

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

He who believes that there is, or that there can be, any other religious duty than to increase the happiness of mankind, in this world, now and here, is superstitious.
—INGERSOLL.

Bible and Business.

It is a very unusual thing to find two articles on one subject in the same number of the *Freethinker*. The article which follows this one deals with Dr. Clifford's letter in the *Daily News* on "Bible or No Bible," but we conceive that there is something more to be said from a special point of view, and we would rather not let the opportunity slip by without saying it; nor do we think that the result will be anything like wearisome repetition.

Before saying what we wish to say about Dr. Clifford and the Bible, we will venture to say a few words about something that led up to it.

The Archbishop of Canterbury addressed a letter to "Dear Dr. Horton," the Hampstead preacher, who has not taken a conspicuous part in the Passive Resistance agitation. Probably this is the reason why he was singled out. The Archbishop proposed a Conference between the Anglican Church and the Free Churches on the Education difficulty. We dare say he feels that if the two principal divisions of Christianity in England go on fighting each other with the present bitterness, it will lead to nothing but a great gain to "infidelity." He proposed, therefore, a sort of truce, with a view to a treaty. And in doing so he laid down certain positions which Non-conformists could hardly refuse to occupy. For instance, he held that Christians did not desire to have the Bible read and explained like an ordinary book; and that if it were not used to teach the great Christian "verities" it had better not be read and explained at all. Dr. Horton took time to reply. He consulted the Free Church leaders, and the result was that he felt bound to stipulate two important preliminary conditions, without which the proposed Conference would be impossible. These conditions were:—

- (1) That all schools maintained by public money must be absolutely under public control.
- (2) That in all schools maintained by public money all teachers must be appointed by the public authority, without reference to denominational distinction.

Now we agree to this, if it be carried out logically. Teachers *should* be appointed without reference to denominational distinction; but it is easy to see that this can never be realised except under a system of Secular Education, for the simple reason that religion without denominationalism does not exist. Dr. Horton is not logical (or sincere) enough for us. On the other hand, he is ridiculously insolent to the Archbishop. What he actually proposes is the total destruction of the Voluntary School system as the price of a Conference between the rival Churches. He must be well aware that this is an impossible condition. The mere mention of it is perfectly farcical.

While the rival Churches stand apart in this spirit we feel that all is going well with the cause of Secular Education. When an honest man's property is in the hands of two big ruffians, who have

suborned the police, he has a poor prospect of recovering it; but if the two big ruffians quarrel with each other, his prospect undergoes a vast improvement. We are therefore able to watch these proceedings with a certain equanimity, and to derive a considerable measure of amusement from the utterances of these lusty disputants.

It amuses us, for instance, to hear Dr. Horton observing that nine-tenths of the population want Christian education for their children, and that "If we might take a plebiscite of the people I venture to think that the minority would be for the most part silent." He does indeed *venture* when he says this. We venture to say the opposite. And we fancy we have far more right to speak for the minority than he has.

What has Dr. Horton to say about the majority? Why, this. That they desire their children to "hold the faith and morals that Milton held," and that "in every school there should be the sense of God, the habit of prayer and praise, and the reading of the Book which is at once the supreme religious treasure of the world and the greatest masterpiece of English literature."

Now we are coming to business. But let us get in a word first about Milton. Are we to understand that Dr. Horton includes the sublime bard's Arianism in his "faith" and the principles of the Tractate on Divorce in his "morals"? We are not saying that we object to either, but we want to know where we are.

The road to "business" is now clear. Dr. Horton wishes to have Bible-reading in our public schools. But why does he speak of it as "literature"? Is not all that the veriest humbug? The Bible was not placed in the schools as literature, it is not kept there as literature, and when it is only regarded as literature it will cease to be an object of contention. It is not over "literature" that sects are formed, battles fought, and victories painfully decided. These are the "notes" of religion. Yes, it is not as a book of literature that these Christian ministers want to have the Bible in our public schools. They may say so till they are tired, but no sensible person will believe them. No, they want to have the Bible in the schools as a book of religion. Only in that sense is it of any value to them; only in that sense would they lift a finger to maintain it. It contains the oracles of their faith. It is the book by which they live.

Dr. Clifford knows this as well as Dr. Horton, but he will not avow the object for which he is fighting. He also prates about "the highest literature the world possesses"—and all the rest of the cant of his profession. But he has the weakness to refer to its "finer portions." Oh, then, there are *coarser* portions! Certainly there are. Freethinkers have said so for generations. There are things in the Bible that all parents should be ashamed to put (or see) in the hands of their children. The "highest literature in the world" sadly wants cleaning up.

Dr. Clifford writes for a wonderfully gullible public. "We say," he exclaims, "with the Society of Amalgamated Engineers, let us have secular education, including Bible instruction." Let us have round squares, tall dwarfs, little giants—and sensible preachers! Dr. Clifford must be moonstruck if he believes that Bible instruction is compatible

with secular education. And why does he make so much of the Amalgamated Engineers? Why not take the opinion of a wider industrial constituency? Has he forgotten the fact that the Trade Union Congress, only a few weeks ago, voted for pure Secular Education by a majority of 1,032,000 to 5,000?

We are much indebted to Dr. Clifford for letting the cat out of the bag. He says that if he only gets "Bible instruction" in public schools he is quite willing to "leave to the Home and the Churches the whole task of imparting to the children the elements of the Christian faith." Precisely so. Dr. Clifford is not like those publicans, the Churchmen; he does not even ask for "prayer and praise," like Dr. Horton; all he requests is the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. Modest man! But the Bible does the trick. Once get the children to read that book as the fountain of "faith and morals," and you make them raw-material Christians; and the Free Churches can then join with the Anglican and Catholic Churches in the competition for manufacturing the raw material into the finished (denominational) article. This is the Nonconformist line of business at the present moment; they have the trade sagacity to see it is the only one open to them, and they pursue it for all it is worth.

Having a few lines to spare, we "venture" to ask Dr. Clifford a serious question. When he speaks of "the Bible," what Bible does he mean? The Jews have one Bible, the Protestants another, and the Catholics another. An Irishman might say "the Freethinkers have no Bible, and that makes four." Anyhow, there are different Bibles; and we wish Dr. Clifford would tell us which he chooses, why he chooses it, and why he thinks that *his* Bible is the proper Bible for everybody else. We repeat that this is a serious question, and we beg Dr. Clifford to give it an honest answer.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Three "C's" and Education.

THE two first "C's" stand for Clifford and Campbell, the third for Cant; and they are simply inseparable so long as the subject is the Education Act. Mr. Campbell addressed a special meeting on the subject of Passive Resistance on the 29th of October, and on November 5 Dr. Clifford had another long letter in the *Daily News* on "Bible or no Bible" in the schools. Neither had anything new to say; both assumed the familiar "we-are-the-salt-of-the-earth and champions-of-mental-freedom" air that is so familiar, and so amusing to all whose sense of humor is keen enough to appreciate the situation. For the situation has a certain broad humor of its own. To see men striving to tax Jews and Freethinkers for the teaching of Christianity, in the name of religious liberty; to hear them denouncing the State support of religion, while taking thousands of pounds annually towards the upkeep of their own chapels—cannot be mere failure of such men as Clifford and Campbell to apply certain plain principles; it *must* be their way of joking. A clumsy, elephantine kind of a joke, but a joke all the same.

Mr. Campbell plaintively complains that the bishops hardly "take our opposition seriously." Can he reasonably expect them to? In the first place, they are in the same business; and professions that impose upon the outsider can hardly be expected to influence a professional. If Mr. Campbell will recollect, the jugglery of Moses astonished everybody in the palace of Pharaoh—except the court conjurers. They were in the same trade, and knew the tricks. And Moses might with as much reason have complained that these men did not take *his* performance seriously. Had he done so, they would probably have given him a quiet wink, and inquired what on earth he expected. That tricksters should impose upon the public is natural enough, but that

they should impose upon each other is to assume that one is much the superior of the other, and I should hesitate at branding the bishops or Mr. Campbell with the mark of inferiority. The bishops and the Dissenters are both fighting to get a form of religion in which they believe taught at the public expense, and to exclude other forms. Of course, they don't *say* that this is their object. But Mr. Campbell knows the real aim of his own party, and says, rightly, that this is also the aim of the bishops. The bishops in turn know what they are after, and they say, also rightly, that this is likewise the aim of the Dissenters. Now how, under these conditions, can Mr. Campbell expect the bishops to take him seriously? The thing is absurd.

In quite childlike innocence Mr. Campbell repeats the protest that it is "no part of the business of the State to teach denominationalism," and virtuously asserts: "We would not ask for ourselves from the State anything that is denied to members of any other denomination than ourselves. We do not ask for State pay for the teaching of our principles; more than that, we would refuse State pay if it were offered." Well, now, here is offered a capital illustration of the last of the three "C's." In England there are many forms of Christian organisation, and there are many others that are religious without being Christian, and still others that are not religious at all. And I hardly care to think that Mr. Campbell is so very stupid as not to be able to see that, in relation to these other bodies, Christianity is as much a denomination as is Congregationalism or Episcopalianism. And, therefore, when he advocates a Christian religious instruction by the State, he is advocating that the State shall teach denominationalism; and that all the non-Christian bodies shall be made to pay for it.

There is, however, a saving clause. As a Free Churchman, Mr. Campbell does not ask for himself anything he is not willing to give to others. Dr. Clifford says the same. And both of these gentlemen ask for Bible instruction in schools. But then there is the Mohammedan with his Koran, there is the Parsee with his Zend-Avesta, and there is the Freethinker, say, with Paine's *Age of Reason* or Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*. Does Mr. Campbell and Dr. Clifford mean that they are willing that the Koran, the Zend-Avesta, the *Age of Reason*, or the *Riddle of the Universe* should be expounded in schools by State-paid teachers? The idea is absurd. If it were seriously proposed, both of them would go off in a perfect paroxysm of indignation. What they really mean is, they are willing that all *Christians* should be treated alike. Only the Nonconformist Conscience kicks at perfect honesty, even on so simple a point as this. Besides, the outsiders are unbelievers, and although Mr. Campbell does not believe in eternal damnation, he is still orthodox to say that they may be damned.

Mr. Campbell also says: "We do not ask for State pay.....more than that, we would refuse State pay if it were offered." If this means that Mr. Campbell does not ask for direct payment of salary from the State, it may pass. But the distinction is not worth much. For, as a matter of fact, Mr. Campbell's Tabernacle does receive every year from the State considerably over one thousand pounds in hard cash; and, being only a Freethinker, lacking, as Mr. Campbell would explain, a "spiritual faculty," I am really unable to detect any vital difference between a salary, part of which is paid direct by the State, and a salary, part of which comes from remission of rates that other people have got to make good. And, really, Mr. Campbell ought not to be surprised if the dignitaries of the Church of England fail to take seriously a man who cries out that he does not want, and will not take, public money, and who is, at the same time, quietly pocketing, from this source, some twenty-four pounds per week.

