

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Nothing so outrages the feelings of the Church as a moral unbeliever.—INGERSOLL.

Evangelist Torrey and Thomas Paine.

WITH SOMETHING ABOUT COLONEL INGERSOLL.

I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devised this slander; I'll be hanged else.

Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.
O heaven! that such companions thou'dst unfold,
And put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascals naked through the world.

—*Emilia* (in "Othello").

A FEW weeks ago we printed a statement by one of our Liverpool readers as to certain utterances by Dr. R. A. Torrey, the American evangelist, who was then conducting a mission at Liverpool. Those utterances concerned Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll in particular. They were of the common type of orthodox charity; that is to say, they were grossly personal; and we advised our correspondent to ask Dr. Torrey to give his authority for such allegations. Mr. Cain acted on our advice, and Dr. Torrey wrote him the following letter from Scotland:—

Mather's Hotel, Dundee,
October 14, 1903.

Mr. Wm. Cain,
Liverpool.

DEAR SIR:—

Your note of October 8 at hand, and also the clipping sent me from another source containing your letter to the "Free Thinker." You have quoted me very inaccurately in this letter, in regard to what I said about Ingersoll, about Payne, and about Darwin. I presume this misquotation was unintentional, but it allows a loophole for one to deny the statement. However, the main facts stand. Does the editor of "The Free Thinker" deny that Thomas Payne took another man's wife with him to France and lived with her? If this commonly believed outrageous action of Thomas Payne's is not correct history, it should be known, and I certainly for one should be glad to know it, for I believe in giving any man his due. I did not suppose that infidels denied the conduct of Thomas Payne. In regard to the statement about Robert Ingersoll, the alleged libellous statements about him were made by Dr. A. C. Dixon at that time of Brooklyn, now of Boston. Dr. Dixon did not show any disposition to take back his statements when Col. Ingersoll brought action against him for libel; on the contrary, he prepared to defend his statements in court then, had secured considerable evidence to do it, and Col. Ingersoll requested that the trial might be in private, but to this Dr. Dixon would not assent and the action was withdrawn. I am surprised that the editor of the "Truth Seeker" did not know this, as it is a matter of common knowledge in America. I am writing to America by this mail for more details concerning the matter.

I am somewhat surprised at the difference of tone toward me that you take in your letter to me and in the public letter that you sent to the editor of the "Free Thinker."

Sincerely yours,
R. A. TORREY.

This letter is a distinct curiosity; or rather it would be so if Freethinkers were not already so accustomed to this class of production.

No. 1,162

Dr. Torrey cannot even spell Paine's name accurately. We dare say he has never read Paine's writings, and never read any reputable Life of that great reformer.

Dr. Torrey seems to know no more about Paine than he has picked up from Christian tracts, or from controversial Christian books. Had he possessed any real first-hand information about Paine, he could hardly have fallen into or perpetrated such a monstrous confusion.

It did not occur to Dr. Torrey that he was under any obligation to make sure of his facts before attacking the character of a man who has been dead nearly a hundred years, and is therefore unable to defend his reputation. Probably he found it much easier to call Paine a scoundrel than to answer his arguments, and we are prepared to make allowances for the exigencies of a revivalist's profession. But why on earth, when he is brought to book, does he put on an air of injured innocence, and blandly say he did not know his defamatory statement had been denied? Very little intelligence is requisite to see that this is only making a bad matter worse. Dr. Torrey is asked for his proofs of Paine's scoundrelism. Instead of giving them, he simply says, "Isn't it true?" Yet he regards himself as a logician and a man of honor.

When this American evangelist says "I did not suppose that infidels denied the conduct of Thomas Paine," he merely displays his inexcusable ignorance. "Infidels" have denied these defamatory statements about Paine for more than three-quarters of a century. The denials have been made from platforms, and in print, by all the leading Freethinkers of three generations. Are we to understand that Dr. Torrey has really never heard of the fact? Has he never heard, for instance, that Colonel Ingersoll wrote a brilliant vindication of Paine? Has he never heard of Dr. Moncure Conway's *Life of Thomas Paine* in two large volumes, published by one of the leading firms in America (G. P. Putnam's Sons)? Are we seriously asked to believe that a leading American evangelist has never heard a whisper to the effect that "infidels" denied the Christian assertions about Thomas Paine being a disreputable character? If this be indeed true, if Dr. Torrey has never so much as accidentally heard of these things, we must say with Byron, that truth is strange—stranger than fiction.

Dr. Torrey asks whether the editor of the *Freethinker* denies that Thomas Paine "took another man's wife with him to France and lived with her." We beg to inform him that the editor of the *Freethinker* does most emphatically deny it. We also beg to tell Dr. Torrey that he is loose even for a libeller. He has read, and half remembered, some pious nonsense about Paine's private life, and jumbled it all up in a way that is perhaps characteristic of one who believes, or says he believes, that the Bible, precisely as it stands, is the veritable Word of God.

We might content ourselves with asking Dr. Torrey whose wife it was that Thomas Paine took with him to France, and where the elopement was recorded. But we shall do more than that. We shall not only challenge Dr. Torrey but explain him. We shall show what a muddle he has fallen into; and that ought to be the end of him as far as this matter is concerned.

Never until now did we hear that Thomas Paine took another man's wife with him to France and lived with her. The fact is that Dr. Torrey has dressed up an old libel in new clothes.

The original libel on Paine was in relation to Madame de Bonneville. She was the wife of a French bookseller who befriended Paine in Paris. When the Republic was overthrown by Napoleon the bookseller, who was an active Republican politician, had to hide himself to save his life. His wife and children were sent on to America, and it was expected that he would presently be able to follow them. When they arrived in America they naturally went to Thomas Paine; and, as they had befriended him, he befriended them. He acted humanely and like a gentleman. But he was the hated author of the *Age of Reason*, and bigotry seized upon what William Cobbett, who exposed the whole lying story, called "the unfortunate French female" incident. Orthodox blackguards chose to say that Paine had seduced Madame de Bonneville from her husband, had invited her over from France to join him in America, and was living in adultery with her. One of these orthodox blackguards was prosecuted by Paine for libel, and an American jury gave the plaintiff a verdict and damages.

Such are the simple facts of the case. All the rest is the decoration of later bigots and calumniators.

Many biographies of Paine have been written and published in America. Dr. Torrey ignores them all. He had only to open one of them to learn the facts. Instead of doing so, he hashes up an old libel that had grown cold, and offers it once more to the taste of a fresh audience. This he does, be it observed, not only in defiance of Paine's biographers, but in defiance of the verdict of an American jury.

Dr. Torrey says "the main facts stand," meaning the main facts of his statement about Thomas Paine. We reply that they do not stand, that there is not a single word of truth in all that Dr. Torrey says on this matter.

It is easy for Dr. Torrey to say that he "would be glad to know" the truth. Let him take the trouble to know it. That is all. Let him be as careful of what he says about the character of a dead man as about the character of a living man who can bring an action for libel. One who stands up to teach others should be ruled by conscience, and not by the fear of consequences—to himself.

Let us now turn to what Dr. Torrey says about Colonel Ingersoll. On the face of it the statement is absurd. Ingersoll's only object in bringing a libel action would be to vindicate his reputation. Is it credible that he would demand a sort of secret trial and the practical suppression of the evidence? Ingersoll's worst enemies never said he was a fool.

Dr. Torrey has written to America for "more details." We hope he will publish what he receives, and state the name of his informant. We hope, also, that this will meet the eye of our American comrade, the editor of the *New York Truthseeker*, and that he will send us a statement, however brief, for English Freethinkers on this "Dixon" affair. We all love Ingersoll on this side of the Atlantic, and we will not leave his name a prey to the vultures of superstition.

Meanwhile we may say, on our own account, that Ingersoll left the American Secular Union many years ago because he considered that the resolution it passed on the subject of what should be allowed to go through the United States mails was not strong and clear enough. He implored the Union Congress to pass another resolution, and on its refusing to do so he withdrew, not as a reflection on those who remained, but in justice to himself. This is "a matter of common knowledge in America," to use Dr. Torrey's language. The facts are set forth in the *Truthseeker's* little Biography of Ingersoll, and his speeches on the matter appear in the Dresden Edition of his writings and discourses.

G. W. FOOT.

A Question Answered.

A WRITER in a recent issue of the *Daily News*, commenting upon the fact that the hardest thing one can say of two disputants is that they quarrel like theologians, asks "Why should religious disputes be supposed to reveal the very lowest depths of virulence?" The writer does not dispute the justice of the expression, nor can it be reasonably disputed by others. It is one of the plainest facts of history, and it serves as a commentary upon the statement that religion provides the only enduring basis for social life. People differ on scientific matters and remain friends. Others have a difference of opinion on what constitutes literature, the function of art, or the nature of poetry, and conduct the discussion without casting aspersion upon character or expressing a desire for one another's blood. Even in politics, as a rule, difference in opinion is recognised as inevitable, and can usually be discussed with a fair regard to the courtesies of life.

But once touch religion, and the case is altered. A difference of opinion about the existence of God or the immortality of the soul is taken as proof that the doubter is afflicted with either criminality or insanity. Disbelief in Christianity is the one ground upon which all the lying and filthy charges against Voltaire, Paine, and other Freethinkers have been built. Had they been Christians, their social work would have earned unbounded praise and reward. As they were not, these very services only served as a fresh impetus for the scurrility of the religionist. Prominent preachers, capable of attracting huge audiences, can be found even to-day who openly bracket unbelief and immorality in terms of cause and effect, and who assert that were it not for the latter the former would not exist. One has only, in fact, to touch upon religion to rouse all the worst instincts of civilised human nature.

It is the same right through Christian history. The earliest appearance of groups of Christians is as rival sects, quarrelling over points of fantastic doctrine, and fighting with a ferocity that caused the tolerant Pagans to open their eyes in astonishment. Church Councils, as often as not, ended in a fight. The election of a new Pope often left the church in which the election took place littered with corpses. In that of Damasus, according to Milman, there were a hundred and thirty-four. Over and over again the Emperors of Rome had to intervene to stop the murderous quarrel of the sects; just as in later centuries it required the constant supervision of the secular power to prevent Christian bodies disturbing the social order. No other disputes can show as much hatred connected with it as those between Arian and Athanasian, Catholic and Protestant, Lutheran and Anabaptist. And these quarrels never die. They slumber for awhile, and then once again there is the same brutality, scurrility, and savagery, varied only by circumstances of time and place.

Why is this so? Why should religion be the one subject that absolutely defies gentlemanly discussion or high-minded controversy? The writer referred to suggests this is due to the belief that "the issue of the controversy is of the most momentous importance. The highest moral and spiritual welfare of man.....hinge upon the acceptance or rejection of [the] teaching." But this strikes one as a round-about way of repeating the question, not answering it. Theologians quarrel so violently and bitterly because they believe their teachings to be of paramount importance—that is, they quarrel in this fashion because they are theologians. This we knew at the start; it seems we have to go a little further in order to get the answer. Why should theologians have got into this chronic condition of thinking that their particular opinions are of such paramount importance that they justify their treating as criminals or lunatics all who differ with them? Why should believers find it necessary to accompany their dissent from other people with a show of moral

repugnance? This is not the case anywhere else; why should it be so here?

