

THE Freethinker

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Dreyfus and God.

Five Years of My Life. By ALFRED DREYFUS. Translated from the French by James Mortimer. (London: George Newnes.)

CAPTAIN DREYFUS has just published to the civilised world the story of his awful martyrdom. The method he has adopted is characteristic of the man. The bulk of the book consists of letters written by him to his wife, and letters from her to him, and the brief diary which he kept on the Devil's Island. There is a short introduction, penned with soldierly concision, and a still shorter account of his landing in France, his second trial at Rennes, and his release by a "pardon" from the French Government. The book is thus perfectly honest and faithful. There is no straining after effect, no attempt at story-telling. The facts, and the emotions they excited at the time, are allowed to tell their own story. After reading the book through most carefully—its tragic intensity does not invite skipping—we retain the impression that Captain Dreyfus is a very remarkable man; a man of heart and brains and indomitable will. We also feel that Lucie Dreyfus is an adorable woman, and that her husband is one of the most fortunate of men, in spite of all his unspeakable sufferings.

"Unspeakable" is the only word for this man's sufferings. Words fail to express one's feelings as the terrible panorama unrolls itself. One shrinks with horror and disgust. The earth shrivels, the sky blackens, the universe becomes a prison and a tomb. Whoever can read this book without tears is more or less than a man. Treated like a wild beast, subjected to every conceivable outrage and indignity, condemned to silence when a word of sympathy would have been like a drop of water on the parching tongues of the damned, yet denied the poor consolation of a moment's solitude with his own grief; exposed to cold and heat, to hunger and thirst, buried alive in a hut under a fierce tropical sun, shut within it without an hour's relief sometimes for weeks and sometimes for months, chained down to his wretched bed by night when sick with fever; kept for long periods without anything to read, robbed of letters sent to him by his devoted wife, and finally having only copies given him of the letters that were allowed to reach him, thus being deprived of the solace of the sight of her dear handwriting; surely it is astonishing that he survived the tremendous ordeal, that any flesh and blood, animated by the sublimest fortitude, could hold this unconquerable will to live.

"What martyrdom for an innocent man; certainly greater than that of any of the Christian martyrs"—Captain Dreyfus says on one terrible page of his diary. And he was right. "Internal pains almost continually." "These sleepless nights are awful." So it went on day after day, year after year. What is death to this? For a parallel to it one has to go back to the seven-years' Gethsemane of Bruno in his dungeon of torture, before he was led out to the welcome relief of his fiery doom.

What a sarcasm is the dogma of infinite benevolence! Is it possible that God looked down and did nothing? Lucie Dreyfus prayed for her husband, little Pierre Dreyfus prayed for his father's return. The poor child said his prayer twice, so that God might hear and understand. But the martyr himself was under no such illusion. Witness the following passage from his diary. It is December 3, and he has not yet received the October mail:—

"This is a gloomy day, with ceaseless rain. My head is bursting, my heart is broken. The air is thick and
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heavy, the sky black as ink. A genuine day of death and burial. How often there recurs to my mind that exclamation of Schopenhauer, at the spectacle of human iniquity: 'If God created the world, I would not be God.'"

God "winked," to use a Bible expression, and the tragedy went on to the bitter end—at least as far as he was concerned. But happily there was a gallant band of men in France, nearly all of them Freethinkers, and the chiefs Atheists, who were fighting the martyr's battle, and fighting it against the friends of God. How they fought, and how they won, is one of the most inspiring things in modern history. And they were battling for more than the life and honor of one man, or the fame of a single family. They were leagued for the triumph of truth, justice, and humanity.

What supported Captain Dreyfus through his martyrdom? He knew nothing of what was being done for him in Paris. That information was denied him, and he had to draw hope and resolution from other sources. There was his own honor, as a loyal soldier and a true son of France. He kept saying to himself: "If I die, I shall be the eternal victim of this wicked conspiracy. I shall be buried as an execrated traitor. I must therefore live. That is the first indispensable condition. Whatever happens, I must live to the last dregs of my strength." Then came the thought of his children. He loved them fervently. They were his joy and his pride. He would not have them burdened with a legacy of infamy. Nor should his wife's name be blasted. He would live, live, to vindicate his honor for their sakes, even though he could do no more. That in itself was worth all the struggle and all the torture. But sometimes the fight was too hard, and the all-wearied man longed for the everlasting sleep of death. Out of the lethargy, however, he always sprang erect, alert, and quivering, with the cry of "Lucie, Pierre, Jeanne!" upon his lips.

"In the frequent moments when my disgust for all around me makes my senses reel, three names, which I murmur low, reawaken my energy and ever give me new strength—Lucie, Pierre, Jeanne!.....My nerves trouble me so that I am afraid to lie down. This unbroken silence, with no news of my dear ones for three months, with nothing to read, crushes and overwhelms me. I must rally all my strength to resist always and yet again; I must murmur low those three words which are my talisman: Lucie, Pierre, Jeanne!"

It is like a monomania, but what a noble one! Clearly the attempt was made to push him into suicide. Agony and humiliation were heaped upon him to that end. But the sacred talisman saved him. The holy angels of deliverance smiled upon him through their tears, and the faltering man nerved himself for another wrestle with the powers of darkness. What a tribute is all this to the natural resources of virtue! It is only when we are not in earnest for the right that we need help from above.

From first to last the voice of Lucie Dreyfus was an inspiration. That she should cling to her husband in his adversity was natural to her wifehood. That she should encourage him so nobly was a speciality of her own character. Here is an extract from her first letter to him after his condemnation:—

"I know how brave you are, I admire you. You are an unhappy martyr. I entreat you, bear these new tortures bravely still. Our life, the fortune of all of us, shall be devoted to seeking out the guilty. We will find them—we must! You shall be rehabilitated. We have spent five years of absolute happiness; we must live on the remembrance of it; one day justice will be done, and we shall be happy again; the children will love you.

We will make of your son a man like yourself; I could not choose a better example for him."

Weeks later she writes again:—

"The dignity and willingness with which you accept martyrdom for my sake and the sake of our children are superhuman; I am proud of bearing your name, and when my children are old enough to understand, they will be grateful to you for the sufferings that you have endured for them."

"If great misfortunes are the touchstone of noble souls," Captain Dreyfus wrote to his wife long afterwards, "then, oh, my darling, yours is one of the most beautiful and noble souls of which it is possible to dream."

We pause here for a moment to say that Captain Dreyfus managed to learn English while on the Devil's Island. He was able to understand Shakespeare during that tragic period, reading him over and over again, and especially appreciating *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Whatever experiences of life we have, merry or sad, joyous or terrible, we find that the genius of Shakespeare had been there before us. That the martyr of the Devil's Island found refreshment in him is a tribute to Shakespeare; and, on the other hand, it is a tribute to the martyr himself.

Returning to our more immediate subject, we have to bear in mind the title of this article, which defines its special purpose. We say that this story of Captain Dreyfus should be read by Freethinkers. In its way it is one of the sacred books of humanity. It enshrines a love of husband and wife, and of both for their children, which is infinitely precious. Amidst the sordid follies and shallow sentimentalities of too much of human life, a story like this, with its beauty, and power, and pathos, stands out like an heroic landmark, hinting the way to those who have lost their road wandering from the true life of humanity. And it reminds us that our strength lies within us; that we feel it most, not when on our knees before an idol, but when on our feet bearing the tasks of the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Main Object of Christianity.

THE claims urged on behalf of Christianity by its orthodox adherents are as numerous as they are arbitrary. If the question is asked, What is the principal object of the faith? the general answer will be, The salvation of man's soul. But other replies would depend largely upon the sect to which the questioned one belonged. Apart from this alleged soul salvation, professed Christians appear to judge the object of Christ's mission from the standpoint of the particular denomination to which they are attached. To them the New Testament seems to be a kind of mirror, which reflects their own peculiar ideas as to the nature of Christ, his mission, and his views. Hence the contradictory character of the doctrines and teachings which are supposed to be based upon portions of this same book.

As showing the fallacy of Christian claims, let us take the orthodox boast that the object of Christianity was to regenerate the world politically, socially, and morally. We have read much in theological literature about Christianity having transformed human thought and feeling to such an extent that governments, laws, and social customs have been revolutionised through its influence. It has actually been said that we are indebted to Christianity for general liberty, personal freedom, the elevation of woman, political and social advancement, the purification of literature, and the cultivation of art. To this we reply that the New Testament nowhere states that the object of Christianity was to produce a political and social condition of society such as secular reformers are striving to secure to-day; and, further, we fail to discover in the book any practical injunctions for the attainment of the proper position of woman, the production of secular literature, or for the progress which has been made during the last fifty years. It does not follow, because advancement has gone on side by side with the profession of Christianity, that the improvements acquired are the result of its teachings. Before such a claim can be verified it must

be shown that modern improvements are in harmony with Christian teachings. And this is just what cannot be done, in spite of the boast of enthusiastic orthodox professors. Upon scientific, educational, and social questions, the reforms desired and sought for are the very opposite to Bible teachings.

It may be fairly urged that, if the object of Christianity were the securing of modern reforms, it should contain the elements of secular progress; but this is not the case. Among the necessary elements of all individual and national advancement are primary consideration to the duties and requirements of this life, scientific studies, educational pursuits, intellectual freedom, and the avoidance of poverty and of the enforced adherence to traditional beliefs. The New Testament, however, has no provisions for any of these. On the contrary, many of its teachings, if acted upon, would either retard their development or prevent them altogether. Further, if the object of Christianity were what its adherents allege, why was there so little progress prior to the last century? At that period but little opposition was offered to the prevailing faith, the governments bestowed upon it ample patronage, it was backed by strong military power, and it had the willing submission of the people; and yet it failed to give the nation political justice, social rights, or to allow it freedom upon religious questions. Besides, how is it that for centuries Christianity did not improve upon the morals, science, and philosophy that obtained before its existence? Moreover, how is it that when Christians had supreme power they used it in opposition to these essential agencies of physical and mental progress? The answer is, The object of Christianity was not to teach people how to live so much as to impress upon them how to prepare to die.

The fact is civilisation, such as we have it, is not the result of Christianity, but rather of scepticism, which, as Buckle has shown, has ever been the precursor of all advancement. A sceptic is one who favors to the fullest extent free inquiry, who discountenances all ostracism and persecution for disbelief, and who is guided by reason—not by ecclesiastical authority. Scepticism implies doubt, which begets change; and that is often the prelude to advancement, which is the key to civilisation. Undoubtedly the present age is more sceptical than any preceding one, and it is also the most progressive. It is equally true that the Middle Ages were pre-eminently Christian, and at the same time thoroughly unprogressive. The legitimate inference, therefore, is—judging the tree by its fruit—that, if the object of Christianity were to promote those progressive measures which have augmented our personal comforts and our national welfare, that object has not been achieved, for nowhere do we find that the faith is acted upon or its teachings obeyed.

Judging from the New Testament, the real object of Christianity was to secure the salvation of a portion of the human race; and this could only be done, according to the book, by believing in Christ. Such belief is thought by Christians to be of more importance than aught else. Many illustrations of this may be given from the Gospels. For instance, in Luke we read that Martha complained to Jesus that too much of the domestic work was left to her, while her sister Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." "Jesus answered, and said unto her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Here we have an indication that the main object of Christianity is to prepare its believers for some other life, in preference to training them for the proper discharge of the duties of this one. This appears to us to be one of the many errors which pervade the teachings ascribed to Christ. His language was: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"; "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." It is not here a question of truth or error, or even of personal option; but absolutely of compulsory belief and the subordination of human needs to theological conjectures. When Jesus sent his disciples upon a mission of propaganda he told them to "preach the kingdom of God"; but he gave them no instructions as to the ordinary necessities

of human life (Luke ix.). Even the burial of the dead was deemed as being of no import, for Jesus said: "Let the dead bury the dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (*ibid*). This is the more unfortunate inasmuch as, although, according to the Scriptures, we *must* believe, or suffer severe penalties for not doing so, we are entirely helpless in the matter. We cannot go to Christ except the Father draw us, and we cannot even believe without his assistance. This may be described as "the head and front" of the offence of Christianity.

