

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



THE LATE HORACE SEAVER.

MR. SEAVER, whose death, at the advanced age of 79, we chronicled last week, occupied an unique position among American journalists. For over fifty years he edited the *Boston Investigator*, which was for long the only Freethought journal in America. From 1836, when Abner Kneeland, the founder of the paper, was imprisoned for blasphemy, Mr. Seaver has kept at the helm. Distinguished by plain, practical common sense, he made the paper essentially a family newspaper, with something for everybody, yet the whole leavened with pronounced Freethought. His writing was always clear, direct, and pointed. In opposing superstition he never beat about the bush. He always aimed at the elevation and progress of humanity. A volume of selections from his editorials has quite recently been published, with the title *Occasional Thoughts*. They give a very good idea of his manly, honest, downright common sense.

In his young days Mr. Seaver, in addition to his editorial labors, performed much service as a public speaker, frequently addressing Freethought audiences in Boston and the vicinity. Although no orator, he was a pleasant and impressive speaker. At the funeral of his wife, now very many years ago, he introduced the then innovation of a Secular funeral, himself addressing a circle of mourning friends.

Mr. Seaver was a materialist. Among his favorite authors were D'Holbach, Frances Wright, Draper, Buckle, Mill, and Harriet Martineau, and frequent extracts from these authors appeared in the pages of his journal.

In all his writings he regarded the character of the Freethought movement. The whole of the volumes of the *Boston Investigator* may be searched in vain for anything derogatory to the character of the cause.

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We never met Mr. Seaver personally, but reading the *Investigator* week by week, we came to know and regard the man. This we can safely say, his heart was in his work. His great aim was to maintain the good old *Investigator* worthy of the cause for which it has fought for over half a century. We trust that our American friends will see to it that his wishes are fulfilled.

Mr. Seaver died as he had lived, a confirmed Freethinker. Shortly before his death he said to his lifelong friend and business partner, Mr. J. P. Mendum, "I wished to live yet a few years to assist you." He was pleased to receive remembrances from his old friend Mrs. Rose, and his mind seemed clear and bright even after he could no longer converse.

[Col. Ingersoll's Funeral Oration will be found on p. 386.]

## CHRISTIANITY AND WOMAN.\*

THE position of woman is one of the best tests of civilisation. It is not decisive, but it goes a long way in enabling us to judge not only of men but of nations and of religions by their attitude in regard to the so-called inferior sex. Modern Christians have sought to claim the elevation of woman as a triumph of the gospel. The claim has been indignantly challenged by one of the foremost advocates of women's rights in America, Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton. We are convinced it will not bear serious investigation. So frequently, however, has it been repeated that woman owes a debt of gratitude to Christianity that the usually careful Mr. Lecky makes an oft-quoted concession of this character, we presume as a set-off to his many damaging statements as to the ill-effects of Christianity upon law, citizenship, and the rights of human reason. The authority of Sir H. S. Maine—no higher one can be quoted on a matter of ancient law—that Christianity tended from the first to narrow the liberty accorded to woman by the Roman law is sufficient of itself to discount the less qualified opinion of Mr. Lecky.

But now comes Principal Donaldson denying emphatically that the position of women among the early Christians was raised above their status under Paganism, and showing that in several particulars it was far less favorable. At the outset he warns his Christian readers that they will probably be disappointed at the result of his investigation.

"It is a prevalent opinion that woman owes her present high position to Christianity, and the influences of the Teutonic mind. I used to believe this opinion, but in the first three centuries I have not been able to see that Christianity had any favorable effect on the position of woman, but, on the contrary, that it tended to lower their character and contract the range of their activity."

Certainly in the gospels women occupy a prominent position. One "who was a sinner" was the only person who anointed the anointed one, and then it is a moot question between different Evangelists as to

\* The Position of Women among the early Christians, by Principal Donaldson. *Contemporary Review*, Sept., 1889.

whether she anointed him on the head or the feet. Dr. Donaldson says "the women of his day and country seem to have had great liberty of movement and action." Well, if they seem to have had it, it is certain he cannot have given it to them.

When we come to the writings of Paul we find that woman's position is laid down in a stern and restrictive manner. Man was not created for woman but woman for man (1 Cor. xi, 1-9). Wives submit yourself to your husbands as to the Lord (Eph. vii). Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection (1 Tim. ii, 11), etc. Writing on Paul and Marriage (*Freethinker*, Feb. 1, 1885), we hinted that Paul's views perhaps arose because, as alleged by the Ebionites, he had been jilted by a Jewish lady. Curiously enough, Dr. Donaldson says:

"The Ebionites explained the Apostle's conversion by stating that he was, as he himself allowed, a native of Tarsus, that he was not a Jew, but a Greek, with a Greek father and a Greek mother, that he went up to Jerusalem and stayed there for some time, there he fell in love with the high priest's daughter, became in consequence a proselyte and asked her in marriage, but on being refused he was enraged, and wrote against Circumcision, the Sabbath and the Law. Some have thought that there is bitterness against women in the writings of St. Paul which can be explained only by some such rejection as that related by the Ebionites."

Be this as it may, it is certain Paul's words had a great influence on the formation of opinion in regard to woman in the early Church. It is here well to mention that there certainly is no more competent authority on all that pertains to early Christian literature than Dr. Donaldson, who is editor of the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*. Dr. Donaldson notices that the early Christian fathers in speaking of women did not use that euphemism desired at the present day, and that one whole book of Clement of Alexandria had to be clothed in a Latin dress, while in "the Banquet of the Ten Virgins," by Methodius, "the virgins show a remarkably intimate acquaintance with the physiology and aberrations of women." But sufficient evidence on this point is adduced by the scholar who, under the pseudonym of Celsus, has written on *Bible Bestiality and the Filth of the Fathers*.

In previous articles Dr. Donaldson has shown that at the time when Christianity dawned in the world women had attained freedom and influence in the Roman Empire. Yet in Christianity they were only seen in two capacities: as martyrs and as deaconesses. Into the question of martyrs we shall not go, beyond recording our conviction that the alleged martyrdom of early Christians have been most grossly exaggerated. But let us look at the deaconesses. "In the advance of ascetic ideas," says Dr. Donaldson, in regard to the early Christian churches, "the women sat or stood apart from the men and entered by a separate door. And at this door stood the deaconess to direct the worshippers to their places, and to see that all behaved quietly and reverently. This was the great work of women in the Church, and in the end became their only work." They were prohibited from teaching. A layman might upon occasion baptise, but a woman never. Tertullian on this point appeals to Paul. "For how credible would it seem that he who has not permitted a woman even to learn with over-boldness, should give a female the power of teaching and baptising. 'Let her be silent,' he says, and at home consult their own husbands." Dr. Donaldson observes:

"The entire exclusion of women from every sacred function stands in striking contrast with both heathen and heretical practice. In Rome the wife of the Pontifex Maximus took the lead in the worship of Bona Dea, and in the religious rites which especially concerned women. The most honored priest attached to a particular god in Rome, the Flamen Dialis, must be married, and must resign his office when his wife died, for his wife was also a priestess, and his

family were consecrated to the service of the god. And the vestal virgins received every mark of respect that could be bestowed on them, and the amplest liberty. The highest officials made way for them as they passed along the streets, they banqueted with the College of Pontifices, they viewed the games in the company of the Empress, and statues were erected in their honor. The same respect was accorded to women by many of the heretical Christians. Nearly every founder of a sect has a woman to aid him. Simon Magus has his Helene, Montanus his Maximilla, Apelles his Philumene, and so in the case of other sects."

The Priscilliani, who were persecuted and burnt to death by the orthodox, used to give thanks to Eve, because she first ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; but these vile heretics were stamped out as speedily as possible.

"Such then," says Dr. Donaldson, "was the position which woman occupied in the Church in the course of the first three centuries of Christianity. The highest position to which she rose was to be a door-keeper and a message woman, and even these functions were taken away from her during the Middle Ages." The truth is Christianity was never intended for the amelioration of humanity in this world. It never protested against slavery. Dr. Donaldson says:—

"A Christian slave woman was the property of her master, her children were a source of gain to him, and he took entire control over this matter as over the breeding of cattle. Yet we do not hear of any discussion in regard to this arrangement, nor of any attempt to rescue the slave woman from the treatment to which she must have been subjected."

