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The love of others has the same necessary foundation in the human mind as the love of ourselves.—HAZLITT.

Paying Imposture.

THERE are some people who lie naturally. They tell falsehoods by preference. But the practice is a difficult one to keep up. For the reason that liars have need of good memories, it requires cleverness to go on telling falsehoods with much success. Not the natural liars, therefore, but the artificial liars, are the most mischievous. Lying for the mere sake of deception is a shallow silly business which is very soon seen through; but deliberate lying may be conducted by clever scoundrels for a long while; long enough, at any rate, to enable them to fill their pockets handsomely at the expense of their dupes.

The principal business in this world sustained by lying is religion. We do not mean that it is *all* lying. There is superstition in it as well as imposture; and if it were not for the superstition the imposture would have a small chance of prosperity. What we mean is that the artfulness of enterprising liars supplements the simplicity of credulous believers. It is easy enough, for instance, to understand the state of mind of the foolish myriads who believe that the gore of some ancient (and perhaps apocryphal) saint liquifies into arterial blood once every year; but this particular miracle could not survive if it were not for the unscrupulous dexterity of the ecclesiastical gentlemen who work the trick with the bottle.

Whenever you have to deal with prosperous fables you find designing liars somewhere. This is how it struck the shrewd Yankee who unconsciously summed up the whole of Hume's argument, and settled the question of practical supernaturalism, by saying that he had travelled all over the world and had met thousands of liars but not a single miracle.

We are sometimes told that we take a too severe view of religion, and that most religionists are quite honest. We believe so too; indeed, it goes without saying that they *must* be; for, while one man may feed a thousand physical parasites, it takes a number of men to feed one social parasite. Every rogue has to prey on several honest people. Every sharper must trade on a number of flats. It is like skimming milk. You need to skim a lot of it to get a pint of cream.

The old gentleman who lives at Rome, and calls himself the Pope (Papa, or Father of the Faithful), receives his Peter's Pence from all points of the compass. Millions of pious souls in every part of what is (sometimes facetiously) called the civilised world send in their financial contributions to support His Holiness. He skims the biggest milk-bowl on earth.

But there are many other skimmers, and some of them do amazingly well. The Archbishop of Canterbury gets £15,000 a year—£1,250 a month, £288 a week, and £41 a day; the very thought of which is enough to make a workingman gasp for breath. The Bishop of London gets £10,000 a year, and poses as an unhappy man with a grievous

burden. Other right reverend fathers in God get diminishing incomes, until we come to the unfortunate one who complained at the recent Church Congress that he only received £2,400 last year. Some of the Nonconformist preachers enjoy very handsome stipends. Dr. Parker's successor is extremely well paid; and when his old Brighton congregation wanted to make him a present they could think of nothing so suitable as a brougham. It is a natty affair; we have seen him step into it outside the City Temple; and the incident carried our mind back to the gentleman's Master, who had only one ride in his life, and that was on a jackass.

General Booth is another fine skimmer. He stands outside all the sects—to run a sect of his own. They tell us that he receives nothing from the Salvation Army, and they appeal to the balance-sheet. Innocent simplicity! What does he want to pay himself for when he owns all the Army's property and does as he likes with it? There is a Trust Deed, but there is no Trust, for William Booth is only accountable to William Booth.

Some time ago—in one of the dull seasons, when newspapers were in want of a sensation—London was agitated over the "carryings on" of Messiah Pigott. It was a mere nine days' wonder. That was all. The storm blew over; old ladies ceased smiting the metropolitan Messiah with their umbrellas; Jesus Christ Pigott, or Pigott Jesus Christ, whichever it is, resumed the even tenor of his way; and the Messiah business goes on as before.

Over in America there is another Messiah. He is Scotch, and naturally he takes the cake. Scotland produces the most fervid zealots and the pawkiest hypocrites on earth. It boasts John Knox and "Holy Willie." And we should say that Dr. Dowie, of Zion City, Illinois, has about twenty per cent. of Carlyle's hero and eighty per cent. of Burns's victim in his composition. He is 'cute among the 'cutest; that is to say, among Scotch Americans. What he does not know in the way of running a religious circus is not worth knowing. His "people" must be very simple, but Old Dowie is deep—*very* deep. He teaches them to give, give, give; and all they give is the Lord's, and Alexander Dowie minds it until the Lord wants it. Zion Church is his, Zion City is his—and *they* are his, but he is not *theirs*. He owns himself, and it seems a very good investment.

Old Dowie has such a firm hold over his "people" that he can fool and tax them laughing. He must have had his tongue in his cheek when he took his "Restoration Host" from Zion City to New York to convert the Wall-street brokers and other worshippers in the Temple of Mammon. The Zionites travelled by special trains, and Dowie went with them in great state. On arriving they scattered to cheap boarding houses, while Dowie drove in a magnificent gilded coach to the Plaza Hotel, one of the most fashionable in the city, where he has a suite of rooms rented at a hundred dollars a day. He is surrounded by a "sacred guard" of a hundred men, elaborately dressed in black and gold uniforms; while a guard of twelve Chicago ex-pugilists are employed to keep the reporters away from him. Reporters, of course, have no reverence; they would interview him as they would "do" Lipton or Fitzsimmons.

One of Dowie's deacons is reported to have said that the "Restorer" expects to raise five million dollars during his three weeks' stay in New York, and that the money will be used for establishing a Zion City on the Pacific coast, and another on the Atlantic coast—both of which will belong to Dowie, like the one in Illinois. The Grand Old Prophet will then have a central city in the United States and a city on both coasts, to which he will be able to retire according to circumstances, including the weather.

Dowie addressed a big inaugural meeting in Madison-square. The end of his first paragraph was characteristic. "I want your money," he said, "and your souls." He put the money first. And the result was gratifying. One soul-stricken woman gave a cheque for three thousand dollars; another gave diamonds, and others gave watches, finger-rings, and cash. It was a splendid haul. Yes, the business of imposture is a fine one; all the capital you want is a level head, plenty of cheek, and some gift of the gab; and the dividends on this investment may be quite enormous.

We must not conclude without referring to the spiciest item of all. Old Dowie was accompanied by his wife. Perhaps she felt she ought not to leave him, with all those hysterical ladies knocking about. Anyhow, she joined the show, and got herself up for the occasion. But on the way to the hotel she suffered a calamity. A nimble thief eased her of a diamond pin valued at fifteen hundred dollars. That is how Prophets' wives go about nowadays. Two or three thousand years ago they had little finery on except an extra touch of paint. But circumstances have altered since the days of the first Elijah, whose wardrobe consisted of one cloak. Elijah the Second (Old Dowie) is better off, and pays hundreds of pounds for a single article of his wife's jewellery.

G. W. FOOTE.

Reason and Religion.

THE attitude of religious apologists towards science and scientific reasoning is a curious one. If a scientist like Haeckel sees reason to declare himself an unbeliever, and to produce evidence to warrant his unbelief, the apologist is ready with a retort. Science, he says, has nothing whatever to do with religion. It is impossible to discover the soul in a test-tube, or God by means of a telescope. Religion is quite outside the region of science, and the duty of the scientist is to get along with his employment, and when he wishes to understand deeper problems—go to church or chapel. That is when scientific men are not religious. But let a man like Lord Kelvin or Sir Oliver Lodge come along, and let loose some perfectly absurd statement as to science pointing to the existence of an intelligent Creator as the governing power in the universe, and there is a marked change in tone. The statement is repeated from a thousand pulpits as *scientific* testimony on behalf of religion, with the further assurance that the more deeply nature is studied the greater the evidence in favor of religious beliefs.

Now, it would seem clear enough to the meanest intelligence that if religion really does lie outside the region of science, if science is inadequate to give any opinion *against* religion, it must be equally inadequate to give evidence for it. If it is open to Lord Kelvin, as a scientist, to say that his physical research furnishes a presumption in favor of a Creator, it must be equally open to another scientist to contest that statement, and upon scientific grounds. Either science can speak upon the matter or it cannot. If it cannot, Lord Kelvin's testimony is worthless on the face of it; and if it can, his evidence is swept on one side by the counter testimony of a number of foremost scientific workers, backed up by the overwhelming evidence of the whole tendency of scientific development.

The truth is that religious apologists shirk intellectual criticism, not because they really believe that religion lies beyond the domain of reason, but because they recognise that reason condemns its pretensions. Hence their joy when they get what passes muster among the unthinking as intellectual proofs of their beliefs, and their affected ease when the intellect condemns them. This is well shown in an address by Archdeacon Wilson on "The Nature and Origin of Religious Faith," that has been sent me by a correspondent. Dr. Wilson addresses his lecture to men, which is either an insult or a compliment to women. It is the former if he thinks that no woman is able to appreciate the profound (?) reasoning contained in his lecture, or the latter if he believes they would be unaffected by it. Or perhaps he feels of his religion as a certain king did of his dynasty, that "It came in with a woman and would go out with a woman," and that the great thing meanwhile is to capture the men.

Dr. Wilson starts his lecture with the question, "Ought the strength of our religious faith to be proportioned to the degree of intellectual conviction arising from the evidence for it accessible to us?" He answers the question, as one might expect, in the negative; and in support of this he says: "Take the fundamental question of the Being of God. Was this a proposition to which the assent that they gave was intellectual on the balance of reason from evidence?" Well, but what connection is there between the question and the answer? Dr. Wilson starts with asking whether we *ought* to build up our faith in a particular manner. He continues by pointing out how it is actually formed. Now, a Free-thinker would be the first to assert that people's belief in God is not proportioned to the evidence accessible. The average religious person's belief is the result of education, of environment, and a predisposition to supernaturalism. No one is likely to dispute the Archdeacon's statement that "religious faith or belief in God is not, in general, solely dependent on intellectual evidence or argument." The Freethinker has been saying this for years; and we have, therefore, no quarrel with Dr. Wilson's reiteration of the same opinion.

But this is evidently riding off on a false issue. For what Dr. Wilson means, without ever actually saying it, is that we ought not to rest religious belief upon intellectual proofs at all. And the answer to this is plain and simple. All belief, whether religious or non-religious, must rest upon evidence that can be ultimately expressed in terms of the intellect. This evidence may be of the kind that lies near at hand, such as the evidence for the belief in the sphericity of the earth or the influence of the moon upon the tides, or it may be of the kind that expresses itself in the shape of instincts, the justification for which has to be sought and found in certain age-long conditions of animal existence. Not one man in a million, for example, bases his belief in the sanctity of human life upon the acquisition and digestion of evidence. It is with us all an instinct more or less strong. But if it is called into question, it is always possible to produce evidence for the justification of this instinct, and thus place it in the category of ratiocinative products. And there is simply no exception to this rule; either beliefs are the immediate result of inferences derived from facts, or they result from the insensible pressure of *general* facts spreading over generations of experience. But all beliefs *must* have an intellectual basis.

Certainly religious beliefs form no exception. "Faith," says Dr. Wilson, "originated in some profound spiritual region of human nature." Nothing of the kind; the expression is a piece of undiluted religious charlatany. The fundamental objects of religious belief are two—God and a future life. And both of them have their origin in reasons drawn from a certain conception of natural forces. The belief in God and the soul is in its essence as much an inference as is the Newtonian law of gravitation or the Darwinian principle of Natural Selection.

