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PRICE TWOPENCE

The sense of right grew up among healthy men and was fixed by the practice of comradeship. It has never had help from phantoms and falsehoods, and it never can want any.—W. K. CLIFFORD.

Christianity and Toleration.

SOMEONE observes that Calvinistic dogmatism has been likened "like a nightmare and hideous dream"; but it should be borne in mind that Calvinism is a Protestant term applied to the body of doctrines promulgated by a distinguished Protestant divine. Even in the Protestant world, however, Calvinism is by no means dead, though it is being considerably modified, or reconstructed, to meet the requirements of modern knowledge. It may be true, indeed, that Arminianism is steadily gaining ground, even in quarters where the creeds held are avowedly Calvinistic. There are Presbyterian and Reformed clergymen who, even doctrinally, are not easily distinguishable from many of their Wesleyan brethren. Views are now being tolerated in all communions which fifty years ago would have been utterly condemned and severely punished. We are not to infer from this that Protestantism, as such, is one whit more tolerant than Catholicism. More vehement haters of liberty than Luther and Calvin ever lived. Being themselves persecuted, they shone as notorious persecutors. But among the roots of Protestantism there has been working, from the very start, the leaven of Rationalism and liberty, with the inevitable result that Protestants tend more and more, either to return to the bosom of the Catholic Church, or to renounce religion altogether. This being so, the conclusion is irresistible that the growth of the spirit of toleration among Protestants is an unmistakable sign of the decadence of Christianity. Strictly orthodox believers are of necessity intolerant towards all forms of heterodoxy. Under Queen Elizabeth, it was the turn of the Catholics to be tortured and put to death in company with Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and Arians. The Anglicans were in power, and Bishop Bilson maintained that nothing could be more sinful than to tolerate any others. His language was terribly soothing, as the following extract, addressed to Catholics, shows:—

"No corner is so secret, no prison so close, but your impiety there suffered doth offend God, infect others, and confirm your own frowardness. If your religion is good, why should it lack churches? If it be naught, why should it have chambers? A Christian prince may not pardon or wink at your falsehood."

A few years later the Irish Protestant Bishops assembled on purpose to proclaim that intolerance was a sacred duty. That is to say, the Church of the minority in that troubled land, being in power, banned and proscribed the Church of the overwhelming majority, declaring that to give Papists any toleration, or to consent that they might freely exercise their religion, and profess their faith and doctrine, would be a grievous sin.

In spirit, the Catholic Church is as intolerant today as it ever was. Its creeds have grown and developed, but have undergone no other material change. Any movement towards freedom has taken place in a gradually secularised State, or in a Church more human than Christian. A thoroughly Christian

State or Church would be untrue to itself if it afforded hospitality to what it regarded as heresy or error. An Australian Catholic Archbishop, Dr. Carr, tells us that the greatest of all persecutors is God. As reported in the *Age*, of Melbourne, for June 28, he asserts that, Godless education being responsible for the War, God is now expressing his displeasure with the nations of Europe by humbling them at the point of the sword, and that "when their infliction has wiped out their errors, and the Almighty is satisfied, then will the War end." In other words, God will keep the War going, with all its unspeakable horrors, until all the nations engaged in it have repented of their respective sins and errors, and become lovers and servants of his Christ. Immediately after making that strange statement, Dr. Carr proceeds thus:—

"When I think of the frightful carnage, dreadful cruelty, and immense loss of life; when I see the papers and see the photographs of the number of young men, boys—merely boys—with their splendid countenances, and read of their heroic deeds, my heart bleeds for the condition of the young men of this country who have gone forth to fight their country's battles, meeting superior numbers. For the sake of the good, honest, Australian lives that are being sacrificed, I urge you to pray for a speedy end of the War."

Do you notice the fundamental inconsistency in the Archbishop's teaching? In one breath he assures us that the War is a Divine judgment, visitation, or infliction, and will continue until it has cleansed the peoples concerned from all their transgressions, and then urges his flock to pray for a speedy termination to it. If, in any case, God is sure to end the War as soon as its designed mission has been fulfilled, why insult him by asking him to end it sooner?

His Grace proceeds thus:—

"I have always hoped that this fair land of Australia would remain a Christian land, but lately I have some fears that there is a small section of the community upon which the Christian doctrine has no influence, and which may, perchance, have a bad effect upon those who come in contact with them, unless they are on their guard. I must ask the great body of Christ's followers that if they at any time or anywhere hear any men denying the existence of the Supreme God, or the Christian moralities, if they cannot refute and disprove them, to at least have no culpabilities in it. I have a special reason for making this appeal; I do not wish to mention any publication, but there are some people in our land who are trying to spread those devastating principles which have done so much to place Europe in its present chaotic state."

How laughably impotent the priest is now that the State is no longer at his beck and call. The old spirit is still alive, but lacks the arm to put its behests into execution. Servetus was burnt to death at the stake for much less heresy than that of which the Freethinkers of Australia are guilty to-day. The Archbishop hates them with perfect hatred, and denounces them in the strongest language, but is powerless to harm them. What the devastating principles are which have contributed on such a scale to Europe's present chaotic state we are not informed; but we venture to affirm that Christianity has had its share in the production of the confusion. At the head of the German Empire is a man who holds that "no words of man have ever been uttered worthy of comparison with the words of Christ," who eulogises "that

love for one's neighbor which grows in the soil of Christianity," and who believes that "the noblest duty of a Government is to protect the weaker classes of society and to assist them to attain to a higher economic and moral condition." France is the only country that can be suspected of Atheism, on any extensive scale, and in which the bugbear of Secular Education is to be found. Belgium was a loyal daughter of the Church, and yet she is immeasurably more terribly stricken than any of the other lands. What "devastating principles" have brought about her shocking downfall? Under the Divine rule, do the innocent suffer with the guilty, without any discrimination? The Archbishop's reasoning is as fallacious as it can be. What he decries as containing and spreading "devastating principles" is Freethought, and this, if he only could, he would exterminate by force. His ancestors both had and used the power to rid the world of Freethinkers, but even they were powerless against Freethought, which had the knack of spreading in the dark underground. His Grace, Archbishop Carr, cannot touch either Freethought or Freethinkers except with his tongue, which, after all, is comparatively harmless. But we can clearly read between the lines how he would deal with both, if the State were only as spiritual as the Church. Intolerance is still a duty which every true Christian cherishes in his heart, though he can no longer discharge it in deed as well as in thought.

Incidentally, the Archbishop betrays an astonishing lack of confidence in the power of the Gospel. Australia is well supplied with ministers and churches of all denominations, and the work of evangelisation is incessantly going on; and yet his Grace has fears that "a small section of the community" may succeed in preventing that fair land from remaining Christian. A few years ago a Melbourne Baptist minister, who is now in London, in an article in the *Christian World*, spoke most slightly and insultingly of the opponents of the Christian faith in that city, as if they were an entirely negligible quantity. The Archbishop differs from that gentleman to the extent of fearing that those same despised people may, unless checked in some way, convert the whole country to "the devastating principles" of Atheism, and we incline to the opinion that the Catholic's fears are better founded than the Protestant's hopes. The wonder is that his Grace does not see that by entertaining such fears he is dealing Christianity the deadliest blow possible. If the religion of which he is a chief minister is so feeble that it cannot successfully repulse the attacks of so insignificant a foe, the question reasonably arises, What has become of the omnipotent God of all grace, of the all-conquering Christ, and of the Holy Ghost with his all-quickening powers, the praises of whom all pulpits are so fond of singing at the top of their voices? Do not the Three-in-One stand completely and finally discredited as worthless myths?

For the most part, Protestantism is becoming more and more tolerant because it is slowly growing more human and correspondingly less Christian. In theory, Catholicism is as intolerant as ever, but it has lost the support of its ancient coadjutor, the civil government, and can no longer put its theory into practice. We are enthusiastic advocates of universal toleration, even the toleration of the Churches, though we do not expect to be ourselves tolerated by the Churches, as long as they remain loyal to their apostolic traditions. The saved by the only saving name under heaven are under a solemn obligation to persecute all revilers of that, to them, infinitely precious name, and that for their own good. Our ambition, however, is to convince as many of our fellow-beings as we can that faith in that name is the vainest of delusions, human salvation being possible alone, not by supernatural belief, but through the dissemination of natural knowledge, and the socialising of all our faculties.

J. T. LLOYD.

Atheism and the Law.—II.

(Concluded from p. 514.)

THE whole history of the laws dealing with blasphemy is, as Mr. Justice Stephen says, an extremely curious one; and it may be added, that so far as the Western World is concerned, it is a history connected with Christianity. In the old Roman World there existed no law against criticism of the gods. Religious observances were associated with State ceremonials and some of the duties of citizenship, but nothing approaching laws against blasphemy, such as obtained under Christianity existed, and sufficient of the old Roman literature remains to prove that criticism was very free and often very drastic.

Laws against blasphemy appear to have originated in the Western World owing primarily to the fact that Christianity began as the religion of a sect, and not of a State or nation. As a sect within the State, the Christian Church thus created its own constitution, and exercised certain rights of expulsion and discipline towards its own members. When the rulers of the State became Christians, and the State underwent a process of Christianisation, the Church claimed the support of the State in carrying out its edicts in relation to heretics, and later, to unbelievers. Thus there were two grounds on which the jurists of the Church claimed the right to order discipline or to inflict punishment. In the first place, it claimed the right to discipline its own members in cases of heretical teaching or irreligious practice. In the second, to protect itself against attack—and attack was made to cover all cases where criticism or teaching was hostile to orthodoxy. This, it is clear was a most comprehensive claim. It covered almost everything, and its influence can be seen in all blasphemy laws and persecutions even to our own day.

But there was no attempt to make "blasphemy" or heresy an offence against the secular powers. The two institutions were quite distinct. The Church, or the Church Courts, judged the offence, and then asked the secular power to enforce its decisions. The two powers—secular and religious—were quite distinct. Contrary to popular belief, the mediæval State was not technically a religious State. When the bishops acted officially in secular matters it was because they were also feudal lords possessing all the rights conferred upon them by the feudal system. They had the rights of jurisdiction possessed by a feudal baron or duke, and exercised the same power over people on their estate. When the Church was summoned to send representatives to Parliament, this was not because the Church was a religious organisation, but because it was a distinct community, making its own rules, and possessing the right to levy its own taxes. This last fact was of extreme importance to a mediæval monarch. Of course, the Church lost no opportunity of advancing its own interest in both ways, but it is important to bear this distinction in mind.

