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PRICE TWOPENCE

*Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

—PAUL.

**Puffing the Bible.**

MR. EDMUND GOSSE was once a poet. Not a great one, it is true, nor even a considerable one; but he wrote verses of some merit, as well as prose criticisms of a really noticeable character. The progress of some thirty years, however, has brought him age and respectability. He has long repented of the Radical levities of his youth. Eleven years ago he sounded his first loud note of holy sorrow. It was at the Shelley centenary gathering at Horsham. Mr. Gosse apologised to the somewhat bucolic audience he was addressing for the political, social, and religious indiscretions of the author of *Queen Mab* and *Prometheus Unbound*. He was good enough to plead Shelley's youth as an extenuating circumstance. Had he lived another twenty years, the ethereal poet might have condensed, and become as solid and decorous—as his eulogist. But fate, alas, said no; and Shelley was denied the opportunity of reaching the level of Mr. Gosse.

Mr. Gosse is now, apparently, a perfectly reformed character. Perhaps there is one thing lacking. He might occasionally fill a pulpit. He has already taken to writing the Lives of eminent divines. He has even—as we see by the pious organ of the Non-conformist Conscience—written a touching advertisement for the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is announced as from the pen of "Dr. Edmund Gosse, Translator to the Board of Trade, author of *History of Modern English Literature*, and other works." And it is described as a "personal testimony to the value of the Scriptures."

When we read that we stared. "Ah," we thought, "Mr. Gosse is at last among the prophets. Here he is giving a certificate of excellence to the Holy Ghost. No doubt that personage will be everlastingly grateful."

When we read a little farther we were less impressed by Mr. Gosse's piety. It was not so much an experience-meeting testimony that he was giving as a literary puff of the English Bible. The compliment to the Holy Ghost was thus discounted, for the translators might claim a large share of the praise. They might claim it all, according to Mr. Swinburne, at least as far as the New Testament is concerned. Mr. Swinburne is reputed to be a fine Greek scholar, and we know from reading him that he is a fine poet, and a fine master of his native tongue. And has not Mr. Swinburne said that the New Testament is translated from canine Greek into divine English?

Mr. Gosse's "personal testimony" is used as an advertisement by the Bible Society. We suggest that they should use Mr. Swinburne's in the same way. It would be a striking addition to the advertisement list.

Now let us see what Mr. Gosse as a "literary gent" has to say about the Bible. We reproduce his letter in full, as it appeared in the *Daily News*; and we trust we are liable to no penalty for violation of

copyright. We are only helping along the advertisement—for what it is worth.

"It would be impertinent for me to praise the English Bible, and needless to dwell upon its value as a model of noble language.

"But since you offer me this opportunity I should like to insist on the importance to those who are ambitious to write well of reading the Bible aloud. It is a book the beauty of which appeals largely to the ear. By one of those almost miraculous chances which attended upon the birth of this incomparable version, each different part of it seems to have fallen to a man appropriately endowed for that fragment of the task. The Gospels, for instance, vibrate with the tender and thrilling melody of stringed instruments: in the narrations of the Old Testament and in the Psalms we find a wider orchestra, and the silver trumpet predominates.

"When young men, therefore, ask me for advice in the formation of a prose style I have no counsel for them except this: Read aloud a portion of the Old and another of the New Testament as often as you possibly can.

"It only remains for me to congratulate the Bible Society, and with cordial sincerity, on having completed the century of its admirable labors."

The first remark we have to make on this letter is that there is not a word in it about the Bible as a book of religion. A total stranger would never infer that Mr. Gosse was writing about the "sacred volume" which contains "the plan of salvation."

The second remark we have to make is that if the Bible Society is glad to receive such tributes, and to print them as testimonials, it must feel that the book it circulates is in sore need of patronage and support.

With regard to this letter itself, we have to observe, first of all, that the writer begins by saying that it would be "impertinent" to do a certain thing, and then proceeds to do it. He also says that it would be "needless" to do a certain other thing, and he proceeds to do that likewise.

Mr. Gosse insists on the importance of "reading the Bible aloud" as a training in composition. He begins with this, and he ends with it. The only advice he offers young men who want to cultivate a prose style is to read aloud portions of the Old and New Testaments as often as possible.

Supposing this to be good advice, it is evident that Mr. Gosse has not followed it himself. There is not a trace in the style of this letter of his having read the Bible aloud—or otherwise; and we believe his other writings, if consulted, would bear the same testimony.

More cant is spoken and written about the Bible than about any other book, or any other subject. Its literary merits are ridiculously extolled by two classes of men; first, those who live by it, and feel that it cannot any longer be defended on the old dogmatic grounds; second, those who laugh in their hearts at the Christian faith, but feel that they must, in common prudence, burn a pinch of incense on its public altars. Both classes are hypocrites, but the first class are the worse of the two, for they pay their God the strange compliment of contending that he comes out remarkably well in a literary competition with his own creatures.

Mr. Gosse carries the cant too far. For the cultivation of a prose style, he recommends the Bible,

the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible. It is impossible to take him at this point seriously. He must be aware that any real student of literature who happens to read what he says will regard it as an absurdity. No one could cultivate a good English prose style, for present-day use, by simply studying the English Bible. The contrary assertion is merely fantastic, and to discuss it is a sheer waste of time.

Tennyson, whom we venture to think as much above Mr. Gosse as an Egyptian pyramid is loftier than a Brixton villa, was guilty, perhaps, of some exaggeration in saying that a man should read the Bible to learn how to speak of God, and Shakespeare to learn how to speak to his fellow men. Shakespeare is certainly a grander model than the English Bible. He has vastly more variety, and a far bigger vocabulary. But even Shakespeare is not *all*-sufficient; particularly in prose, where at least a dozen other models are necessary.

Without troubling to criticise Mr. Gosse's *musical* eulogy of the English Bible—except to say that it is one of the oddest things we ever read—we shall try to show that, in spite of his being the author of a History of English Literature, he is grossly ignorant of the very nature and history of the Authorised Version. Let us take by itself the special sentence in his letter relating to it.

“By one of those almost miraculous chances which attended upon the birth of this incomparable version, each different part of it seems to have fallen to a man appropriately endowed for that fragment of the task.”

Now the truth is, that the Authorised Version, made in the reign of James I., was not so much a new translation as a new version. It was laid down that the Translators were to depart as little as possible from the versions already in use. Former translations were collated, their very style was adhered to, and the result was a conservative production, which was nevertheless an improvement, as it well might be, on its predecessors. That the different parts of it fell into appropriate hands was only natural; for, in the first place, the committee were carefully chosen, and, in the second place, they distributed the work amongst themselves according to their special capacities and accomplishments. But the great point to be insisted on, and which is so generally overlooked, is this: that the English of the Authorised Version is *not* the English of the Elizabethan age, neither is it the English of any other age. It never was spoken in England, and it never was written in England, except in the English Bible. It was a special dialect, which developed through several generations, and was absolutely devoted to the translation of the Scriptures. Dr. Marsh noted this fact; it is also noted by Dr. Lang, in the Preface to his translation of the Odyssey; but with these, and maybe a few other exceptions, it is universally disregarded; and yet it is not only obvious, but positively striking, to any good reader who studies the case for himself, using his naked eyes without the spectacles of authority and tradition.

So far, then, from the English Bible being a model, much more an exclusive model, for English prose writers of to-day, the fact is clear to anyone who will take the trouble to look that whenever a verse of it is quoted it stands out sharply from the surrounding text. You know at once what book it is from, because no other book was ever written in the same language.

Taking the English Bible as it stands—special, and even unique—we are not in the least disposed or concerned to underrate its literary value. We believe that a good deal which is highly praised in it is nothing but imposing and consecrated commonplace. But we believe there is an imperishable residuum of poetry and cadence which students of literature will always prize; although we also believe that this residuum will be neglected, as much as all the rest, by the common people, when the Bible ceases to be regarded as the Word of God. They have read the Bible as *that*, and when they cease to think it so they will no

more read it than they read Homer—to say nothing of the Koran, the Vedas, or the Zendavesta.

Evidently, then, the British and Foreign Bible Society is on a wrong track in soliciting and printing these literary testimonials to the Bible. Freethinkers will not be deceived by them, true believers do not need them, and they are “words, words, words” to the great host of indifferentists. Literary testimonials never kept alive a dying faith, and they will never resuscitate a dead one. It is only as the Word of God that the Bible can possibly survive. And if it is not that, the Bible Society had better sing small, or keep quiet altogether.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Examining the Idols.—II.

(Continued from page 739.)

THE third cause of error is called by Bacon the “Idols of the Forum.” The principal forms of this are the power of words over thought, and the general influence of social intercourse. Usually it is considered a disparagement of two disputants if it is said they are quarrelling about words only. But, as Bacon saw, definition is the all-important thing in any discussion. “For men imagine that their reason governs words, whilst, in fact, words react upon the understanding..... Words are generally formed in a popular sense, and define things by those broad lines which are most obvious to the vulgar mind; but when a more acute understanding, or more diligent observation is anxious to vary those lines, and to adapt them more accurately to nature, words oppose it. Hence the great and solemn disputes of learned men often terminate in controversies about words and names, in regard to which it would be better (imitating the caution of mathematicians) to proceed more advisedly in the first instance, and to bring such disputes to a regular issue by definitions.”

Words should *express* thought; as a matter of fact they more often determine its course. And this tyranny of speech is the harder to fight because its presence is so seldom suspected. Assume, for a moment, that the same words represented exactly the same ideas to all people and discussion would be either abolished or reduced to a minimum. But because words do not convey the same connotations to all, because in fact their connotation is determined by heredity, by education, by environment, because the same words fail to give anything like a common mental ground on which different people may meet, discussion not only continues, but becomes unnecessarily involved.

Take as an example the theistic implications read into the theory of natural selection. The phrase was not the most accurate that might have been used, but the meaning placed upon it by Darwin was plain enough. All that Darwin meant by it was that the emergence of a “fitter” form of animal life was due to certain animals possessing in a greater degree qualities that enabled them to more successfully overcome the difficulties of their environment. These survived while the less fortunate perished. The process was therefore analogous to that process by which a breeder develops certain varieties of animal or plant, with the exception of one feature. In the case of the breeder the selective power is conscious, works for a desired end, and *selection* is the dominant factor. In the case of nature, there is, so far as can be seen, no end to be realised, elimination is the dominant factor, and selection subsidiary, while the result is produced by unconscious and mechanical forces.

This distinction must be perfectly plain to all who seriously set to work to find out what really is meant by natural selection; yet, because selection implies intelligence, when the term connotes human action, it is solemnly argued, that the whole natural process necessarily involves the existence of an almighty breeder, who operates through natural selection to

produce a superior animal form. Or one finds it gravely argued that inasmuch as in human society the smart swindler often triumphs over the morally better individual, therefore the principal of the survival of the fittest does not apply to mankind. Of course, "fittest" has no necessary moral significance, as the term is used in science. All it means is fittest in relation to a given environment. There need be no relation whatever between the morally best, and the biologically fittest. In both these instances it is the word that determines the thought, and not the thought that selects the words.