Not only is it true that the object of Christianity was not to aid the progress and civilisation of the world, but its influence has tended to impede human advancement. It has been found to be impossible to base a progressive society upon its teachings. For a thousand years the Christians had an opportunity to try the experiment; history, however, does not record that the effort was ever made. The one question with Christians has always been: "What must I do to be saved?" And the answer has been: "Believe or be damned."

CHARLES WATTS.

Reason and Religion.

THERE are two main defences of the contemporary religious world against the assaults of scepticism, either of which destroys the other, and one of which is self-destructive. The first is to prove that religion is eminently reasonable, and that its claims may be legitimately upheld in the face of the strictest and most logical inquiry. The second takes the form of a counter-attack, and asserts either that human reason is invalid when criticising religious beliefs, or that ultimate scientific conceptions are no more capable of demonstration than are religious beliefs, and are therefore no more reasonable. These positions are not taken up always by different individuals; the same person will often be found championing both assertions, without betraying the least consciousness of the absurdity of the situation. Thus we have the curious spectacle of the same person arguing for the "reasonableness" of his religion in the one breath, and in the next discrediting his own weapon by reasoning against the use of reason.

Historically, the use of reason in matters of religion is never discouraged so long as the reasoning is not acute enough to question the validity of religious beliefs. It is only when this happens that the discovery is made that human reason has no validity when applied to religion, just as the ordinary believer will agree to criticise his Deity so long as the verdict is favorable, but will shriek "Blasphemy!" when it is adverse. But this plea, that human reason is incompetent to judge religious beliefs, is too weak to last for any length of time, or to be of any real service in warding off attack; and so a fresh line of defence must be devised. This, as I have said, takes the form of a counter-assault. Its main features consist in an examination of fundamental scientific concepts, and a consequent triumphal conclusion that, as these do not admit of demonstration, there can be nothing illegitimate in holding to religious beliefs, in spite of the absence of anything like scientific proof.

This last position, although not by any means a new one, is yet new in the sense of its becoming an increasingly popular one. It is the dominant note of that class of books of which Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* is a fair sample; and it forms, besides, the staple of much of that flashy rhetoric and pseudo-scientific preaching that does duty in the pulpit for sound philosophising. The question is, therefore, worth discussing, as illustrating both the habits of the clerical mind and the feebleness of religious defences.

A common form of this defence is met with in the statement that, as all our actions presuppose a degree of faith, it is unreasonable to sneer at the religionist who bases his beliefs upon the same foundation. "Faith," says one writer, "is the keynote of our existence. Without it, the daily commerce of life would be impossible. Without the mutual faith of husband and wife, domestic life could not be; without faith in our neighbors' honesty and trustworthiness, society could

not exist. Our whole existence is a constant testimony to the necessity and reality of that which is looked upon by the unbeliever as a religious weakness." And the conclusion is, of course, that, as husband and wife have faith in each other (a trust not always well placed, by the bye), and as we rely upon the trustworthiness of our neighbors (a trust that is still more often at fault), therefore we ought to have faith in the existence of God, of a future life, and all the other absurdities of religious extravagance.

Now, it hardly needs much elaboration to make clear the fact that the use of the term "faith" in connection with secular matters has an entirely different meaning to the same word when used in relation to religious beliefs. There is no more resemblance between the two meanings than there is between a horse chestnut and a chestnut horse. In the first instance, our faith has its basis in the normal experience of ourselves and the race. We believe, for example, in the honesty of the average human being, because experience has shown that, on the average, men and women come up to our expectations of them. Our "faith" here is only the expression of our belief that the future will resemble the past, and is a form of the wider belief in the invariability of natural law. The use of the word in the religious sense is, on the contrary, to ask us to believe that the future will *not* resemble the past, and is a reversal of the belief in the invariability of natural processes. Experience furnishes no clear proof of the existence of God, of immortality, of virgin births, or resurrections from the dead. The faith that makes "the daily commerce of life possible" is solidly based upon our daily experience, and is only a registration of that experience. The faith called for by religion has nothing to build on, no experience to appeal to, and no results to justify the appeal. It is, of course, nothing new to find terms of double meaning employed in this manner by religious advocates; but it is, nevertheless, a good example of that mental crookedness which seems to be inseparable from religious defences.

So far the lower form of this religious attack on the sceptical position. The other form of the same argument, while it has superficially a stronger appearance, turns out on examination to be on all fours with it. All ultimate scientific and mathematical truths, it is urged, rest on an unproved and unprovable assumption. Science rests upon certain axioms concerning space, time, and number, which do not admit of proof in the ordinary sense of the word. We say that twice two equal four, that the whole is greater than the part, that an external world exists; but, if called upon to demonstrate these things, we can only point to the constitution of the human mind, and insist that, if there is to be any thinking at all, these things must be assumed to commence with. And then comes the inevitable conclusion that religion, too, rests upon an assumption, and that, therefore, the same reasoning that demolishes religious beliefs demolishes science also.

Cast into the form of a syllogism, the argument would run as follows:—

The highest form of truth—*i.e.*, mathematical truth—is based upon assumption.

Religion is based upon an assumption.

Therefore religion is one of the highest forms of truth.

Now, I do not think that it requires a skilled logician to detect the fallacy involved here, but it will be brought out more clearly by another example of the same kind of reasoning. Thus:—

The higher orders of English society do not engage in manual labor.

Tramps do not engage in manual labor.

Therefore tramps belong to the higher orders of English society.

How many schoolboys are there who would be imposed upon by such a transparent fallacy as exists in both these examples? It is the common fallacy of an undistributed middle. We assert something in the conclusion that is not warranted by the premises; or, in other words, we commence by an assertion concerning certain specified forms of truth, and then draw the illegitimate conclusion that therefore *all* alleged truths that do not admit of proof are worthy of equal credence. When one finds the leading clergymen of the country indulging in such patent absurdities, one cannot but

feel admiration for the course of training that renders those who have gone through it so impervious to common sense.

But let us see how far, and in what sense, ultimate scientific truths do not admit of demonstration. Let us take, as an example, a belief upon which all science rests—namely, the belief in the universality of cause and effect. Obviously we cannot *prove* that every phenomenon will have a cause in the future; we can only assert that, so far as human observation goes, such always has been the case. Yet not only are we all prepared to believe that every phenomenon will always have a cause, but we are actually unable to conceive the reverse being the case. We cannot think of anything beginning to be without some cause; even the Theist has to assume God when he has banished all else. Similarly with all ultimate truths of number, space, and time. The ultimate reason why we believe that $2 \times 2 = 4$, and always have done so, is because we cannot conceive it being otherwise. It is for this reason that the deepest of all truths—axioms—do not admit of discussion; they are self-evident.

Now, these truths, we are told, are assumptions. Well, they are, in the sense that we start with them as the basis of our reasoning, or that they do not admit of proof in the same manner as lesser truths do. Yet they do admit of proof, and that of the highest kind; while, far from being pure assumptions, they are at bottom the expressions of *invariable* experience. A few words will make this clear. It is a commonplace to the scientific psychologist to say that the present constitution of the human mind has been brought about by the constant interplay of organism and environment. It is equally a commonplace that in any case the demonstration of truth is only the demonstration of a harmony between our ideas of things and the things themselves. I have also pointed out that the truths referred to by clerical apologists as being assumptions are those of which it is impossible to conceive their negation. We cannot even picture the part as being greater than the whole, two straight lines enclosing a space, or that $2 \times 2 = 5$. The supernaturalist refers to this phenomenon under the question-begging phrase, "the constitution of the mind." The sanely scientific student sees in the existence of such a "constitution" proof that, as we cannot transcend experience, the existence of such ultimate truths is so many evidences of the invariable experience of the race. Our minds have developed in a universe in which such relations are constant, ever-present factors, and we cannot conceive them otherwise, because experience has failed to provide us with anything to go upon. Thus, instead of ultimate scientific and mathematical truths being assumptions incapable of proof, they are provided with the surest proof of all—the evidence of the unvarying, unbroken experience of the race.

Now, in the name of all that is reasonable, what analogy is there between truths of the order I have just outlined and religious beliefs? In the one case we believe certain things to be true because universal experience has forced these beliefs upon us, and we cannot—do what we will—divest ourselves of them. They exist substantially with all, and persist under all conditions. In the other case we can, and do, divest ourselves of religious beliefs; while our own experience, and the reading of the history of our ancestors in the light of that experience, help to explain on purely natural lines all that they explained as due to the supernatural.

Finally, in the case of scientific truths our dependence upon them is daily justified by results, the experience of each testifying to their solidity. Once established, a scientific truth may be left to take care of itself. There is no need for the same individual to be taught over again that the whole is greater than the part, or that two things that equal a third are equal to each other. Once learned, the lesson is for life, and no amount of subsequent information disturbs it.

But with religion the case is entirely different. Experience is so far from justifying it that there is needed a constant stream of artificial stimulants to keep it alive. Religious beliefs are so wide of the daily experience of each that they have to be taught not only to each individual once, but over and over again to the same person. Left alone, with all the artificial

stimulants of preaching, exhortation, elaborate church services, and fashion's prestige banished, religion would rapidly disappear from civilised society. It is hard to believe that the clergy, for the greater part, do not see this as clearly as we do. Hence their eagerness to stimulate the religious feelings by every means within their power, legitimate and illegitimate. In the hope of preventing this perpetuation of a set of outworn beliefs, I have gone into what I fear some may regard as a wearisome analysis of a stupid argument; but if it will enable one here and there to realise more clearly the uselessness of attending to professional theologians masquerading as scientific thinkers, my purpose will have been served.

C. COHEN.

The New Bishop of London.

DR. WINNINGTON INGRAM is now, after a series of ecclesiastical performances, the Bishop of London. There was rather a disgraceful scene at his confirmation at Bow Church, which seemed to suggest that he was objected to by members of his own Church. A very credible account appeared in various papers as to Dr. Ingram's appointment to the See. We know now that he was the last person who was desired by the principal people who had the disposal of the office. They didn't want him. Does London?

The Bishop of Winchester was applied to. But his health did not permit of a change. The Bishop of Rochester was invited, but he had reasons which induced him to decline. As a last resort, and to avoid a quarrel, the King and Premier decided to appoint the Bishop of Stepney—Dr. Ingram, who seems to have accepted readily enough.

But he is a poor successor to Dr. Creighton, who was something of a historian, and had great abilities in various ways. Winnington Ingram is—scholastically and oratorically—a poor successor to any Bishop of London that we can remember, and none of them were very bright and brilliant. When Dr. Temple was instituted in that office, one understood it. His educational efforts, and especially his supervision of a great national school, seemed in a sense to justify his appointment.

The Lord has been kind to Dr. Temple, who now draws £15,000 a year as Archbishop of Canterbury. But it is surely an evidence of weakness when the Church has felt itself obliged to offer the premier bishopric with £10,000 a year, and Fulham Palace and the St. James's Square House, to a man of such small parts as he who succeeds Dr. Creighton.

