

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XIX.—No. 49.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1899.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

Zola's Faith.

MR. HERBERT BURROWS, who is exoterically a Socialist and esoterically a Theosophist, has just published, through Swan Sonnenschein and Co., a little brochure entitled *Zola*. We judge the contents to be the substance or the full text of a lecture. But that is of no special importance. The writing is clear and interesting, though with a tendency to run into slipshod. Our concern, however, is not so much with the writer's style as with what he has to say. Mr. Burrows criticises, or rather praises, Zola as novelist, poet, and dramatist; and praises him still more as a sort of Socialist. Now it is indisputable that Zola is a Socialist, if Socialism simply means a passion for social amelioration. But we do not think he is a Socialist in any other sense of the term. He is rather a Positivist in spirit and method, who does not accept any cut-and-dried solutions of the great social problem, which is really not one and simple, but various and manifold. Zola sees life to be a very much more complex affair than the average reformer, with his systems and panaceas, ever imagines it to be. He has no pill to cure all diseases. What he recommends, or seems to recommend, is unlimited patience and steady walking towards the light and warmth of science and humanity.

We must pause here to notice a curious misstatement in Mr. Burrows' opening paragraph:—

"Never in the history of modern literature has a literary man performed two such entirely distinct and opposite parts as Emile Zola. Looked upon for years by many of his own countrymen, and by the great majority of those outside France, as the apostle of the gutter, who fed on the social garbage which respectable people disdained even to mention, his books ostracised by the professedly moral, his very name a bugbear, he suddenly stands before astonished Europe as the champion of truth and justice, a man who was willing to risk, and did risk, pecuniary loss, the hatred of his own people, imprisonment and exile, because he was determined that, so far as in him lay, righteousness should be done."

Mr. Burrows has forgotten Voltaire, who surely occupies at least as large a place as Zola in "the history of modern literature." Voltaire was an "unspeakable" author to the common public of his day. "Respectable people" regarded him as damned beyond redemption. But he was by far the greatest literary force of that age. Well, this king of the world of letters became a man of action just as suddenly as Zola; and his splendid fight for the vindication of Calas had many similarities with Zola's fight for justice to Dreyfus.

We must now jump to the end of Mr. Burrows' pamphlet. The intermediate portion is an account—a very good account—of Zola's three books in which is traced the intellectual and moral development of Pierre Froment, the young priest who figures in *Loudes*, *Rome*, and *Paris*, finally becoming a thorough Freethinker, unfrocking himself, marrying, and settling down to the life of a true citizen. One of the characters in *Paris*, a distinguished chemist, delivers a strong little speech on what he conceives to be the only real method of human progress.

"How many times have I not told you that science alone is the world's revolutionary force, the only force which, far above all paltry political incidents, the vain agitations of despots, priests, sectarians, and ambitious people of all kinds, works for the benefit of those who will come after us, and prepares the triumph of truth,

justice, and peace. If you wish to overturn the world by striving to set a little more happiness in it, you have only to remain in your laboratory here, for human happiness can only spring from the furnace of the scientist."

We have no doubt whatever that this expresses, at least substantially, Zola's own view of human progress. Mr. Burrows appears to have no doubt either, for he says: "Now I am far from satisfied with that." He observes that a man may be scientific and immoral, or moral and unscientific. But that is no sort of answer to Zola, whose argument is general and not particular, dealing with the race and not with individuals. Zola does not mean that science will make a criminal virtuous, or an unsympathetic man tender, or that the lack of it will make a saint a villain. What he means is that science is truth and power, that it enlightens and exalts, that the ideas it promulgates are the great permeating and uplifting force of the world, and that it is always tending to strengthen men's community of interest, which is the necessary basis of the loftier ideal of brotherhood. When the world is our country—to use Paine's words—doing good will be our religion. But the world can never be our country until science has destroyed racial and national barriers by means of commerce and other forms of international communication.

According to Mr. Burrows, science is not enough. "Something else is wanting," he says, and that something is "true religion." But he does not tell us what "true religion" is; and we suspect it only means Mr. Burrows' religion. He does not even tell us what "religion" is. When he sings its praises, he artfully or unconsciously changes "religion" into "morals" or "pure morality." Well, if that is all he means, why not stick to ethics and drop religion altogether? At any rate, Mr. Burrows has no right to prance along without any attempt at definition, and to change his colors as often as it suits his purpose. Only in his very last sentence does he give us even a hint of his meaning. There he talks of "the harmonies which underlie earth's discords," and which are to be "gathered up" some day, and "set into one grand anthem of peace, of truth, of justice, and of goodwill." But what are these "harmonies"? The Theist calls them "God," and the Theosophist by some other name. All such terms, however, are but disguises of ignorance. You might as well say "Abracadabra," and have done with it. For our part, we fancy that the only "harmony" which underlies earth's "discords" is a physical one. Discord does not really begin until we enter the moral sphere. And the harmony is not something underlying; it is something to be striven for, and if possible attained. It seems to us that Mr. Burrows has simply fallen into the common fallacy of imagining the end in the beginning. Theists argue that evolution implies involution—which it doesn't, for it is not one organism that evolves, but countless organisms through vast, incalculable periods. And they declare that whatever life develops into was potentially there at the start. But this is metaphysical jargon—the reading of human ideas and fancies into the processes of nature. And we hope Mr. Burrows will pardon us for saying, because we think it, that his harmonies and anthems belong to the same school of ratiocination.

Mr. Burrows does not, in our judgment, supply any valid addition to Zola's faith—a faith which is the only regenerating power at present in distracted France. That faith sustained Zola in his daring battle for truth and justice, and will sustain any man who is worthy to share in the upward movement of humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

On Compromise.

ENGLAND appears to be the natural home of compromise. Geographical position, climatic conditions, national character, and existing institutions, all tend to keep down extreme views. In religious and social matters alike we are found compromising where other people work to a more logical conclusion. I am not speaking so much of the sphere of practice, where the rough logic of facts demands, and compels, a certain amount of compromise, as of the sphere of opinion, where compromise—particularly such as exists all around—should receive but scant welcome. From one point of view all life may be described as a compromise between opinions and circumstances, as all statesmanship is a compromise between what we believe ought to be and what it is possible to achieve; but at least this compromising spirit should be confined to the carrying of ideas into practice, and not to their formation or expression. Conditions may not always admit of our acting as conscience dictates; but to refrain from a reasonable expression of opinion is to refrain from using the chief means of bringing practice and opinion into harmony.

We may grant, readily enough, that economic and social conditions are not always favorable to a candid avowal of opinion. A man may find his means of obtaining a livelihood destroyed, and those dependent upon him left destitute, by a too indiscreet confession of faith; and here is certainly a consideration that demands respectful treatment, and one that may well give pause to the most ardent enthusiast. Yet it is well to face the fact that, while economic conditions may drive one into conformity with current beliefs, this conformity serves in turn to perpetuate the economic conditions, and, at the same time, makes the burden so much heavier for those to bear who have dared to brave the storm. For it is in matters of opinion as in matters of taxation. Just as the refusal of certain individuals to bear their share of the public taxation casts a heavier weight upon the shoulders of all remaining taxpayers, so those who are ostensibly in agreement with prevailing beliefs, by remaining silent—whether their silence be a matter of necessity or not—place the burden of their inaction upon all who seek to win for society at large the priceless privilege of free thought and free speech.

But even if the impossibility of realising principles in practice, or professing them in public, be granted, it still remains true that, both in practice and in speech, there exists an amount of compromising that should be swept on one side. Let us take as an illustration, both of weakness of opinion and timidity of expression, the use commonly made of the term "Agnostic" as opposed to the older one of "Atheist." I do not wish it to be understood that I regard the use of the former term as being always due either to mental confusion or timidity, but I do believe that one of the two causes is responsible for its use in a very large number of cases. There are, undoubtedly, a number who feel that "Agnostic" more accurately represents their intellectual attitude than any other term could do; but, even when this is the case, I should be inclined to say it is because they have taken their definition of Atheism hastily, instead of carefully studying its meaning. And, in this case, one has to put their action down to the same loose thinking that is so much condemned by them in the religious world.

For, with any defensible use of either term, it is impossible to discern any vital difference. If Agnosticism is taken to mean without knowledge of God, surely that is what Atheism has always meant to every educated man who used the word. What Professor Huxley called "dogmatic Atheism," and which was held to "assert there is no God," is a form of anti-theism which existed only in the writer's imagination, or in the mouths of those who could hardly be taken as representative speakers. Such belong to those who are, to use Cudworth's language, "mere novices in Atheism, and a kind of bungling well-wishers to it."* And if by Agnosticism it is meant that, after a study of mental processes, the conclusion reached is that knowledge of extra-phenomenal existence is impossible to the human mind, then, again, one can only say that this is

the psychological basis upon which Atheism has rested since the days of ancient Athens.

There are, I am aware, one class who connect Agnosticism with a certain sense of reverence towards the universe in general; but it remains to be seen why a man should express feelings towards something of which he does not and cannot know anything. The feeling of reverence should, at least, have consciousness in its object; and, if one believes that the universe is conscious or is controlled by a conscious power, his proper designation is that of a Theist, not an Agnostic. I can reverence goodness, greatness, truthfulness, or any other human quality; but I can no more reverence the universe, as a whole, than I can reverence the individual forces that go to constitute its being. Such an expression is mere intellectual fetishism, and lacking the plausibility of the fetishism of primitive man.

I have had it seriously put to me by a large number of people that the principal justification for the use of the term "Agnostic" is that the older word is open to misunderstanding, and calls down much ill-feeling. So far as the first part of the statement is concerned, my experience hardly bears it out. And as to the second, a little consideration will show that the only reason why Agnosticism enjoys greater freedom from abuse is precisely because Atheism is in the field. The religious world simply hurls its heaviest artillery against its most formidable opponents. One form of heresy is spared because there is a more objectionable form to attack. But suppose that all Atheists adopted the name of Agnostics, what would be the result? The abuse that is now showered upon Atheism would be as freely thrown at Agnosticism, and the supposed immunity of the latter would vanish into air. It is here as elsewhere: the temerity of the few gives safety to the many; while the timidity of the many makes the burden still heavier for the few.

It is unfortunate also that this unfair compromising spirit—the compromise of mental indolence, or confusion, or cowardice, as distinguished from the compromise of circumstances—expresses itself only too often in one class of Freethinkers belaboring another of a more venturesome type, or in their looking with lofty scorn upon such as are less attentive to the curiously fastidious feelings of religious votaries. The other day, Mr. John Burns, in protesting against the London County Council increasing the opportunities for Sunday amusements, described himself as a "respectable Freethinker," a phrase that was repeated with unctuous egotism by the *Methodist Times*. One wonders exactly what was meant by the description. If Mr. Burns meant that there were people who called themselves Freethinkers who were not respectable, I do not know that anyone would seriously dispute such a bald statement. Neither vice nor virtue is the exclusive property of a party, and Christians can no more hope to indulge in a monopoly of the former than of the latter. Mr. Burns could hardly have meant that Freethinkers, on the whole, were so disreputable that when a man avows himself to be in that mental condition it is necessary to preface the title with such a qualifying phrase. Nor would it be fair to assume without clear proof that "respectable" was only introduced into his speech in an I-am-not-as-they-are kind of a spirit. One is reluctantly driven to the conclusion that it was, on his part, an unconscious weakening to the pressure of a semi-religious environment.