The power of words over thought is again seen in the hoary controversy of "free will." If the question were stated as it ought to be stated—namely, whether there existed in the world a force that was absolutely independent of all other forces; one that was self-originated and self-controlled—the absurdity would be so glaring that it would hardly demand discussion. But, surrounded by a host of quite irrelevant words, such as "freedom," "necessity," "power of choice," etc., the essential question is lost sight of, and the misleading associations of these words result in the question being decided by prejudice instead of reason. Everyone likes to feel himself on the side of freedom; no one cares to stand as a champion of "necessity"; but just what is meant by freedom, or necessity, or choice, or will, when used in such connections, is scarcely thought of.

Social intercourse is also, as Bacon points out, a powerful obstacle in the way of people arriving at truth. It may safely be said that, for every one individual who takes his or her beliefs from a study of a subject, ninety-nine derive them from class or caste influence and prejudices. The whole grounds of the support given by people to certain logically indefensible principles of government is that they have been born in a particular social set, and subjected to certain special class influences. Their defence of these institutions take a number of ingenious forms; but at bottom it is caste prejudice that has secured their adherence, and which has prevented their even subjecting them to an impartial examination.

How many persons are there who owe their beliefs about religion to a study of the subject? Not one in a thousand. Primarily people have definite religious beliefs because their parents possessed them beforehand; and these beliefs take their form from the country, the locality, or the class amid which they move. Far from religious beliefs being held from a genuine conviction of their truth, examination is the very last thing that is thought of; the bare suggestion of it as necessary being rejected as a species of personal affront. More than that, the suggestion that one might be led to give up belief in his religion is treated as if it were asserted that one would turn traitor to one's country—the instinct of race becoming thus affiliated with the belief in religion.

This is seen with great clearness in the case of Jews, when repressive social and legal enactments have been given up, and they are allowed to mingle with the surrounding population, as in England. Of religious conviction the average English-born Jew possesses little. What he often mistakes for that is the instinct of race cohesion; and this leads him to cling to a number of semi-barbarous customs, obsolete institutions, and perform religious ceremonies in a more or less perfunctory manner, rather than feel that he is deserting his race.

The influence of social custom is seen quite as strongly in securing silence in cases where all religious conviction has ceased to exist. If it is not exactly fashionable to have a religion, it is certainly not fashionable or respectable to say openly and honestly that one has given up all belief in it. One need not discuss those whose reticence is dictated by purely financial considerations. Quite apart from these, there are large numbers who hide their heresy simply because they do not care to feel that they are outside the stream of respectability. Thousands go on, year after year, mixing with people who have no more belief than they have

themselves, and each of them showing to the other a certain semblance of belief. Each is playing the hypocrite for the benefit of the other. If thought-reading were universal, the civilised world would be considerably surprised to find how little real religious belief there is among educated people. The social sanction has its good side; without it, human evolution could not have reached the stage it has reached. But it has its injurious aspect also; and this is, that it enforces customs long after their usefulness has gone, and wrings from timid men and women a profession of belief where no genuine conviction exists.

Lord Bacon's fourth and final obstacle to truth is "The Idols of the Theatre." These include the dogmas and theories of the schools. They do not influence the mind in the insensible manner of the other three, but are acquired, and are often enough the result of much learning and study. Men study hard to master a particular theory, and, once they have mastered it, their whole energies are bent towards twisting everything into agreement with it. In this way, learning itself becomes a hindrance to truth instead of a help. Or the influence of a pet theory is such that people reckon only the facts that agree with it, and pass over all that would serve to confute it. "It was well answered," says Bacon, "by him who was shown in a temple the votive tablets suspended by such as had escaped the perils of shipwreck, and was pressed as to whether he would then recognise the power of the gods, by an inquiry, 'But where are the portraits of those who have perished, in spite of their vows?'" The whole armory of religious defence is filled with weapons of this description—arguments that count the hits and ignore the misses.

The pestilential influence of religious theories is traceable in the whole history of the conflict between religion and science. Discoveries in physics, in astronomy, in geology, in biology, were all opposed on the avowed grounds that they were in opposition to the theories taught by religion. If one looks back, it is simply astounding how seldom this opposition was based upon the belief that these teachings were false. It was enough that they were not in harmony with religion. And it is not uncommon, even to-day, to hear people say, without any recognition of its absurdity, "Oh, I do not believe in this or that teaching of science, because it is against my religious belief." That it is the duty of each person to see that their beliefs are warranted by facts, to modify them in the light of more complete knowledge, and, if necessary, discard them altogether, never seems to cross their minds. And that this should not occur to the average man or woman is, when properly regarded, one of the severest condemnations of the influence of religion on human development that can be passed.

C. COHEN.

### Were the Jews ever in Egypt?

"And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt; and the king's merchants received them in *droves* each *drove* at a price" (1 Kings x. 28).

IT is a somewhat remarkable thing that King Solomon should have derived his supplies of horses from Egypt. Egypt is not a horse-breeding country nowadays, and it is not well suited for the animal. If it were not for the above verse, no one would ever have guessed that Solomon's remount department was supplied from the Nile valley. Furthermore, the Hebrew word *קָרָיִים*, translated "droves" in the English Version, is somewhat of a difficulty in this connection, for it makes the sentence ungrammatical. If we assume that the Hebrew text has the wrong vowel points, then, instead of "drove" we may read *me Queh*, i.e., "from Kueh," and the verse would inform us that the king's merchants received the horses "from Kueh, from Kueh at a price." The Septuagint translators rendered the passage "from *Thekue* at a price." That is to say, they read *קָרָיִים* instead of *קָרָיִים*—a very excusable mistake; but

some later Greek versions rendered it "from *Koa* at a price," which is practically the reading proposed by Lenormant and Winckler. But where was *Koa* or *Kueh*? It was the name which the Assyrians gave to eastern Cilicia! Herodotus tells us (viii. 90) that Cilicia was a noted horse-breeding country; and other classical writers have mentioned the horses which roamed in herds over the plains of Cilicia. But if Solomon's merchants received their horses from *Kueh*, what had Egypt to do with them?

The Hebrew word for Egypt was *Mizraim*, the Assyrians called it *Muzri*. But upon the famous Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser II., we have the inscription:—

"I have received the tribute of the country of *Muzri*; dromedaries with two humps, an ox of the river *Saveya*, an antelope, elephants, and apes with their young."<sup>\*</sup>

The inscription is accompanied by a bas-relief representing the animals in question; and there can be no doubt that the first are Bactrian camels. The "ox" is exceedingly like a yak; and the elephant has the small ears of the Indian variety. Evidently none of these animals came from Egypt—if they did zoology, and "the geographical distribution of animals" is a vain study. But as long ago as 1874, Dr. Schrader pointed out that the Assyrian inscriptions frequently mentioned a land of *Muzri*, which was evidently in Northern Syria. It is, therefore, obvious that the *Mizraim* of 1 Kings x. 28 must have been this northern Syrian *Muzri*, and that was why it was linked with *Kueh*. Solomon, therefore, derived his horses from the great horse-breeding districts of Cilicia and Cappadocia.

But the Assyrian inscriptions also make us acquainted with another *Muzri*, this time in northern Arabia. The earlier Assyriologists confused this *Muzri* with Egypt—a very pardonable mistake—but as this *Muzri* is repeatedly mentioned along with *Milukhi* (the Amalekites of the Old Testament) and Arabia there can hardly be any question in the matter.† Did Solomon get horses from the north Arabian *Muzri*? That is hardly probable, as at that time Arabia was only noted for its camels—camels of the one-humped variety, *i.e.*, the Arabian camel—and the Arabian horse does not trace his pedigree higher than the Prophet. But Solomon's *wife* may have come from that country. Sargon, King of Assyria, mentions as one of his antagonists *Pirhu*, King of the land of *Muzri*, in connection with an Arabian Queen, *Samsieh*, and a Sabæan, *Ithamar*.

There were thus in Assyrian times three countries called indifferently *Muzri*—namely, Egypt, Northern Arabia, and Northern Syria. This frequency of the same name for widely separated countries gave rise to difficulties in Assyrian decipherment before it was fully grasped; but it opens up a much larger question. If the north Syrian *Muzri*, whence Solomon got his horses, could become confused with Egypt, what certainty have we that *Mizraim* means Egypt in other parts of the Old Testament? Of late years, Dr. Winckler has put forward the theory that the legends of the Egyptian bondage and exodus have arisen simply and solely through confusion between the Egyptian *Muzri* and the Arabian *Muzri*.

It is now accepted among Old Testament critics that the legends of the Pentateuch in their present form are not earlier than about the eighth century B.C.; and in that case they were dealing with events supposed to have happened six hundred years before. Six centuries would give ample time for the growth of any legends; and it would be considered more dignified to connect the early story of the nation with the great realm of Egypt, rather than with the petty land of *Muzri*. It has been claimed that there is a lot of local color about the Egyptian stories in the Pentateuch; but, even were all this local color what is claimed for it, it would contain nothing that could not have been written by any well-informed Jew down to the latest date at which the Pentateuch could ever have been compiled; and the fact remains

that the said local color is chiefly to be found in the very latest stratum of the Mosaic books.

For centuries it has been sought to find traces in Egypt of the Israelitish sojourn there—and the search has been fruitless. The hope of discovering corroborative records of the Exodus has given a zest to the science of Egyptology for the last hundred years—and the hope has remained unrealised. Although the literary records of Egypt are most plentiful for the period when the "bondage" and "exodus" are supposed to have occurred, no authentic mention of them has yet come to light.

If the Israelites had marched from Egypt to Palestine, the natural road would have led them to enter the latter country from the south; whereas the legends consistently describe their invasion of Palestine to have taken place from the east—north of the Dead Sea. The Jewish writers themselves saw that difficulty, and they therefore invented the theory of a vast turning movement (Exod. xiii. 17, 18). *Yahveh* was afraid to lead the people through the land of the Philistines, and so led them round to the banks of the Jordan. Such a course was utterly unnecessary for invaders coming from the south; for anyone who looks at a map can see that there was a considerable stretch of Canaan between Philistia and the Dead Sea which would have permitted the Jews to penetrate into the interior of the country without disturbing the Philistines at all; therefore the turning movement theory does not explain the facts of the case.