And I repeat, although the people were grossly superstitious, although the Church exerted enormous power, although the monarch often trembled before its thunders, the mediæval State remained—technically and legally—a secular State. The Roman Church never admitted itself to be a department of the State, it has never done that yet, and the State never admitted itself to be a department of the Church. The Church had its own laws, its own courts, and they declared what was heresy or blasphemy, asking the secular power to enforce its decrees. This assistance was generally given, as the heretic usually found to his cost. But we owe to Protestantism the legal establishment of a State religion, a State, that is, in which the profession of a particular form of religion was essential to holding public office, from the king downward. Amongst the many retrogressive influences exerted by Protestantism this is certainly not the least evil. There is no need here to deal with the way in which the power of the Church to deal with heresy and blasphemy became vested in regularly recognised

ecclesiastical Courts, and finally passed within the jurisdiction of the common law. That phase of the subject is fairly well understood, but what has been said will help one to recognise the almost unconscious error of the *Church Times*' remark about the Judges wrecking the "the law of the Ages." They might, on the contrary, claim to be restoring the law of the ages—but of the ages before Protestantism succeeded in identifying a particular religion with the State.

But under either form—that in which the Church remains distinct from the State, with Courts trying offences against religion, or that in which the people are ordered by law to accept a certain form of religion—"blasphemy" is a more intelligible offence than under conditions which maintain Blasphemy Laws while allowing a citizen to choose his own religion, or, if he pleases, to worship one altogether. Except in the case of the king, and, I think, the Lord Chancellor—of course, appointments in the State Church—there is no legal compulsion for a profession of religious belief. Every judge on the bench might be a Freethinker. Some, I believe, are; but all of them might be. They are not called upon to make a profession of religion as a condition of appointment. The Lord Chief Justice is himself a Freethinker. As such, he denies all that is fundamental and essential to Christianity. To say, therefore, that the law ought to declare attacks on Christianity to be illegal, while it appoints judges who believe that it is in the highest degree absurd. The modern State is, intellectually, too composite for laws against religion to suggest anything but a revival of mediæval barbarism and bigotry. The *Church Times* complains that the decision passes Atheists—

"Legally in a better position than Catholics, whether of the English or Roman obedience. Let a man disinherit his offspring and give his estate to promote Atheism, the law upholds the gift. Let a widow leave £10 for Masses for her own or her husband's soul, and the law, on grounds of public policy, cancels the bequest."

In concluding his article, the writer says:—"One more word. The large legacy given to the Secular Society meant the disinheritance of the testator's issue. The legacy was the greater part of his fortune. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Christian morality has been so strong in England that a testamentary freedom allowed in few other lands has been found safe. The present example of Secularist fanaticism suggests that ere long it may be found necessary for the State, in the public interest, to deprive its citizens of the power to disinherit its offspring."

A more cowardly paragraph than this was never written. It suggests more than it says: and it is exposed, because to have said it, would have discredited its falsity. The picture of Mr. Bowman "Secularist fanaticism," leaving his money to the Secular Society, Limited, is well calculated to cause Christians to lift their hands in horror and forget to many of the legacies which enrich the Churches of this and other countries. But what are the facts? The facts are, that Mr. Bowman, in making his will, was not influenced in any way by any member of the Secular Society, Limited. It was a quite spontaneous act of his own. The will was not contested on the ground of undue influence or on any ground of insanity. Had there been the ghost of a chance in either direction it would have been tried. Mr. Bowman left no issue—if by issue is meant sons or daughters. He left a widow—an elderly lady at the time of his death—and provided her with £1,000 in cash, a house and furniture, and the proceeds of the estate until her decease. It was only after her death that the Secular Society, Limited, was to receive its share of the estate was to be paid legacies to a number of his relatives. What becomes, then, of the *Church Times*' appeal to the sympathy of the religious world for these poor victims of "Secularist fanaticism"? They simply do not exist. If Mr.

Bowman had been a Christian and left his money to a church or a missionary society, he would have been lauded for his piety. As it was left to a Secular Society, he is a glaring example of "Secularist fanaticism"—so glaring, that to prevent its recurrence the laws of primogeniture may have to be altered. There seems greater need for a law that would compel the editors of religious papers to print only the truth.

Just a word about the Catholic widow leaving money for masses for her husband's soul. I believe that, as the law stands, this would be an illegal gift. But that is not a law which owes its being to "Secularist fanaticism." It is of Christian origin. It is due to the fact that when a Christian finds himself in power he has an almost irresistible tendency to play the part of persecutor. When Catholics were in power they persecuted Protestants. When Protestants gained the upper hand they made the practice of Roman Catholicism illegal. More than that, they made the teaching of opinions contrary to their own illegal, and the *Church Times*, in spite of a half-hearted disclaimer, now laments that this practice is breaking down. The *Church Times*, which leans to the practice of the Mass, is simply tasting the medicine it wishes to be served out to others. By all means let the Catholic widow leave money for Masses, if she pleases. Freethinkers are the last to wish to deprive her of that right. More, they would, I hope, be the first to give her that right had they the power. It is not the Freethinker who calls in the policeman and the gaoler to hinder the spread of this opinion, or to aid the spread of that one. That is a role that belongs of historic right to Christianity. In that direction it occupies the highest position, and Freethought has no intention or desire of contesting its supremacy. C. COHEN.

The Bible as Literature.

- The Literary Man's Bible*, by W. L. Courtney. Chapman & Hall.
- The Bible and Anglo-Saxon People*, by William Canton. Dent & Co.

MR. W. L. COURTNEY'S *The Literary Man's Bible* has attracted considerable and deserved attention. The press, religious and secular alike, has given it conspicuous and laudatory consideration. Nor is this to be wondered at, for Mr. Courtney, a well-known Fleet-street journalist, has prepared a novel edition of the Bible. He makes it perfectly clear that his sole object is to treat the Scriptures as literature. And he rightly insists that, if the Old and New Testaments are to be judged as literature, identically the same canons of criticism must be applied to them which are applied to any other books. There can be no question of verbal inspiration. "To me," says Mr. Courtney, "Isaiah is as inspired as Shakespeare, but not more so. Plato is as inspired as Job, but not more so." The world moves indeed. A popular writer, mark you, can say this to-day amid applause, but years ago such a remark would have cost Mr. Courtney his liberty.

Mr. Courtney gives us the best passages he can find in the Bible, selected, we repeat, purely as literature. The Bible itself, as it at length escapes from the blue pencil of the distinguished literary critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, wears a curious but not unfamiliar shape. It recalls those editions of the sacred volume intended to spare the blushes of the young. This most unauthorised version of the Bible is divided into an "historical" section, which comprises 223 pages out of some 400; a "prophetical" section of 61 pages; a "poetical" section of 80 pages; and a so-called "wisdom" division of 40 pages. It will be noticed that the entire priestly contribution to the Bible is treated with what Carlyle calls "high-sniffing contempt." In the "historical" section the plan has been to take the separate legends and episodes out of their respective books, and introduce them with brief

explanatory and critical comments, strongly suggestive of the newest of new theologians.

An impression as of "the horns of Elflaud faintly blowing" is produced by reading Mr. Canton's book, *The Bible and Anglo-Saxon People*, for it is as remote from Mr. Courtney's method as the North is from the South Pole. The book is quite out of touch with modern knowledge. Mr. Canton is hypnotised by the Bible, and for him the other sacred books of the world have little or no meaning. He makes it quite clear that his sole object is to hold a brief for the Christian Bible, and he has wasted a good deal of ink for that purpose.

Mr. Courtney is far more up-to-date. In his introduction to *The Literary Man's Bible* he boldly throws overboard the old-fashioned ideas, but he protests too much in speaking of the "unparalleled" literary value of the Bible. He even points to his carefully selected pages of Oriental fact and fiction, poetry and pietism, and challenges comparison with the greatest writers of all time. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" While preachers and proselytes were content to point to the Bible as the Church's "one foundation," they could claim at least attention. But when a sentimental journalist insists that the Bible is the greatest piece of literature in the whole world, and assigns a place to it above Shakespeare, above Dante, above Homer, then indeed it is high time to enter a strenuous and, if possible, a serious protest.

When one studies the Bible purely as literature, one sees that though it occupies a special place on account of its religious character, it has no claim to unchallenged supremacy. Its literary characteristics are not, in reality, different from other similar works. It is the work of Orientals, and, further, it is not a single book, but a collection of books. It is a very far cry from the simple, artless stories of a savage people to the passionate romance of the "Song of Songs." There is an immense gulf between the plain, unvarnished, and often indelicate, stories of the patriarchs, and the involved, artful, transcendental romances of the Gospels. The books of the Hebrew Old Testament cover a period of centuries, and are filled with stolen Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian ideas. In the New Testament one finds books written in a comparatively modern language, when Rome held the sceptre of the world. Thus, in point of time, the work ranges from 1000 B. C. to at least as late as A. D. 200. In material there is a corresponding variety. There are scraps of folk-songs of war, early legends, mythical history, fragments of laws, collections of proverbs, psalms of meditation, chronologies, the euphemistic ingenuities of the Apocalypse, the elaborate romances of the Gospels, and the dialectics of Paul.

The whole atmosphere is Oriental, and springs from the same fertile source as *The Arabian Nights*. In the New Testament, side by side with the riotous Eastern imagination, there is a new element in the attempt to graft philosophy on the elementary fictions of the Old Testament. If one remembers that the only other work with which English-speaking peoples are familiar, which comes from the same Eastern background as the Bible, is *The Arabian Nights*, one will realise better the enormous distance from us of this Biblical literature. Stevenson has pointed out that the characters of *The Arabian Nights* are mere puppets, and their stories are a mere succession of incident and event, unbroken by any attempt to characterise the people.