But, after all, this attitude only illustrates a common type. It is perfectly nauseating to find writer after writer and speaker after speaker prefacing his statement of dissent from the current religion with extravagant professions of respect for the opinions he is attacking. It may be a question of temperament or of reason—I do not care for the moment to discuss which; but, whichever it be, I must confess to scant patience with those who are always insisting upon the ghosts of religious beliefs being treated with marked respect. Many of those who so insist know full well that all real life has long departed from the religion we assail; yet they insist upon the empty structure being treated respectfully. Nor would one object to this under certain conditions. But when the building that has been deserted by its original and only legitimate tenant is made the camping ground of a party of intellectual freebooters,

* *Intellectual System*, i., 204.

who cast a halo of sanctity over their depredations in virtue of their place of residence, then respect seems to me to be ill-placed—even mischievous.

And one cannot help thinking that underneath and animating all these professions of respect and reverence—when honest—is the fear of the object to be assailed. It is not to be expected that the deeply-rooted fear of religion, the product of so many centuries, is to be torn up in a day. Expelled from the region of our conscious lives it may be, but only to sink below the level of consciousness, and from this stronghold, which can only be taken by the labors of years or generations, continues to exert a surreptitious influence over our whole lives. Personally, I have no respect for religious beliefs; nor can I see why a man's opinions concerning God or a future state should be treated with any more respect than his opinions concerning the interior of Africa or the character of the mound-builders. I do respect each and every man's right to hold whatever opinion seems to him best; but that is a far different thing to respect for the opinions themselves, which are often too ridiculous to be treated with anything but contempt, and too injurious to be visited with anything but prompt extermination.

Yet I do not mean that each individual must be forever shouting out his opinions at every street corner, or even that all are qualified to act as propagandists. On this head I agree with old Sir Thomas Brown, that "Every man is not a proper champion for truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in the cause of verity; many, from the ignorance of these maxims and an inconsiderate zeal unto truth, have too rashly charged the troops of error, and remain as trophies unto the enemies of truth."* All I desire is that it should be realised that the duty of honest, fearless speech does not lie wholly with the advocates of received opinions. At any time those who really see error are few enough; but their number is sadly reduced when a portion of that body indulge in illegitimate compromises and discreditable apologies. The real way to get others to respect your opinions is to begin to respect them yourself; and this can hardly be done while they are put forward as though they needed some special measure of justification, or as though their being held legitimately opened one to suspicion of mental or moral weakness.

G. COHEN.

Religious and Moral Claims.

THE Christian's definition, or idea, of religion is the only one in this country which we need consider in reference to the teachings given in our Board schools. In recognising its claims, and comparing them with those of the moralist, so far as they affect the instruction of children, we must differentiate between the two. The professor of Christianity urges that his religion is necessary to the efficiency of the instruction given to the rising generation; that apart from such religion there is no sure guarantee of moral conduct; and that this religion should be incorporated in our national system of education. The Secularist, on the contrary, contends that, in educating the rising generation, the Christian religion can be dispensed with; that between it and morality there is no necessary alliance; and that history and personal experience prove the possibility of children being taught the nature and obligations of the duties of daily life without the aid of any faith based upon the alleged supernatural. The superiority and correctness of the latter claims over those of the former will be seen to be established by glancing at the origin, development, and present attitude of morality and religion.

If there is one fact in history more obvious than another, it is that morality can, and does, exist apart from religion. It was so at their inception, and they have, in many important instances, remained separate to the present time. The origin of the first forms of religion of which we have any record was fear and the prostration of reason; while that of morality was the outcome of intellectual culture and thoughtful experience. As the Rev. Minot J. Savage states in his book, *The Morals of Evolution*: "Religion and morality were

totally distinct in their origin. At first they had nothing to do with each other. Religion was simply an arrangement between man and his gods, by which he was to gain their favor or ward off their wrath. Morality, on the other hand, is a matter of behavior between man and man." On pages 24 and 25 the reverend gentleman says: "Go far enough back into antiquity to come to the time when large numbers of men were fetish worshippers; when the object of their adoration, their reverence, or fear, is a stick, or a stone, or a reptile. Of course, you will understand in a moment that the worship of an object like this cannot be associated in the mind of a worshipper with any necessity for telling the truth, with any necessity for being pure, with any necessity for being charitable and kind towards his fellows." The same principle is enforced in the case of the Indian devotee, who fasts and torments himself, not that he may benefit mankind morally by his sufferings, but solely in order that he may acquire favor and power with the gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Seeva. Such a man may be very religious, but he is not necessarily a moral man; for, if his fellow-men were to emulate his example, the human race would be enervated, if it did not become extinct.

The Bible furnishes numerous instances of persons who were said to be very religious, but whose morality was "conspicuous by its absence." Take such men as Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, David, and other heroes of the Old Testament; these were all regarded as religious, yet their moral characters were of an exceedingly low type. A similar truth may be urged in reference to the Christian Church, from its earliest days down to the present time. Within its fold religion has been in strong evidence amongst its most prominent expounders, but morality was in many cases an unknown quantity. On the other hand, among Atheists and other disbelievers, where no religion was even professed, what Dr. Chalmers termed "high-toned morality" was to be found. Of course, it is not here insinuated that morality is never associated with religion. Such an insinuation would be both foolish and untrue. The contention rather is that the two are not necessarily allied, and that there is no lack of instances where the one is to be found professed and acted upon without the other. Taking it, therefore, as a fact, amply proved, that the two—morality and religion—are distinct, we urge that in the education of the young religion is not a necessity, for the reason that all the requisites to good conduct can be had without it. Not so with morality, for that is essential to personal excellence, to societarian welfare, and to progress in all that is useful to the highest development of the community.

For this reason we ventured to state, in our recent article in the *Freethinker* on "The Sanctions for Right-doing," that, while religion should be excluded from our Board schools, the teaching of morality should form a part of their curriculum. To this Dr. Henry Smith takes exception in his article on "Should Ethics be Taught in Board Schools?" which appeared in this journal dated November 19. Dr. Smith's objections to our position appear to us to be very superficial, and as if based upon hastily-drawn conclusions. Moreover, he seems to have entirely overlooked the reasons we gave for our statements. It was never our intention to advocate that a stereotyped "code" of morals should be imposed upon children. The question as to which is the best system of morals to be received can be left for adults to decide. But associated with all systems or morality in civilised countries there are certain teachings upon which all moralists agree. These are—truthfulness, honesty, temperance, industry, consideration for the welfare of others, and kindness to the lower animals. We know of no moral "code" in this country that does not include these teachings, except, perhaps, the last; and we know of no moralists who differ as to their usefulness. Dr. Smith contends, and rightly, that all education in our public schools should be secular. He cannot, however, have this without including moral teaching, inasmuch as secular instruction, as a rule, given in schools, includes morality—that is, instruction which is useful in preparing the recipients for good citizenship.

Dr. Smith appears to be troubled about my "proviso"—"morality properly understood." Who is to decide this? we are asked. So far as the moral teachings,

* *Religio Medice*, section vi.

which we allege may be taught in Board schools, are concerned, no further decision is required, for experience and general consent have already furnished the decision. Not one of the moral teachings mentioned above would, we opine, be objected to by "Christian, Moslem, Jew, Buddhist, Mormon, Secularist, Agnostic, or Anarchist." Here is general agreement upon all that is necessary for educational purposes. If, however, the theological tenets associated with the beliefs of these religionists mentioned are incorporated with the morals taught in public schools, then morality in reference to schools is not, in our opinion, "properly understood." "If," says Dr. Smith, "the Bible and Christian teaching are excluded because they are objected to by some, why should not morals also be excluded if some object to them?" For the very excellent reason that morality is necessary to good, secular life, and the Bible and Christian teaching are not. As already stated, a child can be trained to be a really good man or woman without religion, but not so without the moral teachings which we have cited, and as to the value of which no material difference obtains. In reference to the basis of morals, and the authority for teaching what is right and wrong, these were given in our previous article, and until what is there stated is answered nothing more need be said upon those points.

Finally, we desire to emphasise the fact that the authority for moral acts is in their influence personally and generally. A man must be prudent, or he loses his all, and thus becomes a burden on others; he must be honest, or he will be a criminal to society, and will not be able to have any guarantee for his own rights and for the safety of his own possessions; he must be benevolent, or else he will neglect his duty to others, and the old age of iron will return, with its law of might making right, and the despotic rule of the strong over the weak.

CHARLES WATTS.

Doubting Thomas Huxley.

Him not the tales of all the gods in heaven,
Nor the heaven's lightnings, nor the menacing roar
Of thunder daunted.—LUCRETIVS.

"THE impregnable position of science," said one of our most celebrated thinkers, "may be stated in a few words. We claim, and we shall wrest, from theology the entire domain of cosmological theory."

It would be difficult to name a man of science who did more for the realisation of this ideal than Professor Huxley. It is from that point of view—as the Free-thinker, the man of unfettered intellect, many-sided, with keen interest in the problems of his day—that we prefer to write about him. His popularisation of Darwinism, his advocacy of Agnosticism, his numerous controversies—which sent the monthly reviews through many editions—all these we can only allude to. They are to be found in his collected writings, the perfect lucidity and beautiful English of which might make many a successful man of letters envious. We shall discuss him not as the mere "scientist," but as a teacher who had for his great object the liberation of the human intellect.

When Thomas Henry Huxley was a small boy his great ambition was to be ("angels and ministers of grace defend us!") a parson. Think of that! A later desire of his was to be an engineer. He often wished to be what the Fates denied. For example, both he and his great friend Tyndall were at one and the same time candidates for professorships in Toronto University, but both were defeated. At an earlier stage in Huxley's career some of his friends thought he might probably spend his days as a navy surgeon. For, like his illustrious master, Darwin, he served on board a British man-of-war, and collected knowledge from remote seas and lands.

All his early education was acquired in London. He never imbibed wisdom from Cambridge dons nor from "the monks of Oxford sunk in prejudice and port," as Gibbon sarcastically called the Fellows by Isis. It was Huxley's work of discovery in the Southern Seas that won for him the proud distinction of F.R.S. His extraordinary versatility was in part due to the variety of his early experiences. There is no doubt his most successful

and satisfactory work was that of a scientific missionary. The "St. Paul of Darwinism" someone dubbed him, and certainly his power of expounding and popularising Darwin's teaching was very remarkable. It is to his credit that he was one of the first to seriously apply the evolutionary theories to the current religious beliefs. He tells us that when he was a young man "geologists and biologists could hardly follow to the end any path of inquiry without finding the way blocked by Noah and his ark, or by the first chapter of Genesis; and it was a serious matter, in this country at any rate, for a man to be suspected of doubting the literal truth of the Diluvial or any other Pentateuchal history," whereas "at the present time it is difficult to persuade serious scientific inquirers to occupy themselves in any way with the Noachian Deluge. They look at you with a smile and a shrug, and say they have more important matters to attend to than mere antiquarianism." One consequence among many of this belief in Genesis is worthy of note. Sir James Simpson, with whose name the use of chloroform will always be associated, had an enormous amount of prejudice to overcome before women in childbirth were allowed the alleviation of anæsthetics. Official Christianity alleged that medical science had no right to interfere with a curse laid by our Heavenly Father upon all women, because of the backsliding of "our general mother."