This is the real question, and the answer would seem to be twofold. First, there is the part that the intellect plays—or does not play—in religious beliefs. In all matters of social policy discussion has played some part from the earliest times onwards. It might be a question as to the advisability of a hunting expedition, the waging of a tribal war, or, in later times, the formation of a Government or the laying down of a national policy. But discussion, and therefore a difference of opinion, has been always present and recognised. No matter how valuable one person might have thought his own opinion to be, there was always present the recognition, not only of a contrary opinion, but of its legitimacy and right of expression. Curtailed as this expression may have been at various times, it has never ceased to exist. The result has been that all social matters have been approached from a different, and higher, standpoint to that of religion. They have appealed far more to man's higher qualities—to his reason rather than to his emotions, to his sense of comradeship rather than to his prejudices.

With religion the case is different. Here, from the beginning, difference of opinion was discouraged. And for at least one strong reason. In purely social matters man was master of his fate. If he blundered he paid the penalty and profited by the mistake. In religion he was not master, but slave. The gods were quick to punish, and anything but discriminating in their vengeance. A whole tribe might be punished for the offences of a single individual. The unbeliever thus became a danger to the whole of the society he belonged to; and the priestly order was quick to utilise this sense of corporate responsibility to its own advantage. Religion was thus early marked off as something not open to discussion; something not safe even to reason about, as the very act implied the probability of unbelief. If unbelief did show itself, it was suppressed at once as a danger to society.

The writer already referred to gives as a compensating element for the savage intolerance of religion, the intense earnestness evoked by it. But this is no compensation at all. It is rather an aggravation. We need not doubt that the men who formed the Spanish Inquisition were earnest men—Llorente, Protestant as he was, was surprised to find that in private life they were quite admirable individuals. Calvin was no doubt the embodiment of earnestness. The Catholics and Protestants who get up a religious riot in Ireland may also be earnest enough; men do not fight and imprison and torture and kill unless they are in earnest, but this makes it so much the worse. For what it means is that religion rouses in man the strongest and most inflammable qualities, and being without any adequately intelligent directive force generally succeeds in doing more harm than good. And it really does not extenuate if, after breaking a man's head because he differs with you on the question of the trinity, you plead that you felt very earnestly on the subject. Your victim would feel that with less earnestness you would make a much better companion.

The modern Christian, like the evangelist Torrey, for instance, may honestly believe that the Freethinker is a living monument of vice. This may be admitted; but the point is not whether he believes it or not, the point is that he has no right whatever to this opinion of a body of men and women with no better basis than a difference of belief. We do not behave thus in science, or art, or literature, and if we do in religion it seems clear that we are dealing with a force that is profoundly anti-social, if not profoundly anti-moral in its very essence. And no amount of earnestness can possibly compensate for this distorted view of human nature. Earnestness with judgment and intelligence is a good thing, but earnestness minus these controlling elements is one of the most dangerous forces that can be let loose in society.

It is, therefore, in the first instance the absence

of that sense of restraint, of a feeling that with equal honesty and integrity widely differing views may be held on the same subject, the absence of even a modicum of "sweetness and light," the whole culminating in a false and distorted view of human nature that is primarily responsible for the virulence and savagery attaching to theological disputes. The intellect is ruled by the passions instead of the reverse. And this negation of intellectual restraint is helped by a further circumstance. In science or in sociology disputes tend to wear themselves out for the reason that there are facts to which appeal can be made, and both disputants recognise their existence. The dispute over the nature of the factors of evolution may go on for a considerable time, but the steady accumulation of facts bearing upon the subject will gradually settle the matter once and for all. But in religion there are no facts to which appeal may be made. There is nothing but passion and prejudice right through the piece. There is nothing in religion to check passion, nothing to restrain it. And the result is written in the fact that of all hatreds and of all disputes those connected with religion are the longest lived and the most savage in their nature.

And the second reason for the savagery of religious disputes is that religion is savagery at bottom. No matter how refined religious beliefs may be, they are still rudiments of the uncivilised stage of human history. The "soul" of the modern Christian is the survival of the savage misinterpretation of subjective experiences. His deity is a survival of the being that came into existence through the misunderstanding of both subjective and objective phenomena. The Christian crying out about the "blood of Jesus" is but re-echoing the belief in human sacrifice, intimately associated with early religious beliefs. Religion cannot be divorced from savagery, try as we may. And man's instincts, his beliefs, his passions are also associated. Rouse one, and you rouse a group of others. Arouse man's religious feelings, and you touch the deepest instincts, truly, but you also arouse those feelings of intolerance, of persecution, of unreasoning cruelty that properly belong to the savage state. Over these instincts civilisation has cast a thin veneer of culture, of restraint, but how easily this is broken through all history bears ample testimony.

C. COHEN.

Jesus: A Man Made from the Old Testament.

(A Lecture Delivered in Investigator Hall, Paine Memorial, Before the Ingersoll Secular Society).

BY L. K. WASHBURN.

A CAREFUL perusal of the Gospels will convince the mind that the person called Jesus was born, lived, and died "according to the scriptures"; that is, that the narrative of this person was constructed according to certain passages in the books of the Old Testament, which were believed to point, or have reference, to the advent and career of a Messiah. The New Testament is not an original production; it is not grouped around an original life and character, nor does it stand out peculiar in its accounts of miracles or in its moral teachings. It is my purpose to show that the man of Nazareth is but a reproduction of the Hebrew ideal of humanity, an attempt to clothe with the outward semblance of being the mythical Messiah which haunted the Jewish mind for so many centuries. I shall not criticise the authorship of the books of the New Testament farther than to say that no one knows who wrote a single line from Matthew to Revelation. I might also declare that the authorship of the Old Testament is enveloped in like mystery, and that no one can tell who wrote a word from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Malachi,

They who believe that God inspired the Bible ought to believe that the Devil invented the concordance. The work of noting the corresponding passages in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures was doubtless undertaken with the honest intention of establishing the divine relation of the Old and New Testaments; not as parent and child, where the likeness of the one is repeated in the face of the other, but where the stream grows wider and deeper as it flows towards the ocean, but instead the work has served to furnish the key to the frauds practiced by the writers of the latter. We find that the salient points in the narrative of Jesus were suggested by the ancient authors of the Hebrew Scriptures, and that the miracles which he is said to have wrought were borrowed from older performers of wonders.

It is a fact that nearly every writer of the Gospels and Epistles is guilty of plagiarism, and it is safe to say that had there been no Old Testament there would have been no materials for a new one. Comparisons of Scripture are odious to Christian ministers, who wish to have their sacred book accepted as God's word; but, when we find corresponding ideas, incidents, and passages in different parts of the Bible we do not regard such coincidences as evidence of divine inspiration but as proof that one author borrowed from another. There is sufficient evidence to prove that the Gospel-story of Jesus is not a record of a human being and a human life, but is simply a piece of literary carpentry. This work is not a narrative of human experiences: It contains no spontaneous expressions. It is a composition put together in a manner to illustrate some central thought or sustain some essential faith. Jesus does not appeal to us as a man who lived, loved, and suffered in this wondrous world of ours, but he is like the character in a play or story. If Jesus were called a prophet instead of being spoken of as the Christ, his life might be in the book of Kings as well as in the New Testament. The resemblance between the hero of Matthew and Luke and some of the early Hebrew prophets is striking enough to suggest that the artist who painted the portrait of the Nazarene had Elisha to sit for the picture.

The Israelites, for several centuries before the birth of the Christian superstition, had dreamed, hoped, and prayed for a king, for a divinely gifted man, such as the elder Hebrew poets had celebrated in their psalms and canticles. This dream, this hope, became with the Israelites a passion, which not only colored their political thoughts, but influenced their religious feelings to an authoritative extent. For hundreds of years, through varying national fortunes, this hope sustained the people and formed a bond of union stronger than any outward tie. Taking advantage of this fervid passion, numerous adventurers attempted to secure their own political advancement and their nation's fame, by asserting their claim to the Messiahship; but one and all failed of their purpose. It is probably certain, as near as the dim historical mirror of that distant age can reflect any contemporaneous event, that at the time of Cæsar Augustus this expectation of a Messiah burst forth with an energy bordering on frenzy, and possessed the minds of the people like a superstition. The Israelites, stripped of all national power, governed and controlled by a Pagan emperor, their fierce ancestral pride crushed and humiliated, and their boast of having God for a champion and protector laughed to scorn by a barbarian and heathen race, saw their only hope in the coming of a defender and Savior who should strike the chains of a foreign power from their limbs and lead them to that supremacy which their nation once enjoyed. From this intense longing and passionate desire among the Jews for a deliverer from the Roman yoke came the New Testament story of Jesus. The hope of a coming Messiah was the inspiration of this story.

My object is to establish this proposition, to show that from the Jewish expectation of a national Savior came the idea of the Christ upon which the vast structure of Christianity has been built. As this

prophecy of a Messiah was never fulfilled, as the hope of a deliverer and Savior was never realised, as the Jews perished utterly from the face of the earth as a nation, and as their claim to be God's chosen people was not established by any manifestation of divine power in their behalf, it is plain that any pretended fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies must rest upon fictitious events, and be proved not by what a Messiah *actually did*, but by what the Scriptures of the Old Testament say was expected of him.

I propose to demonstrate that the author of the Gospel narrative of Jesus made up his story from the different writers of the book of the Old Testament, and that the character of Jesus was put together "according to the Scriptures."

The common notion that the Messiah was to be a descendant of David influenced the writer of the story of Jesus in tracing the genealogy of his hero back to that renowned chieftain; but, after forming a perfect genealogical chain to connect Jesus with David by making Joseph his father, this writer makes the astounding assertion that the Holy Ghost was the author of his hero's being, and that Joseph was his father *only by brevet*. The writer of the Gospel tells us that "all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah, saying, Behold a virgin shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel." An angel of the Lord assured Joseph that his wife was the person foretold by the prophet. The writer of Matthew's Gospel has Jesus conceived and born according to the fourteenth verse of the seventh chapter of Isaiah. I do not believe that, among the many men who profess to accept this ghost story as reliable, and the explanation of the angel of the Lord as satisfactory, there is one who would accept with religious complacency a like justification of a similar state of affairs in his own family. I do not believe that there is a Christian man on the earth who would accept a wife as Joseph took Mary, even if ten thousand angels of the Lord came with their story of a Holy Ghost. The birth of Jesus was fixed in Bethlehem of Judea, because in the second verse of the fifth chapter of Micah it says: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." Wise men were made to go to Jerusalem to find where was born this king of the Jews, because in the third verse of the sixteenth chapter of Isaiah it reads: "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising," and a star of the East must be the guide to the place of his birth, because it says in the seventeenth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Numbers: "There shall come a star out of Jacob."

The writer of the Gospel narrative makes Joseph and Mary flee into Egypt with their son, because in the eighth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Numbers it says: "God brought him forth out of Egypt," and in the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Hosea it says: "When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

From Egypt Joseph, after the death of Herod, is made to go into Galilee, and dwell in the city of Nazareth, because it was said by a Bible-writer: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

We have followed Jesus from birth to manhood, and every single event connected with this person up to the time that he goes to be baptised by John is suggested by the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus had his origin in the seventh chapter of Isaiah. He was conceived and cradled in the fourteenth verse of that chapter. That verse was the father and mother of Jesus. It suggested both Mary and the Holy Ghost, and is the only authority for the foolish and disgusting miracle of the first chapter of Matthew.

