

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

If an offence come out of the Truth, better is it that the offence come, than the Truth be concealed.—JEROME.

Herbert Spencer.

THE news of Herbert Spencer's death arrived as last week's *Freethinker* was going to press. All I could then say was a brief, though not exactly hurried, word in praise of his great and splendid life. But I promised that I would say something more, and here it is—in addition to the special paragraphs which will be found in another part of the present number of this journal.

Herbert Spencer was not what is called a man of action. He was a man of thought, and he wielded nothing but words. Yet it is only superficial people, after all, who do not see that words are really acts. And when many a magnificent deed has been almost or quite forgotten, a magnificent saying has sometimes lived on for millenniums, thrilling, inspiring, and nerving an uncountable succession of responsive souls.

Full of years, and covered with honor, Herbert Spencer has gone to his rest. It is in his writings that he now lives. And what a noble array of volumes he has left behind him! The best thought of half a century is expressed in their pages. And to a vast extent the thought was his own. Every great thinker is also an assimilator, an appropriator—a borrower, if you will. Herbert Spencer learnt from his predecessors, and from his contemporaries; but it was not what he learnt that made him immortal; it was the use he made of it—in other words, his own original contribution of mental power. He seized, shaped, and built into a glorious edifice the raw material of structure provided by a thousand laborers in the field of intellectual progress.

Darwin called Herbert Spencer "our great philosopher." Such, indeed, he was. He lived in the age of Evolution, and it was the philosophy of Evolution that occupied the dreams of his youth, the achievements of his manhood, and the retrospect of his old age. There was imaginative as well as intellectual force in the broad sweep of his vision. He seemed to stand on a special elevation, from which he viewed the movement of things out of the first impenetrable darkness, through the ever-growing light of knowledge, and forward into the inscrutable darkness where all knowledge is swallowed up. It was within the space of light, however, that his best work was accomplished. Theologians and metaphysicians, anxious to grasp at any straws on the ocean in which they are sinking, make the most of his impressive tributes to the eternal mystery of the Unknowable. But the students of Nature—outside man and within him—prize his wonderful expositions of her forward development through the inorganic into the organic, and thence through sensation, intelligence, emotion, and imagination into the domain of progressive human society. It is as a psychologist and sociologist, rather than anything else, that, in my judgment, Herbert Spencer has made himself an everlasting renown.

Tylor in one field, Lubbock in another, and others in their respective areas, have worked with astonish-

ing effect in clearing up the mystery of man's past—and with it the mystery of his present superstitions. But none of them equalled Spencer in universality. In this respect, he was like Bacon; he made all knowledge his province. First he made an enormous collection of facts, then he breathed upon them the breath of his own intellectual life, and they started up as orderly truths of ethnology—one over another in a great hierarchy of principles. Finally, he set forth the laws of ethical development; showing all morality to be natural, and leaving not the smallest hole for supernaturalism to nestle in. And it was reserved for him, I think, to reconcile the Experimental and Intuitional theories in a deeper and higher co-ordination. He lifted Utilitarianism from the literary and critical stage in which Mill left it, and placed it on the wider and firmer basis of social evolution.

I have said that the theologians and metaphysicians (the shadows of theologians) have made the most of what they are pleased to call Herbert Spencer's "admissions." But they have been juggling all the time. Mill wrote a strained, and even ludicrous, panegyric on Christ; he did not revise it for the press, and it was published by his more religious daughter-in-law after his death. This has been a godsend to Christian advocates ever since. They quote it to satiety, as though Mill had never written anything else. Herbert Spencer, however, published what he had to say during his lifetime; and it is really not as helpful to the mystery-mongers as they pretend. He declared that "the Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable." And certainly the capital letters *look* a little Theistic. But they were not meant to be. They were only convenient personifications. The great point was their unscrutableness. And that pierces all the bladder-dogmas of faith.

Just in the same way, while Spencer refused to be called a Materialist, he also refused to be called a Spiritualist. His position was that both were right and both were wrong. Each emphasised an aspect of the truth. Spencer affirmed that, although "the relation of subject and object renders necessary to us these antithetical conceptions of Spirit and Matter," they are both to be ultimately "regarded as but a sign of the Unknown Reality which underlies both." Which is also the teaching of that wicked dead Atheist, Büchner, and of that terrible living Atheist, Haeckel. Consequently, it could not be very reassuring to the theologians, if they only understood it.

Herbert Spencer probably made too much of the "Unknowable"—which can hardly be anything but the Unknown. But he always refused to use the word "God," or any other Theistic formula. And he should be judged by his own practice—not by clerical representations. In one of his last essays he gave no countenance to the idea of a future life, but stated his opinion that the elements of individual consciousness lapse at death "into the Infinite and Eternal Energy whence they were derived." How is it possible, in the face of such utterances, to claim Herbert Spencer as a friend of religion? It can only be done by using the word "religion" in two different senses; one to suit the philosopher's utterances, the other to suit the sinister interests of his exploiters G. W. FOOTE.

Dr. A. R. Wallace and Religion.

MOST people are acquainted with the story of the Greek orator who, finding the people applaud him, stopped and asked if he had been saying anything silly. I do not know but that this would be a good rule for scientists to adopt in regard to praise from the religious world. To the real and enduring work of a scientist the religious press is usually blind. But let a scientist put his work on one side for awhile, and venture upon speculations with a religious tendency, and he is seized upon, interviewed, paraded as one of our foremost thinkers, and all for the sake of a mere guess that may be quite forgotten in the course of a year or two.

Alfred Russell Wallace is a name that is famous in the scientific annals of the nineteenth century as the co enunciator with Darwin of the principle of Natural Selection. But behind Darwin in the thoroughness of its application, he saw fit to draw the line in the operation of this principle at the mental and moral nature of man. In this position he stands to-day, so far as competent authorities are concerned, alone. Darwin saw, as others saw after him, that no essential distinction could be drawn. If Natural Selection could account for the physical structure of man it could account for his mental and moral nature likewise. It *might* fail to explain the former, but it was absurd to say it held good in the one instance and not in the other.

Nevertheless, it is for this reason that the religious world has always taken more kindly to Wallace than to Darwin. The former did hold to a kind-of-a-sort-of-a-something that operated on man in some mysterious manner; the latter left room for nothing of the kind. And his further speculations concerning "spiritual" things still further endeared Dr. Wallace to the religious world.

Dr. Wallace, who is now over eighty years of age, has just been interviewed by a gentleman on behalf of the *Christian Commonwealth*. This gentleman, after reciting some of Dr. Wallace's views, says that unless he is much mistaken, he would not see anything absurd in the idea that "the whole universe may total up into the shape of a huge man-god," and "thus do Revelation and Science clasp hands." We must confess to some doubt whether Dr. Wallace would go to quite that length; but in any case the statement that Revelation and Science join hands, is ridiculous. Dr. Wallace's speculations are no more "science" than are the speculations of any other man. What Dr. Wallace can say, and prove, is science, but what he *believes*, without even the possibility of proving, is no more science than is the prophecy of a strolling fortune-teller. Dr. Wallace, would, in all probability, agree with me here; I only note the expression in order to show the fatuous nature of these religious interviews.

But there is plenty of questionable matter in what the Doctor is reported as having actually said. Dr. Wallace repeats his dissent from Darwin, and reasserts his belief that man received "something" he could not have derived from the lower animals. And he believes that the "influx" of this "something" took "place at three stages in evolution—(1) from the inorganic to the organic; (2) from the plant to the animal; (3) from the animal to the soul of man." Now, with all due respect to Dr. Wallace, I beg to say that this is the language of a mystery-monger rather than that of a scientist. The very terms are non-intelligible. "*Something*" was introduced. There was an "*influx*" of it; and at what stage? Why, at the point that every believer in mystery seizes on. At the point where actual knowledge falls short. In other words, as we cannot trace, with the same certainty as we can trace other stages, the connecting links between the organic and inorganic, between animal and plant, or the stages of the development of the human mind, Dr. Wallace finds here the only points at which his "something" "spiritual" may have come to man. Is it not curious

that in the whole history of religious speculation no one has ever placed a finger upon a single fact as giving him *knowledge* of "divine" influence? It is always a case of "I believe this to be due to the action of God, because I know nothing about it save the bare fact of its existence."

Not to misrepresent Dr. Wallace, he appears to believe very definitely in a spiritual universe, *plus* the material, without having any very definite belief about a God. He says, quite correctly, that the "idea of a Supreme Being does not explain the mystery of the universe.....The fundamental problem is, 'Why does anything exist at all?'" This is sound philosophy. Existence is assumed in every act of thinking, and for that reason defies explanation. Existence *per se* is the only problem that is really insoluble. The average Theist seems to think that when he has propounded a God he has explained everything. He has really done nothing of the kind. What he has done is invent a new term, which, while leaving the essential problem as it was, adds another factor that requires accounting for.

But, while not believing in the Theist's God, Dr. Wallace *does* believe in design in nature; and he quotes Sir Oliver Lodge to the effect that "the attempt to explain the universe by chance has absolutely failed. It must have had a designer." The expression is almost hopeless in its obscurity. "Chance" is not a positive term at all, but a negative one. It expresses not our knowledge, but our ignorance, of the incidence of forces. It is chance, we say, whether a penny falls tail or head. But this is only another way of expressing our ignorance of the value of the forces that determine its fall. *How* it shall fall is no more a matter of "chance" than is the tipping of a balance with two unequal weights. And so it is with the universe. Once we start with existence as a given datum, the only thing requisite to explain every operation, from the simplest to the most complex, is knowledge. That we cannot now explain all is only saying that our knowledge is not complete. But it is not justifiable to take the incompleteness of our knowledge as the sole ground for inferring design.

Dr. Wallace believes that "the best spiritual teaching seems to be that we are all capable of infinite progression," and that "the reason for the existence of this world and the explanation of the problems that puzzle us are that the earth and its struggles and pains are essential to the development of the highest spiritual faculties." The theory reminds one, at first glance, of a man who toils hard all day to dodge a few hours work. Surely any power that would *create* the world for the purpose of educating man, might have brought about his education with but a fraction of the energy spent on the creation and development of the world. And the latter portion of the sentence, that pain is essential to the highest development, is simply not true. Pain crushes as often as it elevates. Those children are not the best who spend a hard childhood, familiar with pain from their infancy upwards. They are often hardened, brutalised, and made worse *because* of the hardness of their experience. As a mere psychological fact, the enduring and witnessing of pain harden's one to its presence, far more frequently than it excites sympathy. Were it otherwise the saint would be a commoner object than the sinner. There is no greater fallacy than this of asserting that the world is made better by suffering. It is one of those distortions of fact that only escape criticism because used in defence of unprovable theories.