The legend of Adam and Eve has been productive of infinite evil; but the vogue of that fatal fiction is well-nigh ended. Not Gabriel with a flaming sword, but Huxley with a pen of steel, illuminating the researches of his master, Darwin, has forever banished Eve and her paramour from their empire over deluded mankind. The whole drift of Huxley's teaching was essentially naturalistic, and all his thinking was entirely untrammelled by religion.

Some theologians still picture Professor Huxley to themselves as a matter-of-fact, dry-as-dust scientist. They were never more mistaken. Few men have written more eloquently than Huxley on the supreme importance of the cultivation of a sense of beauty. The loss of the power of "seeing beauty," he tells us, "is infinite." Let us quote a sentence, almost at random:—

"The man who is all morality and intellect, although he may be good and even great, is, after all, only half a man. There is beauty in the moral world, and in the intellectual world; but there is also a beauty which is neither moral nor intellectual—the beauty of the world of art."

"I should like," he said in his rectorial address to the students of the Northern University, "to see professors of the Fine Arts in every university; and instruction in some branch of their work made a part of the ordinary curriculum."

Huxley's *Lay Sermons* literally teem with aphoristic sayings and epigrams which range from gay to grave. Two opposite illustrations may be quoted. His jest that public opinion sometimes means *publicans' opinion* fittingly precedes his emendation of Kant's statement that the three main questions for the soul to consider are, "What can I do? What ought I to do? What may I hope for?" Now for Huxley's characteristic reply: "Do what you can, do what you ought, and leave hoping and fearing alone."

Huxley threw open the windows of his mind to whatever impressions art, science, history, literature, human life, could convey to it. Some of his sentences on the Renaissance are as attractive as any that have ever been written on that immortal theme. "They were," he says, writing of the effect of the classical revival upon the men of mediæval and papal Europe, "as men who had kissed the fairy queen, and, wandering with her in the dim loveliness of the under-world, cared not to return to the familiar ways of home and fatherland, though they lay at arm's length overhead. Cardinals were more conversant with Virgil than with Isaiah, and popes labored with great success to repaganise Rome. Unfortunately to the Renaissance succeeded the nightmare of Calvinism. But science came, and, with its numerous votaries, working in the plastic clay of matter producing dawn from darkness, order from disorder, cosmos from chaos, has dispelled many of the credulous dreams of priest-ridden humanity."

Thus it is that to the schoolboy of the near future, in spite of the Diggles and the Rileys, hell will have vanished, paradise have become a name, purgatory a fable, and Jacob's ladder a myth. The "true" Cross will survive no more than the "true" Ark. The Garden of Eden will have gone, and Gethsemane will have gone with it. Jonah will swagger arm-in-arm with Sinbad; Daniel will exchange yarns with Baron Munchausen; and little Moses in his bulrushes will gurgle a welcome to the Babes-in-the-Wood. The Menagerie of the Apocalypse will be classed with the Genii of the *Arabian Nights*. Bald-headed Elisha with his bears will romp with little Red Riding Hood and her wolf, and the New Jerusalem with its many mansions will be classed with the House that Jack Built.

MIMNERMUS.

Shakespeare's Will.

ORTHODOX writers are always finding opportunities of imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of ordinary readers. Sometimes their impudence is positively brazen. Only the other evening a regular writer in the *London Echo*—one whose pen has been at work in its columns for many years—had (or took) occasion to refer to Shakespeare's religious opinions; and, after observing that the question had been much discussed, he proceeded to settle it by quoting from Shakespeare's will, which he said was written by the poet's own hand. Now this writer either knew he was stating a falsehood or he did not. If he did know it, he is a liar; and, if he did not know it, he is an unpardonable ignoramus. We say unpardonable for two reasons; first, because he was under no necessity to write on this or any other point in the absence of proper information; second, because the information on this particular point is so easily accessible.

Shakespeare's will was *not* written with his own hand, nor even at his dictation. It was written by the scrivener, who took his directions in the usual way of legal business. All that Shakespeare himself did was to write his signature on two of the three sheets of paper, and perhaps on the third, counting backwards; although it was held by Steevens that "the name at the top of the margin of the first sheet was probably written by the scrivener who drew the will," which, he says, was "the constant practice in Shakespeare's time." The "By me, William Shakespeare," at the end of the will is merely formal, in the prevailing fashion of the time. Malone puts the whole matter pointedly. "Neither the day," he says, "nor the year, nor any preceding part of this will, was written by our poet." Dyce quotes from one of Malone's manuscript *Notes* in the Bodleian Library, that "the will is written in the clerical hand of that age." This, indeed, has never been disputed; it is perfectly obvious, and admits of no controversy.

But this *Echo* writer will perhaps reply that, while his statement was not literally accurate, it was nevertheless true in substance, since Shakespeare signed the will, and thus made it his. Yes, his as a *will*, but not as a *composition*. No doubt he acted like other testators, for he was a first-rate man of business; supplying his lawyer with notes as to the disposition of his property, and leaving that functionary to do all the rest. It would never occur to him to criticise anything else. He would let formality take its course, and never trouble his head about legal jargon or a pious flourish.

Certainly the will opens with a pious flourish. All wills did so in that age. But when the will included a real confession of faith it was something very different. Look, for instance, at the long extract in Isaac Walton from the will of Bishop Sanderson. It sets forth the testator's religious belief in his own strong and precise language. But will any man outside a lunatic asylum contend that the opening of Shakespeare's will is of this character?

"In the name of God, amen! I William Shakespeare, of Stratford upon Avon in the countie of Warr., gent., in perfect health and memorie, God be prayesed, doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in the manner and forme followeing, that ys to saye, first, I comend my soule into the handes of God my Creator,

hoping and assuredlie beleeving, through thonellie merits of Jesus Christe my Saviour, to be made partaker of lyfe everlastinge, and my bodye to the earth whereof yt ys made."

We say nothing about the orthography, for that was a liberal age in such matters; everybody spelling pretty much as he liked, and even distinguished men and scholars, like Raleigh, writing their own names in half-a-dozen different ways. But look at the composition! Angels and ministers of grace defend us! Did that dull, perfunctory rigmarole come from the brain that produced *Hamlet*?—or, to take the very last of Shakespeare's plays, the glorious and majestic *Tempest*? The man who says Yes may successfully grow cabbages or break stones, but is utterly unfit to wield a pen, and ought to be debarred from doing so by some public committee like the Commissioners in Lunacy.

Mr. Sidney Lee shows his usual good sense in his comments on Shakespeare's will. "The religious exordium," he says, "is in conventional phraseology, and gives no clue to Shakespeare's personal religious opinions." This is the whole sum of the matter.

We may just add, by way of conclusion, that the *Echo* ought to be ashamed of a writer who plays to the orthodox gallery in defiance of truth and common sense. We know the piety of our contemporary, but it should be tempered with a little regard to literary decency.

G. W. FOOTE.

Confucius.

(551-479 B.C.)

(Concluded from page 765.)

WHEN reading the accounts of the *Lun Yü*, we have a very vivid impression of him, stately and dignified in every respect, yet full of benevolence and piety. This could not, however, restrain Lao-tzü from making him a subject of ridicule and from laughing at his artificiality. Lao-tzü appears as a rugged mountain thickly covered with wild trees and with huge boulders scattered here and there, whereas Confucius may be compared to the cultivated aspect of a velvet lawn, smooth, and in perfect order, and with everything arranged according to the law of symmetry.

The main object of Confucius, however, was the promotion of national welfare and the amelioration of social conditions. He taught the doctrine of sympathy and benevolence, not that the people might be fairly rewarded in the future or reborn in heaven, not that they might thus be released from the bond of material existence, not that they might save their hypothetical souls from eternal damnation and the curse of the last judgment, but that they might live righteously in this present life, be in peace with their neighbors, and enjoy the happiness of a good conscience—this was the ideal of the Chinese sage.

Not being a religious teacher, he made no effort to teach the masses and to awaken them from ignorance; he, on the contrary, wished to follow the example of Chou-king, his ideal statesman, because he thought it the best way of actualising his benevolent administration and of making the people happy materially as well as morally. The political condition of the time seems to have been so precarious as to induce even the apparently world-abandoned author of the *道德經* (*Tao-teh-king*) to dwell on the policy of governing a State. Speaking in general, the most cherished idea of the majority of Chinese philosophers and moral teachers is to enforce the practical application of their views through the authority of the administration.

The practical turn of the Chinese character is clearly shown in the biography of Confucius as recorded by his disciples and followers. Their memoirs are singularly free from the clouds of miracles, superstitions, and impossibilities which usually gather around the life-histories of religious sages. There are no legends about him. He stands before us as a plain human being, who said and did what any other mortal could say and do. Look, for example, how the imagination of Indian and Semite, overleaping the natural limits of probability and possibility, heaps up the tinsel glory of miracles on the heads of their spiritual leaders! Is it

not, indeed, surprising to notice in what plain language the life of the Chinese sage is described, and yet before his statue the proudest kings reverentially bow down, and in his analects, however fragmentary, millions of human beings for more than a score of centuries have found wisdom and consolation?

Confucius was not, indeed, the leader of a religious movement in any sense, nor could Chinese minds conceive any such spiritual reformation. Deeply immersed in practicality, they could not see any significance in things beyond this life. What they most cared for was the betterment of social conditions—that kings should be benevolent, subjects loyal; that parents should be loving, sons filial; that husbands should be affectionate, wives devoted; that friends should be faithful to one another; that brothers and sisters should be mutually attached. When these virtues are practised by every individual in the empire, peace will prevail on earth; then the aim of our life is attained, and there is nothing left beyond to be desired.

The utilitarian phase of Confucianism may be further illustrated by an example furnished, not by Confucius himself, but by one of his most distinguished followers. As Buddhist monarchism was not known in China at the time of Kung-tzu, we cannot exactly say what personal attitude he would have assumed towards it, but most probably his positivistic tendency would not have approved it. When Buddhism attained its most flourishing stage under the Tang dynasty, it greatly annoyed Han-yü, who was one of the famous Confucian sages of the time, and who boasted himself to be a second Mencius. He wrote an article entitled *Yüan Tao*—i. e., "Fundamental Principle," in which he bitterly attacked Buddhism, exclaiming: "While the doctrine of the ancient sages teaches us to promote our social welfare by co-operation and division of labor, what rôle do the followers of Buddha play, who, remaining in idleness, consume all that is produced by other classes of the people?" It must have been an assault least expected by the Buddhists, who, having lived in abundance of food and clothing in the most favored quarter of the globe, were probably not prepared to hear such a practical complaint, although their theoretical weapons must have been well sharpened to meet and crush opponents. But these two characteristics, practicality and speculativeness, may be considered to be the most striking marks of division between Confucianism and Buddhism.