Winnington Ingram has made great pretences of engaging the East-end working man in controversy, and converting him to religion. Oxford House and Victoria Park are said to have been the scenes of his greatest triumphs. We can hear of no conversions through these agencies except of the imaginary "Secularist" who made a presentation cabinet, which may be taken as an evidence of belief—at any rate, in subsequent payment. This East-end Bishop has protested so strongly that one began to think he protested a trifle too much—against the idea of having to forsake his customary 'bus for a carriage, and he seems not at all decided whether he will live in Fulham Palace or the big establishment in St. James's Square, or whether he will only keep on the Palace gardens.

He has said so much about these and kindred matters that one almost began to wonder whether he would accept his ten thousand a year. But there is no doubt about that! He will take the ten thousand, and say nothing about it. But *does* it seem appropriate to the spirit of the Apostolic mode of life to accept so large an annual sum—not for distribution amongst the poor, but for personal enrichment? Or does it accord with the Gospel accounts of the example of Christ (who preached poverty) to live in palaces and ride in carriages?

One of the silliest pretences that could have been made for this episcopal carriage was to say, as Dr. Ingram said, that East-end costers might have a lift in it if they desired. As if they would ask for a lift, or as if they would get one if they did ask! A twopenny ride on a tramcar would serve just as well, and would

be more available. Carriages are useful to those who have means, but they are absolutely unessential and incongruous when the person who possesses them is a preacher of the Gospel of Christ and a supposed imitator of Christ's example. We don't expect a person to go about in our city streets arrayed in the robes which were the fashion on Galilee's shore. What we do expect is some ostensible attention to the precepts of Christ—"Blessed are the poor," "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," "Labor not for the meat which perisheth," etc. They, and others of a similar kind, are rather awkward precepts to practise; they may be counsels of perfection, but they are not easily followed—that is to say, by laymen. We expect much more from a Bishop of London. If he will be equally as frank about the expenditure of the £10,000 a year as about the carriage and his rates and taxes at Fulham, it will be possible to realise a certain element of sincerity in his statements.

In addition to what seems to be rather vulgar vamping to so-called interviewers, Dr. Ingram has written some pamphlets. They are bound in blue and green and drab, and they bear upon them most pretentious titles. They are mere leaflets—thin in contents and sense. One is called *Popular Objections to Christianity*. In fifty small pages the new Bishop of London thinks he can dispose of these objections. It is a trifle difficult to follow him through this tract and the others. He seems not to have the least desire to be understood; his sentences are long—involved. The meaning is obscure, and the grammar more than doubtful.

He starts this reply to "Popular Objections to Christianity" with some observations on miracles. His opening sentence is: "Who can deny that miracles form to-day the greatest stumbling-block to the acceptance of Christianity?" Of course they are; and no weaker attempt has been made to remove this "stumbling-block" than Dr. Ingram's effort, which is amateurish to the last degree. Referring to the laws of nature, he says "it is the easiest thing in the world to become the victim of a mere phrase." We know that, theologically. All his argument is disposed of by the fact that Freethinkers never use the term "laws of nature" as implying a lawgiver, but simply as indicating observed sequence of cause and effect.

There is a reply to nearly every sentence of this pretentious little book; also to other of these productions of Dr. Ingram. One of them is called *New Testament Difficulties*, and another *Old Testament Difficulties*; and there is one called *Church Difficulties*.

There are many difficulties in the Church. The Church is full of them. It has a wonderful facility for creating them. The new Bishop of London found this out for himself when the Kensit disturbance took place at Bow Church. The feeling there seemed to have been that Johnnie Kensit, and not Ingram, should have been made the Bishop of London. Likely enough he would have done as well.

FRANCIS NEALE.

Thomas Hardy.

"Whose end was to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

—SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet*, iii. 2).

It is with unusual pleasure that we find ourselves able to place at the head of our paper the name of a living writer of real and unmistakeable genius. Our readers will, we venture to think, recognise in his works something at once new, and not likely to be forgotten—the welcome brilliancy and spirit of the modern school, united with lasting elements of excellence, presented by no other contemporary writer, to the best of our knowledge, save only George Meredith. We rejoice to welcome in Thomas Hardy an author who has attained that true prize of envy and ambition—permanent success. The precise place Hardy will ultimately occupy among the Olympians we cannot venture to anticipate the judgment of time by deciding. But that he has gained a true and lasting success the magnificent works he has given us bear very sufficient testimony. Hardy has won his present proud position after years

of labor. His first published novel, *Desperate Remedies*, bears date as far back as "the seventies." Since that time his reputation has been steadily on the increase, until at the present he is paying the penalty of popularity in the attacks of that worst enemy to genius—the servile and self-destructive herd of imitators.

In the case of a writer like Thomas Hardy, whose works are in everyone's hand, or, better still, require only memory for the verification of a reference, criticism has a more pleasant field than when she aims at serving as a guide to lands as yet unfamiliar. In an instance like the present our office must be rather synthetic than analytic. For wishing to give our readers some idea of the justice of Hardy's title to eminence we can do no more than take a brief glance at his master-pieces, indicating rather the treasures of the land than mathematically surveying it. From *Far from the Madding Crowd* to *Jude the Obscure*—what a splendid series of novels! To glance rapidly over the range of Hardy's vision in the field he has elected to work, and to realise how many superb life-dramas he has plotted and carried out therein, is a most delightful retrospect.

The actors and actresses in these dramas are entirely human, swayed by human passions. The women, from Bathsheba to Sue Bridehead, seem transcripts from actual life. The somewhat elderly heroine—as in *Two on a Tower*—who woos a lover younger than herself, is frequent in these novels and in real experience. She is almost ignored by the circulating library writers, whose voluminous works proclaim their industry rather than their ability. The ladies in Hardy's pages are not invariably charming, but they are entirely womanly. Their moods and whims and sublimely illogical actions are depicted by a master hand. In his knowledge of "the concrete Unknowable" he is as wide and as true as Shakespeare, as modern as Meredith. He is no less successful with his male characters. Who can forget Gabriel Oak in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Dr. Fitzpiers in *The Woodlanders*, Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Angel Clare in *Tess*, or the unfortunate hero in *Jude the Obscure*?

When, like many others, one knew Hardy's novels without knowing the Wessex peasantry, the type seemed exaggerated; but a sojourn in Dorsetshire redeems them from the reproach of caricature. An acquaintance with the inhabitants shows his photographic power of reproducing life; for Hardy writes of these peasants without sentiment, and, rarer still, without patronage; with the manlier tone of kinship with the least of these that, whined as it may be by specious hypocrites, is yet the noblest truth of our common life.

More than this, the writer has sown broadcast over his work the most delightful, ironical humor. Not one of his rustics, of his working-class folk, but has a special originality, a native peasantry—jovial or sly—and a delightful cast of drollery. Few novelists have strewed over their work such abundant irony. He is, indeed, a master of the lash—as fertile as Heine, as pitiless as Gibbon, as acidulated as Renan.

Hardy has been called a pessimist. He may be so. Yet there is no lack of comedy in his novels. *The Hand of Ethelberta*, that most whimsical story, is as full of a wondrous comedy as an egg is full of meat. *The Laodicean* is somewhat more eccentric. In each a far-fetched, improbable idea is worked out with grim earnestness, and in the true spirit of the highest comedy. *Far from the Madding Crowd*, written in his happiest mood, is still his most popular work. From the oft-quoted opening description of Gabriel Oak's smile to the ringing down of the curtain it is a joy to anyone who possesses taste and perception enough to discriminate between a Molieresque humor and a riotous farce.

One can hardly recall a modern writer who cares less for poetic justice and virtue rewarded. Nemesis, indeed, dogs the guilty in his novels, as in the immortal Greek tragedies. As his characters fulfil their doom they drag the innocent to misery with them, as though they were common people in real life. In *The Woodlanders*, *Tess*, and *Jude the Obscure* tragedies "too deep for tears" grow out of trivial causes, true to the course of mundane things. *Life's Little Ironies*, a volume of short stories as perfect as anything of Maupassant, revealing some of the most delicate and perfect work of this great artist, is full of the same lesson. These

short stories are pure gems, and, as is proper, leave nothing to desire and nothing to regret.

Hardy, it is true, has, in his novels, drawn hardly anything but ordinary life. His favorite heroes are farmers, artisans, laborers, and middle-class characters. But underneath these externally dull and prosaic existences this great magician makes us behold the eternal tragedy of the human heart. We meet in his pages once more the failure of will, the calculations of egoism, pride, coquetry, overmastering passion, hatred, love, all our foibles, all our littlenesses, and all our errors. He is so clear-eyed. Small wonder that the smile on his face is so near tears.

The constant value in fiction is the manifestation of human nature. Character in action is the perennially interesting thing, and, when to character is added right emotion, then the novel may be called great. Viewed from this point of view, the work of Thomas Hardy stands fair and full above that of all but the supreme work in literature. What shapes arise as you recall it! Not sawdust dolls, not shadows, but full-bodied, full-blooded creations, moving in a living world, instinct with the fire of life. Where, in all contemporary fiction, is there nobler work than the more poignant scenes in *Tess*, or that other showing the dying Jude and the choristers, or the quiet figure of the bereaved girl in the closing scene of *The Woodlanders*, as wonderful in its way as Millet's picture of "The Angelus." In these is struck the consummate tragic note, as in the pages of Æschylus and our own Shakespeare; hearing which, ordinary men bow the head. They wring the heart as poignantly as actual, individual experience. For they are life sublimed by passing through an imagination of singular capacity and a nature of uncommon force. And to this end Hardy's pathos is no less potent than his passion. Not to know and to exult in his finest scenes is to be dead to literature, or ignorant of the great effects of modern English speech. It is impossible to read his pages without feeling ourselves won by his intense sympathy, which covers everything as the arch of heaven. We are at once moved and soothed by its vastness. It seems that he has enlarged our ideas of the world. We feel, as we put his books back in their places, that we are more at peace with ourselves, calmer in face of the problems of destiny. And, mark you, not for an instant does he cease to be an artist. By his genius he has added a wonderful chamber to the House Beautiful of Art, which will endure so long as there are English readers who care for real literature. He is one of the kings of art who can afford to ignore blame or praise, and who right royally commands our allegiance.

MIMNERMUS.

Agnosticism in India.

THERE is undoubtedly a very considerable and a growing tendency, especially among the younger educated Hindus, to Agnosticism and indifference in religious matters. This tendency, as has already been indicated, is common to all great transitional periods in the religious history of any people—especially in places where there already exists a considerable degree of intellectual and social cultivation. Japan has been passing through such a transitional period with an astonishing rapidity, and with that extreme thoroughness with which this nation has thrown itself into all the currents of modern civilisation. India is entering upon a corresponding period—more slowly and secretly, on account of its dread of breaking with its own social and religious past, and of imperilling the future condition of the souls of its multitudes. But India is certainly feeling the disintegrating power over its own religions of foreign religious beliefs and practices.

Moreover, the tendency to Agnosticism and irreligion among the natives of India is just now undoubtedly much accentuated by British commercial, educational, and official influences. The officer of the British Government in India is very properly forbidden to take sides in any religious controversy, or to exercise his authority or influence as an officer in the behalf of Christianity. By example, and in other indirect ways, some of the official classes—notably some of the higher official classes—have done much to commend a purer religious life and a nobler and more rational faith to the needy multitudes of India. But this is by no means the case with all of the British official influence in India. The same thing is true of the more unrestricted influence of the classes engaged in trade or in education.