We are pleased to see that Dr. Wallace does not find many scientific men who agree with him in his speculations. They regard the tendency to become religious, he says, askance, and look on it as "a sign of insanity to avow belief in any other than what are called the ordinary laws of nature." And he reminded his interviewer that when Sir Oliver Lodge and Lord Kelvin expressed their belief in "some outside power, leading scientific men went dead against them. They seem to think, and to like

to think, that the whole phenomena of life will one day be reduced to terms of matter and motion, and that every vegetable, animal, and human product will be explained, and may some day be artificially produced by chemical action."

The admission is important, and we hope the interviewer will bear it in mind. For this, after all, represents the true tendency of science. The fantastic speculations that some scientists may indulge in, glitter for awhile, and then disappear. But the real work of science goes steadily on. And that is the reduction of the universe to a series of problems in human knowledge, the key to which is to be found in patience and industry. Religion lives in mystery; and every advance of science shows that mystery is only a synonym for ignorance.

C. COHEN.

Conflicting Authorities.

ARCHDEACON WILSON has for many years been regarded as a most liberal theologian, whose interpretation of Christianity proves acceptable to many people who cannot swallow any of the historical creeds. Latterly, his liberalism has led him into sore temptations which he is unable to resist. For example, he avers that faith does not mean believing that certain events took place many centuries ago, and that it is possible to be a good Christian without affirming the scientific and historic accuracy of the New Testament records. In this strange contention he by no means stands alone. Both in his own Church, and in several sections of Nonconformity, there are many who fully agree with him, although all of them alike constantly refer to certain events alleged to have occurred many centuries ago. They write elaborate essays and preach impassioned sermons on the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. But when the Higher Criticism puts them into a corner, they proudly assert their utter independence of all documents whatever. It is a curious position to take up, and must necessarily be abandoned before long; and it is difficult to see how its present occupiers can avoid taking one step forward into unbelief.

Congregational and Baptist ministers are not imprisoned within the narrow limits of a stereotyped creed. They are at liberty to hold and express any opinions they please, as long as they do not alienate their supporters. But with clergymen of the Established Church the case is entirely different. Archdeacon Wilson has no right to be a free lance. When he was ordained the Bishop asked him: "Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?" and he answered, "I do believe them." He further swore that he was "determined, out of the said Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to his charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which he should be persuaded might be concluded and proved by the Scripture." But the Scriptures relate innumerable events of the most vital importance, if true, to the whole human race. The Histories form a very considerable proportion of their contents. In the name of all the wonders, then, how can Archdeacon Wilson say that "the Christian Faith does not, and cannot, stand or fall with the scientific and historic accuracy of the record of any events or transactions in history whatever"? Has he broken his ordination vows? Is he no longer bound, "out of the Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to his charge"? Has he not fled for refuge into the cave of the heterodox, in which he cannot consistently remain while pretending to be an official expounder of the Book of Common Prayer?

That this is a correct statement is abundantly clear from a letter by the Bishop of Worcester published in the last number of the *Guardian*. The letter is addressed to the Rev. C. E. Beeby, who contributed an article to the October issue of the *Hibbert*

Journal, entitled "Doctrinal Significance of a Miraculous Birth." In the said article, Mr. Beeby does not deny the Miraculous Birth of Christ. His argument is that "the Virgin Birth is logically bound up with the principle of Sacramentarianism, which is the principle of Mediæval Catholicism." He expresses astonishment that those who do not hold to this principle should "cling so passionately to a belief in the Virgin Birth as part of the Christian Faith." This is how Dr. Gore characterises the article:—

"It appears to me to be directed against the whole conception of miracles as holding their place in God's revelation of Himself, and against the Virgin Birth of Christ in particular." Further on the Bishop writes: "I say, then, that every clergyman holds his position as an officer of the Church in England on condition of the constant public recitation of his personal belief that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and that He rose the third day from the dead. These clauses are perfectly free from ambiguity. They simply affirm that certain events recorded in the Gospel narrative truly occurred. Now, consistently with public honor, a man cannot hold his official position in virtue of constantly saying, 'I believe' such and such a proposition to be true, unless he does believe it. And if he does believe it, I do not see how he can write against it, as it appears to me you have done." This extract shows that the Bishop fully appreciates the situation. He is not discussing the subject of the Virgin Birth on its merits, but merely expressing his conviction that a clergyman of the Established Church has no right to reject it. And surely a man who believes in the Resurrection of Christ should experience no difficulty in believing that he was supernaturally born: the one event matches the other.

There can be no doubt whatever but that the Church of England is, as a Church, deeply and indissolubly wedded to the belief in the substantial accuracy of the Biblical records. Dr. Gore himself has published an exhaustive and scholarly *Dissertation*, the object of which is to defend the doctrine of the Virgin Birth; and in the letter just quoted he says: "I also note that almost all our most learned theologians and critics of the last and present generation, Westcott, Moberly, Sanday, Suetes, Robinson, and many others, have regarded, and do regard, the recorded fact as true, and the doctrine as matter of reasonable faith, and—as Dr. Westcott frequently indicated—of gravest importance. I know of no names of comparable weight to be set on the other side in England." The Dean of Westminster, also, is at present delivering a series of Saturday lectures in justification of the Athanasian Creed, according to which Creed the object of worship is "the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity." This famous Creed teaches that Christ was "perfect God and perfect Man; equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood." To this Creed the Virgin Birth is an absolute necessity to complete the circle of miracles. And Dr. Robinson maintains that in this document the doctrine of the Trinity found its final and authoritative expression, and that every clause in it is the tombstone of some dangerous heresy.

Archdeacon Wilson is undoubtedly a heretic, according to the majority of learned theologians and critics in his own Church, and so most assuredly is Canon Cheyne, editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Here, then, we have two conflicting authorities claiming supremacy; the authority of the organised Church which dates from ancient times, and the authority of modern scholarship both within and without the self-same Church. Archdeacon Wilson and Canon Cheyne and Driver represent the latter, and the Bishop of Worcester and the Dean of Westminster, together with an overwhelming majority of the clergymen, the former.

If it were asked which of the two authorities

deserves the greatest respect the answer would certainly have to be in favor of that of the orthodox Church. Liberalism in theology is an intolerable anachronism. The arguments which make belief in the Virgin Birth impossible cut the ground from under the belief in all other miracles. Those who boast that Christianity does not, and cannot, stand or fall with the scientific and historic accuracy of the New Testament records thereby put their religion in the same category as all the so-called ethnic religions; and in the New Testament and the orthodox Church's sense they are no longer Christians. If Christ was not supernaturally born he was not a Divine Being; and if he was not a Divine Being neither is he the Savior of the world. The moment the Virgin Birth is surrendered all the other miracles lose their sublime significance. Wilhelm Soltau has just written a book, the conclusion of which is that "an Evangelical Christian is no longer able to believe in the Supernatural origin of Jesus. All records relating to it are without doubt borrowed from later fables, and these are to be traced back in every case to heathen models." But is not Herr Soltau aware that precisely the same remarks would be equally applicable to the Crucifixion and Resurrection? Scientific Criticism discovers that all records relating to these stupendous miracles are borrowed from older fables which were common to most other religions. Practically everything recorded in the Four Gospels has its exact parallel or model in Pagan religions. *This is a discovery which renders the intelligent defence of Christianity absolutely impossible.* The iconoclastic argument derived from the comparative study of religions remains unanswered because it is unanswerable. Messrs. Grant Allen, J. G. Frazer, Arthur Lillie, and J. M. Robertson have done work in this department that cannot be picked to pieces by the most ingenious opponents. This gigantic work has been and is being done on purely scientific lines. The conclusions arrived at are based on ascertained facts, and facts are most stubborn things. Liberalism in theology gives no relief, not even the abandonment of the Bible is of any service, when the fundamentals of the Faith are seen to be themselves resting on baseless superstitions. We sometimes read and hear of compliments being paid to Christian Rationalism; and it was once customary to christen liberal theologians Rationalists. But true Rationalism dictates the rejection of the whole fabric of the Christian Religion, and on precisely the same ground that Christianity dictates the rejection of all religions but itself.

The only intelligent choice, therefore, lies between blind adhesion to Orthodoxy and whole-hearted acceptance of the indisputable conclusions of modern Science. We must either shut our eyes against the light of verified truth and remain Christians, or else we must welcome the sun of ordered knowledge, and allow the moon and stars of superstition to set for ever. The liberal theologian imagines that science is on his side, and he waxes vehemently eloquent in a pseudo-scientific defence of his advanced position; but all the time science laughs at him in its sleeve, and goes its way rejoicing. The truth is that science is not more sympathetic in its attitude towards religion to-day than it was thirty and forty years ago. Everybody knows that Dr. A. R. Wallace is, in consequence of his close contact with Spiritualism, a deeply religious man; but he is also honest and refuses to tamper with facts. Asked by a reviewer, the other day, if he did not think that science is less dogmatic and materialistic to-day than it was a generation ago, he answered:—

"I cannot see it. For instance, take the recent correspondence in the *Times*. When Lord Kelvin and Sir Oliver Lodge expressed their belief in some outside power, some external cause, leading scientific men went dead against them. They seem to think, and to like to think, that the whole phenomena of life will one day be reduced to terms of matter and motion, and that every vegetable, animal, and human product will be explained, and may some day be artificially produced, by chemical action."

There now abideth Orthodoxy, the New Theology, Science, these three authorities; and the greatest of these is Science, whose sun is fast mounting up to mid-heaven, there to shine and enlighten mankind to endless generations.

JOHN LLOYD.

Torrey's Trashy Tales.—II.

(Concluded from page 786.)

THERE had been several attempts to suppress Free-thought literature in America by means of the law against "immoral" publications; all such attempts, apparently, being engineered by the famous, (or infamous) Anthony Comstock. At length, in 1877, there came the arrest of Mr. D. M. Bennett, the proprietor and editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, who was no more "obscene" than Dr. Torrey is. His offence was publishing a pamphlet on the population question, and a jury found him "guilty," just as a jury in London found Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant "guilty" of a similar crime. Mr. Bennett appealed, but the conviction was affirmed, and he was sentenced to thirteen months' imprisonment. Ingersoll tried to obtain a pardon for him, and President Hayes promised to grant one; but he went back on his word, and the "infidel" served the full term of his sentence.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Bennett was struck at because he was a Freethinker. We may add that another man was prosecuted subsequently on account of the very same pamphlet, and that the trial resulted in an acquittal. And as that was the last judgment of an American jury on the matter, it is just and reasonable to assume Mr. Bennett's innocence. His only crime was that he was some years in advance of the age in which he lived.