There is one thing connected with this so-called prophecy in Isaiah which must not be passed in silence, that is, its utter irrelevancy to the events of the first Christian century. Isaiah was speaking to a king of Judah, and the sign which the Lord was to give to this king was, that a "virgin shall conceive

and bear a son." Now this promise of the Lord in order to be a sign to Ahaz must be fulfilled during his lifetime, and must have reference to an event in the immediate future. This promise was the ever-repeated cry of Israel's prophets, that a deliverer should be born to save the people. It was a stimulus to a waning faith in the God of Jacob. It was used to give the warriors courage and keep the people quiet. Let us see what this prophecy, or promise, to Ahaz means when interpreted according to the language of that period, and see what a gross and offensive fiction it becomes in the hands of the Gospel-writer, when he makes it the foundation of the birth-story of his hero, Jesus. The poets and prophets among the Israelites frequently refer to their country as the Daughter of Zion and as the Virgin of Israel. In the twenty-first verse of the nineteenth chapter of second kings it says, speaking of the king of Assyria: "The Virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn, the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee," meaning simply that the Israelites manifested their scorn for the Assyrians. In the thirty-seventh chapter of Isaiah we find the same passage, word for word. Jeremiah, in the thirteenth verse of the eighteenth chapter of the book which bears his name, refers to Judah as the "Virgin of Israel." In the fourth verse of the thirty-first chapter occurs the same expression, which is again repeated in the twenty-first verse of the same chapter. It is plain that the expressions, "the Virgin, the Daughter of Zion," refers to Israel as a people, as a nation, the same as the expression, "the daughter of Jerusalem," refers to the city of that name.

It says in the fifteenth verse of the second chapter of Lamentations: "They hiss and wag their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?" thus showing that our interpretation of these expressions is correct. In the second verse of the fifth chapter of Amos we read, "The virgin of Israel is fallen," referring to the fallen condition of the house of Israel. With the meaning of the word virgin, which we have pointed out as the only meaning which it had in the mind of the prophet, the words of Isaiah mean this, that Israel "shall bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel," which name means "God with us."

(To be continued.)

Roosevelt's Book.

ANOTHER book the youngster deemed safe and so brought home is Roosevelt's *Life of Gouverneur Morris*. This work contains the president's slander of Thomas Paine, and a good deal of the matter he has used recently in his speeches. Dr. Conway has spoken of it as "a unique collection of blunders." Here you get many of his gems of political wisdom at first hand. It appears to have been the French Revolution that stirred Roosevelt to utter the sage remark that "anarchy is the handmaid of tyranny," a sentiment he recently found applicable when discussing the Southern lynchings. He should read C. L. James's *History of the French Revolution*, and learn that the interregnums of anarchy between the tyranny of the throne, the mob, and the convention were the most peaceful days of that bloody era. Roosevelt is a man of poor judgment. He condemns Paine for using knowledge he obtained through his official position to prevent Silas Deane from defrauding the government, and deems it praiseworthy in Morris to have caused Paine's removal therefore from his secretaryship to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. But he makes no comment on the morality of Morris's acting for a syndicate to buy up at a low figure the American debts to France and Spain, which he had inside information would be paid in full. It may be appropriate to state, for the correction of one of Roosevelt's blunders, the recorded fact that Paine was not "removed," that a motion to dismiss him was lost, and that he resigned because a pusillanimous Congress would not allow him a hearing. Roosevelt observes that Paine was a master in the art of invective, but met more than his match in Morris. But there was no meeting; Paine's defence was suppressed, and Morris had the field to himself. And who of

the two was the patriot—Paine, who resigned his office that he might serve America more effectively as a citizen and soldier, or Morris, who held an office and speculated in his country's debts? I get warm on this subject.

Morris was a "sceptic" and a "scoffer." He had no principle, so far as can be ascertained, and performed no service for the truth. He had less religion than Paine, and no morals at all. Roosevelt admits that he was altogether too much the reverse of puritanical. In Paris he called on women in the morning, was admitted to their bed-rooms before they were up and dressed, and in his journal passed encomiums on their modest way of getting out of their night-clothes and into their day-clothes in his presence. It is plain enough that he had his mistresses, and in the light of that fact the following passage by his biographer is rather juicy. Roosevelt says: "To tell the bare truth is sometimes to make the most venomous comment possible, and this he [Morris] evidently felt when he wrote of his meeting with the Cardinal de Rohan: 'We talk among other things about religion, for the Cardinal is very devout. He was once the lover of Madame de Flahaut's sister.'" The passage is ambrosial because the "bare truth" as here told is as "venomous comment" on Morris as on the cardinal, for Morris was the lover of Madame de Flahaut herself! I do not see why it was less respectable for the cardinal to have one of the sisters for a mistress than for our Minister to have the other. I am not censuring either, for it does not disquiet me as much as it seems to some others to learn that certain men and women took what enjoyment they could in their perishable bodies without saddening anyone else; but how could a public man making Roosevelt's pretensions to what he calls "decency" consent to go down the skidway of the ages as the eulogist of a libertine like Morris, and as the detractor of Thomas Paine, who lived a virtuous life?

Both Paine and Morris wrote voluminously while in Paris. I would like to have the admirers of Roosevelt's judgments of men place Paine's correspondence, including that with a woman, beside Morris's record of society scandal, and decide who was "filthy," and, for that matter, which was the "Atheist." Ah, Teddy, Teddy! Take that gun out of your hip pocket (for I hear you haven't changed your clothes since the Spanish war), wipe off those glasses, and sit down to read the true life of Thomas Paine. It will produce three reversals in opinion. Many people will think more of you than they can at the present time, you will think better of Paine, and you will not think so much of yourself.

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

A small girl who lives in Philadelphia, according to the *Ledger*, has troubled her mother very much by her reckless disregard for the truth. One day her mother had a very serious talk with the little daughter, and ended up by telling her that liars could not go to heaven. The small daughter reflected for a time and then said: "Mamma, do you ever tell lies?" "Certainly not," replied her mother. Sudden recollections sweeping across her mind, she hesitated and added: "Sometimes, of course, when it is impossible for me to see people, I send down word that I am not at home. But that is merely to keep from hurting their feelings. It is not lying." The small girl reflected and said nothing. That night when her father came home she said bluntly: "Papa, do you ever tell lies?" "Certainly not," replied her father, with astonishment and some indignation. Then he began to fidget a little, and after a while he added, "Of course, when I'm selling goods I can't always tell all I know about them. It's the other fellow's business to know what kind of goods they are. That isn't lying, though; that's just business." The small girl reflected again, and after mature consideration, spoke. "I don't think that I want to go to heaven," said she; "there won't be any one there but God and George Washington."

The Rev. Dr. Charles Wood, of Philadelphia, has a story which he tells "on the excellent authority of Mr. Booker T. Washington." A negro had a dream in which he thought he visited purgatory. He was telling a friend about it next morning when the friend interrupted him, asking: "Was there any niggers there?" "Yaas, sir; there was lots of them," was the reply. "Any white men?" "Yaas, sir; lots of them." "What were the white men doing?" "Every one of them was holding a nigger 'tween him and the fire," said the dreamer.—*N. Y. Times*.

PERILS AVOIDED.—"Mrs. Goodart—"There was a little baby born at the parsonage this morning." Mrs. Feerson—"It's a girl, I hope." Mrs. Goodart—"Yes; but why are you so anxious?" Mrs. Feerson—"Well, you know how ministers' sons turn out as a rule."—*Catholic Standard and Times*.

Acid Drops.

What a miserable failure all the occult ladies and gentleman were in the case of Miss Hickman! Not one of the whole crew—spiritualists, telepathists, thought-readers, or what not—were able to shed a gleam of light on the problem of her whereabouts. Neither for love nor money could they see an inch farther into the darkness than other people. Mr. Hickman's offered reward of £100, and the Hospital's of the same amount, ought to have been secured in five minutes if there were any truth in these people's pretensions. By a singular sarcasm, it was reserved for "wanton boys" to stumble upon the poor young woman's dead body—or what remained of it after vermin and decomposition had done their work. Logically, these occult ladies and gentlemen ought to retire from business after this egregious collapse. Practically, we may be sure they will do nothing of the kind. For, as Heine said, the fool-crop is perennial; and charlatans do not live on their own performances, but on the folly and credulity of their victims.

For a week or so after Miss Hickman's disappearance some newspapers—the dear *Daily News* included—printed the outpourings of sundry occultists. The stuff was nonsense on the face of it, as they flatly contradicted each other. One saw her, in his mind's eye, lying ill in bed in the Italian quarter about Saffron Hill; another saw her on the south side of the Thames; and others saw her in various imaginary positions up and down the country. Of course it was all impudent guess-work. They had to *look* wise, and say *something*, and there was always the off chance that one or another charlatan's guess might be something *near* the truth.

Mr. Henry Labouchere, several years ago, locked up a valuable banknote, and announced that any occultist could have it by telling its number through the walls of an iron safe. "Labby" knew the note was safe enough. So did they.

After the discovery of Miss Hickman's dead body—it is always *afterwards* that we hear of such things—a report was published to the effect that Canon Wilberforce had probably something to do with it. On the previous Sunday morning he had mentioned Miss Hickman's case to his congregation, of which, it is said, she was a member; and the following words fell from his lips:—

"I have been asked to bring the subject before you with the view of all of you on this day concentrating your minds upon her with an intense desire that the mystery of her disappearance may be cleared up, so that the dynamic force that is in concentrated thought may be brought into play and thereby the trouble that has overtaken her family be removed. I have no doubt that if this could be accomplished to-day, the week will not pass without our hearing something about her."

Suppose Canon Wilberforce did utter these very words that Sunday morning, what evidence is there that they had anything whatever to do with the gruesome discovery in Richmond Park? In all probability it is a case of mere coincidence. Moreover, it is difficult to see how "the dynamic force of concentrated thought," such as Canon Wilberforce talked about, could lead to the apparent accident of a couple of boys jumping over the fence near which Miss Hickman's body lay. How a lot of people thinking about a thing could influence, with regard to it, the action of other persons who were *not* thinking about it, is not very easy of comprehension. Besides, there had been plenty of such "concentrated thought" for eight or nine weeks, and it had led to nothing. Why should it lead to something when Canon Wilberforce joined in the concentration? Is he so important a person as that?

Helene Gingold, whoever the lady is, joined in the absurd chatter over poor Miss Hickman. She told the readers of the *Daily News* that on the very first day she heard of Miss Hickman's disappearance she had a dream of the missing young woman taking a country walk to get rid of brain fag, of her sitting down to rest, of her being assaulted by a tramp, and of her body being disposed of in the darkness of the night by that tramp and a "pal." We cannot see anything important in this dream, which may have no sort of relation to the actual facts of Miss Hickman's death. In any case, what use is there in relating such a dream now? Had it been related at the time, and had it led to the discovery of Miss Hickman's dead body, it would have been worthy of attention.

"It appears to me," Helene Gingold says in conclusion, "that even the most sceptical must allow that there is something more between Heaven and earth than is dreamt of in

our philosophy." If the lady means that her dream is an illustration of the intercourse between Heaven and earth, we can only shrug our shoulders and smile.

Alfred Ernest Sach, Zionite and Faith Healer, of Ipswich, has been fined £20 for "cruelty" to his daughter. The cruelty consisted in trying to cure her fractured thigh by prayer instead of calling in medical assistance. We have not heard that Canon Wilberforce or Archdeacon Sinclair has said a single word on this persecuted man's behalf: which shows how much sincerity there is in their talk about the power of "concentrated thought" and "mystical communion with God." We call this man *persecuted* because he is prosecuted, tried, found guilty, and sentenced by his fellow Christians in a Christian country for being a real Christian. If the New Testament does not teach that bodily as well as spiritual ailments are to be cured by prayer it teaches nothing at all.