If, however, instead of coming from *Mizraim*—*i.e.*, Egypt—the early Israelites came from *Muzri* in northern Arabia, the east of Palestine would be the natural direction for them to have commenced their invasion. The course of Israelitish tradition would therefore have been this. The early stories told of an entry into Canaan across the River Jordan, with some preliminary settlements on its eastern bank; the children of Israel having come from *Muzri*. From these narratives was eventually evolved the idea that the immigrants came from the more important *Mizraim*. What the primeval legends said of *Pirhu*, King of *Muzri*, we know not; but he was superseded by *Pharaoh*, King of *Mizraim*—a monarch still unknown to Egypt. The legends gathered material, as legends do, and fresh stories were invented to account for the Jews being in Egypt to start with. *Mosheh* the "deliverer" was postulated, to draw the children of Israel out of Egypt; and his name testifies to the lateness of his invention, for it is merely the regular active participle of *mashah*; while the narrative of the ark of bulrushes was an old Babylonian tale about *Sargon* of *Akkad*. Then other legends had to be made up to account for the appearance of the Israelites in *Gilead* and *Bashan*, which were obviously not on the road from Egypt; and at last the story of the Exodus was developed as we find it in the Pentateuch. All this was fully within the scope of Jewish imagination; and thus there is really no reason to suppose that the Israelites were ever in Egypt. In the language of the apologists "thus a great difficulty is removed from the sacred narrative." CHILPERIC.

## Prayer.—II.

(Continued from page 741.)

In 1 Kings xviii. there is a very amusing, if not an instructive, account of a praying contest. The contest was to decide whether *Baal* or the God of Israel was the real God, and whether *Elijah* or the prophets of *Baal* were the real prophets. *Elijah* was by himself, an only one; but *Baal* had 450 prophets, and there were besides 400 prophets of the groves. The conditions and arrangements of the contest were made by *Elijah*, the one prophet; the 850 prophets had nothing to say in the matter but to accept the terms and do as *Elijah* told them. Each side had to erect an altar, place a bullock on the

\* *Records of the Past*, New Series, iv., p. 52.

† *Encyc. Biblica*, iii., col. 3,165.

wood, and pray to their god to set fire to the wood; and the god that would answer the prayer by firing the wood would be the real God. The prophets of Baal commenced the contest. They called on the name of Baal from morning till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us." But there was no voice, nor any that answered. Then Elijah mocked them, and said: "Cry aloud, for he is god. Perhaps he is talking, or pursuing, or is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." The result of the mocking was terrific. The prophets cried aloud, cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them; and this was continued till evening without an answer, when it was given up. Then Elijah went to work, made an altar, put the bullock on the wood, poured water time after time over all, made a trench around the altar and filled it with water, and then prayed; and the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the altar and all, and licked up the water in the trench; and the people fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is the God." I will at present refrain from making any comments on the narrative, although the whole chapter is full of materials and temptation to do so, and is, besides, very suggestive in many ways. Let the reader make his own reflections, and draw his conclusions in his own way.

This praying contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal reminds me of an attempt made some years ago to have a modern contest between prayer and science. Science and prayer were each to have a bed in a hospital, to test the value of praying over a patient, and the efficiency of material means without prayer. But nothing came out of it. Theologians knew better than risk the failure, and the challenge was declined.

Seriously, is there any good in all the praying going on in all the world? Is there any reason in it? Is there any utility in it? Are prayers ever answered? Are the prayers of to-day, in any sense, superior to, or more rational, than the prayers of primitive man? Will any prayer stand the test of analysis, and bear the searchlight of reason without damage? If the answer is in the negative, as prayer is about half of what is called religion, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that praying is a huge waste of time, energy, and opportunities, besides being a gigantic delusion.

I suppose that Christians, especially intelligent and educated Christians, would agree that all the prayers made to Baal, and other pagan gods of old, were useless, fruitless, foolish, and wasteful of time, energy, opportunities, and means. They would also agree that it would be a ridiculous folly to pray to animals, trees, fountains, and rivers, or even to the moon, the sun, or the stars. It would be equally absurd to pray to an idol of stone or wood made by man himself to be his god. In the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah this aspect of the question is well described. "He heweth him down cedars, cypress, and the oak. With part of the wood he makes fire to warm himself, to bake his bread, and roast his meat; with the residue he maketh a god, a graven image. He falleth down to it and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god. And the writer says they had not enough knowledge and understanding to say, "I have burned part of it in the fire, and have baked bread on the coals thereof. I have roasted flesh and eaten it, and shall I make the residue thereof a god, shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?" The prophet saw very clearly the absurdity of praying to and worshipping an idol made by the man himself. But he did not see that it was quite as absurd to pray to and worship a god that was nothing but an idea, made by the mind of man, as the other god was made by his hands.

In the case of the idolater, he has an object which he calls god that he can see and handle. And it is not the wood or stone that he worships, but the divinity which he believes resides in the idol. Christians would say the belief is absurd. It may be granted that it is so. But is it any more absurd than

the belief of a Christian. A personal god must be somewhere, and he must be in many places at the same time, otherwise how can his worshippers call on him in thousands of chapels and churches at the same time? Do they not call the churches and chapels "houses of God"? Are they not built for God to dwell therein? But this is the point: Is there anything more absurd in the idea of God dwelling in an idol than in the belief that he dwells in a church or a chapel? Of the two the idol god seems to be the most substantial. The idolater can see his god without closing his eyes, which the Christian apparently cannot do, for whenever they pray they close their eyes, in order, I suppose, to see the ghost, for if it is not for that it is difficult to account for so ridiculous a practice.

To the majority of Christians, there is no doubt, God is a person similar to themselves, having eyes to see, ears to hear, lips to speak, and, one would think, something to think with, and somewhere to live in. Of course, they have never thought the matter out, and their priests have never taught them to think or informed them of what others have thought on the subject. Had they thought, even superficially, what a belief in a personal God implies, it would inevitably shake their faith. But the god of the educated Christian is not a person. O dear no. He is the first cause, the unknowable, the essence, the soul of the universe—that is to say, he is something or other, but they do not know and cannot say what. Now I can understand how an idolater can worship an idol, and how an ordinary Christian can worship a supposed personal god, but how anyone can worship an impersonal something by calling on him and praying to him passes my comprehension. We have some idea of infinite space, endless duration, and the universal ether, but no intelligent man would pray to them. We can conceive of love, justice, force, and many other things in the abstract, as an idea, though never existing apart from an object, as far as we know; but would any sane, intelligent person pray to them with expectation they would hear, understand, and answer? Surely not. But that would be quite as rational as praying to an impersonal God, which at the best is only an idea, a personification of goodness by man himself. And it would be as wise a proceeding to build a temple to the letter X for men to worship it as it is to build churches and chapels to worship a mere idea under the name of God.

It is true that the universe is full of objects calculated to inspire awe, reverence, love, admiration, wonder, and fear; but all these emotions can be felt and exercised to the full without worshipping them and praying to them. The more we examine the secrets and wonders of nature the more reverence and awe is felt. You may call this reverence, if you like, worship, but remember that the agnostic and sceptic can feel and exercise this reverence as keenly and fully as any Christian. Besides, the objects which inspire reverence are only part of nature and not the whole. There are other objects and aspects of nature that it is impossible to admire, love, reverence, or praise. There is ugliness, calamities, cruelties, disease, and death, and thousands of other enormities that no sane man can admire or praise. Christians never look at the dark side, or if they do they never say anything about it. If the good, beautiful, beneficial, and adorable in nature is to be worshipped under the name of God, would it not be quite as rational to establish a worship or service of hate and execration for the devil, which is a personification of evil, as God is a personification of good? If not, why not? If the good can see, hear, and answer the prayers of worshippers, why cannot the evil be influenced in a similar way? Christians, no doubt, will ridicule and scout the idea that the evil in nature can be influenced by anything man can do. But is it not quite as ridiculous to think that men's prayers or praise can influence the good under the name of God?

R. J. DERFEL.

(To be continued.)

## Religion in the Schools.

THE STATE HAS JURISDICTION OVER ONLY THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD.

(BY DR. MINOT J. SAVAGE.)

EVERY boy ought to be taught the fundamental principles of right and wrong. Can this be done without teaching religion? Some religionists tell you it cannot; but let us see a moment. How is it that men have learned that it is not right to kill; that it is not right to steal; that it is not right to lie; that it is not right to covet, not right to envy, to hate? How is it that men have discovered the fundamental principles of ethics, of right and wrong? Has it been by any revelation, or has it rather been as the result of human experience?

Men have learned the fundamental principles of right and wrong by trying to live and get along together, just as naturally as they have learned what articles are wholesome to eat and what are not. This is proved beyond any sort of question in the face of any religious controversy by this fact, that all over the world, in every land where you find people arrived at a certain stage of social and political progress, you find substantially the same ethical principles recognised and acted upon.

If you require a revelation, supernatural revelation, to teach people the principles of right and wrong, then you must concede not only that there has been a supernatural revelation accorded to the Christians and the Jews, but to the Chinese, the Persians, the Hindoos, the Mohammedans, and all the other great religions of the world.

Just as, for example, when you reach a certain altitude above the level of the sea, whether in North America or South, in Europe, Asia, or Africa, you find substantially the same kind of trees and shrubs and growths of one kind or another—not identical, but substantially the same kind—so, wherever you reach a certain altitude of social and political experience on the part of men, you find substantially the same ideas of right and wrong.

These, then, have been wrought out as the result of human experience, and they can be taught without reference to any particular religion or any sect in Christendom, just as well as the fundamental principles of astronomy or geology can be taught. And these ought to be taught in the public schools.

You cannot control the development, possibly, of a pupil's character, but you can teach him the principles of right and wrong, so that after he goes out into society and begins to play his part as a man, if he goes wrong he shall do it with his eyes open and be responsible for it. That is all that the State can do in the matter.

Three things, then, the public school ought to concentrate its attentions upon: training the child so far as possible into an ability to earn his own living honestly; training him in such a way that he can be an intelligent citizen of the republic and cast an intelligent vote, training him in regard to the fundamental principles of right and wrong, so that he may know the right way, whether he chooses to walk in it or not.

Now, as I said a moment ago, I have no objection to every boy's knowing everything, and being trained into the possibility of doing everything, if he can; but the interest of the State is simply in having the child trained into fitness for good citizenship. That first, middle, last, all; and that anyhow, whatever else goes by the board. That first; other things, so far as you can, after that.

But, as I said, it is very difficult for people to get free of their traditions; and the religious tradition, the religious prejudice, is the last one ever to be overcome. Why? Because it is held as the most sacred and the most important, and so people feel bound by it after they are willing to surrender almost anything else.

And so people demand—they demand to-day, it is the popular demand in one way or another—that religion shall still be taught in the public schools.

It is taught in a fragmentary way, in a poor and inefficient way, but the majority of the people seem to be in favor of some attempt in that direction.