This is as true of the Bible as of *The Arabian Nights*. Compared to the great masters of speech, Shakespeare, Dante, Homer, to say nothing of Æschylus, Lucretius, or Milton, the anonymous authors of the Bible are poor of resource, limited of range, timid in execution. These Orientals mostly pour out floods of anger and pietism; largely utter hoarse cries of fear, revenge, and worship. Wit and humor were closed books to them. From the first error in Genesis to the final absurdity in Revelation there is not a spark of humor. Much of their best work is only so much mellifluous pruriency, presented in exotic forms of verse. At other times their verse

is filled with the turmoil of battle, the champing of horses, the flashing and bickering of spears. Only on rare occasions does the still, sad voice of humanity make itself heard. The austere simplicity, to which attention is so often drawn, is easily paralleled in the Vedas, the Koran, and other sacred books of the East. Thus, in the last analysis, the Bible simply contains the ordinary stock-in-trade of almost all Oriental writers. Compare Isaiah with the *Divina Commedia* of Dante; contrast the Song of Songs with Shakespeare's *Othello*. Place the story of Jonah alongside Goethe's *Faust*. Confronted with the works of the masters of human speech, the books of the Bible are merely the work of minor writers.

Even the vigorous English of the Authorised Version of the Bible is but a happy accident of translation. Hebrew is, admittedly, a poor language, and the Greek of the New Testament is perhaps the worst ever written. The obvious reply to Mr. Courtney's suggestion is that one writer alone more than outweighs the Bible. The finest attempts at poetry in the Scriptures, comprising, be it remembered, the work of many minds in many centuries, touch the dead level of inferiority when put side by side with the sky-soaring grandeurs of Shakespeare. His magnificent works cover the whole gamut of human emotion, but the writers of the Bible knew only the simpler passions. Shakespeare is the one writer who has the highest gift of language that the great concert of poetry has ever known. When he is at his best, it is well-nigh impossible to do justice to the music of his language. It is as various as it is faultless—now caressingly tender, now lulling, lingeringly mournful, now resonant as silver trumpets. He had a love, too, of a solemn, peculiar music, booming round the sense like the sea round a lonely rock. He delighted in the ample swell and roll of polysyllabic words. With these he would fill his large and reverberating sentences that have in them, somehow, the echo of immensity, as a sea-shell holds the murmur of the waves. His genius crossed all frontiers, and the chief of the impressive lines that fell from his pen are rooted in the speech of civilised humanity. Shakespeare is supreme, the master-artist, the incomparable craftsman, the musician in words who has enriched beyond measure the noblest mother-tongue ever used by the lips of men. Compared with his deathless dreams, the barbaric and elemental fairy tales and lyrics of the Bible are merely the work of minor writers. If they had not been associated with a heavily endowed system of religion, they would, centuries ago, have been consumed to nothingness in the echoless Temple of Universal Silence.

MIMNERMOS.

The World's Premier Plant.—III.

(Continued from p. 518.)

ANOTHER fungus produces root rot, a disease that proves fatal to fruit trees, and other important plants, including cotton. This parasite sucks up the nourishment contained in the root's living substance, and causes the roots to dwindle and die. This exasperating malady thus robs its victim of the food-materials and water it obtains through its roots from the earth, and the entire plant then perishes. Various remedies have been advocated for the destruction of the fungus, but with little practical result. Cereal crops are apparently immune to the attacks of the parasite, and it has been suggested that the only plan available that is likely to lessen the evil is the adoption of a system of crop rotation which will limit the growth of cotton in an affected area to one year in every three or four. In these circumstances the cotton will gain all the numerous advantages derived from rotation, and, in consequence, the plant's more vigorous growth will materially assist it in surviving the insidious attacks of the fungus.

Leaf-blight is a common cotton disease, and although it gives the older leaves an unsightly

appearance and adds nothing to the value of the crop, it is not regarded as a very serious ailment. Mildew is also occasioned by a fungus-growth which, like the rust, has led to little damage. There are various other fungoid diseases, all of which serve to show us that Nature permits, and even encourages, lowly forms of life, devoid of either beauty or utility, to increase and multiply to the detriment or destruction of highly evolved flowering plants, which not only form an ornament to the landscape, but are of priceless practical benefit to human kind.

From the fungoid enemies we will now turn to the insect foes of cotton. The parasites already mentioned are innocent and harmless organisms in comparison with the hardy and aggressive antagonists now to be noted. The Mexican boll weevil is a veritable terror to the cultivator of cotton. This undismayed by the many attempts to extirpate this ravenous creature successfully entrenches itself in some chosen habitat, from which it despatches its raiding armies in all directions. It has become a pest to be seriously contended with in vast areas within the great cotton country.

In the sanguinary 'sixties of American history the boll weevil, in Mexico, presented the cotton planters with the surrounding country with the boll weevil. Its depredations steadily worsened and ultimately forced the farmers to forsake their cotton fields in despair. After weary years of waiting, the planters at last decided to resume the culture of cotton, but the boll weevil, which had somewhere secreted itself during the interval, immediately reappeared and ruined the crops. A score of years later the weevil had arrived at Matamoros, and was preparing for a further advance. Nearly all the immense territory devoted to cotton in Texas is now at the mercy of the invader; the adjoining States have been entered, and the pest promises to ultimately penetrate the entire cotton area.

The boll weevil is a small insect whose appearance scarcely suggests its desperate character. It is a little grey beetle, hardly a quarter of an inch in length. Yet its presence, particularly in a previously uninvaded territory, arouses fear and trembling in the human community. Under last autumn's fallen leaves, protected from the cold of winter under sticks and weeds, the beetle sleeps until spring, to be reawakened to his deadly deeds when the vernal sun rejuvenates the earth.

At the time when the cotton plant rejoices in the warmth and light of the unfolding year, the weevil comes to pay an early visit to the shrub he loves so well. The female soon becomes attentive to the function of reproduction, and places a single egg into each available cotton "square." As the season advances and the cotton boll develops, she pierces its hard shell with her well-designed proboscis, deposits an egg in the opening she has made, and covers it over. Sometimes two or more eggs are laid in each square.

In a few days the egg is hatched, the larva metamorphoses at the expense of the plant, becomes a pupa, its cycle of development being now complete. The weevil reaches maturity so quickly that by the fall of the year the original population has enormously increased. The newly developed weevils emerge from their retreats and mingle with their parents and grandparents. They soon set about their own family matters; they multiply apace, and each and all maintain their rapacious lives at the cost of the sorely persecuted cotton plant.

Early autumn frosts, when these occur, assist in killing off the later broods of the pestilent weevil, but the planters still await the discovery of remedial measures capable of utilisation on a large scale. One remedy already adopted is of some little interest. It was rumored that an ant existing in Guatemala was regarded as an inveterate enemy of the boll weevil, and a party of inquirers set out for the purpose of ascertaining the habits of the ant and introducing it into their native land. Accustomed to a warm climate and succeeded in surviving the colder conditions of the

cotton States. But some of these Southern ants appear to be adapting themselves to their new environment, so that it may become possible to evolve a variety which will prove of inestimable value in the weevil smitten area.

The "cotton-worm," as it is popularly called, is another pest. This so-called "worm" is really the caterpillar of a migrant moth. In common with all caterpillars, it is an unending eater, and from one to four weeks, according to the weather, the insect is occupied in passing through the larval phase of its development. Naturally, the amount of ruin wrought becomes enormous. The female moth deposits about five hundred eggs, and these she usually places on the under side of the cotton leaf. Unless delayed by inclement weather, the eggs soon hatch out, and the newly emerged larva begins to devour the leaves or even attack the bolls of the plant. The caterpillar grows rapidly, and when the larval or caterpillar phase comes to a close, the insect makes an incomplete cocoon, very commonly within a folded leaf. In this retreat the larva, now transformed into a pupa, passes a period of rest. This phase of the insect's metamorphosis covers a period which varies from a week to a month. During this resting stage the pupa develops into a winged moth, which issues from the cocoon, and soon afterwards seeks food, and in the case of the female, a place for her eggs. Half a dozen or even more generations may thus be produced in the course of a summer, and, needless to state, a single female can populate an area of considerable size.

A serious menace to the cotton grower is the boll-worm. This insect enjoys a wide geographical range, but only attacks cotton when it happens to serve as its most convenient feeding-plant. This parasite's life-cycle is similar to that of the cotton-worm, but its favorite food is the cotton boll. Nor is it satisfied with one boll, for when it tires of one, it proceeds to destroy another. Each worm is capable of seriously injuring several bolls, and the insect is in consequence highly detrimental to the crop. Nor is this the full measure of its iniquity, as the boll-worm constantly attacks the immature flowers and prevents their further development.

The caterpillar spends two or three weeks of its wasteful existence in destroying bolls and blooms, and then, satisfied with its lengthy meal, it descends to the earth for a few weeks' rest. It shapes itself an oval cell in the soil, and in this state of voluntary immurement it remains for a week or so in repose. During this time its metamorphosis takes place, and it returns to the world in the form of a brightly-colored moth. As may have been observed, the time spent in the evolution of the insect varies within considerable limits. This lack of uniformity is mainly traceable to the nature of the weather. But in any normal season the average period occupied in the various changes from the egg to the imago or adult insect is from thirty-five to forty days, so that five or six generations appear each year. The evil insect is equally in its element among the growing corn or in the tomato patch, so that three important crops are subject to its ravages. Trap crops, moth traps, insecticides, and other weapons have been opposed to the boll-worm. Experience appears to prove that insect poisons and moth traps are open to serious objection, but the plan of preparing decoy crops for the moths to nest in, and then burning the plants with their contained eggs has shown itself fairly successful in minimising the pest. Again, wise farmers are not unmindful of the value of insectivorous birds, and would rather encourage these winged friends in their plantations than scare them away with their guns.

Much as we endure the black blight on the nasturtium and elder bush, the cotton cultivator suffers from the invasion of the cotton-aphis. The aphides emerge from their winter shelter among the weeds and alight on the tender cotton leaves of spring. The aphides are very harmful, as they absorb the juices from the delicate leaves and, like all other insect pests, they possess the power to multiply

at a stupendous rate. In the cotton ground, as in our own gardens, the most convenient plan for reducing the number of aphides is to clear away the weeds and rubbish from the soil throughout the winter months.