Mr. T. B. Wakeman drew up a petition to Congress on Mr. Bennett's arrest, asking for the *repeal or modification* of Comstock's law, by which that professional bigot expected to stamp out the publications of Freethinkers. Ingersoll allowed his name to go on the appeal for *modification*. He told the committee in charge of the petition that he was *not* in favor of the *repeal* of the law, as he was willing and anxious that real obscenity should be suppressed by all legal means. That is the position he took in the letter, already cited, to the *Boston Journal*; and that is the position he took at the Annual Congress of the National Liberal League, held in November, 1879, at Cincinnati.

Ingersoll was chairman of the committee of resolutions at that Congress, and in the name of the committee he submitted the following:—

"Resolved, That we are in favor of such postal laws as will allow the free transportation through the mails of the United States of all books, pamphlets, and papers, irrespective of the religious, irreligious, political, and scientific views they may contain, so that the literature of science may be placed upon an equality with that of superstition.

"Resolved, that we are utterly opposed to the dissemination, through the mails, or by any other means, of obscene literature, whether 'inspired' or un-inspired, and hold in measureless contempt its authors and disseminators.

"Resolved, That we call upon the Christian world to expunge from the so-called 'sacred' Bible every passage that cannot be read without covering the cheek of modesty with the blush of shame; and until such passages are expunged, we demand that the laws against the dissemination of obscene literature be impartially enforced."

Ingersoll's impassioned speeches in support of these resolutions are printed in the Dresden Edition of his works. He gave the *repealers* credit for the best intentions, but he told them that their policy was deplorable, because it would lay them open to the most unfortunate misrepresentation. He warned them that "theology can coin the meanest words to act as the vehicles of the lowest lies," and that unless they passed resolutions which no one could

misrepresent they would be sure to find themselves branded as the friends of obscenity. Here is an extract from one of Ingersoll's speeches:—

"We want to see to it that the Church party shall not smother the literature of Liberalism. We want to see to it that the viper of intellectual slavery shall not sting our cause. We want it so that every honest man, so that every honest woman, can express his or her honest thought upon any subject in the world. And the question, and the only question, as to whether they are amenable to the law, in my mind, is, Were they honest? Was their effort to benefit mankind? Was that their intention? And no man, no woman, should be convicted of any offence that that man or woman did not intend to commit. Now, then, suppose some person is arrested, and it is claimed that a work written by him is immoral, is illegal. Then, I say, let our committee of defence examine that case, and if our enemies are seeking to trample out Freethought under the name of immorality, and under the cover and shield of our criminal law, then let us defend the man to the last dollar we have. But we do not wish to put ourselves in the position of general defenders of all the slush that may be written in this or any other country. You cannot afford to do it. You cannot afford to put into the mouth of theology a perpetual and continual slur.....Suppose some man is indicted, and suppose he is guilty. Suppose he has endeavored to soil the human mind. Suppose he has been willing to make money by pandering to the lowest passions in the human breast. What will that committee do with him then? We will say 'Go on; let the law take its course.'"

Dr. Torrey has stated that Ingersoll advocated "the repeal of the law against sending instruments of vice through the American mails." But it is better to take Ingersoll's own words than Dr. Torrey's statement about them. This is what Ingersoll actually said:—

"The law against sending instruments of vice in the mails is good, as is the law against sending obscene books and pictures, and the law against letting ignorant hyenas prey upon sick people, and the law which prevents the getters-up of bogus lotteries sending their letters through the mail."

At the evening session of the Congress the subject was again discussed, with a view to voting, and Ingersoll "implored" them to be reasonable. "I am not," he said, "in favor of the repeal of those laws. I have never been, and I never expect to be." Moreover, he said, and he meant it, that if the total repealers had their way he would go out of the League. "I cannot, and I will not," he said, "operate with any organisation that asks for the unconditional repeal of those laws." "If that resolution is passed," his last words were, "all I have to say is that, while I shall be for liberty everywhere, I cannot act with this organisation, and I will not."

The total repeal resolution was carried, and Ingersoll resigned his vice-presidency and left the League on the spot.

There is no need to argue whether Ingersoll or his opponents at the Congress were right. That was the point at issue then, but it is not the point at issue now. The point at issue now is a question of fact. What was Ingersoll's attitude? Did he, or did he not, advocate the repeal of the laws against sending obscene prints and articles through the American mails?

The answer to that question is already given. It is clear, emphatic, and decisive.

American men of God, and American editors of religious journals, went on telling their dupes the very opposite of the truth in regard to this matter. No doubt they proceeded on the assumption that many would see the lie and few would see the correction.

Writing in 1892, in answer to a Christian minister who was circulating the falsehood, Ingersoll said: "I will give a premium of one thousand dollars a word for each and every word I ever said or wrote in favor of sending obscene publications through the mails."

Contradicting a lie, however, does not kill it. It lives as long as it is useful to the liars. Ingersoll probably knew this when he wrote to a corre-

spondent on August 21, 1879. He concluded his letter as follows:—

"Every minister and every layman who charges me with directly or indirectly favoring the dissemination of anything that is impure, retails what he knows to be a wilful and malicious lie."

Dr. Torrey's description is therefore easy. He is a wilful and malicious liar.

G. W. FOOTE.

Rome and Ignorance.

RELIABLE statistics prove that the Church of Rome does not make for enlightenment. In Spain, at the 1787 census, there were 188,625 ecclesiastics of all descriptions, including 61,617 monks, 32,500 nuns, and 4,705 inquisitors. In 1833 this unproductive class still numbered 175,574 individuals; of these, 61,727 were monks and 24,007 nuns. In 1884 there was in the land of the Inquisition 32,435 priests, 1,648 monks, and 15,594 nuns. (By decrees of the Cortes passed July 23, 1835, and March 9, 1836, all conventual establishments were suppressed and their property confiscated for the benefit of the nation.) Seeing that the education of the Spaniards has for centuries been under the control of the clergy, it will surprise no one that at the beginning of the last century a working man in Spain able to read was a curiosity, and that the accomplishment among women was looked upon as "immoral." In 1898, 68.1 per cent. of the population could neither read nor write. In Italy there were, in 1865, 28,991 "religious"—14,807 men and 14,184 women. (At the 1866 session of Chamber of Representatives a perfect law for the entire suppression of all religious houses was adopted.) According to the 1864 census returns, out of a population of 21,703,710, no less than 16,999,707 persons could neither read nor write! In 1881 the ratio of illiterates above six years of age was as follows:—Upper Italy, 40.85 per cent.; Central Italy, 64.61; South Italy, 79.45; in the Islands, 80.91. These figures prove abundantly that Rome fosters ignorance.

—Progressive Thinker (Chicago).

Reverend Rogues; or, The Vile Profession.

FORSAKE, O priests!—from curates down to popes—
Your shameful "cash-down" trade in "Heavenly Hopes"!
Reform your ways, and strive to energise
Your better selves, nor longer live on lies!

Of course, you fear to leave your well-paid ease,
For unaccustomed toil, and doubtful fees;
But, moral gain would weigh the fiscal loss,
And make the specious bribe to look like dross.

The best of rogues may pause, were Truth to mean
The likely loss of weal to wife and wean;
But, think of all the other wives and weans
Whose lives are blighted by your baleful means.

Must honest folk be cheated and oppressed
That you and yours with fulness might be blest?
Give up your canting, lying, knavish trade,
And speak the Truth, of which you're now afraid!

You cheat your "flocks" with lies of Heaven and Hell,
And fondly try to cheat yourselves as well;
But, self-deception you invoke in vain,
Since flock-deception spells financial gain.

You prate of children's souls, with mean pretence,
Although, to you, they're but potential pence!
What deep disgrace, to batten through the years,
By cramming children's minds with lies and fears!

You know that all your business is a sham;
Your Heaven, a myth; your Hell, not worth a damn.
Your words are false, and false are all your acts,
Except "collections"; they are solid facts.

Take heed! The masses—lately, "mostly fools"—
Begin to see they've been your dupes and tools!
Take heed! When wakened Justice justice notes,
You'll stand with other "fortune-telling" cheats!

O worst, but most "respectable," of crooks!
Attorneys for a trinity of spooks!
Forsake your Christ-cum-cash-cult! Cease to lie!
And thinkers may respect you—by-and-by.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Acid Drops.

"The People's Schools" is the heading of a jesuitical article in the *Christian World*. Our clever and wily contemporary is, we suspect, at heart in favor of Secular Education, but it dare not say so in face of the present temper of Nonconformity. It feels bound to approve the recent manifesto—for such it really is—of the Free Churches. This manifesto includes "Biblical instruction." That is to say, it includes just as much religious instruction, in public schools, at the public expense, and by public machinery, as Nonconformists consider to be safe and prudent from their own point of view. Now this is simply a demand for the teaching of Nonconformist religion in the State schools. It is Nonconformist religion because it suits Nonconformists, and nobody else. The Church of England is opposed to it, the Catholic Church is opposed to it, Jews are opposed to it, and all Freethinkers, Secularists, Agnostics, Atheists, and Rationalists are opposed to it. It has only one set of friends, and therefore we call it *theirs*. If it is not theirs, it is nobody's. And when it comes to the sticking place, we are not surprised at the *Christian World* supporting this partisan policy, as if it were the last word of impartial statesmanship.

It is really *too* thin, however, for the *Christian World* to pretend that there is an analogy between the Education struggle in England and the Education struggle in France. Certainly the French are struggling to keep Education free from "ecclesiastical control." They are struggling to keep it free from *all* ecclesiastical control. They are not so illogical as to keep it free from the control of the Catholic Church, and to let it be controlled by the Protestant Churches. They are striving to save Education from *all* Churches; and, to do that, they know that they must save it from *all religions*. But this is not the policy, or anything like the policy, of English Nonconformists. It is the policy of English Secular Educationists.

"We want to keep a religious spirit in our schools," the *Christian World* says, "but we, too, at all costs, must be rid of the priests." What nonsense, to be sure! "We, too," is a bit of transparent humbug. Has our contemporary the folly to think that M. Combes, the French Premier, would recognise any essential difference between the demands of the Bishop of London and those of Dr. Clifford? Would he not say—if he were in the habit of quoting Shakespeare—"a plague on both your houses"?

One passage in the *Christian World* article is irresistibly amusing. The "open door" for denominationalism is described as turning the schools into "a theological cockpit in which the children shall watch the sects struggling for the mastery." Therefore our contemporary will have none of that. "We need a religious influence there," it says, "which, instead of dividing, shall unite the new generation in a common reverence for all that is good." Of course "a common reverence for all that is good" is a trick phrase; for, under the cover of "good" our contemporary meant to insinuate something more than *moral* good. But our point is not that. What we want to draw attention to is the funny idea of Christian "religious influence" uniting the next or any other generation. Whenever and wherever did this "religious influence" unite people except in acts of intolerance to those who differed from them? It united Christian Europe against the Mohammedan "Infidel." It united Christian Europe, recently, in sending a joint army of "vengeance" to China, and to compensate for the murder of one Ambassador by the wholesale slaughter of Chinese men and the wholesale violation of Chinese women. And it has always united the squabbling, and mutually persecuting, sects against the common "heretics" and "blasphemers." But it could not unite the Britons and Boers; it could not unite France and Germany; it could not unite America and Spain; and it cannot unite Great Britain and Russia. Every student of history knows what its *uniting* influence comes to. And we, for our part, have no hesitation in saying that to bring up children as Christians is to bring them up to be quarrelsome.