Unsound reasoning, we believe it to be, but that does not divest it of its ratiocinative character. Religious beliefs are only *unreasonable* in the specific sense of the balance of evidence being against them. These religious reasonings about nature become discredited in the light of a fuller and more accurate knowledge; but to say that they are drawn from a "profound spiritual region," and are, therefore, not amenable to reason, is a piece of absurdity that would be wholly amusing were it not, in its consequences, so socially injurious.

Archdeacon Wilson tries to show the folly of resting the belief in God upon a balance of evidence by instancing "the immense research, the extensive and profound knowledge of science, the rare penetrative power, the training in logic and philosophy that would be required" in order to give it intellectual warranty. One has only to wait for a religious pleader to commit the "happy dispatch," and Dr. Wilson effectually does it here. After pleading that religious beliefs are independent of the intellect, he next proceeds to argue that few of us have the capacity for acquiring the necessary intellectual data. Then it *can* be acquired, after all! And, if it can, what becomes of the argument that no such intellectual data exists? Or, if it does *not* exist, why argue that *very few* have the capacity for acquiring it? Is there any other subject under the sun, except religion, on which such inanities would pass for profound thinking?

If religious faith was identical with intellectual assent to evidence, then, said Dr. Wilson, he would be an Agnostic. We are not surprised; for this is only another way of saying that tried by the test of reason religious beliefs are like an idiot's tale, sound and fury signifying nothing. And much greater men than Dr. Wilson have said the same thing. Pascal said it; Faraday said that the same common sense applied to his religion that he applied to science would destroy it altogether. And the general policy of the religious world in exalting "faith" as superior and different to reason, is but another confession that religious beliefs cannot stand critical examination. Still, in the light of this admission the numerous "proofs" of the existence of God look very peculiar. Archdeacon Wilson uses them himself, and then, in case they are not convincing, proceeds to throw them overboard as all being more or less invalid. "Gentlemen," said a lawyer addressing a jury, "My client is charged with stealing a watch. I am prepared to prove in the first place that he never had the watch in his possession; and, in the next place, that if he had, he paid for it." Dr. Wilson's defence reminds one of that plea. He is prepared to prove, first, that religion is justified by reason, and, second, that reason has nothing whatever to do with the subject.

Archdeacon Wilson had a word to say on the gradual change in religious beliefs. The belief in a flat earth, special creation, the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, have all passed from "history to parable." Well and good, but it would have been better had the Archdeacon pointed out to his audience that all these beliefs had been taught by the Christian churches, emphasised by them as being of cardinal importance, and only given up at last owing to the strongest possible pressure from *non-Christian sources*. Had this been done, some of his hearers might have reflected upon the lesson of Christianity having for centuries mis-directed and mis-educated the race, forcing upon the people as history and science what is now admitted to be fable and error. Some might even have gone further and have asked what right has any Christian minister, standing as he does as the representative of a religion that is discredited on every subject upon which it has played the part of teacher, what right has such a man to stand as the exponent of truths too great for the ordinary scientific intelligence to grapple with? Is anything further needed to discredit Christianity than the admitted fact that upon *every* subject where its teachings can be tested it is shown to have been wrong, and that in every

case it has been the non-religious teacher that has had to instruct the people aright.

It would be too much to expect a clergyman to wind up a lecture of this character without some talk about "mystery." Religious faith is a mystery, but so too is much else. There is the mystery of protoplasm, of life, of the universe itself. Dr. Wilson, however, overlooks one or two important points. Nearly all the "mysteries" of science are unsolved problems merely, and there is little doubt that one day they will yield to the patient investigation of science. And science never asks us to believe any more about a subject than we can understand concerning it. If all that is known is that a force exists we are only asked to believe in its existence; beliefs about its nature will come later with greater knowledge. The religious "mystery" is of a very different order. This is not an unsolved problem; it is not a problem at all. It is a mere jumble of words answering to no known fact, and corresponding with no definite idea. It is a mystery because no man living knows precisely what is meant by it. We do not know where it exists, or what it is like, or even if it exists at all. And yet upon this "mystery" all religion hangs, upon it all churches depend, upon it all the clergy live, and upon it we are asked to base the conduct of our lives. Absurd, is really a mild term to apply to such a position.

C. COHEN.

Principles, Not Persons

THE great central principle is that in proportion as people grow in intelligence and culture, their faith in religion declines. The more a man knows of Nature and her ways, the less he believes in the supernatural. How few of the great scientists have been, or are, avowed and zealous Christians! Christians assert that the tendency of science is to destroy our spiritual nature. True; and the retort of the scientists is that man is untrue to himself when he cultivates a spiritual nature. The late Professor Bain ridiculed the idea that we naturally possess a spiritual nature. We are Nature's offspring, and she has bequeathed to us her own attributes; and spirituality is not among them. Science brings her students into close touch with Nature, and they quickly learn that spirit is simply Nature's breath, which she communicates to her children. Everybody understands now that soul and body are essentially one—soul signifying, not a distinct entity emanating from the deity, but the body's life, or that which distinguishes the body from an ordinary lump of clay. If science, then, teaches that spirit means wind or breath, and soul life, how can scientists, and ordinary students of science, be expected to believe in Christianity? This is the principle to which Secularists loyally adhere; but it does not follow that all who believe in Christianity are hypocrites. Thousands of them are absolutely sincere. We may reflect on their intelligence and make fun of their simplicity, but we must respect their honesty, which is as pure as a frosty sky. We may call them the dupes of superstition, or the gulled slaves of unreality, but we call them hypocrites at our peril. Of course, Christian hypocrites are by no means few and far between. Some years ago I came into contact with an exceptionally brilliant young clergyman, who prided himself, in the presence of the members of his own church, upon being *personally* an unbeliever in, while officially a preacher of, Christianity. He would argue against the efficacy of prayer, in private, and advocate the same in public. I have grounds for thinking that multitudes are in the same position. They teach what they are appointed and paid to teach, though they do not believe a word of it. Such people are canting hypocrites, and are not ashamed of the fact. Three years ago, a clergyman told me that he cannot himself accept the dogmas he preaches to others. He is by nature a liberal—

a liberal theologian, if anybody can be such by nature—but his congregation is composed of conservatives, and twice every Sunday, to please his hearers, he champions conservative views with which he has absolutely no sympathy. He, too, though in many respects an excellent character, is guilty of hypocrisy. These facts make it all the easier for us to be faithful to our principle. Even some of the most enlightened official defenders of the faith deny it in their private capacity, while the number of those who, both publicly and privately, avow their unbelief, is becoming larger every year.

It is customary with many preachers, at present, in defending the Christian religion, to ignore the proofs from prophecy and miracles, and to magnify what they regard as the surer proof from results. "Look at the moral result," they exclaim, and then they proceed to describe a typical case: "That man would tell you that once he was blind, now he can see; once he was dead in trespasses and sins, but the message reached him of the love of God in Jesus Christ. If I were to say to him, and he could get up and answer in your presence, What think ye of the ideal Christ, the Christ that now is, the Christ whom we cannot see, but the Christ in whom you sincerely believe? his answer would be, 'God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven my sins. I have started a new life; I am living in the hope that the gates of heaven will open wide for me, because the hand of Jesus holds them.' This may be an illusion—mark, I admit it—but look at the moral result." Well, in the name of all that is reasonable, what next? This argument stands on one leg, and this leg has the ague badly. The Christian faith *may* be an illusion. Great heavens! what right has anybody, after making such a humbling admission, to recommend the Gospel of Christ to men and women as the one redeeming power in the Universe? Is it right to seek to save people by a lie? Are we still children to be lured on to the higher life by illusions? The admission just quoted is an undeniable proof that Christian apologists have lost their heads, and are deliriously clutching at straws. Let us look at the moral result, of which they make such an enormous deal. We are told that every sincere prayer for deliverance is instantaneously answered, that no one has ever appealed to Jesus in vain, and that he saves all who come to him in faith. Let us see. I once knew an intelligent young man, the son of a minister. He was taught to trust and love Jesus from his infancy. At twenty he was a bright star in the Christian firmament. He participated in many forms of Christian work, he could pray in public with moving eloquence, and he was prominent in whatever position he occupied. But by slow degrees he succumbed to the craving for alcohol. At twenty-eight he had literally no will-power, so that every day he was in a state of intoxication. He had *delirium tremens* at least half a dozen times. And yet he believed in, and loved, and prayed to Jesus unceasingly; whether sober or drunk, he would passionately appeal for help to conquer his foe; he would often spend hours on his knees crying "O God, help me to give up this cursed drink, O save me from a drunkard's grave." This went on for several years, only he was sinking lower and lower into the pit. God never answered, and Christ never stretched forth his hand to help. But a young woman loved this wretched drunkard, and had courage enough to marry him. She had an inexhaustible supply of will-power, and of her own abundance she communicated to her husband, and after years of hard struggling reclaimed him. Look at the moral result of a woman's love laying hold of a man's weak will; and a woman's love may *not* be an illusion, but is a grand and abundantly verified reality. I admit that people *do* obtain deliverance from debasing vices by believing in an imaginary or idealised Christ; but at what cost! It is horribly demoralising to believe a lie, or to hug an illusion as if it were the truth. But why should people cling to degrading superstitions, when the power to save the world lies latent within themselves? I would rather go to hell with the truth than to heaven with a lie.

With motives we have nothing whatever to do, except when it is impossible to misunderstand them. It is with a principle that we are dealing, which principle is in the process of being firmly established. It is admitted that Christians have idealised Christ; and it is equally certain that they are now idealising the moral results of Christianity. Christianity has not achieved the successes they claim for it. It has failed to cope with the slums in large towns and cities. It has failed to deliver society from thieves, and murderers, and swindlers. It has failed to heal divisions, and factions, and party animosities. Look at the moral result of the religious persecution now going on in England and Wales. The Established Church is up in arms against Nonconformity, and has just scored a magnificent victory; and Nonconformity retaliates by indulging in shockingly bad language against the Establishment. If Christianity were of Divine origin, and if Divinity still inhered in it, would this be its effect on the character and temper of its adherents? But if it be, as we believe, a hurtful superstition, all the present signs of the times clearly indicate that it is slowly but surely passing away.

JOHN LLOYD.

Theistic Absurdity.

If God exists, he made us all—
The best, the middling, and the parson;
He makes the starving sparrows fall,
And winks at murder, faith, and arson.
If God exists, our deeds are right,
The fruit of his creative sowing;
Our worst is pleasing in his sight,
Approved of old in *his* fore-knowing;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, we're all the same,
Though false as Jacob, frank as Esau;
If "free," we ne'er demerit blame,
Because, if "free," we're *forced* to be so.
If God exists, he's very sly;
He gave me "Will," and *makes* me use it
Exactly as I like, since I
Must like the likeable, and choose it;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, he made my mind,
So, therefore, *he* does all my thinking;
He could not, if he were inclined,
Unlink Causation's interlinking.
He ne'er was "free" to make us "free";
He *had* to limit all his creatures
With qualities of *fixed* degree—
With strength, brain, tastes, time, place, and features;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, my "heart" and brain
He made, with all therein potential:
The right, the wrong, the vague, the plain,
The doubtful, and the evidential.
"Will" cannot change belief or creed;
Belief determines our volition;
The Will is *forced* to "choose" to heed
Unwilled Belief's *unwilled* monition;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, he destined me
To view his acts with detestation;
In "choosing" aught, *no* choice have we;
We "choose" by mental gravitation.
If God exists, I am, perforce,
Precisely what he planned I *should* be;
And, so, on me he smiles, of course,
Whate'er my thought, or deed, or mood be;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, he's *forced* to be;
And though he ne'er was self-created,
But, all constrained, as much as we,
To pity him I ne'er was fated.
If God exists, he shows respect
To certain folk, and not to others;
Some babes are born in homes select,
And some, in lairs of drunken mothers;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, 'tis in his plan
That men should main and torture cattle;
He planned, and made, and helps the man
Who chokes with blood the infant's prattle.