Let the Christian who boasts of what Christianity has done for women ponder these lines. Of course the italics are mine. Dr. Donaldson glances at the question of the sexual morals of the early Christians, a subject we will for the present eschew, intending to devote several articles thereto presently. Suffice it to say Dr. Donaldson shows that the early Christian conception was that "Man was a human being made for the highest and noblest purposes; woman was a female made to serve only one. She was on the earth to inflame the heart of man with every evil passion." Tertullian thus addresses women: "You are the devil's gate-way, the unsealer of that forbidden tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law," etc. Clement of Alexandria says, it brings shame on a woman, "even to reflect of what nature she is." Gregory Thaumaturgus asserts "a person may find one man chaste among a thousand, but a woman never." We cite only passages given by Dr. Donaldson, but he knows there are plenty more, sufficient to sicken any healthy-minded man or woman.

The antagonism to marriage as only a concession to human weakness which dominated the fathers and which is clearly seen in Paul (1 Cor. vii), had a pernicious influence on family life. Dr. Donaldson says "It is strange how seldom children are mentioned in the Christian writings of the second and third centuries. Almost nothing is said of their training. No efforts are mentioned as being made for their instruction." Their very existence was, in fact, a sign of their parents being given over to the world, the flesh, and the devil. The sacred name of mother was sunk far beneath that of virgin and spouse of Christ.

A noble and brave lady of my acquaintance, one who has fought many a battle for freedom before I was born, Ernestine Rose, well says "the Church has been built on the necks of women." They are, indeed, the great supporters of the doctrines which degrade them. Let them but read the Bible for themselves. Let them study the historic effects of the religion to which they have been attached and the cause of freethought will be won. For—the priests know it well—the future lies in the hands of the women.

J. M. WHEELER.

## REASON OR ROME?

THE *Nineteenth Century* contains a paper by W. S. Lilly, entitled "In search of a Religion." Of course Mr. Lilly is not in search of a religion. Educated by the Jesuits, he is safely moored in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. We should say, it is the best place for him. There he can calumniate with impunity the French Republicans, and his defamation of Mr. Morley and other opponents meets not only absolution but commendation.

The weapons Mr. Lilly uses are time-honored in the service of his church and for the glory of his God. No more zealous partisan of Popery exists, at any rate among men of literary ability. Mr. Mallock and Mr. Mivart are not in it when Mr. Lilly takes up his pen. None the less, he seems to have missed his way for once, for in his anxiety to show the untenability of the Protestant position and its Bible fetish, he takes hold of the two-edged sword of rationalism, apparently unaware that it does as much execution on Roman Catholicism as on Protestantism. The *Catholic Weekly Register* which usually praises all that Mr. Lilly writes, finds his argument "commonplace and futile." Futile it certainly is as far as telling in favor of Catholicism, but commonplace at any rate in expression it cannot be said to be. Our readers shall judge.

The paper is in the form of a dialogue, the interlocutors being Temperley, "a Christian by heart and sceptic by the head," Grimston, a complete sceptic, and Luxmore, a Catholic. The dialogue is not well managed, for Temperley is made to make such statements as that, "I confess the Pope appears to me the only power left which values supremely the moral law, which witnesses for it unflinchingly: the one power which cares nothing for the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them?" Ye gods and little fishes! this the testimony of a non-Catholic to the wealthy priest at the Vatican, who spends his time in scheming to recover temporal power! The statement might have been put into the mouth of a Catholic, but to make it the forced confession of "a sceptic by the head" is a trifle too thin.

But the interest of the article to the Freethinker is the use made of sceptical arguments. The person "in search of a Religion" is supposed to be a Hindu gentleman, who has lost faith in his ancestral Brahmanism, but does not see his way to choose among conflicting Christian creeds. There is some smart satire on the Protestant missionaries with their creature comforts about them. Grimston says, "I suppose that the conversion of a really educated native of India is almost as rare as the conversion of a Jew." Temperley says, he saw an advertisement, "Help! help! help! 923,350,000 of heathen waiting to be converted. Pray assist the Little Peddlington Missionary College to send out one more evangelist."

The Hindu has difficulties about the miracles of Christianity and its sacred books. This gives an opportunity of bringing in the greater evidence for the miracles of the Catholic saints than for those of the Old and New Testaments. Again the sceptic by the head is made to say "the prodigies related in the *Acta Sanctorum* are, from the point of view of historical criticism, much better established than the like occurrences in the Bible." Even the Catholic Luxmore observes that the higher criticism is fatal to the claims usually made for the Scriptures. "But to suppose Christianity to be based on the collection of ancient documents called the Bible is historically false. It is certain that no authorised New Testament Canon existed until the latter half of the second century." And the Catholic speaker goes on to confess his dismay at the disingenuousness of Bible defenders. "The Procrustian torture to which they subject the sacred text in order to make it fit with

facts recently ascertained by physical, historical, and critical science, is fatal to its real significance."

Many thanks, Mr. Lilly. We have long felt indebted towards Catholics of your school for making the issue clear. To tell sensible men that they must either be Freethinkers or Romanists is to make them Freethinkers. The arguments you use against Protestants recoil with ten-fold force against Catholicism. As to the cowards or fools who, because there is no refuge from unbelief except in Romanism, therefore become Romanists, we wish you joy of them. Pray retain them, Mr. Lilly, and above all, pray remain yourself exactly where you are.

LUCIANUS.

## A PARSON AT THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

"THE Parson of Puddleton," whom we introduced to our readers last week, continues his "Sabbath Day's Journey" in the *Church Times*. After going to the Strike meeting at Hyde Park in the afternoon, he spent the evening at the Hall of Science, where he heard Mr. Foote reply to Mrs. Besant. "As soon as I entered the Hall of Science," he says, "I felt that I was in the presence of no ordinary audience, and very soon became aware that the speaker was no mere tub-thumper." A brief account of the lecture is given, and this is followed by a fuller notice of Mr. Foote and his audience.

"Well, Sir, what of the lecturer? I can report what I saw of him, and if I did fail to grasp his meaning on some mysterious points it was no fault of his. I saw that Mr. Foote knows how to manage an audience as well as any man I ever heard. He is deliberate, clear, careful in building up his sentences and arguments, and has a good voice which he knows how to use with effect. His powers of denunciation far outweigh his persuasiveness, and hence he lacks in edification: but, on the other hand, he can make an audience roar with laughter without the suspicion of a smile on his own face, and this with a sufficient supply of dogmatism, creates a sense of power which commands attention. I could not forbear whispering to Cynic that there was much in common between Spurgeon and Foote as speakers. Cynic fairly shuddered at the thought, and whispered back "mere trickery." but on whose part I gathered not, for just then Cynic's voice was drowned in the burst of applause which greeted Mr. Foote's brilliant demonstration that "life" was not an entity but a condition, bearing the same relation to matter that the polish on a steel knife does to the knife.

"I am told that Mr. Foote is a more thorough-paced atheist than even Mr. Bradlaugh, but if their pamphlets (which were on sale in the Hall) are any guide, I imagine that there is little to choose between them, the difference, if any, is probably in method not opinion.

"As to the audience, it was thoroughly attentive, most of the men were of the artisan class, and one could well believe very active in instilling their Sabbath dose of Atheism into the ears of their fellow workmen during the ensuing week. They must have found it very difficult to follow Mr. Foote on the Sunday I was there, and the applause at the end of some passages in the lecture was as much by way of relief to mental tension as in approval of what had been said. I much wish that any leader on the Christian side who is tempted to underrate either the speakers or their hearers at the Hall of Science, would do as I did, and study the position *in situ*."

This genial parson winds up by remarking that "*Men want certitude*, both in physical and in spiritual affairs." He sees that "the future of English life will be with the artisans, and that no one body of Christian teachers has for the present, much to do with forming the character of the coming race."