I found all classes of seriously religious people, native and

foreign, admitting and deploring the spread among the younger educated natives of this Agnostic and irreligious tendency. Especially in Northern India there was general agreement that the *babu* of to-day is less sober in mind and less trustworthy, morally and religiously, than his predecessor of a generation ago. The earnest Christian teacher attributes the change, perhaps, to a lack of dogmatic positiveness in the prevalent teaching of his own or some other sect. The serious Hindu bewails it as one of the evil effects of a foreign religion, which, being in itself much lacking in power to influence the life, has seduced the native youths from the safe paths of their ancestral faith without providing any other guide to their faltering and uncertain steps. And then there is everywhere the too obvious greed of the Christians resident in India for wealth or for official preferment. It has infected, say the Hindus, our own youth. The believers in a form of the Christian religion that lays high claim to absolute authority agree with the most orthodox of the Hindus as to the defects of Protestant Christianity. In a conversation with a Roman Catholic archbishop, who has been more than a half-century in India, after agreeing with me in the statement that the Agnosticism and the Atheism of many of the present generation of *babus* formed a worse condition than their former Hinduism, he quoted with approval the saying of an Englishwoman, Lady — : "India will all ultimately become either Catholic or Agnostic."—*George Trumble Ladd, in the April "American Journal of Theology," Chicago. Condensed for "Public Opinion" (New York).*

Acid Drops.

BURNING INGERSOLL'S BOOKS.—Binghamton, New York, April 23.—With the smoke from the burning works of Robert Ingersoll curling near his grave, Marcus A. Miller, educator and political writer, will be laid at rest in Floral Cemetery to-morrow afternoon. Miller is well known throughout the West, having been a publisher in Cleveland, manager of the Mosler Safe Company in Kansas City, and general manager of the Smith Premier Typewriter Company in St. Louis. He was a follower of Ingersoll until a short time ago, when he again embraced the Christian faith. When he learned that his illness was fatal, he asked his relatives to burn the books of Ingersoll at his grave as an expiation, and in hopes that it might show others the sophistry of their teachings. The books will be lighted by Rev. Samuel Dunham, the oldest Presbyterian clergyman in this section, and will be burned as the casket is being lowered into the ground.—*Chicago Chronicle.*

We are indebted for the above paragraph to one of our exchanges, the *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago. It is certainly a gem. Ingersoll has been answered in many ways before, but this would be the most triumphant answer if it could only be carried out thoroughly. Burn every copy of Ingersoll, and there would be no Ingersoll to reply to. But that cannot be done at this time of day, as it was done with the writings of Celsus and Porphyry. The combustion of one set of Ingersoll, therefore, only creates a vacancy in the book-market for a fresh supply. Consequently there is something ineffably silly in this graveyard performance at Binghamton.

A couple of centuries or so ago the good Christians would have burnt Ingersoll himself. Now they can only burn his books, and only a few of them are imbecile enough for that. What an immense improvement in two hundred years! Yes, as Galileo said, the world *does* move. And it leaves the Christians all behind.

Since the above paragraphs were in type the New York *Truthseeker* has come to hand, and we learn from it that the holocaust of Ingersoll's works did not take place after all. According to a *Journal* dispatch, this is what really happened:—"Binghamton, April 24.—The family of M. A. Miller intervened at the last moment to thwart his dying commands, and the burning of Ingersoll's books at his grave in Floral Park Cemetery did not take place. A pile of kindling-wood had been made at the grave shortly after 4 o'clock this afternoon, and cast upon it were the works of the great Agnostic. An oil can stood near by to saturate the heap. All that was needed was a lighted match to complete the work. Rev. Samuel Dunham, who had promised Mr. Miller he would set fire to the books, delivered the prayer. At the last moment one of the intimate friends of the family suddenly seized the books and carried them to a carriage, and was rapidly driven off."

The cream of the joke remains to be told. Marcus A. Miller was not an Atheist nor an "infidel" of any kind. For many years he had been a member of the West Presbyterian Church. This was stated by the Miller family to a representative of the local *Republican*.

A deputation, headed by the Rev. A. Waller, Church of

England, waited on the Grays Town Council to protest against the tramcars being run on Sundays. One of the calamities that would be brought upon the town, according to this clergyman, was "the disfavor of Almighty God in not hallowing his Sabbath." But it was not stated whether this disfavor would manifest itself in plague, pestilence, famine, battle, murder, or sudden death. Some good speeches were made against this professional petition, notably a rattling one by Councillor Doody. Reference had been made to Moses. Well, said Councillor Doody, if there had been trams in the time of Moses he would have gone on a long ride, and the Jews would not have been kept such a time in the wilderness, nor would there have been any need for the collection of extra manna on Saturday. Finally, the Council decided that the "disfavor of Almighty God" should be risked. Heaven is such a long way off, and the interests of Grays must be respected.

At Haverhill Petty Sessions an application was made by Mr. T. Bates, Sudbury, on behalf of the Pampisford Brewery Company, for the permanent transfer of the licence of the "Butchers' Arms," Haverhill, to John Cashmere. It had been demanded that perfectly satisfactory testimonials should be backed up by one from a minister of religion. Mr. Bates argued that this rule would debar a Freethinker from holding a licence, and that was not countenanced by any law on the Statute Book. The Chairman replied that they did not make it a hard-and-fast rule that an additional testimonial should be signed by a minister or clergyman, but they liked to have one if possible. Finally, the applicant, who is a Roman Catholic, produced a testimonial from his priest. One of God's representatives on earth declares that John Cashmere is a fit and proper person to sell swipes. We suppose, therefore, that the clergy are good authorities on this matter.

At a public dinner in New York, the other day, the Rev. Dr. Rainsford, having denounced the controversy over the missionaries as "damned rot," went on to deplore the scarcity of moral ideals in society. He was followed by Abraham Gruber, a politician, who said: "It's all very well for Dr. Rainsford to talk about ideals. He's got way the best of the rest of us. He doesn't have to deliver the goods until after death. He can paint the beauties of any old thing he likes, but we will never know whether he has been talking through his hat or not until we're dead. And the dead don't come here to hire lawyers to sue ministers for false representation. In politics, if I promise a place, I've got to make good. If I could date my bills of lading like Dr. Rainsford, and with my ability to promise, I could lick Mark Hanna in Ohio."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Bishop of Salford (Roman Catholic) recently supported a resolution at Bury in favor of the Sunday closing of public-houses, and in doing so he showed the *trade* spirit which animated him in reference to this question. "It was becoming alarming," he said, "to see the rising generation of England devoting Sunday after Sunday to their own pleasure-seeking, and apparently neglecting the sacredness of God's holy day..... He was prepared to say confidently that, if the temptation of the open public-house door on Sundays were only removed, the natural goodness in people's hearts would lead them to some place of worship." Evidently this priest wants public-houses emptied merely in order to fill churches. Those who would remove the "temptation" of the open public-house door are the very people who would also remove the "temptation" of the open art gallery, museum, or public library door. Their motive, therefore, is simply professional.

The Rev. Dr. E. Harcourt, addressing the Baltimore Medical University the other day, had something to say about the carrion crows of the death chamber. "I do not think," he said, "that ministers should go into a sick room and pray for someone who is about to die, in an attempt to get him to become a death-bed Christian. The sick bed is not a place for the transformation in the life of individuals. It is character that tells here and hereafter, and not the little puff of prayer at the last few moments which goes up when a minister is called to prepare a man for death. I urge you to be careful about allowing clergymen in the sick room. They are a great cause of alarm, tip-toeing about with a little black book under their arm, and whispering to the sick and dying person, 'Are you ready?'"

These sensible observations roused the ire of one of the carrion crows who was present. Hisses came from the sanctified mouth of the Rev. William A. Crawford, of the Church of the Holy Comforter. He was evidently touched on a sore spot.

This is the way Christians talk of each other. The *Church Times* says: "We hear that Mr. Kensit is bringing an action for alleged libel against the *Evening News*. Will he take the same step with regard to *Truth* for the interesting particulars which that veracious journal gave of his methods last week?"

Such is the interest of the Christian Churches in the affairs of the world that a number of Primitive Methodists have

actually proposed to form a Primitive Methodist Bank for "Connexional purposes," whatever they may be. The idea, says the *Sunday Chronicle*, is not at present favorably regarded, but with the present rage for investing money in stocks and shares one never knows what may happen. In the fulness of time, unless the gambling instinct which the *Methodist Weekly* believes is "not necessarily an evil," be restrained, we may yet have a Congregationalist Hooley, a Wesleyan Stock Exchange, or a Primitive Methodist Bucket-shop.

According to the *Evangelical News*, there are 15,000,000 "outside all public worship." Christ might think his appearance on earth vain. Other people have that notion.

The Bishop of Hereford was the diocesan from whose jurisdiction the Rev. Dennis Hird, M.A., rector of Ledbury, retired—not that he had any quarrel with the Bishop, nor with the patroness of the living, but with some silly, interfering people, who wished to put Mr. Hird down because of his advanced views.

His former Bishop is now himself being lectured upon his liberal views. The *Church Times* asks in regard to this prelate: "How, we should like to know, can he justify his appearance last Friday on the platform of the West London Mission, an agency of the Wesleyan persuasion, which has invaded the parish of St. James's, Piccadilly, as though the church of that parish made no spiritual provision for the people? The Bishop of Hereford has no roving commission, authorising him to go and bless alien, and in some degree hostile, work in all the dioceses and parishes of England. The Church, of which he is a Bishop, has her own sharply-defined principles, her own system of order. The West London Mission, whatever else may be said of it, has the effect, if it has not the object, of subverting that order, and we contend that the Bishop of Hereford has gravely offended against Church order in promoting schism in St. James's, Piccadilly."

The *Christian Herald* has a novel by the late Mrs. Henry Wood running through its pages. When the lowest strata of Christians begin to take delight in imaginative literature, we, too, may hope for the end of the Christian *régime*, which the Reverend Mister Baxter has foretold, more or less correctly, for a generation.

The Rev. Dr. Chalmers and other missionaries were going ashore at a certain place in British New Guinea, when they were surrounded by a fleet of canoes, with armed natives, and were never seen again. Perhaps they were buried in the ground, and perhaps they were buried in the natives' stomachs. Anyhow, it was very sad. But the matter has been set straight on the noble principle of tit-for-tat. A punitive expedition has destroyed the village and canoes, and killed twenty-four natives, besides wounding many others. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Yes, but that doesn't apply to the missionary business. It is necessary to strengthen the Lord's policy with a little stiffening in the shape of maxims and rifles. Then the text reads all right.

Chief Rabbi Adler, speaking at Birmingham, complained of the "conversionists" who assail Jews with pamphlets and desire to "shake their faith." The late Bishop of London, he added, set his face strongly against those attempts to propagate Christianity amongst the Jews, but the present Bishop was not likely to tread in his predecessor's footsteps. Well, we ask, why should he? If the Jews are unbelievers, and if all unbelievers go to hell, it is an act of mercy to try to convert them. Nevertheless, we can quite believe that Dr. Adler is right when he says that the conversionists, as a matter of fact, only "make of bad Jews worse Christians." For the Jew also regards *his* religion as the true one, and it generally requires something more than argument to make him wear the badge of Christianity. That is why so much money is spent on "converting" the Jews in comparison with the number of converts.

Religious prejudice, or religious superstition—call it which you will—still interferes with the efforts of the Government to deal with the plague in India. Villages have banded together to oppose the plague measures, and troops have had to be called out to protect the hospital assistants. Faith and dirt are preferred to science and cleanliness.

Rev. G. N. Herbert, vicar of St. John de Sepulchre, Norwich, has successfully appealed against the income charged on the £65 he receives as a grant from the Queen Victoria Sustentation Fund, the aim of which is to raise the income of all benefices under £200 a year net up to that amount. Mr. Justice Phillimore, whose pious leanings are so well known, went to the length of calling this "an unsavory case." He said it was an attempt to raise a tax out of public benevolence. Technically, we suppose, the judges are right; but, substantially, we should like to know what difference it makes to the clergyman's *income* whether he gets it from one agency or another. And why should he escape paying income

tax altogether when it has to be paid by his next-door neighbor, whose actual income is just the same?