Mr. Balfour, it will be remembered, pointed this out, as Freethinkers have done for a long time past. Freethinkers could be ignored; but Mr. Balfour called for some reply, and not being such an adept at

running away from an awkward question as is Dr. Clifford, Mr. Campbell—replied. He said: "When you put St. Paul's on the rates, I am quite willing that the City Temple should be placed upon the rates." No doubt this was considered very telling; but as Mr. Campbell says that it is an act of robbery against the people of England for the State to subsidise religion, to a Freethinker the reply sounds much like "You're a thief, but until you turn honest I'll be a thief also." Mr. Balfour may not be a brilliant statesman, but his sense of humor will no doubt enable him to have a good laugh at the cant of the City Temple preacher after reading this "reply." I have heard City swindling defended on the grounds that if A was not swindled by B he would be by C, but I must confess I never expected to hear this preached at the City Temple as Nonconformist morality.

The Compromise of 1870 cropped up in Mr. Campbell's sermon, and Dr. Clifford's letter dealt largely with the same. The former says that to the Compromise "We somewhat unwillingly submitted in the hope of a better day." We presume this has reference to the fact that Nonconformists were at first willing to support secular education, but sold themselves when the Compromise was suggested. Mr. Campbell would now wish us to believe that this was only *submitted* to in the hope of one day getting religion quite divorced from the State. Well, perhaps Mr. Campbell can tell us what help the cause of secular education has received from dissenters during the past thirty years? To the best of my recollection and reading, not any. And as Mr. Campbell goes on to "hope" that there may come in a system of education which shall "retain the Bible in the schools," one is rather doubtful whether cant is not really a too mild term to apply to such an utterance.

Dr. Clifford in dealing with the same point writes much about the "will of the English people." Parliament, he reminds us, did not say that the Bible *should* be used by the schools, it left this to the discretion of each locality, only stipulating that if it were used it must be with certain limitations. And he goes on to say that while, if the State is to do justice to all, "it must allow the use of the Bible under the restrictions now in operation.....I would not impose my will on another, and, therefore, I would leave the question as to the use of the Biblepurely optional to the ratepayers through the education authority."

This certainly has a liberal sound, but apart from the sound the cant of it is two-fold. In the first place Dr. Clifford is willing to leave the question to be decided, so far as the use of the Bible is concerned, to each district for the obvious reason that, as the majority of people profess Christianity, a vote in favor of the use of the Bible is a practical certainty. The reference to the constituencies is, therefore, a sham of the most outrageous kind. Dr. Clifford knows which way the referee will decide, and so he says let us submit the case to him.

And, secondly, Dr. Clifford has been declaring all along that the question is one with which a majority has nothing to do. A majority in Parliament has declared in favor of the New Education Act. Dr. Clifford shrieks that this is an immoral vote, that Parliament has no right to vote upon the matter at all. It is outside its province. Suppose the people *outside* were to endorse the action of the government? Would Dr. Clifford then believe the act to be a righteous one, and would he then advise the Passive Resisters to submit? He would do no such thing. He would simply say that people were framing laws on subjects that should be left absolutely to individual judgment. Well and good, but if the majority has the right to decide whether the Bible shall be read in schools or not, what principle is there to prevent them deciding the form that this religious instruction shall take? It is really too absurd to say you will bow to the will of the people—provided they do as you wish them to. And Dr. Clifford *must* see this. It is *too* ridiculous to go on arguing against

men in his position as though they were complete and incurable idiots unable to see that twice two make four. They must see that retaining the Bible in the schools, claiming exemption from general rates, etc., is in flagrant contradiction to the principles they profess. For my own part I believe they *do* see it, and have no hesitation in saying that their speeches and actions are nothing better than exhibitions of the rankest hypocrisy.

Consistent opinion, a line of action based upon principle, commands respect even while it calls forth dissent. The Churchman who believes the State should support religion is upholding a principle; and his acceptance of help is only its legitimate result. The man who says the State should not interfere in matters of religion is also upholding a principle, and one that Freethinkers are pledged to. But when the man, who professes the second of these two principles, takes eagerly all the financial help the State is willing to give him, and takes it in a doubly-dishonest manner by using for Secular purposes buildings that are exempt from taxation on the express understanding that they are not so used; when the man who protests against a religious rate levied for the benefit of his rivals, is himself foremost in levying a similar rate for the benefit of himself; when the man who asserts his belief in the severance of the State from religion in the case of adults, supports their connection in the case of childrer; when we find a man acting in this manner, to still profess a faith in his intellectual integrity is to descend to his own level of mental and moral turpitude.

C. COHEN.

Is Atheism Doomed by Science?

"Its [Christianity's] gains from among educated Brahmans, Buddhists, and Mohammedans are few and slight; its losses from among the scientists and thinkers of Europe are many and serious. It is a far more urgent problem at present how to keep the leaders of thought in Germany, France, and Britain Christian than how to make those of Turkey, India, and China Christians, for we are certainly much more rapidly losing the former than gaining the latter."—PROFESSOR FLINT, *Address to Divinity Students in Edinburgh University, 1887.*

"The world offers just now the spectacle, humiliating to us in many ways, of millions of people clinging to their old idolatrous religions, and refusing to change them even for a higher form; whilst in Christian Europe thousands of the most cultivated class are beginning to consider atheism a permissible, or even a desirable, thing."—ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, *Address, Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, 1868.*

"Never since the first ages of the Gospel was fundamental Christian truth denied and denounced so largely, and with such passionate animosity, as is the case at this moment in each of the most civilised nations of Europe."—CANON LIDDON, *The Divinity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, p. 498.

THE Bishop of Liverpool has made an important discovery. Preaching to the members of the British Association at St. Andrew's Church, Southport, he told his congregation that—

"The modern study of nature had helped them to realise the present activity of God. It had brought home to them the immanence of the Creator in His creation. Nor was this all; it had shown that atheism was unscientific. It had been pointed out as a remarkable fact that, after trailing its black length for centuries across Europe, atheism had had its doom pronounced by science; and lately there had not been wanting voices which had affirmed that, for some far-reaching eyes at least, nature was beginning to show traces of a personal Creator" (*The Times*, September 14, 1903).

However, let us take heart; Atheism has been declared dead so often, only to rise again upon the third day, that it is a wonder that the theologians have never used it as an argument for the resurrection.

It is a pity that the worthy Bishop spoke from a pulpit, as no doubt many of his congregation would have been glad to have satisfied an eager curiosity as to these new scientific facts, which the Bishop is keeping exclusively for his own consumption.

For instance, it is quite a revelation to hear that Atheism has trailed "its black length for centuries

across Europe." We always understood that philosophic Atheism first arose among the Indians and Greeks along with the birth of science and philosophy, and that the triumph of Christianity overwhelmed them in a common grave, where they lay buried for more than a thousand years, until the revival of science in Europe again made it possible to formulate an Atheistic theory of the universe.

If the Bishop had said "There had never been wanting voices which had affirmed that nature showed traces of a personal Creator, but that science had shown that natural laws eliminated the idea of a supernatural cause of the universe, and that, after trailing its black length for centuries across Europe, Christianity had had its doom pronounced by science," the statement would have been more in accordance with the truth. As a matter of fact, it was not until just before the French Revolution that it became possible to publish an Atheistic work. D'Holbach, with the help of Diderot, was the first to reduce Atheism to a system, in his *System of Nature*, which, for safety, he attributed to Mirabaud, who had been dead ten years. His work on *The Natural History of Superstition* was condemned to be burnt by a decree of the French Parliament in 1770, and no doubt they would have had much pleasure in burning the author along with his book if he had put his name to the work; even then his books had to be printed secretly at Amsterdam.

Even during the French Revolution—which pious fancy has painted as an orgie of Atheistic bloodshed—it was not safe to profess Atheism; the Revolution was a thoroughly Deistic movement. "The Committee of Public Safety," says John Morley, "despatched Hébert, and better men than Hébert, to the guillotine for being Atheists. Atheism, as Robespierre assured them, was aristocratic."* Chaumette was accused by Robespierre of conspiring with Cloutz "to efface all idea of the Deity." Saint Just, "the destroying angel," cried: "They attack the immortality of the soul, the thought which consoled Socrates in his dying moments; and their dream is to raise Atheism into a worship."† We have heard much of the bloodthirstiness of Marat, but few people seem to be aware that he "respected himself as the instrument of God," had written a work in defence of the immortality of the soul, kept the Gospel constantly open on his table, and, when this was noticed, he declared: "The Revolution is in the Gospel.....Jesus Christ," continued he, bowing reverently when he uttered the name, "Jesus Christ is our Master."‡

In fact, it was not until 1841 that downright Atheism, in the modern sense, was openly advanced, under his proper name by Feuerbach in his *Essence of Christianity*, followed in 1855 by Buchner's *Force and Matter* §. From that time, say fifty years ago, until the present, notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the churches, Atheism has increased by leaps and bounds. Even so early as 1863, the historian Froude remarked that, "The uncertainty which once affected only the more instructed, extends now to all classes of society.....On the Continent the peculiar English view has scarcely a single educated defender. Even in England the laity keep their judgment in suspense or remain warily silent." And later on, "Society in its actual life, has long been atheistic. The speculative creed begins to show a tendency to follow in the track of practice." || So much for the Bishop's centuries of Atheism.

We append a few statements as to the progress of Atheism, not culled from professors of Atheism, but from earnest Christians, who lament the facts, while they cannot disguise them:—

"Although I fear that theologians are not aware of the fact, yet probably the doctrines of Materialism are more widely embraced at this day than almost any other

religious error" (*The Religion of Geology*, p. 11, by Edward Hitchcock, professor of Natural Theology and Geology).

"But, oh, the power of this material philosophy in the present age! The amazing progress of the sciences of matter, the absorption of the energies of the best and most progressive minds in the philosophy founded on sense and sensuous experience, have created a current of thought, a tide of philosophy, which sweeps us along with such breathless speed that we have no time to think of the claims of spirit. The mind of the age is absorbed in new and startling discoveries in science. Everything must be expressed in terms of matter and sense, in the formulæ of a material philosophy. But, alas, spirit eludes sense, and immortality transcends experience. Therefore, this philosophy will none of it, cannot believe in it.

"See, then, how swiftly the current sweeps us away toward the dark gulf of Materialism, and with it carries away all our hopes, our aspirations, and all that ennobles humanity (*Religion and Science*, pp. 251-4, by Joseph Le Conte, professor of Geology and Natural History).

"Even in our religious England.....The unbelief of large numbers is scarcely veiled by the thin disguise of courteous silence.....the younger men of the clubs, and much more the men of culture and science, in growing numbers, reject the Gospel as an oppressive delusion."

"On the continent, Atheism stark and sturdy, has of late years made astonishing advances among men of scientific culture.....When such is the style of thought among men of education; when numbers are protected against similar views only by their incapacity to understand the atheism of their betters; it is scarcely to be wondered at that many of the working classes, always more resolute in opinion than the money-making bourgeoisie, should imitate the atheology of the scientific luminaries whom they admire without entirely understanding" (Edward White, *Life in Christ*, pp. 523-4).