A report has been presented to the Anthropological Society of Paris of some interesting observations on that portion of the brain known as Broca's convolution, which modern research shows must be recognised as the seat of memory and speech. This convolution is absent in all animals below the higher apes, and appears among them only in a simple and rudimentary form, being fully developed in man alone. In idiots, deaf mutes and all persons of inferior intelligence it is always more or less atrophied.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Will you kindly allow me a little space to call attention to the case of soldiers and sailors who are Freethinkers and members of the N.S.S.? They suffer a cruel injustice in being compelled to attend religious services every Sunday, and also on Christmas day and Good Friday. They have often to sit in church and hear their own party, very often their party leaders, abused in the most Christian manner. A fortnight ago several members of the N.S.S., myself one of the number, were under the painful necessity of having to sit in church and listen to a sermon in which the clergyman spoke of the abolition of religious teaching in Board schools as having been brought about by "mean, base, cowardly men." He also used words to the following effect:—"Some years ago, in France, a most deeply religious country, a party of about eight Atheists succeeded in taking away from the people their dearly beloved Bible." The same adjectives adorned the "party of eight" with the addition of "contemptible." I could scarcely restrain myself from hissing out aloud, "St. Bartholomew's Night." Can nothing be done to relieve us from having to listen to such cruel insults? Why should we be compelled to attend or take part in a service which we honestly and frankly detest? Religion dare not be forced on people belonging to any other sphere of life. Why should it be forced down the throats of soldiers and sailors? What shall we do to be saved from it? Is it not a disgrace to a civilised nation? Will those who have fought so long and so successfully for the emancipation of our National Schools from religious tyranny, take up the case of the Army and Navy.

A MEMBER OF THE N.S.S.

## ACID DROPS.

A series of torrential rainstorms and floods has visited the Southern provinces of Russia. Several villages are swamped and isolated, the roads having become impassable. Intelligence from Mexico announces that serious floods have also occurred throughout that country, causing the loss of many lives as well as heavy damage to property. Great destitution prevails, and the inhabitants are appealing for aid. Railroad and telegraphic communication is interrupted in several places.

Heavy storms have also passed over Switzerland, causing much damage to the crops and vines. In Lucerne several farms were struck by lightning.

Praise God from whom all cyclones blow;  
Praise him when rivers overflow;  
Praise him who whirls the churches down  
And sinks the boats their crews to drown.

The details of the earthquakes in Japan show that at the lowest estimate fully six hundred people were killed and three thousand houses demolished or half destroyed. Crowds of people have since been spending their nights in the open air, almost without clothing or food, and great distress prevails. Fresh shocks are expected, and the population are in a great state of terror.

"CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY.—The Treasurer regrets to say he has not funds in hand to meet the August expenses of the open-air Lectures. Your immediate help will be greatly appreciated. 13 Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C. September, 1889."

This is an exact copy of a little slip, printed in red ink, which has fallen into our hands. We earnestly hope it will elicit a hearty response. Freethought cannot afford to see the Christian Evidence Society failing for want of cash. It is a powerful adjunct of the National Secular Society, and is very successful in converting Christians to Secularism.

We very much doubt, however, if the C.E.S. will do itself much good by parading its latest "converted Freethinker" in its September programme. Mr. James Marchant is a very poor catch. He never was an Atheist, to begin with, and he was in the habit of railing at "the Bradlaughites." Nor was he, in any proper sense of the words, a "lecturer

for the National Secular Society." Individual Branches engage all sorts of gentlemen from time to time, but the "lecturers for the National Secular Society" may be found in a recognised list, and Mr. James Marchant was never among them.

The rancor of a renegade is proverbial, and the C. E. S. is not likely to check it, for it lives on defamation. It prints Mr. Marchant's statement that Secularists, or "the majority of them, instead of devoting their leisure time to self-improvement, lounge idly in the public-house with illiterate and undesirable companions." We are also told of "the loose living that prevails" among Secularists. Now, it is wonderful that Mr. Marchant did not discover this *before* his "conversion." Up to the early part of August, when the Hyde Park Branch would not allow him to lecture *against Atheism*, he never whispered a suggestion of this discovery. The obvious explanation is that he is prompted by the sweet charity of 13 Buckingham Street.

Messrs. Engstrom and Waterman make much of their little catch. "A poor thing, but mine own," as Touchstone says. If "conversions" are arguments, where would Christianity be? We can refer them to thousands of converted Christians. Their names are to be found on the members' list of the National Secular Society.

We have merely to observe, in conclusion, that, much as we dislike personalities, we are delighted to see that the C. E. S. "convert" is graduating in the school of abuse. The more vindictive, libellous, and foul-mouthed are the C. E. S. lecturers, the more good they do Freethought by disgusting all the decent people who listen to them.

"An Hour in Hell," says a pious magazine, "was the subject of a lecture announced to be given by the editor of the *Freethinker* on a certain Sunday evening; and not only would people flock to hear him, but pay for the pleasure (?) of listening, while he made sport of the awful portion of the lost in eternity." This writer is far gone. If we meet him below we will try to cheer him up a bit.

Last Sunday a scene took place at the Wesleyan Chapel, Sherwood, Nottingham. The preacher made an attack upon persons engaged in the liquor traffic—a brewer in the congregation named James Shipstone, rose in his pew and publicly protested that the preacher's conduct was un-Christian and unwarranted by the Bible. Does not the good book say "Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more?"

The Christians and Mussulmans of Crete mutually accuse each other of murder and outrage, and we fear like Voltaire with the two railing fishwives, we must exclaim, "We believe you both."

The Rev. J. Smith, of Broughton Place, U. P. Church, Edinburgh, has been pointing a moral of the Penicula catastrophe, where twenty seven miners lost their lives. He said, "It was by such awful disasters that God roused the most careless and indifferent." The Edinburgh *Evening News*, says "Surely with so many ministers in Edinburgh and elsewhere, these lessons might have been taught at less cost than the desolation of a mining village."

John Burns, the generalissimo of the dock strikers, is a Freethinker. At any rate he was once a member of the Battersea Branch of the National Secular Society, and we have not heard that he has changed his views on religion. The *Star* says he is "a kind of rough amateur Moses to the East-end Israel—he is prophet, lawgiver, moralist, and inspirer of the great army of marchers and toilers in our modern wilderness." John Burns has not imitated Moses, however, in slaying the Egyptian. He counsels order and legality, and is less "rough" than the old gentleman who led the Jews out into the wilderness—to die.

John Burns made a big mistake in negotiating with Cardinal Manning and the Bishop of London. These clerical "friends of the people" proposed an impossible compromise, and afterwards as good as called the strike leaders liars for saying they had not agreed to it. We suspect it was Mr. Stead's influence which led John Burns

astray. The editor of the *Pall Mall* is a passionate admirer of Cardinal Manning and an out-and-out religionist.

According to the *Star*, Mr. Keir Hardie, the Scotch Socialist, was once a Freethinker, and is now a Christian. Can any of our Northern readers give us a little accurate information on this point? We very much doubt Mr. Hardie's having been a Freethinker up to the point of belonging to a Freethought Society.

The Rev. J. G. Gregory, of Emmanuel Church, Brighton, has been taken to task by the bishop for presiding at a lecture on Ritualism and Rome by Dr. Fulton, who made the remark that "the Virgin Mary was not much of a virgin." The bishop points out that this is rank blasphemy, in direct contradiction to Scripture. "God," says the bishop, "sent forth his son born of a woman, but that woman, according to prophecy, was a virgin." The bishop ought to know that his prophecy, Is. vii., 14, is a mistranslation. The "virgin" ought to be a young woman. As Mary had a considerable family (see Mark vi., 3), Dr. Fulton's statement seems to have better Scripture authority than that of the bishop.

Most of the French bishops have issued pastorals about the elections, in which they make it evident that the whole power of the Church will be cast against the Republican government. The Bishop of Valence, for instance, says, "The choice the electors are about to make will decide whether France is to live or die. If she is to live, she must ascribe at the head of her programme the recognition of the rights of God, without whose authority no other authority can subsist." The French Republic seems to manage along pretty well, so we suppose it is with the authority of God.

The United States has done better without the incorporation of God into its constitution than any of the old monarchies professing to rule by divine grace; but the American sky-pilots are not satisfied, and mean to howl Sunday after Sunday until they get God into the Constitution.

The Papal Nuncio at Madrid has been interceding with the Spanish Minister of Justice on behalf of priests condemned to penal servitude for political offences. The Minister was forced to tell the Nuncio that the Government was determined to check and punish all priests or monks who interfered with politics and preached civil war.

Those attracted to Theosophy should read the article on "The Origin of Modern Occultism" by F. Legge in the current number of the *National Review*. Mr. Legge knows a good bit about the Theosophists, but he is not fully aware how much Madame Blavatsky is indebted, not only to King's Gnostics and their Remains, but also to Britten's "Art Magic" and the Magical Works of "Eliphas Levi." Mr. Legge draws attention to the coincidences between the Blavatskyite teaching and the Gnostic doctrines, and endorses Mr. King's remark in his preface that "there seems reason for suspecting that the Sibyl of Esoteric Buddhism drew the first notions of her new religion from the Analysis of the *Inner Man* as set forth in my first edition."