If God exists, 'tis right to hate,
To love, and also to contemn him ;
The dull, and shrewd, he did create ;
The dull adore, the shrewd condemn him ;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, he makes me state :
My God-given mind detects his badness ;
I'm glad that I am forced to hate
A shark-designer—glad in sadness.
If God exists, he takes delight
In quarrels, hatred, blood, and fighting,
Since " dogs delight to bark and bite "
And creeds result in disuniting ;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists—the Christian one,
He edited lampoons and letters,
Abetted by his Ghost and Son,
To gird the minds of men with fetters.
If God exists, he helps the priest
To swindle noodles with the fictions
Of all the errant, bookless, East,
The home of sacred contradictions.
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, he made the mouse,
And made the cruel cat to catch it ;
A lack of heart, or lack of nous ;
Can any human rascal match it ?
If God exists, I *must* protest
Against the wicked way he rules us ;
Our worst is better than his best,
Unless our highest sense befools us ;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, he seems to be
A god of malice, spite and mocking,
Since thoughtful folk are forced to see
That nearly all his acts are shocking.
If God exists, he loves to jest,
For, so-called " blasphemy and treason "
Proceed from those who think the best,
And best employ their god-made reason ;
And so, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, he made the Turks
To do the bloody deeds that shock us ;
When *God's* work works, 'tis *he* that works—
Unless our reason's sent to mock us.
If God exists, then God is I,
And I must be a Godly-fraction
Affecting, and affected by,
The sum of things, in ev'ry action ;
And yet, if God exists, I'm forced to hate him.

If God exists, there's nought beside,
And man must be a mode of *Godness* ;
If so, of course, I cannot hide
That this involves perplexing oddness.
If God exists, what, then, am I ?
And what is *he*, that *he* should blame me ?
Can *he*, to-day, or by-and-by,
Attempt, with *his* vile ways, to shame me ?
If so, 'tis well indeed to hate him !

G. L. MACKENZIE.

The Cure.

I HAVE stirred some ill-feeling against me because I have said that I was unable to conceive of the separation of Churches and the State otherwise than as an engine of war against religions in general, and against the Church of Rome in particular. Certain worthy Republicans who profess anti-clericalism, and, at the same time, affect a great respect for religion, bring an accusation against me and reproach me with a desire to attack liberty.

I joyfully bear their anathemas, for, while I tilt at the Church, I am persuaded that I do more for liberty than those honorable sticklers for trifles who would fight clericalism while venerating religion, and who see liberty in permitting priests to poison youth with execrable superstitions. It is necessary, once for all, to explain what is meant by liberty. Mme. Humbert felt justified in reproaching the Paris jury for checking the liberty she had taken of swindling people, aided by an imaginary will. Now amongst the Liberals who condemn me I have not met one who rises to protest against that flagrant attack on liberty. Why this silence, whilst they claim so loudly the liberty for priests to

deceive? Let them not say I am paradoxical. The priest who asks twenty-five sous from a simpleton, assuring him that by a mass he will release a soul from Purgatory, differs in no way from Mme. Humbert. When he promises the restoration to health of a sick person, or the passing of a successful examination for the sum of five francs placed in St. Antony's box, he uses the same dodge as the celebrated Thérèse of Toulouse. St. Antony and all the other saints of Paradise are the Crawfords of the Church. While the curé has not proved indubitably to me that, after his mass, a soul has betaken itself from Purgatory to Paradise, or that St. Antony exists and has appointed him his representative on earth, I am justified in regarding the curé as a swindler. Mme. Humbert was condemned because she could not prove the existence of the Crawfords, nor show the will, nor produce the millions.

Why, then, shall the priest not be condemned who can, no more than she, prove the existence of St. Antony, nor show the plan of Paradise. The simpletons poured out their money into the pockets of the Humberts on the faith of an imaginary will, other simpletons pour their wealth into the coffers of the Church on the faith of a paradise not less imaginary than the will. It is just the same operation. They condemn Mme. Humbert, but they bow down before the Pope, the chief of the ecclesiastical band. I demand the same treatment for both, and if the priest be not forbidden to cheat I ask the same liberty for the Humbert family.

It is all very well to ask liberty for the Church in a fine article. It permits of touching developments on religion in general, and the Catholic Church in particular. But when we weigh the facts we find these brilliant words only concealing lying, deception, and the exploiting of unhappy invalids by a band of knaves acting with the sanction of Government, thanks to the complaisance of citizens who, emancipated themselves, yield to the general snobism and fairly swoon when the words " religious jugglers " is pronounced before them.

I have demonstrated many times that every religious man is an illusionist or a madman. It is self-evident that belief in saints, angels, demons, and in miraculous cures, and a hell or paradise ought to be taken as the conception of delirium, and should be relegated to mental pathology. The believer who, kneeling on his *prie-dieu* holds converse with an imaginary being, such as the Virgin, Jesus Christ, or St. Peter, is demented as much as the insane man in the asylum, who passes his time in listening to voices and answering interlocutors non-existent. I have not invented this theory. It is that of all who reflect at all. In a word, following Diderot, we consider religion as a folly, and priests either as wanting in mental balance, or rather as deceivers who exploit for their own profit the feeble-minded under their control. These considerations, free from all sentimentalism, should guide us in our line of conduct. We ought to fight religion as we would fight alcoholism, tuberculosis, or the bubonic plague.

But when we demand that disestablishment shall be an engine of war against the Churches, we in no wise mean, as our adversaries pretend, to offer violence to individuals. Let everyone have his liberty of thought. I have no philosophic system in my pocket to impose on others. I have my philosophy; let each one have his. My conception of the world is not that of my neighbor, and that of my neighbor is not mine. Little it matters what are the metaphysics of him who rubs against me in the street. My intention is not to thrust by force my conception on that which he may have in his brain. I would not even prevent the Catholic absorbing the wafer bread which he believes to be his God. Individual theophagy is not dangerous; but I would not have that mania generalised and systematised and made, under the name of religion, a social evil.

To sum up, we would cure, not coerce. But to cure it is necessary to limit the action of the priest, who is the principal agent of contagion. This is why we demand—first, that the State, the counties, and the boroughs cease to furnish funds to churches and buildings to the hypnotisers who nurse religious folly; second, that measures be taken to prevent priests taking advantage of the simple people who listen to them and extort from " the faithful " divers sums by lying fictions and gross deceptions; third, that the State prevent those agents from associating themselves in national groups, or bodies; fourth, that the State take to itself the monopoly of primary and secondary education, and that courses of history on scientific principles be given in all degrees of education. In these various means there is not, in spite of what is said, any attack on the liberty of individuals. It is the social body which defends itself against a dangerous malady.....In every case, as Diderot says, if religions are follies, they cannot stand against the constant impulse of Nature, which teaches us by her laws. The cure is certain; but we would hasten it.

—From an article in " *La Raison*," by Maurice Allard,
Translated by Elizabeth Holland.

Acid Drops.

One of the subjects discussed at the Church Congress was the inadequacy of the stipends of the clergy. The Dean of Windsor, who opened the discussion, treated his hearers to a strong dose of pathetic eloquence. He pleaded for a great central sustentation fund, in addition to the existing endowments, to enable the parsons to live up (not down) to the gospel of "blessed be ye poor." The Bishop of Bristol said that a man had asked him: "You scoundrel, what are you doing with your five thousand a year?" His answer was that last year he only received £2,400. He had just enough honesty, however, to admit that this was "a good deal." Of course it is! Just fancy Jesus Christ and the twelve Apostles getting hold of that sum of money—we do not say annually, but once in a while! Had they done so, Judas (the cashier) would never have rattled for £3 15s. He carried the bag, you know; and it must have been very light when he decided to commute his future salary, and perquisites, for £3 15s. down.

The Bishop of Bristol, with his £46 odd per week, felt his position was one that warranted a little facetiousness. So he said he was quite ready to accept the phrase "fatal opulence" which had been applied to the Bishops. The "opulence" was very "fatal" to the children he would leave behind him. Good! It was an excellent joke. And the assembled parsons took it. Some laughed and others cheered. They felt it was worthy of the cause and the occasion.

The Bishop of St. Asaph, referring to the "Fatal Opulence of Bishops," said that if anyone cared for his balance at the bank they might have it. Well, the Bishop *does* get a very comfortable salary, anyhow. Perhaps it is invested in stocks or breweries.

The *Daily Telegraph* says that the Christian missionary establishments in China cost about £2,000,000 a year. We believe the money might be spent more profitably on feeding and educating poor neglected children in England.

"Why men do not believe the Bible" was the subject of a recent address by Canon Grant at Guildford. The gist of what he had to say was that the common idea of the inspiration of the Bible is a great mistake. "The theory," he is reported as saying, "that the Bible was word by word absolutely and distinctly the word of God had never been said by the Church of England.....Christians guided by the Holy Spirit could not venture to say exactly in what sense it was inspired." Quite so. The Bible is inspired as long as you do not define "inspiration." The moment you do that the trouble begins. It is best, therefore, to treat that word "inspiration" like that other blessed and consoling word, Mesopotamia.

The Lord Mayor of Manchester gave a reception in the Town Hall as a preliminary to the annual meeting of the members of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The principal teachers of day-schools and superintendents of Sunday-schools in the district were specially invited, and about six hundred attended. During the evening speeches were delivered in the large hall. The Lord Mayor spoke of the Bible as "the book of books, the foundation of all good works"—including, we suppose, the good works of those who reject it, and the good works of those who never read it. Dr. Alfred Hopkinson, the Principal of Manchester University, condescended to talk a great deal of pious nonsense. Amongst other absurdities, he said that "the reason the English race was fitted to be an imperial race, as he once heard in the House of Commons, was that the Englishmen who went out as administrators had been trained from their earliest youth by mothers who had Bibles in their hands and who believed in them." This foolish statement was greeted with loud applause. Naturally. Most audiences like being called an imperial race. But there must have been a few thoughtful teachers present who remembered the old Romans, who were a more imperial race than even "God's Englishmen," as John Milton called them; and these few thoughtful teachers must have wondered how the Roman mothers managed to bring up *their* strong sons *without* Bibles in their hands.

Principal Hoskinson was followed by Miss Burstall, head mistress of the Girls' High School in Manchester. This lady urged her hearers to treasure the Bible more than they had ever treasured it before. But this is mere exhorting. Incidentally, she observed that the Bible Society was "founded during the dark days of the terrible war with Napoleon." The lady did not pause to reflect that it was

the Bibliolators in England and elsewhere who made Napoleon possible. Had they not banded themselves together to put down the French Republic, the Revolution would have run its course without a great European war. The Bibliolators, as usual, stuck their noses into other people's business, and the result was twenty years of bloodshed on land and sea, and a national debt of a thousand millions to Great Britain alone.

What a pity it is that the voice of truth cannot be heard at some of these Bible Society meetings, where persons of more or less local celebrity flatter the popular superstition—with more or less sincerity! How we should like a chance of addressing the Bibliolators, if only for ten minutes! Of course we should want to be carefully fenced in from frontal, side, and rear attacks.