At all events, Confucius was the Chinese ideal of a perfectly-developed virtue. How could he otherwise command the national admiration, reverence, and worship? It is the law of evolution that those who are best adapted to their inner and outer surroundings alone can survive. Lao-tzu and Confucius are, doubtless, the two greatest minds ever produced on the soil of China; but the latter was more native, and thus his doctrine was better fitted to send deep roots down into the hearts of his countrymen to develop and prosper all over the land of his birth. Those who are capable of finding some admirable traits in the people of the celestial kingdom beside their conservatism and odd traditions will also be able to appreciate the high moral tone and the spirit of practicality in Confucius as well as in Confucianism.

TEITARO SUZUKI.

A nobleman was in the habit once a year of inviting his tenants, among whom was a conscientious Quaker, to dine with him. The Quaker, not anxious to brave the senseless ridicule to which members of the Society of Friends were at that time exposed, invariably declined the honor. At length his lordship pressed him, as a personal favor, to attend. On the right of the host sat the vicar, and on the left his curate. After dinner the vicar, who stuttered painfully, attempted to put a question, by way of banter, to the Quaker. The Quaker made no reply. In the same incomprehensible manner the clergyman repeated the query. Still the Quaker made no answer, and the curate, who was of a glib and ready tongue, interfered and said: "I do not think you understand what the vicar says." "I do not see how I should, friend," quietly replied the Quaker. "Oh," replied the curate, "he simply asks you whether you can tell him how it was that Balaam's ass spoke?" "Balaam had an impediment in his speech, and his ass spoke for him," was the rejoinder.

Freethought in America.

OUR Christian friends, especially the ministers, are becoming badly demoralised. They are entitled to our sympathy in their affliction. They have discovered that faith must give way to science and common sense. To them it seems very grievous. By this means they have lost their barbarian God, Jehovah, the image of themselves, their virgin-born Savior, their Holy Ghost, and their revealed word of God. No one remains to listen to prayers, or to answer them. All is now myth and mystery. The Bible is not holy, but full of holes. The creation story in Genesis is a chimera. The Lord God did not create the first pair, nor make coats of skins to clothe them. Nor did he walk in the garden with them in the cool of the day. There was no fall of man. Noah did not have a flood. There were bulrushes in Egypt, but no Moses. No two million Israelites ever lived in the land of Goshen, nor spent forty years in exodusting a hundred and fifty miles to the land of Canaan. The Red Sea did not open a passage for them to march through on dry land. Jehovah did not, with his finger, engrave the ten commandments on stone and deliver them to Moses, nor did he and God talk face to face on Mount Sinai. The astronomical feat of Joshua with the sun and moon, on Gibeon and Ajalon, is abolished. Rains' horns did not destroy the walls of Jericho. Lot's wife was not pilloried in salt. The whale did not swallow Jonah. When Elisha cursed the children, in the name of the Lord, for mocking him as a bald-head, two she-bears did not "come forth out of the wood and tear forty-and-two children of them." The Lord was not in that line of business. Nor did Elijah go up to heaven in a fiery chariot. Neither Jehovah nor the Holy Ghost ever fathered a child. No one was ever resurrected after death. Wine was never made of water. Five loaves and two little fishes never fed a multitude. Devils enough were never cast out of one man to fill a drove of two thousand hogs. Miracles are purely imaginary. All stories concerning them are relics and romances of pre-historic imagination. The cherubims and seraphims have stopped crying. The communion of saints has ceased, and even the bones of a saint smell no better than those of a sinner, and will cure no more diseases. The kingdom of heaven no longer exists. Astronomy has consigned it to oblivion. God does not sit on a white throne there, with the books open, judging the dead according to their works as written in those books, and consigning most of them to hell. This ancient realm for eternal torture of the damned, formerly so dear to the Christian heart, has lapsed into innocuous desuetude by common consent. Strange assertions, in whatever book found, or by whomsoever spoken, must not be believed upon authority, but only upon proof. Nothing supernatural ever occurred. Human reason is the only criterion of truth for human beings. Human experience is the best guide to conduct. These, and many others of like import, are the conclusions of honest clerical thought. Even our Unitarian friends, who started out in the joyful companionship of the one God Jehovah, rejecting his two trinitarian companions, have now rejected him also, and are affiliating with a better specimen, "The power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness."

That such great advances have occurred in clerical thought and speech is due to the valiant efforts of scientists and men of independent minds, who have done their own thinking, and have not lacked the courage, on apt occasion, to make known their thought to others. To those who have pursued this policy, it certainly is a cause of profound congratulation that their efforts have so well awakened the minds of their fellowmen to the fallacy of dogmas, creeds, and superstitions, and that the truth, on theological subjects, is worrying the clergy to open confession. Ingersoll, our great and glorious champion, has by his lectures and writings, clear and fearless, done more to advance the cause of truth among the multitude, and to free the minds of men and women from the thralldom of theology, than all other men of the century. Freethought magazines and publications have done much. The general advance in popular education has been a great coadjutor. The fear of thinking is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Courage for fearless expression is fast advancing. Fear of priests and ministers has well nigh died away.

—D. K. Tenney, in "Freethought Magazine."

After all, it is only in the ecstasy of church congresses that our importance is ignored. The Christian public is quite convinced that Freethought will live on. The Christian public is secretly inclined to our heresy. It abjures us, but it heeds us. It jeers at our banner and follows our trail. What doctrine of the Church does not carry the tokens of our assault? What miracle does it ever proffer to our criticism without apology? What practical hold has supernaturalism upon the life of the English folk of 1899? What educated Englishman will speak of the "infallible" Bible except in the presence of babes? What Church leader does not know that social reform is the absorbing interest of the age, and that in presence of this vast problem the theological legends are sinking below the horizon of our solicitude?—F. J. Gould.

Acid Drops.

So the Khalifa is done for at last. He fought his last battle without running away, and died with his Emirs in a desperate effort to get through the deadly hail of bullets at his relentless enemies. The man probably had some good qualities at the outset, but arbitrary power, and lust, and religious humbug played the devil with him. He reduced immensely the population of a vast district—a sure sign of rapacity and bad government. Of course the Christians will say that Gordon's God has triumphed at last, and Allah is nowhere. But the victory was won by trained intelligence, and discipline, and good guns, and straight shooting. God had as much to do with it as the man in the moon.

It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that Mohammedanism is losing any ground in Africa. On the contrary, it is gaining every year. It is spreading amongst the negroes, whom it suits a great deal better than Christianity. It makes them sober and industrious, and its stern Monotheism corrects their tendency to idolatry. Christianity in Africa is too much associated with laziness, hypocrisy, and the gin-bottle.

Mr. Thompson, the editor of *Reynolds's Newspaper*, is a vigorous and effective writer, but his enthusiasm sometimes runs away with him. Last week he declared that the thunderbolt of God was ready to strike England. Good old thunderbolt! It is always falling, and it never falls. Why does Mr. Thompson condescend to such nonsense? We do not think he has any belief at all in God, but we suppose he thinks the word is a sounding one for rhetorical purposes.

Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake, said Paul. Jesus Christ went one better. He turned a huge quantity of water into wine at a marriage feast to keep the spree going. The Wycombe Guardians are probably also Christians, but they have resolved to stop giving the paupers beer at Christmas.

The Leeds *Saturday Journal* refers to the will of Joseph Benoit, who died at Kansas City recently, as "a most remarkable document." Although an "infidel," he left the bulk of his estate, worth about £30,000, to charitable organisations. "His change of religion," our contemporary remarks, "did not cause him to lose his faith in charitable work. He told his friends that his new religion was to do good to all, to relieve suffering, and to make all his friends happy." But what is there "remarkable" in this? Men who leave Christianity because it does not satisfy their intellectual and moral nature do not become misanthropes. American "infidels" have often been extremely liberal. Colonel Ingersoll's generosity was proverbial. Another "infidel" founded and endowed the great Girard College, and still another founded the great Lick Observatory.

The Rev. R. J. Paul, minister of Coldstream parish, ayont the Tweed, married on the twelfth day of last December, and on the twenty-first day of June his wife gave birth to a child. This chronology was an affliction to his congregation, who presented a petition on the subject to the Presbytery. Ten ministers and seven elders sat upon the matter for four hours, and decided at the finish that there was no need to take any further action. The medical evidence, as usual, was conflicting, but all agreed that the baby was prematurely born. The reverend gentleman subsequently complained in the pulpit of "poisonous, whispering tongues." Well, what does he expect? He is the servant of a Christian congregation—in Scotland.

What a rumpus, and what an investigation, there would have been if Mary, the mother of Jesus, had lived at Coldstream instead of Nazareth! The miraculous birth of Jesus would never have got set up as an established fact. The elders would have unearthed the "fornicatin' loon" responsible for the baby who was very much more premature than Mrs. Paul's.

Gospel-grinding seems to pay in America, although there is no Established Church with fat livings and rich bishoprics. We see that the salary offered Dr. Babcock, who has just taken the pulpit of the Brick Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, is nearly £2,500 a year. How the mouths of the twelve apostles would have watered at the prospect of receiving that sum between them! Had there been a couple of thousand pounds in hand, Judas would never have "sold" his Master for those thirty half-crowns. But then there might have been no Crucifixion, and that would have meant no Christianity, and no big salaries in the gospel-grinding line of business. On the whole, Dr. Babcock and his like have reason to be thankful that the gentlemen who started the business were poor.

The notorious Lord Oxford was invited to become

President of the Norwich Bible Society. He replied: "I have long been addicted to the gaming table. I have lately taken to the Turf. I fear I frequently blaspheme. But I have never distributed religious tracts. All this was known to you and your Society, notwithstanding which you think me a fit person to be your President. God forgive your hypocrisy."

The "Nationalist" party in France is going from bad to worse. This is the party of the Aristocracy, the Army, and the Church. Its journalists are so far from being gentlemen that they often do not understand the elements of common decency. They are doing their best to get up a quarrel with England. That has been the Nationalist policy all along. One of these fire-eaters sketches out a plan for invading and conquering England (heaven save the mark!) with 25,000 Frenchmen. Another showers the dirtiest insults on the Queen. And then comes a caricaturist who depicts her in a manner which is quite indescribable in a journal which has readers of all ages and both sexes. A Republican need not throw mud at a woman because she happens to be a Queen. But these wretches are not Republicans. They are really Royalists, and devoted sons, for the most part, of Holy Mother Church. Men like Zola and Clémenceau are far above such infamous conduct. They are able to express severe opinions in the language of gentlemen.