In addition to the enemies already dealt with, the cotton planter has to contend with several species of cut-worms. These vermin derive their name from the fact that, in early spring, when the young plants have risen out of the soil, the farmer frequently notices, when he surveys his plantation in the morning, that large numbers of his shrubs have been beheaded during the night. This phenomenon is so familiar to the farmer that he at once realises that the cut-worms have been engaged in their nocturnal malpractices. These cut-worms are really caterpillars—voracious caterpillars which, when full grown, are sometimes nearly two inches long. They shun the light of day, but steal forth after dark and devour the heads of the young plants so completely that the latter look as if some ill-conditioned person had deliberately destroyed their tops. The presence of these caterpillars is frequently unsuspected until the damage has been done, as the insects remain hidden during the day. The discoveries of science are now rendering assistance, and a completer control of these direful caterpillars may confidently be looked for in the immediate future.

The garden web-worm and the cotton-square borer are likewise responsible for much mischief, but sufficient has been put forward to prove that the cotton grower is unceasingly threatened by the immensely destructive and, in some cases, nearly ruinous inroads of parasitic fungoid and insect foes.

From grey antiquity cotton has been cultivated and manufactured in India. The first record of cotton production in China occurs in the eleventh century of our era, but there is every probability that it was grown in that country many centuries before, as cotton fabrics were common in China prior to the alleged birth of Christ. Egypt and nearly all the African continent were familiar with it from very early times. Herodotus mentions "the thorax or cuirass sent by Amasis, King of Egypt, to Sparta" in 550 B. C. And the Father of History proceeds to explain that trees grew in India, "the fruit of which is a wool, exceeding in beauty and goodness that of a sheep." From these trees, he tells us, were derived the fleeces which adorned the cuirass which Amasis presented to Sparta. For hundreds of years cotton has been cultivated in Asia Minor, in various Mediterranean Islands, in Greece, and in the South of Italy. For the introduction into mediæval Europe of this invaluable staple we must thank the Moors, who reared the plant in Spain a thousand years ago. For centuries the Catholic Spaniards looked with cold disdain on this Mohammedan industry, but it was accepted in more enlightened Italy, and from that Southern land it spread to France and Greece.

(To be concluded.) T. F. PALMER.

Sleep.

Oh, dreamless Sleep! thou gift, of all gifts greatest!
That leadeth us awhile to perfect rest:
That soothest all the heart-break and the sorrow
That in our waking hours keeps us oppressed:
Thou takest from us morbid care and brooding;
Our fevered souls forget, and cease to pine;
And all the fretted nerves that twinge with anguish,
Thou calmest with thine own pure anodyne.

Oh, wondrous boon! when Death at long last cometh,
And I must yield, all life doth round me twine:
I shall not fear the dark-robed haunting stranger
Who cometh, bringing gifts like unto thine.
To Mother Nature he takes all her children;
Close to her heart he lays them on her breast;
To dreamless sleep—their joys and tears forgotten;
Their burdens gone; for evermore at rest.

W. J. KING.

Acid Drops.

Some religious folk may have been pleased to learn that Smith, the hero of the "Brides and the Bath" case, met his end in quite a religious spirit. His last letter from prison was written to Miss Pegler, whom he assured that he was spending his time in "deep and solemn meditation." Of the nature of that meditation he left no room for doubt:—

"I am preparing my soul for Him to receive. I return to the teaching which I received from my mother.....I have gone to God with all my sins with true repentance, and asked his forgiveness and mercy on my soul. I truly believe and feel that my faithful and sincere prayers have been answered.....I shall have an extraordinary peace, perfect peace."

Quite a touching letter, and so pious! Smith was also sure that God had "ordained" the coming together of himself and Miss Pegler. Who "ordained" his meeting with the other ladies is left to our imagination.

Some weeks ago we said that we should not be surprised if presently some witnesses were found for the Mons Angels. In such cases evidence is almost certain to be forthcoming, and we are, therefore, not surprised that a witness has been unearthed. Lance-Corporal — (he is forbidden to give his name, although it is difficult to see why) is at present in hospital (hospital unnamed), and he told a *Daily Mail* representative that during the retreat from Mons, after a hot, tiring day, he saw a strange light in mid-air, and then quite distinctly "three shapes, one in the centre having what looked like outspread wings," the other two quite distinct but not so large. "All the men with me saw them, and other men came up from other groups, and told us they had seen the same thing." So there it is! We are only puzzled to account for the silence of this Lance-Corporal — and the other men who saw the vision—a silence lasting for nearly a year. That was a question the *Daily Mail* man never thought of asking this wounded soldier, whose name is conveniently withheld.

Writing on the Mons legend, Mr. Arthur Machen says that angels are more popular than saints in England. Both are rarer than honest journalists.

A writer in a pious journal refers to "the homely enthusiasm of the religion of the man in the street." The educated theologian sometimes imagines that the Biblical word "publicans" refers to licensed victuallers, and that "divers diseases" means water on the brain.

There is a humorous sequel to the English clerical assertion that the Germans are Atheists. The Prussian *Zeitung*, a Protestant publication, says that English Christians are supported by the "wildest British Atheists" in their denunciation of Germany. It looks like a modern version of the old story of the pot and the kettle.

The death of Sir James Murray, the world-famous editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, to which he devoted his life, reminds us of a good story. A friend tendered congratulations on the publication of Section L of the work by sending him a note worded, "I rejoice to see you have escaped from L."

Mr. Arnold White thinks that "the solemn shams ossified the heart of England before the War are doomed. We hope he is a true prophet, for the most solemn sham we know is Christianity.

In a leading article, the *Church Times* for August 10 declares that "the simplest, as it is the best, reply to give to those who pronounce Christianity a failure is the reply Alice made to the infuriated queen of Wonderland. "No sense"; but we beg to submit that our contemporary treatment of the subject is characterised by a vast deal of sheer nonsense. We are told, for example, that "Christian religion satisfies the educated and the uneducated" but the statement is almost totally false. There are a few among both the educated and the uneducated who do accept Christianity, but the overwhelming majority in both classes are unbelievers. How many men of science, how many lawyers and doctors, on the one side, and how many among the working classes, on the other, are wholehearted believers in and followers of Christ? The truth is that the main support of religion come from what the *Church Times* satirically calls the *bourgeois* class. The plain English *bourgeois* is middle class, and is it not a well-attested fact

that the so-called middle class is composed almost exclusively of the hidebound slaves of convention and religion?

On our contemporary's own showing, Christianity flourishes among the bourgeois class which it insultingly dubs "the semi-cultivated." The writer of the article poses as a superior person, as a sort of super-prig, who pretends to know better than all who differ from him. The rejectors of Christianity are not even worthy of a hearing. They have neither modesty nor knowledge of their limitations. Such opponents of the faith may rise out of the bourgeois class, but they are not of it. The worshipers of the past, the hand-servants of tradition, and the champions of superstition are to be found almost exclusively in the middle class; but even in this class there is now a decided decline of religious interest, which shows that Christianity is a signal failure among all classes.

The Church Times complains that irresponsible journalists and college dons declare that Christianity is a failure, solely because they are out of touch with the parochial work of the country. But why are they out of touch with such work? Simply because the Christian work of the country has not succeeded in reorganising its life. The work is unknown because it does not bear fruit on any noticeable scale. Our contemporary avers that the Church has not been silent in intercessory prayer. True; but what on earth has been the practical use of intercessory prayer? Nothing has ever come of appeals to the supernatural, and nothing ever will. The making of them is as fruitless as beating the air.

It is perfectly true that it is "impossible for any regular churchgoer to avoid being continually reminded of the fact that the nation is at war." True, again; but is it creditable to the Church of the Prince of Peace that it is under the necessity to remind its members that the nation is at war? The truth is that the Prince of Peace has been supplanted by the ancient God of battles, and it is to this Deity that the Church is now forwarding its petitions. If the Prince of Peace had been alive, and seated on his throne, there could have been no war. Therefore the War is a direct negation of the religion of the God of love and peace.

Remarking upon the judgment of the Appeal Court in the Bowman case, the Catholic Herald for August 14 says that probably the decision was inevitable. "In times like these," our contemporary adds, "when scepticism is rampant, it was impossible for judges to resist the trend of the age." Very properly the principle observed in the Bowman case is applied to masses for the dead. It is beyond that the trend of religious opinion is away from the Protestant conception of the future state. A growing number of people within the Anglican Communion accept the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, while a far larger percentage approve of some sort of prayers for the departed. We heartily endorse the concluding paragraph in the Catholic Herald's article:—

"If, then, the Courts of the country are ready to measure out the same justice to the Catholic as to the Atheist, it is for them, on the next occasion when the question of superstitious uses is raised, to apply the principle of the Bowman case to the removal of a serious Catholic grievance."

We are advocates of equal justice to all alike, irrespective of differences of creed, color, or race.

"There is but one Heaven and one God," says Mr. Horatio Bottomley. Unfortunately, popular Christian prejudice is in favor of three gods and a devil.

"The real test of Christianity is to come after the War," says Dr. Newman Smyth. At the present time, presumably, the Christians are too busy fighting each other to trouble about theological matters.

The dear Daily News is not in love with the idea of the visit of Billy Sunday, the Yankee baseball evangelist, to this country. Reviewing a "Life" of Sunday, the Daily News remarks partly that "the publication might conceivably be explained as a step designed to render any such enterprise impossible, for it proves how remote are his ways and how far below the level of the Salvation Army, we are not surprised at the anxiety of the Cocoa Press.

A religion of trust in God sooner or later kills all self-respect. They who trust in the Lord, while kneeling in prayer, are for ever calling themselves ugly names, such

as worms, miserable sinners, nothing, and less than nothing, prodigal sons, and they seem to take inordinate pride in such dishonoring cognomens. They crawl in the dust, they cringe in self-abasement, they beat their breasts in self-contempt, so long as they continue in prayer; but the moment they rise to their feet and face their fellow-beings, their humility vanishes, and they become notorious egoists, the haughtiest of the proud, forgetting that "the pride that dines on vanity sups on contempt."

Evidently Watford is not a living which imposes a severe strain upon its incumbents. The Rev. Lee James, who has just resigned the benefice, held that office for over sixty years. His predecessor held the benefice for fifty-six years.

The Bishop of Worcester thinks that, in view of the severe strain placed upon the clergy by the War, holidays are more necessary to the clergy this year than ever. Rather than the clergy should forgo their holidays, he would be prepared to allow fewer services in his diocese, and he thinks the laity would cheerfully make that sacrifice. We think so, too. Some might even suggest a lengthy extension of the holidays—on these terms.