This brings us down to 1878, the date of the last cited work. In 1886 Mr. Cotter Morison published his brilliant work, *The Service of Man*, in which he testifies, that:—

"No more surprising change of fundamental conceptions will be recorded by the future historians of philosophy, than that which has supervened in the last twenty-five or thirty years in reference to the idea of God. The wittiest scoffer who ever attacked Christianity, Voltaire, was a firm deist, and declared that if God did not exist he would have to be invented. The extreme school of Diderot and D'Holbach, even in the sceptical eighteenth century, failed of a wide acceptance. Now the conception of God is freely treated by many of the leaders of philosophical and scientific opinion as a transitory phase of thought which the growth of knowledge has finally terminated. The natural history and evolution of the idea of God is traced in calm outline from its cradle to its grave" (p. 32).

Since 1886 there have been many attempts to evangelise the people. Missions have been held all over the country; millions of bibles and tons of tracts and Christian Evidence literature have been distributed, the Salvation Army has collected enormous sums. The Wesleyans alone have collected a million pounds since the year 1900; but, notwithstanding all this lavish squandering of money, time and energy, the tale is still the same. Professor Banks, in his speech to the Wesleyan Conference at Plymouth in 1895, said, "He believed we underrated the force of scepticism which was spreading over all classes of society. Going up and down the Leeds district he was constantly meeting the sons and daughters of their own people who had given up all profession of religion, and who disclaimed any desire to worship, and said that they could do without the life of the church altogether."

The Rev. B. L. Ottley, at the 1892 Church Congress, after citing from Mr. Lilly's book, *Right and Wrong*, the fact that "The higher thought of Europe as a whole.....is largely given over to Materialism," tells his audience that: "The real tendency of naturalism has hitherto been visible more clearly in France than in England. But in modern Europe generally it may be said that Christianity is now confronting a view of man which represents him as virtually the product of the natural forces amid which he moves like a machine, determined

* Diderot and the Encyclopedists, p. 349.

† Morley's Rousseau, p. 345.

‡ Lamartine, *History of the Girondists*, vol. ii., p. 444.

§ Even then, both Feuerbach and Buchner were dismissed from their professorships for advocating Atheism.

|| *Short Studies*, vol. i., p. 204; vol. ii., p. 137.

from without, not from within."* And this state of things exists, not only among the higher classes, but we have the testimony of Dean Farrar to the fact that, "the writings of Freethinkers are widely disseminated among the working classes. The Church of Christ has lost its hold on multitudes of men in our great cities. Those of the clergy who work in the crowded centres of English life can hardly be unaware of the extent to which scepticism exists among our artisans."†

And if this is the state of religion in England, what of the continent? In Germany, the home of Protestantism, we have it upon the authority of Herr Stocker, the most famous living clergyman in the Evangelical Church, that: "Adherence to-day to Social Democracy means alienation from faith in God and eternity. In workmen's circles, and where the red flag flutters, the work of the Church is manifestly impossible. From the commencement Social Democracy has proclaimed war on Christendom and the Church. The Socialists hold the Church as the obstacle to their designs, and their aim may be summed up in the words, *Ecrasez l'infame.*"‡ Of the programme of the Progressives or Radicals, he says: "Hatred hostility to the Church is almost a part." Mr. Heath, who cites this unwilling testimony, in an interesting article in the *Contemporary Review*, Oct, 1898, also draws attention to the book of Pastor Göhre, entitled, *Three Months in a Workshop*, and tells us that:—

"The impression Pastor Göhre gives of the result of his experience as a factory hand at Chemnitz, in Saxony, is that the great mass of working men and women have so entirely severed themselves from the Evangelical Lutheran Church that they no longer trouble themselves at all about it, regarding both it and the clergy with indifference and contempt. Some one more than usually just, he says, will admit that there are men both good and clever among its clergy, but even he will add, "They get a living out of Christianity, and not a bad one either."

"According to Herr Göhre, the working men at Chemnitz are ardent students of natural science, their teachers being pure Materialists, who labor with much earnestness to instruct their disciples in a new conception of life, from which all supernatural ideas are eliminated, and which is wholly occupied with things secular."

In Berlin it is the same tale. Mr. Heath tells us that there are "three times as many meeting-places as there are churches, and while the latter are empty the former are crowded with audiences ranging from 300 to 1,000 men and women"; and cites the testimony of Mr. Dawson, who, in his book on *Germany and the Germans*, declares that, "taking Berlin as a whole, every service, as far as space is concerned, might be attended by tens of thousands of additional worshippers."

In France they have heard nothing of the Doom of Atheism. Mr. Vizetelly, in his Introduction to Zola's *Paris*, states that "never were there fewer religious marriages, fewer baptisms, or smaller congregations in the French churches. I refer not merely to Paris and other large cities, but to the smaller towns, and even the little hamlets of many parts. Old village priests—men practising what they teach, and possessed of the most loving, benevolent hearts—have told me, with tears in their eyes, of the growing infidelity of their parishioners. I have been studying this matter for some years, and I write without prejudice, merely setting down what I believe to be the truth.....and in my own opinion, as in M. Zola's, France as a whole is lost to the Christian religion" (pp. viii.-ix.; 1898).

Yes, Science has pronounced the doom of Christianity; it is perishing in the highest centres of civilisation; it is fast losing its hold on England, France, and Germany, the leading nations of to-day.

The priests of the evil faith may shout "Great is Christ," but their cries fall upon dull ears. The burning and far-shining rays of the rising sun of

science are dispelling the mists of this gloomy and hateful superstition. Christ has had his day. "O fools," says Swinburne, in his glorious *Hymn to Man*, "he was God, and is dead."

He will hear not again the strong crying of earth in his ears as before,
And the fume of his multitudes dying shall flatter his nostrils no more;
By the spirit he ruled as his slave is he slain who was mighty to slay,
And the stone that is sealed on his grave he shall rise not and roll not away.

W. MANN.

A Mummy Book; or, the Embalmed Bible

A GREATER contrast ne'er can meet our mental view
Than that between a tale when false and same when true;
A tale denied is not the same as same believed;
A tale is something told, *plus* how it is received.

A book that's held to be inspired is not the same
As one the same, but not so held,—whate'er its name.
A "sacred" book becomes whate'er its readers think;
Their nescience makes it swell; their science makes it shrink.

'Tis said, in spite of all that thoughtful people say,
That "God's Old Book" remains the same old book to-day;
That vain have been the means which Critics have employed,
Because, despite their work, the Book is not destroyed.

O fools! No more into your fathers' Book are read
Your fathers' thoughts; and, so, their Book, with them, is dead.

You read the same old book of paper marked with ink,
But try to think it means the thoughts you wish to think.

Though still the printer prints, and still the binder binds,
The "Holy Bible's" worth depends upon our minds.
The Book, to be destroyed, need not be torn, nor grilled;
By change of "point of view," a "sacred" book is killed.

Your fathers gulped, with gust, the Book into their hearts;
To you, 'tis like the curate's egg—not bad, "in parts";
Your fathers thought the Book was true in ev'ry word;
But *you* believe the bits that seem the least absurd.

Resultants change when factors change; and books, we know,
Resultants are of writers and their readers; so,

The Jewish Book has changed, as thoughtful thinkers find;
The altered factor is the reader's quickened mind.

The Book your fathers read was *all* divine, they said;
To-day, no "book divine" exists; so, theirs is dead.
A book with which our thoughts no longer coalesce
Is dead as sherbet which has ceased to effervesce.

Although a "human" book in which a flaw is found
May be, despite the flaw, reliable and sound,
A Book that claims to be inspired by God-blown breath
Is *damned throughout* by one small flaw, and dies the death.

Your fathers' "Book of God," to-day, is "Book of Man";
But none can equal God, not ev'n the Kaiser can;
And, so, the God-man ratio the measure is
Of *your* book's difference from the Book your sires called *His*.

Your Holy Bible says, the earth is flat and fixed;
Your Godly fathers said, their Book was Truth unmixed;
But, earth is round, not flat; the Book is false, not true;
When God's flat earth you find, you'll find His Bible too.
In proving God's flat earth, we find that earth is round;
In proving "Book Divine," a human book is found.

Since back to God, you say, causation must be traced,
Responsibility on Him must all be placed;
And, so, the errors of His Holy Book are His;
But, error in a God, a contradiction is;
Yet, cause of *all* is cause of tittle and of jot;
If not, then God is not, and, so, God's Book is not.

A mummied Pharaoh's still the Pharaoh Egypt feared,
If still your gutted book's the Book your sires revered.
Your "Word of God" exists no more—if e'er it did;
'Tis now as dead as nail of door or coffin-lid.

As "Book of Man" 'tis prized, as "Book of God" 'tis trash;
Yet parsons boom the trash for power, rank, and cash.
Begone! fare-ill! man-speed! priest, parson, cheek, and spook!

A-dieu! Deceit! God's Book is dead! Long live the *Book!*

G. L. MACKENZIE.

* The Times, Oct. 6, 1892.

† The Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy, p. 2, 1897.

‡ "Crush the infamous," Voltaire's oft-repeated cry.

Acid Drops.

Amongst the Passive Resisters' effects sold at Willesden-green were four volumes of the Life of Spurgeon and three Bibles. There must have been a great dearth of furniture in the houses these books were taken from. Second-hand Bibles are very unsaleable. Even the pawnbrokers, we believe, refuse to look at them now.

After the sale of these books, which were probably bought by the owners, the Passive Resisters held an open-air meeting, at which Dr. Clifford was the chief speaker. This solemn leader of a comical cause was wroth with Mr. Winston Churchill for calling Passive Resistance a "pantomimic martyrdom." It was nothing of the kind, he said but "a tragedy, and a great tragedy." We suppose it is a theme for one of our strongest dramatists. The fifth act would take place in an auction room; the bold bad auctioneer would sell the victims' odd lots; and a Passive Resistance leader, made up like Dr. Clifford—beard, mouth, and all—would weep over their sufferings, while beckoning in the angels of retribution, at whose sight the wretched auctioneer would howl in vain for mercy. Yes, it is a remarkably promising subject; and we congratulate Dr. Clifford on discovering this "great tragedy."

Dr. Clifford warned his Willesden-green hearers "not to accept a compromise, which would only result in handing on the fight to future generations." By "compromise" he means an understanding with the Church of England. This time the Dissenters are to have it all their own way—if they can get it. Dr. Clifford never betrays any recognition of the fact that the population of this country is not exclusively composed of Anglicans and Nonconformists. He talks as though Christian and citizen were convertible terms. And this in the face of the *Daily News* religious census!