Almost at the same moment that Principal Hopkinson was talking absurdity about the Bible in the Manchester Town Hall, Professor Flinders Petrie was discoursing at Owen's College—a place with which Principal Hopkinson is very familiar. The Bible represents the first man as having been created some four thousand years before Christ, and the "fall" of that man as having necessitated the Atonement. Professor Petrie told the Owens College audience that researches at Abydos, in Upper Egypt, had enabled them to read at that one spot a continuous history running back to 5,000 B.C.; and he pointed out that many thousands of years must have rolled over between the pristine dwellers in the Nile Valley and the men who carved ivory statuettes and manufactured glazed work inlaid with second colors. It was a long, long march (he said) from flint instruments to the solemn temple, ivory statuettes, and human portraits, of the times of Mena, the first king of the first dynasty, about 4,700 B.C. Such is the voice of Science. How different from the voice of superstition—in the Manchester Town Hall.

Republicans and Catholics came into collision at Bilbao. The result was seven killed and thirty-three wounded. A number of priests were arrested as the principal instigators of the disorders. Revolver shots were fired from the windows of the Catholic Society's rooms and from the windows and steeples of the church of San Nicolas. What beautiful effects of the religion of love!

The *Western Mail* is responsible for the truth of the following story: At a recent local temperance meeting a resolution of sympathy with the relatives of several deceased temperance workers was moved. In support of the resolution a well-known minister was specially invited to speak about a departed philanthropist, whose name is a household word throughout Wales. Speaking with considerable feeling, the rev. gentleman eulogised the departed brother in measured and stately language, and, to the consternation of the audience, concluded by saying: "Mr. — is gone to heaven. Of that there can be no doubt. We shall never meet him again."

Christians trail their bigotry behind them wherever they go. Here is the editor of the *Abolitionist* failing to understand why Mr. H. S. Salt or any other Atheist should object to Miss Frances Power Cobbo's association of Atheism with Vivisection. "For clever people," it says, "these defenders of atheism seem in this little matter to be surprisingly dense." Then it goes on to say that only Atheists are free to argue that the lower animals may be tortured for our own benefit. We beg to tell him that Atheists do *not* feel free to make use of this argument. The editor of the *Abolitionist* is either ignorantly or maliciously talking sheer nonsense. Let him stick to his anti-vivisection and leave Atheism alone. Otherwise we shall have to tell him, and prove it, that Atheists were in the field of humanitarianism before the Christians entered it.

In the anti-vivisection page of *The Animal's Guardian* we note that the "blessing of Almighty God" is asked on the work. But what sort of a God is it that waits to be asked for his blessing on kindness? On the next page of this journal is "a clever poem" by "Lawrence Nelson," who is stated to be the daughter of "that most able controversialist, writer, and humanitarian, Mr. J. H. Levy." Well now, Mr. J. H. Levy is himself an Atheist, unless he has changed since the old days when he wrote philosophical articles signed "D" for Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*.

Some years ago we incurred odium amongst certain fanatics by saying a good word for Lord Kitchener. We pointed out that his fine conduct of the Fashoda affair, his asking those who wanted to commemorate his Soudan victory to give him £100,000 to establish a College out there, and

his remarkable decision to keep the Christian missionaries and Christian teaching absolutely out of it—all showed him to be something superior to the common run of successful generals. It happens that our view of Lord Kitchener has been gradually gaining acceptance, and we may live to hear the worst of the aforesaid fanatics say that perhaps we were right after all. Turning from fanatics to more or less level-headed men, we may note Lord Rosebery's suggestion—after the publication of that awful War Report—that Lord Kitchener should be called home from India and given a free hand to reorganise the British Army. This was laughed at by the *Daily News*, but the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience has changed its tune on the subject since then. The idea of Lord Kitchener's recall has so caught on, even with Liberals, that it was actually made a leading point in the recent address of Mr. Augustine Birrell in the Town Hall, Westminster, at a demonstration organised by the Bristol South Liberal Association. Mr. Birrell's highly flattering references to Lord Kitchener, as the one man the country has to look to for anything like satisfactory army-reform, were greeted with loud applause. Evidently, then, the editor of the *Freethinker* is not such a "rotten" prophet after all.

Congregationalist men of God have gone home from their Bournemouth Conference full of determination to carry out the Rev. Dr. Horton's advice and clamor for the impeachment of Mr. Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain, and other members of the old Unionist government. Of course they won't succeed. Probably that is why they clamor. But there is no denying that the Congregationalists, like other Free Churchmen (heaven save the mark!), are terribly wild with the Government for passing the Education Act. They would like to see Mr. Balfour's head on a charger.

Mr. Edward Clifford, secretary of the Church Army, told the Church Congress that athletic games and exercises were excellent, but he believed the clergy made a mistake when they organised for their people either dancing or acting. We believe so too. We would go to the length of saying that principles and amusements never mix well. This is true all round. We never knew a Secular Club, for instance, that did not sooner or later come to grief; either by the Club extinguishing Secularism, or by the Secularists deciding to extinguish the Club. Unfortunately, two such Clubs—one in North London and the other at Bradford—presumed to take (in vain) the honored name of Charles Bradlaugh. We hope the next little knot of Secularists who will not profit by the lessons of the past, but feel that they must learn absolutely "on their own," will at least refrain from trading gratuitously upon the memory of Charles Bradlaugh or any other dead *Freethinker*.

Chancellor Vernon Smith, of Manchester, discussing the question of the Church in relation to the State before and after the Reformation, told the Church Congress that he was amazed at the complacency and satisfaction with which some Churchmen contemplated the process of disestablishment. He ventured to warn these mistaken people in the following impressive manner:—

"Disestablishment would be an irreligious act, and a blow to religion. Disestablishment would mean disendowment. That would not mean that the Dissenters would have a share of the funds. Dr. Clifford said they did not want them for themselves, but for the nation; but he contended that to divert them to the poor law, old age pensions, and other similar objects, would be unscientific and irreligious."

We are unable to see how disestablishment could be unscientific, or scientific either; but we can quite see how it would be irreligious if it meant disendowment, for disendowment is the most irreligious thing in the world. When you touch the Church's cash-box you are laying your hand on the very Ark of God.

Weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth still goes on over the case of Mr. W. A. Parker, an elderly Passive Resister, who did a week (we believe) in Wandsworth Gaol. A correspondent of the *Daily News* says it is "enough to make any Christian's blood run cold"—though, we should judge from the rest of his letter that "cold" was a misprint for *hot*. We do not recollect, however, that the Christians' blood ran cold (or hot) when the editor of the *Freethinker* suffered fifty-two weeks' imprisonment in Holloway Gaol. When the followers of Jesus Christ feel the pinch of a law it is always a bloody persecution; when a non-Christian feels it, they regard it as a trivial incident. Never did the world see another such a lot of selfish hypocritical creatures. But what can you expect of people who, instead of piously dying for God, hit upon the beautiful plan of making God die for them?

It is complained that Mr. Parker was "measured and weighed," which couldn't have hurt him much; also that

he was "put in a damp cell." The latter complaint is probably ill-founded; for gaols are model dwellings from the mere point of view of physical sanitation. Of the same character, we suspect, is the complaint that Mr. Parker had his Bible taken away from him. Naturally prisoners are not allowed to carry their outside property into their cells. But there is no difficulty about getting a Bible to read. Every prison cell is furnished with one; indeed, for the first three months it is the only book a prisoner is allowed to read.

A Passive Resister, at the Leicester Borough Police-court, held forth like a perfect oracle, and would not let the magistrates interrupt the torrent of his pious eloquence. He said he was there in obedience to a divine law, to protest against a law which had no moral sanction, and was doomed in the sight of God. Sir Thomas Wright, one of the magistrates, ventured to remind this inspired Nonconformist that they also had consciences, though they were not perhaps of that high character that professed to carry Jesus Christ in their pocket.

A Passive Resister at Twickenham wanted to know whether the auctioneer had been converted yet, whether his sins had been blotted out, and whether he was prepared to meet his God. If things get much worse, we dare say auctioneers would sooner meet God than a Passive Resister.

The Wesleyan Methodists of Eastington have applied to the County Council for powers to open a school under the new Act, in which religion is to be taught "in conformity with the doctrine of the Wesleyan Methodists." Evidently this body of Dissenters have no objection to accepting rate aid for definite religious instruction. And what about passive resistance?

It would almost seem as though hypocrisy and Nonconformist Conscience were convertible terms. A little time back, just as the advocates of secular education were beginning to get a show in the correspondence that had been running in the columns of the *Daily News* and the editor interposed with "no more letters on this subject can be received." But ever since we have noticed the advocates of religious instruction continue to get their letters inserted as before, although under another heading. In last Saturday's issue, for instance, there appears several letters containing all the usual twaddle about Dr. Clifford standing for the rights of citizens, as against the bishops who stand for sectarian interests. When Dr. Clifford plucks up sufficient courage to *publicly* advocate a policy of exclusively secular education in State schools, we shall be able to agree with these writers, but not before. Until he does, we believe that Dr. Clifford and the Bishop of London are both playing the same game, only just now the latter holds the winning hand. Hence the row. All the same, it is curious that the *Daily News*, which thrusts its religion so effusively on its readers, can only find room for one side of the controversy.

Dissenters are jubilant over the *Daily News* Church Census for East Ham, which gives them a majority over the attendants at the Established churches. Whereupon the Vicar of East Ham writes to the *Church Times*, saying he is not surprised, because in this particular district the Nonconformists have handsomer and more comfortable buildings for people to go to—and they go. So much for conviction. It is simply a matter, with a large number, of getting the best evening's entertainment. No wonder the clergy are all opposed to Sunday concerts and the like. With plenty of these attractions in full swing the churches would simply be out of the running altogether.

There is some humor left in the church to which Sydney Smith belonged. The Rev. T. E. Wilkinson writes to the *Church Times* pointing out that no adequate reward has been offered to the natives of South Africa who stood by us against the Boers, and he therefore suggests the foundation of a new South African bishopric. Gods, what humor!

Dr. Torrey, the peripatetic evangelist, is now busy in Dundee. According to the *British Weekly* he is being "well supported by the leading clergy in the town"—which says very little for their intelligence. A man who can at this time of day declare he believes "the entire Bible as originally given without flaw or error as the very word of God," must be either a great fool, or something worse. And when a man whose addresses bristle with absurdities of this description receives the support of the "leading clergy," well, *Freethinkers* can only hope they will keep at it. Another statement made by this man is,

"If there is not a devil and hell there ought to be." One is inclined to hope there is—for Torrey's sake. And here is yet a third statement, "Show me a man who persistently and continually questioned and denied it (the Bible) and I will show you a man who was living either a life of greed for gold, or a life of lust. Looseness of morals and so-called liberality of doctrine go hand in hand." Such effusions are, of course, beneath contempt; but imagine what a religion Christianity must be when the "leading clergy" of a large town openly support blackguardism, like this.