M. Gohier, who holds that friendship with England should be the constant policy of France, gives a curious quotation from a Catholic priest, who is also a doctor of divinity. This pious gentleman says that marriage and family life are something awful in Protestant England. He states that wives are led about with a rope round their necks by their husbands, and put up to public auction; and that the Government has tried in vain to suppress this abominable custom, which is too deep-rooted in English society. Just think of it! Fancy a fellow, wearing what he calls God's livery, telling such infamous lies, simply in order to make his own ignorant countrymen hate the English—and that because the majority of us do not belong to his Church! If he were to come to England, and marry a wife, and try the rope trick, he would find what a mistake he had made about the slavery of English women.

Frederick Chadwick, of Ratcliff-street, Stockport, has been sent to prison for three months for neglecting his children. He had previously done a month for assaulting his wife. His children were horribly dirty, and swarming with vermin; and when his wife tried to clean them he left off reading the Bible—which seems to have been his stock entertainment—and knocked her on the head with a jug. While this pious gentleman is doing time he will be able to read the Bible without conjugal or filial distractions.

Mr. Gladstone used to tell a joke at the expense of Prophet Cumming. A book of that gentleman's was announced, *The Great Tribulation Coming upon the Earth*, which was thus parodied: "The Great Tribulation: Cumming upon the Earth."

It is recorded that Mr. Gladstone could actually swear. On occasion he rose to the height of a "Damn." This relieves him from the charge of being without a single redeeming vice.

A good story comes from Cambridge. It seems that yesterday [Nov. 24] was Commemoration Day at Emmanuel, on which day it is usual for the Bishop of London, as visitor to the College, to favor Cambridge with his presence. The anti-Ritualistic opinions of the Dean of Emmanuel are well known, and a telegram which it had been arranged should be despatched from London early in the day must have surprised him: "Remember Isaiah i. 13 (incense is an abomination).—M. LONDON." Meanwhile a few enterprising undergrads had arranged to burn, on the quiet, a considerable amount of incense in the College Chapel, which elicited another telegram, this time from Brighton, purporting to come from an Anglican cleric of somewhat extreme views: "Congratulations on your literal rendering of Malachi i. 11 (in every place let incense be burned).—*Daily News*."

The Bishop of London says that the only foe of the Church is ignorance. We always thought that was the name of the Church's best friend.

The Bishop of Rochester thinks that clergymen may break-fast with Nonconformist ministers, but must not pray with them.

The very serious and exclusively feminine congregation at Holloway College had, says the *Christian World*, its gravity upset on a recent Sunday morning by the announcement from the pulpit of the text, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

A new London coroner at his first inquest administered the oath, Scotch fashion, to the jurymen, standing in a body with their hands uplifted. This is a step in the right direction, in so far as it dispenses with the absurd and dangerous practice of "kissing the book."

Says the *Christian World*: "The world moves. Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) is to be the moderator of the next English Presbyterian Synod." Such an election would have been impossible a couple of years back, when Dr. Watson was considered fair game for the heresy-hunters.

Doctor Weingart, an able and scholarly pastor, well known throughout Hanover, has been dismissed from his office by the provincial Synod for heretical views as to the resurrection of Christ. He declares that the New Testament narratives of the resurrection need not be taken literally, and that it is capable of a "spiritual interpretation."

The Rev. J. W. Horsley has been contributing to the *Church Times* some interesting revelations as to the duplicity of presumably religious people in connection with the publication of banns. His statements show, as the *Christian World* observes, how little value is to be attached to any statistics of the numerical strength "of the Churches" based upon marriages.

Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., recently had a curious experience. He was attending an Anglican church on the Continent, when the venerable clergyman read a sermon in which he described his hearers as criminals, the children of thieves, drunkards, etc. After a while, it dawned upon the preacher that he was reading the wrong discourse—he was a prison chaplain—so he brought it to an abrupt conclusion.

The Bishop of Lincoln thinks, if people only read their Bibles as much as they were now reading their newspapers, the world would be a great deal better than it was. It would be if fiction would do it, for there is a great deal of that element in both.

There appear to be very diverse notions as to what liberty consists of, says the *Church Gazette*. For instance, the *Primitive Methodist* of last week tells the story of a certain Mr. Baker, whose great achievement was the founding of a Wesleyan "Free" Church in the island of Tonga—soon to be annexed by England. Of this worthy it is recounted that "his zeal was admirable. Not content with using all his eloquence and his political influence, Mr. Baker organised a kind of inquisition, on a small scale, to secure converts. The Tongans who were so ill-advised as to hesitate to leave the Mission Church for the Free Church were soundly beaten until their scruples vanished. A hundred of the more perverse recusants were deported to a barren island." If this be the result of being "Free," we can only say we much prefer to remain as we are. But possibly good Mr. Baker did not consider that, in a spiritual sense, these Tongans were "ripe for self-government."

Professor Arthur C. McGiffert, of the Union Seminary, New York, is shortly to be tried for heresy. An effort was made to induce him to retire from the Presbyterian ministry, but without success. He declines to accept the dictum of the General Assembly that the "statements of Holy Scripture are absolutely truthful—i.e., free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense."

Rev. Dr. Crowe, of the Church of the Eternal Hope, New York, has been preaching a sermon which is reported in the *Herald* under the heading of "Fear of Hell Filled the Pews." The preacher made the following declaration:—"For fifteen centuries the sole thought of religion in the popular mind was a supernatural scheme to evade Sheol. In those days people went to church, not because they wanted to, but because they had to. Nobody asked whether the minister was interesting in those days. He could give them three straight hours of abstruse dogmatizing, with mercury at zero and no fire in the church; but their cringing fear of a time when it would be warm enough held them to the frosty benches without a murmur." Dr. Crowe said that the last thirty years have witnessed a great change. Charles Darwin took the foundation from under Genesis, and the whole theological scheme of fifteen centuries has collapsed. The fear of everlasting punishment has fled, and the average man doesn't see why he shouldn't go bicycling on Sunday. "And church attendance," Dr. Crowe says, "will go on decreasing until we get a new foundation under our feet."

We quite agree with Dr. Crowe so far. But we are afraid he won't find that trusty new foundation. Apparently he gives up hell and keeps heaven. This arrangement, however, is not likely to work. People won't be brimstoned into church any longer. Very well then, says Dr. Crowe, "we'll

treacle them in." But you can't do it. The old mixture was brimstone and treacle. Treacle alone won't work. The brimstone is the active ingredient.

Mark Twain spoke as follows some time ago in London:—"Yesterday I was at luncheon with a party at West End. A great dignitary of the English Established Church went away half an hour before anybody else, and carried off my hat. Now that was an innocent act on his part. He went out first, and, of course, had the choice of hats. As a rule, I try to get out first myself, but I hold that his was an innocent, unconscious act, due, perhaps, to heredity. He was thinking about ecclesiastical matters, and when a man is in that condition of mind he will take anybody's hat. The result was that during the whole afternoon I was under the influence of his clerical hat, and could not tell a lie. Of course, he was hard at it. It is a compliment to both of us. His hat fitted me exactly; my hat fitted him exactly; so I judge I was born to rise to high dignity in the Church somehow or other, but I don't know what he was born for."

Rev. Mr. Civill, of the Methodist church at Mount Kisco, New York, declined to preach to his congregation because he was "not fit." "A man who is not fit to preach is not fit for anything else," says the *New York Truthseeker*, "and it is no wonder that the Rev. Mr. Civill attempted suicide by jumping in front of a railroad train."

If it be true that an endless hell awaits every unconverted person, as the preachers were constantly declaring in times past, then why not continue the work of "plucking brands from the burning," as they formerly did? But if, as it seems, the preachers have abandoned the endless brimstone hell idea, why not be honest enough to say so and devote their energies to saving humanity from the real hells of this life? We need a great "revival" among the preachers—one that will induce them to be honest, and preach what they really think. Theology, with most preachers, seems, to an unregenerated man, to be only a question of how best to get their bread and butter.—*Freethought Magazine (Chicago)*.

The growth of liberal ideas among church members has had a demoralising effect upon Denominational religious papers. Twenty years ago several Denominational papers had large circulations, and were making large amounts of money. To-day, it is said, the strictly Denominational paper has a hard struggle for existence.—*Chicago Tribune*.

We do not, as a rule, take any notice of anonymous communications. But we break the rule for once this week. A lady, who is anxious for our conversion, sends us a long epistle, without giving her name and address. It is a very pious and irrational effusion, though it is probably well-meant. "I have only seen you once," the lady says, "and that was some years ago at the Shoreditch Town Hall, when the Bible was given you in your hand to read, and you read the wrong verses." Evidently this lady is pious through and through. She has even a pious memory. As a matter of fact, the editor of the *Freethinker* has never spoken in the Shoreditch Town Hall. Also as a matter of fact, he has never been inside the building even as an auditor.

Another anonymous communication, this time a telegram, reaches us from Glasgow. The sender has spent more than a shilling to tell us, without giving his address or even his name, what follows:—"J. M. Robertson saying British Government wrong have thrown his books and pamphlets into fire think of putting yours there too." Some day or other, when the sender of this telegram cools down, he will probably smile at his hasty effusion. At present he is very difficult to please; indeed, it seems that he cannot brook the least dissent from his own opinions—which is incipient insanity. Mr. Robertson's views apparently differ diversely deal from our own, but the Glasgow telegraphist differs from both of us, and consigns us both to perdition. A mad world, my masters! exclaimed an old dramatist, and he might utter the same exclamation now if he were living.

Dean Cowie has been in residence at Exeter Cathedral for eight months. The exhausted man of God is now off to the Riviera until the end of April for the benefit of his health. Verily the parson's lot is not a happy one. Who said "Rats!"

Tommy—"Miss Upjohn, I want to know the names of the twelve disciples." His Sunday-school teacher—"Certainly, Tommy. They were Peter, James, John, Andrew, Phillip, Thomas, Judas, and—and—I can find the names of the others in a moment." Tommy—"No fair lookin'. I knowed you couldn't do it!"—*New York Evening World*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

December 10 and 17, Athenæum Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—December 3, Athenæum Hall, London; 10, Manchester; 11, Bolton; 17, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24, Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

E. VETTERLEIN.—See paragraph. Your gallant West Ham Branch has our very best wishes.

E. NEWELL.—Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops." So you are eighty-two years old. We are glad to hear from one who has been so long in "the true faith."

LARNER SUGDEN.—We are obliged to you for a copy of the paper. Your courage is admirable, anyhow.

W. COX.—The date is booked. We hope the Liverpool Branch's next year's work will be more successful. You have had to fight against great local difficulties, chiefly caused by Christian bigotry. But don't be disheartened.

T. J. THURLOW.—We are not responsible for Mr. Symes's views. The extract was inserted merely to show what he thought, as the information might be interesting to some of his old friends in England. We might quote stronger passages from *Secular Thought*, of Toronto, but there is not the same justification. At the present, at any rate, we decline to let anything further upon the subject appear in the *Freethinker*. Too many seem incapable of discussing the South African question without losing temper and calling names; and, while passion is rampant (on both sides), reason is wasted.

J. KEAST.—We hope to survive the blow.

J. DRENNAN.—Neither prose nor verse. Why not write one or the other?

J. YOUNG.—Hope to find room for it.

WELL-WISHER.—Thanks. See paragraph.