Rev. Tom Collings is an "advanced" Church of England clergyman, and friends of ours have told us he is a "good fellow." But we do not think the better of him for being "delighted to see his Free Church brethren fighting the Education Act." Mr. Collings should stick to his own Church or leave it. Certainly he ought to have more sense than to applaud a refusal to pay rates on mere party grounds. If he knows of any *principle* that his "Free Church brethren" are fighting for, we wish he would take the trouble to indicate it.

"If we cannot have Free Trade in religion," Mr. Collings says, "we must have secular education." What a curious declaration! Secular Education is Free Trade in religion. Church and Chapel are simply fighting for two different forms of Protection.

A specially headed paragraph, in large type, was given by the daily organ of the Nonconformist Conscience to reporting the partial secession of a Tory parson at Dover from the present Government. It appears that the Rev. H. Falloon, vicar of Christ Church, has declared that he cannot support the Government proposals on the licensing question. We are not particularly in love with the present Government ourselves, but we imagine it may survive the loss of Parson Falloon.

Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace has been interviewed by a representative of the *Christian Commonwealth*. The interview took place at the beautiful residence that Dr. Wallace has built himself on a healthy, lofty, and picturesque spot in Dorsetshire. Philosophers are not always lucky enough to find such comfortable quarters. But this does not hinder our congratulating Dr. Wallace on his good luck. We would rather see a philosopher than a vulgar speculator enjoying himself amidst pleasant surroundings in the closing years of his life.

It would be rude to say that Dr. Wallace is an eccentric. He is a geocentric. He argues that the universe is finite, that our system is about the centre of it, and that our earth is the only one of all the millions of celestial bodies which is inhabited. No astronomer appears to agree with Dr. Wallace, but this does not shake his confidence in his own theory. Sir Oliver Lodge, while admitting that no other planet in our solar system may be inhabited, smiles at the idea that intelligent beings are not to be found on any other lump of matter in space, and calls it "absurd." Dr. Wallace replies that the term "absurd" is no argument. But is not *that* absurd? Calling a thing absurd seems to us a compendious argument. It may be a good one or a bad one, according to circumstances; but an argument it is, for all that. Sir Oliver Lodge probably means that Dr. Wallace's theory is absurd, because it is a pure assumption; resting at the best on negative evidence, which may only be ignorance; and quite incapable of any sort of positive demonstration.

Dr. Wallace was asked by the interviewer whether he had any difficulty in believing in the existence of consciousness apart from material organisation. His reply was, "None whatever." But it all depends on what is meant by "believing." Sometimes it merely means *conceiving*. And in that sense we "believe" in a future life as much as Dr. Wallace does. We can *fancy* Charles Bradlaugh still addressing crowds of listeners; we can *fancy* Colonel Ingersoll still holding vast audiences entranced by his eloquence. But we do not "believe" it in any definite and philosophic sense of the word. When you say that you *believe* anything, you should mean that you have some positive grounds for thinking it so.

It may be said, of course, that Dr. Wallace has positive grounds for believing in consciousness apart from material organisation. Well, what *are* these grounds? Dr. Wallace simply accepts the phenomena of Spiritualism; and, having read what he has to say on the subject, we are bound to say that he accepts those phenomena in a spirit of childish credulity. In physical science he is quite careful as to the *facts*; in spiritual science (if we may use the expression) he accepts as facts all kinds of roundabout, and sometimes obviously questionable, hearsay. The case for Spiritualism, as he presents it, would soon fall to pieces in any court of law. It is built up on a gross defiance of the elementary principles of legal evidence. And what are the principles of legal evidence but a strict process of practical logic?

One point is satisfactory about Dr. Wallace. He is "quite unable to accept current religious doctrines," and does not call himself a Christian. His position is somewhat Agnostic. He believes in the infinite progression of human beings, in this world or some other, but there he stops. "I have no difficulty," he says, "in conceiving an ascending scale of being rising up into what the Christian means by 'God,' but the idea of a Supreme Being does not, of course, explain the mystery of the universe. The child's questions as to when God began and where he came from still remain unanswered. The fundamental problem is, Why does anything exist at all? Why was there not absolute negation—nothing but empty space? Infinite time or space or matter alike are unthinkable by us." Dr. Wallace's conclusion, therefore, is that "ultimate problems" are "insoluble and indeed unthinkable."

We quite agree with Dr. Wallace that "ultimate problems" are "insoluble"—just as we believe that the fastest walker will never beat the slowest walker in reaching the horizon. And there the matter should end, as Comte said. The very consideration of "ultimate problems" is a sheer waste of time—like bailing out the ocean or chasing the moon. And when you come to the question "Why does anything exist at all?" you are face to face with metaphysical lunacy.

The Kensit Crusade appears to have flourished with fresh vigor during the twelve months since John Kensit's death. Before he met his "martyrdom" at Birkenhead the income of his Society, or his movement, or whatever it was, amounted to £4,681. Since then the income has risen to £7,222. At least it is stated so in a *Daily News* advertisement, in which donations and subscriptions are "earnestly pleaded for" towards this "well-directed effort." The only person mentioned in the advertisement is J. A. Kensit, secretary. Apparently he receives the remittances. We suppose he also well-directs the effort.

Bishop Gore has been preaching a series of sermons, or delivering a course of lectures—it doesn't matter which—at St. Philip's Church, Birmingham. The subject of one of them was "The Christian Doctrine of Sin and the Fall." Perhaps the most eloquent feature of the function was the presence of ladies in the galleries while men occupied the body of the church. This arrangement may not have been so intended, but it illustrated the Christian theory the Bishop was dealing with better than anything in his discourse. The discourse itself, judging from the long report in the *Daily Post*, was little else than a solemn and pretentious rigmarole. Dr. Gore gave Adam and Eve the go by, and talked about "the Christian theory" as though it were some philosophical speculation. If he would honestly consult the Bible for the Christian theory, he would find it, first in the Garden of Eden story, and secondly in the words of Paul—namely, that "in Adam all sinned." Dr. Gore is simply humbugging his hearers in talking about "that mysterious but undeniable fact of human wilfulness, lawlessness, and sin." There is nothing *mysterious* in the matter, except what is made so by means of metaphysical moonshine. To the Evolutionist it is perfectly intelligible. There is a law of heredity as well as a law of variety, and a tendency to reversion as well as a tendency to progress. Some men are "sinners" simply because they are born out of season. They belong to what are now anti-social types. But had they been born two or three thousand years ago, in a different social environment, they might have achieved distinction—and even won a proud place in the Bible.

This same Bishop Gore, who has written some remarkable nonsense about the Virgin Birth of Christ, and taken the name of Huxley in vain in connection with it, has sent a minatory letter to the Rev. C. E. Beeby, who is vicar of a small church in Birmingham, and has a somewhat unorthodox reputation. It looks now as though the Bishop were seeking a pretext to kick him out. Mr. Beeby is the author of an article in the *Hibbert Journal* on "The Doctrinal Significance of a Miraculous Birth," and the Bishop says that, while he does not explicitly reject it, he argues against the doctrine, and leaves his readers to conclude, if they will, that it is not true. This sort of thing the Bishop says he will not tolerate, and he feels bound to "go to the limits of his powers" in order to put a stop to it. So poor Mr. Beeby had better beware.

According to the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, the religious world in Cottonopolis is "being stirred by a recent newspaper attack on Christianity." The reporter (or his employer) is afraid to name the *Clarion*, which is in all probability the paper he alludes to: and we dare say he (or his employer, again) would drop down in a fit at the very idea of naming the *Freethinker*.

It appears that a series of lectures in reply to this attack on Christianity are being organised by the Rev. S. F. Collier at the Central Hall. They are delivered on Sunday afternoons, and may draw a few citizens from a comfortable and refreshing snooze. The series is entitled "Is Christianity True?" Well, at this time of day, the question answers itself. Considering what Christianity professes to be, namely, a revelation from God; and how it claims to be attested, namely, by a tremendous array of miracles; there ought to be nobody left unconvinced of its truth after the lapse of nearly two thousand years. Christianity has still to argue for its right to exist; and, in view of the chronology, this very fact is the most fatal blow to its pretensions.

We see that "a remarkable list of speakers" has been provided to talk against the "recent newspaper attack on

Christianity." Archdeacon Wilson is the most distinguished; there are also Professor Peake, Dr. Adeney, Dr. J. H. Moulton, and Mr. J. L. Paton, High Master of Manchester Grammar School, besides other big-wigs who need not be catalogued.

This should prompt Christians with brains in their heads to a little serious reflection. Nearly nineteen hundred years ago at Jerusalem the big-wigs were all opposing Jesus Christ. Now they are opposing the opposers of Jesus Christ. Why? The explanation is very simple. In each case the big-wigs were supporters of the established religion. They always did support it, and they always will support it. And for two good reasons. In the first place, notwithstanding their possession of what is called learning, they are generally deficient in original powers of mind. In the second place, they understand who finds them in bread, and on which side it is buttered.

The *Manchester Guardian* is responsible, as far as we are concerned, for the following sample of curious English and unconscious sarcasm, which is said to be seen posted over the alms-box close beside the main entrance of one of the most famous Cathedrals in the North of Italy:—"Appele to charitables. The Brothers, so-called, of Mercy asks slender arms for the hospital. They harbor all kinds of diseases, and have no respect to religion."

Manchester University ought to be an unsectarian; in other words, it ought to be non-religious, or secular. Yet on the motion of the Rev. Dr. McLaren, an eminent Non-conformist preacher, it has just been decided to establish a Faculty of Theology there. Dr. McLaren's motion was seconded by the Bishop of Manchester. Which shows how the rival Churches agree when they are able to obtain a common advantage at the public expense.

It is natural to rejoice—when there is something to rejoice over. Even the dull Zionites had a flare up recently when Old Dowie got rid of the official receiver's men from Zion City. The curfew regulation was suspended, and torchlight processions were the order of the night. Instead of going to bed, as usual, at nine o'clock, the whole five thousand Zionites went merry-making in the streets. And how they must have enjoyed it! Fancy the lost time they had to make up!

The Crescent and the Cross have been in conflict again in the Soudan. The Anglo-Egyptian Government, hearing that a new Mahdi had arisen, sent forward an expedition by forced marches. Locating the village of the Mahdi's encampment, the force surrounded it by night, and, compelling surrender, made prisoner of the chief.