There is some discussion going on in Coventry on the subject of Sunday bands. Canon Baillie, in the August issue of the Parish Magazine, says that the question turns on whether the Corporation is to regard itself as the Corporation of a Christian community or not? Quite so; and if the Corporation decides that it is, we have no doubt that it will taboo Sunday bands. The deeper question is, however, whether the Corporation is justified in taking that view? The people of Coventry are no more wholly Christian than are the people of any other town or city. The population is made up of people of all sorts of religious belief, and of no religious belief whatever. The members of the Corporation are not—legally, at least—elected because of their religious belief, and their election involves no profession of religion. Legally and morally, therefore, the Corporation is not the Corporation of a Christian community; it is a purely civic body, with purely civic functions, and its duties towards the community are of a quite non-religious character. If Sunday bands are provided, no religious person will be compelled to attend their performances. And a band playing on Sunday can surely offend none but the most bigoted.

We quite agree with Canon Baillie that enjoyment of art and music is consistent with degradation of character, although we should prefer to phrase it so that it may co-exist with degradation of character. But for that matter, so may almost anything else. Religion itself is consistent—or may co-exist—with degradation of character. We may remind Canon Baillie that the notorious Charles Peace found the most intense enjoyment in religious services of an evangelistic character. The argument for giving the public every access to art and music does not rest on the assumption that the person who enjoys a picture or a piece of music must be pure in life and action, but that, so far as they are operative, they represent refining influences. No one is made worse by them, and many are made better. Even the inhabitants of Coventry might be benefited by these means.

The great difficulty in all these questions is to get Christians to realise that there are others in the world beside themselves. They are so used to talking about the Christian conscience, the Christian claims, the Christian community, etc., that they never fully realise the existence of others who are not Christians, and of claims that are not Christian. In the modern world Christianity is only one religion among many; and in a modern community a Christian is only a member of one of numerous sects. Consequently, his only valid claim against the State or against a corporation is to be left alone so long as he discharges his duties as a citizen. He has no more right to demand legislation in the name and in favor of his religious opinions than the Atheist or the Jew has to demand special legislation in favor of his special opinions. No one asks for Sunday bands because they aid their religious or non-religious opinions, they ask for them on the broad ground of citizenship and social health. If they can be opposed on that ground, well and good. But to oppose them on religious grounds is utterly indefensible. It is nothing but Sabbatarian bigotry, no matter how disguised.

Christians are very insistent in demanding respect for their own religion, but they have very little respect for other creeds. A cigar is named after Gotama Buddha, the personage whom Kipling politely refers to as "Bloomin' idol made o' mud, wot they called the Great Gawd Budd."

Some "gods," worshiped in the West, look like ending in smoke, too.

A minister at Benfleet, Essex, has joined the British Army, and the fact is so remarkable that the pressmen are busy making headlines about it. Some fifty thousand other ministers are remaining behind, and, presumably, a few will pray for their brother in the Lord.

Speaking on the subject of air-craft risks at the meeting of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, the Reverend Father Higley said "he trusted in Providence for the protection of his four schools in the neighborhood of London." Presumably, the clergy of Rheims Cathedral did the same.

"God bless England" is the new German cry, according to the *Evening News*. This looks as if the Germans are being converted from their Atheism.

Editors of newspapers find out everything in time. Commenting on the national religion, the *Evening News* says "People travel miles by omnibus and tram on Sundays—people who are such strict Sabbatarians that to read a Sunday newspaper is a sin—merely to hear a popular preacher.

A Sunday paper has a picture of Trafalgar-street, London, S.E., which it calls "the most wonderful street in the world." A Sunday editor ought to have remembered "the street which is called straight," mentioned in the Bible, which an American traveller said was "straighter than a rainbow, but not quite so straight as a corkscrew."

Rev. R. J. Campbell says that in some cases of religious conversion the "moral upheaval" is "almost incredible in its thoroughness." "The very same person who used to be vile-mouthed, coarse-minded, immodest, will become as delicate in feeling, as instinctively pure and guileless, as a child." And that is the kind of thing that passes for philosophy at the City Temple! A vile-mouthed, coarse-minded, immodest person suddenly becomes as delicate in feeling and as pure as a child. The thing is a sheer impossibility. We have seen more than one of these miraculously changed individuals—and have read of many more—and have found their last state as objectionable as the first. There has been no real change; there has only been a new pose. The frank brutality and coarseness of the unconverted man was bad enough; but the disguised coarseness, the constant harping upon unsavory subjects by way of an affected reprobation of them, is infinitely more disgusting. There is no change of character; there is only an alteration of the direction in which the same qualities show themselves. Every sane student of human character knows this to be so; only it suits men like Mr. Campbell to ignore a truth that everyday experience illustrates.

The *Sunday Pictorial* suggests that the Kaiser's name be erased from the roll of Oxford University, of which he holds an honorary degree. Oxford University can boast that she expelled Shelley and that she showered honors on the late "General" Booth.

The Rev. Dr. Gwynne, Bishop of Khartoum, has been appointed Army Chaplain-in-Chief, and will be in charge of the Church of England chaplains at the Front. This is unlikely to make any difference in the military situation, for it is improbable that the chaplains will do other than talk. It is a pity that they cannot be marched against the German Army chaplains.

A whale measuring thirty feet has been washed up on Rhossilly Sands, near Swansea, and the matter was dealt with in a three-line paragraph in the papers. Evidently, it was not the "fish" that afforded Jonah "board and lodging" for three days and nights.

The Rev. Professor J. M. Thompson, of Oxford, seems powerless to resist the temptation to treat the War in its relation to religion. He has written numerous articles on the subject, every one of which betrayed a serious lack of common sense. In the *Christian Commonwealth* for August 11, the editorial, entitled "The Effect of the War upon Theology," is from his pen. The very title suggests that theology needs reconstruction, and the contention is that the "deeper experiences of the War" must, of necessity, eventuate in very real benefit to those under whom the reconstructive process will be carried on. But in this article of two columns and a quarter, Professor

Thompson doesn't come to grips with his subject at all. Indeed, we fail to discover what he means by theology. He admits that the problem can never be solved by argument, well knowing, doubtless, that all true argument is dead against the position he tries to defend. He therefore falls back upon the divine's extremely vulnerable city of refuge—*assumption*, whose characteristic is that it affords no refuge at all.

The Professor does ask one really very serious question, namely, "Can we go on believing, as we did before, in the power of God, when he seems to raise no hand in defence of broken treaties, ruined churches, women outraged, and innocent people massacred? Or, if we admit his power, can we go on believing his love?" "Theology has here the hardest questions of all to answer" is the ready admission; and these are the questions which cannot be answered by argument. It is impossible to get hold of facts which will satisfy the reason that there is an all-powerful and all-loving Father in heaven who rules the world, but we must *assume* that there is, in defiance of all existing facts. Professor Thompson *assumes* his existence, contending that he is above the world, and no longer works in the world through men as his instruments. Consequently, it is not God whom the War has discredited, but man who works independently of God, and has made such a mess of things.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer has been writing to the *Times* concerning drinking, and he says "it breaks one's heart" to consider the state of Britain when Russia and France "have rid themselves of a similar curse." If Brother Meyer means what he says, why does he not protest against the use of "communion port" in places of worship?

Giving evidence at Acton in regard to the remarks used by a defondant, a witness said "the language was not fit for a dog to hear." It looks as if it were high time that the Rev. Billy Sunday came to improve our speech and morals.

The Modern Parson's Creed.

I PREACH unto a dying world
Of a great Love divine;
And as I thus preach, my thoughts upward ^{[reach}
To matters more sublime.

I think of the glittering gold
That shortly will be mine,
And the ease it will bring, as I softly sing,
"Good Spirit, I am thine!"

I love the most holy Church
With a zeal that is steadfast and true,
Because—don't you see?—it has given to me
A fat living, with nothing to do.

My God, who made lords and slaves,
And many strange things that be,
He knew my worth from the hour of my ^{[birth—}
Hence my exalted degree.

Thus devoutly I render thanks
For the wisdom by him shown,
Knowing full well that poverty's hell,
Makes thousands disconsolate groan.

'Tis true I pity the poor
Who dwell in my country's slums;
But pity is cheap so long as I keep
For myself all the pleasure that comes.

As I think of my princely robes,
And the rags which round them cling,
'Tis then that I feel my religion is real—
Indeed, 'tis a priceless thing.

Sincerely such thoughts make me pray ^{[may be}
For rich blessings to be given,
Not to them, but to me, that life's journey
Paved with gold from earth to heaven.

O! the Gospel I love is sublime,
'Tis the mightiest on earth;
And I'm sure it will be the best thing for me
Till another life has birth.

Of that life I nothing can tell,
But I truly hope there will be
A chance of the gold for which I have sold
My soul, being given to me.

Wm. J. GILLINOR.

To Correspondents.

HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—Received from March 15: Previously acknowledged, £134 Gs. 4d. Received since:—S. H., £1; L. Rowe, 10s. *Per Miss Vance*: J. Herbert Sanders, 6s.

H. POWELL.—The lines you send contain ideas, but their form is hardly up to the *Freethinker* standard.

COOPER.—If you are summoned on a jury and wish to affirm, you should make the request in a respectful manner and avoid argument. We do not anticipate that many judges or magistrates will place obstacles to your making affirmation. It would not, after all, be fair to take either Judge Denton or Mr. Justice Ridley as representative of the English Bench in this matter. The Oaths Amendment Act of 1887 gives you full authority for demanding to affirm, and if this is cited and respectfully insisted on—if any difficulty should arise—we think that you will get what you want.

J. LIVINGSTONE ANDERSON.—Thanks for congratulations. Some of the newspaper reports were, as you say, tantalisingly brief, but with this week's issue we commence giving the judgments in full; so *Freethinker* readers will have no cause for complaint at that head.

W. MANN would be glad if Mr. C. M. Marshall, who recently wrote him care of this office, would be good enough to send him his full address. A letter written him by Mr. Mann has been returned as insufficiently addressed.

EDWARDS.—The only annoyance we suffer from such Christian letters as yours is that we are sometimes led into wasting time by reading them. Otherwise, we are too well seasoned to be troubled by the abuse of bigots.

B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. GRANT.—Very glad that our note concerning supply of *Freethinkers* has produced such gratifying results.