Mr. Legge concludes: "Taking all the facts together, they seem to form a very strong proof that the system of the Theosophical Society has *not* been handed down from prehistoric times by secret and mysterious means, but has, on the contrary, been copied *en bloc* from the relics of Gnosticism. These pretensions to the contrary argue, perhaps, no very keen sense of morality on the part of the founders; but there is no need to imitate Madame Blavatsky's method of controversy by imputing to them a corrupt motive. The assumption of superhuman knowledge has, in all ages, exercised an almost irresistible fascination over minds of a certain cast; and the extremity of self-deception to which it will carry its victims has been frequently shown."

Believers in coincidences may note that one of the last century believers in Count Cagliostro, pupil of the sage Cagliostro, otherwise the convict Joseph Balsamo, was a certain D'Adhémar, and that is the name of the editor of the

*Revue Theosophique*. Perhaps it is to be accounted for by credulity running in the family.

Theosophists follow St. Paul in regarding celibacy as the highest condition of man. They should be aware of some of its fruits as illustrated in Mr. Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy* or read the trials in Switzerland of the Roman Catholic vicar of Eimmen, who has been proved to have abused dozens of children of from eight to sixteen years, and whose enormities are too brutal to be more than hinted at.

There is a disgusting exhibition at St. James's Hall of semi-savages who devour vermin, stick knives in their stomachs, and stand on swords. All this is supposed to be done in a state of religious frenzy, and the performance really illustrates what early religion was like. But perhaps the Blavatskyites will claim the Aissouas as Theosophists.

The Aissouas remind us of a showman we once heard announcing that "the last of his race" would eat a pound of raw liver. We could only hope that the performer was indeed the last.

A parson, the Rev. W. K. Mott, vicar of Wall, near Lichfield, died suddenly at Derby races. What a chance for the little God-almighties who know all about the divine judgments upon sinners and the mysterious ways of Providence.

The Rev. G. Carroll, rector of St. Martin's, Worcester, and minor canon of the cathedral, who mysteriously disappeared, together with a young lady, last Whitsuntide, has had his name struck off the Capitular Roll, and his minor canonry declared vacant.

It seems from the reports from various reading libraries in the provinces that theology is almost neglected. At Liverpool, where it is most in demand, we presume owing to controversies with the Catholics, it only reaches 3 per cent. together with philosophy. But Rochdale will have none of it, nor will Derby, Sheffield, Norwich, or Great Yarmouth. Fiction averages from 70 to 80 per cent. We fancy the proportion of theological works might easily be raised if only the libraries would include anti-theological books. They would be found to have a better demand than sermons or orthodox polemics.

The *Times* seeks to controvert Mr. Chamberlain's contention that the Dissenters first adopted the principle of toleration and to claim it for the Church, mainly on the ground that Jeremy Taylor wrote the *Liberty of Prophesying*. But long before that the heretical and persecuted sects, the Anabaptists and Anti-trinitarians, had argued for toleration, while the Church supported the Star Chamber and Court of High Commission. Vane, Milton, and Roger Williams each wrote in favor of toleration before Taylor. Taylor's treatise, it must be borne in mind, was written in 1647, while the Presbyterians were in power. The Presbyterians were then certainly among the most bigoted advocates of intolerance. The Westminster Confession of Faith still reveals their principles, and it was in opposition to them that, in 1646, an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Toleration Justified* appeared, in which, for the first time, toleration was claimed even for those "so far misinformed as to deny a deity or the Scriptures." A reference to the statute book shows that even yet Christians have not arrived at this standard of toleration.

The Rev. Peter Mackenzie says that Jonah went in for the ministry, graduated in a whale's belly, then took part in a Forward Movement, and then went on a Missionary Deputation to Nineveh.

The Ritualistic *Church Times* says, "We wear alb and chasuble, stole and maniple now, because they approximately reproduce the dress of our Lord at the first institution." Just fancy Jesus Christ toggled up like a High Church priest. We wonder they do not array themselves in the costume in which "our Lord" must have appeared to Mary Magdalen after the resurrection.

Sydney Gedge, M.P., the pious solicitor to the London School Board who takes something like £3,000 a year from

the pockets of the ratepayers has been preaching at Eastbourne in aid of the Church Missionary Society. If they could only induce Mr. Gedge to go out to Central Africa we should ourselves be happy to subscribe.

The next time Mr. Sydney Gedge occupies a pulpit he should preach from the text "Woe unto you lawyers."

Frederic Mills, a tobacconist, has been fined half-a-crown at Blackburn for selling the "divine herb" on Sunday. When will this silly old law be repealed? At present it is simply a nuisance. Thousands of tobacconists open shop on Sunday, and here and there one is pounced upon by some fussy bigot.

Colonel Olcott is in England, and it is announced that he will lecture at South Place Institute, with Mrs. Besant in the chair. According to what looks like an inspired paragraph in the *Star*, it is quite possible that Theosophy in India may be a cloak for the spirit of political revolt.

The Bishop of Worcester "entirely disapproves" of the Rev. J. O. West's speaking in a Baptist chapel. How these Christians love one another!

The policy of the Church is always to suppress criticism. They make a desert, and then call it peace. The editor of the *Cincinnati Telegraph* ventured to criticise the administration of the diocese, whereupon the Archbishop swooped down on him with an imperious demand for a full retraction of "all impious assertions." Of course, the editor won't risk excommunication and damnation hereafter. Gagging the press may secure the screening of scandals, but enables the scandals to fester until they break out in open sores.

The Bishop of London is said to have expressed the view that the litigation in regard to the reredos at St. Paul's is likely to last at least five years. Quarrels between the sects mean ample pickings for the lawyers.

A circular was recently sent to the American novelists asking them which books of fiction they preferred. Many voted for Scott, Thackeray, etc., but Edgar Saltus answered The Old and New Testaments. This was very good, but not quite original. We fancy it was Diderot, who, when asked who was the greatest hero of fiction replied *Dieu!* God.

A plasterer named John James Pearce, of Brixham, Devonshire, has, it is stated, lately become entitled to £1,400,000, by the death of a clergyman of Sydney. He must have been a nice follower of the Galilean carpenter to accumulate that sum. The chance of this rich man getting through the eye of a needle is about equal to that of a camel entering the kingdom of heaven.

E. B. Lanner, writing in the *Fortnightly* on "Russian Characteristics and Civilisation," says Jews are compelled to pretend to Christianity by thousands. "They have to blacken their souls with falsehood, bowing down and worshipping strange gods in which they believe not. I am personally acquainted with several young men, once honest Jews, and now spurious Christians, whose sentiments towards their adopted Church resemble those which a healthy young man might be supposed to entertain towards the corpse strapped on his back for the remainder of his life."

The Cornishman who shot his brother, and then committed suicide, showed, by his exclamation, "Oh Lord, have mercy on me," that he was of the pious fraternity.

The honor of being the "oldest and smallest sect in the world" is claimed for the Samaritans of Nablouz, the ancient Shechem. They still worship according to the rites in use at the time of the Babylonian exile. Beyond this their history goes back to Abraham's settlement at Shechem. They state that their copy of the Pentateuch was written by Aaron's grandson, and that it is the oldest in existence; but Dr. John F. Hurst describes it in *Harper's Magazine*, from personal examination, as containing evidence of comparatively recent origin. After all their claims are only similar to those of other religionists,

More pious gambling! They are getting up a big raffle, politely called "A Drawing of Prizes," in aid of St. Mary Magdalen's Asylum in Dublin. The committee includes some Catholic priests and several Catholic members of Parliament. The chance of getting "£150 for 6d." is set forth on the tickets and prospectus in the most tempting manner.

Mary Magdalen as a saint is one of the wonders of the world. She is reputed to have been a professional beauty, who sold her person instead of her photographs, but she was taken in hand by J. C., who turned seven devils out of her—one at a time, we suppose. After that she went about crying over his feet. She finally died in the odor of sanctity and went to heaven. The Church has made a saint of her, no doubt on the principle that publicans and harlots have the first chance of glory.