I wish now to ask you to consider the principles involved, and see what we ought to do. Note now what I said a moment ago, that this country, for the first time in the history of the world on the part of a great nation, has abandoned any claim to dictate in the matter of religion. All religions here are free. All sects are free. All should have equal opportunity before the law, none of them any special favor before the law.

Why? In the first place, to put it baldly—and you will see that that carries the whole principle—all the religions have had it as their great aim in the past to prepare people for another world; to see to it that people's souls were saved after death.

Now let us put it with perfect frankness and freedom. It is none of the State's business whether my soul is saved in the next world or not. The only concern the State has with me is to see that I make a good citizen in this world. What becomes of me after I pass the border is my business, and not the business of the State.

Governor Odell has a perfect right, as a man, to join any church and to do anything he can to persuade other people to join it, to engage earnestly in trying to save people's souls; but, as *Governor Odell*, he has no concern in this matter, and has no right to interfere in it. The State has jurisdiction over this world, and not over the next. There is the fundamental principle.

Now note what the present condition of affairs is. When I was a boy, the New Testament was read the first thing in the morning after the school session began. We read around in turn, each of us reading a verse. I never thought that the effect was one in favor of reverence or the cultivation of religion. It was not done with any great seriousness. The children, half the time, did not know what they were reading about, and it rather tended to flippancy and disrespect towards religion.

I understand that in this State to-day the law is that the Bible may be read in the school, but without note or comment on the part of the teacher. Is that law obeyed? I do not know to what extent the matter is carried, but I do happen to know that in some cases the teachers do comment, and do teach, not religion only, but theology.

And do you not know perfectly well that it is practically impossible for a teacher to conduct the reading of the Bible in the schools without its being apparent as to what his own standing and beliefs are, without his having, not a religious, necessarily, but a sectarian influence of one kind or another? I believe—and that is what I am coming to now, practically—that the only just, fair, righteous thing is that the Bible should never be read at all in the public schools, and I will tell you why.

Before coming to that, let me touch on one point that I am willing to concede as an exception, though I do not think it would be satisfactory to anybody. Every little while somebody tells us how valuable the Bible is as a masterpiece of English. I grant it. President Butler, of Columbia, has been making a point of it recently, and saying that the Bible ought to be more read and studied by scholars, if for nothing else than that it is such a masterpiece of noble English.

Does anybody believe, however, that the way the Bible is ordinarily read in the public schools teaches any child a noble use of English, that they get any impression in that direction? If you wish to use the Bible for that, let us have a text-book prepared, the finest specimens of the Bible selected, and let it be used as a reading-book. I should have no objection. Those, however, who look upon the Bible as an absolutely infallible, divine revelation, would think that a degradation of the book; it would not satisfy them; and for that reason, in my judgment, it is not a practical solution of the problem.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

(To be continued.)

## Acid Drops.

Twelve months have passed by since the death of Dr. Parker. His successor, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, reminded the City Temple congregation of the fact last Sunday. Mr. Campbell himself is still "going strong," and the City Temple is more attractive than ever; partly, perhaps, on account of the electric light, and other improvements, introduced at a vast expense. The sermon last Sunday is described as "highly practical." We are told that it was "based upon the combination in Christ's character of the two apparently contradictory elements, the sweetness of Guatama with the strength of the Stoics." The "sweetness" of Christ is not very obvious in some of his sayings, such as: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." "Whoso believeth not shall be damned." "All that came before me were thieves and robbers." "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Nor is the strength of Christ too obvious in such sayings as: "Oh, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"—the cup he came to drink; and, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But perhaps Mr. Campbell uses a different Bible from ours.

About 9,000 members of Religious Orders have been "expelled" from France; that is to say, have emigrated because they could not, or would not, conform to the law of the country. Some 6,000 of them have settled in England, and are mostly living in clover on beautiful healthy spots. A thousand or so have gone to Canada, and nearly two thousand to the United States. We see it is estimated that the 6,000 who have settled in England have brought some £4,500,000 with them. "Blessed be ye poor."

*Holy Russia!* The trials in connection with the Kischineff massacre, after all this lapse of time, are being conducted with such secrecy that all the newspaper correspondents have left in despair of obtaining any decent information. Yet *Holy Russia* puts on a solemn face and joins in rebuking the Sultan for allowing massacres in Macedonia.

The Chief Commissioner of Police in London has sent a memorandum round to all the stations to the following effect: "It has been suggested by a Temperance Society that prisoners detained in police cells might be provided with a Bible, New Testament, or other religious or Temperance literature, especially on Sundays, when they would probably be in a condition to read and appreciate such literature. Superintendents are to report as to the practicability of the suggestion made, and the number of copies that would be required for use in each cell, together with any suggestion as to other literature (which would be procured by the Society) that could be similarly used."

We do not know the name of this Temperance Society, as we naturally did not get a copy of this memorandum from the Chief Commissioner himself. Anyhow, it is a rare joke to class the Bible with "other Temperance literature." Jehovah appears in quite a new light as a Temperance author. When the Saturday night "drunks" got hold of a copy of his works on Sunday, if only to kill the time, they may discover some very remarkable teetotal texts. "Let him drink, and remember his misery no more," would be particularly appropriate. On the strength of that, the poor devil in the police cell might request the bobby in charge to fetch in an adequate supply of "booze," and drink success to the tippler's text-book.

The religious education question has cropped up on the Glasgow School Board. Mr. Forson, a Congregationalist minister, moved "That the Shorter Catechism be withdrawn from the syllabus of religious instruction." This was touching the very Ark of the Covenant. So far it was a bold proceeding. But we cannot admire the way in which Mr. Forson went to work. He wanted to get rid of the Shorter Catechism to make more room for the Bible. One of his objections to it was that some ministers and teachers did not believe all that was in it. Does he mean to say, then, that there are no ministers and teachers who do not believe all that is in the Bible?

Mr. M. Haddow, who joined in the discussion, said that he was in favor of secular education. His was the only rational speech in the debate. One clerical speaker was positively outrageous. Canon Dyer appealed to a higher principle than any mandate from the electorate. He would take no mandate (he said) from any electorate; he would always insist that religion, as he understood it, should always be taught in their schools. Indeed! Why, it is only the mandate of the electorate that enables Canon Dyer to sit on the

Glasgow School Board at all. We hope the electorate will take note of his impudent declaration, and send him packing at the next election.

Dr. W. M. Bayliss, of University College, London, succeeded in his libel action against the Hon. Stephen Coleridge. In the present state of public opinion and sentiment in this country, nothing else was to be expected. One can only regard the monstrous amount of damages awarded by the jury (£2,000) as a punishment inflicted on a leading anti-viviselector. Such damages are simply retributive. It is evident that the jury is not always an ideal institution. Where principles and convictions are concerned, it may even be a worse despotism than that of a bigoted ruler—because of its utter irresponsibility. Perhaps the chief lesson of Mr. Coleridge's misfortune is this: that anti-vivisectors should confine themselves to the evidence given by vivisectors against themselves. It is abundant, and it is necessarily convincing. Let them be convicted out of their own mouths; a method which meets the claims of both logic and poetical justice.

Mr. Stephen Coleridge writes to the press: "I paid Mr. Bayliss his £2,000 damages yesterday. It is my duty to accept the verdict of the jury, and I do not criticise it." We cannot see that it is Mr. Coleridge's duty to do anything of the kind. Of course he could help accepting the verdict of the jury in one way; he had to pay the damages or be sold up or made a bankrupt. But he is under no obligation to accept the verdict of the jury in any other way. And, as a matter of fact, he does not do so. He declared in court that he was impenitent, and that he disbelieved Mr. Bayliss's evidence as far as it was contradicted by the two lady students.

If pioneers bowed morally, as well as legally, to the verdict of juries, there would be precious little progress. The men who fought for the freedom of the press which we now enjoy defied juries as well as judges, generation after generation. Juries represent the average man, and the average man, alas, is generally too much of a fool and a slave.

Amongst the letters in the *Daily News* on this case is one from a well-meaning, but not too clever, man of God—the Rev. H. J. Williams, of Kinross. "There was another Judge and another jury," he says, "not far away." Not far away! Outside the court is practically as far off as Sirius. It is not very wise on Mr. Williams' part to drag in his do-nothing deity in this fashion.

Mr. William Watson, the poet, was the first to offer a subscription (of £10) towards the £2,000 and costs in which Mr. Stephen Coleridge has been mulcted. Mr. Watson made this spirited offer through the *Daily News*. He is not a Christian, however, in any intelligent meaning of the term. We suppose, if he called himself anything, he would call himself an Agnostic.

Having signed the Panama Canal treaty, President Roosevelt also signed the usual Thanksgiving proclamation to his subjects—we beg pardon, his fellow citizens. No doubt the Almighty is duly obliged to him for this act of consideration. Roosevelt hoped his people would desist from labor on November 26, and "in their several homes and places of worship render thanks unto Almighty God for his manifold mercies." Doubtless a great many of them will do so—to the accompaniment of roast turkey. Those who are out of work, those who find much difficulty in making both ends meet when they are in work, and those who have almost lost the recollection of what a square meal is like, will perhaps let Roosevelt and the other prosperous Americans have a monopoly of the thanksgiving. For what *they* have received may the Lord make *them* truly thankful—as the girl who was kept without dinner said grace at the finish.

The *Lancet*, in an article on the Miss Hickman case, concluded that she was probably upset by her responsibilities. Each and all of us, it added, when confronted by a tragedy like the present, may take to himself the words of Lear, and pray: "Oh, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!" Apparently the *Lancet* could not think of a suitable text in the Bible. Shakespeare is often more useful. He was not inspired, but he had genius.

"A Passive Resister" had a charming letter in the *Daily News* recently. Being the principal of a private school, as well as a Nonconformist, he felt he had a right to speak on the subject of "the present strife over the religious education of the children of our land." In his opinion, the way out of the trouble was very easy—though the fact that it was not taken ought to have suggested to him that it might not be as easy as it looked. "The religion necessary for a

child," he said, "is a very simple one, and I have found it possible to teach my girls to look up to God as their Father, to Jesus Christ as their Savior, and to rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and strength to live the holy life without reference to Church organisation or differences of opinion as to baptism and the Lord's Supper, etc. And surely such teaching is common to all denominations, Unitarians and Jews excepted—for them there is the conscience clause." How delightful! Unitarians and Jews may withdraw their own children from a religious teaching which they disbelieve and even abhor, but they must contribute to the cost of teaching it to other people's children. As for other non-Christians, this gentleman has never heard of them, unless he thinks them beneath notice. He does not regard Atheists, Agnostics, Freethinkers, Secularists, Rationalists, and Positivists as worth consideration. The Christians should come to an arrangement amongst themselves, and the citizens of every other denomination may then go to the Devil. Fortunately, the Christians will not come to such an arrangement. Roman Catholics and Anglicans look upon "unsectarian religion" as neither flesh, fowl, nor good red herring. To them it is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.