Margaret Jagger, a Horwich confectioner, has been fined £5 11s. for working female employees at unlawful hours. Inspector Tinker said it was one of the worst cases he had had to deal with. It appears that there were regular hours for *prayers* in this lady's establishment, but none for *meals*.

We feel awfully abashed. That great and famous journal, the *Ilford Recorder*, has descended upon us with all its majestic terrors. The editor has been reading a copy of the *Freethinker*, sent to him by an unknown friend, and he finds it full of "offensively aggressive and coarse blatant Atheism." Whatever room is left, as the Irishman would say, is occupied by "disgusting twaddle." There, now! The final blow has fallen. We are annihilated.

Like the Prophet of Nazareth, however, we have a capacity of resurrection. Having recovered, therefore, after an oblivious interval of two seconds, we take our courage in our two hands and venture to address a few words of remonstrance to the editor of the great and famous *Ilford Recorder*. We plead guilty to the Atheism, but it occurs to us that our contemporary's adjectives and adverbs may simply express differences of taste and opinion. When your conclusions are "diametrically opposite" to those of other men, you are not certain to be an unprejudiced judge of the tone and temper of their propaganda. It is just possible that you may regard as "offensive aggression" on their part what you would expect to be regarded as reasonable zeal when displayed by yourself.

The editor of the great and famous *Ilford Recorder* is a profound believer in God. He is prepared to back up the deity through thick and thin. He feels that if God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him. No doubt he feels that the fiction would serve the purpose almost as well as the fact. So do we. And that may account for our "aggressive" Atheism.

"I have conversed," this gentleman says, "with Secularists, Agnostics, and Atheists, but I never yet met with one who had a gleam of sunshine on his face." This is very sad, of course; but how could sunshine be expected on the faces of men who do not believe in hell? So much of it is naturally seen on the faces of the "death and damnation" people. How merry they look in church and chapel—yea, and also in the Sunday-school! What a joy of life beams from them as they sing hymns, listen to sermons, and go through all the other points of their devotion!

But we will not pursue the subject. We should be sorry to give unnecessary pain to a good man. We therefore turn off the stream of our "disgusting twaddle." Henceforth we shall always be conscious that we have found a new model of literary deportment. We must drop reading even Shakespeare, and spend our days and nights with the *Ilford Recorder*. In the course of time, perhaps, we shall be able to approach its beautiful and splendid style; we shall get rid of our "vulgarity" and become quite "inspiring"—yes, as inspiring as our contemporary in its best "Sabbath" mood. Did we say "as inspiring"? That was a mistake. We could never be quite as inspiring. The lack of that "sunshine" will always tell.

What romantic imaginations Christians have! Perhaps it is a result of their being brought up on the Gospels. Here is the *Church Times*, for instance, letting itself go in the following fashion:—"We see that an Agnostic in his eightieth year has advertised his desire to contribute £15,000 towards the establishment of a Freethought Institute for London, on condition that an equal sum is subscribed by others. The aged Agnostic has been taken at his word; a committee, with Mr. Passmore Edwards for one of its leading spirits, has been formed; and the required sum has all but been collected." Now the only truth in this paragraph is contained in the first sentence. The rest is a specimen of Christian accuracy.

The *Church Times* winds up with the withering statement that "the profession of Ethics is peculiarly favored by those who have given up morals." Our pious contemporary does not seem to know that this £30,000 scheme is not supported by the Ethical party, any more than it is supported by the Secular party. Reaching after the moon is not a very profitable occupation. Those who have carried on progressive organisations in the past have a better idea of what is possible in the immediate future.

"Lessons from the Life of Napoleon" is the heading of a hodge-podge column in *Pearson's Weekly*. Here is an extract:—"Napoleon trifled with everything, except the first

great cause. On the deck of his ship, on a fine night, there was much irreverent, flippant, materialistic chatter. The Revolution had made stupid atheism fashionable. But Napoleon was impressed by the calm night, the blue, dark water, and the silent, beautiful stars shining down in cosmic rebuke of the tiny blasphemers below. He stopped very abruptly the prattle of atheism. Towards the stars he pointed the short, thick arm, so soon to rule this little planet: "You may talk as long as you please, gentlemen, but Who made all that?" There was no answer, and there was no more atheism that night."

The end of this paragraph is sheer invention. It should be added that the "tiny blasphemers" who were "chattering stupid atheism" were the first scientists in France, including the great La Place. The whole account is worthy of the mental-slops budget, which Messrs. Pearson, in common with other caterers, serve up weekly for a big profit, on the shallow pretence of educating the British public.

At Ormskirk Police Sessions the other day an application was made for an occasional licence for a three days' bazaar in aid of a new chapel. Superintendent Jervis thought this was bringing the Bible and beer too close together, and the application was refused. It transpired that several publicans had given donations to the bazaar in the form of liquor. We suppose they had read of Jesus Christ's wine miracle, and thought this an appropriate present.

Judy dresses up an old "profane joke" with a good drawing. A young lady, receiving a call from the parson, tells him that she used to doubt that story of the talking ass, but his sermon yesterday had convinced her of its possibility.

Mrs. Johanna O'Brien, of 6 Granby-street, Plymouth, who has been sent to prison for cruelty to two of her children, does not appear to be a Freethinker—as, according to orthodox logic, she should be. Of her eldest daughter, who was giving evidence against her, she said: "She is the biggest liar and the veriest thief the Lord ever created." The prisoner quite overlooked her own share in the girl's production.

Missionary and Collector Edward Kenworthy Cunliffe pleads in the *North Daily Mail* for funds on behalf of the thousands who, "in God's inscrutable wisdom," are deaf and dumb. He does not see that he is blasphemously interfering with God's inscrutable wisdom. What God has done let no man try to mend.

Dr. Josiah Oldfield, in his new book on *The Penalty of Death; or, the Problem of Capital Punishment*, states that he approached all sorts and conditions of men with a view to obtaining their opinions on this subject. After interrogating the Judges he tried his hand on the Bishops, with the following result:—"Here again I was grievously saddened by the fact that, while I received most courteous replies from nearly every Bishop, there was *not one* who took up any other position than that hanging should be perpetuated, and in no case was there any suggestion that the Church should take any steps to replace this crude penalty of putting wicked men to death, by adopting the position of Pope Clement that the function of the penalty is the improvement of the character, and not the ending of the life."

The cost of elementary education during the year ending with last August amounted to £8,973,871. What a fleabite is this compared with the vast sums spent on war and preparations for war, to say nothing of other ways in which a Tory government runs the nation up a bill of something like £140,000,000 a year! Yet we are told that the cost of education must be retrenched, and that Evening Continuation Classes ought not to be supported by public funds.

Mr. J. R. Haldane contributes a long letter to the *Glasgow Herald* on "The Romish Church and Heretics," in which he shows that the Great Lying Church still claims unlimited right to deal punitively, wherever it has the power, with all who withstand its teaching or oppose its interest. The people of this country should turn a deaf ear to Roman Catholic pretences of toleration. Talk of this kind is only resorted to where the Church is in a minority. Where it predominates it follows the arrogant old policy of persecution.

There was a fine old squabble at a recent vestry meeting for the parish of Great Cornard, in Essex. The vicar is a "Romanising" High Churchman, and has quarrelled with the choir and nearly emptied the church. One of his pious antics is burning candles in broad daylight. Mr. Eady suggested that these candles would be better given to the poor. The vicar replied that they symbolised the great doctrine of the Incarnation, and thereby Christ was set forth as the light of the world; whereupon Mr. Crosby interjected that he was sorry that Christ wanted to be represented by a penny candle. What a lovely quarrel, to be sure!

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 19, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W.; at 7.30, "Has God Ever Spoken? A Challenge to all the Churches."

To Correspondents.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are once more warned that we cannot take notice of their communications. They must send their names and addresses as a guarantee of good faith.

C. M. HANDLEY, whose verses entitled *The Bible Not of Man* were lately criticised in our columns, writes to us as follows from Maldon: "Thank you for your criticisms, which, however, savor more of abuse than argument. You play upon a few words, etc., which I know are far from perfection; but the real matter, and the truth sought to be set forth, you severely leave alone, for obvious reasons no doubt. Why do you call me a 'rev.' and a 'clergyman'? You have evidently jumped to conclusions—a thing, by the by, you are much in the habit of doing. I repudiate the so-called systems of Christianity as much as you do, having gone against public opinion all my life, believing the Bible sets forth something altogether different to what is known as orthodoxy, as you must have seen had you carefully read my lines." We beg Mr. Handley's pardon for calling him a "rev.," and we are glad to hear he is not guilty. As to his lines, we *did* read them carefully, and it is perhaps his own fault if we misunderstood him. Let him stick to prose in future, and be intelligible.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your cuttings.

E. G. G. says that the Rev. A. J. Alcock ought to be indeed "grateful." Would the *Church Times* allow you [us] space for a letter a column in length? Perhaps not. Freethinkers are naturally more in love with intellectual hospitality. Mr. Alcock is quite welcome to convert our readers if he can. We want them to have the truth, anyhow.

J. G. BARTRAM.—We knew Peter Weston well. His solid sincerity was like that of the oak of his native island. A truer man never lived. In the midst of his poverty his friendship was a privilege. We shall always be proud of the interest our work created in that brave soul. In his way he was a martyr. He made and suffered many sacrifices for the cause he loved.

E. BARREYATT.—We are acquainted with the Rev. Walter Walsh's views as to the work of Romanism in the Church of England. What he does not see is that there is no necessity to resort to mystery or intrigue as an explanation of the High Church movement. In the intellectual break-up of Christianity the Catholic Church is bound to gain an advantage, with its infallible assurances and its soft pillow for distracted heads. It recognises that religion is a matter of faith, and those who want faith will more and more go over to it, while those who want reason will as naturally go over to Freethought. The Protestant sects are all doomed. It is only a question of time.

JAMES NEATE.—See paragraph. Pleased to hear that Mr. Moss is well liked in Victoria Park.

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to hear you had three good open-air meetings on Sunday. We can quite understand that you felt "a bit exhausted." Three outdoor lectures are at least one too many on the same day. Your subjects for June have been handed to the secretary.

J. ELLIS.—We note, as requested, that the Alexandra Hall, Liverpool, will be closed on Sundays, May 19 and 26.

H. PERCY WARD.—Your reverend opponent, the Rev. P. J. Cocking, is indeed a *rara avis*. It is good to see that his courteous example has influenced the rowdies who were giving you so much trouble. May the better spirit continue.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Thanks. See paragraph.

READER.—(1) It would be expensive to publish Sunday lectures in the *Freethinker*. Accurate stenography is costly. Nor do we think the lecturers would care to have their lectures printed before they had done with them. Your suggestion, however, has often been before us, and we have no doubt that the lectures would be found interesting by our readers. (2) Polygamy—at least open polygamy—is no longer allowed in Utah. It has been penalised by the United States' law. We do not know of any recent good hook on the Mormons and Mormonism. Two or three were published many years ago, but they are all out of print now, including the one by Hepworth Dixon, which caused such a sensation.

FREETHOUGHT TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND.—T. R. Embleton, £1.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance, secretary, acknowledges:—Birmingham Branch, £2 5s.; Huddersfield Branch, 15s.; Glasgow Branch, 18s. 1d.; Blackburn Branch, 3s. 6d. Also parcels of clothing from Mrs. B. M. Smith and Mrs. Kersley. Mrs. B. M. Smith likewise sends a parcel of Freethought books for the N. S. S. Library.

L. SIMPSON.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Bigotry, alas, is still rampant in many parts. We wish you all success.