He is described by Reuter's telegram as a man of great intelligence, who had twice made a pilgrimage to Mecca. Conducted to El Obeid, he was "tried"—for the sin of defending his country—and immediately executed. Summarising the news of this cold-blooded event, the *Daily Telegraph* naively remarks:—"Interesting particulars have been received of the religious rising in El Obeid, which Colonel Mahon nipped in the bud. The new Mahdi was captured, tried, and hanged. (p. 9)."

It is reported—but it may be a pious falsehood—that cannibalism broke out in the Mad Mullah's camp, and that he executed some who had taken part in the orgie. Well now, cannibalism was quite common amongst the Christian Crusaders in the "Holy Land," and nobody thought of executing those who took part in it. The shocking facts of the case may be found in the chapter on "The Crusades" in our *Crimes of Christianity*.

At a clerical conference at Chelmsford, the Rev. L. W. Blakemore, chaplain of Chelmsford Prison, said he had sometimes to deal with men who knew absolutely nothing about religion or God. One young prisoner under his care was asked, "Who is Jesus Christ?" and he replied, quite sincerely, "I believe he is the son of the Devil." The Bishop of Colchester was anxious to know if this shockingly ignorant prisoner came from his diocese. There was a general sigh of relief when it was stated that he came from Birmingham.

The thought occurs to us, Was that young prisoner so shockingly ignorant, after all? May he not have been reading the New Testament "on his own"? He might have seen there that the Jewish leaders accused Jesus Christ of casting out evil spirits by the aid of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Possibly he concluded that Jesus Christ was the Son of the Devil. And he was probably as accurate as the chaplain who concludes from the same book that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Rev. A. McCluggage (no man ought to go about with a name like that), a Baptist minister, of Darwen, has been perpetrating some solemn jokes on Jesus Christ and the working man. He tried to show that Christ was for the working man; he also wanted the working man for Christ. In the latter object the reverend gentleman was no doubt perfectly sincere. The men of God all round want the working man for Christ. But the working man doesn't seem to want Christ quite so badly.

Mr. McCluggage (oh ye gods!) made a great point about Jesus Christ having done good work as a carpenter. Of course it is easy to say that nowadays. All the evidence is lost. It is probably true, however, that Jesus Christ did not take a hand in jerry-building—though many a godly deacon, elder, and churchwarden has done so since. Jerry-building was not invented then. It came in with the speculative builder, who put up houses to *sell*. Nobody was ever fool enough to build a rotten house to *live in*. If Mr. McCluggage (heaven help us!) will think over that fact it may explain a good many things to his struggling intelligence.

Lord Penrhyn, after beating his quarrymen down to the ground when they stood up for their right of combination, now subscribes £1,000 towards upholding the Church schools in the diocese of Bangor. Working men with any brains in their skulls may easily draw the moral from these two facts.

Passive Resistance is really but one of the new sensationalisms of Christianity. Sensationalism, indeed, is becoming rampant in religious circles—especially in Dissenting circles. Even the Rev. F. B. Meyer, the "intellectual," the "cultured," is joining in the game. He has taken to going out into the streets at midnight from his church, at the head of a band of crusaders for Christ, in order to sweep drunkards into a place where they may drink hot coffee (without cognac) and listen to the Gospel. The crusaders sing to what even the Nonconformist Conscience daily calls "the somewhat husky notes" of a euphonium. Last Saturday night they sang "We're marching to Zion," when a passing cabman shouted, "Liars, liars!" It was rather rough on persons who were doubtless well-intentioned, but it was substantially true nevertheless. They were *not* marching to Zion. Had they thought there was any danger of nearing Zion that night, most of them would have sent for a doctor.

We dare say the Bible League is a very distinguished and powerful body, although we do not recollect that we ever heard of it before. We have received some newspaper reports of a Conference it has been holding at Newcastle on the subject of "The Higher Criticism." On the opening day of the Conference the League's organising secretary, Mr. A. H. Carter, stated that "the effect of the Higher Criticism had seriously hindered Christian work in the foreign mission field." How odd! Who on earth carried the results of the Higher Criticism to the heathen? Bishop Colenso, of course, felt obliged to tell the poor Zulus a thing or two, but such candor is not common.

Rev. James Douglas, on the second day of the Bible League's Conference, observed that the Higher Critics, in what they said about the authorship of the so called books of Moses and other Old Testament documents, gave the lie direct to Jesus Christ; and that it was "a very serious matter to give the lie direct to the infallible Lord." Does the reverend gentleman mean that the Higher Critics must look out for earthquakes? Mr. Douglas also censured these clerical sceptics for "putting down the recorded intercourse between God and man as legendary." On this point he said he was able to speak from personal experience. Divine incidents had occurred to his knowledge in various parts of England and Scotland where he had lived. What these were the newspaper reports do not inform us. Perhaps the reverend gentleman saw the sun and moon standing still together—or something of that sort. In certain conditions of the brain, occasionally induced, such experiences are fairly ordinary.

During the recent trial at Belfast of Joseph Moan on the charge of murdering Roso McCann, the counsel for the prosecution, Mr. Denis Henry, made a very free use of the Almighty. He urged that Providence had put the facts together to convict the prisoner, and that "the finger of Providence was in it all." He also wound up by hoping that the jury "would have the guidance of God in arriving at a right conclusion." That is to say, a *foregone* conclusion. And this sort of thing is supposed to be piety!

Rev. W. L. Watkinson, the well-known Wesleyan editor and preacher, once published a book attacking the personal

character of "leading Freethinkers." Those who would like to read a fuller account of it will find what they wish in the essay on "Infidel Homes" in the second volume of Mr. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought*. Mr. Watkinson almost ran amuck. He "went for" Goethe, Mill, George Eliot, Harriet Martineau, Carlyle, Shelley, Godwin, Schopenhauer, and (of course!) Voltaire. Fortunately none of them were alive to "go for" *him*.

This charitable Watkinson, this Methodist mixture of sweetness and light, has been interviewed lately by *Great Thoughts*—a pious paper with a monstrously pretentious title. We note that he still plays the moral pedagogue, and adds to it the role of a Jeremiah. Being asked what evils constituted England's greatest peril at this juncture, he cleansed his stuffed bosom of the following load: "If the people should fall away from the observance of the sacred day of rest; if they lapse from the high ideals erected by our Puritan forefathers; if they lose their reverence for the Bible as the true bulwark of the nation's strength and the real charter of our liberties; if they gradually drop out religion as no longer essential to life and welfare; then Britain's doom is sealed." Considering the *trade* this gentleman is in, and how he gets his *living*, he reminds us of the gentleman in the ancient story who cried that there was nothing like *leather*. "Turn your backs on my business," he says, "and you'll go to the Devil."

A man named Holland was walking along St. John-street, Hanley, on Saturday (Dec. 12), when the pavement gave way under him, and he disappeared. He had fallen down an old disused pit-shaft, covered over with timber, which had been forgotten. He is supposed to have dropped two hundred feet, and to be buried under tons of earth. Consequently, it was held that he could not be rescued, and he was left to lie where he was till the day of judgment. So a parson was fetched to read the burial service over the hole. It wasn't much, but it was all they could do for him, and they left the rest with God—who must have seen him walk on to that death-trap.

According to a statement made by Councillor T. W. Harrison at a special meeting of the Hanley Town Council, the man Holland was actually singing Sankey's hymn, "When the roll is called up yonder I will be there." The poor fellow was "there" sooner than he expected—probably sooner than he wished.

Mr. W. T. Stead is fifty-four years old, and has never seen a play yet. He is going to make a beginning in the new year. What a time he'll have! Eliza Armstrong will be nothing to it.

A Clerkenwell carpenter, apparently suffering from a severe attack of religion, was charged at the local Police-court with disorderly conduct in the streets, and was remanded for an inquiry into the state of what was politely called "his mind." We fancy we have seen this pious carpenter at Freethought open air meetings in former years. His name is Meckelburgh.

When we read in the papers that Ernest Clows, a Sunday-school teacher, had been charged before Mr. Plowden, at Marylebone, with stealing a Bible, we could hardly believe our eyesight. We felt that there must be some mistake. Stealing a Bible seemed an act of pure kleptomania. As we read on we found that what he had stolen was money, and not the Word of God. He had pocketed the price of a Bible which he had sold for his employer. That explained it.

Josephene Martella, an Italian girl employed at the Carlton Hotel, committed suicide by pouring paraffin over her clothes and setting fire to them. The jury concluded that she suffered from religious mania.

Another sample of religious faith comes from Bristol, where Lily Milsom, a girl of eleven, drowned herself in the pond at Victoria Park. She had previously said to some school companions, "I wish I was in heaven."

Passive Resisters have scored a point over the West Ham test case. The judges have laid it down that a magistrate, in issuing a distress warrant, for whatever reason, must allow for money tendered on account in open court. And in a general way this seems reasonable. We do not believe, however, that the decision will be of much practical value to the Passive Resisters in this struggle. If the amount they refuse to pay is large enough, it will be recovered by distraint; if it is too small to trouble about, it may be dropped without affecting the battle one way or another; or the amounts may be left to accumulate as arrears, and be recovered when the total is big enough to worry about.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(Suspended till after Christmas.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton. December 20, Camberwell.

IMBER STANLEY.—As you are not yet nineteen, you need not be surprised to learn that your efforts are not yet up to our standard for publication. No doubt you will improve with study and practice. At present you are, very naturally, in the imitative stage; by and by you may have thoughts and sentiments of your own to express. All in good time.

R. H. CARSON begs us to "keep up the *Pioneer* if possible." He says that he has taken six copies every month through his bookseller, and circulated them advantageously, in one of the most priest-ridden towns in England. He and a local friend have also passed their copies of the *Freethinker* (when done with) into other hands. And cases of conversion have resulted; one being a local preacher. This correspondent thinks 1903 has been a very trying year, and hopes 1904 will be an improvement.

F. J. VOISEY.—It is good to find that the late Right Honorable Charles Seale-Hayne, M.P., had the sagacity and courage to keep *all* men of God out of the Technical College he left money to build and endow.

F. HOLLAND.—Thanks. We will look through the volume in the spirit suggested.

J. BLACKHALL.—Cuttings we can find a paragraph on are always welcome.

F. S.—Thanks for the cuttings, which you will see have been useful.

W. S. CARTER.—The original edition of Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics* has long been out of print and scarce, and fetches a good price when it turns up second-hand. The current edition—a much later production—is largely modified. It was fiercely, and even savagely, attacked by Henry George.

C. E. COPE.—Such cuttings are always welcome.

THE COHEN PRESENTATION FUND.—John Hume 2s. 6d., W. Longstaff 2s. 6d., Margaret McCrae 5s., J. R. Webley 5s., W. Giles 1s., C. Keenan 2s.