The *Canadian Baptist* says, "We have known even a Baptist minister, and a man of education and scholarly tastes, who would not only call on his much-enduring spouse to perform menial services which he might a thousand times better have performed for himself, but would not hesitate to address her in terms of sharp reproof, even in the presence of friends or strangers." It never strikes the *Canadian Baptist* that this Baptist minister probably takes his notions of woman's true position from the Bible, and is careful not to love his wife more than Christ, in case he should be deemed unworthy of the latter.

Prophet Baxter has a rival in "S. S.," the author of a pamphlet on *The Time of the End*, published by Menzies, Edinburgh. Next year the Jews are to be restored to Palestine. Hallelujah for that! 1894 will see the fall of the empires of Russia, Germany, and Persia, and of the Church of Rome. In the same year also, says "S. S.," Christ will descend on Olivet. He has put it off for a long while, but he will positively appear at last. The world, thinks "S. S.," is as bad as it can be, and it behoves all to consider the use to which they will put their money till J. C. comes. Probably "S. S." would take care of it for poor sinners who find the deceitfulness of riches obstructing their salvation.

James Walsh, a Catholic priest, was found stark naked in the Avon, where he was taking a mud bath, probably with a view to suicide. He was fished out and is now clothed, if not in his right mind. He has been suffering from religious mania. The poor creature hails from Kilkenny. We trust he will return there, and get the better of his malady. Instead of troubling his head about religion, he would be well advised to take up some harmless occupation, if it were only collecting materials for a monograph on the Kilkenny cats.

Canon Roberts has been preaching at Richmond (Yorks) on racing. He was obliged to contrast the Greek games, where the competitors strove for wreaths of glory, with English races where the spendthrifts and blacklegs delight to assemble, and where hundreds of thousands of pounds are anti-socially shifted from one set of pockets to another. Canon Roberts forgo, however, to point the moral. What becomes of all the fine claims made on behalf of Christianity? After eighteen centuries of it, in the most Christian country in the world, a Christian minister is obliged to bid his hearers imitate the example of the Pagan Greeks, who had the misfortune (or good fortune) to live some hundreds of years before Jehovah sent his son to redeem a sinful world.

Rameau, the musician, dying at the age of 83, was by no means resigned. The priest came and chanted the offices, but he called out, "Why the Devil do you try to chant when you know your voice is cracked!"

A ready-made creed is the paradise of the dreams of the indolent and mentally lazy. A string of authoritative dogmatic propositions comprises the whole mental wealth which they desire. The volume of nature, the volume of history, the volume of life appall and terrify them. Such men are the material out of which good Catholics—of all sects—are made. They form the uninquiring and submissive flocks which rejoice the hearts of all priesthoods.—*Greg's Creed of Christendom*,

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, September 15, Hall of Science, Old Street, E.C.; at 7, "Body, Mind and Spirit."

Sept 22, London Hall of Science; 29, Newcastle.  
Oct. 6 South Shields; 13 and 20, London Hall of Science; 27, Milton Hall, London.  
Nov 3, Birmingham; 10, Camberwell; 17, Hall of Science, London; 24, Huddersfield.  
Dec. 1, Camberwell; 8, Nottingham; 15, Portsmouth; 29, Hall of Science, London.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

T. MUSTY, 56 Moore Street, Normanton Road, Derby, will distribute any Freethought literature sent him for that purpose.

W. ROSS.—Perhaps the morning lecture would have been better at night. The subject gives a fine scope for attacking the Christian foundations. We note the rest of your letter. Thanks.

S. SODDY.—Delighted to hear of your pluck and your success at Grays. See paragraph. We are too full of copy this week, and the verse would lose its point in a future number.

G. RAWSON.—Thanks. We will stop sending. A content's-sheet not exhibited is a dead loss.

HULL.—Mr. C. E. Næwiger, 5 Hull Place, Osborne Street, Hull, will in future supply all Freethought publications.

CASTREL.—As the early Gentile Christians broke away from Judaism the first day got substituted for the seventh. It was not, however, until the days of Constantine that Sunday was officially adopted as the Christian holy day. We do not remember having ever said that the town of Liberal has the power to prevent any parson coming within a five mile radius. If you address a letter to Mr. G. Walsler, Liberal, Barton Co., Missouri, he will give you all information.

S. G. GRANT.—Cuttings always welcome. Glad to hear your friends like the enlarged *Freethinker* and are specially delighted with "Letters to the Clergy." We intend to collect these Letters by-and-bye in a volume.

J. GATTS.—Pleased to hear from you. See "Sugar Plums."

ATHEIST POSTMAN.—Received with thanks.

ON THE WAR PATH.—We prefer to do without perilous alliances. The very passage you take for a compliment is intended to be the reverse. We know our own work and mean to do it in our own way. With regard to a future life, we understand your sentiments but we do not share them. You dwell upon its bright aspects; another dwells on its dark aspects; and both are imaginary. Do you construe Agnosticism as a selection of pleasant superstitions? Thanks for subscription (one shilling) to the Paris Congress Fund.

PHOTOGRAPHICUS.—Mr. Wheeler will correct the Rousseau misprint with a few others in the Appendix.

W. H. SPIVY.—The date is booked.

W. G. RENN.—Better leave Claremont Hall alone. It is sure to be a failure.

TRUTHSEKER.—The Davenportes were tied up by a sailor at Liverpool and could not release themselves. The audience got their money back. This was the most unkindest cut of all. The exposure of Home took place in the Court of Chancery. Monck was caught at Huddersfield with stuffed doves and other spiritual apparatus; he bolted to America and set up as faith-healer. Slade was sentenced by Mr. Flowers at Bow Street Police Court to three months' imprisonment.

E. PINDER.—(1) You are misinformed. Mr. Foote has not declined to lecture in Leicester. You might ask when he was invited. Still, it is true that he does not approve the system of free admission and collections. On ideal grounds, perhaps, it may be all right; but on practical grounds it is all wrong. How is a man improved by listening to a Freethought lecture if he meanly lets other people pay for it, and drops a penny in the box instead of paying threepence or sixpence—according to his means—at the door? The experiment was tried for years at Birmingham, and it failed. Audiences that pay are actually larger than audiences that come in free. When we get endowments the case may alter; for the present, Secular Societies cannot afford to pay the expenses of free meetings, and when the attempt is made it usually takes the form of "sweating" the lecturer. (2) See "Acid Drops."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Truthseeker—Ensign—Liberty—Western Figaro—Freethinker's Magazine—Der Arme Teufel—Liberator

—Isle of Wight Herald—Echo—Twentieth Century—Free thought—Indian Methodist Times—Polytechnic Magazine—Freidenker—Secular Thought—Edinburgh Evening News—Sussex Times—South London Mail.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. FOOTE had good audiences on Sunday at Liverpool. Mr. Wise, of the Christian Evidence Society, spoke after the morning lecture and tried to show the Bible was inspired. Another Christian critic, who drew upon Scripture for his vocabulary, was told to sit down by his co-religionists as well as by the Freethinkers. It was a good illustration of what Ingersoll calls "inspired filth." The event showed that the Christians were ashamed of their own book.

THE afternoon and evening lectures were also followed by discussion. "Mrs. Besant's Theosophy" drew a very earnest and attentive audience. There could be no doubt that Mr. Foote had the meeting with him. Theosophy will not make many converts among the Freethinkers of Liverpool.

WE are glad to learn that the Liverpool Branch is making progress. It is in a better position, financially and otherwise than it has been for a good while. There is every prospect of a prosperous winter. We hope all our readers in Liverpool—and they are many—will give the Branch their hearty support.

ONE of our hardest workers in London—Mr. S. Standing—visits Liverpool on September 29, and will deliver three lectures in Camden Hall. We shall be glad to hear of his receiving a cordial welcome.

*Secularism and Theosophy*, Mr. Foote's rejoinder to Mrs. Besant's pamphlet, is now on sale. Mr. Foote's two pamphlets form an all-round review of Mrs. Besant's position.

OUR next number will probably contain the first portion of our report of the International Freethought Congress at Paris. Mr. Wheeler spends a few days in Paris before the Congress opens, being desirous of consulting books in one or two of the Paris libraries in the interest of his *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Mr. Foote follows on Sunday night. The reception of the members of the Congress by the Paris Municipal Council takes place on Monday afternoon at the Hotel de Ville.