W. STOURTON.—Better leave the discussion in the hands of the parties now conducting it—at least, for the present—or we shall get into a muddle all round.

F. E. G.—Mr. Foote's general health is very good, but he has been troubled of late again with insomnia. This is one of nature's warnings that ought to be heeded; but, alas, it is easier to talk about leaving work than to leave it.

E. R. WOODWARD.—The responsibility seems to lie in that direction.

S. W. BEVERIDGE.—We have been thinking over a sixpenny collection of Voltaire's most pungent anti-Christian writings to match the Twentieth Century edition of the *Age of Reason*. But it will involve a considerable outlay, little short of £200, and projects of that kind cannot be entertained daily. But no matter; as the stage villain says, the time will come! The new edition of Paine is selling well, but we should like to see it going off faster. Freethinkers ought to make an effort to put this book into general circulation, and a dozen copies can be bought for 4s. 6d.

CENTAUR.—Letters must be addressed to the editor, not to correspondents you are replying to.

ANONYMOUS.—Received, and under consideration.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Secular Thought—Progressive Thinker—Public Opinion (New York)—Manchester Guardian—Two Worlds—Open Court—Crescent—La Raison—Blue Grass Blade—Truthseeker (New York)—Grays Gazette—Neues Leben—East Anglian Daily Times—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Monmouthshire Beacon—Essex and Suffolk News—Glasgow Herald—Diss Express—Christian World—Sun—Northern Daily Mail—Western Evening Herald.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, 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.

Sugar Plums.

In spite of the beautiful weather, so unfavorable for indoor meetings, there was an improved audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Dreyfus and God; or the Martyrdom of the Devil's Island in the Light of Infinite Benevolence." The lecture was followed with profound attention and very warmly applauded. Some parts of it were too pathetic for the nerves of some who were present.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening, taking for his subject, "Has God Ever Spoken? A Challenge to all the Churches."

Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience at Sheffield on Sunday afternoon. He had to lecture out of "uniform," his portmanteau, containing his platform clothes, having gone astray on the Midland Railway. We hope the missing "lot" will turn up all right, for Secular lecturers cannot afford to lose anything. Mrs. Watts's readings in the evening were received with what religious circles call "great acceptance." Mr. Watts lectures again to-day (May 21) at Sheffield.

We are pleased to hear, and many of our readers will be pleased to hear, that Mr. C. Cohen is recovering from his recent indisposition, which was brought on by a severe chill. Ministers who are "run down" are generally able to get away for rest and change, but Secular lecturers have generally to keep at their task. This is a great pity, for mental work is very exacting, and it is a sadly unwise economy to treat a valuable propagandist something worse than a horse.

Mr. Percy Ward has had some very noisy meetings at Nechell's Green, Birmingham, on Friday evenings, but the police honestly try to keep good order. They are reinforced by an elderly Wesleyan minister, the Rev. P. J. Cocking, who wrote expressing his regret that Mr. Ward was subjected to so many interruptions, and offering to debate with him. This led to an open-air discussion on "Everlasting Punishment." The behavior of the crowd showed a wonderful improvement. Probably they were shamed by the fine example of Mr. Cocking. It was arranged that on the following Friday evening (May 16) another debate should take place on the question, "Does Evolution Abolish God?"

Referring to the open-air Sunday morning meetings in the Bull Ring, the Birmingham *Weekly Mercury* says that "it is questionable whether the Secularists themselves damage religion so much as some of the religious speakers." The following is a specimen of what our contemporary condemns: "On Sunday morning last a young man, who makes poor Nelson his regular centre, and whose sole redeeming feature is his illiterate ignorance, was shouting an account of a vision of heaven and hell he had recently experienced. His wife 'sor' it too. 'I sor' ell opened, and my wife she sor it.

an' she trembled. An' be'old, a vice come up out of 'ell, an' it said '—here the speaker went into detail of a threatening character, while the crowd, idly leaning on the barriers, openly commented on the strength of his lungs and expressed an unfavorable opinion of his veracity."

The Victoria Park meetings, which a certain truculent anti-infidel boasted that he had extinguished, are going on splendidly. Mr. A. B. Moss addressed a big audience on Sunday afternoon, and the Branch secretary informs us that he "kept them in roars of laughter for over an hour." There was another large sale of the new *Age of Reason*, and the supply of the *Freethinker* was soon exhausted.

M. Leon Furnémont, the Brussels editor of *La Raison*, has consented to accept a vice-presidency of the National Secular Society. As the Conference Agenda had to be completed a fortnight beforehand, the President will have to ask the Conference to suspend the standing orders while our Belgian *confrère* is nominated. Writing to Mr. Heaford, who communicated with him on behalf of the N. S. S. Executive, M. Furnémont says: "I am very much honored by your proposal. I have long known and I admire the propaganda of the National Secular Society, and my friends in Belgium appreciate the favor which is to be conferred upon me. This will promote the work of unity carried on between the Freethinkers of all countries. I have just read in the *Freethinker* that our friend Victor Charbonnel will also receive the title of vice-president. This is a double honor for *La Raison*, which will try to continue worthy of it."

This is the last opportunity of any useful announcement of the National Secular Society's Conference, which is to be held at Glasgow on Whit-Sunday. The Conference itself will sit in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street. The evening public meeting will take place further west, in the Waterloo Rooms. We hope the N. S. S. Branches will make an effort to be well represented at the first Conference in the Twentieth Century. Visitors from all parts of the country will also be cordially welcome.

Mr. John Allen, 7 Kenmure-street, Pollokshields, Glasgow, has kindly undertaken to see to the hotel or other accommodation for delegates and visitors, if they will only let him know in good time what accommodation they want, and for what length of time. Those who wish to join the Sunday luncheon at 1 o'clock, at the North British Station Hotel, should communicate with Mr. T. Robertson, secretary, 1 Battlefield-crescent, Langside, Glasgow.

The Glasgow Branch has organised a corps of guides to assist delegates and visitors in "doing" the great Exhibition on the Monday. Those who stay over Tuesday will find facilities for visiting the splendid scenery of the West of Scotland.

We beg to draw our readers' attention to the Prospectus of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, which appears on the last page but one of this week's *Freethinker*. It is very desirable, and indeed very important, that this enterprise should be properly supported with working capital. In our next issue we shall print a special appeal on its behalf, setting forth at some length the practical reasons why Freethinkers should take up Shares in the Company. A form of Application for Shares will also be inserted separately, and we hope a considerable number of our friends will fill them in and forward them to the Secretary (Miss Vance) with a remittance. Meanwhile we ask all our friends to bear this matter in mind. They might look about them during the next week, and see what they can afford to do—and then do it.

Abbreviations.

A colonel of a British regiment in South Africa, who was repairing a railroad after one of General De Wet's many breakages, discovered a fine empty house, which he proceeded to occupy as headquarters.

When the news of the colonel's comfortable quarters reached Bloemfontein, he received a telegram which read: "G. T. M. wants house."

The colonel was unable to make out what "G. T. M." meant, and inquired of officers, who translated it "General Traffic Manager."

"All right," said the colonel. "If he can use hieroglyphics, so can I."

So he wired back: "G. T. M. can G. T. H."

Two days later he received a dispatch from Bloemfontein ordering him to attend a board of inquiry. On appearing in due course he was asked what he meant by sending such an insulting message to a superior officer.

"Insulting?" repeated the colonel, innocently; "it was nothing of the kind."

"But what do you mean," demanded his superior, "by telling me I can 'G. T. H.'?"

"It was simply an abbreviation," replied the colonel. "G. T. M. (general traffic manager) can G. T. H. (get the house)."

Two Models for the Twentieth Century —Jesus and Ingersoll.

AN ADDRESS BY L. K. WASHBURN
(Editor of the "Boston Investigator").

II.

(Concluded from page 300.)

MEN who take Jesus for a model to-day must teach religious falsehoods and religious superstitions. Men who take Jesus for a model to-day must give up business, live the life of a wanderer, have no home, no wife or child, associate with the outcast and lowly, quit family and kindred, break the laws of the country, and die the death of a criminal.

Men who take Jesus for a model to-day must perform the miraculous and do the impossible.

Why do men and women praise Jesus? Why do they reverence this dead Jew? Not on account of his life and words, but because of his religious character as the savior of the world. It is not the real Jesus that men honor, but the fictitious Jesus of Christian theology. It is the Son of God, and not the son of Mary, that human beings reverence.

Not a man on earth follows Jesus, and not a man can follow him. Who can turn water into wine? Who can drive fever away with a touch? Who can still the tempest by a whispered word? Who can restore sight to blind eyes, and speech to dumb lips? Who can drive madness from the tortured brain by a rebuke? Who can walk on the water as on the land? Who can feed ten thousand men and women with five loaves and two fishes? Who can put the bloom and perfume of life in the cheek of death by a word? Who can disdain the grave, and, at the last, cheat earth of his body? He who cannot do these things cannot follow the Jesus of the New Testament. I do not deny that Jesus uttered some sensible words and gave some sound advice, but he so mixed theology with his moral teaching as to render it practically worthless. We do not know what will please God. We do know what will help man, and I hold that our duty to men, to our families, to our fellow-beings, transcends all other obligations.

Jesus is left behind. Science has exploded his heaven, destroyed his hell, and shown that his miracles were added to his hands after they were lifeless and cold. Take away the false, the impossible, the supernatural from the biography of Jesus, and we have only an ordinary man, who was not above the limitations and imperfections of his time. Such a man is no model for this century. The twentieth century is far ahead of the first, ahead of it in human virtues and human achievement; ahead of it in literature and in philosophy; ahead of it in charity and goodness; ahead of it in all that makes humanity glorious. And more than this, it is ahead of Jesus—so far ahead of him that he has ceased to influence our lives and destinies. Jesus, measured by human greatness to-day, was a dwarf.

This age demands a man who is natural, who was born naturally, who lived naturally, and who died naturally. Nature is the highest model, and whatever is more than nature is false.

There is now and then a man so much truer, so much larger, so much nobler than his fellows that he draws the world after him. Such a man was Robert G. Ingersoll. He attracted the young, he led the old. For forty years he was before the public. His career from 1860 to 1900 was a march of triumph. He crossed and recrossed the continent, and everywhere he was hailed with joy and heard with gladness. More than two million people listened to his marvellous voice; more than ten million people have read his marvellous words.

I give you Robert G. Ingersoll as the model for the twentieth century. In all the relations of human life he was supreme. He was every inch a man. As friend, companion, or counsellor, as private citizen or public official, as son, husband, or father, he had no peer. He had Bruno's love of truth, Voltaire's love of justice, Paine's love of liberty, and Howard's love of man. He was one of the best, greatest, grandest, and most glorious men that ever lived, and *we* "shall never

look upon his like again." I had rather have touched the hand of Robert G. Ingersoll than to have hobbled with all the patriarchs and all the prophets and all the apostles and all the popes. This man was a giant in intellect, a man to be admired for his superb mental powers; but I count him greatest not in mind, but in heart. His loving nature, his deep pity, his generous sympathy, his warm feelings, his kind humanity, bound to him all who came within the radius of his influence. He had one other quality that gave him the rarest charm—the sweetest humor that ever gave birth to laughter. His life had proportion, had color, had perfume. Wherever he went he made the atmosphere warmer, softer, brighter. Greatness seems too small a word to apply to Ingersoll. Thousands of men have been great, but that was all. Greatness is not loved, and men loved Ingersoll.