Dr. Macnamara, M.P., is the representative of the National Union of Teachers in the House of Commons. He is also editor of the *Schoolmaster*, a journal devoted to the interests of teachers, and in a minor sense to education. His opinion, therefore, on education, if not intrinsically valuable, is at least worth notice. In the issue of his journal for Nov. 7 there is an article, presumably by the editor, dealing with denominationalism and education. In the course of this article he expresses a belief that if the quarrel between church and chapel continues a party will arise that will demand the exclusion of all religion from the public schools. This is not a very brilliant discovery at this time of day, but Dr. Macnamara goes on to say that for himself he should "deeply deplore to be driven to this settlement of despair." For this he gives what he calls two reasons. One is that it would exclude religion from the early training of children; which is not a reason at all, but simply a restatement of the excluding of religion from public schools. The one reason given—and even this has the air of a pious platitude, is that "it would deprive the public school teacher of by far the most potent instrument which he now possesses for the incubation of morality and for the development of men and women inspired to live a goodly, righteous, and sober life."

One is quite used to this kind of talk from the pulpit, and one expects it. But to find a man who poses as an educationalist raising the same prejudice is apt to give one pause. We wonder whether Dr. Macnamara seriously means either that the majority of teachers regard religious instruction in this light, or that their opinion is sound even if they do so regard it? We have no hesitation in saying that the majority of school teachers, if they could, would drop religious instruction altogether; and on this matter either we are better informed as to the opinions of teachers than is Dr. Macnamara, or he is not writing in accordance with his knowledge. We speak plainly because we feel strongly. It is simply monstrous that an ex-teacher, one who has had practical experience, can speak of the religious instruction given in schools at the beginning and fag end of school time, and even then given in a perfunctory manner, as the most potent instrument for turning out righteous and sober men and women. We should much like Dr. Macnamara to say in what way religious instruction so operates. Our columns are quite open to him on that point. Such an expression must be, not an expression of sober judgment, but that of a bigoted religionist, or a politician with an eye to the Nonconformist vote at the next General Election. Verily, the Nonconformist Conscience is like pitch—one cannot touch it and remain undefiled.

The Secretary of the National Society writes to the *Church Times* rejoicing that even though a fresh House of Commons

should decide on altering the Education Act, the Church still has left the Upper House, and "above that there is the hand of God." It is noticeable that the House of Lords comes first. And we think the Church would much rather feel it had the support of the House of Lords than be compelled to trust to the hand of God alone.

Sir Edward Clarke, as a lawyer, takes anybody's money and does anybody's work. We do not complain of that. It is the rule of his profession. But he might try to draw the line somewhere in cross-examination; or judges—and, if not judges, then juries—might try to draw it for him. One question he put to Mr. J. M. Robertson, in that gentleman's ill-advised libel action, was this: "In the Bedborough arrest were some of your books seized?" Now in putting this question Sir Edward Clarke could only have meant to insinuate that Mr. Robertson's books that happened to be in Mr. Bedborough's possession were obscene, indecent, or at least "questionable." He should have known, however, and probably did know, that they were nothing of the kind. Mr. Bedborough happened to have some copies of *The Saxon and the Celt* and *Montaigne and Shakespeare*. It would be absurd to suppose that Sir Edward Clarke perceived anything "improper" in such works; unless, indeed, he is like a man with a diseased nose who smells feculence everywhere.

Mr. Justice Grantham acted, in the trial of the Robertson action, as all who knew him would have expected. If the published reports are accurate he made a shocking display of bigotry. For instance, he quoted a passage from an article in the old *Free Review* by a lady contributor, which expressed the view that marriage carried to the bitter end when love had ceased was a ghastly mockery. Now we are not going to discuss that opinion. To do so is not necessary. We merely say that there is nothing indecent or "unmentionable" about it. Moreover, it happens to be the very view which John Milton pleaded with such passionate eloquence. Query: would Mr. Justice Grantham dare to insult John Milton as he presumed to insult John Robertson?

After listening to Mr. Justice Grantham's super-virtuous indignation at the outspoken utterances of an honest critic on topics of vast importance, there is cynical amusement in hearing Bishop Thornton, of Burnley, declare that more than half the parish livings of the Church of England are private purchasable freeholds, and that 120 of them have of late years been purchased for party purposes in the Church. What kind of morality is it that allows this sort of traffic to go on while honest thinkers are insulted by judges in our public courts?

In the *Freethinker* of November 1 we criticised some dream-stories about Miss Hickman that appeared in the *Daily News*. One of them emanated from a lady, and we criticised it firmly, though without a single offensive word. Imagine our astonishment, then, at receiving the following ladylike protest:—

SIR,—“Helene Gingold, whoever she is” that you so coarsely and vulgarly allude to in your journal is a woman and a worker, and being such should have been vouchsafed that courtesy which is ever extended to the more sensitive sex even by costermongers. The “Dear *Daily News*” is evidently conducted by a gentleman. I can quite understand that a mannerless “Yahoo” cannot comprehend the species. This “rowdy” journalism is a disgrace to the great English press. If you possess such a book as *Who's Who?* and care to look for the name of “Cowen,” you will find I take a place amongst the earth's workers. I claim no higher and better honor.
Yours, etc.,

HELENE GINGOLD.

Our indignant correspondent is in such a temper that she cannot quote us accurately. We did not say “Helene Gringold, whoever she is.” We said “Helene Gingold, whoever the lady is.” Does she want to be called something better than “a lady”? Or are we to beg her pardon for not knowing that she is one of the 15,000 persons in *Who's Who?* That seems the trouble.

Apropos of the Bradlaugh yarn in our last issue regarding his alleged discomfiture on having to answer the question, “Have you given up beating your wife?” a correspondent informs us that he heard the immortal C. B. (not the wobbling Scotch M.P. who also claims these initials) put a similar question, at Edinburgh in 1887, to a noisy opponent who would have nothing but “yes” or “no” in reply to a question. “If you can answer every question in this short way,” said Bradlaugh, “may I ask if you are as great a fool as you look?” This was a poser from which there was no escape, and the gent. immediately subsided.

In France, perhaps more than elsewhere, the "Jour des Morts" was this year observed, as in other years, by a constant stream of bereaved relatives and friends to the cemeteries. In Paris alone more than half a million people are said to have thus honored the day. In all the great city, perhaps, only one burial-place was left solitary and unvisited. In the Rue de Flandre there is what might best be described as a great sombre courtyard, buried between the high, windowless walls of tall houses that turn, almost ostentatiously, their backs upon it. Nothing grows there but weeds or the rare leaves on some half-withered trees, beneath which, level with the soil, are twenty-nine forgotten tombs. The inscriptions upon them, where the invading moss has not rendered them illegible, show that the least ancient dates from more than a century ago. This ill-omened resting-place, suggestive in some measure of those deserted London churchyards which so haunted the imagination of Dickens, is not, any more than were they, the last prison of desperate malefactors and evil-doers. It is where, in times past, Jews and heretics were buried, secretly and by night. Yet we continue to talk of the "good old times!"—*Manchester Guardian*.

"Dear old Dad,—I am leaving you for God." So wrote John B. Burrough, whose dead body was found in the canal at Golgate, Lancaster. How these Atheists do rush into suicide, to be sure!

"Pope lines" were vilely quoted in the *Daily News*, which made them run as follows:—

For forms of Government it stands confessed
Whate'er is best administered is best.

What Pope actually wrote was this:—

For forms of government let fools contest,
Whate'er is best administered is best.

This is not the first time that we have had to give the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience a lesson in elementary literature.

Old Dowie's mission at Madison-square Garden, New York, came to an end on November 1. Carpenters set to work at once to prepare the place for a Dog Show. "Oh what a fall was there!" Perhaps so—but most dogs are honest, anyhow.

Mrs. Dowie, the wife of Elijah II., who is in London on her way to Australia, conducted a religious service at Caxton Hall on Sunday evening. According to the *Daily Telegraph* report, she said one accurate thing in her sermon. "When a minister makes up his mind to lie," she said, "he takes the cake, as we say in America. Why, he can do it better than the newspapers, and that is saying a good deal." Mrs. Dowie has studied the ministerial tribe from a first-rate model.

Bari and Venice have always disputed as to which of them possesses the authentic bones of St. Nicholas, but there would seem to be no doubt in the mind of the Russian General Bagdonovitch, who on seeing them offered the Cathedral of Bari 1,000,000 roubles (about £105,000) for them, with the intention of taking them to Russia, where this saint is extraordinarily popular. It appears that General Bagdonovitch was visiting Bari when he saw the relics, which are at the bottom of a species of well, the bones being crossed and water springing from them continually. He became very thoughtful, and then exclaimed, "I will give you 1,000,000 roubles for them." When those present smiled, thinking that he was joking, he repeated his offer several times, but of course it was refused. The present Tsar, as Tsarevitch, visited the same relics, while the cathedral was the scene of Queen Helena's abjuration of the Orthodox creed and her conversion to Roman Catholicism. It is thought that the matter will not end here, and that the general will make further efforts to secure the bones, but of course he has no chance of success.—*Daily Telegraph*.

Mr. Josiah Nix, who used to work the Derby in connection with the West London (Wesleyan) Mission, is now apparently off to fresh woods and pastures new. He has been conducting a Gospel Temperance Mission at Newcastle-on-Tyne. According to a sympathetic newspaper, it has been a grand success. One of the principal features was a torch-light procession at midnight. Mr. Nix appears to substitute one form of intemperance for another.

The Torrey-Alexander firm of Evangelists have been doing good business at Manchester. A large number of the local men of God act as their advance and advertising agents. The ready-made Christians swarm to the services, and when they fill a big hall—which should be easy enough—the Evangelical organs cry "Wonderful."

Evangelist Torrey seems to have dropped the "converted infidel" line of trade. Some time ago he was constantly boasting of the converted infidels he had left behind him in his triumphant progress. We hear little or nothing about them now. This is probably due to the awkward questions as to time, place, and identity, asked by the unconverted infidels.

Good news at last! The secretary of the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission sends the glad tidings to the *Daily News* that: "News has just been received that five converts from the Beni-Israel people are being prepared for baptism, and are expected soon to take their stand for Christ." It is not stated where these five Sons of Israel may be found, nor how they are being "prepared." Is it by means of free board and lodging and pocket money? And suppose they don't come up for baptism, after all? To talk of them taking their stand for Christ at this stage is very much like counting your chickens before they are hatched. Some would say before the eggs are laid.

The Bristol Tramway Company's cars were overcrowded during the wet nights of Church Congress week; also during the football match between Bristol Rovers and Tottenham Hotspur. The police served summonses for both occasions. But the magistrates were more discriminating. They fined the Company for the football overcrowding, but merely bound it over on account of the other offence. Moral: if you want to break the law with impunity, do it with a religious motive.

While there are so many "honorable" persons crawling between heaven and earth, who never did anything really useful or noble in the whole course of their lives, it is good to come across a person like the brave fisher-woman of Ushant who, seeing a boatload of shipwrecked sailors in dire distress, swam out to them, and piloted them through dangerous waters to a place of safety. She saved the lives of six men at the risk of her own. According to the report she is unmarried. What a pity! She should have been a mother of heroes. Such women, not the dolled-up anæmic abortions of our great Christian cities, are fit to sustain the blood and vigor of the race. If the present writer were a rich man, he would seek out that brave Frenchwoman, buy her a cottage, and place her beyond want for the rest of her life. How few millionaires ever do anything so sensible.