Some of the Dundee clergy, however, to do them justice, are not quite so fond of "Dr." Torrey's methods. The majority of his converts—a very large majority we imagine—are very young people, and one clergyman has protested against this "business of converting immature people in the manner adopted by the American evangelist." We heartily agree with this protest. To our mind, it is little short of criminal for such men as this uncultured evangelist to work upon the emotions of young boys and girls at the most impressionable and most critical periods of their lives, in the interest of his *business*. Statistics are available which plainly point to the injurious effects of such revivalistic meetings in the shape of an increase of insanity and the like. Dr. Mercier and other specialists at home and abroad have called attention to this aspect of the matter. Some of the boys who were "converted" by Torrey have been reconverted by the clergyman protesting. Torrey's reply was to ask the meeting to offer up prayers that the minister might be brought to repentance. We do not suppose that the prayers will have much effect, and if this particular clergyman succeeds in calling attention to what is a grave social evil, he will have performed a public service.

It is the religious bodies in London that make Sunday hideous. They have no respect for the feelings of their fellow-citizens, and none for those of the Almighty whom they suppose to be listening to all their noise. A Hackney correspondent of the *Daily Express*, having been ill and ordered to keep his room on Sunday and have a day of complete rest and quiet, gives the following account of his experiences:—

- 6.30 a.m.—Detachment of female Salvationists beating tambourines and singing.
- 7.0 a.m.—Detachment of male Salvationists with a concertina, and singing.
- 8.0-9.0 a.m.—Chorus of milkmen.
- 9.30 a.m.—Band (drum and fife), some church lads' brigade.
- 9.45 to 10.15 a.m.—Children waiting for their Sunday-school to open, occupying the time letting off fireworks.
- 10.15 a.m.—Parade of the Salvation Army Congress Hall Band; tune, "Annie Laurie"; words drowned by the instruments.
- 10.30 to 11.0 a.m.—Parish church bells.
- 10.45 a.m.—Return journey of same band.
- 11.30 a.m.—Street parade in aid of some fund; two bands.
- 12.30 to 1.15 p.m.—Open-air mission; harmonium; male and female voices.
- 2.0 p.m.—Congress Hall Band again.
- 2.30 p.m.—Reassembling of Sunday-school children; more fireworks.
- 3.0 p.m.—Return journey of Congress Hall Band.
- 4.15 p.m.—Sunday-school over; more fireworks.
- 6.0 p.m.—Evening march of Congress Hall Band.
- 6.30 to 7.0 p.m.—Parish church bells; a hideous jangle, as no tunes are played.
- 7.0 p.m.—Return journey of Congress Hall Band.
- 7.30 p.m.—Lads' brigade, with drum and fife.
- 8.30 to 9.30 p.m.—Open-air mission; tunes, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest" and "God be with you till we meet again."
- 10.0 p.m.—Detachment of female Salvationists, home journey; tune, "I am happy all the day."
- 10.30 p.m.—Detachment of male Salvationists, home journey; tune, "Mary of Argyle"; words unrecognisable.
- 11.0 to 12.0 p.m.—Realised at last—rest and quiet.

It is clear that the religious people will have to be kept in order if London citizens are to enjoy a decently quiet Sunday.

"Church-going," a local paper says, "in the aristocratic West-end of Edinburgh shows a marked decrease during the year." We are glad to hear it. Our only wonder is that the "aristocratic West-end" has kept up the game of pretence so long. It must be very trying.

We were talking the other day to a Scottish lady Freethinker who resides with her husband (a German) in Kaiserland. She observed that there was religion, of course, in Germany, but "they don't make such a fuss about it as they do here"—meaning Scotland. "The pastor calls upon you in a social way," she said, "but he never mentions religion, and never asks you to come to church."

The Lord Provost of Glasgow, being apparently quite satisfied that there were no "horrors" left in that city, called a citizens' meeting to express the city's feeling on Macedonian affairs. According to the official notice of this meeting, the situation in the Balkans is not only fraught with much danger to Europe, but is "so repugnant to the spirit of Christianity." Evidently the Lord Provost of Glasgow, while no doubt a good, worthy man, is no authority on "the spirit of Christianity." If he would read history a little, and go back in mind a hundred years or two, he would learn that "the spirit of Christianity" was responsible for any amount of cruelty and bloodshed. It is not religion, but humanity, that has brought about a welcome change in the Western World.

Six of the nuns who left France for Italy in consequence of the recent legislation, aroused the suspicions of the Customs officials by the bulkiness of their dress. On being searched there was found a quantity of ancient and valuable lace, and a "good deal" of tobacco. We wonder for whose consumption the latter article was intended? But the picture of these "Holy Sisters" with their skirts lined with tobacco is charming.

The corruption of the American character (we do not assert this corruption, but merely take it as reported) has been variously ascribed to Tammany, to the influx of undesirable emigrants, and other agencies. According to the Rev. W. M. Greer, who has been favoring a reporter of the *New York Sun* with his impressions, this is all wrong. The real cause is that there is not enough religion in the public schools. According to this reverend gentleman, "Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Hebrews have struck a compromise by which God and Christ are eliminated from the public schools," and the result is the corruption of society. Mr. Greer also says that, as a result of this compromise, Agnosticism is established as the State religion, and the people are heavily taxed for its support. But this is, of course, humbug pure and simple. Eliminating religion from the schools does not establish Agnosticism; it simply leaves Gnosticism and Agnosticism on one side. The secular matters that are taught all classes believe in; the religious matters that are not taught are believed in but by a section. The essence of the matter is that a scheme of secular education taxes all for what all believe in, although many believe in a number of things in addition, and religious instruction taxes everybody for what some only believe in.

Mr. Greer believes the only way to save America is to arrange for the clergy of the different denominations using the schools for the purpose of giving religious instruction. In other words, the State is to collect the children, build the schools, pay for their maintenance, and then stand on one side while the parson does his best to develop customers for his particular wares. This is cool, not to say cheeky. Curious, too, that in America, where there is certainly no lack of parsons, the national character—so says Mr. Greer—is becoming corrupt. What on earth, then, is the influence of the clergy worth? "Oh," whines Mr. Greer, "you do not let us have the children to begin with, and therefore they are not good Christians when they grow up." The same tale the other side the Atlantic as on this side. The only way to get Christians is to *breed* them. The only way one can be sure of a man believing Christianity is to fill him with it before he is old enough to understand it.

Mr. W. D. Benthiff delivered the presidential address at the recent thirty-first annual meeting of the Metropolitan Board Teachers' Association. Teachers (he said) should be secured against the inquisitorial impertinence of the modern denominational zealot as were candidates to any other branch of public service. They must be prepared to wage ceaseless warfare against those tests, so that every certificated teacher in the public service might have the right of entering into competition, unhampered by religious disabilities, for the headship of any school under the control of a public authority. We quite agree with this as far as it goes. But why stop there? When will the teachers learn that the only way to abolish religious tests is to exclude religion?

Atheists are supposed to be fond of suicide. But this is a great mistake. It is the Christians who kill themselves by the thousand. Hardly a week passes without a minister of religion going to God in a hurry. The last case before us is that of the Rev. Richard Frederick Hawkins, curate to the Rector of Barnes, who hung himself with his clerical black girdle. Perhaps he thought, the better the rope the better the deed.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, October 25, Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool: at 3, "Man and Superman: or, Mr. Bernard Shaw's New Evangel;" at 7, "The Fate of Faith: with Reference to Robert Blatchford's *Clarion* Articles.
November 1, Birmingham; 8, Queen's Hall, London; 15, South Shields; 29, Queen's Hall.
December 6, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton. November 15, Queen's Hall, London; 22, South Shields.

ELIZABETH HOLLAND.—Thanks. The translation you send us of Maurice Allard's article in *La Raison* appears. We are always delighted to see women taking an active interest in Free-thought. Be sure that we value your good wishes.

JOHN JEPSON.—We have read your long letter. There is nothing in it we care to discuss. Those who are so far separated in thought must agree to differ.

E. V. S.—Pleased to hear you intend to revive that "infidel lecturer" story. Our query has not brought us any information about the Rev. J. Menzies Love, of London, from our readers. We sympathise with the rest of your letter, though we wish you used the leading terms more strictly.

T. HOWARD.—You must indeed feel how tender are the mercies of "Providence."

F. S.—Thanks for cuttings. See "Acid Drops." Your quotation from glorious John Dryden is very apt:

"By education most have been misled,
So they believe because they were so bred;
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man."

It is the instinctive apprehension of this truth, which they could not express with Dryden's magnificent strength and terseness, that animates the leaders of all the Churches (including the so-called Free Churches) in fighting for the control of elementary education.

W. P. BALL.—Your useful batches of cuttings are always very welcome.

F. GOODWIN.—The blunder happened during our compulsory absence from London on business. Of course the paragraph in which you were mentioned should have followed the paragraph relating to Mr. G. W. E. Russell. We are glad to see that you are "drawing" some of the bigots in the *Grays and Tilbury Gazette*. The effusions of such people will only disgust healthy-minded readers; and will do you, personally, more good than harm. "Let them rave."

J. HUGHES.—We have handed over your letter and cheque to the business manager.

W. ROWLAND.—Thanks. Our friends render us real assistance by sending us press cuttings on which we can write a suitable paragraph for our own readers.

B. L. HAMILTON.—You are quite right. The articles in the annual and monthly publications you refer to are practically reprinted, without a word of acknowledgment, from the *Freethinker* and other publications of our editing. We are too busy to bother any further about the matter at present, but it is a curious sample of literary ethics.

W. CAIN.—Glad you took our advice and wrote to *Evangelist Torrey*; also that you have forwarded us his reply. We intend to deal with the matter in a special article next week.

H. S. S.—Many thanks for the papers.

G. WEIR.—If there is any difficulty about the fine and costs let us know in time. We remember you in the old days at Edinburgh as a man of courage. We shall be happy to "cut in to smash the bigots," as you suggest, but any meetings we attend must be indoors.

J. W. GOTT.—We congratulate you on getting through so well. In reply to your query, we can only repeat that we will gladly visit Leeds as soon as possible if you can obtain a decent hall.

E. PACK.—Very glad to hear the Leeds stipendiary magistrate acted so fairly. We hope the police will retire, with all the grace they can command. If they do not, it is good to hear that you will *continue*. That is quite right. *Freethought* soldiers must have all their wounds in front.

W. H. DOWLING.—Cuttings are always welcome, but if we are already crowded with matter we have to leave some things over till the following week, by which time some of them are out of date.

J. G. STUART.—Of course we should have been glad to meet you again at Glasgow. Sorry to hear your newsagent is willing to supply the *Freethinker* but cannot secure it. Who is his wholesale agent? The fault does not lie here. We publish regularly, and should be happy to sell a hundred times more than we do.

CELSUS.—Such ellipses are permissible, and indeed inevitable. Composition, without them, would often be mortally tedious to writers and readers. When we wrote in that way of the "morality" of the Bible, we meant what it presented as morality.

J. B. WALLIS.—Shall appear.

C. EAYRS.—Thanks for good wishes. The subscriptions are acknowledged in the list. We hope, with you, that the Cohen Presentation Fund will be a real success; as it will be if the rank and file of the party wake up.

THE COHEN PRESENTATION FUND.—We have received the following fresh subscriptions: W. H. Deakin £1, P. Rowland 5s. *Newcastle*: M. J. Charter 2s., A Friend 4s., Miss Hutty 2s., J. Burrell 2s., J. G. Bartram 2s. 6d., T. P. Stewart 5s. *Glasgow*: Mr. McConnachie 1s., Mrs. Ralston 2s., J. Webb 3s. 6d. W. Robinson 5s., G. Taylor 10s., John Sumner junr. 7s. 6d., R. Wallis, 2s. 6d. *Northampton*: J. Simmons, E. Halse, J. Clarke. J. Huggett, W. Eayrs, E. Eayrs, C. Eayrs (6d. each), 3s. 6d.). J. M. Day 2s. 6d., Mrs. Daniel Baker £1 1s., J. F. Aust 5s., A. C. Brown 1s., F. J. Voisey 5s., W. Young £1 1s., R. H. Wood, 2s. 6d.