Let us look into this matter. Canon Wilberforce told the *Daily Express* that he fully believes in the efficacy of prayer. He accepted the discovery of Miss Hickman's dead body as an answer to his congregation's "solemn request to the Almighty," and he asked, "Why should the answer to our petition be regarded as mysterious?" Archdeacon Sinclair was no less emphatic. "Why," he enquired, "after all is said and done, so soon after this solemn prayer did a few small boys rake away the decayed leaves that covered the body of the poor girl, whose unknown fate was the subject of concern to millions of people? Has mankind, indeed, forgotten that 'with God all things are possible?'" "I believe," Archdeacon Sinclair added, "in faith-healing, and that a true faith can overcome any difficulty that may present itself." Surely this is plain enough. And just as surely both Canon Wilberforce and Archdeacon Sinclair are cowards in letting Alfred Ernest Sach, of Ipswich, go to prison without a word of protest from their lips. He simply *practised* what they *profess*.

We have before us a document that bears indirectly, but very strongly, on this matter. It is a printed announcement of "The Leicester General Church Mission" which is, apparently, to be held in St. Peter's Parish from the twelfth to the twenty-third of November. It is headed in big bold letters "A Call to Prayer!" Well, that Ipswich Christian felt called to prayer, and had to pay a fine of £20 for the luxury.

The Leicester "Call to Prayer" starts off with a quotation from Tennyson: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Then it proceeds to say a number of things on its own account about prayer. The first is this: "Prayer is the *greatest* power in the world, for it brings Almighty God into action." Just so. Alfred Ernest Sach thought likewise. But he did not merely *think* it—he *acted* on it. Ay, there's the rub! While the men of God were mouthing nonsense he staked his daughter's life upon its truth; and for this act of sincerity, in the midst of millions of hypocrites, he narrowly escaped imprisonment in a Christian gaol.

All along it has been tolerably clear that the "Passive Resistance" movement was inspired by two motives—sectarian hatred and love of advertisement. The appearance in court and elsewhere gave a first class opportunity for a number of people to pose as martyrs with the minimum amount of suffering. When the rates were paid by anonymous outsiders, and the passive resisters were debarred from making speeches in court, the protests were loud, and the curses, no doubt deep. If the rates are paid by others without interfering with the advertisement, dissenters do not seem to raise any objection. The other day, for instance, the auctioneer at a sale in the provinces, to show his sympathy with the movement, paid the rate for which one individual was summoned, and gave the owner back his goods. Whereupon the "Resisters" cheered loudly and thanked the auctioneer. Of course in this case the appearance at the court had taken place, the usual advertisement had been gained, the crown of martyrdom earned, and there was nothing to be gained in keeping up the comedy any longer. The incident is instructive.

The *Bristol Times* is responsible for the following. "After a sale of goods at Chippenham, a woman was heard to say, 'Oh, to think of it! To think they should sell £14 worth of goods for 6s. 8d. to give to the Roman Catholics.'" And of such is the backbone of Britain—so says Dr. Clifford.

The dissenters bid fair to stir an enemy not easily laid again, and to raise questions they would rather have

unasked. First of all there is the question of the subsidies received from the State by Nonconformists in the shape of remission of taxes, to which attention was called in these columns a fortnight ago. It is, of course, a manifest injustice for the State to help any religious opinion by relieving it from paying its proportion of the rates and taxes. But the injustice is combined with hypocrisy when those who benefit by it go about complaining of the injustice of the State endowing religion, and protesting that they would go to prison rather than countenance such a thing. This exemption is granted on condition that the building is used for religious purposes only. But Churchmen are now pointing out that Nonconformist places of worship are used for secular purposes, and therefore cannot claim exemption. A Paddington resident has just written to the Borough authorities pointing out that Dr. Clifford is announced to give a course of lectures on some secular subjects, for which payment is made, and a committee has been appointed to consider the matter, and decide whether, under the circumstances, Dr. Clifford's chapel should continue to be exempt. It is a pretty domestic quarrel, and one that affords us much amusement; but it really looks as though between the pressure from Church people on one side, and Freethinkers on the other, that Nonconformists may ultimately be driven to act consistently. But there is always this danger when people pose as being honest—they may be called upon to live up to the character.

Then there is the question of voting at political and other elections. Nonconformists having threatened to make their sectarian interest the chief question, a movement is growing among Churchmen to let church interests decide their voting. It is, of course, simply monstrous that the interests of the nation should be thus subordinated to the rivalries of the sects, but it will at least have the effect of disgusting many with both parties, and so make for good in the long run.

We do not regard Mr. Balfour as a great man, but he is not devoid of intellectual subtlety, and he has more than once taken the "cheek" out of the Nonconformists in regard to the Education Act. He gives them another dig under the fifth rib in his recently published letter to the editor of the *London Argus*. Mr. Balfour points out, as we have often pointed out, that "Nonconformist places of worship, and, I believe, Sunday schools also receive aid from public funds in the shape of exemption of rates." And he observes that this "makes the position of the Passive Resisters, if possible, more illogical than it was before."

We have often said that the Nonconformists, although theoretically opposed to State religion, like to have their share of what is going. Here is a case in point. The Congregational and Baptist Unions have been memorialising the Admiralty, and the result is a communication to the following effect: "The Admiralty see no objection to the proposal of the appointment of a Baptist or Congregational minister at each naval centre where a sufficient number of men to justify an appointment declare themselves of these denominations. These ministers will be paid capitation money, and, on receipt of the names of the ministers appointed, instructions will be given to the several commanders-in-Chief to cause all necessary facilities to be afforded to them in the discharge of their duties." What has Dr. Clifford to say to this?

The Passive Resisters at Margate were "disgusted" because the Rev. H. A. Bull, as chairman of the Bench, strongly resented any remarks against Romanism. Their disgust clearly shows what they are after. Religious fanaticism, on one side, and religious greed, on the other, are the motives that animate them.

Mrs. Spurgeon, the widow of the famous C. H. Spurgeon, who died recently, seems to have been a very estimable lady; and, according to her lights, a zealous worker for good objects. This is all the more reason why her religious friends should have refrained from associating her death with anything calculated to "make the unbelievers blaspheme." They posted a notice outside the Tabernacle stating that, "Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon entered heaven at 8.30 this morning." That was the time she breathed her last. Evidently they think it is a very short journey from earth to heaven.

A similar ridiculous announcement was made when C. H. Spurgeon died. The hour and the minute of his entering heaven were posted up at the Tabernacle. Some wag, however, produced a telegram from St. Peter, dated hours afterwards, stating that Spurgeon had not yet arrived, and that the people in heaven were getting anxious. We dare say the celestial telegram and the Tabernacle notice were equally accurate.

Old Dowie seems to have had a "mixed time" in New York. It was amusing, though natural, that he should attract the attention of Mrs. Carrie Nation, the notorious temperance reformer and champion saloon-smasher. Apparently she resented Old Dowie's poaching for notoriety on one of her preserves. A heated altercation took place between them, and Old Dowie had to drown her voice by ordering the Doxology to be sung. This is a tribute in its way to the lady's powers. It was impossible for any one man to silence her.

It appears to be unlikely that Old Dowie will realise the five million dollars he expected to make in New York. It is probable, however, that he will do fairly well. Many zealots have sent him handsome contributions from different parts of the country. According to reports, a farmer's wife in New Hampshire sent him £300, having sold all her property to raise the money; while a rich Kentucky farmer sold a farm for £10,000 and sent Elijah II. the entire proceeds. "Let 'em all come."

The *New York Herald* reports the rumor that Old Dowie intends to go off and live in Australia on the immense fortune he has accumulated in America, and that a strong box containing seven million dollars in bonds and other securities is being closely guarded by Old Dowie's prætorians.

"Old Dowie's London agent," a correspondent writes, "held a three days' mission at Southend recently. A branch seems to have been formed here. One address of the 'agent' I heard labored in showing that the old boy (the Devil, not Dowie) was still an all-powerful tempter; but while he openly classed the Zion chief with the prophets of old, he asserted that Dowie's imperviousness against considerations of self placed him on a level higher than the prophets of Judah. A deaconess, evidently a sincere dupe, spoke on healing for twenty minutes, referring to Old D. as the 'dear master.' The chairman, in his bearing to the audience, manifested objectionable 'cockneyism,' not to say vulgar insolence, and he was warm on the question of hell fire."

One expects orthodoxy in a paper like the *Oban Times*, and one is not disappointed. In a notice of the *Humane Review* it says that "Nearly every writer abjures Holy Writ as not being sufficiently pronounced on the subject, in which the writers are specially interested, forgetting that the whole teaching of the Bible is to Do Good. Thus the objects of their sympathy they themselves put out of court." This is a fearful piece of composition. Fortunately the contributors to the *Humane Review*, if lacking in orthodoxy, manage to write good English.

According to the *Rock* there is a highly educated clergyman selling matches in the Strand. He is the son of a Canon of Durham Cathedral, and once held himself a good living in Devonshire. But he is now reckoned "too old" for clerical work, and is reduced to the lowest shifts to gain a subsistence. Such is the *Rock's* story. But the question suggests itself, How did this clergyman lose his good living in Devonshire? The incumbent of a Church living is incumbent for life unless he commits an offence dealt with under the Clergy Discipline Act. For the rest, we can only say that the Church is rich enough to relieve this unfortunate clergyman, if it is really a deserving case; and that it does not do so only shows how well it clings to the fleshpots of Egypt.

At the Church Congress at Bristol the chairman asked Professor Lloyd Morgan to address the meeting for a few minutes. Professor Morgan said that he had been asked some six or seven weeks earlier to read a paper, but, having sketched out the lines he would go upon, these were not satisfactory to the President of the Congress. He therefore declined to address the meeting. We should much like to know what these "lines" were. Professor Morgan is a well-known and able writer on comparative psychology, and he could have said something worth hearing. Perhaps there was too much plain speaking to suit a congress of clerics.

At the same meeting the Canon of Exeter said they must resist "the spread of the mischievous cheapening of sermons." Hear, hear! We believe they can be bought at two shillings and sixpence each, with a discount on taking a quantity. Probably the Canon wants their raising to a figure that will enable the wealthier preachers to procure original sermons without feeling that the same sermon is being preached by a neighboring parson who is only getting a hundred and fifty a year.

Canon Walsham said plaintively, "there must be something wrong with their sermons, seeing the ridicule and

frivolity they at times excited." This is really very sad. After a clergyman has gone to the trouble and expense of buying a brand new sermon, to find it excite only "ridicule and frivolity"! It is enough to make the angels weep.

The Rev. Christopher Robertson, addressing the Congress, said he "was a stranger and a working man"; whereupon there was much laughter. Really the Congress, what with its confession as to the value of sermons and its "laughter" at clergymen posing as working men, seems to have been in quite a rational humor.

Archdeacon Wilson, speaking at the Manchester Diocesan Conference, said they must not say that a man could not join the Church unless he could accept the whole of the Bible as the Word of God. He agreed that the stories in the early chapters of Genesis must not be insisted on as literally true. Quite so. Sceptical criticism has compelled the Church, or its leading men, to say that. But is it supposed they can stop there? If the early chapters of the Bible are not literally true, we may depend upon it that the same will be said of later chapters in the fulness of time. After all, the creation of Adam out of dust is not more incredible than the creation of Jesus out of nothing. When you have to pick and choose in the Bible it ceases to be different from any other book.

Canon Nunn, speaking at the same meeting, wanted to know what was left after Archdeacon Wilson's admissions. "If man had not fallen," he asked, "how could the restoration of man be taught?" This is a question which the clergy never face frankly. Perhaps they dread it too much. Maybe they are taxing their wits to prepare an answer, and keep "mum" until they are ready.

The *Westminster Gazette's* obituary notice of Professor Lecky contained no reference whatever to his *History of Rationalism*, the work that first brought him fame, and that had the honor of being reviewed by George Eliot in the *Fortnightly*. A strange omission!