Mr. J. C. Kenworthy, the Christian Socialist, apostle of Tolstoyism, and boss of the Socialist Colony at Purleigh, must be an odd sort of man to claim £10,000 damages from the *Daily News*; still more so to request that paper to advance him £30 to start the action with. We thought Tolstoyites, like the primitive Christians, were never to go to law. What we are certain of is that even Tolstoyites can occasionally add to the gaiety of nations.

The General Synod of the State Church of Prussia, which meets only once in six years, has just concluded its sitting. One of the subjects discussed was duelling. A resolution was proposed condemning the practice. This was opposed by a number of the clerical dignitaries present, who based their opposition on Exodus xxi. Eventually the resolution was carried; but the discussion is significant all the same.

Dean Pigou has a number of amusing stories in his just published *Odds and Ends*. Here are a few that will be of interest to Freethinkers:—

"What, my child, are sins of omission?" "Those which we ought to have committed, and have forgotten to commit."

"What are the heathen?" "Bright boy replies: 'Heathens are people who don't quarrel about religion.'"

I add a few authentic replies given by children. "What would be a greater miracle than the whale swallowing Jonah?" "Please, sir, Jonah swallowing the whale." "What is meant by sowing tares?" "Mother mending my breeches." "Why did the eunuch go on his way rejoicing?" "Please, sir, because Philip had done a-teaching of him." After an address to children in connection with missions to the heathen this question was put: "What is the difference, now that you have heard all about missionaries and their good work, between a Christian and a cannibal?" A boy of ten, noted for his good appetite, replied promptly: "Why, master, a one enjoys himself and t'other enjoys other people." At a Church school in the North this reply was given to the curate, whose mind was much fixed on Lenten services. "Well, boys, can any of you tell me what follows Ash Wednesday? Think, now, before you answer." "Yes, Sir, I can." "Well, tell me." "Malton Steeplechases."

A hard-hearted cheesemonger obtained a committal order against the Rev. G. V. Briscoe, of St. Benet's Vicarage, Kentish Town. But it subsequently appeared that the cheesemonger had been romancing as to the reverend

gentleman's means. He had a good deal to say about the debtor's "living." And the vicarage is, indeed, a large house, that would take a thousand a year to keep up; but the vicar and his family only live in a corner of it. His total income is £150 a year, out of which he has to pay £42 a year rent and taxes on the vicarage. On learning these facts, the County Court judge rescinded his order, and the cheesemonger's rivet is unscrewed. What the unhappy tradesman will do now is a point on which we have no information. Perhaps he will try prayer. The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much—and "much" ought to cover a cheese-bill. It may be, of course, that the tradesman is not "righteous" enough. In that case, why not seek assistance from the man of God?

Miss Marie Corelli has found her true disciple at last. Perhaps we should say her most discerning critic. A gentleman called Brain (happy name!) at Bristol describes her as "the most Christian lady and the greatest writer the world has ever known with the exception of Shakespeare." Oh that "exception"! It is like a fly in amber or a hair in a precious box of ointment. Mr. Brain should have gone the whole hog. A mere man—not even Shakespeare—should not be allowed to stand before a lady. And when the lady is Miss Marie Corelli! Oh heavens!

Amongst the people who perished in the recent fire in a big tenement house on Eleventh avenue, New York, was one man who was suffocated as he knelt in prayer. We presume that was God's answer to the poor fellow's supplication. One woman died with her child pressed to her bosom in a vain attempt to save it from the smoke. That woman's heart was more tender than the heart of "Providence."

"Providence" has been active in Italy. Floods have caused vast destruction and much loss of life. "He doeth all things well."

A Salvation Army woman, testifying to her conversion, declared that her silks, satins, and jewellery were dragging her down to perdition—so she gave them all to her sister!

Some years ago a K.C. asked a child in the witness-box "Do you know where people who tell lies go to when they die?" The child could not answer, and the K.C. proceeded to object to the witness, when the judge said "Well, he doesn't know, and I'm sure I don't: do *you*?" The K.C. was in a hole, and could only get out of it by replying that he was not in the witness-box.

Mr. Cluer, the Worship-street magistrate, recently had a witness before him seven years of age. In reply to a question as to the nature of an oath, little Beatrice Duggan said: "Little girls who don't tell the truth go into the burning fire." Mr. Cluer observed: "I hope it is not true. Such doctrines are ridiculous." Yes, to Mr. Cluer; but, unfortunately, not so to millions of less educated and thoughtful people.

The Pope has had to seek aid from the Temporal Government after all. The fire at the Vatican had to be subdued by "profane" firemen. "Providence" might otherwise have burnt down the whole establishment.

Mr. Coleman, the stipendiary magistrate at South Shields, told some Passive Resisters that there were thirty-three different denominations in the town, and if they were all going to fight that question they would never be able to live peaceably.

The London *Daily Express* is publishing letters from living correspondents on "After Death." There is a want of enterprise about this. Letters from dead correspondents would be more valuable.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace seems to have found a mare's nest in his new theory about the earth being near the centre of a limited universe. Nevertheless he has not ceased to be a philosopher, and he says many wise things in spite of one folly. For instance, he says that "pure air for every individual" is the one thing needful. "Yet," he adds, "our wealthy and learned classes, our rulers and law makers, our religious teachers, and men of science, all alike devote their lives and energies to anything and everything but this. But till this is done our civilisation is nought, and our politics are less than nought—are utterly despicable." We believe this is profoundly true. It seems to us that the constant breathing of pure air would destroy a host of evils, amongst others the craving for alcoholic drink. Christianity has offered the world the wrong Holy Ghost. The true Holy Ghost (or Geist) is a proper mixture of oxygen and nitrogen.

HUMAN PROVIDENCE.

Those who look wisely into the future of society will feel that the conception of man becoming without fear or boast the arbiter, within certain limits, of his own destiny, has in it something far more satisfying than the old belief in Providence, which implied our remaining passive. Social union will be strengthened by the conception, because every one will see that union forms our principal resource against the miseries of human life.—*Auguste Comte*.

Either God would remove evil out of the world, and cannot; or He can, and will not; or He has neither the power nor will; or, lastly, He has both the power and will. If He has the will, and not the power, this shows weakness. If He has the power, and not the will, it is malignity. If He is neither able nor willing, He is both impotent and malignant. If He be both willing and able, whence comes evil, and why does He not prevent it?—*Epicurus*.

An American residing in Providence, R.I., testifies to the moral value of parochial schools. He writes to the *Sun*: "I reside two blocks from a large parochial school, and the profane and obscene language of the pupils as they pass to and from school compels us to close the windows frequently. Yet we are told that the religious school is the great and only conservator of morals we have. Does its output justify these claims?"

A man in Indiana died, and left money because he could not take it with him. He also left a will, the provisions of which did not please some of his relatives, and they endeavoured to break it by asserting that he was insane, offering as a proof the fact that he believed in witchcraft. He was steadily seeking treasure buried by the Indians, but said that just when he had located it, the witches spirited it away. The Supreme Court of his State held him to be sane because Blackstone and Sir Matthew Hale believed in witches, also in burning them. Furthermore, the court said, many scholarly and successful business men believe in Spiritualism, others in Christian Science, and others in the transmigration of souls, and others still in witchcraft, and it is now well settled that testamentary capacity is not determined by what one believes nor by the character of the horrid tales he tells. The court ought to have added that the English authorities quoted believed in burning witches because the Bible commands it, and that all Christians must believe in witchcraft or repudiate the inspiration of that work.

NOT MEANT THAT WAY EXACTLY.—A young Oklahoma man went to church with his best girl. When the collection was being taken taken up the young man explored his pockets, and whispered to the young lady: "I haven't got a cent; I changed my pants." In the meantime the young lady had been searching in her pockets, and, finding nothing, blushed a rosy red as she stammered, "I'm in the same predicament."

ABSENCE.

"We are here to-day," said the solemn-looking man with a thin neck and a collar three sizes too large for him, "and gone to-morrow." "That's right," agreed the dyspeptic-looking man with the ivory-black cigar; "and when we get back six months later some of our best friends want to know where we've been for the last two weeks."—*Puck*.

One summer day Bishop Williams of Connecticut went out fishing with a friend, and as the day was warm they placed a bottle of wine over the side of the rowboat. When luncheon time came the bishop essayed to pull the wine aboard, already tasting in anticipation the cool, delicious beverage. Through some mishap the string slipped from his fingers and the bottle sank to the bottom of the river. Bishop Williams sat up with a sigh and said, with his eyes sparkling: "You say it, Jones; you're a layman!"

An Indianapolis man perpetrated a joke on Carrie Nation while she was there. A local dentist was standing on a corner when Mrs. Nation got through haranguing the crowd. "Look at that man," said the Indianapolis joker, pointing to the doctor. "He is well off, and he makes his money out of the tears of orphans, the wails of widows, and the groans of strong men." "He keeps a rum shop, does he?" said the smasher, darting a piercing glance in his direction. "No," said the man. "he is a dentist."

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, November 15, The New Empire Palace, King-street, South Shields: 7, "The Doom of Religion: with Reference to Mr. Blatchford's *Clarion* Articles."

November 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.

ALICE M. BAKER.—We tender you our respectful sympathy. Your mother was one of the most remarkable women we ever knew. In spite of her great age, you must feel the separation from such a noble being.

M. BARNARD.—Pleased to know that you enjoy our "vigorous articles" from week to week, and that you take an extra copy of the *Freethinker* and post it to "likely readers." Perhaps the best single-volume History of the French Revolution is Mignet's. The English translation is published in Bohn's Library at 3s. 6d. Carlyle's graphic work might be read with profit afterwards.

W. D. ANDERSON.—Charles Bradlaugh claimed to affirm in the House of Commons, and was told that he had no right to do so. He eventually took his seat in peace after taking the oath. But he subsequently brought in, and carried, a Bill making oath and affirmation practically optional.

G. COLLINS.—Too late to be dealt with this week. Will see what can be done next week.

DAVID SEDDON.—It is interesting to hear from a "staunch Freethinker" who was "forty-five years a Christian."

D. HARCUM.—Remittance distributed as requested. Thanks for your good wishes.

A. FLOOK.—Glad to know you have had so much pleasure in reading the *Freethinker* week by week for the past two years. We understand that a parcel for Bristol went astray last week, and has had to be duplicated. This may account for the delay in your own case. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Bristol and other Western places this winter.

F. RICH.—If all give who should give and could give, the £200 we suggested would easily be made up by the end of the year for the Cohen Presentation.

C. D. S.—Thanks for your letter and enclosures. We are always pleased to hear from you. Yes, the Birmingham meetings were remarkably fine. See our leading article and "Acid Drops."