This "Passive Resister" is a nincompoop to call himself a Nonconformist. He evidently does not understand the meaning of the term. "I believe," he says, "that as a Christian nation it is our bounden duty to give to the children those Scriptures which are able to make them 'wise unto salvation,' and that England will rue the day if ever the Bible is excluded from our schools." Now there can be no such thing as a Christian nation to a true Nonconformist. His fundamental principle is that the State should have nothing whatever to do with religion. Even to ask the citizen's religious opinions in a census paper is, to the true Nonconformist, an impertinence. A Christian nation cannot exist without a State religion. To argue that a State Church is a false and evil institution, and then to plead that the State should patronise religion as far as it suits the convenience (that is, the interests) of Nonconformists, is a most disgusting and contemptible hypocrisy. Whether the Bible is a necessary "good" book for English children is really beside the point. Even if it were so, it would not follow that the State should provide it in the public schools. If the State provides the Bible to-day, a different majority might substitute an anti-Christian text-book for it to-morrow; and how could a Nonconformist resent that, if he once admits the right of the State to deal with such matters? The right of the State means the will of majorities. In some things, this is the only feasible settlement; in other things, it is the most odious tyranny.

Some "friend" has done the Rev. William Sharman, of Derby, an ill turn. Mr. Sharman was doing time as a Passive Resister. As a holy martyr, he would have been pretty sure of heaven. But just as he was counting on a through ticket, this "friend" went and paid the education rate for him, and he was ignominiously released.

This Sharman affair is made the subject of a letter a column long by Dr. Clifford in the *Daily News*. This wordy gentleman argues that Mr. Sharman was really imprisoned by the Bishops of the Church of England, for he holds that they are responsible for the Education Act. Consequently he brands the Bishops as sanguinary persecutors. Well now, we will just put a question to Dr. Clifford. Suppose the Churches and Nonconformity made up their quarrel; suppose Christian teaching were peaceably established in the State schools; suppose we then refused to pay the Education rate, and were sent to prison for refusing; would Dr. Clifford regard us as being persecuted, and would he write long letters to the *Daily News* denouncing our imprisonment? The answer he gives to this question will decide the amount of sincerity there is in his present attitude.

At the dinner held to celebrate the completion of the *Daily News* Religious Census in London a number of letters were read from more or less distinguished Christians. Mr. George Cadbury said: "The attendance is better than many Christian workers had supposed." The Rev. J. Scott-Lidgett, Chairman of the Metropolitan Free Church Federation, however, said: "The state of things revealed is from many points of view disheartening." This gentleman added that "it is the glory of Christianity that it can face unpleasant truths." We suppose this accounts for the laws against blasphemy and heresy.

Why on earth is the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience so unconscientious? We have frequently corrected its careless, and sometimes very stupid, misquotations. Here is another instance. Over its article on the Bayliss-

Coleridge libel case, it printed the following in bold type:—

He liveth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small.

That is not what Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote. What he did write we leave the *Daily News* to find out. The search may improve its literary accuracy—and perhaps its literary knowledge.

The rottenest paper in London is the *Daily News*. We mean it is printed on the rottenest paper. It isn't even fit for what Coleridge called post-culinary purposes.

The dear *Daily News*, which cannot give a line to anything of a radically progressive character, devotes a long paragraph, with a special heading, to "a very interesting relic of Russia's patron saint" in the possession of a lady living at Edgbaston. It consists, we are told, of a large silver locket, containing not only a small piece of one of St. Nicholas's bones, but a number of similar relics of a score or so of Catholic saints, while in the centre is a fragment of wood said to be a piece of the true Cross. While our contemporary was on the job it might have stated what part of the saint's anatomy the bone belonged to. There is nothing like precision in these matters.

Two men of God belonging to rival Churches have agreed to co-operate at Blackheath. The Rev. E. A. Barnes belongs to the Church of England; the R. Rev. Fotheringham belongs to the Congregational Church; and they are jointly running a "People's Service" in the Blackheath Concert Hall. We understand that this is the first case of the kind on record. Christianity is the religion of love (see the prospectus), and two thousand years after its introduction people are astonished to see two preachers of different Churches combining to save souls.

An awkward misprint occurred in a recent number of the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*. "Should they hold good once more," the scribe wrote, "1904 and 1905 will prove dry." The compositor put in "god" for "good," and made it shocking blasphemy.

It was not to be. The Prophet of Nazareth would not allow his poor and humble disciple to be shaken out of his seat. Mr. Hall Caine still sits for Ramsey in the House of Keys. So all's well that ends well. Yet the *Manx Reformer* has the cruelty to say that he is a mere Whig in the House of Keys, although an ardent reformer on the hustings.

The Rev. Mr. Dawson, of Highbury Quadrant church, is making a great effort to bring the non-churchgoers of Islington into the fold. Apparently the thing is to be done—if it is to be done—with the aid of Gipsy Smith, who has been brought into the district as a powerful missionary. No doubt he will have good meetings. The Christians will see to that. But whether he will make any fresh Christians is quite a different matter—on which we have our own opinion.

"Drink," the *Daily News* says, "is the feeder of all other forms of vice, and the most patriotic work, as well as the most Christ-like work, in which the Churches can engage is in combating [the *D. N.* spells it 'combatting'] its influence." Patriotic, it may be; Christ-like, it certainly is not. Christ was not a teetotaler, nor anything like it. He was reproached with being a friend of winebibbers. On one occasion, at a wedding party, when the guests had consumed all the liquor, he provided a fresh supply miraculously; and the words of the text seem to show that it was stuff which a toper could appreciate. The very last meal that he took before his death was enlivened with wine. He did not drink "Scotch" and "Irish" because they were unknown then; but he drank what was going in his day and generation. Consequently, it is very absurd, and not too honest, to talk of opposition to "drink" as "Christ-like."

The Bishop of London has made the belated discovery that there are 28,000 "unfortunates" within his diocese. We understand that he is getting up a Christian crusade against their business. We call it a "business" advisedly, for this is what it is. Women do not become prostitutes by choice, but by necessity; it is the method some are driven to in order to earn a subsistence. The causes of prostitution, therefore, are partly moral, and partly economical. Preaching against it is only a waste of time; and harrying it, with the aid of the police, is not work for "spiritual" teachers, neither is it likely to lead to any durable good. We advise the Bishop of London to meddle—if he *must* meddle—with what he understands.

### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, November 29, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W., at 8, "On the Brink of Death. Herbert Spencer's Last Words."

December 6. Leicester.

### To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.
- G. DAVEY.—We don't think there is any deception this time; anyhow, we are not likely to waste time and money in the way you fear. You say that "if we have a vulnerable point" it is where "the real or apparent persecution of a Freethinker is concerned." Perhaps you are right, but the fault leans to the side of generosity—which is ever the best. Personal suffering should make us more sympathetic with others.
- W. JOHN (Merthyr Tydfil).—We cannot undertake to answer such questions through the post. You will find all the information you seek in Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *Christianity and Progress*, price one penny, which is sent post free from our publishing office for three halfpenny stamps.
- HENRY TESSIER.—Would it not be wiser to get inside the existing Union and try to turn it in the right direction? It may be "rotten with Jesuism," as you say, but it would be difficult, if not impossible, to establish, or even to start, an anti-Christian Union. The powers of cant and humbug are too great.
- J. B. WALLIS.—Thanks. See paragraph.
- H. C.—Is it likely that we should think Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* "out of date," when we are chiefly responsible for the Twentieth Century Edition? Never listen to a clergyman's opinion of a Freethought book. Ask him for his arguments against it. Of course Thomas Paine has been "answered," but he has never been refuted. On the contrary, if you read the Notes to the Twentieth Century Edition you will see that Thomas Paine's conclusions are now taught by eminent Christian divines.
- N. D.—Thanks for your interesting letter. We think you do quite right not to put yourself at the mercy of a lot of bigoted Christians. Every man must judge for himself how he can best serve his principles. No one has the right to decide for another. The great thing is to do something, according to opportunity. Thanks also for the paper. See paragraph.
- J.—We were not aware that when permission was asked to sell Freethought literature at the Woodhouse Moor meetings our Bradford contemporary was the only periodical handed in as a specimen. If this be true, a serious mistake was made. It is no criticism of that little monthly (a thing from which we have always refrained with respect to all our British contemporaries) to say that it does not quite stand for the whole Freethought literature of England. We thank you for the rest of your letter, and assure you that your suggestions will not be neglected.
- S. E. S.—Certainly we are not annoyed. You pay us a compliment in being interested in the reputation of this journal. We will bear your criticism in mind. On the other hand, you will perhaps remember that tastes vary a great deal, and that different minds have to be got at in different ways.
- E. HOLLAND.—Many thanks. Hope to make use of it very shortly. Mr. Foote is considerably better.
- T. E. RHODES.—See acknowledgment in list. Glad to hear that your meetings at Liverpool "have had a record run" since our visit. We hope to see you all again in March.
- CELSUS.—Keep on. The letters will do good. With regard to the Reformation, you may safely say that its leaders did not appeal to the principle of toleration. They claimed to rule the roost as the real true believers, and wanted to put down the Catholics as idolaters. You will find some interesting matter in Cobbett's trenchant, though rather one-sided, little book on the *Protestant Reformation*.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- E. BEARD.—We are sure your lecture in the Labor Hall must have done good. Glad to know the pamphlet was helpful. Was your lecture reported?
- W. H.—The statement about atoms bearing the marks of manufactured articles was made by Lord Kelvin and Clerk-Maxwell, we believe; but it seems to us very nonsensical, if not a bad bit of bluff, for no one has ever yet seen an atom, and the word "marks" is therefore metaphorical; in other words, the statement simply means that two pious scientists happen to believe that God created the universe. That is all. Thanks for your interesting letter. It is pleasant to know that a chance copy of the *Freethinker*, sent you by an unknown person, began a revolution in your mind.
- R. CHAPMAN.—Thanks for your letter re the *Pioneer*—which, by the way, has begun to improve a little in circulation; but so has the *Freethinker*, for that matter. We note your suggestion that the *Pioneer* should be merged in a reorganised *Freethinker*, giving attention to other subjects as well as Freethought ones.
- W. MANN.—Received with thanks. With regard to the other matter, accept our congratulations and best wishes.
- E. CHAPMAN, 32 James Mather-terrace, South Shields, the local Branch secretary, will be glad to hear from friends willing to assist in carrying on meetings in Victoria Hall early in the new year.

CHRISTIAN.—We have already referred to Professor Orr's nonsense about having before him a list of twenty-eight Secularist leaders who became Christians before they died. Let him give the names of these "leaders," and see if anybody recognises them.