Lecky was not, in our opinion, a great writer. He was certainly not a great thinker. When he stood for Dublin University he replied to the queries concerning his religion by saying "I am a Christian," and would not add another word. That was characteristic of the man, we fancy. He should have said less or more. Either he should have refused to be heckled at all with regard to his religious opinions, or he should have given a plain satisfactory statement. The middle course he adopted only recalled George Eliot's sarcasm about persons who are willing to admit that the radii of a circle have a tendency to be equal, but also shake their heads and declare that the spirit of geometry may be carried too far.

At an inquest held at Morley, near Leeds, on the body of a young woman, the mother told the coroner she belonged to the Christian Catholic Church of Zion, and did not believe in doctors. She trusted to faith and prayer. The coroner said this was not belief in God, but blasphemy or fanaticism. The coroner's remark strikes us as supremely silly. If it was not belief in God, what was it? If the mother had believed in God less, or trusted him less, or believed in him differently, she would have run for a doctor. And then what would have happened? Well, the girl *might* have died all the same, and then, if the doctor had been religious, he would have said it was *God's work*. Or she might have recovered, and the mother would have been told by some parson to thank God for her child's recovery. On the whole, we venture to think the mother acted—as a Christian—honestly and consistently. She believed in God, and trusted him. She read the New Testament, believed it, and followed its prescriptions. And then a *Christian* coroner gives her a jacketing. The verdict should have been "Died from an overdose of Christianity"; but that would have let the cat out of the bag with a vengeance.

The Torrey Mission in Dundee has been producing some curious results. A correspondent writes to a Dundee paper, complaining that someone has been sending to business men the question, written, "For how much do you value your soul? Answer God only," and signing his name to it. The correspondent says it has been done either by a religious crank or a lunatic—which strikes us as a case of tautology.

Mr. Hales, the *Daily News* war correspondent, is a vigorous and effective penman, but his philosophy is not profound, and his theology is ridiculous. After giving a terrible story of the sufferings of Macedonian women and children who escaped from Turkish massacre and outrage to Bulgarian territory, he said: "It was a woeful march. Every rood of ground was agonised by woman's bitter woe. Children were

born in that dread passover from the land of tyranny and shame, and the suffering mothers with Spartan courage continued the terrible flight. It must have been that the God of the helpless, the God of the babe orphan before its eyes had met the light, that sustained these Macedonian matrons in their bitter hours." Mr. Hales's grammar is here as shaky as his logic. He does not pause to ask himself what the God of the helpless was doing while those who could *not* escape suffered infamous and bestial cruelty at the hands of their murderers. This God of the helpless seems about as helpless as those he fails to assist.

Some time ago an effort was made to unseat Senator Smoot who represents the Mormons of Utah in the Upper House at Washington. It was sought to invalidate his election on the ground that he was a polygamist. The effort failed, however; and we see the report that a fresh effort will be made on the ground that Mormonism exacts oaths subversive of United States supremacy. Any stick, we suppose, is good enough to beat a Mormon with; otherwise we might have observed that the "supremacy" objection is absurd and the "polygamy" objection hypocritical. There is no text in the whole of the Bible against polygamy. In this respect, at any rate, the Mormons are better Bible Christians than the rest of the American people.

Savile Town Wesleyan Visitor, a little magazine conducted apparently by Pastor Joshua Holmes, contains in the advertisement pages (of all places!) the following: "I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.—THOMAS PAINE, *Age of Reason*." We hope Pastor Holmes will keep up these quotations from Thomas Paine. We could mark a few nice ones in the *Age of Reason* that would be fresh and entertaining to the Savile Town Wesleyans.

According to a paragraph in the *Liverpool Echo*, a new plan has been adopted in a church near Wellington, Somerset, to induce boys to attend Sunday school, cases of cigarettes being given them during the service. Whether this be true or not, it suggests an old idea of ours that the clergy might try smoking-pews as a means of bringing working men to church. If pipes were found instead of prayer-books, and tobacco instead of bibles, there might be an improvement when the next religious census is taken.

George Ernest Edalji, the young solicitor, who has been sent to penal servitude for diabolical cattle-maiming, is the son of the vicar of Great Wyrley. The jury were unable to believe the vicar's sworn statement that his son did not leave the bedroom he occupied with his father on a certain night.

A tearful religious imposter has just been sent to gaol at Chelmsford. W. J. Taylor was a "missioner," and ran a "home" in connection with a bogus "Poor Children's Guild." Subscriptions came in at the rate of over a pound a day, but where were the children? A subscriber who paid a surprise visit found no furniture in the house, but there were 130 collecting boxes, and a cartload of Bibles and Testaments. Taylor burst into tears when he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Such fellows have often a large amount of self-pity.

God in a Bottle of Bass.

"Yes," remarked the agreeable gentleman who was sitting opposite to me at lunch, "I have just come from the City Temple." This interested me, having already heard much of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, so I casually remarked, "A. J. Campbell is back from America, I hear." "Yes," came the reply. "What did you think of his sermon," I asked. "I understand he is very orthodox, that is, from a Protestant point of view." "Oh, not at all," replied my agreeable friend, "he is very broad; for instance, only this morning, he said, 'God is all and all is God.'" Now, to me, this seemed a very bold statement, but I merely replied, "I do not quite understand that, do you?" "Oh, yes," my friend replied, "he means God is in the air, the earth, and in everything else." "In the water we drink," I queried, "Yes," came the emphatic answer, "in everything." "In a bottle of Bass," was my next question, but this was too much for the solemn-faced waiter who was listening, and whom I had known for years, but had never known him to smile, and he laughed outright.

Then at last my unscientific friend had a shadow of doubt that either the Rev. R. J. Campbell was wrong, or that he had misunderstood him.

Now, I had heard of "God in a box," and read of "God in a bonfire," but who would have thought of looking for "God in a Johnny Walker." Surely there must be some mistake.

A MAN ON THE ROAD.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, November 1, Birmingham Town Hall; 3, "The Doom of Religion: with Reference to Mr. Blatchford's *Clarion* Articles"; 7, "The Comedy of Passive Resistance."

November 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.

T. RAYNOR (Johannesburg) writes: "If you decide on publishing Mr. Lloyd's articles in pamphlet form I should like a few dozen for sale here, where Mr. L. was so well known. They would be sure to do good. A real good lecturer and public debater ought to make a tour through South Africa pay its way, likewise open up a good field for propaganda. Mr. L. must not forsake us in his new sphere. This is practically virgin ground awaiting cultivation. The *Clarion* articles are doing good in more places than England. This is the best work ever 'Nunquam' has done. May you all succeed in your uphill work."

A. M. BLACKMORE.—We dare say you mean well. We do not wish to rob you of your "bright heavenly home in the world above." When you take possession of it you might let us know. We suppose you will have a house-warming. Meanwhile, don't trouble to send us more copies of the New Testament. We are already supplied, and there are several religious depots handy to our office if we run short.

R. W. TRENAMAN.—Thanks. We hope you will have a prosperous voyage to South America and back. Your father was a gallant Freethinker, and we judge you to be a true chip of the old block.

W. P. BALL.—Always glad to receive your cuttings.

W. PALMER (Haughley) writes: "For the benefit of country newsagents who cannot get supplied with the *Freethinker* from their wholesale agents, I beg to say that I have been supplied from the first issue by G. Golding, 78A Great Queen-street, Holborn, London, late of Newcastle-street, Strand."

W. PAGE.—We will see if we can help you when our books are unpacked and available; perhaps next week.

F. S.—You will never "overwhelm" us with useful cuttings. We are always glad to receive them. Send us more whenever you will. Friends who supply us with material we can write paragraphs on really help, in their own way, to edit the *Freethinker* and keep up its interest.

J. MASTERTON.—You start with a strange assumption. What is there in sexuality that makes it inexplicable by Evolution? Probably you would change your view if you read the volume on *The Evolution of Sex* in Scott's Scientific Library.

J. DOBSON.—References to the "Master" and the "Great Father" are lost on our readers.

F. COMERFORD.—Thanks for the cutting, which we might not have seen otherwise. We shall certainly make use of it as you suggest.

G. CROOKSON.—We do not know of any cheap book on Savonarola. You might form some idea of him by reading George Eliot's *Romola*. Is there not a Public Library at Barnsley, or Sheffield, that you could consult?

JAMES WESTON, a veteran Sheffield Freethinker, in sending a subscription, expresses a hope that the Cohen Presentation Fund "will be a large one."

J. G. STUART.—Such facts are, as you feel, irreconcilable with the idea of a God of love.

C. A. TESTER.—The writer of "Sub Rosa" in the *Morning Leader* wields a bright pen, and we fancy he is not overburdened with religion. Please convey our best regards to your young lady friend who delights in reading the *Freethinker*.

E. H.—We don't quite see how anyone could know anything about the "supernatural." Whatever we know is natural, is it not? Of course there was morality before Christ, and "organised" morality too. Without turning to the records of the great civilisations, proofs may be found even in the Old Testament, which is only a Christian book by adoption. The letters you refer to will doubtless do good.

A. H. SANDERSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

H. THORNLEY.—It is certainly rather odd. See our comment elsewhere.

W. W. ROBERTS.—Pleased to have your good opinion of Mr. Cohen.

H. HARRINGTON.—The boycott against the *Freethinker* is mean enough, as you say; but the difficulty of breaking it down remains. We note, for the sake of "saints" in the district of Bath that this journal is supplied by Jelly, newsagent, Broad-street.

H. LEES SUMNER.—You will have seen the Birmingham bills before this. There ought to be big meetings in the Town Hall.

COHEN PRESENTATION FUND.—James Weston, 10s. 6d.; J. G. Stuart, 1s.; E. J. Tocher, 1s.; H. H. Hurrell, 2s.; W. W. Roberts, 5s.

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.

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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day in the great Birmingham Town Hall. The afternoon lecture on "The Doom of Religion: with Reference to Mr. Blatchford's *Clarion* Articles" will probably be attended by members of the Labor Church. Councillor Fallows, M.A., will preside on this occasion. The evening lecture, which ought to draw a crowd, will be on "The Comedy of Passive Resistance."

Thirty-two years have rolled by since Mr. Foote first spoke from the Birmingham Town Hall platform. He was but a stripling then, but he had the honor to stand, however humbly, beside Austin Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh. It was a public meeting to celebrate the inaugural Conference of the Republican League.

The Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool, where the local Branch of the National Secular Society holds its meetings, had quite a festive appearance on Sunday evening. It has been redecorated recently, and lit up with electric light, which is an immense improvement in many respects, especially from a sanitary point of view. Gaslight vitiates the air terribly, and distresses the audience, and half poisons the lecturer. And this was a matter of great importance on Sunday evening when the audience was packed tight from the platform to the back of the hall, when the very ante-rooms, with the doors open, were full of people, and many were unable to gain admittance at all. No such meeting, we believe, has ever been seen there before; and Mr. Foote, who was in good form, held his audience for quite an hour and a half, and was cheered most enthusiastically. Mr. Hammond, who took the chair, pleaded for a fresh accession of members, and we understand that several were enrolled. A good collection was also taken at the door for the Cohen Presentation Fund. It should be added that Mr. Foote's afternoon audience was an exceptionally good one, the lecture being followed by some discussion. The chair on that occasion was taken by the veteran Freethinker, Mr. John Ross.

Mr. Cohen had a capital audience at the Leicester Secular Hall on Sunday evening, when he lectured on "Is Christianity Worth Preserving?" We are glad to hear that improved audiences have been so far the rule at Leicester this season.