IRONSIDE.—It is, as you say, astonishing how many unoriginal persons, with a good deal of bigotry or conceit, seem to have telephonic communication with Bradlaugh's grave. "Bradlaugh would have thought this!" "Bradlaugh would have done that!" How on earth can they know what Bradlaugh would think or do if he were living now? Bradlaugh thought for himself, and the duty of all of us is to do the same.

A. JENKINS.—Huxley's "Life and Letters" is to be published shortly. It should be a very interesting book. He had friends or acquaintances in many branches of human activity. His writings are vigorous, and his letters should be entertaining.

LIVERPOOL, SOUTH SHIELDS, E. LONDON.—Your lecture notices were too late for insertion last week.

G. CRUDDAS.—James Marchant's opinion of the *Freethinker* is a matter of supreme indifference to us. It is not edited to please him or his like. His statement about his past connection with the Freethought party is true to this extent, that he was for a short time, when very young, an officer of the old West Ham Branch of the N.S.S. You had better take no notice of his "challenges." He is not very able and not very particular.

JAMES READ (Liverpool).—We have no knowledge of James Samuelson's ever having been connected with the Freethought party. It is quite true that Paine's argument for the existence of God beats the efforts of nearly all the clergy hollow; but Paine would probably have been more than a Deist if he had been born a century later.

W. P. BALL.—We are much obliged to you for your weekly batches of cuttings. Do you never find time now for a contribution from your own pen?

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Truthseeker (New York)—De Vrije Gedachte—Public Opinion—Berwick Advertiser—Huddersfield Examiner—Leek Times—Ethical World—Isle of Man Times—Yarmouth Mercury—Liberator—Young Oxford—People's Newspaper—Crescent—Sydney Bulletin—Progressive Thinker—Blue Grass Blade—Boston Investigator—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Secular Thought—Edinburgh Evening News—El Libre Pensamiento.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

It being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription expires, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. Displayed Advertisements:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Special.

A CALL TO HURRY UP.

THE NEW COMPANY TO GO FORWARD.

APPLICATIONS for Shares in the new Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, are still coming in, though of course more slowly. Perhaps they will continue to come in thus till the end of the chapter. Nevertheless, I venture to appeal again to all my friends, and all sincere and earnest friends of the Freethought movement, to lose as little time as possible in co-operating in this important enterprise. It has been impossible to force the pace, so many things have had to be done or seen to, and all this effort comes at present on the top of my otherwise heavy work. But we must make a big, bold move with the new year—and it is rapidly approaching. Let me therefore ask all those who have not yet taken Shares, but who mean to or wish to, not to indulge in unnecessary delay. When you go to war you don't want your forces to arrive in dribbles; you want them to arrive together and in time. Freethinkers who do me the honor of reading my article on "Our Outlook" in the *Secular Almanack* will see how I am planning and striving for the effective organisation of our party. This is not a matter of one man's interest; it is really the interest of all, and should be the work of all. Even the humblest can take a part in it. If a Freethinker can only take one Share, let him take it; he may be able to take another by-and-bye. Finally, I venture to throw out a reminder to the few—it is only a few—who have not yet redeemed the promises they made a month or two ago. Procrastination is the thief of time, but don't let it be the robber of this enterprise.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

THERE was a fine audience at Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured by request on "Britishers and Boers: A Freethinker's View of the White War in South Africa." Mr. Victor Roger, the Branch president, who occupied the chair, introduced the lecturer in a pleasant little speech. He regretted, as he believed they all did, that the N.S.S. President was not amongst them oftener, but they all recognised that there were many demands upon him, and many other Branches to be visited. Mr. Foote then delivered his lecture, dealing with the question exhaustively, and occupying an hour and twenty minutes, during the whole of which time the interest of the audience was thoroughly sustained. After the lecture a good many questions were asked and answered, but there was no formal opposition. One pleasant feature of the meeting was the presence of many ladies. Mr. A. B. Moss and Mr. W. Heaford sat on the chairman's right on the platform.

This evening Mr. Charles Watts will lecture in the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject, "The Defeat of the Cross." This is an entirely new lecture, and, as it embraces a review of the history of Christianity, it should evoke a profitable discussion.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1900 is now on sale. Its contents are both useful and interesting. There is the usual Calendar, brought up to date, by the insertion of the death-dates of Colonel Ingersoll, Dr. Buchner, Grant Allen, Edward Truvelo, etc. Then there is the usual mass of information about the National Secular Society and other Freethought organisations. Finally, there are special articles by G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, C. Cohen, Francis Neale, and Mimmermus, and one by the late J. M. Wheeler. This publication ought to be purchased by all Freethinkers. The price is only three-pence, and whatever profit accrues from the sale goes into the N.S.S. exchequer.

The West Ham Branch held a meeting on Sunday morning

in aid of the Tom McCarthy Fund. A large audience assembled at the Grove, Stratford, and Mr. E. Leggatt delivered a highly appreciated lecture on "Tom McCarthy: Secularist and Worker." The collection, mostly, of course, in coppers, realised £1 7s. 1d. Many back numbers of the *Freethinker* were distributed at the meeting.

The *Yarmouth Mercury* gives a good report of the excellent lecture delivered by Mr. J. M. Headley in the Freethinkers' Hall on Thomas Paine. It is instructive reading for the East Englanders.

The American Secularists have been holding their Annual Congress at Boston in the Paine Memorial Hall, and we expect to receive reports of the proceedings shortly. It is to be hoped that the Freethinkers of the United States will rally round their flag and fight valiantly against the common enemy. Ingersoll's death was a great blow to the cause, but that is no reason for inactivity; on the contrary, it is a reason for increased effort. The many must share amongst them the labors of Hercules.

Ingersoll's *Reply to Gladstone*, handsomely printed, is now again on sale at Mr. Forder's. This is the first pamphlet issued by the new Freethought Publishing Company, Limited. The next issue will be another edition of the *Mistakes of Moses*, which has long been out of print. Messrs. Foote and Ball's *Bible Handbook*, which has also been out of print for some time, is also going through the press again.

Mr. Francis Neale contributes the opening article in the December number of the *Literary Guide*. The most noticeable among the other contents of this publication is an interesting article by Mr. Edward Clodd on the late Grant Allen.

A Shakespeare Letter!

ANTI-SEMITISM and learning, not to say humor, evidently don't travel together, if we may credit a capital story forwarded by the Vienna correspondent of the *Morning Post*: "The *Wiener Bezirksbote*, a local Anti-Semitic paper, recently urged its readers to see the production of *The Merchant of Venice* at one of the Vienna theatres, in order that they might realise how their great countryman, Grillparzer, had pictured Shylock, the type of the evil Jew. A local wag thereon addressed the following letter to the editor of the *Bezirksbote*, who is described as member of a suburban school board:—

Dear Mr. Editor,—Will you kindly state in the next number of your valued paper that *The Merchant of Venice* was written, not by Grillparzer, but by me? A wretched Liberal like Grillparzer could never have produced a piece of such evident Anti-Semitic tendency.—Thanking you in advance for the correction, yours, etc., WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.—Vienna, November, 1899.

The *Bezirksbote*, incredible as it may appear, fell into the trap, and published, in all seriousness, the letter. An explanatory editorial note says: "It was an error to attribute *The Merchant of Venice* to Grillparzer, but we trust that Mr. Shakespeare will be satisfied with our above acknowledgment."

Testimonial to Mr. John Fagan.

W. Davey, 2s.; Kendall and Dent, 10s.; George Shipton, 5s.; George Kempton, 5s.; W. Jaevons, 10s.; A. J. Hooper, 1s.; R. M. Morrell, 5s.—GEORGE WRIGHT, Treasurer, Bradlaugh Club, 36 Newington Green-road, N.

William Steel, the banker who died recently in San Rafael, California, leaving an estate of \$100,000, of ten expressed an aversion to ministers, and his will just filed for probate proves that he meant just what he said. The closing paragraph reads: "And I make the special request that my body be cremated, and that not one copper coin of the income of my estate be expended upon, or in, any chapel or church, or upon the support or encouragement, directly or indirectly, of any so-called minister of the Gospel, or on missionaries of any sect, for the whole of the tribe for whom I entertain a sincere, well-founded, and unconquerable aversion, because, during my lifetime, I found that both the men and the women preachers did not know about what they were talking."

Who can compute what the world loses in the multitude of promising intellects combined with timid characters who dare not follow out any bold, vigorous, independent train of thought, lest it should land them in something which would admit of being considered irreligious or immoral?—*John Stuart Mill*.

Thomas Paine.

BY COLONEL INGERSOLL.

(Concluded from page 764.)

AND I remember, when there was something the matter with my throat, I got a letter from a Presbyterian minister, who took the pains to tell me that he had read in a paper that I had cancer of the throat; he then called my attention to the fact that it was probably a judgment of God for the blasphemies I had uttered. And I wrote back to him, good-naturedly—I always feel that way towards clergymen—I have the feeling that they are doing the best they know how. So I wrote back to him that I shouldn't wonder if he were right; and if it turned out that it was the judgment of God, I should never blame him—never; that if I were in God's place, probably I should kill any man that I could not answer.

In justice to that man, I suppose I ought to add that he wrote me another letter taking the first one all back. But such was the belief; and if the Church could have answered the *Age of Reason*, it would have satisfied itself simply by attacking the book—that would have been enough. It was because it could not answer the book that it attacked the man. And that is what the Church has always done. I do not say it has been dishonest. I don't know how it will account for its acts. But it has always done that way. And there is something to me remarkable in the constitution of a religious falsehood. What health it has! How hard it is to kill! After you think it is dead, the rose of health will bloom in its cheeks again. It will lie in a comatose condition, like a frozen serpent, and all at once, in the sunshine of opportunity, it crawls. It will lie hidden for years, waiting for the moment of resurrection—waiting for orthodox lips, that it may be born once again. And it is always born again—yes, sir, I have never known a religious lie to die.

Only the other day, in a paper in this city, appeared the old story that when Thomas Paine died he was in agony and terror; that he called upon Christ to have pity on his soul; that he confessed to some girl that the devil must have had a hand in writing the *Age of Reason*; that he wished the books had all been burned. Now, that was told only the other day; written—published by a minister of the gospel—one who has been duly ordained, and I have no doubt he believes every word of it—undoubtedly he believes it, because he wants it that way.

But the facts are exactly the other way. And is it not wonderful that all these gentlemen rely so much on what they call the evidences of death? Hundreds of murderers die in this country on the gallows without a quiver—with the utmost courage; and I have never known one of those deaths to be quoted in favor of murder—never; and yet it would be just as sensible. A man goes to the stake and dies for his opinion. That is not the slightest evidence that his opinion was correct. It simply demonstrates the sincerity of the man and the courage of his heart, not the correctness of his opinion. And if every Christian in the world was frightened at death when he dies, it would not tend to prove the truth of any miracle in the Bible, or the falsity of any miracle in the Bible. The thing is not evidence in that case.