E. G. B.—You are mistaken in supposing that what you said was any answer to our letter. You refer to a stray Christian who speaks tolerantly. We have met several such. But what we say is that, when it comes to the sticking point, you may be pretty sure that a Christian, as a Christian, is not to be trusted in relation to a Freethinker, as a Freethinker. Do you understand now?

We have to repeat that letters without the writer's name and address will not be replied to in this column—or elsewhere.

W. P. PEARSON.—Glad to hear you enjoyed Mr. Lloyd's "clear straightforward eloquence" after listening to Mr. Campbell's "rhetorical rubbish" at the City Temple. No doubt, as you say, Mr. Lloyd will get a generous reception when he visits Liverpool. Thanks for your good wishes for the *Pioneer*.

S. STEVENS.—See paragraph.

R. P. EDWARDS.—Thanks for your letter. We are writing you on the subject.

W. CAIN.—We are obliged, and will deal with Dr. Torrey again next week. We have him on toast.

THE COHEN PRESENTATION FUND.—G. Davey 2s. 6d., A. J. Y. 5s., H. W. 5s., Mrs. Stevens 5s., Mrs. E. Beard 2s. 6d., H. C. Byshe 5s., F. Bonte 18s., J. W. B. 2s. 6d., W. Wilson 3s., F. Morgan 5s., M. Silverstone 1s., D. Frankel 1s. 6d., S. Getrah 1s., I. Solomons 2s., J. Goldberg 1s. *Liverpool Branch*:—Mr. Schweitzer £1, Mr. Pearson 2s. 6d., Mr. Howard 2s. 6d. (total £1 5s.).

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

Refraining from platform work for only a single Sunday has done Mr. Foote much good. It has given his throat and chest a chance of recovering themselves from the bad effects of heavy lecturing (for he never lectures perfunctorily) on a very nasty cold. He expects to be himself again this evening (Nov. 29), when he lectures at the Queen's Hall, where he hopes to see a strong rally of his London friends. His subject, "On the Brink of Death: or, Herbert Spencer's Last Words," should prove interesting. Everyone has to stand on that brink, sooner or later; so that the subject is, or should be, one of universal concern. As this is the last lecture of the present Queen's Hall course, Freethinkers might try to induce some of their less heterodox friends to attend. This is, indeed, the best form of advertising.

Mr. Foote's recent lectures at Liverpool were referred to by "Ethel," who writes the "Woman's Letter" in the *Liverpool Review*. "Have you ever," she asks, "heard Mr. Foote lecture? If not, then seize the next opportunity. Never mind whether he is an Atheist or not. Go just for the pleasure of hearing fine oratory, sound sense, and healthy views. A good Atheist is better than a bad Christian. And Mr. Foote looks a decidedly good man. Tall, broadly built, with a fine square head." Mr. Foote will have to buy rice powder for his face if this continues. All the same, he is glad the lady enjoyed his lecture.

Mr. John Lloyd delivered a powerful and highly appreciated lecture at the Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, and he really ought to have had a much larger audience. Of course a price is charged for seats, but Freethinkers are accustomed to that, and they can hardly expect their leaders to be finding money from nowhere. As far as the general public is concerned, it may be necessary to go in for free admission, and trust to collections. We shall see.

Mr. Cohen delivered the second of the special course of Freethought lectures at South Shields on Sunday evening to a good audience, although, as before, the free seats were not as well patronised as they might have been by the general public. Mr. John Lloyd delivers the third lecture of this

course this evening (Nov. 29). No doubt there will be a strong rally of the Tyneside "saints" to give him a rousing reception.

Mr. Lloyd has been induced to pay Newcastle-on-Tyne a visit on Monday evening (Nov. 30), when he will lecture in the Lovaine Hall, St. Mary's-place, at 7.30, on "The Death Struggle of Religion."

The following letter concerning Mr. John Lloyd is extracted from the *The Trades and Labor News*, Johannesburg, of October 17, a copy of which has reached us from a correspondent out there:—

SIR,—It may interest your readers to know that the Rev. John Lloyd, Presbyterian minister—and for many years South Africa's most popular preacher—has relinquished the pulpit, and is now lecturing and writing in the cause of Freethought in England. A series of most interesting articles have been appearing of late from his masterful pen in the London *Freethinker*, entitled "From Christian Pulpit to Secular Platform," under the name of Richard Trevor. Would that every member of his late congregation and personal friends would send along to the Freethought Publishing Co., Ltd., 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C., for a copy of his first pamphlet relating to his "conversion" to Freethought. Mr. Lloyd's first public lecture at the Queen's Hall, London, as an Agnostic, was on "Why I gave up the Supernatural." By the way, the Labor Party have now secured yet another Agnostic-Socialist leader from the South African pulpit. And I would suggest that the Trades and Labor Council, Trades Unions, etc., send a letter of welcome and encouragement to Mr. John Lloyd, at the above address, on his leaving the pulpit to come out into the open to fight the battles of his fellow-men amongst the ranks of labor. Would that he could see his way clear to return to Johannesburg. Hands across the sea to Mr. John Lloyd, ex-Presbyterian minister of the Gospel, and now a leader of men—agitator if you will. Teacher is a more appropriate name.

Yours, etc.,

FELLOW-SHIPMATE.

Johannesburg, Oct. 12, 1903.

We are glad to see M. Clemenceau pursuing what we regard as the right course in respect to education. The right policy is to secularise education and to secularise the State. To set up a State monopoly of education, besides being unjust and inimical to freedom and progress, might simply result in handing over education to the Church—for the Church may capture the State again as it has done before. M. Clemenceau, in his great speech in the Senate, pointed this out plainly. "You monopolists," he said, "whose plan, instead of secularising education, would surrender it in the long run to the priests, are clumsier than the bear of the story, for the bear killed the fly on the man's forehead, whereas you will smash the man and let the fly (the priest) escape." And there is something more. The State is not an impeccable institution. "All the great crimes of history," M. Clemenceau said, "have been perpetrated by the State. I do not deny that there have been good kings. I even admit that there have been religious Popes. But the State, generally speaking, has been a tyrant, unjust, implacable, without bowels of compassion." He referred to the cruelty practised by Christianity as soon as it became allied to the State.

The French Premier obtained a majority of eleven in the Senate for the fresh clause in his new Education Bill debarring all religious Congregationists from opening schools. The original word "unauthorised" was eliminated. M. Combes has the bulk of the nation with him in refusing to let the education of France be any longer under clerical influence. Men who divorce themselves from family ties and duties are not fit to have the youth of France under their control.

Mr. Foote visits Leicester next week end, and delivers two lectures in the Secular Hall. The Saturday night lecture is part of a recent innovation. The Sunday night lecture belongs to the established order of things. Both subjects are of great interest, and will probably attract large audiences.

Councillor Fallows did perhaps a bolder thing than he thought in presiding at Mr. Foote's afternoon lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall. Bigots got up on the Town Council and severely reprimanded him, Astonishment was expressed at his expecting to sit on an Education committee after taking the chair at "such a blasphemous lecture." And enjoying it, too!

Last week's *Yarmouth Mercury* contained another powerful letter by Mr. J. W. de Caux on "Christian Fables." It is chiefly in reply to a Christian who hardly deserved notice, but Mr. de Caux has his eye on the general reader. We note that he definitely leaves the question of what he needs to be saved from if Adam did not fall, because not a

single Christian has ventured to answer it. He now invites Mr. Engström, as soon as that gentleman is well enough, to give his "infinitely easy reasons for believing that Jesus Christ rose from the dead." There will be some fun when Mr. Engström begins.

We have been favored with a copy of the *Blackburn Labor Journal*, which seems to be a lively little sheet. One excellent item in it is "An Open Letter to Catholic Working-Men," bidding them vote at municipal elections according to their own minds and consciences, and not according to the dictates of their priests. The writer has evidently little sympathy with those who, for a livelihood, pilot working-men as well as others "from this 'vale of tears' to the 'mansions in the sky.'" Most of our own readers will be glad to see the following passage on Secular Education:—

"All agree that Secular Education is good. For who will dispute that teaching children to read and write, to impart arithmetical knowledge essential in the business life of a civilised community, to teach them the importance of truthfulness, honesty, and tolerance, to train them in habits of industry (especially useful to the children of the wealthy), to inculcate a desire for good literature and scientific knowledge as well as the love of art? We should think none. Well, then, Socialists hold that public money should be spent upon education of the character named. The belief in a god is a matter for the individual and not for the community. If you Catholic workmen believe that the tenets of your church are good, you should either explain the tenets yourselves or engage others belonging to your faith to do it. But in no case should you compel others who don't agree with you to share in the expense of that instruction. What can you urge against that position? Is it not a fair one? Better still, if all fathers and mothers would agree that the best interests of their children are served by giving them, at the public expense, such a course of training as would develop to the full their physical and mental powers, leaving aside theological instruction till they arrived at maturity. The children would then be better able to judge the merits or demerits of the various beliefs. Some people say that would be bad. Bad for what? For theology? Perhaps so. But that means that the different theological systems cannot withstand intelligent investigation."

"Voltaire is the great humanitarian as well as the great scoffer." This is an extract from the *Daily News*. We congratulate our contemporary on its occasional lucid intervals.

The *Gainsboro' News* prints a capital Freethought letter from the pen of Mr. J. T. Harper in reply to the Rev. J. Gurnhill. We wish Freethinkers would make more use in this way of their local newspapers.

Messrs. Pack, Gott, and Weir had to appear before the Leeds magistrate on Tuesday on a charge of "blasphemy." As the *Freethinker* pages are made up on Tuesday we are unable to give any further information this week. We have written to the defendants with respect to the course we think they should pursue at the police-court. We have also arranged for Mr. Pack to come up to London, at the expense of the National Secular Society, in order to confer with us as to the course the defendants should pursue subsequently. We do not know what more we could do in the circumstances.

The *Secular Annual* for 1904 is in the press and will be ready in a few days. It contains special articles by G. W. Foote, C. Cohen, John Lloyd, Chilperic, Abracadabra, F. J. Gould, and Mary Lovell, as well as the usual information of interest to Secularists. It is well got-up, and the price is only sixpence.

Mr. John Lloyd's story of his journey from the Christian Pulpit to the Secular Platform is also in the press, and will be ready for circulation soon after this number of the *Freethinker* is published. It makes a sixty-four page pamphlet. There will be two impressions; one on fine paper, with a handsome cover, at sixpence; the other on inferior but decent paper, without a cover, at twopence. The Pioneer Press is bringing it out for the Executive of the National Secular Society. It is intended to send a considerable number of copies to the press, and to leading Christian preachers.

We beg to remind our readers that only a very few weeks are left for their subscriptions to the Cohen Presentation Fund. Those who have not yet subscribed will have to hurry up if they want to be in the list. Indisposition has prevented our writing a recent "Special" on the subject, but we have one in hand for next week, as a final rally. That will be our last word on the matter until the Presentation is made at the Annual Dinner on the second Tuesday in January. Meanwhile we await subscriptions, and there should be scores.