M. MANNATH (Calcutta).—We do not see that the Archbishop of Canterbury's appeal for prayer shows any sign of mental weakness. He is simply studying his professional interests.

C.—Thanks for reference.

EDWARDS.—The story is not a bad one, but it has been so widely published that we feel certain most of our readers are already acquainted with it.

MANN.—We all ought to help in some way. How we help must be determined by circumstances; but there are scores of ways in which a cause like that of Freethought may be served.

P. P.—Have returned MS., as desired. Ideas are quite as important to poetry as to prose. Some people appear to use prose as a substitute for them.

EDITOR OF THE FREETHINKER.—Should be addressed to 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

NOTICES.—Must reach 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ADVERTISERS.—Who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

EDITOR OF THE FREETHINKER.—Literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon-street, London, 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.

Personal.

THE BRITISH REVIEW publishes a story by Mr. T. H. S. Escott, who was once considered veracious enough to edit a monthly review wherein the truth was to some extent respected. As to the story itself, I will vouch for its newness; but as to its truth, Mr. Escott shall look to that himself. I was living myself at that time, and I knew Bradlaugh personally, and I am prepared to swear any number of times that the thickest-headed and most bigoted London magistrates may consider sufficient that the story is true. I speak here in the original sense of the word "true"—its historicity, not like so many of the crimes and crimes which are made up in churches and courts of law. That is the sense of true in which I use it. Now, it is said in this story that King George, who was a boy then of sixteen or seventeen, heard the great Bradlaugh at a famous place of irre-sponsible public debate called Cogers' Hall, off Fleet-street, London. This is said to show the great interest the youth of royal blood took in the welfare of his future subjects. A merciful, instructive, and great Charles Bradlaugh as the principal orator of the occasion, and it appears that Bradlaugh and King George were thoroughly prepared for their parts; one to speak, for which Nature had fitted him; one

to listen with as good a grace. Both cared for the poor, but in what sense we are too busy to relate. All Bradlaugh got out of the poor ceased with him; King George is still, what the Americans call, "drawing." * * *

This young prince was there to hear Bradlaugh. Any other prince might be there on a similar occasion to hear your humble servant, but what I am going to say is that if the King, then Prince George, went to hear Bradlaugh at the Cogers' Hall, there must be something wrong with the story which calls the orator "a certain Charles Bradlaugh," as if Bradlaugh was just beginning to be known, and people hardly knew whether he was six feet two, or five feet six. This is said to have occurred in the "early 'eighties." Bradlaugh was a well-known personage at that time. He had fought for and won the seat for Northampton again and again then. The constitutional struggle between Bradlaugh and the House of Commons had begun. These are facts of history, and whether they are so or not is important. * * *

What on earth is there important in the fact that King George, as a boy, heard Bradlaugh speak? Did Bradlaugh ever take the trouble to hear Prince George or any of his elders speak? I never heard him express admiration for any species of royal oratory, except, perhaps, in a flattering, friendly way in the case of Prince Jerome. * * *

Certainly the chronology of this story is absurd. I can vouch for the fact that Bradlaugh in earlier days did speak at Cogers' Hall. All sorts of politicians spoke there to gain practice, and fire off as many political or other epigrams as they could in ten minutes, all warranted original when not borrowed from the English classics, or the literature—perfectly familiar to the speaker—of Greece and Rome. One may call it the apprentice-house of political reputations. * * *

I do not say there is no truth at all in Mr. Escott's story. That is a matter of much indifference. If the story as told is not quite true, there is not enough value or vim in it to hand it down to what is called "the future." After all, the story is not one about Bradlaugh, who was not conscious of Prince George's presence. It is a story about Prince George himself, who played the innocent part of a listener and a spectator. * * *

As to Bradlaugh's speaking now and then at the Cogers' Hall in the "early 'eighties," as well as in the "early 'seventies," I should be inclined to think there might be some occasional truth in this. Great men have often returned to the scenes of their early conflicts with politicians—budding politicians—just for the sake of auld-lang-syne, and a few cheerful reminiscences, which they might exchange with other auld-lang-syners in the House of Commons. * * *

With regard to the statement that Bradlaugh's speech about Queen Victoria being physically and mentally incapacitated from performing her duties was delivered at Cogers' Hall, I can assure everybody that he did nothing of the kind. He delivered it at the Hall of Science. I was there myself and heard him, and it is not fair to Bradlaugh to represent him as merely declaring that the Queen was weak and demented. He accepted something of the slyness of Disraeli's flattery as not at all reflecting on the Queen. It was enough for Bradlaugh, as a known Republican, to accept as probably a matter of fact that neither Queen Victoria nor any other royal personage was capable of performing all the political duties that devolve upon a modern sovereign. It is far too much even for the men now. Look at the Kaiser! * * *

An odd little story happened outside my house on Sunday evening. My wife ran into the front room,

where I was writing. Looking through the window, I saw a lady had been speaking to her there. She was leaning forward in expectation. "A lady wants change for sixpence," my wife exclaimed, and having just the amount, I handed it over. When she returned my wife said to me, "She's going to church, and wants to change sixpence into coppers." She did not know she had called at the house of an Atheist to help make up a church collection.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

We print this week the judgments of the Master of the Rolls and Lord Justice Pickford in the Bowman Appeal case. That of Lord Justice Warrington will appear in our next issue. We are glad to learn from our shop manager that our suggestions as to the suitability of these issues for propaganda is being acted on. One reader has ordered three dozen copies of each issue, and other smaller orders are to hand. It would be well if those who require extra copies would make their wants known in advance; otherwise it may not be possible for us to meet them.

A Durham correspondent writes us that he is pleased to say that all judges, in their treatment of Freethinkers, are not like Judge Rentoul, and all counsel not like Mr. Muir. In his own case when asking to affirm, as a juror at the Durham Assizes, on the Clerk of Arraigns saying, "He wishes to affirm, your lordship," the judge replied, "Certainly he may affirm if he wishes to. Why not?" We are not surprised at this. As we have said in answer to another correspondent, most judges are prepared to administer the Oaths Act with fairness. This does not, of course, relieve Mr. Muir and Judge Rentoul from blame for acting as they did, nor does it relieve Freethinkers from the duty of vigilance in such matters. But it deserves to be noted, if only to the credit of the English judicature.

Last week we announced for sale a limited number of copies of the Debate between Mr. G. W. Foote and Rev. Dr. McCann, on *Christianity and Secularism*, cloth bound, at the reduced price of ninepence, and of the Debate between Mr. Foote and Rev. W. T. Lee, on *Theism or Atheism?* at the reduced price of sixpence. Our shop manager now complains that we omitted to give the price of postage. We hasten to correct this omission by observing that the postage for the first named is twopence, and the last named three-halfpence. Intending purchasers will please note.

Mr. James Stephen has just published a new volume of poems, entitled *Songs from the Clay*, which "E. L." reviews in the *Christian Commonwealth* for August 11. In "E. L.'s" estimation, the chief fault of these songs is that they are non-Christian, or that they deal with the lighter, gayer side of life, or that they run on the old Pagan lines. Of their kind, they are admitted to be exceedingly fine, but their level is far too low. "E. L." we are glad to learn, is utterly out of touch with the Church, which, he says, lies to us on many points; but he wants something ineffably superior to anything Mr. Stephen has, as yet, given us. In other words, "E. L." wishes Mr. Stephen to become the poet and prophet of the New Theology, which, for all we know, may be as objectionable to the young genius as the Old Theology. As a matter of fact, *Songs from the Clay* is not a glorification of Paganism, old or new, but of Nature untouched by the hand of the supernaturalist. The book closes, as it opens, on a thoroughly natural note:—

"The bee sped home, the beetle's wing of horn
Went booming by, the darkness every side
Gathered around,
On air and sky and ground.
The pliant tree sang gently, far and wide,
In cadenced lift of leaves, a tale of morn;
And then the moon's white circle, faint and thin,
Looked steady on the earth—there is no sin."

The third Demonstration arranged by the N. S. S. Executive was held in Brockwell Park on Sunday evening last, the clerk of the weather having kindly suspended the heavy thunderstorm which had successfully prevented most other meetings during the day. Our generous friend, Mr. Wilson, again supplied the brake used as a platform, and Messrs. Hooper, Rosetti, Davidson, and Miss Kough addressed an appreciative audience, considering the threatening weather. The interest was further increased by a pathetic, though humorous, account of his conversion to Freethought at the early age of ten from a Secularist who was present.

The Bowman Appeal Case.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE. COURT OF APPEAL.
Before the Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Pickford, and
Lord Justice Warrington.

JUDGMENT.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS: Mr. Charles Bowman by his will left his residuary estate upon trust for the Secular Society, Limited. Mr. Justice Joyce has declared that this gift of the residuary estate is valid. From this decision the heir-at-law and next of kin appeal.

There are two points which may at once be got rid of. This is not claimed to be a charity. The Plaintiffs assert their right to the residuary estate as their own property. In the next place no question of perpetuity arises, because the Plaintiff is a Limited Company, and, in the view of the law, a person competent to dispose of what is given. But it is argued on behalf of the Appellants that the Plaintiff Society is illegal inasmuch as its objects are antagonistic to all religion and therefore no Court ought to aid it in recovering the legacy. A Limited Company is bound by its Memorandum of Association. It cannot go outside its limits. I decline to look at anything but the Memorandum and in particular I have no right to consider whether the Chairman or any of the Directors of the Company may have been guilty of what the law would undoubtedly regard as the publication of blasphemous libels. When I turn to the Memorandum I see that it is one of those Companies permitted by law, the objects of which are not pecuniary gain. The dividend or income can be received by any member of the Company. It is a Company Limited by guarantee. When I look at the objects for which the Company is formed I find that the principal object is:—

(a) To promote in such ways as may from time to time be determined the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge and not upon supernatural belief and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.