WE are pleased to notice that Frau Hedig Henrich-Wilhelmi, the talented German-American lecturers, will represent the German-American Freethinkers at the International Congress. We hope her presence will serve to attract more Germans. We can assure them that no international animosities exist among Freethinkers, and though the proceedings will be in French, we hope it will not be many years before an International Congress is held either in Germany or Switzerland.

A VOLUME of Frau Henrich-Wilhelmi's lectures has just been published by the Freidenker Publishing Company, 470 East Water St. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

THE North Middlesex Secularists had a famous gathering on Sunday. There was a children's party, and a party of about five hundred adults to watch their sports. The proceedings struck amazement into the Christian breast, but the Freethinkers enjoyed themselves immensely. A great many copies of the *Freethinker* were circulated. Among the hard workers we may mention Messrs Standing and Hillier.

THIS afternoon (Sep. 15), at 3.30, an open-air meeting will be held in Finsbury Park, which will be attended by Mr. Foote, Mr. G. Standing, and Mr. R. Forder. Freethinkers in the district are earnestly invited to attend. The object is to start a good working Branch of the N. S. S.

THE Positivists have been commemorating the day of Comte's death, Sept. 5, and also the proclamation of the Third Republic in Paris. Mr. Frederic Harrison has been acting as guide, philosopher, and friend to the party.

THE Belfast Branch sends us a copy of our article on the Rev. Dr. Kane reprinted as a tract. Seven hundred copies were distributed at his last meeting. It is whispered that Dr. Kane has been considering the propriety of a debate on Secularism. If he is willing to enter the arena, Mr. Foote is quite willing to go over and meet him.

MR S. SODDY lectured at Grays on Sunday afternoon, and went pluckily through a very trying task. An old lady, named Hall, brought a strong piece of opposition in the shape of an ancient police-rattle, which she wielded with great effect. She was supported by a score or so of Christians, who yelled and hooted like the menagerie of the Apocalypse broken loose. An attempt was even made, but unsuccessfully, to push Mr. Soddy off his stand. These pious proceedings were watched by several Salvation Army soldiers with great glee, and the fact is a remarkable comment on their sincerity as champions of the right of open-air meeting. Fortunately Mr. Soddy was able to hold his own. He finished his lecture and replied to two opponents, who regretted that he had not had fair play. Several copies of the *Freethinker* were circulated in the meeting at our expense, the strike having made it impossible for many would-be readers to purchase one.

G. STANDRING, Hon. Sec. London Secular Federation, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—E. B. Rose (per J. Taylor), 16s. 6d.; Finsbury Branch collection, 15s.

AN article on the Russian Peasantry in the *Westminster* says that the elite of the working classes "read Mill, Spencer, and Darwin, Kostomarov and Setchenov, Turghenev and Ostrovsky just as the privileged classes do, and for the most part turn Freethinkers."

ANOTHER interesting article in the *Westminster* is that on "The Religion of Rome during the Third Century," dealing with the new book of M. Jean Réville, which does much to explain the natural causes which resulted in the triumph of Christianity over Paganism in the fourth century. Mr. Réville shows that a process of eclecticism, blending the old gods together, went on which led inevitably to the triumph of a universal religion. "Almost all the gods were said to work supernatural cures. The priests of the Oriental religions, personally interested in extending their god's power, nearly all claimed this power for their god. In time Serapis, Isis, Attis, and Mithra came to be regarded as all-powerful and universal; this fact necessarily led to confusions and combinations among the gods themselves. Mithraism in special threatened to become a universal religion. The first Christian writers trace analogies between the practices of the worship of Mithra and the Christian sacraments. These might be accidental at first, but would probably be intentionally accentuated later, as each religion had a tendency to reproduce in its own ritual ceremonies that succeeded in another." M. Renan says "if Christianity had been stopped in its growth by some deadly malady, the world would have been Mithraic." But the worship was checked when Constantine found Christianity more suitable for his ambition, and in 377 orders were given that the temples of Mithra should be closed.

THE credulous and superstitious character of the masses of the peoples among whom Christianity spread is well illustrated in the account given from Lucian of the success of charlatans, who set up oracles and drew crowds after them, upon whose simplicity they traded. Such facts as these are the true evidences of Christianity, and serve to account for its success.

THE study of Diderot in this month's *Westminster Review* brings out the extraordinary versatility of the great Freethinker, and well says, "Everything that Diderot touched, he vitalised." There were few things he left untouched, and he in especial represented the spirit of scientific advance. It is this which makes him so interesting after the lapse of a century.

FREETHOUGHT is causing great excitement at Dum-Dum in India. Ingersoll's lectures, our pamphlets, and the *Freethinker* have found their way into an English regiment there, and the contagion of "infidelity" is spreading so rapidly that the chaplain is trying every means to check it. We see from the *Indian Methodist Times* that "three controversies with professed Atheists have been held in the Soldiers' Home." The writer of the article in question says that the Atheists collapsed, simply because they would not say "There is no God." For the rest, the article is not written in a bigoted or persecuting spirit, although it contains several inaccuracies. We advise the writer, who, we understand, is the chaplain, to make himself better acquainted with what he is opposing.

DR. VOELKEL'S *Neues Freireligiöses Sonntags-Blatt* gives an article on "Heretics in Antiquity," in which he gives a number of the anecdotes found in our columns for June 16.

THE *Freethinkers' Magazine* for September may be called a Bruno number. It opens with an article by the veteran G. J. Holyoake, entitled "The Murder of a Philosopher." Mr. T. B. Wakeman follows with an article on "Bruno in the Past, Present, and Future." There is also a portrait of Bruno and a picture of the monument. The portrait is very different and inferior to the one given in the *Life of Bruno* by Bartholmess.

A MONUMENT to Garibaldi has been erected with great éclat at Leghorn. The clericals were so disgusted that they left the town *en masse*. A monument to Gavazzi, the great anti-Papist orator, is also to be erected in the Protestant cemetery at Rome. It will have side medallions of Garibaldi and Ugo Bassi.

A SELECTION from Schopenhauer's *Parega and Paralipomena* will shortly be published by Messrs. Swan, Sonnenschien and Co., under the title of *Religion: A Dialogue, and other Essays*. The translation is made by T. B. Saunders.

WILLIAM H. HERNDON, for twenty years the friend and law partner of Abraham Lincoln, has at length put out his life of that hero in three vols. He distinctly affirms the fact of the absence of any specific Christian belief.

AN article on the Messianic Idea among Jews and Christians, copied by the *Jewish World* from Dr. Brull's *Monatsblätter*, has a few points worth noting. It notices that under the Herodian and Roman rulers quite a number of Messiahs arose who were treated by Romans as revolutionist and rebels.

OF the Christian Messiah, it says, the church conferred on him the character of Messiah, High Priest and King, although he was never anointed as such. "Then, in order to make him a scion of the House of David, a genealogy was brought forward, in which his royal descent was traced through his mother. That they could not well attempt to trace his pedigree through his paternal relations, is evident enough, as God himself was alleged to have been his father."

THERE seems a little mistake here. The genealogies given are evidently those of Joseph, and probably arose before Jesus was supposed to be a veritable deity. The doctrine of Christ's Divinity, says the writer, was conceived for the Gentile-Christians, to whom the idea of a visible and tangible deity was a necessity, and who could not reconcile themselves to the spiritual worship of an invisible God.

THE writer thus concludes: "The Church gave out Jesus as the Messiah, but the Messianic hopes were not fulfilled through him, neither were the politico-national aspirations of the Jews, nor the ideals of mankind in general. The example of the Jews was then followed, for the Church fathers also relegated the fulfilment of the Messianic hopes and prophecies, to an indefinite future, with this difference however, that in the Church, this ultimate realisation became inseparably connected with a second advent of Jesus."



## LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—VI.

## ON "THE CREDENTIALS OF THE GOSPEL."

To the Rev. Professor Joseph Agar Beet.

(CONTINUED.)

IN a certain sense, however, I agree with your statement that "to the mysterious tribunal within appeals all external teaching, moral or religious." The only thing I object to is the epithet of "mysterious." For the rest, your statement bears out my contention that morality is primary, and not secondary to religion. Our reason is the proper judge of Revelation on the intellectual side, and our moral sense its judge on the ethical side. But this makes a clean sweep of every system which is based on faith.

"The teaching of Jesus," you say, "is no exception." I agree with you. But do you see the logical result of this admission? If my moral sense is the judge of his teaching, in what sense can that teaching be called divine? If it be divine, my moral sense must be diviner still. And if I have a faculty which is able to sit in judgment on his teaching, I have a faculty which would, in the course of time, enable me to discover all that is best in it without his assistance.

