

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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*Life liveth but in Life, and doth not roam  
To other realms if all be well at home :  
"Solid as ocean-foam," quoth ocean-foam.*

—JAMES THOMSON ("B.V.").

## Mr. Holyoake and Passive Resistance.

IN the *Freethinker* of March 20 we printed three paragraphs in "Acid Drops" on Mr. G. J. Holyoake's joining the Passive Resisters. We reproduced in full the *Daily News* report of what he said when summoned for his rates at Brighton, and we devoted twenty lines of criticism to it. Mr. Holyoake objected, the report said, to having money taken from him by force in order to teach tenets from which he dissented; and upon his action on this ground we commented as follows:—

"We presume he has paid rates and taxes ever since the first Education Act was passed, thirty-three years ago. During the whole of that time money has been taken from him by force (if you don't pay they make you) and devoted to the teaching of various forms of Christianity in the public schools. Mr. Holyoake 'dissented' from all those forms of Christianity, yet he never kicked before. He never advised the non-payment of rates when Secularists were taxed for what they often detested, when they were openly oppressed, when their children were subjected to insult, and when these children, as they grew up, were debarred by both Churchmen and Nonconformists from service in the teaching profession. Mr. Holyoake bottled up his indignation until his Nonconformist friends felt the trouble. Now they protest, and he explodes."

Now we have not the slightest hesitation in saying that this is perfectly legitimate criticism, and Mr. Holyoake might have given it a straightforward answer. But he did not choose to recognise that he owed the Secular party an explanation. He thought it sufficient to address a letter to the *Daily News*, in which we were not mentioned, and in which no sort of reply was offered to the substance of what we had said. We were simply alluded to obscurely as "another objector," and a merely incidental observation (that Mr. Holyoake had become a Passive Resister rather late in life) was seized upon and worried at considerable length as though it were the chief bone of contention. That letter we dealt with in "Acid Drops" in the *Freethinker* of April 3. Our paragraphs were discursive, like Mr. Holyoake's epistle; but we took care to point out that he had not shed a gleam of light on the really important questions: "Why has he become a Passive Resister now? And why did he not become a Passive Resister when Secularists, instead of Nonconformists, were the victims of the Education Act?"

Mr. Holyoake still leaves these questions unanswered. Instead of replying to them he sends us the following communication:—

DEAR SIR,—You see I do not regulate my conduct according to your notions. That may be imprudent in me, but I accept the hostility that may occasion. Thus it is not necessary for me to answer the objections you raise, which my fondness for controversy would lead me to do had I time.

I read in Tory papers the same contemptuousness for Nonconformists which the *Freethinker* continually expresses. You take the side of the Church in deriding

them, in the few respects in which they are right. It was the Church that put you in prison, yet you take the side of the Church in its contempt of Nonconformists. He who writes the word God with a small "g" is held to belittle Deity. This is what you do when you write Nonconformist with a small "n." Whereas I hold it, as Emerson did, to be a great principle, larger than sectarian Dissent. You see something "unpleasant" in "discretionary" Nonconformity, yet you define it as "opposition, if necessary, to customs and conventions." Is not that discretionary Nonconformity? Undiscretionary Nonconformity is silliness. It is the Pauline offensiveness of "being instant in season and out of season."

Discretionariness in controversy was an attribute of Secularism which it is always my pride to have advocated.

You say, "honestly and fairly according to your custom, you gave every word of explanation offered by me." Yet you comment (April 9) through more than a column, upon a letter of mine which you do not cite. I send it you exactly as I sent it to the *Daily News*, with the addition of a few words, which, through want of space, the *Daily News* omitted. No one can form a fair opinion of a letter cut up into phrases and fragments, so I send it to you entire.

Brighton, April 8.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

We really see no reason why the *Freethinker* should be made the dumping-ground for Mr. Holyoake's revised letters to the *Daily News*. Why are we expected to find room for what our contemporary omitted for want of space? The letter was meant for Nonconformist consumption; it was not in any way addressed to the Secular party; indeed, that party, as represented by its leading spokesmen, was only made the object of somewhat mysterious, but sufficiently bitter, sneers. We feel justified, therefore, in declining to let our columns serve for a rehash of Mr. Holyoake's "Nonconformist" civilities. If he will address our readers directly, and explain why he is a Passive Resister now, and never was so under the Education Act before, we will gladly insert what he has to say.

In the meanwhile, we may begin by devoting a few lines to what he does say in his letter to us.