We trust our readers will bear the Cohen Presentation Fund in mind, and send us in their contributions without further delay. We meant to write a "Special" on the subject this week, but other duties have interfered, and we have also been hampered by the circumstances referred to in our last week's "Personal." Meanwhile we beg to report that it is intended to make the Presentation to Mr. Cohen at the Annual Dinner on the second Tuesday in January, and that the Fund by that time ought to nearly double its present amount—in other words, it ought to reach the round figure of £200.

Mr. John Lloyd had a good audience and a very hearty reception at Camberwell on Sunday evening. His lecture was highly appreciated, and all who heard him want to hear him again in the near future. Mr. Lloyd is being invited to visit Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, and other places, and we hope he will be kept busy, at least on Sundays, during

the present winter. The Freethought party should make the most of such a valuable accession to its fighting strength.

Mr. John Lloyd delivers two lectures to-day in the Secular Hall, Glasgow. He ought to have a rousing welcome there. We hope to hear of crowded and enthusiastic meetings.

A new course of Sunday evening lectures at the Queen's (minor) Hall, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, is advertised on the back page of this week's *Freethinker*. The lecturers are Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. C. Cohen, and Mr. John Lloyd, and the subjects ought to attract large audiences. Mr. Foote's opening lecture will be as careful as well as a candid study of the late Mr. Gladstone as "The Last Christian Statesman"—with emphasis on the "Christian," and with ample reference to Mr. John Morley's Biography. Handbills of this course of lectures can be obtained at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., and we appeal to our friends to distribute them, judiciously, as widely as possible. They will thus help to advertise the lectures without expense, save for a little trouble.

Mr. John Morley's *Life of Gladstone* is a very striking success. The first edition of 20,000 was exhausted in a few days. The singularity of an Agnostic man of letters writing the biography of a great statesman who was almost an ostentatious Christian, had something to do, perhaps, with the book's attraction for the British public.

The most unteachable thing in the world is a fly. Chase it off your nose twenty times and it will return gaily as though nothing had happened. Hurl acres at it, relatively speaking, and it dodges them and comes on buzzing as merrily as ever. Yes, a fly takes the cake. But next to it come the Leeds police. They cannot learn, or they will not learn—we don't know which, and it comes to the same thing in the end. In spite of the Stipendiary's remarks on their partiality they have taken out fresh summonses against the Secularists for doing what other bodies do on Woodhouse Moor—hold meetings, sell literature, and make collections. Two summonses have been served on Mr. E. Pack, one for selling, the other for collecting, both returnable on Friday, October 30, at the Leeds Town Hall. We hope the police will receive another lesson that day. Meetings were held again at Woodhouse Moor on Sunday, and a letter of sympathy and encouragement was read from Mr. Foote as editor of the *Freethinker*.

The following paragraph respecting the prosecution of Secularists at Leeds appeared in the *Leeds Daily News* of October 19 amongst the editorial "To-Day's Chat":—"A Freethinker complains in a local morning paper that the Leeds authorities persecute them as a body on Woodhouse Moor for no other reason, apparently, than because they, the authorities, are opposed to secularist views. The fact that the police look leniently on pamphlet selling when the views expounded are anti-vaccinist or political, and, as the correspondent alleges, pounce immediately upon the secularists when they do this, is not creditable to the city, if true. I fear there is some truth, too, in this grievance, for a well-known member of the City Police came up to me in the Town Hall at the time Mr. Pack, the secularist lecturer, was fined, and asked me if I were not delighted to see him convicted. It was evident from his remarks that this officer was determined to push the law to its furthest limit against a body of men whose views he considered dangerous." We congratulate our Leeds contemporary on its courage in printing this in the face of so much local bigotry.

The Humanitarian League is organising an important meeting of its members and friends at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on Thursday evening, November 12, when Mr. Edward Carpenter will open a debate on Vivisection. Mr. Carpenter is not often heard in London, and there are many who would not willingly miss an opportunity of hearing him. We understand that Mr. J. M. Robertson and other well-known speakers will take part in the discussion. Mr. G. W. Foote intends to be present if possible. The proceedings will commence at 8 o'clock. Admission free.

We have pleasure in quoting the following paragraph from the *Manchester Evening News*:—"It is to be hoped the police force will not take too seriously the suggestion that the discovery of Miss Hickman's body was a direct answer to prayer. Mr. Hickman thinks the police had not done their work well, otherwise the body would have been found much sooner. And it may go ill with us if the police think that their slackness is to be compensated by prayers in the churches. In this particular case, assuming the answer to prayer, it would seem that some little boys had been providentially induced to go trespassing on a Sunday after-

noon; unless the providential interference was limited to directing the flight of one of the boys from a keeper to the place where the body lay. Probably sober-minded people will be slow to accept the providential theory. They will recall many curious coincidences in their own experience. Apart from the prayers in the church, no one would have seen anything providential in the discovery of the body. And the mere fact that specially urgent prayer was made just before the discovery does not convert the natural into the supernatural."

Mr. Victor Roger, an Independent Progressive candidate at Lambeth, ought to receive the support of all the local Freethinkers at the approaching Borough Council election. He was basely jockeyed off the official Progressive list by the Nonconformists, who want all the "Liberal" candidates to be Chapel people. Mr. Roger is an open and a fearless Secularist, and Secularists should rally round him in the circumstances.

We are glad to see that the *Star* approves the new Education program of the National Free Church Council with a reservation. With regard to the seventh clause, that "there shall be no religious teaching except Biblical teaching within school hours," our contemporary says: "It would be better to keep secular education quite free from the rivalries of rival sects, for so long as the various sects are permitted to wrangle over the child it will be hard to devise any arrangement which will circumvent their intrigue."

The Hacknall Torkard *Dispatch and Mercury* has been printing some useful correspondence on religious and moral instruction in elementary schools. The last number contains an admirable letter by Mr. F. J. Gould, and telling contributions by "Secularist" and "Rationalist." We take this opportunity of once more impressing on our readers throughout the country what good they might do by getting letters of a Freethought tendency printed in their local newspaper. Such letters meet the eyes of thousands who would never look at a Freethought journal.

Branches of the National Secular Society that have not already done so, are requested to reply at once to the head secretary's circular letter. It is necessary that information should be in hand immediately for the list of Branches, and newsagents who supply Freethought literature, in the 1904 *Secular Annual*, which must go to press without further delay.

Freethinkers ought all to be reading and handing round Colonel Ingersoll's *Christian Catechism*, just issued from our publishing office. It is one of the very brightest, most trenchant, and most effective of Ingersoll's productions. To put it into wide circulation will be a first-rate way of spreading Freethought.

SARDONICS.

Nothing is more logical than persecution. Religious tolerance is a kind of infidelity.

Hope is an explorer who surveys the country ahead. That is why we know so much about the Hereafter and so little about the Herebefore.

"All the souls in this place have been happy ever since you blundered into it," said Satan, ejecting Hope. "You make trouble wherever you go."

In the Parliament of Otumwee the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed a tax on fools. "The right honorable and generous gentleman," said a member, "forgets that we already have it in the poll tax."

Those who most loudly invite God's attention to themselves when in peril of death are those who should most fervently wish to escape his observation.

—Ambrose Bierce, in the "American."

PASSIVE RESISTANCE!!!

"With snarls of rage and covered with gore, the fight continued. Limbs were flying in all directions, and the air was very foggy owing to the strength of the conversation. With a terrible glint in his eyes and muttering a fearful oath, the Rev. Lambchops, fighting like a wild beast, threw himself upon his opponent and plunged the blood-stained dagger again and again into the poor wretch's heart. Then with a curse that shook the building, the rev. gentleman gave a terrific lunge, and the remains of the auctioneer were scattered broadcast on the pavement. 'Git aart of it, yer dirty bog-trotter!' yelled Lambchops. 'I'll show yer what Passive Resistance means! Git aart of it!'"

[Extract from proceedings at Sockem Hall while distraining for the Education Rate.

—Ally Sloper.

Parson Trawley's Other Cheek.

THE East-end fishmonger's man shifted his quid of tobacco to the other side of his mouth, and spat carefully into the road.

"Well, gov'nor," he said, "them Salvationers and Weslins may be the right sort, but my 'umble opinion is that they don't touch Parson Trawley nohow—ain't a little patch on 'im. Why, afore 'e come 'ere, this place was a little 'ell on earth; but since 'e come, and since they built that p'lice-station across the road there, there ain't been 'alf the rows there used to be. And to look at 'im, why you'd take 'im for a fair mug. Yer know, 'e's got a bit of the 'aw-'aw about 'im, and 'e talks a bit soft-like. I saw a bloke one day try to take a rise out of 'im—pal o' mine, too!—told the parson 'e'd drop 'im on a thick un. 'What d'yer mean by that?' says the parson. 'Why,' says Chunkey, 'I means this'; and 'e makes a jab at the parson's jaw. Brije me, you ought to have seen what 'appened. It was one, two, biff, and Chunkey was on 'is back winkin' and blinkin' at the lovely blue sky. When Chunkey met the parson agin, 'e took off 'is 'at, and said, 'I bows to superier science'; and Chunkey is no play-thing, I give yer my word. Well, arter 'e give Chunkey one for 'is nob, things went a bit easy for the parson. 'E 'ad a tin church put up on a bit o' waste ground, and 'e used to 'old revival services for men and women—kids not admitted. They got their turn on Sunday arternoons. When 'e'd been 'ere about a month, 'e 'ired the biggest 'ouse in the place and started a men's club. It's going now; see it over there? 'E undertook to teach boxin' 'isself—that brought the corner-boys all along in a lump. Funny for them to want to learn boxin', wasn't it? 'Cause, accordin' to the way they swank, you'd reckon 'em, at least, light-weight champions. And what made it more funny was, that most of 'em found out they'd forgot a lot about boxin' when the parson stepped in front of 'em. Why, one of 'em told the parson 'e was wastin' 'is time preachin'—said 'e ought to be the Champion of Hingland.

"After a bit, the parson started a Cricket and Football Club, which caught on 'andsome. We didn't make much of a fist at cricket, but when we played our fust football match wiv the *Pearly Rangers* we scored six goals nothink in next to no time; and, when they got a drop o' booze on board and started fightin', we beat 'em at that, too. No flies on us, I give yer my word. And heverythink turned out fust-rate wiv the parson till 'e hinstituted a Boys' Club—and we've got some pure varmint about 'ere, gov'nor. Well, as I was a-saying, 'e was a-going all so gay till 'e started that Boys' Club. It wasn't 'alf a club, neither. There was boxin' and fencin', quoits, billiards and bagatelle, newspapers and magazines, and a lot o' them big volumes of the *Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News*. A bit classy, and no mistake. But, yer know, gov'nor, them boys is born himps. The fust week they was like lambs. Looked at heverythink wiv their heyes and mouths wide open, and all you could get out of 'em was, 'Ain't it alright!'

"They started their little games by rollin' the billiard balls downstairs to see if they'd break. Got step-dancin' on the billiard-table. 'Ad a game at 'Olden Times'—one lot upstairs chuckin' down volumes of the *Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News*, and the other lot down below flingin' up balls o' wet paper. One of 'em, one night, filled the parson's tall 'at wiv water. Another night they poured a lot o' soap-suds over a young couple who was standin' talkin' outside on the pavement. But when they turned the gas off at the main, and pinched all the cakes in the coffee-bar, the parson thought it was about time 'e turned it in. So 'e shut the Club up for a few weeks, then 'e 'ired an old prize-fighter as caretaker, and the boys what still belongs to that Club 'ave been middlin' quiet ever since.