This man upheld the torch of reason; he added to the intellectual light of the world; he respected knowledge, and opened his mind to the sun of science; he admired men who knew; he wanted facts; he counted those achievements greatest that widened the mental horizon, and those riches best that enriched human life; he placed value upon human experience; he loved the beautiful; he stood by the right; he revered the truth, and to liberty he gave the holy passion of his heart; he held his convictions honestly, and used language to express his thoughts, not to disguise them; he had faith in real things; he taught what had been proved, demonstrated; he had sense, which could not be deceived by trick or betrayed by superstition; and he lived in that intellectual sunlight where ghosts and goblins never came.

We know what Ingersoll said and what he did. We have his thoughts as they were written by his own hand. He has left to the world what he called his "creed." It was this: "To love justice, to long for the right; to love mercy, to assist the weak, to forget wrongs and remember benefits, to love the truth, to be sincere, to utter honest words, to love liberty, to wage relentless war against slavery in all its forms, to love wife, children, and friends, to make a happy home, to love the beautiful in art, in nature, to cultivate the mind, to be familiar with the mighty thoughts that genius has expressed, the noble deeds of all the world, to cultivate courage and cheerfulness, to make others happy, to fill life with the splendor of generous acts, the warmth of loving words, to discard error, to destroy prejudice, to receive new truths with gladness, to cultivate hope, to see the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night, to do the best that can be done, and then be resigned."

The living hand of Ingersoll wrote this creed, and his dead hands hold it out to the twentieth century. Who can add to it or improve it? Who can live better than its words? Who can put its words into deeds better than did he who copied them from his heart, from his life?

This "creed" holds the germ of every duty, contains the essence of all human obligation. All religions seem paltry beside it.

We know little or nothing of Jesus personally; we know almost everything of Ingersoll. We have only a few glimpses of the Nazarene; we can follow nearly every step of Ingersoll for sixty years. We are not sure that we have the words that Jesus uttered; we are certain that we have what Ingersoll wrote and said.

Robert G. Ingersoll represented human nature at its best. He was endowed with all the natural wealth of body and brain, of mind and heart. No man ever lived who spent that wealth more regally. He lived to make the most of his own life and to add most to the lives of others. He abhorred persecution; but, had he lived three centuries ago, he would have defied it and suffered death for his bravery. He was the white knight of Freethought, and he met and overcame every champion of the Church. His lance was never broken.

He did not say "Follow me; do as I do"; but "Follow the truth; do right." He thought of others and forgot himself. He knew his own strength and others' weakness, but he never struck an unfair blow. He used his opponents better than they deserved. Bitter words he never uttered.

I say to men and women: Read the New Testament candidly, and obey its teachings honestly, and then read

the words of Robert G. Ingersoll, and heed them, and tell the world which have made you the better husbands and wives, the better citizens and neighbors, the better men and women.

You can build churches on the teachings of Jesus; you can build homes on the words of Ingersoll. Priests can get a living on the teachings of Jesus; parents and patriots can find encouragement and light in the words of Ingersoll. Jesus sent men to hell for a difference of religious belief. It was on his authority that the Christian Church has damned unbelievers; Ingersoll would not have sent even a dog to hell, and the worst he ever wished those who did not agree with him was that they might live long enough to see their error.

Jesus worked for another world, Ingersoll for this world. Jesus stood for superstition, Ingersoll for civilization. Jesus taught that men should live for glory hereafter, Ingersoll told them to live for happiness here.

The men who have taken Jesus for a model have killed and damned their fellow men; have hated the great and murdered the good; have hindered progress and obstructed science; have rewarded vice and punished virtue; have defended falsehoods and imprisoned those who told the truth.

The man who takes Robert G. Ingersoll for a model will never injure his fellow man, never be a hypocrite, never uphold the wrong, never defend the false, and never turn away from suffering or sorrow.

The Jesuits in Spain.

THERE is a rising tide of revolt against the tyranny of the vast Order of Jesuits—those well-named "conspirators against freedom and progress" whom the French Government are trying to control, and already compelling to seek refuge on what has hitherto been the more congenial soil of Spain, but which now more than threatens resistance and revolt. It is a sickening story, as I have heard it told. The bitter allegations are to be heard everywhere, amongst rich and poor: the secret and insidious interference with domestic affairs, perverting women, practically robbing and ruining families; undermining political and municipal administration—a relentless tyranny, permeating every sphere of life, and exercising everywhere a demoralising and dangerous power. The "worm" has turned and shown very plainly that if the oppression cannot be removed by constitutional means it will be met and combated with stones and revolvers and blood-stained riot. Were this the place, I could narrate authenticated facts of fortunes perverted to clerical purposes, of orphans and relatives left destitute, of importunate begging, and of the accumulation of enormous wealth not used merely for charity or legitimate "Church extension," but often invested in trading concerns mainly for personal objects and proselytising in its most objectionable forms. Hundreds of such damning "illustrations" may be found in households throughout the country, whilst the priestly intolerance and undisguised hostility to all improvement—social, educational, or political—have produced the natural results of despair and reckless resistance. But it has to be said—and this is unquestionably one of the secrets of growing influence—that the Order contains many of the most learned and high-minded men within the pale of the Catholic Church, and that some of its institutions, both educational and charitable, continue to render valuable and effective service; young men come out of the liberally-endowed colleges, skilfully drilled and blindly inspired for its work, whilst the afflicted find consolation, and the needy are not sent empty away. All the same, the spirit of revolt grows and gathers strength every day. In Barcelona crowded meetings have been held to denounce the clerical oppression; in the populous centre of Corunna the other day over twelve thousand people assembled and in speeches expressed their detestation of the Jesuits, and in resolutions demanded the expulsion of the religious orders. "Down with the Jesuits!" and "Hurrah for Spain without Convents!" are to be heard everywhere, often in the mellifluous and expressive Basque tongue. Even in sober Malaga—where in one hotel we found nearly one hundred English visitors—a largely-attended anti-clerical meeting has demanded immediate expulsion, and resolved to send messages of congratulation to the French and Portuguese Chambers on their recent and very drastic action in dealing with the hated orders. Of a truth, "the fires are kindled"; but strangely the accused make no audible defence, and only stolidly "hold on."—*Sir H. Gilzean-Reid, LL.D., in the "Westminster Gazette."*

The rector was enthusiastic. "Think of that parent's devotion," he said. "He had kept that calf for years and years—that is—ahem—he had had the calf for a long, long time—I mean the calf was there waiting for the young man's return."

Correspondence.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I thank you much for inserting my letter, and congratulate your readers on your decision to let both sides of a controversy be seen. I beg to offer further remarks on Mr. Watts's paper, beginning, where I left off, in third paragraph, which is devoted to "the imperfections of Christ's character."

The first "imperfection," I notice, is Christ's teaching we are to be "perfect" as our Heavenly Father is "perfect" (Matthew v. 48). The comment on this runs according to this—perfection involves absolute knowledge and power. Now the preceding context absolutely rejects such an interpretation, and shows the "perfection" we are to aim at lies in being kind to those who deserve no kindness from us, even as the perfect God is merciful to the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. Having given his interpretation, our critic proceeds, as though it were indisputable, to show Christ was not perfect because He knew not the time of the Judgment Day (Mark xiii. 82). Now, to teach anyone is imperfect because he is not omniscient is at variance with all dictionary definitions of the word. The truth is, that in the working out of the Gospel salvation it appeared needful (why, we cannot tell) that the knowledge of when Christ shall return in glory should be retained by His Father. The next quotation shows the same error of definition, by implying a being is imperfect unless he is omnipotent. Moreover, it displays great confusion of thought, as it teaches the exact reverse of what Mr. Watts believed, who wrote thus: "As to His power, He admitted that He could do nothing of Himself" (John v. 19). "It occurs to the present writer" that our critic can never have read the New Testament carefully for himself, but must have got his objections from some sceptical handbook, as the text we discuss proves Christ's omnipotence when the omitted portion is read. Here it is: "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do, for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." The meaning of the verse plainly is: the union between both is so close that the Son does nothing independently of the Father, and is as omnipotent as the Father, because what He does so does the Son. Next we read: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor" (Matthew xix. 21), as an illustration of Christ's defective teaching. The meaning is, as usual, plain from the context. A rich, avaricious man wanted to know how he might deserve heaven, upon which the Searcher of Hearts gave the reply quoted, which applied the touchstone to his besetting sin, and showed that, if he could not begin by selling his property, he could not take any further steps in the road leading to perfection. The remarks about "the women of Canaan" appear so vague as to require no answer.

Paragraph 4 gives eleven "imperfections," in reference to which the places quoted are never suggested. Any value they may seem to have arises from one of three causes—either unfair quotation, or from ignoring Christ's method of teaching, or from lack of acquaintance with Scripture. As examples of unfair quotation, I give the first and last of the eleven: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth" and "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth" (John vi. 27 and Matthew vi. 19). Now, if your readers will consult these passages, they will find the subsequent context of each quotation shows the teaching is comparative, and merely lays down we are to care much more for the things of eternity than for those of time. Better advice could not be given. Mr. Watts says of such directions, as calmly as though he were an infallible pope: "Those who profess to believe them never attempt to carry them out." I wonder how does he know? Ignoring Christ's method of teaching is, secondly, the parent of sundry "imperfections." Christ sometimes used strong proverbial language, which was sure to attract notice from the impossibility of obedience to the bare letter, and then subsequently qualified His teaching by declaring the words were to be understood spiritually, or by demonstrating this from His own example. This is the key to explain strong expressions in the Sermon on the Mount, such as letting a man have our cloak if he has taken our coat, and turning our cheek for a blow to anyone who has struck the other side of our face. Such objections as these have been urged and replied to during the last seventeen centuries, and I therefore pass them now. Thirdly, I produce "imperfections" arising from not being acquainted with Scripture. "Lend, hoping for nothing again," is a specimen. This is a notorious mistranslation, as Mr. Watts ought to know; the New Version rendering is "never despairing" (Luke vi. 35), and simply means give the borrower every chance. Another is the quoted difficulty of a rich man getting to heaven (Mark x. 25). The preceding verse qualifies by showing the reference is to rich men who "trust in riches." This may suffice for paragraph 4.

Your correspondent "Zeno" asks me whether I do not think Christ might have adopted a better method of teaching. I do not. The education of His people was intended to be progressive, and even, as in worldly learning, greatly depending on their own piety and zeal for information. To

these qualities the deeper truths of Christianity gradually unfold themselves, the finding being ever in proportion to the seeking.

I propose, unless forbidden, to send a final letter next week on the paper of Mr. Watts.

(REV.) HENRY J. ALCOCK.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Although I am quite confident that Mr. Watts is fully capable of defending his own case, will you allow me, as a recently-converted Freethinker straight from the Christian fold, space for a reply to the inconsistent arguments of Mr. Alcock in last week's *Freethinker*?

He argues (and one often sees it put forward) for the truth of Christianity because it has the majority of adherents. Now, in the first instance, he surely knows that there is nothing to equal the vitality of error, and it always claims the largest number; to use his own words, "forty-nine out of every fifty respectable Englishmen are professing Christians." Why "respectable"? Does he not recognise the disreputable portion of which Christianity is principally made up? Had he not (on his own admission) been in such a hurry to pen his reply, he might have seen that to rely on the swelled numbers of the "common herd" to back his assertion is no proof whatever, for numbers, taken as a test for truth, would prove that Mohammedanism or Buddhism is the true religion; and his argument is equally applicable, and no doubt was applied, against the early Christians.

By parity of reasoning, a Chinaman could disprove his fellow converted to Christianity by saying: "What! the religion of that foreign devil the only true one, and we, a people numbering nearly 800,000,000, all wrong?"

He cannot possibly have a very deep knowledge of human nature, otherwise he would know that the vast majority of people are simply led; they do not think for themselves. If they did, Christianity to-morrow would not have an adherent outside a lunatic asylum.