W. D. FOSTER.—Of course we shall "keep pegging at it" until we peg out.

ATHEIST (Liverpool).—It shall have a paragraph in our next.

J. M. DAY.—Pleased to hear you value our "Holy War" articles. Mr. Cohen is quite well, and we hope he will keep so—for the next forty years. After that he can choose for himself. Our own health has much improved, and we feel plenty of energy left in us yet.

AMUSED ONE.—Probably in our next.

ALICE M. BAKER.—We have great pleasure in acknowledging your mother's subscription to the Cohen Presentation Fund. The widow of Daniel Baker will always be, to us, one of the first ladies in England. Thanks for your own good wishes.

A. WEBBER.—Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., keeps saying he was once a Freethinker, but he does not answer our request for the name of any person who knew him to be so. Certainly he was never "a Freethought leader." If he says that, his story is growing with age. Thanks for the bit from your friend's letter. Sowing the seed is good work. Some of it will spring up some day.

A. S. PARKER.—There is a large and flourishing Secular Sunday School at Failsworth, and a growing one (we believe) at Leicester.

W. PAGE.—As you do not *give* us the quotation, we are unable to assist you. Send it, and we will try.

R. J. DERFEL.—We note your offer, with thanks. Always glad to hear from you.

G. DAVEY.—The story is fully told in Mrs. Bonner's *Life* of her father. Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant did not *write* the pamphlet in question; they published it when it was attacked, and because it was attacked, holding that the freedom of the press was at stake.

A. C. BROWN hopes all our readers will contribute their mite to "so good a cause" as the Cohen Presentation.

F. J. VOISEY.—Glad to hear you value Mr. Cohen's articles. We hope to come West early in the new year, if not before.

D. BAXTER.—Very busy; see "Personal." Will see to it next week.

A. NOTLEY.—Thanks for your efforts to promote the circulation of the *Freethinker* and *Pioneer*.

W. YOUNG.—Cheques should be crossed and made payable to G. W. Foote.

ANXIOUS.—We don't answer conundrums. Ask we nearest man of God.

F. DONOVAN.—Thanks for your letter. Of course there are some agents who supply the *Freethinker* fairly.

J. D. POTAGE.—When we attended the funeral of the late G. E. Lupton we fancied his aged widow could not long survive him. We are glad to hear that her death was so calm.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the *Freethought* Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*, which are most useful in the *Freethought* Publishing Company's business.

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.

Mr. Walter Dexter, the Labor candidate at King's Lynn municipal elections, devotes some clauses of his Address to the subject of Education. One plank of his program is the following:—"Efficiency to determine the choice of the Teachers, irrespective of their Theological beliefs." This is good as far as it goes, though not all that might be expected from a Labor candidate who professes himself a Socialist.

Personal.

ON medical advice I have changed my residence from London to a place where (when I am at home) I can enjoy more wholesome surroundings. Fresh air has become a vital necessity to me, and I prefer travelling out of London to being carried out of it. I do not need to be in London every day. When I have to be there I can avail myself of a very cheap season ticket; without which, indeed, I could not have ventured to take this salutary step. My best writing has always been done at home, in the midst of my books, and it will be done there still.

Books are delightful companions at most times, but not in removing. Thousands of volumes, covering hundreds of feet of bookshelves, are all right while you keep still; but when you shift—well, the rest may be left to imagination. It is quite a task getting straight in my new home—especially with those books! So I ask the indulgence of my friends and readers while I am settling down. I get through most of my work as usual, but something must suffer.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Oct. 25) at Liverpool—after a long absence, and the Alexandra Hall ought easily to be crowded. The subjects (afternoon and evening) should prove exceptionally attractive. Both are up-to-date.

We are asked to state that the price of the tickets for Mr. Foote's lectures at Liverpool is as follows:—For one lecture, 6d.; for both lectures, 9d. Also that tea will be provided after the afternoon lecture for friends from a distance, at a charge of 6d. each. It would be wise to notify the secretary beforehand.

Midland Freethinkers, some of whom have made enquiry, are requested to note that Mr. Foote's lectures at Birmingham on Sunday, November 1, will be delivered in the Town Hall. There will be two meetings—afternoon and evening.

Camberwell audiences at the Secular Hall, in New Church-road, have not been very grand lately. A revival is wanted in connection with the place, and we hope it will be supplied by the action of the Secular Society, Limited. The course of lectures now going on there under that Society's auspices began on Sunday, October 11, when only a moderate audience assembled to hear Mr. Cohen, who had the ungrateful task of opening the ball. There was a very much improved audience on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote delivered what was evidently a stirring lecture on "The Comedy of Passive Resistance." The third lecture will be delivered this evening (Oct. 25) by Mr. John Lloyd—the latest recruit from Christianity to Secularism; and we hope the South London "saints" will give him an enthusiastic reception.

Mr. John Lloyd is willing, and indeed anxious, to lecture on Freethought platforms throughout Great Britain; and we have no hesitation in saying that wherever he appears the folk will want to see him again. His present list of engagements is as follows:—November 1, Glasgow; November 22, Queen's Hall, London; November 29, South Shields. A date is being fixed up also for Birmingham. Manchester, Liverpool, and other Branches should send Mr. Lloyd a prompt invitation.

Another course of Sunday evening lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, has been arranged to take place at the Queen's Hall, London, on November 8, 15, 22, and 29. The lecturers will be Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. C. Cohen, and Mr. John Lloyd. Posters and handbills advertising these meetings are now ready. Friends who can help to display or distribute them are invited to communicate at once to the secretary—Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

Bills will be ready in a few days advertising the course of Sunday lectures in the Empire Theatre of Varieties, South Shields, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited; the lecturers there also being Messrs. Foote, Cohen, and Lloyd. The dates are November 15, 22, and 29. These meetings will, of course, be worked by the South Shields N. S. S. Branch for the Secular Society. Tyneside friends

who can display posters or distribute handbills should therefore apply to the local secretary, Mr. E. Chapman, 32 James Mathew-terrace, South Shields. Every effort should be made to crowd the "Empire" on these occasions.

Mr. Victor Roger, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, as well as president of the Camberwell Branch, is standing as a candidate in the 1908 Lambeth Borough Council election. He was once on the "Progressive" list, but was jockeyed out of it by religious bigots, who condescended to the shabbiest trickery to get rid of such a sturdy Freethinker. He is now standing as an independent Progressive, and we hope (in the special circumstances) he will get the vote of every Secularist in the borough. His address is all right, and he is refreshingly logical and sincere as to the working of the new Education Act. We should much like to see him returned at the top of the poll.

Mr. J. W. Gott and Mr. George Weir were summoned by the Leeds police for selling literature and making collections at the Secularist meetings on Woodhouse Moor—precisely like all the other local bodies who hold meetings there. The stipendiary magistrate acted impartially. "I am quite satisfied," he said, "that you have been specially singled out in this matter." He made Mr. Gott's fine 5s. inclusive, and Mr. Weir's 10s. and costs; but the latter has to deduct a day's pay from this amount—which, if he understands deduction, will not leave a large balance. We understand that Mr. Pack is going to stand in the way of another summons if the police bring it along. But perhaps they will understand that they are virtually beaten already.

Mr. Foote is begged to pay Leeds a visit as soon as possible, with a view to rallying all the Freethought forces there and starting a good local organisation. He will be very happy to do his best in this direction if a decent hall can be found for the meetings. A little money might very well be spent by the N. S. S. Executive at this juncture.

Mr. Joseph Leicester, who died on Tuesday, October, 13, at the age of 76, was a glass-blower by trade, an old-school Radical by conviction, and also a strong Temperance advocate. He was a warm admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh—at least he was so many years ago when we sometimes had the pleasure of meeting him. Mr. Leicester was one of the first working-men who gained an entrance to the House of Commons. He was elected for South West Ham in 1885, but his seat was taken from him by a Tory in 1886. Mr. Leicester was a man of some ability, and perhaps a little eccentricity; but his honesty, we believe, was never doubted by his worst enemies.

"R. B." writes us with respect to Joseph Leicester:—"An unaggressive but decided Freethinker, a friend of Bradlaugh, Joseph Barker, and George Odger. He was of the Glassblowers Union, himself a workman of exquisite skill. Up to the end his residence was in Belvedere-road, Lambeth, near the Shot Tower. He was taken ill at a friend's house at Forest Hill, where (I think) he passed away. A great student of human nature. I last saw him at the 1902 Derby, standing beautifully, alone, closely observing the heterogeneous crowds assembled on the Downs."

The Humanitarian League sends us in pamphlet form Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner's article on *The Death Penalty* reprinted from the *Humane Review*. It is an able and temperate statement of the case against capital punishment, and should have a wide circulation.

We have received from the *Clarion* office a notice that Mr. Blatchford's recent articles will be published in book form early in November with the title of *God and My Neighbor*. We shall be glad to welcome the book, though we have to smile at the statement that Mr. Blatchford is "the only author in England who publishes his own books." Mr. Foote published his own books for twenty years. Is he not an author? We rather fancy he has been of some assistance to Mr. Blatchford in writing the *Clarion* articles.

A little work that ought to have a big circulation is this week issued from our publishing office. It is *A Christian Catechism* by the late Colonel Ingersoll. It has never been published in England before, and we believe it will have a big circulation when people find out what it is like. It is really one of the cleverest and most effective things Ingersoll ever did. Under the form of Question and Answer, it carries on a brilliant attack against Christianity. Some passages will make a Christian writhe; others will make him laugh in spite of himself. Immense good would be done by circulating it widely. Mr. Foote, who has seen it through the press, contributes a brief (necessary) Introduction.

Thomas Paine: Was He Drunken and Dirty?

By J. E. REMSBURG.

(From "The Searchlight," Waco, Texas.)

THE *New Voice* of July 16, 1903, contains the following:—

"One of the saddest and most repulsive wrecks made by the liquor traffic at this time was Thomas Paine, of whom one writer says: 'In his old age, when the frugal gifts of two States which remembered his good work has placed him beyond immediate want, he became a sight to behold. It was rare that he was sober; it was still rarer that he washed himself, and he suffered his nails to grow till, in the language of one who knew him well, they resembled the claws of birds.'"

In this paragraph the founder of our Republic, one of the ablest constructive statesmen of modern times, the greatest political writer of his age, and one of the noblest and purest of mankind, is characterised as a drunken beast.

The good grey poet, Walt Whitman, before his death, said to the biographer of Thomas Paine, Dr. Moncure D. Conway: "Paine was double-damnably lied about." One of the most damnable lies ever told about him is the one above quoted. The *New Voice* is seemingly ashamed to name its author, hiding his identity under the verbal cloak of "one writer." It is engaged in combating the evil of intemperance. Let me assure it there are other evils quite as great as that of intemperance. One of them is slandering the dead. It would suppress intemperance by prohibiting the sale of intoxicating drinks. But if it would be right, in the interest of temperance, to prohibit the sale of intoxicating drinks, would it be wrong, in the interest of truth, to prohibit the dissemination of falsehood? If the laws of Illinois prohibited both, and these laws were enforced and their violators punished, the dram-seller of Chicago and the editor of the *New Voice* might be occupying the same floor of the Cook County Gaol.