So the same story was told of Voltaire in the same paper here the other day—that he had died in the utmost terror. Now, it has been denied—not only that, but it has been demonstrated a thousand times—that it is utterly false. But it will come up again next spring along with the grass. The intelligent ministers, however, won't use it—that is, not when they are preaching in their own pulpit; if they go out in the country, they may. And it is a very curious thing the way that is done. When a thing gets too idiotic to be preached in the pulpit it is handed down to the Sunday-school superintendent and taught to the children. When it is too absurd for the children we give it to the missionaries, or send it down South for the colored brethren.

In other words, we do with our theories—with our religions—as we do with our clothes: when they get out at the elbows and knees, and when we cannot get

them cleaned and revamped, or mended, to look decent, why, then, we have charity enough to give them to some other fellow. So we find the religious teachings of the day charitably distributed—going from the highest, as they call themselves, down, down, down, until they strike those who for the first time hear “glad tidings of great joy.”

Now, all that Thomas Paine endeavored to do—and it seems like a small matter—was to make this world fit to live in. That is what he was trying to do. He was trying to keep the organized few from living upon the agony and toil of the unorganized many. He did his very best to exalt in the bosom of every man his idea of the dignity of man—his idea of the value of liberty and opportunity—his idea of culture, of education; raising, day by day, the standard of human endeavor. That is what he tried to do. He tried to change kings and lords and dukes into the servants of the sovereign people. That is what he endeavored to do. And in the world of religion he tried to do, if possible, still more.

In the one case he wished to preserve the individual rights of the man by the preservation of a Republican government—of real, pure democracy, as nearly pure in form as the character of the people would permit. But in the world of religion he knew that each man was a sovereign; that in that world there should be no government except the government of reason, of persuasion, of logic. He knew that in the world of thought each brain should wear the crown and tiara of sovereignty and the robe of purple. He knew that in that world only the man was a good citizen who gave every right that he claimed for himself to every other human being. He also knew that in that great republic of mind only those were traitors who resorted to brute force. And so Thomas Paine said: “Let every man think for himself; let him have his own idea of the divine being; let him worship as his heart prompts.”

Upon that subject he said as great a thing as man has ever said: “When you say that man shall only worship God in one way, by that law you say that God shall receive worship only in one way.” No greater utterance ever fell from lips upon that subject. You have no right, if there be a God, to say what worship he shall receive; and Thomas Paine said: “If there be a God, his heart goes out to all his children in this world, and, consequently, it is his will that they should all be free; that they should all be happy.”

And all I contend for in this world is that every man is entitled to the work of his hands; every man is entitled to the harvest of his brain; and it is the duty of every man to give his honest thought to every being who has the right to ask it. That is all. That is all. That is all the religion we need in this world, or any other. There may be another—and everybody who is now living wishes to keep on living. Hope is not based on evidence. There is a vast deal of hope where there is no evidence. There has been a good deal of hope when the evidence was the other way on a great many questions in this world. And I suppose it can truthfully be said that hope is the only universal liar who never loses his reputation for veracity. Hope always tells a good story—always paints on the canvas of the future a beautiful picture. And I would do nothing by word or act—I would do nothing anyway—to take from the sky the smallest hope that ever shed a ray of light in the human heart; not one.

If this universe only could be as I wish it were—and maybe it is—I would like to know—nothing could fill me with greater joy than to know that for every sorrow suffered here there is to be a joy somewhere. Nothing would give me greater delight than to know that every tear that sorrow has ever shed will at last become prismatic, and that we will see the beautiful bow upon the dark cloud of death. Nothing would give me greater joy than to know that there is some world where innocence will always be a perfect shield; some world where justice will triumph; some world where truth can enter the ring naked and conquer all comers; some world in which the good man cannot be slandered and maligned; some world in which every heart can be known as it absolutely is. And if there be such a world, in its shining streets, or by its winding streams of joy, you will never meet a grander soul, a braver soul, than once inhabited the clay of Thomas Paine.

And so I say, let us do what we can to destroy the phantoms of ignorance and superstition. Let us do what we can to take from the heart these weeds and thorns; and let us be happy here, and be happy here by making others so. Let us enjoy to-day without regretting having lost yesterday, and without fearing that we may lose to-morrow. Let us enjoy this green strip of flowering earth, called the present, stretching between the two great eternal deserts—the past and the future. Let us enjoy that strip of verdure. Let us enjoy the flowers that bloom upon it. And if there be another world, I will be just as happy when we get there as any fellow in this world or in that; and if there be no such, we will have enjoyed this. While I live I want to be free. That is what Thomas Paine wanted to be—not only free, but he wanted to be free to do good; because the more liberty you have, the more obligation there is upon you.

And this man (I can hardly stop speaking about him) said another thing: “Any system of religion that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system.” Nothing was ever said better than that. And this same man made a creed for himself.

That man was brave enough to write and fight for liberty here—brave enough in the shadow of the guillotine to say in the French Chamber: “Let us destroy monarchy, not the man”—great enough to say: “It was his misfortune to be a king.”

I want you just to think of the diameter and of the circumference of that splendid expression, made under those circumstances. I want you to see just how splendid and noble this man was; and then I want you to know that all the men who have ever maligned and slandered him, from that day to this, compared with him are vermin. And yet I don't blame them; they have done the best they know. It is our duty to tell them who Thomas Paine was. That man, after having done all that he did, received nothing from the United States, for many, many years, except scorn, derision, contempt, falsehood, slander. And the Church has been like a coiled viper on the grave of Thomas Paine since 1809—like a coiled viper, and whoever has attempted to defend him it has attacked.

There is another little thing connected with this, and I am going to say a word about myself. The first speech I ever made in public was an address at a Sunday-school celebration, when the other man didn't come; and in that speech I defended the memory of Thomas Paine. I made use of the first chance I had. I am the friend of every human being who has been the friend of man, no matter where he lived, in what age or time. Every man who has lifted his voice for human rights, I am his friend. Every man who has defended freedom of thought, I am his admirer to-night. And every man who has endeavored to enslave his fellows, and every man who has persecuted his fellow-men, I hate with all my heart and soul; and yet, if they were alive, the only injury I would do them would be to enlighten them. What would the world have been without these men—without such men as Voltaire, one of the noblest men who ever lived, and whose name I never see and never repeat without a thrill—never? I think of a soldier, with a plume over his helmet, riding to a walled city, demanding surrender; and I see the hosts of superstition on the beleaguered walls, and I see them with a white flag in their trembling hands. Voltaire, Thomas Paine—take the two, and they did more for human liberty than any other two men who ever lived.

Now, all I want is for you to know the truth—and in a little while it will be published—about Thomas Paine; and after that book has been published by Mr. Conway,* and sufficient time has elapsed for intelligent people to read it, then, when any occupant of a pulpit tells the old lies again, I intend to hold him responsible—at least, by calling his attention to the fact; and I want everyone who hears me to-night to make up his and her mind—especially her mind—that from this night forth you will always have the womanhood and the manhood to defend the memory of the friend of man, Thomas Paine.

* The life of Thomas Paine, by Moncure D. Conway, is the best life of Paine that was ever published, and ought to be owned by every Freethinker. The price, in two volumes, is 2rs.

Was it a Tragedy?

WE are told by writers on the history of law that the original mode of selecting a jury was different from the present. Instead of selecting disinterested persons who knew nothing of the case to listen to the testimony and decide between litigants, the court selected for jurors those who did know about the case—that is, the witnesses and the jurors were the same persons. Taking the most favorable view of the pretended evidence of the crucifixion of Jesus, the jury was selected in this way. Now, without considering the authenticity of the Gospels, paying no attention to the fact that they were written long subsequent to the alleged occurrence of the events, when, where, or by whom is wholly a matter of conjecture, we will take the statement made by the imaginary witnesses, introduced by the writers of the Gospels, just as if they were real testimony, and see how the case would stand, tested by modern rules of evidence, under the charge of a modern intelligent judge, and before an intelligent jury. Let us concede, then, all that can be claimed, that Jesus was crucified, was actually ascertained to be dead, and was placed in a room which had been prepared for a sepulchre. Then let us consider the fact that the person who is thus proved to have been killed appears before the jury alive and well. What, we ask, in such a case would be the charge of a modern judge, and what the verdict of a modern jury?

Suppose, for instance, that in the late Cronin murder case, after the body of the murdered man had been identified, the fact that he had been murdered established, and the parties who committed the murder duly convicted, Dr. Cronin had presented himself before the jury alive and well, would not the verdict have been acquittal? Would any sane judge listen for a moment to the plea that the murdered man, though alive and well to-day, was dead yesterday? Is not the fact that a man is alive and well now, with appetite unimpaired, good and sufficient proof, regardless of all testimony to the contrary, that the man has not been dead? In every case where persons have been convicted and executed for murder, and afterwards the parties proved to have been murdered have turned up alive, has it not been universally agreed that an injustice has been done, and that the convicted parties were innocent? Yet we have one hundred and three thousand preachers and priests in this country making a living on the strength of an alleged murder of a man some nineteen centuries ago, which man, according to their own record, was seen alive and well only a few days after the murder. And not only identified in one case by eleven of the twelve original jurors, and in another case by twelve of the eleven, but also by more than five hundred witnesses at once.

How many thousands of Jews and Gentiles have the Christians killed on account of this alleged murder, and every one of them has remained dead until this day. And, by the way, this is the great objection most of us have to being killed. We know that we shall remain dead. That is what makes the tragedy of death. Our dear ones never come back. Our aching eyes peer into the darkness in vain until they are blinded with tears. Our ears have vainly listened to catch the faintest sound that might come back to us out of the eternal silence, until we are persuaded that Job was right when he declared: "They shall never waken out of their sleep till the heavens be no more."

Let us shed no tears over gods or men who can be killed and then get up in a day or two, as little harmed as if just awakened out of a peaceful sleep. If I could be sure of coming to life again, I would not only be willing to die to save the world, but would die a thousand such deaths to give eternal happiness to one human being.

In giving an account of the crucifixion, the Gospel writers made every effort to make it an effective tragedy. Jesus is presented to us in abject terror in anticipation of death. He came into the world for the express purpose of dying upon the cross, and realising that such death was absolutely necessary in order that any of the inhabitants of the world might be saved from eternal agonies; yet, when it comes to the test, he prays God to release him from performing the task which he had been appointed to perform from the foundations of the world. In anticipation of death, in his abject terror, he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood; and cried out on the cross, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet what was such a holy terror in anticipation amounted to but very little when he came to realise it. In a few hours he was around again alive and well, with appetite unimpaired, exhibiting the very wounds which it was claimed were mortal, and asking people to stick their fingers into the prints of the nails in his hands and feet, and to thrust their hands into his side and prod around among his vitals, and satisfy themselves that this was the very wound inflicted by the Roman soldier to make certain that he was dead.