P. A. MOIR.—Not exactly in our line.

TYRO.—(1) Dr. Watson's address has already been noticed in our columns. What the world wants is not a revised form of Christianity or of any other superstition. The only "practical religion" is to do good—as Thomas Paine saw and said a hundred years ago. (2) Mr. Foote has not absolutely recovered, but he is much better.

J. W. GOTT.—Glad to hear you and your colleagues appreciate our advice to "get all your wounds in front." If a hall can be obtained in Leeds we will pay it a visit in December, when, perhaps, we might rally fresh support around the new N. S. S. Branch. See "Sugar Plums."

MESSRS. WALKER & WALKER, wholesale agents, Darlington, supply the *Freethinker* and kindred literature to retail agents on the usual conditions. Those in the locality who are interested will please note.

H. W. KENSSETT.—We will deal with the matter next week.

A. R. DOUGHTY.—Pleased to hear that you read our remarks on Ingersoll "with delight." It is a delightful subject.

ANXIOUS INQUIRER.—We are unable to answer your first question. As to the other question, it is safest to say that force is never found without matter, nor matter without force.

N. D.—Shall be glad to have the other paper in due course.

COHEN PRESENTATION FUND.—W. Cody £1, J. Umpleby £1 1s., R. Richards £1, J. M. 2s., M. Barnard 3s., F. Rich 2s. 6d., Joseph Bovins 10s., S. Newson 2s. 6d., David Seddon 5s., D. Harcum 2s. 6d., J. D. Stones 5s.

E. SPENCER.—We directed the envelope as requested; but please note in future that Mr. Cohen's address is printed every week in the *Freethinker*.

TOM MARKS (Glasgow) writes: "I enjoyed Mr. Lloyd's lecture on Sunday very much. It was just what I expected of him, with a little extra humor."

J. E. G.—You probably saw our paragraph on the matter. Of course it has, as you suggest, a humorous aspect.

OBSERVER.—We know nothing of the person you refer to. Why not address your suggestion to the local Branch officials?

V. ROGER.—Glad to know you made a fight, and still more glad to know you came near to beating the bigots.

SYDNEY C. HINFORD, 8 Iron-street, Roath, Cardiff, wishes to hear from Secularists in the district who are willing to co-operate in Secular organisation.

J. D. STONES, sending a subscription, says he has never had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Cohen, but has "derived both pleasure

and profit from reading his articles in the *Freethinker*." "I trust," he adds, "a good round sum will be the result of this appeal."

W. SANDERS.—The matter is hardly worth another reference. Thanks, all the same.

"A MERE MAN IN THE STREET."—Your second letter does not advance matters. You can hardly expect to make a convenience of the *Freethinker*. If you have anything definite to say, say it at once.

F. HELLJAR.—Is it really worth while advertising such persons? The probability is that the "converted Freethinker" with more than one name will drop out as suddenly as he dropped in, if you don't make the running for him.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your ever-welcome cuttings.

E. G. B.—We did not suppose our article on "Gladstone and Ingersoll" would be pleasant reading for Christians. Nor do we see why we should forget our imprisonment, although it was twenty years ago. We do not mean to let the Christians forget it either. It will be another matter when they repent and abolish the Blasphemy Laws.

F. S. says: "I write to compliment you on the able and well-written article on 'Gladstone and Ingersoll' in the *Freethinker* for this week, which I have read with much satisfaction and great gratification. It is indeed a timely warning, and should be taken to heart seriously by all who call themselves Freethinkers, because to ignore it would, I feel certain, in ninety and nine cases out of a hundred result only in disaster. Would it not be well to reprint the article for distribution as a tract? I think it would."

J. UMPLYBY.—Pleased to hear you think that Mr. Cohen "richly deserves" such a recognition. With regard to the other matter, we find it is no use appealing for contingent subscriptions. We tried some time ago to take advantage of your offer to subscribe a certain amount if so many others would do likewise; and it was simply a case of love's labor lost. Thanks for your personal good wishes.

F. HALL.—Thanks for the information, though it might not be prudent to make use of it publicly, and probably you did not intend us to do so.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Freidenker—El Libre Pensamiento—Postal Record—Truthseeker (New York)—Newtownards Chronicle—Occult Review—Blue Grass Blade—Zoophilist—Two Worlds—Searchlight (Texas)—New Century Path—Leeds Mercury—Open Court—Public Opinion.

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote visits South Shields to-day (Nov. 15) to deliver the first of the course of three Sunday evening lectures in the Empire Theatre. Tyneside "saints" will probably be present in strong force, and the advertising should bring a crowd of the general public to such a well-known building.

There was a good audience, though not a crowded one, at the Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on Gladstone as a Christian, with reference to Mr. John Morley's biography. In the absence of the gentleman who was expected to take the chair, it was occupied by Miss Vance, who said all that was necessary in quite an admirable manner. Mr. Foote's lecture was apparently much enjoyed. Several questions were asked, and suitably answered. We hope the weather will be more pleasant this evening (Nov. 15), when Mr. Cohen delivers the second lecture of this course, on "The Present Position of Religion and Science."

We venture to repeat our invitation to London Freethinkers to circulate the neat handbills of these Queen's Hall meetings. Copies can be obtained, personally or through the post, by applying at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

Mr. John Lloyd, our latest recruit from Christianity to Freethought, delivers two lectures to-day (November 15) at the Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Birmingham. We earnestly hope the local "saints" will give him full meetings and an enthusiastic welcome. Mr. Lloyd has lost friends by his courage and honesty, and he should be made to feel that he has found new ones of a more sterling character. Besides, he is extremely well worth hearing on his own account. He has reaped golden opinions from the Freethought audiences he has addressed hitherto.

The *Paisley Daily Express* devotes a paragraph to what it is pleased to call Mr. John Lloyd's "bitter attack on Christianity." It mentions that Mr. Lloyd was challenged to a public debate by the Rev. C. A. Hall, of the Paisley department of the New Jerusalem Church, and that Mr. Lloyd (very properly) did not accept the challenge, but left it in the hands of the Glasgow N. S. S. Branch. We have no information as to what the Branch is doing, or proposes to do, in the matter. But we are rather amused to learn that Mr. Hall has already "selected" the subject for the debate—namely, "The Religion of Jesus, and its Effects on Human Well-Being."

Mr. Victor Roger made a gallant fight for a seat on the Lambeth Borough Council, and very nearly succeeded in winning it. We have already stated that he was jockeyed off the official Progressive list by religious bigots, principally Nonconformists; and that he stood as an independent Progressive, resolved to let in daylight upon the local situation. Mr. Roger's election address forced the religious question to the front in relation to the working of the new Education Act, and the result was that the Free Church party were very badly damaged in the struggle. Only one of them pulled through safely. That was the great Dr. Meyer, who is generally ranked next to Dr. Clifford. Dr. Meyer had all the machinery of the Free Churches at his back, with hundreds of helpers scouring the constituency; yet he only managed to poll 205 votes more than an "obscure" Secularist like Mr. Roger. We hope Mr. Roger will enter the arena again at the next election. He has badly pricked the Free Church bladder this time. Next time he may bring about its collapse.

Mr. John Morley, in the course of the recent speech in the Albert Hall, Nottingham, declared himself in favor of Secular Education. We wish he had not prefaced it by saying "I am going to do a bold thing." There was nothing very bold about it, considering that similar declarations have already been made by Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Besides, everybody knows what Mr. Morley's views on religion really are, although he has ceased to advertise them. All this, however, is by the way. The substantial item is Mr. Morley's declaration. "My own view," he said, "has been, ever since I began to think about public things, that you will never come to a wise settlement until you have removed altogether the hand of the State from religious instruction. Religious instruction is a thing for the parents—it is not a thing for the State—and I, for my own part, can never be cordial to any policy, any changes in policy, which do not recognise the principle that the State is concerned with secular things, and has no concern with religious things." This is clear enough, and we congratulate Mr. Morley on getting it out. Perhaps, as his declaration was greeted, not with hisses, but with cheers, he will go on repeating it. He really owes something to his own principles on this matter.

Our esteemed contemporary, *Searchlight*, of Waco, Texas, asks us to run down the statement circulated in America, on the authority of Professor Orr, of Glasgow, that "twenty-eight Secularist leaders in England and Scotland have become Christians." We presume this is really a reference to a list published some twenty years ago by the late Rev. C. J. Whitmore, who only gave the initials of these wonderful converts; some of whom were so wonderful that Freethinkers could not identify them. Joseph Barker and Thomas Cooper were fairly well-known, but their "conversion" was very ancient history even then; one having found Jesus in the fifties, and the other in the sixties, of last century. All the other names were those of terribly small fry or imaginary Freethinkers. What the Christians have to do is to convert real leaders of Freethought. They have never done that once in our time, and our public memory covers a period of thirty-four years. Let us have a fresh case, please, and one we can be sure about.

Mr. J. M. Robertson's libel action did one good thing, it gave him a wide advertisement, and brought him a bumping audience at the Glasgow Secular Hall on Sunday evening. Mr. T. Robertson, the Branch secretary, informs us that the local "saints," after recent experiences, are demanding a larger hall for the meetings.

Mr. George Weir has received two fresh summonses for selling literature and taking up a collection on the Woodhouse Moor, Leeds, both being returnable on Thursday, November 12, after this week's *Freethinker* is published. Two Socialists have also been summoned—Ben Scott and Archibald Pollock. Their offence is selling a pamphlet on *The Development of Trade Unionism*. Both have previously sold literature on the Moor, and the police only bother them now in order to appear impartial. Ben Scott says he will go to prison rather than pay the fine; and if he does so the question will be forced upon the attention of the Town Council. We hear that Mr. Gott is also expecting fresh bits of official paper from the police.

Cobbett's *Rural Rides*, lately republished, are very amusing, not to say instructive; and the politics of eighty years ago become living pictures as the reader follows the author up and down the country. The books have for editor the Rev. Pitt Cobbett, vicar of Crofton, Hants, who, in explaining the text for the information of the modern reader, is fairly accurate in his references to Paine, to whom Cobbett occasionally alludes.

In the ride through Wiltshire and Worcestershire Cobbett relates: "At Worcester, as everywhere else, I find a group of cordial and sensible friends, at the house of one of whom, Mr. George Brooke, I have just spent a most pleasant evening, in company with several gentlemen, whom he had the goodness to invite to meet me. I here learned a fact, which I must put upon record before it escapes my memory." Then he proceeds to get in a dig at Pitt.

"Some few years ago," continues Cobbett, "at the public sale by auction of the goods of a then recently deceased attorney of the name of Hyde, in this city, there were, amongst the goods to be sold, the portraits of Pitt, Burdett, and Paine, all framed and glazed. Pitt, with hard driving and very lofty praises, fetched fifteen shillings; Burdett fetched twenty-seven shillings. Paine was, in great haste, knocked down at five pounds; and my informant was convinced that the lucky purchaser might have had fifteen pounds for it."

Mr. Pitt Cobbett tells the story of the exhumation of Paine's bones and of Cobbett's accompanying them from New York to England. "He determined to appeal to Englishmen to give Paine a public funeral, for while he condemned Paine's religious views, he admired his political foresight. But he found that he had committed an error, the relics failed to produce the effect he intended, and for a second time they were consigned to a private grave."