What reform, what improvement, what change in religion ever took place but what the institutors were of the minority? And as to the influence of Christ on men, of which he has boasted before, what a miserable proportion they are compared with the rogues and vagabonds roped within the Christian fold.

In my experience as a trader I have known many whose character and lives have been completely reformed without the aid of any Bible, creed, or Christ; and the result is far more edifying, not being the outcome of bribery—hope of heaven or fear of hell. I find that, to a great extent, the influence of Christ only acts on those who, having led an evil life, are getting aged or near death, and would have cooled down in any case. And I could give names and addresses of many who have come into our establishment, with "Christ for me" worked on their clothing, and a few weeks after had to be taken home rolling drunk, or pulled up to the bench for wife-beating. No doubt they had "a blessed experience" of "Christ's influence."

It was openly published in the public press that during the Chinese massacres the greatest of the atrocities were committed by the Christian armies, and the most human and exempt from pillaging were the Japanese, who were not allowed to take anything. Do these people testify to "Christ's influence" upon their will?

His reckless assertion that he is "well able to prove Christ was perfection" makes his position ludicrous in the extreme. The idea of a person who said, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me," being extolled as perfect! Would Mr. Alcock give me his coat for asking, or "Give to him that asketh, and him that would borrow turn not away"? Men do not, in these days, seem to follow Christ's injunctions with regard to divorce.

With regard to the ass and colt business, any unprejudiced person who will read the Bible for himself will see that it is Mr. Alcock who is guilty of "a gross blunder." "Thy King cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. They brought the ass and the colt and put on them their clothes, and they sat him thereon."

Now, if I was repeating a story to some friends, and said, "They brought the mare and its colt, put on them their saddles, and set him thereon," and this saddling and riding affair was the principal part of the story, my friends would very soon ask me what I meant, for the words clearly imply that the person rode them both at one time, setting aside the other verse quoted above, which Mr. Alcock cannot dispute.

Of course, no sane person for one moment thinks that Mr. Watts expects us to believe that Christ had legs long enough to bridge the pair of them. I read it that he was showing the ridiculous aspect of the story. But there, it is quite possible that perhaps, after all, he used his best endeavors to mount both of them, seeing that he did so many strange things, and was "not as other men are." And, as they strewed branches in the way, one can well imagine that young nuddy cut some tidy antics.

Mr. Alcock refers to Mr. Watts's article as an "onslaught." Truly, it was an onslaught in which his (Mr. Alcock's) fetich was left without a leg to stand upon.

EX-ACOLYTE.

"GRAINS OF SALT."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In my opinion Mr. Coles, in endeavoring to extricate himself from a false position and excuse his God, sinks deeper in the mire of illogicality. What is the use putting forward the plea that Jehovah set Israel free from slavery, when the Bible distinctly tells us that this same Jehovah commanded the vilest form of slavery (Leviticus xxv. 44-46, and Exodus xxi. 11; iii.); ordered the most cold-blooded and heartless wholesale slaughter, not only of men and women, but innocent infants and beasts; also decreed that man should stone the very wife of his bosom to death simply for difference of opinion (Deut. xiii.), etc.? What is the use of attempting to defend such a foul, bloodthirsty monster?

It seems to me nothing but mere quibbling to tell us that Isaiah lxxv. 7 does not mean "evil." If not, then language has no meaning. But this passage does not stand alone; others are equally condemnatory. Amos iii. 6: "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Ezekiel xx. 25: "Wherefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." These, and much more, clearly show the true character of the Bible God. Soon, I suppose, we shall be told that when the word "hate" is found in the Bible it means "love," or that the Devil is a model of virtue.

I can but refer Mr. Coles to the last two paragraphs in my last letter of the 21st ult. According to the Christian's belief, Jehovah created everything (man nothing); and, knowing what man would develop, the blame for all the "evil" in the universe must of necessity be placed to the credit of such creator.

If a carpenter makes a table with one leg shorter than the rest, with the foreknowledge that such will not please him, we do not blame the table, but its maker. Why, then, excuse a God who makes man with an inherent propensity to rebel against and displease his Maker, the vast majority of whom he has to damn (desiring at the same time that all should be saved)? However, as it is evident Mr. Coles persists in clinging to the childish fables of Creation, Fall, a Noah's Ark, and the coming of his Messiah, and chooses to put his own interpretation upon the plainest passages of Scripture, I prefer to leave him in the full possession of his "beliefs"; evidently he adopts the same system as the vast majority of Christians by building his whole case upon bare "assumptions." If he replies to this, I shall (1st) demand a definition of his God and proofs of such existence; (2nd) a definition of the soul of man destined for a conscious existence beyond the grave. These are the two chief essentials in the Christian's belief, and, unless they can be established, I shall consider all else worthless, and make no further reply. I shall also want to know if Mr. Coles is open to be put upon a "practical test" regarding his "standard of truth," notably the "universal efficacy of prayer." I am prepared to give him very easy subjects to pray for, and I will simply defy him to get those prayers answered, or his God to answer same. In my opinion, Mr. Coles is, for all "practical" purposes, as "worldly" as I am, and only a "Christian" by name and theory.

OCTAVIUS DREWELL.

THE LOGIC OF TOLERATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I feel disposed for a moment to take up the cudgels against an old opponent, Mr. Cohen, whose later articles I have been able thoroughly to admire. In his article, "Religion and the State," his logic seems to prove that Christianity, assuming it believes itself, ought, out of pure humanity, to be persecuting, because the consequences of heresy (eternal hell) are so terrible that to save the heretic by his corporal death and society from the poison of his "error" is the truest mercy. But let us see. Five hundred years of the "logic of fact" have definitely demonstrated that the deadly disease of heresy cannot be cured by the method of flaying and burning the flesh, or even of burning books and suppressing free thought. That fact has been put beyond all possibility of doubt, even though the method has partially succeeded in one or two restricted localities—how partially, for that matter, we cannot gauge. It follows, therefore, seeing that the logic of fact has demonstrated beyond doubt that society and the individual can only be saved from the terrible consequences of disbelief by suasion and complete tolerance, and that persecution is worse than useless, that it is at the present day as much the bounden duty of the orthodox to insist upon their unconditional application as it was, before the great experiment had been made, their duty (from their point of view) to insist upon the body and the writings of the heretic being totally destroyed by fire in order to save his soul, and society from the poison of his ideas.

W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A.

"WILL HE DEFINE GOD?"

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My reply to Mr. Webley is that I believe God is omniscient, omnipotent, and that he can make His presence felt anywhere and everywhere. I trust this is a plain answer to a "plain question."

J. J. B. COLES.

Beyond Redemption.

ONE of the Southern bishops enjoys telling the following story on his own daughter. Strongly imbued with her father's doctrine, she had grown up a strict Episcopalian, and had never attended a revival or camp-meeting in her life, although, as her younger brother relevantly remarked, "the woods were full of them."

When she was about sixteen she went to visit an old friend of her mother's, in New York; and her hostess, after much persuasion, prevailed on her to go to hear Tom Harrison, the famous boy evangelist.

"But, Mrs. Burnett," she had finally objected, "suppose he would speak to me, I would be so frightened I shouldn't know what to say."

"Why, Virginia," her hostess had replied, "the church will be so crowded that nothing is more unlikely than he should single out either one of us."

But the girl's fears were realised.

As the great preacher left the pulpit and passed down the aisle, exhorting first this one, then that one, he paused at the pew where the bishop's daughter was seated.

"My dear child," he said, earnestly, "are you a Christian?"

"N-no, sir," she replied; "I am an Episcopalian."

With a twinkle in his eye, the evangelist passed on without another word.

—De Witt Free Press.

Obituary.

It is my painful duty to record the death of two of the most steadfast members of the Newcastle Branch—namely, Joseph Scott and Peter Weston, both being for over twenty years reliable and useful members. Scott, who was fifty-six years of age, died from consumption at Gateshead on May 6, after a long and painful illness, which was borne with philosophical calmness. Being fully conscious of his approaching death, he requested the undersigned and other friends to bear him to the grave, and that a short Secular Service be read, which was carried out, Mr. Mitchell kindly fulfilling the latter request in the presence of a large number of friends. Peter Weston, who was for many years the chief Freethought newsagent in Newcastle, died in the hospital on May 7, and was buried before any of his friends were aware of the sad reality. He was about fifty-two years of age, was a native of Edinburgh, and was well known in Freethought circles from Glasgow to London. His zeal and generous self-sacrifice on behalf of Secularism were unlimited, and such as many better able to afford than he might do well to emulate. It was recently discovered that in his shop, which was pulled down about two years ago, he bravely eked out a bare existence rather than relinquish the sale of Freethought literature, which he strenuously endeavored to supply after leaving the shop; but this effort was too much for him, and, being compelled, he reluctantly abandoned it. About a year ago he obtained employment at Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co.'s, where he worked until within about nine weeks of his death, which was caused by acute dyspepsia, from which he suffered a martyrdom for many years. He was the medium through which the memorable Bradlaugh and Gibson debate was arranged. But a more able pen than that of the present writer is required to do justice to the memory of such a relentless opponent of Christianity as refused even to take the time from a church clock! Knowing his end was near, he offered his body for dissection, and died, as he lived, an opponent to superstition. Both Weston and Scott could tell many interesting stories of stirring events in the earlier history of the movement.—J. G. BARTRAM.

ON Saturday last, the 11th inst., we gave back to mother earth the remains of the late Jane Hooper, of Devonport, aged sixty-one years. Her late husband's death only preceded hers by eleven short weeks, and they who were so devotedly attached to each other in their many years of married life may now mingle their unconscious dust together in the same grave. She was an ardent Secularist and a good woman, and was quite competent to uphold her views on religious subjects in her friendly encounters with Christians, whose esteem she won and retained where they could not share her opinions. Although she was in delicate health for years, her end came rather suddenly at last, just when she had gone away for the benefit which may be gained by change and rest. She desired that her funeral should be a Freethought one, as was her husband's, and the present writer read Austin Holyoake's beautiful burial address at her grave.—G. F. HUGH McCLUSKEY.

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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, G. W. Foote, "Has God Ever Spoken?"

BATTERSEA ETHICAL SOCIETY (455 Battersea Park-road): 3.15, Miss N. Freeman, "Moral Instruction Lesson."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell-road): 7, Dr. Macnamara, "The State and the Child."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11, Stanton Coit, Ph.D., "Christ's Parables."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Clergy and Christianity."

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "Folklore as an Aid to Religious Study."

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, J. W. Cox, "Mary had a little Lamb."

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, R. P. Edwards; 6.30, J. W. Cox, "God's Book."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, F. Davies, "The Mythical Jesus."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, F. Davies, "Why we Reject Christianity."

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, F. Davis, "Creed and Conduct."

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY: 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "What think ye of Christ?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Limitations of God"; 3.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity's Outlook"; 7, C. Cohen, "The Message of Secularism."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Something in its Place"; 7.15, A. B. Moss, "The Clergy and Christianity."

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, S. E. Easton, "Where will you Spend Eternity?"

VICTORIA PARK: 3.15, W. Heaford, "The Fallacies of Christianity."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH: H. Percy Ward—11, the Bull Ring; 3, near Ship Hotel, Camp Hill; 7, Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street, "The Nightmare of Hell." Wednesdays, Bull Ring at 8, Fridays, Nechell's Green at 8.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Annual General Meeting—election of office-bearers, etc.; 6.30, Social Meeting in Commemoration of Mill and Owen.

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

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Tom Swan, "The Psychical Kinship of Man and the Other Animals."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Mr. Charles Watts—7, "The Emancipation of Human Thought"; 7, "What Does the World Owe to Christianity?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

Lecturer's Engagements.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—May 19, Birmingham.

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