And the other objects, so far as it is necessary to refer to them, are as follows:—

- (b) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.
- (c) To promote the secularisation of the State so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature the Executive and the Judiciary.
- (d) To promote the abolition of all support patronage or honor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.
- (e) To promote universal Secular Education without religious teaching in public schools maintained in any way by Municipal rates or imperial taxation.
- (f) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propoganda and endowment.
- (g) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.
- (h) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances or religious ideas.
- (i) To employ lecturers writers organisers or other services for the same end.
- (k) To publish books pamphlets or periodicals.
- (l) To assist by votes of money or otherwise other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.
- (m) To have hold receive and retain any sums of money paid given devised or bequeathed by any person and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

I am not satisfied that any one of these objects is unlawful. Many of these objects are supported by a large section of the community, and I think it would be a retrograde step if we were to hold that there is necessarily any illegality in the Company. I say "necessarily" because in my view it is not sufficient to say that the Society acting by its Directors may use the funds which they receive under this will for a blasphemous purpose, in which case the parties concerned may justly be exposed to an indictment. It is sufficient that they can so apply the money as to be free from any taint of illegality. If, however, any one of the objects in the Memorandum were necessarily unlawful, for example for an immoral purpose, I do not think that the addition of other innocent objects would entitle the Company to obtain the money, but in my view the facts do not bring the case within that principle. It has, however, been strenuously argued that blasphemy at common law is unlawful, even though it may not be a criminal offence, and there is no doubt a body of ancient authority, and some modern authority, in support of this view. In my opinion the better view, and

the one which ought to be followed, is that which was expressed by Lord Coleridge in *The Queen v. Ramsey* and others, 15, Cox's Cases, chap. 231, and not that which was expressed by Mr. Justice Stephen. In substance the view of Lord Coleridge was that publications intended in good faith to propagate opinions on religious subjects which the persons who publish them regard as true are not blasphemy if it is done in a decent way and with regard to the feelings of others. Mr. Justice Phillimore in a subsequent case has distinctly adopted this view and I think it ought to be adopted in this Court. This is one of those subjects in which there have undoubtedly been great changes of opinion within the last hundred years, and I think within the last half century. It is really a question of public policy, which varies from time to time. It is to my mind, almost shocking to hold in the twentieth century that the publications of Positivists, and other schools of philosophers, who do not admit, and probably even deny, the existence of a God, are necessarily blasphemous. I think the older view must now be regarded as obsolete and any decision to that effect ought no longer to be followed. I do not propose to go through the later authorities which are numerous. I think the law is accurately stated by Mr. Justice Erskine in advising the House of Lords in *Shore v. Wilson*, 9 Clark and Fennelly, pp. 524 and 525, where he says, after referring to various toleration Acts:—

"It is indeed still blasphemy punishable at Common Law scoffingly or irreverently to ridicule or impugn the doctrines of the Christian Faith and no one would be allowed to give or to claim any pecuniary encouragement for such purpose, yet any man may without subjecting himself to any penal consequences soberly and reverently examine and question the truth of those doctrines which have been assumed as essential to it. And I am not aware of any impediment to the application of any charitable fund for the encouragement of such inquiries."

I think it is impossible to contend that the main object of the Plaintiffs Society, as described in clause (a), cannot be given effect to without incurring liability to indictment for blasphemy at Common Law. It is, however, contended that this relaxation of the old principles is limited to criminal blasphemy, and that it is sufficient for the present to say that the object though not illegal, either by Statute or Common Law, is yet unlawful in the sense that the Court will not aid the Plaintiffs to get the legacy. It seems to me that the undoubted relaxation of the views as to Common Law Blasphemy must extend to matters outside the criminal law.

Thus far I have dealt with the case without referring to some comparatively modern authorities which undoubtedly present difficulties. *Briggs v. Hartley*, decided by Vice-Chancellor Shadwell in 1850, was simply this:—

"A legacy for the best essay on Natural Theology treated as a science and sufficient when so treated and taught to constitute a true perfect and philosophical system of universal religion."

The Vice-Chancellor said:—

"I cannot conceive that the bequest in the Testator's will is at all consistent with Christianity and therefore it must fail."

In my view that is a decision which ought not to be followed.

Cowan v. Milbourn, 2 Law Reports, Exchequer, p. 230, is a case which I feel great difficulty in following. The Defendant had agreed to let rooms to the Plaintiff, who was secretary to the Liverpool Secular Society. The Defendant discovered that the rooms were to be used for the purpose of having lectures delivered there in advance of the views of the Society. The titles of the proposed lectures were published. The most material ones were "The Character and Teachings of Christ: the former defective, the latter misleading." "The Bible shewn to be no more sacred than any other Book." "Catholicism, Protestantism and Secularism; which contains more truth and which is best calculated to benefit humanity." The Defendants refused to carry out their contract and it was held that the Plaintiff could not recover on the ground that the lectures announced were blasphemous and illegal. Chief Baron Bramwell based his judgment on the ground that Christianity is a parcel of the Common Law of the land and that the titles of the proposed lectures was a violation of the first principles of law and could not be done without blasphemy. Mr. Baron Bramwell said that an act may be illegal in the sense that the law will not aid it, and yet that the law will not immediately punish it. It will be observed that there was nothing to indicate that the proposed lectures would not be delivered in decent and inoffensive language. So far as I am aware this case, which was decided in 1867, has never been followed, and, notwithstanding my profound respect for the learned Judges who decided it, I am bound to say that I think it ought not to be followed. If *Cowan v. Milbourn* is

still good law, the Plaintiffs cannot claim the legacy, but as I do not consider it is good law, I think Mr. Justice Joyce was right in the view which he took and that the appeal must be dismissed.

LORD JUSTICE PICKFORD: The testator in this case left his estate, after providing for certain annuities and legacies, in trust for the Secular Society, Limited, and the question is whether that bequest is valid. Two objections were taken to its validity: (1) That it is a bequest for purposes which are illegal, or if not illegal in the sense that they are criminal, at any rate contrary to public policy; and (2) That it tends to a perpetuity.

The Secular Society, Limited, is a Company registered under the Companies Acts, limited by guarantee. Its objects are stated in the Memorandum of Association. That Memorandum has already been read, and I do not think it necessary to read it again. The Articles contain the following provisions as to the application of funds, and dissolution or winding-up in Articles 54 to 57. The first question whether this is a bequest for purposes illegal or contrary to public policy depends, in my opinion, upon the question whether the objects of the Society as expressed in the Memorandum are illegal or contrary to public policy. It was contended on behalf of the heir-at-law and next of kin that the Court ought to look behind the purposes stated in the Memorandum, and that in that case it would be found that the Society was formed for the purpose of enabling an unregistered body called the Secular Society, and its members to hold money bequeathed for their purposes, which it would be difficult for them to hold if bequeathed directly to them. It was also contended that if the actions and the writings of the members of that Society were examined it would be found that their purposes included that of subverting the Christian religion and of doing so by means which are illegal within any interpretation that has been put upon the law of blasphemy. I do not think we are at liberty to go behind the purposes stated in the Memorandum. This is a bequest to the Limited Company, and not to its members, and if the objects of the Company are legal I do not think a bequest to it is invalid because its members apply the money to an illegal purpose, though they may by doing so subject themselves to punishments. It is therefore necessary only to consider the objects of the Company, and in substance only (a). I do not see anything illegal or contrary to public policy in the other objects, except so far as some of them may be ancillary to (a). If (a) be not illegal or contrary to public policy, then there is no legal objection to any of the objects. It is contended that a part of the object (a) is the denial and subversion of the Christian religion, and that to pursue that object is illegal in the strict sense of being a punishable offence. I do not think the pursuit of that object by a Limited Company is within the words of the Statute 9 William III., chap. 35, which applies only to a certain class of persons, and therefore, if illegal, it must be so at Common Law.

The law of blasphemy has changed very much in the course of time, and much religious controversy is now considered perfectly unobjectionable which would have been punishable by the law in former years. I adopt the law as laid down by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge in *Reg. v. Bradlaugh*, and *Reg. v. Ramsey and Foote*, in 15 Cox's Criminal Cases, pp. 217 and 231, and followed by Mr. Justice Phillimore in *Rex v. Boulter*, 72 Justice of the Peace, p. 488; and adopting that interpretation of the law, I consider there is nothing in the objects stated at (a) that is punishable by the law.

A much more difficult question is whether this object, though not illegal in the sense of being punishable, is illegal in the sense that the law will not recognise it as being the foundation of legal right and will do nothing to aid it. The denial of religion is not in terms the object of the Company as set out in (a), but I think that it is involved in it, and that it is not possible to promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge and that human welfare is the proper end of all thought and action, without at any rate inferentially denying the Divine government of the world and the principles of religion. I think there is no doubt that in former times such an object would have been held to be contrary to public policy, but the question is whether it is right to hold so now. I think that the doctrine of public policy cannot be considered as being always the same and that many things would be, and have been, held contrary to public policy which are not so held now. I agree with what was said by Lord Justice Coleridge in *Reg. v. Ramsey and Foote* at p. 235. It is true that he was speaking only of criminal law in that passage, but I think his words are equally applicable to civil rights. It must not be assumed that the objects of the Company will be promoted by what has been called licentious and contemptuous abuse applied by discussion of a perfectly orderly and decent character, and that being so the object does not necessarily involve anything more than such discussion. I

think that at the present day such discussion though it does involve a denial of religion ought not to be held contrary to public policy, and that the doctrine should be confined to denials of religion of the nature described by Lord Coleridge.

I do not propose to discuss the authorities cited to us at any length as they are fully dealt with by the other members of the Court, but it is perhaps necessary to mention two of them, *i.e.*, *Briggs v. Hartley*, 19 Law Journal, Chancery, p. 416, and *Cowan v. Milbourn*, Law Reports, 2 Exchequer, p. 230. In the former Vice-Chancellor Shadwell held a bequest for the best essay on Natural Theology treated as a science and sufficient when so treated and taught to constitute a true, perfect and philosophical system of universal religion invalid because inconsistent with Christianity; and in the latter the Court of Exchequer, Chief Baron Kelly, Baron Martin and Baron Bramwell, held a contract for the letting of rooms for lectures contrary to the Christian religion not binding. The nature of the lectures is only to be gathered from the titles, and the title most referred to is, "The Character and Teachings of Christ; the former defective, the latter misleading." Whatever may have been the doctrine as to public policy prevailing in 1850, when the former case was decided, I do not think that it ought now to be followed. If the latter decision means that no consideration will support a contract which involves any questioning of the truth of religion, I also think that should not be followed, but the Court may have inferred from the title to which I referred that the lectures attacked religion in a reviling and contumelious manner, and if that was the case, the decision was, I think right.

For these reasons I do not think that the objects of the Company were illegal in either of the senses in which that word was used.