It seems to us very absurd to suppose that we had no right to deal with Mr. Holyoake's letter to the *Daily News* without first reproducing it *in extenso*. No paper ever was, or ever could be, conducted on such lines, without courting an early funeral. We did "honestly and fairly, according to our custom, give every word of explanation offered" by Mr. Holyoake as to why he was acting as a Passive Resister; but that does not involve the necessity of giving every word he chooses to say, in letters to other journals, on a variety of collateral topics.

Mr. Holyoake confuses another very simple matter. He quoted Emerson as saying that "whoso would be a man must be a Nonconformist," and we remarked that the capital *N* made all the difference. Nonconformist, with a capital *N*, at any rate in England, is a technical term. It is a synonym for Dissenter, and strictly means a member of one of the so-called Free Churches. This is the plain truth, and we refuse to be a party to tricks with the dictionary. We subscribe to what Emerson said; but he said it in America, where there is no State Church, and where the word "nonconformist" is not used as it is in England. In one country the term is quite generic; in the other it is absolutely specific.



With regard to "Discretionary Nonconformity," there is discretion *and* discretion; and our paragraphs showed what *we* were hinting at when we said that the "discretionary" was the unpleasant aspect of his case. To speak the brutal truth, since it is demanded, we mean that "discretion" in this instance seems much the better part of Mr. Holyoake's valor. We shall be delighted, however, if he can give it a different complexion.

Mr. Holyoake is wrong in stating that "the Church put us in prison." The Corporation of the City of London was our prosecutor, and the Blasphemy Laws were supported by all sections of Christianity. The few Christians who strove to get them repealed were Churchmen like the Rev. Stewart Headlam and the late Canon Shuttleworth. These gentlemen denounced our imprisonment at public meetings, and we do not remember a single Nonconformist minister who did anything of the kind; with the exception of the Rev. Mr. Sharman, who was nominally a Unitarian, but actually an Agnostic.

We do not take the side of the Church *at all* in this Education quarrel. We are against the Church altogether. It wants its own way, and says so. There is no hypocrisy about it. It fights for as much of its own religion as possible in the public schools. But it fights openly. We know where to find it and how to meet it. Nonconformity is also fighting for its own religious interests in the public schools. But it lies about the matter, plays the hypocrite, and covers its designs with all sorts of canting phrases about public control, the rights of citizenship, and the glorious traditions of civil and religious freedom.

We do not treat the Nonconformists with "contempt" for being Nonconformists, but for *not* being Nonconformists. They are false to their own principle that the State should have no concern with religion. They fight *against* State religion for adults in public churches, and *for* State religion for children in public schools. They sold their birthright, in 1870, for a mess of pottage, and we are now glad to see it is choking them.

Mr. Holyoake's opening paragraph is really amazing. He has time to attend Nonconformist meetings and write letters to Nonconformist papers, but he has not "time" to "answer the objections" raised to his action by the President of the National Secular Society, and the editor of the only weekly Secular journal in Great Britain. And Mr. Holyoake is a Secularist! He talks about our "hostility" and our desire to "regulate his conduct." Now we have nothing to do with Mr. Holyoake's "conduct," and no wish to "regulate" him. We simply criticised his public acts and utterances. When a man refuses to pay his rates, and states his reasons in court, at public meetings, and through the newspapers, he *challenges* criticism. But it seems that Mr. Holyoake courts approval and resents disapproval. He is pleased at the good opinion of Christians, and annoyed at the disapprobation of Secularists—of whom, apparently, he hoped that nothing would be heard (as Secularists) in this Education struggle.

If Mr. Holyoake took the trouble to know something about the Secular party he would be aware that they have repeatedly expressed their contempt for Nonconformist hypocrisy, and attributed to Nonconformist recreancy to principle the entire responsibility for the "religious difficulty" in the public schools of England. This was plainly set forth in the National Secular Society's manifesto on the Education Question, and in resolutions passed at the Society's annual conference. Mr. Holyoake may take it from us that the Secular party is practically unanimous on this point. There may be sporadic cases of dissent, like his own, but they are hardly worth counting.

Secularists perceive that the declared policy of Nonconformists is a cynical outrage on the first principles of civil freedom. Dr. Clifford flourishing his Bible is quite as odious to them as the Bishop of London flourishing his Church Catechism. And if Mr. Holyoake thinks otherwise he—well, he deceives himself.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Religious Instruction and the Teachers' Conference.