## Merry Christmas.

THERE is no good reason why those who do not believe in Christian teaching, and who regard the story of the Incarnation as a fable, should not keep the festival of Christmas well and joyously. It has come to be accepted as a time of mirth, pleasure, and festivity, apart from any superstitions as to virgin births or the supposed Founder of the Christian religion. The most conscientious Freethinker has as much right to it as the most astute believer. Dissociated from all doctrines and dogmas, it is a happy, holy season, because of its mutual joy and goodwill, its loving kindness, charity, and toleration.

Therefore, apart from all theological presentments of it, and all ecclesiastical traditions, forms, and ceremonies connected with it, we, as the children of Reason, hold it as a day to be much observed, and may "keep our Christmas merry still." In gifts one to another, in acts of practical benevolence to the poor and needy, in bountiful open houses and generous feasting, in bright amusements and entertainments, in social pleasure in the family, the ball and the theatre, let us testify that we welcome the old festival. For it antedated Christianity a long, long time, for it "was the birthday of the sun, and of all the sun-gods," and it was a Pagan custom to decorate the houses with evergreen and mistletoe; and among Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans the day was celebrated. The ancient Germans celebrated their Yule Feast centuries before Christianity. "Yule" was the old German name for Christmas, as "Noel" was the French, and signified "the revolution of the year." On this festival the "gods were consulted as to the future, sacrifices were offered to them, and jovial festivities took place" (see *The Rationalist's Manual*, pp. 68-9). The refrain, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men of goodwill," may well be the Freethinker's affectionate wish and aspiration.

Goodwill to men of goodwill, not of ill-will. The just man, the righteous man, cannot wish well to the evil, or invoke blessings on his unrelenting foes. "Love your enemies" may be a "counsel of perfection," but it is not a counsel of common sense. You cannot love your enemies, nor "pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." Grace may do it, but nature revolts at it. You may abstain from violence or injury to those who hate you, yet you have a perfect right to defend yourself against them, and put it out of their power to harm you. You are not bound to endure contumely, insult, or persecution without redress, and sometimes reprisal. You have a natural, inalienable right to silence your adversaries by the most effective, legitimate means in your power, and you ought to do it, if you can. Christmas is not to encourage the pusillanimous spirit, but a brave and manly one. Be magnanimous where magnanimity is opportune. Be chivalrous when you can really act "without fear and without reproach."

In such a spirit let us come to the observance of the happy season, made delightful in thousands of cheerful, joyous households whose Christmas fires shall brighten all the year that is to come. Radiance and beauty emanate from these hospitable homes, not because a certain person is alleged to have been born on this day, but because joy has been incarnated in human hearts through love, intelligence, and truth.

Nor need we fear the feasts of Christmas, unless we are dyspeptics. The ancient Puritan, despising Christmas, saw sin in mince pies and iniquity in plum pudding. Vials of wrath were to be meted out to those who indulged in festive games and dancing and other amusements. But, like the old Covenanters' prejudice against church organs, this feeling has quite died out among the sensible. Thanksgiving Day in New England was the substitute for Christmas and its groaning tables, which even Dissenters now enjoy. We doubt if even the Nonconformist Conscience will prompt even a "passive

resistance" to holiday feasting; and the upper classes among Dissenters probably do not allow a glass of champagne or old port to get past them at the Christmas dinner—some, not all, for all Nonconformists are not totally tectotal. May the mellowing influences soften their asperities towards those who cannot, and would not, think as they do. And if the genial realisation of a blazing plum pudding could but move them, how we long that a million of these, each stuck with its sprig of holly, should be supplied from shore to shore.

"Ever may love and truth prevail" was the legend cut in the marble of the fireside of a literary couple in London (Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hale). Be it our motto, and by it may we strive to promote love everywhere and disseminate truth—that free truth which we so fortunately hold as Freethinkers. We have a goodly heritage in our genuine "Glad Tidings." Let us bring others to share the same, and every recurring Christmastide shall see more and more of Peace on earth, goodwill to men!

GERALD GREY.

## Death of Editor H. L. Green.

Chicago, Ill., U.S.A., November 4, 1903.

ON Sunday, November 1, 1903, a large circle of friends and neighbors of the aged editor of *Free Thought Magazine*, Mr. H. L. Green, and his devoted wife, Thyrsa A. Green, gathered at their home, 213 East Indiana-street, Chicago, Ill., to pay their respects and perform the last offices to the dead.

The old couple were found dead in their bed on the morning of October 30, with the gas pouring from an open gas jet, giving evidence of the cause of death and asphyxiation, and other manifestations of deliberate and carefully-planned preparations for their departure to that bourne toward which all mankind is travelling, but from which none return.

They were both past seventy years of age, and suffering from a complication of diseases against which they had long struggled, but which they felt becoming more and more unbearable, and which the infirmity of their years made impossible for them much longer to resist. The one frequently-expressed fear of each had been that either one would be taken away and the other left to continue the struggle alone. All the facts of their physical condition, age, and circumstances justify the aged couple in their decision to enter the eternal unknown together, if justification is necessary, which their friends do not believe.

The day of the funeral was a perfect one; the sky was almost cloudless and the sun warm, the air balmy as an early day in September. The esteem in which the aged couple were held was manifested by numerous and beautiful floral offerings. Side by side in the modest parlor of their home stood the coffins which held the remains of the old man and his wife, and around which the friends quietly gathered as Judge C. B. Waite, the esteemed friend and earnest co-worker of Mr. Green, offered his tribute to the memory of those whom they had assembled to honor.

Referring touchingly to the cause of Mr. Green's death, he said: "The question of the hour is not, 'How did he die?' but 'How did he live?' and those of you who have known him and of his long years of service in the cause of Freethought, I know will say with me that his life was a worthy one, and well spent in his untiring devotion to the principles set forth in the magazine which he founded and conducted for more than twenty years, and which he always sought to maintain at the highest standard of Freethought literature, according to his conception of it.

"His strong personality and honest business methods have endeared him to the hearts of men and women all over the land, and he has numbered among his friends the brightest and best of those who are known to the literary world of the past half a century.

"Robert G. Ingersoll, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other well-known Freethinkers were among his warmest personal friends."

Judge Waite was deeply affected, and several times came near the point of being overcome by his emotions.

He spoke feelingly of "Mr. Green's desire that his magazine should be continued, and its high degree of excellence maintained, which seemed to him of much greater importance than the fact that the time was fast approaching when his own feeble strength would utterly fail, and his own faithful service come to an end, for this he knew must soon be so; but he only looked forward to that as a well-earned

rest and as the only 'reward' to be expected. And so he has gone into that long sleep or rest which he so richly deserved, and we can only say, Farewell! old friend, Farewell!—and to the faithful devoted wife lying beside him, Farewell! Farewell!"

Carriages were then taken to Oak Ridge Cemetery, twelve miles distant, where the bodies were buried in a grave to which the body of their only son, Horace Greeley Green, who died April 5, 1902, had been transferred from Rose Hill Cemetery, in accordance with the last wishes of Mr. and Mrs. Green, and the friends who stood about that open grave will not soon forget the sight of the three coffins lying within it, the son's in the middle, and the old father and mother on either side.

M. M. Mangasarian, of Chicago, one of the editorial contributors to the magazine and a close personal friend of Mr. Green's, made appropriate remarks at the grave, and, in closing, recited the lines upon the tomb of Robert Louis Stevenson, and also read selections from Walt Whitman and Grant Allen.

About a hundred people went the long distance to the cemetery to see the aged couple laid away in their last resting-place. The pall-bearers were George B. Wheeler, E. W. Kenyon (assistant editors of the *Free Thought Magazine*), J. B. Beattie, Daniel Chapin, P. J. Cooley, and F. W. Toedt, all well-known Freethinkers. E. C. Richwald attended to all the funeral details.

His work well done, his labors o'er,  
His tired hands now lie in quiet on his breast;  
His pen laid down shall never more  
Be raised again, or aught disturb his well-earned rest.

How brave he was, few only knew,  
How fearlessly he faced a superstitious world;  
And valiantly his banner true  
Of "Free Thought" and of Reason for mankind unfurled.

And men who bowed to Church and creed,  
And grovelled in the dark of superstition's night,  
Shook off the chains of priestly greed,  
And ranged in battle to establish "Reason's Right."

Sleep on, old friend, the scattered seed  
Of "Free Thought" and of Reason thou hast bravely sown,  
Shall bear rich fruit as man indeed  
Throughout all time and age before has never known.

HULDA L. POTTER LOOMIS.

[EDITORIAL NOTE.—Our lady correspondent's account of the death of Editor and Mrs. Green is evidently written in good faith. We feel bound to state, however, that our New York contemporary, the *Truthseeker*, treats their death as clearly accidental, and does not even allude to any other explanation.—G. W. Foote.]

## A South African Tribute to Mr. John Lloyd.

Johannesburg, Transvaal, October 25, 1903.

To Mr. G. W. Foote.

DEAR SIR,—Excuse my taking the liberty of writing you a few lines; but since I knew that Mr. John Lloyd was the writer of those articles which recently appeared in the *Freethinker*, I cannot rest till I have told you of my pleasure. I am not an educated man, which you no doubt believe; but here goes. I have been an Atheist since I was able to think—that is, since I was about fourteen years old; and, as Lloyd says, I have only been natural. I have never heard a Freethought lecturer. I had not read one scrap of Freethought literature till three months ago, when I picked up a stray leaf of your splendid paper. I am now twenty-seven years old, and the Bible has had a fair innings. It failed; and I won't be bribed with promises. Their threats of hell—Well, well, that's where the fun begins. Hulloo! what have I written? But I'll not alter it. I mean to say that when an over-fed parson tells you to either accept a golden crown, eternal happiness, etc., or go to eternal damnation, it's ridiculous. Why the threat? Because we *must* believe in something quite beyond mere mortals' comprehension. As to the yarn of an ever-present Providence, can any lover of humanity see the wealthy priest, the poor starving little youngsters, without longing for half the power attributed to God, or for only half the money it cost to build those elegant places of worship. I intrude on your valuable time; but it's such a treat to know I am writing to you, the editor. I have often heard Mr. Lloyd at the church, and what surprises me most is that he is the only preacher that made me regularly attend a church. There must have been something more truthful than Biblical in his sermons, for I had no idea that he was at that very time struggling to face the world a free man.

Free to speak and teach as his honest manliness dictates. I should like to hear him, for to know that the only preacher who attracted me is now a Freethinker, has fairly settled all my misgivings. I quite recognise the fact that no man can explain the creation of this world or the creation of this creative power. I am content to know that when I have suffered death, I shall indeed be at rest. I would not have it otherwise, so I will make the best of this for myself and those around me.