On the question of perpetuities I do not think it necessary to add anything to what has been said by the Master of the Rolls.

(To be concluded.)

The Latest Champion of the Faith.

AN article appears in the August number of the *Nineteenth Century and After*, under the title of "Teutons and the New Testament," by Mr. H. B. Simpson, C.B., which may be taken as a fair sample of the way in which Christian apologists in this country are seeking to exploit anti-German feeling in the interests of religious orthodoxy. Unscrupulous attempts of this sort to tar modern Freethought with the common brush of Teutonism might, on their merits, be passed over with silent contempt. As, however, such libels are only too likely, in the existing state of public feeling, to gain a measure of success, thanks to prejudice rather than to reason, it behoves lovers of freedom and truth to be ready to denounce them as soon as they appear.

Mr. Simpson sets out to establish a parallel between the German falsification of facts in connection with the present War and what he considers to have been the German falsification of facts in connection with New Testament criticism. He, of course, ignores all advanced criticism of the New Testament other than German. To judge by Mr. Simpson's account, no such writers as Renan, Cheyne, or J. M. Robertson ever existed. It is necessary to his thesis to pretend that only wicked Huns ever dreamt of denying the trustworthiness of the Christian canon. In spite of this, Mr. Simpson is himself very ready to appeal to German critics when it suits his object. Much of his argument is based on the fact of Harnack having in recent years receded from his old position as regards the date of the Third Gospel and the Acts. In spite of the fact that Harnack has, as a matter of fact, taken as chauvinistic a line in connection with the present War as any German professor, it appears that *his* conclusions on the authenticity of the New Testament books, when they happen to coincide with Mr. Simpson's, are worthy of all acceptance.

Mr. Simpson is hardly well equipped, from the point of view of historical knowledge, for the task he undertakes. For instance, in arguing for the identity of the Third Evangelist with "Luke the physician," he says, "Throughout the Gospel and

Acts the writer's peculiar use of words shows a close acquaintance with the works of Hippocrates, Galen, and Dioscorides." Now, it is possible, though I do not profess to judge the question, that the Third Evangelist had in fact read Galen; but if so, it is a most unfortunate circumstance for Mr. Simpson's contention as to his date; for Galen lived and wrote in the reign of the Antonines (A. D. 138 to 180)!

Mr. Simpson further commits himself to the surprising view that "a belief in the miraculous has among educated people of the Western world been rather a consequence of Christianity than one of the causes of its acceptance as a religion," and that "we find no trace" of "religious charlatanism and pious absurdity" in the Greek and Latin writers of the Gospel period, or prior to it. The inference he would have us draw from this is that the abundance of miracles in the New Testament cannot be accounted for by the beliefs of the period, and must be regarded accordingly as having really occurred. Now, no one with the average scholar's knowledge of Herodotus, Livy, Tacitus, Pliny, Plutarch, and Apuleius can possibly credit the statement that belief in the miraculous was foreign to the minds of ordinary educated Greeks and Romans. The miracles attributed to Vespasian are a striking parallel to those attributed to Christ. The prodigies said to have attended the death of Julius Cæsar are as extravagant as those recorded to have followed the crucifixion. The fabulous story of the phoenix, which periodically rose to life from its own ashes, was not only received as scientific fact by educated Greeks and Romans, but is appealed to by Clement of Rome as proving that the resurrection from the dead was, according to current ideas, no very improbable thing! The fact is that, except for a small number of persons who were influenced by Epicurean or, to a less degree, by Stoic philosophy, superstition was rampant among all classes in the Roman Empire, and the rapid rise and acceptance of miraculous legends such as those of Christianity is easy to account for.

Mr. Simpson builds much of his argument on the discoveries of Sir William Ramsay, the archaeologist, whose work he regards as having entirely vindicated the historicity and authenticity of "Luke" and the Acts. Now, not having had the opportunity of reading Sir William Ramsay's works, I am willing to take for granted all that Sir William Ramsay may claim to have established in the field of archaeology. *E.g.*, I am willing to accept, in default of leisure to study them, Sir William Ramsay's contentions as to the limits of the Roman province of Galatia, or the two periods of office of Quirinius in Syria, just as I accept without question the conclusions of his celebrated namesake in matters of chemistry. But when all is said and done, I fail to see how any amount of archaeological discovery, short of direct reference in an inscription, can either prove or disprove the early or late date of a Gospel, or the authenticity of the accounts which the writer gives, say, of the resurrection, or the conversion of St. Paul. All that archaeology can do is to convict or acquit the writer of palpable inaccuracy as to public events of the period. Let us see how far, according to Mr. Simpson, this has been accomplished in the case of the Third Gospel and the Acts.

Let us take first the question of Quirinius. Quirinius was Roman governor of Syria in the year A. D. 6, when a census was taken of the population of the province. This has generally been assumed to have been the census which "Luke" had in mind when writing his second chapter. It follows, then, that "Luke" has blundered in making this census taken in A. D. 6, contemporaneous with the birth of Jesus, commonly supposed to have occurred before the death of Herod, which took place in 4 B. C. Recently, however, evidence is stated to have come to light that Quirinius was previously governor of Syria between 10 and 6 B. C. Very well, exclaim the apologists, there you have your answer: there may have been another census under Quirinius' first governorship; or else the census was begun under the first, and finished under the second; or what not!

It does not seem to occur to them that what we want to have established is, not that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria; or that a census might have been taken in both his terms of office; or that a census might have been taken in the tributary kingdom of Herod, as well as in the Roman province of Syria; but that there was such a census taken in the reign of Herod, by the authority of the Roman governor of the adjacent province of Syria. I am not aware that Sir William Ramsay, or any other apologist, has brought forward any evidence of this, or given any reason for supposing that the words of the Gospel refer to such a hypothetical census, rather than to that which we know to have been taken by Quirinius in his second term of office (A.D. 6). Apologists, if they like, in the interests of the faith, imagine a census, of which no record exists, to have been taken by Quirinius, not in his own province, but in a neighboring tributary kingdom; and they imagine "Luke's" reference, if they like, to this fictitious census, and not to the one of which we have historical record. But let them not pretend that such apologetics are worthy of the name of history.

Mr. Simpson pursues exactly the same method in connection with the next classic difficulty, that of "Theudas" in Acts v. 36. The only historical Theudas of whom we know rebelled in A.D. 44. The speech put into the mouth of Gamaliel, in which Theudas is mentioned, is supposed to have been uttered about A.D. 30. Common sense concludes that there is an historical slip on the part of the narrator. The apologists can say to this, apparently, is that there may have been another Theudas. There may, and there may not. We have only Josephus and the Acts to go by, and until we have some further evidence that two Jews of this name, within a generation at most, both rebelled against the Romans, we shall continue to believe that the same man is referred to in both passages, and that the writer of the Acts has dated his insurrection.

So much for the actual bearing of the results of philology on the New Testament. I will now proceed to refer to some arguments, of which Mr. Simpson takes no account, but which have an important relation to the question whether the writer of the Third Gospel and the Acts was a companion of Paul.

To decide this question, it is not necessary to look for errors in the narrative on the subject of public events and conditions of the time. It is sufficient to compare and contrast the accounts of Paul's activities which we find respectively in the Acts and in his own epistles. We shall see, when we come to consider this, that the evidence of the epistles renders the accounts of the Acts so untrustworthy that either the latter must be assigned to a later date, or the narrator must be convicted of a deliberate policy of suppressing truth and suggesting falsehood. Paul's own account of his earlier apostolic activities is given in the first and second chapters of the epistle to the Galatians. After referring to his persecution of the early Church and to his subsequent conversion, he says (chapter i. 6):—

"Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now touching the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc; and they glorified God in me."

Let us now turn to the account in the Acts. There, after his conversion and baptism, we are told that Paul preached for some time at Damascus (no mention is made of the visit to Arabia), and that on going to Jerusalem—

"he essayed to join himself to the disciples; and they

were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way.....And he was with them going in and out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they went about to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus" (Acts ix. 26-30).

There is another account in the Acts of this visit to Jerusalem, which the writer puts into the mouth of Paul himself (chapter xxii. 17-21):—

"And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him [Jesus] saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles."

Here we have three accounts of this visit. According to Paul himself (whose account we are justified in treating as the true one) this private visit was paid at the termination of a long stay at Damascus, in order to make the acquaintance of Peter, and after a fortnight, during which he saw Peter and James alone of the apostles, he left Jerusalem without becoming known to the other Christians. According to Acts ix., Paul on this occasion was introduced to "the apostles," and preached publicly in Jerusalem during his stay. The plain meaning of "the apostles" here is all, or at any rate a majority, of the twelve apostles; for it would have been a misuse of language to speak of Paul as introduced to "the apostles" if, as he tells us himself, he only saw two of them. The account in the Acts is therefore, strictly speaking, inconsistent with the account in Galatians. Moreover, even the two versions in the Acts hardly square with one another. In chapter ix., Paul is hurried away from Jerusalem by "the brethren," who have heard of a plot against his life; according to chapter xxii., he leaves in obedience to a vision.

ROBERT ARCH.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

THE OATHS QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR.—I, like Mr. Foote, am "cut to the quick" by his remarks concerning myself in the "Personal" in the last issue.

Mr. Foote has based his remarks upon hearsay. If he will refer to the *Jewish Chronicle*, July 30, page 14, column 1, he will find that the editor was later called before the judge for Contempt of Court in relation to this matter. He will also find that the judge is reported to have said that my want of religious belief was not the reason of Mr. Muir's challenge. My hearing is not good, and I was not aware of the reason I was discharged until reading it in the papers next day.

Two days afterwards I was on another jury, before another judge, and the same counsel, Mr. Muir, prepared to do, and was allowed to do, my duty.

I am sorry Mr. Foote should feel it necessary to make any insulting remarks as to my cowardice and my inferior position in the party, since he is President and I am Vice-President of the N. S. S., and he is Director and I am also Director of the Secular Society, Limited. He appears to have either a very exalted opinion of his own position, or a very low one of his colleagues. Also I have to say that my services to the cause have always been given gratuitously.

HY. COWELL.

WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE.

God is always, and the son is always; the same time the father, the same time the son. The son co-exists with God unbegottenly, being ever begotten, being unbegottenly begotten. For which piece of practical information, the Lord in his mercy be praised—*Oracles of Reason*. 1842.

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