At the age of fifty, after seeing the dream of *Common Sense* realised, Thomas Paine returned to Europe. He was not drunken and dirty then. In his *Life of Albert Gallatin*, Henry Adams says: "Thomas Paine, down to the time of his departure for Europe in 1787, was a fashionable member of society, admired and courted as the greatest literary genius of his day."

The remaining twenty-two years of Paine's life were passed in England, France, and America, the most of the time in London, Paris, and New York.

THOMAS PAINE IN ENGLAND.

Five years, with the exception of a few visits to Paris, were spent in England. Two great works engrossed his attention here. He invented and constructed the iron bridge, one of the world's great inventions, and composed and published the *Rights of Man*, the world's greatest text-book.

Towards the close of this period Thomas Jefferson, Edmond Randolph, and James Madison urged his return and appointment to a place in Washington's Cabinet. In a letter to Madison, Randolph says: "Mr. J. [Jefferson] and myself have attempted to bring Paine forward as a successor to Osgood." To Jefferson, Madison writes: "I wish you success with all my heart in your efforts for Paine."

Regarding his associations in England, Dr. Conway says: "Here [at Rotherham] and in London he was lionised, as Franklin had been in Paris. We find him now passing a week with Edmund Burke, now at the country seat of the Duke of Portland, or enjoying the hospitalities of Lord Fitzwilliam at Wentworth House. He is entertained and consulted on public affairs by Fox, Lord Lansdowne, Sir George Staunton, Sir Joseph Banks.....The Americans in London—the artists West and Turnbull, the Alexanders [Franklin's connections], and others—were fond of him as a friend and proud of him as a countryman."

The Quaker author, Clio Rickman, says: "Mr. Paine's life in London was a quiet round of philosophical leisure and enjoyment.....Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the French and American Ambassadors, Mr. Sharp the engraver, Romney the painter, Mrs. Wolstonecraft, Joel Barlow, Dr. Priestley, etc., were among the number of his friends and acquaintances." "His manners," says Mr. Rickman, "were easy and gracious." "He was mild, unoffending, sincere, gentle, and unassuming; his talents were soaring, acute, profound, extensive, and original."

Judge Cooper, who was in England at this time, says: "I have dined with Mr. Paine in literary society, in London, at least a dozen times, when his dress, manners, and conversation were such as became the character of an unobtrusive, intelligent gentleman, accustomed to good society."

Thomas Paine was not drunken and dirty in England.

THOMAS PAINE IN FRANCE.

In 1792 Paine went to France. Hon. E. B. Washburne, President Grant's Minister to France, who made a study and

wrote a vindication of Paine's career during the French Revolution, thus writes: "He at once became a hero in France, and was everywhere received with enthusiasm. The doors of the salons and clubs of Paris were open to him, and he was soon recognised as one of the advanced figures in the Revolution, standing by the side of de Bonneville, Brissot, and Condorcet." Three departments—Oise, Puy-de-Dome, and Puy-de-Calais—each chose him for its representative. To Thomas Paine, Condorcet, and the Abbe Sieyes was assigned the honor of framing a constitution for the new Republic.

Years pass; Napoleon comes. Paine is still recognised as one of the wisest of legislators. When the invasion and conquest of England was planned, *Chambers's Encyclopadia* says: "He [Paine] was chosen by Napoleon to introduce a popular form of government into Britain."

Paine's society here was sought by the best people of Paris. Among his most intimate friends and companions were the Lafayettes, Condorcet, the Brissots, the Bonnevilles, the Rolands, Sir Robert and Lady Smith, Lord Lauderdale, Lord Fitzgerald, Robert Fulton, and Minister (afterwards President) Monroe. Madame Roland and Madame De Staël paid tributes to his genius and character. He sat at the table of Napoleon. For eighteen months he was a member of Minister Monroe's household. With fond, but destined to be false, hopes, Monroe writes: "The crime of ingratitude has not yet stained, and I hope never will stain, our national character.....To the welfare of Thomas Paine the Americans are not, nor can they be, indifferent."

Frederick Freeman, in his reminiscences of Captain Rowland Crocker, who was in Paris after the Revolution, says: "He had taken the great Napoleon by the hand; he had familiarly known Paine.....He remembered Paine as a well-dressed and most gentlemanly man, of sound, orthodox Republican principles, of good heart, a strong intellect, and a fascinating address."

Lord Edward Fitzgerald, writing from Paris to his mother, says: "I lodge with my friend Paine; we breakfast, dine, and sup together. The more I see of his interior the more I like and respect him. There is a simplicity of manner, a goodness of heart, and a strength of mind in him that I never knew a man before to possess."

Thomas Paine was not drunken and dirty in France.

THOMAS PAINE IN AMERICA.

In the autumn of 1802 Paine left France and returned to his adopted land, America; Jefferson was then President. The newspapers say that "Jefferson received him warmly, dined with him at the White House, and could be seen walking arm in arm with him on the street any fine afternoon."

Paine had nearly seven years of life before him. These years may be properly called the years of his old age. These years were passed, for the most part, in New York and on his estate at New Rochelle, a suburb of New York. That Thomas Paine in his old age was not drunken and dirty, that he was temperate and cleanly in his last years as he had been during all the preceding years of his illustrious career, I shall prove by the testimony of a score of reputable witnesses who knew him while living or who investigated these slanders after his death. My witnesses I am not ashamed to name.

Hon. Thomas Hertell, a pioneer in the cause of which the *New Voice* professes so deep an interest, a life-long advocate of temperance, the first man in America to write a book in favor of total abstinence, was in his earlier years the companion of Thomas Paine's old age. Judge Hertell declares that Paine was a man temperate in his habits and of the purest character. He says: "No man in modern ages has done more to benefit mankind, or distinguished himself more for the immense moral good he has effected for his species, than Thomas Paine."

Colonel John Fellows, one of New York's most beloved citizens, who was the intimate associate of Paine during all the time that he lived in New York, says that "He was always cleanly and decent."

Judge Tabor, of New York, wrote as follows regarding Colonel Fellows and Judge Hertell and the charge that Paine was a drunkard: "I was an associate editor of the *New York Beacon* with Colonel John Fellows, then (1836), advanced in years, but retaining all the vigor and fire of his manhood. He was a ripe scholar, a most agreeable companion, and had been the correspondent and friend of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams, under all of whom he held a responsible office. One of his productions was dedicated by permission, to Adams, and was republished and favorably received in England. Colonel Fellows was the soul of honor and inflexible in his adherence to truth. He was intimate with Paine during the whole time he lived after returning to this country, and boarded for a year in the same house with him. I also was acquainted with Judge Hertell, of New York City, a man of wealth and position, being a

member of the New York Legislature, both in the Senate and Assembly, and serving likewise on the judicial bench. Like Colonel Fellows, he was an author, and a man of unblemished life and irreproachable character. These men assured me of their own knowledge derived from constant personal intercourse during the last seven years of Paine's life, that he never kept any company but what was entirely respectable, and that all accusations of drunkenness were grossly untrue. They saw him under all circumstances and *knew* that he was never intoxicated. Nay, more, they said, for that day, he was even abstemious."

Walt Whitman, referring to Paine's last years, said: "It was a time when, in religion, there was as yet no philosophical middle ground; people were very strong on one side or the other; there was a good deal of lying, and the liars were often well paid for their work. Paine and his principles made the great issue. Paine was double-damnably lied about. Colonel Fellows was a man of perfect truth and exactness; he assured me that the stories disparaging to Paine personally were quite false. Paine was neither drunken nor filthy.....Paine was among the best and truest of men."

Mr. Lovett, proprietor of the City Hotel, one of the most respectable hotels of New York, where Paine boarded for a time, in a letter to Caleb Bingham, a bookseller of Boston, declared that "Paine drank the least of all his boarders."

John Wesley Jarvis the famous artist with whom Paine resided in 1807, and who painted Paine's last portrait, says: "He did not, and could not drink much." In that age nearly everybody, including clergymen, kept liquor and nearly everybody drank it. Not to offer a visitor a glass of rum or brandy was a breach of hospitality. Paine was not a total abstainer, but he never acquired a love for strong drink. His constitution rebelled against it. Mr. Jarvis, himself a temperate man, did not hesitate to say that "he drank more than Paine ever did."

D. Burger, intimately acquainted with Paine in his old age, and who often took him out riding, says: "Mr. Paine was really abstemious, and when pressed to drink by those on whom he called during his rides, he usually refused with great firmness, but politely." Mr. Burger says that "he was always clean and well clothed."

Amasa Woodworth owned the house in New York in which Paine lived during the last year of his life and resided next door to him. Mr. Woodworth pronounced these stories false.

Rev. Willet Hicks, a Quaker preacher, was a neighbor of Paine's and one of his most faithful attendants during his last illness. Mr. Hicks vehemently denied the story of Paine's recanting and the charge of inebriety. The political and religious enemies of Paine could not answer his writings and they determined to destroy his influence by destroying his character. Mr. Hicks says: "I could have had any sums if I would have said something against Thomas Paine, or if ever I would have consented to remain silent." "Mr. Paine," said Mr. Hicks, "was a good man—an honest man."

Albert Badeau, of New Rochelle, has given Dr. Conway some evidence on this subject. While at New Rochelle Paine boarded for a time at the Bayeaux mansion. Mrs. Bayeaux's daughter, Mrs. Badeau, lived with her. Mr. Badeau, a son of Mrs. Badeau, says: "My mother would never tolerate the aspersions on Mr. Paine. She declared steadfastly to the end of her life that he was a perfect gentleman, and a most faithful friend, amiable, gentle, never intemperate in eating or drinking. My mother declared that my grandmother equally pronounced the disparaging reports about Mr. Paine slanders. I never remember to have seen my mother angry except when she heard such calumnies of Mr. Paine, when she would almost insult those who uttered them. My mother and grandmother were very religious members of the Episcopal church."

Aaron Burr, who came within one vote of being elected President of the United States, who was persecuted by his political enemies while living, and calumniated by them when dead, was once questioned concerning Paine's personal habits. "Sir, he dined at my table," was his indignant reply. Mr. Burr says: "I always considered Mr. Paine a gentleman, a pleasant companion, and a good-natured and intelligent man, *decidedly temperate.*"

W. J. Hilton, of Albany, New York, in a letter dated September 27, 1877, writes: "It is over twenty years ago that professionally I made the acquaintance of John Hogeboom, a Justice of the Peace of the County of Rensselaer, New York. He was then over seventy years of age, and had the reputation of being a man of candor and integrity. He was a great admirer of Paine. He told me that he was personally acquainted with him, and used to see him frequently during the last years of his life in the City of New York, where Hogeboom then resided. I asked him if there was any truth in the charge that Paine was in the habit of getting drunk. He said that it was utterly false; that he never heard of such a thing during the life-time of Mr. Paine, and did not believe any one else did."

D. M. Bennett, of New York, writing over a quarter of a century ago, says "I have conversed with Major A. Coutant and Mr. Barker, of New Rochelle, now very far advanced in life, but who distinctly remember Mr. Paine. They remember him as a pleasant, genial man, who lived on good terms with his neighbors, and was not known to ever have been intoxicated."