I had a hard job to purchase the *Freethinker* here, but after trying a dozen places, I succeeded. Hoping I've not bored you, I'll conclude with all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,  
HERBERT PORTER.

## Correspondence.

### "WHY FREETHOUGHT?"

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—“H. W.” has buckled on the battle sword with considerable irritation. The few general statements contained in his letter, convey no definite program for advance. It must surprise “H. W.” when he reflects upon the progress which in this country has, in part, resulted from this “cancer,” this “retrogressive superstition.” The hospitals and charitable institutions and the twenty-four millions raised in half a century for the buildings and propaganda of this “faith founded upon ignorance,” must give him much food for thought. It was incumbent also, upon “H. W.” when he entered this controversial arena to state what was the *constructive policy of Freethought*. He has failed to do so. As, however, “H. W.” poses as an apostle of progress, let us view the matter in a broad light to see what element of progress is contained in “Freethought,” and to what extent it is retrogressive. To be as brief as possible, my position is stated under headings 1, 2, and 3, and my postulate under 4 and 5.

1. That from historical evidence of religion in some form being almost invariably possessed by the wildest and most savage races, faith in a supreme power would seem to be a product of evolution, and a natural necessity of man. There is no evidence that faith has become unnecessary to man's progress, or that Nature intends to produce an abnormal race of men minus this natural equipment.

2. That this faith has, to the majority of people to-day, by the influence of heredity and education, become idealised to a “fulcrum” of great moral restraint, individually. A small minority of persons are able to formulate a certain standard of moral conduct without this “fulcrum.” To the great majority its removal would result in mental and moral disorganisation.

3. That although the effect upon progress, of certain religions has been retrogressive, the influence for good from religion, upon the whole, largely preponderates.

4. That the methods of “Freethought” to-day (the “destruction of faith” as an instance), do not appear to be part of the original scheme which caused its inception, and cannot in themselves be considered as tending to progress.

5. That “Modern Freethought” (the qualification being used in its technical sense, and as distinct from “Freethought” to-day) was a product of the “necessities of mankind,” and had its place in a scheme of progress.

Numbers 4 and 5 need only be enlarged upon. Freethought history fails to show that “destruction of faith” was part of its propaganda. On the contrary, Deism, Pantheism, and Unitarianism seem to have been largely the faith of its early disciples. The object of the movement seems to have been the removal of a malignant growth—the evils of priestcraft. A simple illustration with an analogical bearing upon the efforts of “H. W.” and other moderns may not be out of place. A reputable and progressive member of society is attacked, through no fault of his own, by a malignant growth in (say) his arm. The correct course would be to remove this growth, for the purpose of restoring the man to his position in society.

“H. W.,” however, would apparently “alleviate nature's bloodshed and carnage” by removing the man's head forthwith, and so close for all time the existence of an element of progress.

There is no “cancer,” but a malignant growth, born of a human greed of power, that has to be removed.

If “Modern Freethought” was a product of “the necessities of mankind,” and had its position in a progressive scheme, the question is, what was that position? Is it that “Freethought” is nature's counter irritant to religions whose teaching and practice are a danger to the progress of a race? It would seem so from the fact that the birth of “Modern Freethought” may be traced to excessive “sacerdotalism.”

As most religions, other than those under the sacrificial priestly influence, appear to make for the advance of man, the correct position of the "Freethinker" from the point of view of the writer will be well understood. The following extract from Mr. Robertson's book seems to verify this: "It is a significant fact that Freethought propaganda is often most active in countries where the Catholic Church is most powerful. There are at least half a dozen Freethought journals in Spain, and Freethought Societies in all the big towns." A matter of mere cause and effect, apparently.

The steady advance of the "Oxford Movement" has been marked by a steady corresponding advance of the counter irritant, "Freethought." The analogy between the "Oxford Movement" and the older form of "Sacerdotalism" will be sufficiently obvious. Before "Pusey's" time "Freethought" does not appear to have flourished abundantly in this country.

If the responsibility for the origin of "Modern Freethought" rests upon the "Priest," the responsibility for the complete rejection of all faith rests upon the apostles of *more* Modern Freethought. If "Freethought" is part of a scheme of progress, it fails to fulfil its destiny by persistent attempts to destroy that which has been such an important factor in all true progress. On the other hand, it will fulfil its destiny only by the working out of its ultimate salvation in the combating of, not faith, but Sacerdotalism—the greatest enemy to progress, and the special danger of the nation to-day.

This "Constructive Policy" is offered for the consideration of "H. W." by

"A MERE MAN IN THE STREET."

### How to Answer Infidels.

*Question.* What do you consider the best way to answer infidels?

*Answer.* The old way is the best. You should say that their arguments are ancient, and have been answered over and over again. If this does not satisfy your hearers, then you should attack the character of the infidel—then that of his parents—then that of his children.

*Question.* Suppose that the infidel is a good man; how will you answer him then?

*Answer.* But an infidel cannot be a good man. Even if he is, it is better that he should lose his reputation than that thousands should lose their souls. We know that all infidels are vile and infamous. We may not have the evidence, but we know that it exists.

*Question.* How should infidels be treated? Should Christians try to convert them?

*Answer.* Christians should have nothing to do with infidels. It is not safe even to converse with them. They are always talking about reason and facts and experience. They are filled with sophistry, and should be avoided.

*Question.* Should Christians pray for the conversion of infidels?

*Answer.* Yes; but such prayers should be made in public, and the name of the infidel should be given, and his vile and hideous heart portrayed, so that the young may be warned.

*Question.* Whom do you regard as infidels?

*Answer.* The scientists—the geologists, the astronomers, the naturalists, the philosophers. No one can overestimate the evil that has been wrought by La Place, Humboldt, Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Renan, Emerson, Strauss, Buchner, Tyndall, and their wretched followers. These men pretended to know more than Moses and the prophets. They were "dogs baying at the moon." They were "wolves" and "fools." They tried to "assassinate God," and, worse than all, they actually laughed at the clergy.

*Question.* Do you think they did, and are doing, great harm?

*Answer.* Certainly. Of what use are all the sciences if you lose your own soul? People in hell will care nothing about education. The rich man said nothing about science, he wanted water. Neither will they care about books and theories in heaven. If a man is perfectly happy, it makes no difference how ignorant he is.

*Question.* But how can he answer these scientists?

*Answer.* Well, my advice is to let their arguments

alone. Of course, you will deny all their facts, but the most effective way is to attack their character.

*Question.* But suppose they are good men—what then?

*Answer.* The better they are, the worse they are. We cannot admit that the infidel is really good. He may appear to be good, and it is our duty to strip the mask of appearance from the face of unbelief. If a man is not a Christian, he is totally depraved, and why should we hesitate to make a misstatement about a man whom God is going to make miserable forever?

*Question.* Are we not commanded to love our enemies?

*Answer.* Yes; but not the enemies of God.

*Question.* Do you fear the final triumph of infidelity?

*Answer.* No. We have no fear. We believe that the Bible can be revised often enough to agree with anything that may really be necessary to the preservation of the Church. We can always rely upon revision. Let me tell you that the Bible is the most peculiar of books. At the time God inspired his holy prophets to write it, he knew exactly what the discoveries and demonstrations of the future would be, and he wrote his Bible in such a way that the words could always be interpreted in accordance with the intelligence of each age, and so that the words used are capable of several meanings, so that, no matter what may hereafter be discovered, the Bible will be found to agree with it—for the reason that the knowledge of Hebrew will grow in the exact proportion that discoveries are made in other departments of knowledge. You will therefore see that all efforts of infidelity to destroy the Bible will simply result in giving a better translation.

*Question.* What do you consider is the strongest argument in favor of the inspiration of the Scriptures?

*Answer.* The dying words of Christians.

*Question.* What do you consider the strongest argument against the truth of infidelity?

*Answer.* The dying words of infidels. You know how terrible were the death-bed scenes of Hume, Voltaire, Paine, and Hobbes, as described by hundreds of persons who were not present; while all Christians have died with the utmost serenity, and with their last words have testified to the sustaining power of faith in the goodness of God.

*Question.* What were the last words of Jesus Christ?

*Answer.* "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

—From "A Christian Catechism," by Col. Ingersoll.

HIS SENTIMENTS, TOO.—Uncle—"How do you like your Sunday-school teacher?" Tommy—"Oh, she's got sense. She's smarter than mom is." Uncle—"Indeed? So you believe in her, eh?" Tommy—"Sure! Her an' me thinks alike. She says Sunday-school don't do me no good."—*Philadelphia Press.*

### SUMMER SCRIPTURE.

I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy—except in August.

The Lord is in his holy temple—except in August.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life—except in August.

How amiable are thy tabernacles—except in August.

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord—except in August.

Preach the gospel to every creature—except in August.

Preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season—except in August.

Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together—except in August.

They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers—except in August.

—*The Examiner.*

**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, G. W. Foote, "On the Brink of Death. Herbert Spencer's Last Words."

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, J. Macdonald, "Socialism and Politics"; 7, Annual General Meeting.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Gustav Spiller, "An Appeal to Nonconformists."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, J. M. Robertson, "Religious Experience."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Miss Vallance, "James Thomson, Poet."

WOOD GREEN ETHICAL SOCIETY (Fairfax Hall, Portland-gardens, Harringay): 7, W. Heaford, "Religion and Morality."

**OUTDOOR.**

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Monday, Nov. 30, at 7.30, Debate, J. Rowney and Rev. John Tuckwell, on "God."

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Bull Ring): 11, Ernest Pack, "The Triumph of Unbelief."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): Ernest Pack, 3, "Miracles"; 7, "Protestant Reforms."

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY (Temperance Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, Dr. Watson, "Scientific Religion."

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane, Failsworth): J. Shuffelbotham, "Who Paid Adam His Wages: a Socialist Moral."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): Joseph McCabe, 12 noon, "The Legend of a Golden Age"; 6.30, "The Riddle of the Universe."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, "A Passive Resister," "Passive Resistance Defended"; 7, L. Bergman, B.Sc., "Souls, Spirits, Ghosts." Monday, 8 p.m., Discussion Class.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): 3 and 6.30, Debate between H. Percy Ward and Percy Redfern; subject, "The Principles of Secularism or the Teachings of Jesus, which are Superior?" Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Lovaine Hall, St. Mary's-place): Monday, Nov. 30, at 7.30, John Lloyd, "The Death Struggle of Religion"; Thursday, Dec. 3, at 8, Lockhart's Cathedral Café, R. Turnbull, "Some Previous Attempts at Protection."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, George Berrisford, "Bible Worthies."

SOUTH SHIELDS (New Empire Palace, King-street): 7, John Lloyd, "Why I Have Given up the Supernatural."

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