We have received from an old friend of ours £5 for the Cohen Presentation Fund, but it is not included in this week's list because we are uncertain as to how it should be acknowledged.

JOHN HUME.—Thanks. Mr. Foote is progressing, if slowly, towards "himself again."

W. P. BALL.—As the year is drawing to a close we beg to thank you most sincerely once again for your weekly batches of useful cuttings.

M. E. PEGG.—All lecture notices we receive are handed straight to the printer. We cannot possibly charge our memory with the details of such matters. If your lecture notice was sent us, and did not appear, it was probably lost in the post. We lose things in the post ourselves.

F. L. G.—Will try to find room next week.

W. SUTCLIFFE.—Thanks for cutting. It will be useful.

WEST LONDON.—We cannot help malicious tales flying about—and we are used to them. What we wrote in the *Freethinker* was the simple truth, and Mr. Pack writes us corroborating it.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

Sugar Plums.

A good report of Mr. Foote's Saturday evening lecture in the Leicester Secular Hall appeared in the *Leicester Pioneer*, and a good report of the Sunday evening lecture in the *Midland Free Press*.

The *Humanitarian*, the monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, is a small paper, but it is always a good one. The December number should win the attention of those who wish to see cruelty of all kinds minimised, if not

abolished. One item in our little contemporary excites our regret. Some friends of the League have been carrying on a high-class quarterly, the *Humane Review*, for the past four years. The price is only a shilling, but it is printed and otherwise got-up in first-class style, and many of the articles have been of great excellence. It appears that this magazine has been "maintained by the generous assistance of two American friends." But now, owing to want of support, which means want of circulation, it is in danger of being dropped. We should be sorry to see this happen, and we hope there will be an adequate response to Mr. Ernest Bell's touching appeal on behalf of this admirable publication.

The difficulty in maintaining advanced periodicals ought to be fully realised by the friends of progress. We know what our own struggle has been, and what trouble we have had to keep the *Freethinker*, not merely alive, but up to a worthy standard of interest and usefulness, for twenty-three long years.

Notices have been sent out for the general meetings of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, and the Secular Society, Limited, on Tuesday, Dec. 22. Should any shareholder or member of these incorporations fail to receive notice, in consequence of any accident, through the Post or otherwise, this public announcement may enable him (or her) to attend.

The second of the December course of lectures at the Camberwell Secular Hall, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, will be delivered this evening (Dec. 20) by Mr. C. Cohen, his subject being "Atheism and the Creed of the Future."

Mr. John Lloyd pays his first Freethought lecturing visit to Manchester to-day (Dec. 20). We hope the South Lancashire "saints" will give him the splendid welcome he deserves. Mr. Lloyd's lectures will be delivered, afternoon and evening, in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road.

Mr. T. Robertson, secretary of the Glasgow Branch, informs us that it has "done famously" this winter. The local lecturers have had good audiences, and all the special lecturers from London have had bumpers. Turning people away from the doors on Sunday evening has become quite a common phenomenon.

The Secular Society, Limited, has decided to carry on a Freethought "mission" at the Camberwell Secular Hall during the winter months in the new year. The Branch meetings have not been as good as they might be of late, and it is felt that a special effort is necessary to put fresh life into the movement and its propaganda in South London.

We are glad to see that, at last, Mr. William Redmond has plucked up courage enough to appeal publicly on behalf of Mr. Arthur Lynch, who has now been nearly two years in prison like a common felon for "treason." Mr. Lynch's detention in prison so long is a disgrace to England. It makes us blush for our countrymen. They are mostly—Christians. He is a Freethinker.

The Leeds "blasphemy" prosecution fell through, as we hoped and even expected it would. The copies of our Bradford contemporary purchased by the police had not been marked for identification, and as they had passed through several official hands after being purchased, it was practically impossible to establish their identity in a court of law. A very broad hint to this effect was thrown out by the Stipendiary Magistrate (Mr. C. M. Atkinson) when the summonses were first returnable. When the case came on again, on Tuesday, December 8, after a fortnight's adjournment, the prosecution had evidently digested this unfortunate fact. Probably it was also felt that the Magistrate's attitude was not very favorable, and that the Leeds press had not given the prosecution any encouragement. Prudence, therefore, dictated a more or less strategical retirement. Mr. Percy Saunders, from the Town Clerk's department, acting on behalf of the Treasury, stated that the whole object of the prosecution had been "to stop this literature from being sold and hurting the opinions of the public." Since the adjournment they had found that "the defendants had ceased to sell this literature." Consequently the object of the police authorities had been achieved, and he (Mr. Saunders) was instructed not to offer any more evidence. The Magistrate, therefore, had no alternative but to dismiss the summonses against all three defendants.

Mr. Pack told the magistrate that he had no objection to this course, but he added "We have not stopped selling this paper." What he meant, however, seems to have been that

they did not mean to stop selling the periodical. It was pointed out by the Magistrate that the prosecution was not aimed at the periodical itself, but at the particular number on account of which the summonses had been issued. Mr. Weir, however, declared that he did intend to go on selling the prosecuted number. Against this the Magistrate gave him an obviously friendly hint. In any case, Mr. Weir cannot go on selling the prosecuted number unless Mr. Gott supplies him with it, and we do not see how that can be done to any considerable extent in the case of a back number—especially in view of Mr. Gott's undertaking given to us in the matter.

The National Association of Freethinkers (France) will hold its Annual Congress on December 25, 26, and 27 in Paris. A public meeting will take place on Saturday evening, December 26, and the Congress will conclude its labors by a grand banquet on Sunday evening. Two important items for discussion, among others on the Agenda, are, Separation of Church and State, and the Congress at Rome.

Freethinkers visiting Paris may like to know that on the first Friday of each month an intimate Dinner for Freethinkers is served at 7.30 at the Restaurant Taverne Gruber, 15 Boulevard St. Denis; also every Friday at midday a lunch is served with the same object of giving persons of advanced views an opportunity of fraternising. Many of the writers in *La Raison* and *L'Action* attend there each week, and Freethinkers from abroad will be welcomed. These lunches and dinners have become quite an institution among our friends in Paris. Victor Charbonnel was the founder of these pleasant reunions, and generally attends. There only remains to add that the price of either meal is three francs, including wines.

The grand Ball organised by the Parisian Freethinkers took place on Saturday last at the Palais D'Orsay, and was a tremendous success. Over three thousand were present. Many leading artistes contributed to the pleasures of the evening by recitations and songs. It should be specially noted that the Colonial Minister, M. Gaston Doumerge, was officially represented by his chief secretary.

We are glad to learn that Mr. W. R. Cremer, M.P., the life-long friend of Peace principles, has been awarded one of the Nobel prizes, amounting to something over £7,000. Mr. Cremer is an honest, sturdy Radical of the old school. He knew Charles Bradlaugh very well many years ago, and we believe he was (and is) a Freethinker. We remember hearing Mr. Cremer, at one of Bradlaugh's meetings in St James's Hall, say that he had circularised all the Non-conformist ministers in London about an urgent Peace meeting, and only three of them had taken the trouble to reply. We think it was three; anyhow, it was an extremely small number. How different is the case now! "Infidels" created the Peace movement, and when it flourished the men of God (as usual) took to patronising it. To hear them talk about Peace now, you would think they had invented it.

This year's Nobel prize for Imaginative Literature has been voted to Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, the great novelist, who is probably the most popular man in Norway. The *Westminster Gazette* speaks of him as "a great Radical politician." We suppose it shrank from saying that he is a great Freethinker. But such he is. Bjørnson translated into Norwegian, and published himself, Colonel Ingersoll's fine articles on "The Christian Religion" which appeared in the early eighties in the *North American Review*. In his pamphlet on "Monogamy" Bjørnson quotes with much approval a noble censure of polygamy from one of Ingersoll's later lectures.

It appears that the late Mr. Seale-Hayne, M.P., who bequeathed the residue of his fortune (from £30,000 to £40,000) to establish a Technical Education College for the county of Devon, left special directions that no part of his legacy should be used for the building or endowment of any consecrated church or chapel, or for the payment of any chaplain or minister; and that no clergyman, priest, or minister of any denomination whatsoever, should hold any post or office in the said college.

The London *Star*, referring to Mr. Seale-Hayne's "secular" bequest, says: "It will be interesting to notice how soon the clericals grab this endowment." The Girard College, Philadelphia, was founded and endowed by Stephen Girard, a pronounced Freethinker. He stipulated that no clergyman of any denomination should so much as set foot in the establishment on any pretence whatever—not even as a visitor. But the Christian rogues have laughed at Girard's orders, with the connivance of the powers that be, and clergymen are actually on the teaching staff—and even teaching religion!

There is some carelessness at the office of our valued contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*. Mr. Foote's article on "Gladstone and Ingersoll" is partly reproduced from our columns, but the usual word of acknowledgment is overlooked. We say *overlooked*, not *omitted*, for we are sure it was not intentional. Eugene and George Macdonald are both good writers, and do not need to purloin matter from the *Freethinker* or any other journal.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society's Executive, takes place at the Holborn Restaurant (as usual) on Tuesday, January 12, at 7.30 sharp. Mr. G. W. Foote is to occupy the chair, and to be supported by well-known colleagues, including the newest one—Mr. John Lloyd. The Presentation will be made that evening to Mr. C. Cohen. The tickets, 4s. each, can now be obtained from Miss E. M. Vance, secretary, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

Immortality.

GIORDANO BRUNO, 1548-1600.

I SHALL leave the place that knew me—
Soon shall mount beyond the fire
To the sky where hunger ceases,
To the heaven of dead desire.

From the fanes where I have lingered—
From the books I held so dear—
From the friends with whom I suffered—
I shall pass without a tear.

Ye shall seek me, seek me vainly,
In the sounding city street,
'Mid the cries of joy and anguish,
Through the rush of hurrying feet.

In the lanes a blossom gathered;
From the fields a dew-drop gone;
On the shore a wave-worn footstep;
O'er the sea a sail that's flown!

In the winter and the summer,
Like the sunbeam and the frost,
I shall be a vanished presence—
Never seized, yet never lost!

High on cloud or low on billow;
In the breeze and on the wing;
Soaring with the lark at sunrise—
With the leaf down fluttering!

Each new season shall repeat me—
Countless hours my soul prolong,
In the perfume of the floweret—
In the music of each song!

Day shall wake my name from slumber;
Night shall hold me in its ken—
I shall live within the starlight—
I shall haunt the thoughts of men!

—Open Court (Chicago).

EDMUND NOBLE.

The Heirs of Time.

FROM street and square, from hill and glen,
Of this vast world before my door,
I hear the tread of marching men,
The patient armies of the poor.