"Well, we'd got pretty used to the parson, when the Salvation Army made a raid on us. It was one Sunday arternoon when they fust come down here—brass band, banners, and tamborines. At fust, everybody thought it was a street-fight—they didn't 'alf make a row, especially the goggle-eyed big drummer. And they 'adn't been 'ere ten minutes afore all the kids and dogs in the place was round 'em. Then the corner-boys come mouchin' along to see what was hup. Some of the old gels—you know, gov'nor, the old gin-twisters—come out and started waltzin' to the music. Then the Salvationers made a ring, and their 'ead bloke stood in the centre and did a bit o' spoutin'. But yer couldn't 'ere what 'e said, 'cause the corner-boys began to chi-hike 'im—you know, shout at 'im and awsk 'im who cut 'is 'air, what made 'im rob the goat of 'is whiskers, and all that kind o' stuff. Then some of the corner-boys speculated in a little flour, and the mischief begun. Pretty soon the wenches and blokes begun to look like millers, and the flour made the bandsmen play all sorts o' notes they didn't want to. It got a bit rough at the finish, 'cause some of the Salvation blokes cut up nasty, which led to 'em being badly

knocked about. Anyhow, the next week's *War Cry* said they 'ad sustained a reverse, but they still 'oped to conquer. Funny thing, but the next time they come along nobody took any notice of 'em, and this seemed to trouble 'em more 'an gettin' hustled. 'Owsomever, they 'ired a little shop what nobody couldn't make pay, and turned it into what they called a 'barracks.' There was only 'alf-a-dozen of 'em (all gels) what lived in the 'barracks,' and when they come out at night singin' and spoutin' they used to run down Parson Trawley somethin' alarmin'—said 'e was a Roman Catholic in disguise, a wolf in sheep's clothin', and a lot more things that I forget just now. I never could make out what they was drivin' at, 'cause I never seed anythink wrong wiv the parson. We know 'e's what you call 'Igh Church; but what's the odds? I ain't no scholar, but as far as I can see a Roman Catholic is just as good as a Church of England—anyhow, they're both on the same lay. And talkin' about 'Igh Church puts me in mind that the parson give a lecture, just afore the Salvationers come 'ere, about 'Church Practices, Past and Present'—that was 'ow the bill went, if I remember right. And the parson's got the gift of the gab, gov'nor. Well, 'e told us about the ways and manners o' Church people 'undreds o' years ago; told us about hincence and 'oly water. Very interestin', govner, and no mistake. And heverybody a-listenin' to the parson was quiet and satisfied except an old Chapel woman, who kept fidgettin' all the hevenin'. Arter the parson 'ad told us about the 'oly water an' the hincence, that cantankerous old woman got hup, give a yawp, and shook 'er humbrella at 'im. 'You erpostate,' she screamed, 'I won't listen to another word. Yer makes me flesh creep, yer does. You hawful man; I'll write to the Kensits about this.' Then she waddled out of the place, puffin' and blowin like a porpoise.

"And whether that old woman had anythink to do wiv it I don't know, but about two weeks arterwards they started to build a tin chapel on the same bit o' ground what the church stood on. They was the Weslins. Well, they kept pretty quiet for a bit, only for several weeks arter they got their chapel finished there used to be 'orrible noises come out of it every other night. We used to wonder what was goin' hon hinside, and it turned out to be a band—all learners, mind yer, except two old soldiers whose breath was enough to corrode anythink made of brass. I shall never forget the fust Sunday when they come out to play. They'd no sooner struck up when all the dogs livin' about 'ere started cryin'. Why, our old tomcat shoved 's back up and tried to make 'isself look like a fuzzy-wuzzy, and my missis says, 'Bill, we'd better drink that drop o' beer yer got in lawst night, or it'll turn sour. Well, gov'nor, that's three year ago now, and I've never 'eard 'em play anythink different since. They say they play all sorts o' marches and 'ymns, but it allus sounds like one tune to me. P'r'aps I ain't got no ear for music.

"Well, they started the open-air spoutin', and begun to run the parson down like the Salvationers did, callin' 'im 'hidolaterous, Papist, erpostate, man o' Berliat,' and a lot more crackjaw words. And the parson took it all cool and comf'table, but 'e was a-weighin' it up for 'em, all the same. 'Owsomever, he never said a wrong word against either of 'em. 'E's a gentleman, is the parson.

"As I was a-sayin', the parson was a-weighin' up for 'em all the 'ard things they said about 'im; but, o' course, they didn't dream o' that. Yer see, the parson did it so cunnin'. 'E 'ad a bill printed, 'Parish Sports, to be 'eld for the benefit of the local charity. All are invited to lend a hand, whether belongin' to the Church or not. It is for a good cause.' Somethin' like that, it was, gov'nor; and the Weslins and the Salvationers took the bait like silly little fishes. The parson 'ired a field not far from 'ere, and made threepence the price of admission. The sports was 'eld on a Saturday arternoon, and the place was fairly crammed.

"We 'ad long and short distance runnin' matches, egg and spoon races, sack races, 'urdle jumpin', throwin' the cricket ball, puttin' the shot, pole-jumpin', boxin', and arter all these two special events to wind hup. I can see it all now, gov'nor, plain as daylight. The parson 'isself made the announcements. Says he: 'Now, ladies and gentlemen, the last event but one is for the lady Salvationers, and it is a greasy-pig-catchin' contest, the winner to receive a gold brooch.'

"Well, they brought the greasy little squeaker along, and put 'im in the centre of the Salvation gels, who 'ad their sleeves and skirts tucked up, and was waitin' for the word 'Go.' They was all country wenches, and we knowed 'em all by name. There was Captain Mary Jane, the gel wiv the Roman beak and the knifey eyes, what does all the spoutin', a-looking very stern; then there was Lieutenant Georgina, the gel what squints; Sister Sofia, what walks gammy; Sister 'Melia, what wears glasses; and Sister Sally, the one we call 'Topnote Sarah.' And the way they went for that piggie was enough to make yer laugh yer 'ead off. And the capers of that little pig! Fust 'e was 'ere, then he was there; got in a-tween their legs, tripped 'em up, and sent

'em sprawlin'; and, well—p'r'aps I oughtn't to say it, being a married man, but if they 'ave got ugly bonnets that don't prevent 'em 'avin' pretty ankles. Well, heverybody enjoyed the fun, 'specially the young blokes; and Captain Mary Jane won the brooch. Then the parson give out the last event.

"'This is for the members of the Weslin' Band,' says 'e; 'a 'undred yards race; each man to play 'is hinstremerment; the winner to receive an alerminium music-stand.'

"Them bandsmen got in a line and 'eld their hinstremerments ready for playin'. And wasn't they a job lot! All 'eights and sizes. The big drummer was a tall, thin chap; the clarinet and base players was stout, stumpy little blokes; and the trombone player 'ad a face as long as 'is hinstremerment. The cornet players was young, slim blokes, but the feller what played the piccerlo weighed about seventeen stone. Well, they got the word 'Go,' and the way they went was about the best sight I ever did see. There was the big drummer runnin' sideways and knockin' sparks out of 'is drum; the clarinet and the base players was waddlin' along like ducks; the trombone player was goin' at a 'oppin' run, wiv his slide goin' hin and hout like a steam engine; and the bloke what played the piccerlo was goin' like a fat old woman runnin' arter a boy what's been chuckin' stones at 'er winders. But the row! Brije me, there never was a row like it. The people nearly fell down laughing, and the big drummer won the stand.

"And, yer know, guv'ner, arter them sports, the Salvationers and Weslins kept quiet about the parson. They could see e'd made 'em look silly—the people about 'ere is allus chippin' 'em about it—and they're waitin' for it to wear off. There's no dust on the parson, I give yer my word."

JAMES H. WATERS.

Osiris and Christ.

It is not to be supposed that the worship of Isis and Osiris was entirely eradicated by the Christian religion. Many of the dogmas of the old solar and phallic cults were absorbed into Christianity. The sphinx still keeps guard over the ancient faith of the Pharaohs, buried though that faith be in a metamorphosed symbology. A celebrated French artist has depicted the Virgin and infant Jesus during the flight into Egypt, resting at the foot of the sphinx, while over them the eternal stars shine in the blue-black sky. The mysterious sphinx broods over the mother and child, veils them in its shadowy embrace, seeming to say to the Christ: "And thou too, and thy religion may pass away, but the wisdom of the ancient Initiates—never!"

If one of the priests of Isis or Osiris could return to life again, and visit a Roman Catholic cathedral on the Continent, he would see many things that would recall to his mind the mysterious religion of the ancient temples: the lights on the altar; the peculiar vestments of the clergy; the incense; the sacred image moving in procession "escorted by the tonsured surpliced train," which Juvenal satirised centuries ago; the worship accorded to Madonna and child, a paraphrase of that given to Isis and the infant Horus; the nimbus (a solar emblem) about the head of the pictured saint; the very orientation of the cathedral itself.

Speaking of this orientation, the astronomer Lockyer (*Dawn of Astronomy*, pp. 95-96) writes: "All our churches are more or less Oriental, which is a remnant of old sun-worship. Any church that is properly built to-day will have its axis pointing to the rising of the sun on the Saint's Day—i.e., a church dedicated to St. John ought not to be parallel to a church dedicated to St. Peter. It is true that there are sometimes local conditions which prevent this; but if the architect knows his business properly he is unhappy unless he can carry out this old-world tradition. But it may be suggested that in our churches the door is always to the west and the altar is always to the east. This is perfectly true, but it is a modern practice. Certainly in the early centuries the churches were all oriented to the sun, so that the light fell on the altar through the eastern doors at sunrise. The late Gilbert Scott, in his *Essay on Church Architecture*, gives a very detailed account of these early churches, which in this respect exactly resembled the Egyptian temples. In regard to old St. Peter's at Rome (*Builder*, January 2, 1892), we read that 'so exactly due east and west was the Basilica that, on the vernal equinox, the great doors of the porch of the quadri-porticus were thrown open at sunrise, and also the eastern doors of the church itself, and as the sun rose, its rays passed through the outer doors, then through the inner doors, and, penetrating straight through the nave, illuminated the High Altar.' The present church fulfils the same conditions."

In front of the eastern *façade* of St. Peter's at Rome, in

* See Inman's *Pagan and Christian Symbolism*, pp. 51-52, 76-77, 101-105.

the centre of the magnificent circular plaza, stands an Egyptian obelisk that once graced the portal of some old temple of Mizraim. It was set up by one of the Popes, as an historical curio and ornament. Singular coincidence!—obelisks are supposed to symbolise the sun's rays. At least they were frequently used as gnomons by the Egyptians. An obelisk in front of an oriented Christian church is after all not such an incongruous thing, but a reminder to the scholar that the ancient solar cult of Isis and Osiris still survives the shock of time, though its outward significance is lost.

—H. R. Evans, "Open Court" (Chicago).

The Phylogeny of the Maiden Aunt.

I HAVE often wondered how many Freethinkers carry their Freethought into other than philosophical and theological spheres. I have often been staggered by the reflection that I may be the only Freethinker upon the maiden aunt question; that I tower above my fellow-Freethinkers by applying their principles to the most baffling of human problems. Do the members of our party reject authority upon the mother-in-law question, or do they slavishly bow to the popular superstition?

For my part, I am a firm believer in the superiority of the maiden aunt over the mother-in-law in point of awfulness, and do not hesitate to say that the former has been excluded from her queendom through the vile intrigues of the comic papers, which have succeeded in imposing their theories upon an unobservant world. Is not the mother-in-law less black than she is painted? Has she not suffered in meek silence throughout the ages the "slings and arrows" of outrageous humorists? Every Freethinker should ask himself these questions, and come to a reasoned conclusion concerning them.