The whereabouts of that private grave, if such exist, would be interesting. The probabilities are that the bones never found a second sepulchre, as they were above ground with Cobbett's effects at his death; and it is greatly to be wished that Cobbett had attended to his own business, leaving America to look after that which was peculiarly hers. The remains, it appears, were taken care of by a laborer until 1844, when they were acquired by Tilley, furniture dealer, of 13, Bedford-square; thence all trace disappears.

Dr. Conway, who closely investigated the subject, concludes: "As to his bones, no man knows the place of their rest to this day." Efforts are still not wanting, however, towards tracing the relics. That a man of Paine's achievement should have been denied burial rites in America and England sounds, in these days, extraordinary. But the varying phases of the Revolutionary times are hard to understand. The generation that consigned Marat to the Panthéon disinterred him for the sewer; and the greatest of all the children of the Revolution, Napoleon, was for years refused a resting-place in the land which his genius so long glorified.

All intending subscribers to the Cohen Presentation Fund are requested to remit to us without further delay. The presentation will be made at the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on the second Tuesday in January. We shall have something special to say about this matter, probably for the last time, in our next issue. A statement up to date will be accompanied by our final appeal.

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.

(Continued from page 717.)

In the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew our author makes Jesus, in imitation of Moses and Elijah, go into the wilderness, and, like his great Hebrew prototypes, fast forty days and forty nights. In this chapter the reader is introduced to a character called the Devil. It is the Devil's part in this story to play the tempter. This is no new character in the Bible. By referring to the book of Genesis, we find the tempter disguised as a serpent, and beguiling the first mother of man. In Chronicles, in Job, and in the Psalms we find this person spoken of as Satan. That the New Testament Devil is the Satan of the Old Testament is shown by the words of Jesus, who is made to address this individual by the latter title. We are sorry to find that Satan was still in the temptation business after a lapse of four thousand years. The history of the world since his encounter with the hero of the Gospel-story does not show that the Devil has yet met with a change of heart. He has been pictured as a wicked and evil spirit, and called the "Prince of Darkness" for several hundred years, and is still looked upon as the presiding genius and enterprising proprietor of the larger part of that undiscovered country which lies beyond the grave.

When the Devil expressed a wish to have Jesus prove his divinity by changing stones into bread, he is answered by a quotation from the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy—When the Devil had taken Jesus up to Jerusalem and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, he is made to cite a couple of verses from the ninety-first psalm, to show Jesus that he can quote Scripture also, and bids Jesus cast himself down from the temple to show whether he be the son of God or not. But Jesus once more answers with a verse from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, which says, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," and does not run the risk of having the Scripture fulfilled, which was quoted by his adversary, by jumping from the top of the temple. Then the Devil invited Jesus to fall down and worship him, and promised him all that his eye could see from the top of an exceeding high mountain if he would do so, and again Jesus refers him to the book of Deuteronomy for his answer.

Most of the fourth chapter of Matthew is borrowed from the Old Testament, and is a mere repetition of the three temptations of Elijah, who, however, proved, when challenged to show that he was a man of God, his claim to the honor by calling fire out of heaven, which burnt up one hundred and two men.

The Sermon on the Mount, as it is commonly called, occupies the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew. This sermon was never delivered by Jesus, but is a collection of moral sayings and commandments of different value made up principally from the teaching of Essenes, a sect of Jews, which Josephus describes as particularly unselfish in their lives, and exceedingly devout in worship; and whose rules of conduct were implicitly followed by all the members. The author of the Gospel-story goes to the Old Testament to learn how he shall dispose of his hero, as it is necessary that it should be done "according to the Scriptures." On his way to the place of execution, Jesus is offered "vinegar to drink mingled with gall," the same as was given David, and after he is crucified they parted his garments and cast lots upon his vesture, as David complained that they did to him, and at last, when help did not come and the shadows of death were falling upon him he is made to cry in the words of the first verse of the twenty-second psalm: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This story of Jesus

was made out of a faith, and not written out of facts.

The actual faith of the Jewish people as expressed in their writings, was in the coming of a king. That faith was disappointed. It lingered even after the Jewish nation was destroyed. The human mind seized upon this faith, out of which to construct a drama. It found its idea of a Christ in the Jewish Scriptures, and painted this character according to the faith expressed therein. This is too plain to be denied. To teach that the Jesus of the Gospel-story was ever a living being is to deceive mankind. Christian ministers will not admit the facts in the construction of the Gospels, but will continue to preach the old, foolish nonsense that they were given by divine inspiration; but the truth will tread upon the heels of their calling until they are forced to admit it. It is a fact that the men in our theological seminaries are not taught the truths that are manifestly against the theory of divine inspiration, but are taught instead the old falsehoods that are used to support it. The man who speaks to the world, or writes what is to be read by it, is in duty bound to write and speak his best thought; to tell all the truth he knows; to state in honest, plain words, the result of his thinking, and leave his thoughts to have whatever effect they will. The man who imagines he helps the world by telling it what is false, or by refusing to tell it what is true, wrongs mankind. Speak out straight from the heart of conviction, and trust to the reason, the sense, and the conscience of men and women to make the right use of your utterance.

What a contemptible place a pulpit is to-day for a man to stand in. He cannot utter an idea that is not grey with age, respectable with senility, and pious with superstitious fear without causing it to totter under him. The minister who does not whittle out his sentences with a denominational penknife is charged with heresy. The methods pursued by the Christian Church to prevent the honest workings of the human mind would bring a blush to the cheek of death. Christian ministers are set the heroic task of defending the virtues on tombstones. I cannot take any man's bond for the honesty and fairness of a minister who praises David and Solomon and damns Voltaire and Paine. I cannot believe that a man who lives to make this world better will make another world, if there be one, any worse.

The people who do not respect brains are those who have not got any. How many truths have died because men were true to the Church and false to themselves. How many reforms have ended without result because men were ordained to defend the wrong and strangle the right. How many noble characters have been slain by the poisoned dagger of slander, because priests and ministers must praise the scoundrel who believes and condemn the saint who doubts. The common Christian judgment of men and women is unjust, unkind and mean. To regard a man or woman as good because he or she believes or professes to believe the Christian dogmas, and another man or woman bad because he or she cannot believe or profess to believe these dogmas, is to offer a premium for hypocrisy. Such a judgment is contemptible. Would you trust the man who stands up in public and declares that he is honest sooner than the man who pays his honest debts and cheats no one? The best judgment, and the only one that is righteous, is that which judges a man by what he does; by his living and doing. The man who is kind and generous, upright and true does not need to wear a Christian collar and chain, nor be tattooed with Bible-texts. It is time that a Christian was estimated at his real value, and not reckoned as a good man on account of his faith.

This mistaken valuation has cost the world too much. Good men and women are not always Christians, we are glad to say; and Christians are not always good men and women, we are sorry to say. A man is a Christian because he is afraid of something. I do not believe that cowardice is a good soil for virtues to grow in. Wherever you find

cowardice you find meanness, you find selfishness, you find all that is little and mean. Where is courage, honesty, manliness, and greatness so maligned as among Christians? And where is littleness, effeminacy, hypocrisy, and fear so honored and rewarded as among Christians? I have no respect for the Christian scheme of salvation. It exalts servility and degrades independence. It puts its mark of approval upon the brow of ignorance, and brands the forehead of intelligence. It crowns fear and dethrones manhood.

It seems to me that a great deal of poor material has been saved and a vast amount of good material lost by this scheme of salvation. Is it not time to say to mankind: If you want to be saved, save yourself? Learn something, be something, do something. Knowledge, character, and goodness save themselves. It is only ignorance and superstition that need a Christ. A large crop of pious pretention has been grown by planting this dogma in the mind. The more a man believes the less he cares to know. To enlarge the faith contracts the intellect. If salvation had been made to depend upon knowledge instead of belief, what a difference it would have made in the world of man. The Christian heaven is no temptation to the rational mind. It is only a refuge for mediocrity. If all those who have been saved by the Church are now in this abode it has no attractions for decent people. More first class villians have been sent to heaven by priest and minister than have entered every penitentiary on earth. It is a fact that the Christian church places its highest prize within the reach of the veriest wretch that disgraces the name of man, but refuses to allow integrity, honor, virtue, charity, justice and manliness to compete for it in their own pure name. How can honest men and women support the preaching of such a monstrous scheme as this! How can just men and women listen to the preaching of doctrines that rob morality of its natural reward and give vice and crime the guerdon of noble deeds. So the Christian hell has no terror for the rational mind. Nearly every reformer who has worked for man on earth, all the bright and brave host whose shining lives have added glory to humanity, have been sent there by priest and minister. Hell has been the punishment of genius, the penalty for brains. The man who was intelligent enough to understand the Christian superstition, and honest enough to reject it, has been doomed by the Christian church to everlasting misery—the reward for honesty and intelligence.

When I look over the list of inhabitants of the Christian hell, as presented by the plan of salvation preached by the Church, I find the name of almost every man and woman who have been distinguished for mental independence upon this list. But what a glorious galaxy of names it is! These names stand for the intellectual light of this world. They stand for the souls that have sung the songs of the human heart, that have lighted the lamps of truth for human guidance, that have worked for human progress and reform, and that have lightened the burdens of man and sweetened the pains of toil.

The works of Lyell, Darwin, and Proctor are more reliable than those of Moses and Joshua. The essays of Emerson, Carlyle, and Thoreau are healthier and better than the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. The songs of Burns are holier than the Psalms of David.

It is impossible to respect honesty, intelligence, truth, and justice and respect the men who preach the Christian dogmas. The men and women who accept these dogmas as true do so for safety, without knowing whether there is anything to be saved from. The world is slowly learning that Christianity is a giant superstition which started in ignorance, and which has been fastened upon the world by ecclesiastical cupidity. It is also learning that Jesus is not necessary to any attainment or enjoyment of human life, and that the foolish faith in him as the savior of man is based upon false ideas of human nature and human conduct.

The universal ignorance respecting the true character and value of the gospels which prevails among Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, shows that the results of modern biblical criticism are kept by the priest and minister from the human knowledge of the believer, and kept, too, for the purpose of maintaining priestly supremacy over the mind. The priest says to man: "Put your neck in my yoke, obey my voice, draw the load I fix for you, or you will feel the lash of my power." It is the fear of men and women that keeps the Church alive.

Our work is to show the people that they have more to fear from the Church than from the future; that the happiness of man depends upon his knowledge and behavior and not upon a superstitious faith, and that it will help the world far more to be a good man or woman than to be a good Christian.

A Correction.

A VERY awkward blunder crept into the paragraph on Mr. John M. Robertson's libel action which I wrote for last week's *Freethinker*. Owing to my absence from the office through indisposition, the printers managed to leave out three words of my writing; and the omission changed what was gracious into something different—if, indeed, it was not unintelligible. What I wrote was this:

We do not mean that his character is a tarnished one; on the contrary, we believe he can hold his head up, as a man of honor, with the best of his fellow citizens.