"We wait with intense interest," you say, "to hear the verdict and sentence on the gospel of Christ pronounced by this unerring judge." The attitude would do you credit if it were not assumed. The fact is, you are *not* waiting. You and your co-religionists *never did* wait. You were brought up as Christians because you were born in a Christian country, just as you would have been brought up as Mohammedans if you had been born in Turkey. You did not make up your minds; they were made up for you. Education and authority have determined your creed. You were prejudiced in favor of Christianity. You took sides before you were able to judge. And you can only say that you are waiting for a verdict on Christianity in the sense in which an advocate is waiting for the decision of the judge and jury.

How little you are *waiting* is seen from your very next sentence. You declare that "The judgment is decisive." But you do not say *whose* judgement. You affirm that "The moral teaching of the New Testament commends itself at once and irresistibly to our moral sense as right and good." Whose is *our* moral sense? I presume you mean the moral sense of Christians. Why do you confuse "the teaching of Jesus" with "the moral teaching of the New Testament?" Does not the second half of the Bible contain the teaching of Peter, James, John, Paul, and several unknown writers, as well as the teaching of Jesus Christ? Finally, how does the moral teaching of the New Testament commend itself *at once and irresistibly* to our moral sense, when thousands of books and articles have been written by honest and able men and women to show that Christian morality is often imperfect and sometimes pernicious?

You are obviously addressing Christians, and Christians only, when you assert that "every moral excellence" is "but a feature" in the "portrait" of Jesus Christ. This is not a view which commends itself to Freethinkers, nor does it seem to commend itself to the Buddhists and Confucians among whom your missionaries labor. Unfortunately you do not enter into details. Your panegyric is general, and I can only raise a general objection. That the Jesus of the Gospels was a *hail* man is not often maintained, nor is it likely that his biographers would depict him as such, seeing he was the object of their adoration. But there are many degrees between badness and perfection, and Jesus does not reach the ideal height. Many elements of greatness were lacking in his character. The fact is, no man that ever lived was perfect. It is a false hero-worship which refuses to see most obvious failings. And the

arbitrary veneration of a single ideal must have the effect of narrowing our sympathies and aspirations.

You tell me "The Carpenter declares that *he alone knows God*." It is an assertion easily made, impossible of proof, and impossible of refutation. You also say that he makes other "unheard-of assumptions," yet calls himself "meek and lowly of heart," and "strange to say, we feel that these words are true." Now "strange to say" I do *not* feel that the words are true. I cannot see the meekness of his denouncing those he could not convince; or the meekness of his extravagant railing against his religious rivals in the capital; or the meekness of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem amid the seditious plaudits of a fickle and fanatical mob.

That "we see him possessing infinite power" and "infinite resources," is belied by his inability to work wonders in certain cities because of their unbelief (Matt. xiii, 58). Did he not also feel that virtue had gone out of him when he was touched by a diseased woman? Do you mean that "infinite power" could feel the loss of energy? And do you think it was a being of "infinite power" who cried out "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?"

Such a dream as the Gospel life of Jesus you say was "never dreamed before or since." Indeed! Are you unacquainted with the life of Buddha? Did he not renounce the splendors of a royal court for a beggar's robes? Did he not wander as a poor mendicant through the land he might have ruled as a king? Did he not practise every form of self-sacrifice? Do not the stories describe him as giving up everything for the love of others, even yielding himself to be eaten by a tigress, out of pity for the emaciated creature and her famished cubs? How beautiful is this in comparison with the callous exclamation of St. Paul—"Doth God care for oxen?" As "a dream," the life of Buddha is, in my judgment, more pathetic and inspiring than the life of Jesus.

I pass from your panegyric on Jesus to your doctrine of sin. You say that the vision of Jesus "brings to light our own deep pollution." Do you think that language of this kind is true or useful? It is the historic language of your creed, I allow, but the modern mind is turning from it with disgust. Dwelling upon our moral infirmities is no more wholesome than dwelling upon our physical ailments. The man who made a public display of his ulcers, or made them the theme of his conversation would be regarded as a nuisance; but the man who makes a public exhibition of his moral maladies, and talks about his "deep pollution," is regarded as a promising candidate for heaven. I protest against this morbid spiritualism. It does not strengthen, it enervates us; and too frequently it leaves more nastiness than it finds. Evolution shows us a better method of culture. Our vices are not diminished by studying them; they perish of inanition through the exercise of our virtues. Our welfare lies, not in exploring our defects, but in practising our powers.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

THE *Ironclad Age* for Aug. 24 reprints "A Defence of Atheism," a capital lecture delivered by Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose at Boston in 1861, but which is as well worth reading to-day as when it was delivered.

The Priests love patronage,  
 Fat livings and Peter's pence,  
 And charities that engage  
 Great folk bringing recompense  
 Of power; women they cheat,  
 And men keep silence for fear  
 To lose what they hold most sweet.

A. O. Shaughnessy.

## THE FUNERAL OF HORACE SEAVER.

"THE world is my country, and to do good is my religion." These simple words which form part of an inscription cut in stone over the arched entrance to Paine Memorial Hall, must have had a profound significance for those who last Sunday gathered in that building to do honor to dead Horace Seaver. In the forenoon people began to assemble in the street. By noon there were large numbers, and at two, the hour for the services to begin, several thousand people were gathered. It was with great difficulty that Colonel Ingersoll and the few with him could make their way into the building. The police had extreme trouble in holding back the crowd that pressed inward at every door. Many offered \$5 and \$10 for admittance. But the hall, large though it is, was fully occupied by the friends of the deceased who had received printed invitations. Presently the crowd outside took advantage of the temporary absence of one of the doorkeepers, and several hundred forced themselves in. They packed the aisles and every available point. Colonel Ingersoll, who was then speaking, was compelled to pause ten or fifteen minutes till quiet could be restored.

The exercises had been opened by the singing, by an excellent quartette of male voices, of a selection from the "Cosmian Hymn Book."

Colonel Ingersoll then pronounced the following noble eulogy:

Horace Seaver was a pioneer, a torch-bearer, a toiler in that great field we call the world—a worker for his fellow-men. At the end of his task he has fallen asleep, and we are met to tell the story of his long and useful life—to pay our tribute to his work and worth.

He was one who saw the dawn while others lived in night. He kept his face towards the "purpling east," and watched the coming of the blessed day.

He always sought for light. His object was to know—to find a reason for his faith—a fact on which to build.

In superstition's sands he sought the gems of truth; in superstition's night he looked for stars.

Born in New England—reared amidst the cruel superstitions of his age and time, he had the manhood and the courage to investigate, and he had the goodness and the courage to tell his honest thoughts.

He was always kind, and sought to win the confidence of men by sympathy and love. There was no taint or touch of malice in his blood. To him his fellows did not seem depraved—they were not wholly bad—there was within the heart of each the seeds of good. He knew that back of every thought and act were forces uncontrolled. He wisely said: "Circumstances furnish the seeds of good and evil, and man is but the soil in which they grow." He fought the creed, and loved the man. He pitied those who feared and shuddered at the thought of death—who dwelt in darkness and in dread. The religion of his day filled his heart with horror.

He was kind, compassionate, and tender, and could not fall upon his knees before a cruel and revengeful God—he could not bow to one who slew with famine, sword, and fire—to one pitiless as pestilence, relentless as the lightning stroke. Jehovah had no attribute that he could love.

He attacked the creed of New England—a creed that had within it the ferocity of Knox, the malice of Calvin, the cruelty of Jonathan Edwards—a religion that had a monster for a God—a religion whose dogmas would have shocked cannibals feasting upon babes.

Horace Seaver followed the light of his brain—the impulse of his heart.

He was attacked, but he answered the insulter with a smile; and even he who coined malignant lies was treated as a friend misled. He did not ask God to forgive his enemies, he forgave them himself.

He was sincere. Sincerity is the true and perfect mirror of the mind. It reflects the honest thought. It is the foundation of character, and without it there is no moral grandeur.

Sacred are the lips from which has issued only truth. Over all wealth, above all station, above the noble, the robed and the crowned, rises the sincere man.

Happy is the man who neither paints nor patches, veils nor veneers! Blessed is he who wears no mask.