The halo of the city's lamps
Hangs, a vast torchlight, in the air;
I watch it through the evening damps;
The masters of the world are there.

Not crine clad or clothed in state,
Their title deeds not yet made plain,
But waking early, toiling late,
The heirs of all the earth remain.

Some day, by laws as fixed and fair
As guide the planets in their sweep,
The children of each outcast heir
The harvest fruits of time shall reap.

The peasant brain shall yet be wise,
The untamed pulse grow calm and still,
The blind shall see, the lowly rise,
And work in peace Time's wondrous will.

Some day, without a trumpet's call,
This news will o'er the earth be blown:
"The heritage comes back to all!
The myriad monarchs take their own!"

—Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

Is the Bible a Suitable Book for Children in Day Schools?

(Concluded from page 789.)

The priest originated partly as a schoolmaster, and in the schoolmaster he will ultimately become absorbed. The schoolmaster has made the priest unnecessary. To teach this fact should not be looked upon as enmity against a priest personally, but as war against error and a campaign for truth.

In the same way it is not hatred of the Bible as an ancient book that makes us oppose its use as a school book, but a conviction that it is unfit and unsuitable for the purpose, and more likely to be hurtful than beneficial to the children. Some of its deficiencies on the negative side have already been noticed. But there remains a number of positive faults that must be mentioned briefly in justification of the assertions made, and these are faults that would keep any book but the Bible from the schools. If anyone published a book with a view to have it accepted as a school reader, and it was found to be full of errors, contradictions, falsehoods, immoralities, indecencies, cruelties, and wrong teaching, that book would be at once rejected, and no one would say a word in its defence. The Bible contains all these faults and many more. It is full of errors, contradictions, and wrong teaching. It relates fables and myths as true history. It gives account of practices, indecencies, and uncleanness, the reading of which would be dangerous to any child. Its ideas of the universe and of our own earth are erroneous. It represents brutal superstitions as truths. It relates conducts and abominable cruelties without a word of disapproval. It represents men guilty of immoralities and crimes as saints, and one of the most objectionable characters possible as a man after God's own heart. It makes God an idol carried about in a box; it makes him an ignorant man, eating and drinking like a man; it makes him a fickle, changeable, irritable, and jealous being; it makes him a vain and partial partisan; and, to crown all, it makes him an unjust judge and a monster of cruelty and tyranny. The Bible sanctions war by precept and example, and justifies the destruction of nations to steal their countries. It sanctions the subjection of woman to man, makes her a chattel property of man, like his ox and ass, and allows him to sell his wife and his daughter, and even to sacrifice her if he chooses. It allows the selling and buying of men as if they were beasts; that is, it sanctions slavery. It teaches the existence of witchcraft, an impossible crime, and orders us not to suffer a witch to live. It countenances a belief in demoniacism, and attributes diseases to demons. It supports prostitution and polygamy, two of the worst institutions amongst men. And by precept and example it inculcates cruel actions and a spirit of vengeance and revenge, which has deluged the world with blood. Worse than all, if that be possible, it approves of intolerance, and commands persecution of opinions, a teaching that has cursed the world above all other curses. All these positive faults, and more that could be named, can be verified by chapter and verse. And it is no answer to the charges, to say that other parts teach the very opposite. That, instead of being an answer, is in reality an additional argument to prove the unfitness and unsuitability of the Bible to be a school book.

Many Christians at the present time willingly and freely acknowledge the truth of the foregoing statements, but they still want to retain the Bible as an inspired book to teach religion. If they would define the word religion and explain what they mean when using the word, I think they would soon see that the Bible has no more claim to inspiration and infallibility in religion than in history and science. If the Bible is fallible and faulty in one part, no argument can prove it inspired and infallible in another part. Analogy would lead us to believe that a book which is untrustworthy in history is to be received with

caution as a moral teacher. As a matter of fact, the Bible is anything but perfect and complete as a teacher of morality—in another word, religion. Since the Bible was written the world has advanced and changed, Society has become more complicated, new circumstances and relations have been evolved, and, in consequence, new duties and obligations have arisen. Much that was appropriate two thousand years ago is now out of date and obsolete. Even those maxims applicable to all, all time, such as the Golden Rule and "love thy neighbour as thyself," are not peculiar to the Scriptures. Nobler, higher, and purer ideals in ethics have been evolved than anything found in ancient books. A better primer of ethics can be composed than anything found in the Bible, and much more in this direction would have been done had the Bible not been in the way. Backward and imperfect as our moral ideas are, they are far in advance of the Scriptures, and I suspect that much seen in the Bible is read into it from the loftier ideas of the present day.

But whether that suggestion be true or not, I think I have made it clear that the Bible is not a fit and suitable book for day schools. Barring the teaching of dogmas will not abolish the difficulty; it will only remove the difficulty from the dogmas to the book. As long as the Bible remains in the schools it will be a bone of contention and a source of difficulty. The only possible permanent solution is the removal of the priest and his book from all day schools. Church and chapel write and speak as if they were the only parties concerned in the dispute. They are greatly mistaken. There are an increasing number of Jews, Positivists, Spiritualists, Secularists, Labor Church, Socialists, Agnostics, and Ethicists all in favor of secular education pure and simple. And I have no doubt that the majority of the people, including many good Christians, would vote with them in order to terminate the education difficulty. As for the Bible, the intelligence of the world is gradually coming round to the conviction not only that it is unsuitable for children in day schools, but that it is a harmful book, if received as a truthful and an inspired document, as expressed lately by Leo Tolstoy:—"People talk of harmful books. But is there in Christendom a book that has done more harm to mankind than this terrible book, called Scripture History from the Old and New Testaments?" (*Appeal to the Clergy by Leo Tolstoy*, last paragraph, Section 8.)

Even as a moral or religious book the Bible is very deficient and imperfect, and a better Bible in every respect could easily be produced. If a Secular Bible Society could be established, with abundance of means, the best and highest talents and scholarship of the world could be employed to write a concise chapter, in plain popular language, by experts in every branch of knowledge, including what is called religion or morality. Such a book could be kept up to date by alterations and additions, as it would claim no infallibility. In fact, it would be a miniature encyclopædia of knowledge—or, in other words, a really useful Secular Bible.

R. J. DERFEL.

"Respectable."

ONE of the queerest ironies of fate existing at the present moment is that which makes the paper created by the depicter of Stiggins and Chadband the organ of the Nonconformist sects; and fills the columns occupied by the reasonings of Harriet Martineau with the philosophies of Mr. G. K. Chesterton. It is no less queer that these sects, which, with but few individual exceptions, are as fanatically bigoted against Freethought as are the self-styled "Catholic" Churches, now form that political party which was founded by the Benthamite Atheists, and proudly carry the name "Liberal" invented by them. This reflection is forced on the mind by a sentence in an article in the *Daily News* of the 7th inst., in which Mr. Chesterton tries to shock the Nonconformist Conscience by telling his readers

that he feels the country, or civilisation, is come to slippery places "when priests are flighty and Atheists respectable.....when, in short, things are getting delightfully funny but a little disquieting."

Only the boundless assurance of abnormal ignorance could prompt the production of such a sentence in such a paper, with such an origin. However, it represents that illogical conception of Atheism which exists in the mediocre mind; and, moreover, it is a sample of that absolute ignorance of the history of his religion common to the "respectable" Christian: that profound void of facts, which has since then—on November 17—caused the *Daily News*, on the top of the third column of page 4, to print that the audience of the Empire Theatre are "men yielding to every phase of self-indulgence, men steeped in practical infidelity, and men soaked with sensuality." To this writer: Mr. G. K. Chesterton—who unnecessarily has informed his readers he is young—priests are by nature stolid and Atheists disreputable. The fact that priests profess to be guided by a "Ghost," and that Atheists devote their intellects to studying the conditions of the human society in which they find themselves, and which they conceive to be absolutely the only one they will ever know; and which therefore, they are compelled to wish to stand well amidst, goes for nothing—not only with this neophyte to human life, but with the vast Deistical school for whom he writes. Now, what is the fact? There are, and have been, uncountable armies of priests. There is but, and there has ever only been, a minute section of Atheists—so few that every one of distinction can be instantly recalled and his career questioned. To Mr. Chesterton this disquieting, funny fact that there are respectable Atheists is a new evolution—a matter of this immediate time, and not of the past. Well—who was there of the Atheists of the past who was not respectable? His own "Liberal" Party is the creation of Atheists! What was the character of the Benthamites?

Now, in actual fact, the Benthamites are the only Atheists who can be regarded as representative. The first time in history that any party considered to be Atheists existed was during the great French Revolution; but its members may as well be called Druids. They were a mere recrudescence of that general savagery and fanaticism which lies hardly dormant in all nations; and it is to be remembered that the only thing they effected: the execution of Marie Antoinette, was insisted on—not from any advanced or atheistical standpoint—but to maintain Christian morality! The Illuminati were reputed Atheists and were hardly respectable—at least, their best known representative, Georges Sand, was not. But, so far from being Atheists, they were afflicted with that self-same incoherent pantheistic dementia Mr. Chesterton himself makes such epileptic convulsions to demonstrate to us in the *Daily News*. It is not these, but the founders of Mr. Chesterton's own "Liberal" Party who are the Atheists the world knows. And who are they? And who were their "infidel" associates and co-laborers? They were Bentham, a squire; Brougham, a Lord Chancellor; Bowring, an Ambassador and Governor of a Crown Colony; Roebuck, a Privy Councillor; James Mill, a Permanent Under Secretary for India; John Mill, his successor and friend of the present King's more intellectual sisters; Grote, a banker, and many others of equally honorable status. And who has followed them? Harriet Martineau, who built up this very journal which so grossly libels her memory; Huxley, the holder of nearly a dozen Government offices; Tyndall, also the holder of Government appointments; and there was the man to whom the Commons of England, on the initiative of the irreproachable Gladstone, apologised: Charles Bradlaugh.

I do not write this to claim respectability for Atheists. Mr. Chesterton says we are respectable—that is sufficient. In actual fact, however, Atheists do not value the middle-class virtue of "respectability." Respectability has been that dead-weight on modern progress which has at length destroyed it.