Shakespeare knew how to write a tragedy in accordance with the fitness of things. In the climax of the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*, the corpse of Caesar had the good taste to remain quiet while Mark Antony displayed the wounds made by his cruel assassins. If there be a case in the world where the very nature of things requires a division of labor, it is this. But in the tragedy of the crucifixion the corpse prances around and displays its own wounds. This is not a tragedy,

but a farce. Yet, in the presence of their own dead, who never come back, the whole world, for eighteen centuries, have been called upon to shed their choicest tears on account of the death of a man who, it is claimed, only stayed dead one day and a part of two nights.

—D. Priestley, in "Torch of Reason."

Another Ingersoll Fable.

Two weeks ago there was to this column admitted, for the sake of argument, some of the work of the Rev. Dr. Parkhurst's imagination, conceived as follows:—

"The late Robert Ingersoll, while in Mr. Beecher's study at one time, saw a large globe standing on his table—a globe that showed in elegant outlines the contour of the earth's continents and seas.

"That is a fine globe you have there, Mr. Beecher. Who made it?" was Mr. Ingersoll's inquiry.

"Oh, nobody," answered Mr. Beecher."

The story is a fabrication, and whoever is deceived thereby is not wise; but the telling of it has had interesting consequences.

Parkhurst's sermon was reported by the *Journal*, and the preacher soon received a clipping, accompanied by this note:—

Oct. 14.
REV. DR. PARKHURST. My Dear Sir,—Will you have the goodness to inform me your authority for the enclosed? My father never visited Mr. Beecher, and no such conversation ever took place. Sincerely yours,
MAUD R. INGERSOLL.

Here, it will be perceived, is a daughter appealing to the goodness of a minister for information which he gives evidence of possessing as to the identity of somebody who has been lying about her father. How does he respond? I quote the answer to her letter:—

New York, Oct. 16, '99.
133 East 35th st.

DEAR MISS INGERSOLL,—I should be very sorry if I had in any way wronged Mr. Ingersoll, and can hardly suppose that I have. I shall not question the accuracy of your statement, of course; and, although I cannot at the moment lay my hand upon my authority for the quotation, yet I know that when what purported to be the truth of the matter was brought to me I judged it to be amply authenticated.....Yours very sincerely,
C. H. PARKHURST.

Where I have inserted periods Dr. Parkhurst wrote over two sides of a note sheet, to demonstrate that, because an Agnostic frequently inquires who made things, it was done by Colonel Ingersoll no wrong to say he asked Beecher who made the globe aforesaid, although, in fact, such an incident never occurred. This is all to be admitted. It is no reproach to say that the Colonel inquired the name of a globe manufacturer, but to suppress his rejoinder when Beecher is alleged to have given the question a theological twist is to carry the idea that he got squelched; and so to leave the matter is unfair. Colonel Ingersoll was quite capable of meeting the crisis sprung upon him by the gaiety of Mr. Beecher. None knew better than he how to distinguish between the evidences of design seen in a manufactured article and those visible in the raw material of the universe. The difference is not lost sight of by Christians when purchasing goods, which are only pieces of the universe in detail, but when they are looking at the world from a religious point of view they class it with wares from Germany, which are all made.

Dr. Parkhurst's "quotation," as he calls his little invention, furnishes another example of the way religious mythology is propagated. Hit by a bright idea, the preacher summoned Ingersoll and Beecher to stage it. He might have employed some unnamed Agnostic, in which case the fraud might have escaped detection, but the impressiveness of the tale would be lost. Once a gospel writer wanted to give a conspicuous example of temptation resisted, and had the devil offer the son of God all the kingdoms of the world as an inducement to be bad. The two cases are similar in nature, and one is as true as the other.

—George Macdonald, in the *New York Truthseeker*.

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forster will send them on application.
- (5) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

Correspondence.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR.—The *Freethinker*, of all papers, is certainly the most liberal-minded, otherwise the article signed "Chilperic" on General Oliver Cromwell, in a recent issue, would not appear, knowing, as I well do, that the editor is a rigid Republican and a great admirer of the immortal Oliver.

Cromwell, like Christ, has been much written upon, and perhaps all that can be said both for and against has been done long ago. But the thing that surprises me most is, how any man of intellectual distinction can be so blinded as to compare the actions and character of Cromwell with such men as Charles I., Napoleon I., and others of that ilk. It seems to me that "Chilperic" has taken a violent dislike to Cromwell because he was a Christian; but men are known principally by their actions, and not so much by their professions. Cromwell laid the foundation of liberty of thought in England, and no man was prosecuted for conscience sake. Under Cromwell the Jews were given full citizenship, and those previously banished were allowed to return. True, such men as Hampden and Ireton, soldiers, and Prynne, the lawyer, were of no less importance than Cromwell himself. But Hampden fell early in a skirmish at Chalgrove Field, and someone had to continue the noble work already begun; and no better man could be found than Oliver, though several were tried, among others being Fairfax, who was a dreadful failure on account of past sympathy with the king.

"Chilperic" says Cromwell used his power for his own advantage. If this was so, it is only a very natural thing to do; but, for my part, I fail to see the point. Cromwell died poor, and Richard, his son, died in abject poverty. Further, he certainly does not look like using the great power he possessed for his own selfish gratification. Much, too, is made of the fact that Bear-baiting, and other vile amusements, took place in Cromwell's time. True, these were institutions created by the ruling classes long before Cromwell's time, and to stop such things suddenly would have created a further revolution. The King, Charles I., used to spend his Sundays at such entertainments, as also others of a vile nature.

"Chilperic" says freedom of the Press was destroyed. Surely this is a mistake. Some persons, undoubtedly, were interfered with because they tried to incite the public mind to assassinate Cromwell. One scamp went so far as to print a tract to prove that the killing of Cromwell was not wrong, but noble, in the sight of God. It was edited "Killing no Murder," and advocated the removal of Cromwell by any means. Under Charles I., this vile creature would have been hung; under Cromwell and the Commonwealth he was simply stopped, and much greater punishment would be meted out to any person who so advocated the removal of others, had his faults. But, take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again.

A statue is at last exhibited in the public street to England's great citizen, soldier, and ruler in this business. The House of Lords has made itself ridiculous, and certain nincompoops of that House, who would have been afraid of him in his life, have reviled him in death. John Morley, during the Cromwell statue-debate in the Commons, said Cromwell needed no statue—his work was sufficient for all time. And those of us who recognise the great liberty he won for us from tyrant kings and wicked men should hand down to our children, with honor and love, his name. THOMAS DUNBAR.

Obituary.

With deep regret we have to record the death of John McGregor, in his 77th year, an old Freethinker and member of the N. S. S., and who for many years never missed a meeting. He was at business almost till the last, went to his bed on the 21st inst., then fell asleep to rest for ever. Mr. Brown conducted the service at the house, and at the Pears' Hill Cemetery. The service was something new there.—JOHN F. DUNBAR, Edinburgh.

I am aware that the assumed instinctive belief in God has been used by many persons as an argument for his existence. But this is a rash argument, as we should thus be compelled to believe in the existence of many cruel and malignant spirits, only a little more powerful than man; for the belief in them is far more general than in a beneficent Deity.—Darwin. We reverence grey-headed doctrines; though feeble, decrepit, and within a step of dust; and on this account uphold opinions which have nothing but our charity to fathers, as if their opinions were entailed upon us as their lands.—Joseph Glanville.

The End of the World.

THE stupid Bible writers foretold the end of the world, and that, too, within their own day. Crowds of early Christians believed the rubbish, and looked forward with terror to the approaching end of all things. Again and again in the early Christian centuries this craze drove Christendom mad; the madness culminated at the end of the tenth century, and as the year 1000 approached the priests and monks did a roaring trade. Rich fools and affluent sinners parted with all they had, and robbed and beggared their families and slaves in the vain hope of saving their worthless souls; for priest and monk did their best to make their dupes believe that the world would not survive that year. It appears that a similar craze has recently broken out and become epidemic in Novgorod in Russia. The peasants in entire villages have, it is said, commenced to sell their goods, have ceased to till their lands, and taken to drink very badly. They expect the world to be burnt to a cinder, November 13, a prophet named Falb having foretold this catastrophe. The government are doing their best to suppress his prophetic pamphlet. Now, if the New Testament had been destroyed on its first appearance, what a world of misery and horrors mankind would have escaped! What is the use of putting down cranky pamphlets so long as the Bible circulates as an inspired book? That is the root of the poison tree; and so long as it remains and is revered prophets and expounders will arise and "deceive many." We must kill the root. That is our work, Freethinkers, and we must do it. We must teach people to despise that trumpery, lying, mischievous book, the New Testament; by so doing we destroy a thousand ills in one. —Joseph Symes, in the "Liberator."

A gentleman from a neighboring town in Mississippi told the following recently: "I walked into a small store the other day, and found the proprietor lying on the counter just dozing off into a sleep. He roused himself on my approach, and, jumping to the floor, quoted the familiar line: 'A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!' 'Where did you get that?' I asked. 'Oh, don't you know? That's what Absalom said when his horse ran under the tree, and left him hanging by the hair to a limb. I thought everybody knew where that came from.'" (See 2 Sam. xviii. 9.)

"My old aunt holds it to be wicked for a minister to joke." "I dunno whether it could quite be called wicked, but generally it is awful painful."—*Indianapolis Journal*.

"Can't the denominations of this town get together?" inquired the exhorter in Kentucky. "Get together!" answered the man with court-plaster on the ear. "Why, it takes eleven deputy sheriffs to keep 'em apart!"

A Scotchman, Sir Edward Russell says, was asserting that all the great poets were of his nation. "Well, but," said one, "how about Shakespeare? You cannot say that he was a Scotchman." To which the other replied: "His talents would justify the supposition."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Defeat of the Cross."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, G. T. Reynolds' Dramatic Company in "The New Boy."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Dance and Entertainment.

KINGSLAND: 12, Meeting at Bradlaugh Club. NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Leighton Hall, Leighton-crescent, Kentish Town): 7, Harry Snell, "Zola, the Realist."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion on "God and the Ethical Movement," opened by G. Spiller; 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "The Three Great Phases of Western Civilisation"; 3, The Ethical."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Empress Rooms, Royal Palace Hotel, High-street, Kensington, W.): 11, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Need of a New Party."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): G. Tooth—11, "Individualism"; 7, "Malthusianism."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday School; 7, W. Heaford, "Some Fallacies of Theism."

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, W. Fletcher, "Patriotism." EDINBURGH (Moulders' Hall, 105 High-street): 6.30, Mr. Bayleff, "Medical Fallacies."

GATESHEAD (Co-operative Hall, Whitehall-road); H. Percy Ward—11, "Man's Reason and God's Revelation"; 3, "Ingersoll and his Gospel"; 7, "The Madness of War."

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, J. Henson, "Men who Face Death: Our Lifeboat Men." (With lantern illustrations.)

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, F. J. Gould, "Voltaire."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, A lecture. MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, "Women and Children, and the Church." (Lantern views.)

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "How Christianity Began"; 3, "The Other Side of Religion"; 7, "What are Secularists Aiming At? An Answer to the Query." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7 "Patriotism, Militarism, and Imperialism: A Review."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—December 3, Sheffield; 10, Hull; 17, Leicester; 31, Birmingham.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—December 17, Birmingham.

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