The three words "the best of" put a very different complexion on the sentence as it stood without them. I wrote these words deliberately, and I wish, in the circumstances, to place them on record. Mr. Robertson had a difference with me a good many years ago, but he did not condescend to join the curs who barked and snapped at my heels when they dared not face me, and I have always regarded him as a gentleman.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Spanish Insurrection.

By W. E. CURTIS, in the *Chicago Record Herald*.

THERE is a particular reason why the Vatican does not wish to send back to Spain the Spanish friars who are not wanted in the Philippines. It is very important not to do anything there that will attract public attention to the religious orders at present; and even more important not to increase their numerical strength in Spain while existing political problems are unsettled. There is likely to be a repetition of the experience they have suffered in France if the Liberal party continues in power, and those who are watching events closely predict that before many years the monasteries and nunneries in Spain will be closed, the religious orders expelled, and their vast property confiscated. The abdication of the Queen Regent, who is a devout and loyal churchwoman, has removed the strongest protection they have hitherto enjoyed, both personal and political, and while Alphonso XIII. has been brought up to share his mother's piety and opinions, he will be nothing but a figure-head in the government for many years, and not a factor of importance in the problem.

The Liberal party, which since the war has been in power, both in the Spanish Cortes and in the Ministry, is pledged to the enforcement of "a law of associations" similar to that which has recently given so much anxiety and trouble to the Church of France. It means the subjection of all religious orders and associations to the civil authorities. It places them on the same footing as commercial and industrial and political organizations and civil charitable societies, corporations for social, manufacturing, or business purposes. In the eyes of the Government, under the law, for example, the Society of Jesuits, which has its headquarters in Spain, will be treated no differently from an ordinary club or mutual insurance association.

Such a law has already been passed, but it is not as sweeping as that enacted in France. At the same time it is very obnoxious, because it requires the Jesuits, the Franciscans, and all other religious associations of men and women to file with the Minister of the Interior inventories of the estates, and other assets, statements of their incomes, the sources

from which they are derived, their expenditure, and the purposes for which they are made; lists of their members, their residences, occupations, compensation and other emoluments; the amount of taxes paid and other information which, for obvious reasons, the religious orders will not be inclined to give. It also provides for an inspection of their affairs by civil officials.

The Liberal party was elected to power upon the pledge of enacting this law, and it was enacted. It is also pledged to reforms in the educational system, which will be met with determined resistance from the Church authorities, for it is proposed to establish free secular schools throughout the kingdom, and to require the ecclesiastics to pay taxes upon all property that is not used exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes. The last two pledges have not been fulfilled. The Liberal leaders decided last winter not to undertake more than one thing at a time, on the theory that when they have succeeded in bringing the secret and other religious communities under the authorities that the other reforms will be more easy to accomplish, but subsequent events are likely to cause a change in the program.

The chief arguments used in support of these reforms are:

First: The large number of priests, monks, and nuns in Spain, who are said to compose at least ten, and some claim fifteen, per cent. of the population. The exact number is not known, and the Conservatives are trying to conceal it. Therefore it will be understood why it is not considered expedient to send the Philippine friars back to Spain just at present.

Second: That they are generally consumers and non-producers; that they do nothing for the good of the people, and add nothing to the wealth of the country, which anyone who has travelled in Spain knows is unjust, for the only hospitals, schools, asylums, and other charitable and educational institutions of any account in Spain are maintained by the sisterhoods and brotherhoods of the Church.

Third: That they possess vast estates which pay no taxes, and compete in the markets with private farmers who do; that they own large blocks of buildings in the cities, which are also exempt from taxation; that the untaxed property owned by the religious orders, from which they derive an enormous revenue, constitutes nearly twenty per cent. of the entire wealth of the entire country, and that the proceeds from these properties and estates are nearly all sent out of Spain and expended in other countries, thus making a continual drain upon the kingdom.

Fourth: That the people are compelled to pay enormous sums to the Church for the support of the idle and non-producing priests, monks and nuns, which makes it difficult for them to pay taxes to the State, to educate their children and to provide themselves with the necessities of life. This is no doubt true. It has been the custom for centuries that a man must pay one-fifth of his income to the Church and another fifth to the king, and in many places the peasants have to pay even more.

Fifth: It is also charged that the parish priests and monks intrigue in political affairs and work against the Liberal party. This is undoubtedly true, and it would be unnatural for them not to stand by their political friends and protectors. The Liberal party is pledged to their extermination, or at least their suppression, and the clergy are fighting for their lives, their property and their privileges. It is charged that they use unfairly the influences of their religious authority in politics, that they threaten the excommunication of the wives and children of the men who vote the Liberal ticket, and that is probably true.

Sixth: It is charged that the clergy are generally disloyal to the present government and sympathise with the pretender, Don Carlos. Strange to say, this is largely true, particularly of the religious orders, notwithstanding the fact that the pope* has again and again pronounced against Carlism, has been the principal prop of the reigning family, is the god-father of the young king and was the most frequent and trusted counsellor of the Queen Regent when she was in power. She never did anything of importance without consulting him. It is generally understood throughout Spain that the monasteries are full of Carlism, and in the revolutions that the village priests have been the Carlist leaders.

These are the arguments used by the Liberals to justify their efforts to bring the ecclesiastics of Spain under the control of the civil authorities, and make them pay taxes like other people upon all property that is not strictly used for charitable, educational or religious purposes, and this is the political issue that now agitates the Spanish people.

Last October the cortes passed the first law in the direction of this reform. It provides for a voluntary census of the religious societies, which is intended to disclose their numerical strength, their wealth, their sources of revenue, and what they do with their money; and the Queen Regent, and very reluctantly, no doubt, and under compulsion, signed a

decree to carry the law into effect. It is understood she did so upon the advice of the Holy See, with the knowledge that it would not be obeyed, and believing that it would satisfy the zeal of the Liberals for the time being, and give the Conservatives a chance to regain power. It is also said that the Liberal leaders agreed not to take any further steps toward carrying out their reforms until the government had an opportunity to observe the operation and effect of this law, provided the decree was signed.

The religious orders had six months to make the reports required of them by statute. The time has expired, and not a single report has been made. The Liberals are furious, complaining that they have been betrayed by their leaders in the Cabinet. Senor Canalejas, the author of the law, who was Minister of the Interior, and made the pledges on behalf of his associates and the queen, has resigned, and has gone before his constituents as a candidate for re-election on this issue to test public sentiment. The election will be held in September; in October the cortes will meet, and there is no doubt of a Liberal majority and the adoption of radical measures. Canalejas will come back to Parliament with an increased majority and prestige, and will be the Liberal leader instead of Sagasta, who is becoming very feeble on account of his age, and has lost the confidence of his party "by allowing the priests to trifle with him," as the Liberal papers say. This explains the frequent reports you read in the cablegrams from Madrid about his retirement from politics. He is more of a courtier than a reformer; he has been a loyal supporter of the Queen Regent, and has transferred his devotion to her son, although he seldom agreed with her on ecclesiastical issues. Sagasta is nominally a Roman Catholic, but has neglected his religious duties for many years, and at heart is believed to be what they call in Spain "a French Atheist." He has temporised with his own party, hoping that time would solve the problem and relieve the situation.

Disinterested observers believe that the Church authorities have made a serious mistake in ignoring the law and the decree for the voluntary census; that it would have been much wiser for them to have accepted the situation and made a show of registering the membership and assets of the religious societies, just as ordinary corporations register their list of stockholders and a description of their property. The government can obtain this information in a few days at any time it desires, and therefore nothing can be gained by concealment; while apparent obedience to the law would have satisfied public clamor and have gained them public sympathy. They need not have disclosed information of importance, and any attempt on the part of the government to enforce disclosures of their private affairs would certainly have been unpopular. But now they are in the position of defying both the cortes and the queen, and have placed themselves on the defensive.

The cortes will certainly pass more stringent laws than it would have done otherwise; the Liberal leaders consider themselves deceived and betrayed, and therefore released from their pledge not to attempt any further reforms until the effect of this one can be tested. This time the cortes will not wait for the priests and monks and nuns to bring in their own reports; assessors will be sent to inspect their books, appraise their property and look into their transactions, and not only may pass a law taxing their estates, but the proposed school reforms will in all probability be adopted. The Liberals are very likely to go to extremes, the Church will resist with all its power, and we shall see a repetition of the scenes that have occurred in France. The Spanish ecclesiastics are not so rich as the orders in France, but are several times more numerous.

Obituary.

We have to record the death of Mrs. Baker, of Birmingham, widow of the late Mr. Daniel Baker, who was so well-known to, and highly respected by, the Freethinkers of Great Britain. Mrs. Baker attained to a great age; indeed, she celebrated her ninetieth birthday on October 31. She had been keeping her bed since July, and she died very peacefully on Saturday, November 7. According to her wishes, Mr. Partridge, of the local N.S.S. Branch, read the secular service at the burial of her ashes, after the cremation had taken place at Perry Barr. We have more than once had occasion to refer to Mrs. Baker, as a lady whom we always held in the highest esteem. In the old days, her fine intellectual face brightened the Secular meetings in St. George's Hall and elsewhere; and it was easy to see that her gifts of mind were perhaps more than equalled by her gifts of character.

* This was written while Leo XIII. was living.

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.

QUEEN'S (Minor) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 8, Chapman Cohen, "The Present Position of Religion and Science."

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Robert Blatchford and His Book."

FINSBURY PARK DEBATING SOCIETY (Hope Coffee Tavern, Font-hill-road, N.): 7, Debate, "Freethought and the French Revolution." Open discussion.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Miss Margaret McMillan (late of Bradford School Board), "Child Life in the Country Districts."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Christ's New Commandment."

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

WOOD GREEN ETHICAL SOCIETY (Fairfax Hall, Portland-gardens, Haringay): 7, John M. Robertson, "Lord Kelvin on Providence."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): John Lloyd, 3, "Why I Gave up the Supernatural"; 7, "The Death Struggle of Religion."

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY (Temperance Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, Presidential Address.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class. Mr. Clark, "Mentality." 6.30, Mr. A. G. Nostic, "Geology; The Sculpturing of the Earth's Crust." With Lantern illustration.

LEEDS (Covered Market, Vicar's Croft): 11, Ernest Pack, "Are the Police Mad?"

LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor): 3, Ernest Pack, "Wanted, a New God."

LEEDS (Trades Hall): 7, Ernest Pack, "The Teachings of Secularism."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward, 3, "Thomas Paine and his *Age of Reason*"; 7, "Jesus the Infidel." Monday, 8 p.m., Discussion Class.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): 6.30, W. Simpson, "Has 'Nunquam' Proved His Case Against Religion?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Sunday Evening, Musical and other Recitals, etc.; Admission Free.

SOUTH SHIELDS (New Empire Palace, King-street): 7, G. W. Foote, "The Doom of Religion: with Reference to Robert Blatchford's *Clarion* Articles."

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