It was in the name of "respectability" that Thomas Moore destroyed Lord Byron's autobiography; and that Sir John Bowring suppressed the more advanced of Bentham's posthumous papers. It was the most eminently respectable Robespierre who dragged out Deism to stop the progress of the French Revolution when the middle class saw that power was passing into the hands of the producers themselves, and that Revolution was finally destroyed by Napoleon Bonaparte when, in his anxiety to be "respectable" he made a point of speaking of the Emperor of Austria as "my father." I merely give the fact that while Atheists as a body have formed the most microscopically small of all parties in the world and in history, no sooner had that party common scope than it produced the greatest number of eminent persons in proportion to its numbers of any party or sect that ever existed. And moreover I give the fact that very few of those persons have not been conspicuously respectable. It is true that two great Atheists have defied sexual convention—Shelley and George Eliot. Shelley was not "respectable," but the age in which he lived was not respectable. His marital relations were a public scandal; but as nothing compared to those of the then wearer of the crown. He was not the hero of a "Delicate Investigation." He did not desert his acknowledged wife to induce others to pay his debts; nor perpetrate a bigamous marriage with a woman who bluntly admitted she did not care for his affection, but the honor of his alliance. When he appealed to the Law it was to assert his primitive rights as a citizen and a parent, not to repudiate them. And—as to George Eliot, she defied convention, it is absolutely and undeniably true, and she was supported and countenanced by a Bishop of the Church by Law Established! She was a phenomenon, but indisputably "respectable." Bruno also was erratic, but he did not outrage the sentiment of his age in the manner of Melancthon and Luther. A friar, he neither married a fugitive nun, nor did he live in ostentatious contempt of his vow, as the majority of the Reformers did before they reformed themselves by getting married. Again, he did not smuggle a woman about in a trunk like Cranmer, nor die pole-axing his theological foes in a set fight like Zwingle!

GEORGE TREBELLS.

(To be continued.)

Herbert Spencer "Mems."

Herbert Spencer died from "senile decay." He had been obliged to husband his health and strength for more than forty years, and the wonder is he lived so long.

It was natural that Herbert Spencer should order his bodily remains to be cremated. No doubt this will act as an incentive or an encouragement to others who are able to make stipulations on such matters.

Herbert Spencer's three executors show how the "wind blew" intellectually. All three of them, we believe, are Freethinkers. Dr. Duncan helped in the compilation of *Descriptive Sociology*; Dr. Charlton Bastian is one of the "spontaneous generation" heretics, and the author of what the pious folk call a "materialistic" book on the Brain; and the Hon. Auberon Herbert is well-known as a pronounced philosophical Individualist (or Anarchist) after Spencer's own heart.

The simplicity of Herbert Spencer's character was manifest in the requests he made with regard to his funeral; first, that no flowers should be sent; second, that no one should wear mourning.

Steadily always did Herbert Spencer refuse what are called "honors." He declined to be nominated as Lord Rector of St. Andrew's University in 1872; he refused the degree of LL.D. offered him by that University and also by Cambridge; he refused a Fellowship of the Royal Society; and he ignored Emperor William's effort to fasten on him the Order of Merit.

Herbert Spencer began his literary career by writing for the *Nonconformist*. That paper was conducted by the Mialls and really had some grit in it. It upheld the true Nonconformist standard of absolute separation between Religion and the State. Afterwards, when Spencer gave up engineering for ever, he became sub-editor of the *Economist* at £150 a year. The *Economist* is still living and has a good reputation. But it never had, and never will have, another sub-editor like Herbert Spencer.

Books like Herbert Spencer's were "caviare to the general." No publisher would undertake his *Social Statics*, in 1850, and he had to print it and sell it on commission. It took fourteen years to get rid of 750 copies. The *Principles of Psychology*, five years later, had to be brought out in the same way; and the edition of 750 copies took twelve years to sell. Spencer found he was losing heavily by his works, and some legacies he received were devoted to their publication. At the end of twenty-four years he found that the publishing expenses and the sales just balanced each other!

In the preface to *Notes and Comments*, dated Brighton, March, 1902, Herbert Spencer wrote: "The volume herewith issued I can say with certainty will be my last." And it was so, as far as publication during his lifetime went. But it is reported that he had written a voluminous Autobiography, which was actually set up in type, and which he was urged to publish while he was living. We hear that this autobiography will be published immediately. It should be very interesting.

Herbert Spencer was a great philosopher, but he was human. "Like Browning," a *Westminster Gazette* correspondent says, "he was a devotee of youth and beauty. The last time I saw him he was talking to a pretty *ingénue* in white muslin." The present writer was told many years ago by one who was there, that Spencer, being at a dinner party some evenings before, was going to be placed by the hostess next to a formidable philosophical lady, who was then rather elderly, and had never been very prepossessing; and that the great man said, "Oh, don't put me there; I'm really very tired, and can't talk to her as I should. Mayn't I sit by that young lady over there?"—indicating a pretty, good-humored looking girl. He had that seat.

There was an excellent obituary notice of Herbert Spencer in the *Athenæum* signed "W." After observing that he "devoted his long life to the service of man," it concludes finely: "Statesmen may come and statesmen may go, and leave their names inscribed in a little corner of national history; but the man who died at Brighton this week belongs to the world at large, and his services are not to be measured by the confines of any country. His work is done. He is already ennobled among the immortals."

The *Academy* notice of Herbert Spencer's death was written by Mr. C. W. Saleeby. We suppose the new management, under the son of a Church of England dignitary, is indirectly responsible for the gratuitous sneer at "Haeckel and such dogmatics." The article, however, was highly laudatory. "All subsequent ages of philosophical speculation, and of scientific investigation," the writer says, "will take their starting-point and their guide from the work of this courageous and stupendous genius."

According to the *Westminster Gazette*, Herbert Spencer once wrote to Mrs. Lynn Linton, sketching the lines of an article which he invited her to write for the *Nineteenth Century* concerning certain strictures lightly passed upon his system by Professor Henry Drummond, the author of *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. He begged the lady to "tweak the nose" of that orthodox philosopher. It is not surprising to learn that Spencer regarded him as "shallow and pretentious."

Some things are done better abroad. It is impossible to think of our House of Commons sending messages of condolence to foreign nations on the mere loss of a philosopher. The Italian Chamber is far less intellectually stodgy. Signor Berenini said that no praise could do justice to Herbert Spencer's genius. He thought he was interpreting the feeling of the entire Chamber in expressing his highest admiration of the eminent philosopher and great pioneer of civilisation, and his deep condolences with Great Britain. [Fancy Mr. Balfour's face on reading this!] Dr. Finchia, Under Secretary of Public Instruction, claimed Herbert Spencer as a citizen of the world. Signor Biancheri, the President, said that the Italian Chamber had always deemed it an honor to do homage to genius, and that it paid reverent homage to Herbert Spencer's memory. This evoked loud and prolonged cheering.

Herbert Spencer wished that Mr. John Morley should be present at the funeral ceremony and deliver a valedictory address. Mr. Morley was holidaying in Sicily, and when a telegram reached him, after inevitable "delay," he had to express his great regret at his inability to attend.

The remains of Herbert Spencer were cremated on Monday at Golder's Green, the ashes being afterwards interred at Highgate Cemetery. A number of private and public friends of the deceased were present, including some of the leaders of science in England. According to request, there were no flowers; but laurel wreaths were on the purple pall, one of them being from the Society of Russian Refugees in London—"To the Great Thinker and Friend of Freedom." Mr. Leonard Courtney delivered the funeral address. In the eloquent peroration he admitted that Spencer knew nothing of individual immortality; yet he dedicated himself to truth, progress, and humanity "as truly and as bravely as any man enjoying the solace of a more definite creed." A testimony from India was added by Mr. Shyamaji Krishnavarma, who offered to give £1,000 to establish a Spencer Lectureship at Oxford.

Correspondence.

THOMAS PAINE'S BONES

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My attention has been called to some paragraphs relating to Thomas Paine, appearing in the *Freethinker* of November 15 last. In one of the paragraphs it is stated that since 1844 all trace of Paine's remains disappears. As a matter of fact, all public knowledge of them does cease from that time. I am able, however, to add something to this public knowledge, having been fortunate to make two absolutely distinct discoveries in connection with this matter. In the first place, then, I have recently interviewed a lady in Brighton who had in her possession at one time a jaw bone of Thomas Paine. This relic was transmitted from one generation to another since about 1825, or, perhaps, somewhat earlier, when it was in the possession of a Mr. Wilkinson, a custom house officer in Liverpool (where it will be remembered that the bones of Paine remained for some years after being brought to England) to whom it had been given by a captain of a trading vessel. The lady to whom I have referred, while living at Eglwysback in Denbighshire, being somewhat uneasy in the possession of this bone, one day seized the opportunity afforded by a new grave being opened in the village churchyard to dispose of it, threw it into the grave. The grave was that of a boy, whose name is now unremembered. This took place some forty-five years or so ago.

My second discovery consists in having traced the major part of Paine's bones, through many years, down to 1896. I am in possession of the names of former possessors of these relics, but am prevented by a promise made—at all events for the present—from making public these names. I may say that the reason for withholding them is a sufficiently good one, of which I, at least, am thoroughly satisfied. The following facts may, however, be given. When the remains were lost sight of in 1896 they went into the hands of a dealer in London (now dead) and with them were the right hand and head and bones of another person not known. Should these bones, nevertheless, be ultimately found, those of Paine, including the skull, can easily be identified, but at present it would be perhaps better not to refer to the means of identification, as the publication of them might lead to fraud.

W. W. BARTLETT.

CORNERING THE MINISTER.—A minister one day got into conversation with a soldier, of whom the minister asked a lot of questions as to what regiment he was in, where it was lying, etc. Presently Tommy thought it was his turn to ask a few questions. "Noo," said he, "Aa would like to know what ye are?" "I am a soldier, too," said the minister. "Ay, an' what regiment are ye in, an' where is't lyin'?" The minister, pointing to the sky, said: "My regiment is in heaven, sir." "Mau," replied the soldier, "but thoo's a lang way frae the barracks!"

SECTARIANS.—"Both of my grandparents on my mother's side were nonagenarians," said Mrs. Oldcastle. "Is that so?" replied her hostess. "My folks was all Baptists, but Josiah comes from a Methodist family."—*Chicago Record-Herald*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, Chapman Cohen, "Atheism and the Creed of the Future."

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

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

WOOD GREEN ETHICAL SOCIETY (Fairfax Hall, Portland-gardens, Harringay): 7, W. Sanders, "The Social Ideal."

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY (Temperance Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, Mr. Paul, "Christmas Delusions."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class. Open Discussion; 6.30, A. G. Nostic, "Ornithology; The Migration of Birds." With lantern illustrations.

LEEDS (Covered Market, Vicar's Croft): 11, Ernest Pack, "The Police and Blasphemy"; Woodhouse Moor: 3, "The Bible and Blasphemy"; Town Hall Square: 7, "Who are the Blasphemers?"

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward, 3, "Herbert Spencer"; 7, "Did Jesus Ever Exist?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, John Lloyd (ex-Presbyterian Minister), "The Death Struggle of Religion"; 6.30, "Why I Have Given Up the Christian Religion." Tea at 5.

PRESTON (Weavers' Hall): 8, Ernest Pack, "Who are the Blasphemers?"

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