The most appalling thing about a maiden aunt is her inevitableness. A man may secure himself against the mother-in-law by the simple expedient of non-marriage, but no man by taking thought can secure himself against the maiden aunt. There is something peculiarly awe-inspiring in this reflection: to think, as you watch the little innocent in his cradle, that he is quite unconscious of his future fate. To my mind it is one of the strongest arguments against an over-ruling Providence. It is so terrible that legislative measures should be taken; an Act for the Compulsory Obliteration of Maiden Aunts would be of the utmost benefit to mankind.

Unfortunately, no descriptive portrait of the first maiden aunt has come down to us. We can but dimly imagine her as a creature of quintessential awfulness, for in those early days a woman must have been terrible indeed to forfeit the bliss of marriage. Much scientific acumen has been wasted over speculations regarding the first man; how much more interesting would it be to discover the attributes of the first maiden aunt! At one time I believed she fell from above, like Nokomis—

"Downward through the evening twilight,
In the days that are forgotten,
In the unremembered ages,
Fell the aunt with terror laden,
Fell the awful woman maiden.

This immature theory was dissipated by a "prayerful" consideration of Genesis i., verse 25: "And God made..... everything that creepeth upon the earth"; and I was forced to pay tribute to the enlightening power of the "Living Word." This passage throws a vivid ray of illumination upon the genesis of the maiden aunt; and a further consideration of the "Word of God" led me to the conclusion that she flourished largely up to the time of the Flood, for the early part of Gen. vi. says "the wickedness of man was great in the earth"—which points to the presence of the maiden aunt. This view receives confirmation from the fact that the maiden aunt would have a considerable time for the exercise of her deadly arts, seeing that she would attain maturity of acidulation at the age of, say, two hundred and fifty years, and would have about five hundred years to spread herself out in, which fact alone constitutes an explanation of the statement in Genesis. For a considerable time I held the theory that there were two maiden aunts in the ark, for Genesis vii. 2 states that Noah was commanded to take into the ark "of beasts that are not clean by two." I then attributed Noah's drunkenness, after coming out of the ark, to a natural desire to celebrate his escape from the company of the maiden aunts, for to be shut up in an ark with two maiden aunts for nearly a year must have been no joke.

This theory, although pleasantly titillative to the imagination, had to be uncompromisingly rejected owing to the clause, "the male and his female," following the quotation given above. There is a further fact which puts the matter beyond dispute, for in verse 21 it says: "And all flesh died

that moved upon the earth.....and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." This is decisive. No maiden aunt survived the Flood. Theories, with no other ground for belief than opportuneness, must be sternly rejected, and the problem must be studied with the gravity indispensable to its elucidation. Therefore, when we find these unclean beasts to be of opposite sexes, we must put the ark theory aside, although its rejection may cost us a pang.

We have, however, satisfactory evidence to show that the maiden aunt was not long absent from the earth, and was flourishing contemporaneously with the building of the Tower of Babel. The idea of building the Tower must have originated in the brain of a maiden aunt; at least, so it has always seemed to me, for there is something in the daring and sublimity of the idea characteristic of her. Although the conclusiveness of this proof may not be admitted by all, yet every unbiassed inquirer must acknowledge that maiden aunts must have assisted at the building of the Tower, for the "Inspired Word" speaks of a confusion of tongues—and where there was confusion of tongues there must have been maiden aunts. This I regard as unshakeable evidence of her existence at that time.

I think I have carried the subject sufficiently far to show that it is one which will abundantly repay scientific investigations, for all I have attempted to do is to lay down the lines upon which future inquiry must proceed. One solemn warning I should like to address to anyone desirous of studying the subject—that is, to bear in mind that all investigation is hopeless that fails to take into account the scientific character of the "Living Word."

LITCHWOOD.

Correspondence.

THE CONDESCENSION OF THE CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There are some very good people in Sheffield, and they are admirably catered for by the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, an ardent advocate of Toryism of a particularly "jingoistic" type, and well "in" with the "angels."

Here is a sample of the mental pabulum supplied by the journal in question.

Apropos of the recent Church Congress discussion anent science and religion, it says:—

"The Church is prepared to approach these dicta (of science) in the scientific spirit. She comes to them with an open mind (!) At present she says of many of them that they are not proven. She demands proof; but she is prepared to accept proof when it is forthcoming, and to modify her views of religious truth accordingly."

It would be difficult to conceive a more perfect example of what is vulgarly termed "cool check" than this effusion of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*.

Darwinism, for instance, and all that belongs to it, rest upon a structure of facts which took a large slice of a lifetime in their acquisition; the "proof" of the theory is overwhelming. Does the Church accept that proof? If so, by how much has her "view of religious truth" been modified? The Church does *not* fully accept the proof, she persists that Evolution is unproven.

If the evidence seems to her insufficient she has a perfect right to reject the theory erected upon it, but here she exhibits a gross inconsistency.

Science asks the Church for proof of what Huxley called her "more or less astonishing creeds," and the Church merely replies "have faith," or at most trots out the wondrously inadequate argument of "individual experience."

So this, according to the Sheffield oracle, is the position. The Church, forced by the logical battery of scientific discovery and argument to her last line of defence, assumes a pseudo-heroic front and cries for "proof." As if her own disorganised and shattered forces were not proof enough of the conquest by science!

J. B. WALLIS.

WHY FREETHOUGHT?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Is not the term "Freethinker" somewhat of a paradox? It is to be presumed that the Freethinker thinks freely, for the purpose of ultimately arriving at a fundamental basis of truth.

"No finality," is the accepted dogma in most realms of speculative thought, but upon hearing some of the gentlemen who speak in the Parks on behalf of the Freethought movement, there is immediately conveyed to the mind of the hearer, the fact that the "Freethinker" is in full possession of "final truth" upon the matter.

He is certain he is right. Why, then, the necessity for thinking any more about it—freely or otherwise? The dogmatism of such a position runs that of extreme orthodoxy very close. The term "Freethinkers," as applied to the pioneers of the movement, claiming as they did, the right to think freely outside the narrow tenets of a religious society, was undoubtedly correct, but the "Freethinker" has apparently discovered "final truth" since that time, so that the name to-day is a misnomer.

Having secured this priceless possession of "final truth," it may be asked, What great ideals has the "Freethinker" founded upon it? What has he done, and what is he doing, to make the whole of his fellow-men the better for it? He possesses that which, if they will accept it, will shatter the basis of the highest ideals and noblest aspirations of the majority of mankind. He is ready, and eager, to cut into shreds the last remnant of faith, which in all ages has been, for millions of people, the very fulcrum of existence.

What, then, is the *constructive* policy of modern "Freethought"? Is the position of the "Freethinker" to-day that of the "noble earl, who suggests no alternative policy"? If so, he may be invited to descend from his position on the "fence" and formulate one that will replace in the minds of the orthodox those ideals he is so anxious they should cast away.

Destructive criticism is of value only in the exact ratio by which it replaces with something higher and better that which it destroys.

What *positive* has the "Freethinker" with which to replace his *negative*? It must be a positive that will supply the necessity for that product of evolution, faith in a Supreme Power, and it must also be one from which will spring a higher basis of conduct and idealism than any yet revealed.

What evidence has "Freethought" to show that it possesses such a propaganda?

A MERE MAN IN THE STREET.

"There drifted in this office from the Episcopal See house across the street the other day," the New York *Truthseeker* says, "a rather common-looking individual with a black suit on and a collar opening at the back, who begged to be excused, but he was a Church of England clergyman, and would we tell him what kind of a place this is. We would. 'It is the office of the *Truthseeker*, a Freethought journal.' 'Ah!' he said, 'you Americans are a go-ahead sort. We have nothing like this in England. Is it Ingersoll's?' 'The Colonel is dead. It is not his place, but you have such a place in London. There was Bradlaugh and his *National Reformer*, and there is Foote and the *Freethinker*, and they correspond to this establishment pretty well.' 'Ah! but they were, and are, tuppence-ha'penny affairs of no account.' 'Well, there is the Rationalist Press Association, which has sold several hundred thousand Infidel publications in England in the past few months. That is no tuppence-ha'penny work.' 'Ah! I never heard of them. Do you have much of a following? Do you have worship on Sunday?' 'Our clubs are taking a vacation now, as the Church folks do in summer, but we shall soon have meetings.' 'Ah! then, you do not worship and have no deity?' 'We don't worship anything; least of all the ministers.' 'Ah! that shows you have never been in England, or you wouldn't use the word ministers. That indicates Baptists, and Methodists, and such. We do not recognise them.' 'Is that Christian charity, to refuse to recognise brethren?' 'Ah! we recognise them as good men, but they are not priests.' 'But the Church of England clergy are not priests, either.' 'Ah! that shows your bigotry; you are a pope; you pronounce an *ipse dixit* that they are not priests,' and we thought the reverend man would jump at us for presuming to deny the priesthood of the would-be priests, but he only started for the door. 'Have a paper to read?' 'Ah! if it won't shock me too much. But you go to extremes.' We earnestly assured him that it was our firm belief that he would still be alive after reading the *Truthseeker*, and he took it and passed out. We hope he will go and see Mr. Foote when he gets back to London, and tell him that the *Freethinker* is a tuppence ha'penny affair!"

TWO VIEWS OF THE BELLS.—A clergyman on his way to church one Sunday morning pulled up to rebuke an angler. "Don't you hear the bells summoning you to church?" he asked. The fisherman put an inquiring hand to his ear. Encouraged, the clergyman repeated the question. But once again the fisherman asked for a repetition, and then again, and even yet again. Flushing from overmuch bawling, the parson was about to proceed on his way when the fisherman spoke: "Very sorry, gov'nor," he said, "but them bloomin' bells make such a hades of clatter that I can't hear a word you says."—*London Globe*.

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, Conversazione.

FINSBURY PARK DEBATING SOCIETY (Hope Coffee Tavern, Finsbury-road, N.): 7, Debate, "Is Free Trade a Failure?" Open discussion.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, H. Snell, "The City as Church."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Dr. W. Sullivan, "Giordano Bruno."

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

WOOD GREEN ETHICAL SOCIETY (Fairfax Hall, Portland-gardens, Harringay): 7, Miss Zona Vallance, "Women and the Ethical Movement."

OUTDOOR

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Monday, November 2, at 7.30, Debate between Rev. John Tuckwell, of Westbourne Park, and James Rowney; subject, "The Sermon on the Mount."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): G. W. Foote, 3, "The Doom of Religion: with Reference to Robert Blatchford's *Clarion* Articles"; 7, "The Comedy of Passive Resistance." Organ Recital, at 6.15, by City Organist, Mr. C. W. Perkins.

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY (Temperance Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, Thomas Common, "The Rights and Wrongs of Secularism"

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane, Failsworth): Saturday, October 31, at 7, Grand Dramatic Entertainment, "The Foundling of the Forest"; Sunday, November 1, at 6, Quarterly Teachers' Meeting.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): John Lloyd, 12 noon, "Whence, Whither, and Wherefore?" 6.30, "Why I Have Renounced Supernatural Religion."

LEEDS (Covered Market, Vicar's Croft): 11, Ernest Paek, "The Police and Secularism."

LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor): Ernest Paek, 3, "Why we Defy the Police"; 6.30, "The Municipal Elections and the Duty of Secularists."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward, 3, "The Holy Inquisition"; 7, "King Edward VII. and his Ancestors."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, R. C. Phillips, "Credit in Commerce."

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

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