The man who lies before us wrapped in perfect peace, practised no art to hide or half conceal his thought. He did not write or speak the double words that might be useful in retreat.

He gave a truthful transcript of his mind, and sought to make his meaning clear as light.

To use his own words, he had "the courage which impels a man to do his duty, to hold fast his integrity, to maintain a conscience void of offence, at every hazard and at every sacrifice in defiance of the world."

He lived to his ideal. He sought the approbation of himself. He did not build his character upon the opinions of others, and it was out of the very depths of his nature that he asked this profound question.

"What is there in other men that makes us desire their approbation, and fear their censure more than our own?"

Horace Seaver was a good and loyal citizen of the mental republic—a believer in intellectual hospitality, one who knew that bigotry is born of ignorance and fear—the provincialisms of the brain. He did not belong to the tribe, or to the nation, but to the human race. His sympathy was wide as want, and, like the sky, bent above the suffering world.

This man had that superb thing which we call moral courage—courage in its highest form. He knew that his thoughts were not the thoughts of others—that he was with the few, and that where one would take his side, thousands would be his eager foes. He knew that wealth would scorn and cultured ignorance deride, and that all believers in the creeds, buttressed by law and custom, would hurl the missiles of revenge and hate. He knew that lies like snakes, would fill the pathway of his life—and yet he told his honest thought—told it without hatred and without contempt—told it as it really was. And so, through all his days, his heart was sound and stainless to the core.

When he enlisted in the army whose banner is light, the honest investigator was looked upon as lost and curst, and even Christian criminals held him in contempt. The believing embezzler, the orthodox wife beater, even the murderer, lifted his bloody hands and thanked God that on his soul there was no stain of unbelief.

In nearly every state of our republic, the man who denied the absurdities and impossibilities lying at the foundation of what is called orthodox religion, was denied his civil rights. He was not canopied by the ægis of the law. He stood beyond the reach of sympathy. He was not allowed to testify against the invader of his home, the seeker for his life—his lips were closed. He was declared dishonorable, because he was honest. His unbelief made him a social leper, a pariah, an outcast. He was the victim of religious hate and scorn. Arrayed against him were all the prejudices and all the forces and hypocrisies of society. All mistakes and lies were his enemies. Even the theist was denounced as a disturber of the peace although he told his thoughts in kind and candid words. He was called a blasphemer, because he sought to rescue the reputation of his God from the slanders of orthodox priests.

Such was the bigotry of the time, that natural love was lost. The unbelieving son was hated by the pious sire, and even the mother's heart was by her creed turned into stone.

Horace Seaver pursued his way. He worked and wrought as best he could, in solitude and want. He knew the day would come. He lived to be rewarded for his toil, to see most of the laws repealed that had made outcasts of the noblest, the wisest, and the best. He lived to see the foremost preachers of the world attack the sacred creeds. He lived to see the sciences released from superstition's clutch. He lived to see the orthodox theologian take his place with the professor of the art of fortune-telling, and the astrologer. He lived to see the best and greatest of the world accept his thought—to see the theologians displaced by the great and true priests of Nature—by Humboldt and Darwin, by Huxley and Hæckel.

Within the narrow compass of his life the world was changed. The railway, the steamship, and the telegraph made all nations neighbors. Countless inventions have made the luxuries of the past the necessities of to-day. Life has been enriched, and man ennobled. The geologist has read the records of frost and flame, of wind and wave—the astronomer has told the story of the stars—the biologist has sought the germ of life, and in every department of knowledge, the torch of science sheds its sacred light.

The ancient creeds have grown absurd. The miracles are small and mean. The inspired book is filled with fables told to please a childish world, and the dogma of eternal pain now shocks the heart and brain.

He lived to see a monument unveiled to Bruno in the city of Rome—to Giordano Bruno—that great man who, two hundred and eighty-nine years ago, suffered death for having

proclaimed the truths that since have filled the world with joy. He lived to see the victim of the Church a victor—lived to see his memory honored by a nation freed from papal chains.

He worked knowing what the end must be—expecting little while he lived—but he knew that every fact in the wide universe was on his side. He knew that truth can wait, and so he worked, patient as eternity.

He had the brain of a philosopher and the heart of a child. Horace Seaver was a man of common sense.

By that I mean one who knows the law of average. He denied the Bible, not on account of what has been discovered in astronomy, or the length of time it took to form the delta of the Nile—but he compared the things he found with what he knew.

He knew that antiquity added nothing to probability—that lapse of time can never take the place of cause, and that the dust can never gather thick enough upon mistakes to make them equal with the truth.

He knew that the old, by no possibility, could have been more wonderful than the new, and that the present is a perpetual torch by which we know the past.

To him all miracles were mistakes, whose parents were cunning and credulity. He knew that miracles were not, because they are not.

He believed in the sublime, unbroken, and eternal march of causes and effects—denying the chaos of chance and the caprice of power.

He tested the past by the now, and judged of all the men and races of the world by those he knew.

He believed in the religion of free thought and good deed—of character, of sincerity, of honest endeavor, of cheerful help—and above all, in the religion of love and liberty—in a religion for every day—for the world in which we live—for the present: the religion of roof and raiment, of food, of intelligence, of intellectual hospitality—the religion that gives health and happiness, freedom and content—in the religion of work, and in the ceremonies of honest labor.

He lived for this world; if there be another, he will live for that.

He did what he could for the destruction of fear—the destruction of the imaginary monster, who rewards the few in heaven—the monster who tortures the many in perdition.

He was the friend of all the world, and sought to civilise the human race.

For more than fifty years he labored to free the bodies and the souls of men—and many thousands have read his words with joy. He sought the suffering and oppressed. He sat by those in pain, and his hand was laid in pity on the brow of death.

He asked only to be treated as he treated others. He asked for only what he earned, and he had the manhood to cheerfully accept the consequences of his actions. He expected no reward for the goodness of another.

But he has lived his life. We should shed no tears except the tears of gratitude. We should rejoice that he lived so long.

In Nature's course, his time had come. The four seasons were complete in him. The Spring could never come again. The measure of his years was full.

When the day is done—when the work of a life is finished—when the gold of evening meets the dusk of night, beneath the silent stars the tired laborer should fall asleep. To outlive usefulness is a double death.

“Let me not live after my flame lacks oil,  
To be the snuff of younger spirits”

When the old oak is visited in vain by Spring—when light and rain no longer thrill—it is not well to stand leafless, desolate, and alone—it is better far to fall where Nature softly covers all with woven moss and creeping vine.

How little, after all, we know of what is ill or well! How little of this wondrous stream of cataracts and pools—this stream of life, that rises in a world unknown, and flows to that mysterious sea whose shore the foot of one who comes hath never pressed! How little of this life we know—this struggling ray of light 'twixt gloom and gloom—this strip of land, by verdure clad, between the unknown wastes—this throbbing moment filled with love and pain—this dream that lies between the shadowy shores of sleep and death!

We stand upon this verge of crumbling time. We love, we hope, we disappear. Again we mingle with the dust, and the “knot intricate” forever falls apart.

But this we know: A noble life enriches all the world.

Horace Seaver lived for others. He accepted toil and hope deferred. Poverty was his portion. Like Socrates, he did not seek to adorn his body, but rather his soul with the jewels of charity, modesty, courage, and above all, with a love of liberty.

Farewell, O brave and modest man!

Your lips, between which truth burst into blossom, are forever closed. Your loving heart has ceased to beat. Your busy brain is still and from your hand has dropped the sacred torch.

Your noble, self-denying life has honored us, and we will honor you!

You were my friend, and I was yours. Above your silent clay I pay this tribute to your worth.

Farewell!

This august address was delivered by the Colonel in his usual unapproachable manner. During its last part he turned and faced the coffin, seeming to address Mr. Seaver personally as much as the audience. The hearers will never forget the impression made by seeing this intellectual giant, subdued with grief, moved and filled by his sorrows and his sympathies and the deep and awful sense of fate, pouring forth the contents of his sincere, truthful heart by the side of his loved old friend. They repeated answered sentiments that struck into their hearts with prolonged yet low applause.

The quartette next sang another fitting freethought hymn.

Then the remains were conveyed to the hearse. The pallbearers were James Parson, Wyzevan Marshall, Geo. N. Hill, Ernest Mendum, John O'Malley, and C. P. Somerby.

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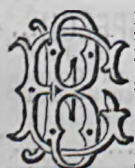
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