Hon. Elizur Wright, of Boston, said that in early life he looked at Thomas Paine through the green spectacles of Orthodoxy. "As years rolled on," said Mr. Wright, "I met a worthy Quaker Abolitionist of New Rochelle who gave me some traditional information of Paine's private character flatly contradictory to the common Christian estimate." Judge J. B. Stallo, of Cincinnati, Minister to Italy during President Cleveland's administration, told Dr. Conway "that in early life he visited the place [New Rochelle] and saw persons who had known Paine, and declared that Paine resided there without fault."

B. F. Haskins, a prominent lawyer of New York, and a personal friend of Thomas Paine, always denied that he was drunken or dirty.

Gilvert Vale, nearly seventy years ago, refuted these slanders against Thomas Paine, and there is no excuse for repeating them to day. Mr. Vale was a teacher, author, and editor, and located in New York while many of Paine's acquaintances were still living. The following extracts from his writings give the result of his inquiries: "In commencing our inquiries we really thought the claim that Mr. Paine was a drunkard in old age was well established." "We never contemplated looking for proof to the contrary till this fact was forced upon us by the uniform testimony of his most intimate acquaintances." "We know more than twenty persons who were more or less acquainted with Mr. Paine, and not one of whom ever saw him in liquor." "We know that he was not only temperate in after life, but even abstemious." "Mr. Jarvis, the celebrated painter, with whom Mr. Paine lived, informs us distinctly, that Mr. Paine was neither dirty in habits nor drunken."

Rev. O. B. Frothingham, of New York, investigated these slanders and then wrote: "No private character has been more fully calumniated in the name of God than that of Thomas Paine."

And now, in conclusion, let me commend for the *New Voice's* careful consideration these words from the pen of that gifted woman, Helen Gardener: "So long as a man, whether he be layman, bishop, cardinal, or pope, is willing to bear false witness against his neighbor, whether that neighbor be living or dead, just that long will all the blood of all the Redeemers of all the nations of the earth be unable to wash his soul white enough to place it beside that of the patriot hero, Thomas Paine."

Vale, Jehovah!

I throw off the yoke of my people,
I doff the white scarf of the Race.
My temple has fallen; its steeple
Has cast a long shade on my face.
The temple's red idol, Jehovah,
Has fallen in ruins: his state
Is finished and shattered and over
For me. I am proud in my gait.
No longer by legend and chanting
The priests shall endeavor to stay
My footsteps. Who heeds their weak ranting,
When, despite them, there dawns the world's day?
What if in the Race I *was* born?
To me that's no reason why I
Should cling to a faith that I scorn,
When my birthright's the infinite sky!

I leave the worn path I was led in,
To turn wheresoever I will,
And find fairer valleys to tread in,
And breathe on some purer-aired hill.
Behind me, more faintly, more pleading,
I hear yet priests' voices. They say:
"Jehovah, our God, lieth bleeding—
His life ebbeth slowly away."

I heed not the fools who would warn me
(With threats)—Give me bribes (prayers)—to stay.
And if, as they say, the world scorn me,
'Twill only be mad, as are they!
*Poor, perishing, priest-propped Jehovah,
The days of thy blood-deeds are dead;
Thy yoke I for ever throw over!*
Good-bye! My farewell has been said.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

Another "Second Coming."

IN the northern part of Siberia is a small village called Atscha, peopled about a hundred years ago by banished Russians of almost every class; their neighbors being almost exclusively Mongolians with whom they associated in peaceful and mutually advantageous relations. The Russians brought with them their arts and trades and also their religion, and the Buddhist natives showed the universal tolerance of that sect for the adherents of another faith while they held many discussions together concerning the respective merits of each creed. The Buddhists declared their belief to be superior, inasmuch as the doctrine of the transmigration of souls secured immortality of existence, and the Christians offered an equivalent in the promise of Christ that he would live forever and would also return to this world. By such philosophising faith was strengthened and the Catholic community began to look forward with fanatic zeal to a speedy manifestation of the savior. So it happened that about eighty-two years ago on a winter night a rainbow appeared in the sky, followed by lightning and thunder and a heavy storm, and amidst the convulsion of the elements a son was born to a beautiful young woman of the colony. She not being married, and the father of the child not being known, the leaders of the faithful announced a miracle, and the congregation accepted the message with gladness. Christ was born. The young mother herself believed that she had given birth to the returned savior and welcomed the worshipers who came to kneel at her infant's feet. Soon the poorly-furnished chapel became rich with the gifts of believers; a converted Buddhist replaced the wooden altar with a gorgeous throne; the floor was covered with costly carpets and the walls with Chinese stuffs. From all parts of the country the rich and the poor flocked to the temple, where the "Virgin," in an ecstasy of joy, sat day after day upon her throne, holding the holy child upon her arm, and graciously accepting the gifts offered by the kneeling multitudes. As time passed on belief was confirmed by the temporal blessings apparently imparted through the heavenly presence. Flocks and herds prospered and the fruits of the earth increased in abundance.

All this went on till the second Christmas passed with even greater splendor of rejoicing. The enthusiasm spread, reaching, finally, the ears of the Czar, who sent a commission to inquire into the affair. These men made short work of the miracle; the sect was broken up, the woman was declared to be an ordinary specimen of her sex, and the child an ordinary boy. The unhappy mother left Atscha with her son and settled in Kiashta, where the youth received a thorough education. When he was sixteen years old he was told of what had occurred at his birth and during his infancy, and he grieved deeply, feeling that nothing in the future could compensate for that vanished hope. But his mother comforted him, and, giving him all her savings, told him not to waste time and strength in dreams, but find consolation in work. She advised him to go to China and establish himself in some kind of business. He obeyed, and when he returned it was as a man successful, independent, and universally respected in his adopted country, where his business undertakings furnish subsistence to thousands of natives. He is now over eighty years old, but still active and robust. Every year, on his birthday, he assembles the children of his neighborhood around a brilliant Christmas-tree laden with valuable gifts, the delighted guests knowing nothing of the sorrowful thoughts which the anniversary awakens in the heart of the lonely old man.

ELIZABETH E. EVANS.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Correspondence.

"ARE ATHEISTS HYPOCRITES?"

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The article under the above title, in your issue for October 4th, complains bitterly of Mr. Campbell's inclusion of Atheists as believers, in one sense, in a God; and applies such charitable epithets as "intolerable charlatany" and "silly dogmatism" to the rev. gentleman's well-meant, if inaccurate, utterance. We are informed that "Even he is not omniscient. On the present occasion he has borne false witness against his neighbors, to whom he owes a humble apology."

Surely, Sir, a critic who is so sensitive about other people's statements of his belief should be careful when he goes outside his own experience; and not exhibit the same "silly dogmatism" with regard to the beliefs of his opponents. And yet, when he is dealing with the Christians' faith in prayer, he has no keener sense of their honesty than to assert that, even if a follower of Christ declares he has seen a

vision (which not many of them do, by the way), all he really has seen is—"his own shadow."

If the author is not "omniscient," by what right does he assume to know that a believer in God has had no experience of him? Is the Atheist's own "feeling and experience" the ground of his criticism? It looks very much like it. But it by no means follows that because an Atheist has no experience of God, therefore a Christian has not. The Christian may be as sincere as the sceptic, and as intelligent. His positive experience is worth more to him, as a rational being, than the negative assumptions of those who, having no knowledge themselves of a Spiritual Being, suppose all to be "shadow" (?) that they cannot apprehend.

Trusting that, in future, your contributor will extend to others the same fairness he asks for himself.

W. H. PUSEY.

Harvest on the Welsh Hills, 1903.

RAIN, rain, and yet more rain. In the distance, on the Welsh hills, I can see the corn lying rotting; the straw going black; the ears sprouting, which utterly spoils it, even for pigs' food. On one farm 100 acres lie uncarried. Special intercessions have been held, but our ministers are evidently out of favor at headquarters, and I should think it must dawn on them that prayer is fruitless. Of course, there is the usual "God-knows-best" kind of expression about them, which hides their real thoughts. The hardy Welsh Nonconformist farmer, who has ploughed, worked, manured, seeded, weeded, and cut his grain, must feel some misgivings about his usual Harvest Festival when he goes to the gate of the wheat-field and sees the mows making a green appearance where should be plump, bright grain. He goes away with downcast head, and looks at the barley, with the clover growing up through it, and it is still more heart-breaking. "Providence" is, as the hymn puts it, attending to the "soft, refreshing rain." I do not envy the clergy the task of preaching at Harvest Festivals this year, even to Nonconformist farmers. It is an awkward subject, and the collection must suffer.

A WELSH FARMER.

Next Door to the Vicarage.

As I tripp'd from my doorway last Sunday
(Like the Jew-god at rest, I have one day),

With a fresh cigarette

And my cap on, I met

A madam as merry as Monday.

From her eyes came a gay little volley

(Of — What, sir? you say it was folly?)

Tut! what did I care

That the parson was there!

Glance for glance I return'd, all as jolly.

Said I to my landlady's nipper,

"She the hen of the Bible-boat skipper?"

Sally said "No:

The housekeeper." (So!

Then, parson, beware! She's a tripper.)

"The wife of the vicar is thin,

And taller," said Sally. (No sin!

But the housekeeper's lips

I will wager he sips,

If he married the tall one for "tin.")

In the week, as it chanced, I pass'd by her,

The Vicar's own lady; quite nigh her;

And (if rightly I spy)

In a witching blue eye

Was a dash of unorthodox fire.

'Tis Sunday again: and to-day,

Past my window she walks on her way;

With a hell of a sparkle

Her eyes glint and darkle,

And—where is the Vicar, I pray?

Maybe to that other sweet mortal

He is preaching of Heaven's guarded portal.

I know nothing of that;

So, your Rev'ence, my hat!

But, Psyche! the dames are immortal.

FESTE.

MAN'S A FOOL.

A friend has tickled my fancy by reciting the lines below, which he had lately seen in print, but which I had not:—

Man's a fool,

Ever wanting

As a rule.

What is not,

When it's hot,

Never liking

He wants it cool;

What he's got:

When it's cool,

As a rule,

He wants it hot;

Man's a fool.

J. C. H.

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 postcard.

LONDON.

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, John Lloyd, "The Death-Struggle of Religion."

FINSBURY PARK DEBATING SOCIETY (Hope Coffee Tavern, Font-hill-road, N.): 7, Debate, "Recent Doings of Sham Radicals."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Harrold Johnson, "A Great City."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, J. McCabe, "Citizenship."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Lord John Russell."

OUTDOOR

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, G. Green. Brockwell Park, 3.15, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, G. Parsons.

COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Town Hall-square): 11, Ernest Pack, "Christianity Doomed."

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY (Temperance Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, J. Bonner, "Vaccination."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class. Mr. Glen, "Sex Life; Man and Woman"; 6.30, A. G. Nostic, "Astronomy: The Planets." With lantern illustrations.

LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor): Ernest Pack, 3, "Why are we Prosecuted?" 6, "Our Answer to the Bigots."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): G. W. Footc, 3, "Man and Superman: or, Mr. Bernard Shaw's New Evangel"; 7, "The Fate of Faith: with Reference to Robert Blatchford's Clarion Articles."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): H. Percy Ward, 3, "When we Die, are we Dead?" 6.30, "Joseph's Dream: A Criticism of Chamberlain's Fiscal Proposals." Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8, A. L. Coates, "Some Reflections of a Social Unit."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Reading; 8, Lecture arrangements.

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