THE National Union of Teachers held their Annual Conference this year at Portsmouth. The Union is one of the largest of organised Trades Unions in this country, and although its opinions on education are far from being authoritative, they are always interesting, particularly so at present when education—or to put it correctly, a quarrel, with education as a cloak—is playing an active part in practical politics. There is also one very serious consideration that causes people to accept the publicly expressed opinions of teachers with some caution. Not all of them are under public bodies of sufficient size to prevent acts of petty tyranny. Many of them work under small local Councils and other governing bodies, and their public expressions are apt to be regulated to some extent by the opinions of such bodies. Teachers of pronounced Socialistic opinions would stand but small chance of promotion under a council the majority of which belonged to the old-fashioned rural aristocracy, and it is even more certain that teachers who are quite out of agreement with religious beliefs, and who would welcome Secular Education as an unqualified boon, are chary of saying so under a Council where religious opinions are erected into a line of demarcation between parties.

I do not say this in any spirit of censure, but as a mere statement of fact. One may regret, without any hypocritical condemnation of those who suffer, the conditions that make honesty of speech so dear a luxury; but the greater fault lies with those who do what they can to manufacture hypocrites by punishing as severely as they dare such as risk all by speaking out.

In such a gathering as that of the N.U.T., held at such a time, it would have been impossible to keep out the subject of Religious Education in Public Schools. And it came up at least twice. The President, Mr. G. Sharples, referred to it in his presidential address. Here his ideal is that of the average Nonconformist, who repeats his shibboleth of Biblical instruction with the unintelligent wearisomeness of a parrot brought up in a religious environment. The President asks for "Biblical instruction free from creeds," which tickles the ears of many people, although no one is quite sure what it means. What it *ought* to mean is that the Bible should be taught free from all creedal interpretations. But how can this be done by Christian teachers in a Christian country? At the very least the Bible would be placed before children as the word of God, and this is as much a creedal article as anything else. What Mr. Sharples' phrase means, although he is not perhaps aware of it, is teaching the Bible free from the Church of England creed. But really, when it comes to teaching a creed, the Church of England has as much right to have a voice in the framing of it as any other body.

The *Church Times* asks, and rightly, how would a teacher explain the words "God with us"? And it replies that, while to the Christian it is one thing and to the Unitarian another, to the Agnostic it is pure nonsense. The Nonconformist way out of the difficulty is to say that the Freethinker does not matter. His views are of no importance, and his pretensions to conscientious convictions a piece of impertinence. Mr. Sharples, had he taken a really philosophic view of the position, would have realised that the Episcopalian or Agnostic view of the Bible has as much right in the schools as any other, so long as others are allowed. Indeed, if we are to have religious instruction in State schools, there can be no valid objection to that instruction being definite or dogmatic. And what is overlooked is that a permanent return to the 1870 plan is no longer possible. Nonconformists have read Churchmen the lesson of Passive Resistance, and if they are successful in amending the Act to suit themselves they will find their own weapons turned against them by their



rivals. The *Church Times* rightly sums up the situation by saying that "Religious opinion is so hopelessly divided that there is only a choice left us between two alternatives, either Secular education or freedom to teach children their parents' religion." And there is little doubt that the first will be the one that is ultimately chosen.

The second occasion on which this topic came up for discussion was on a resolution proposed by the Executive. This expressed an opinion to the effect that, as in Council schools (formerly Board schools), no denominational religious teaching and no theological tests for teachers exists, the same conditions should be imposed upon all fresh schools coming under public control, and no overtures should be entertained when the abandonment of the Cowper-Temple clause is demanded.

So far as this resolution expressed the desire of teachers that the conditions of all schools under public control shall be uniform, there is no fault to be found with it. But the discussion on the resolution, notably the contribution by Dr. Macnamara, calls for a word or two of comment. Dr. Macnamara began by professing a belief that the bulk of the English working-class parents were entirely satisfied with simple Bible teaching. Now this, I venture to say, is a piece of unmitigated nonsense. And Dr. Macnamara knows it. He knows full well, for he has said so, that the bulk of the people are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with "simple Bible instruction." They are simply indifferent. The question does not trouble either parents or children. It is almost entirely a pulpit and platform question. It is a pulpit question because the clergy see that their only chance of getting a class of customers for their particular wares is to create a taste for them early, or at least to so doctor the palate that it fails to properly appreciate a healthy diet. And it is a platform question because those outside the pulpit are beginning to realise that the liberation of the country's children from the country's clergy is vital to the nation's interests. But the parents are, with rare exceptions, indifferent on the question. And Dr. Macnamara knows this as well as I do.

Dr. Macnamara also raised a protest against the State spending money on denominational religious instruction. All very good; but Dr. Macnamara is advocating the very thing he protests against. It is impossible to believe that men in his position cannot realise that what is called undenominational religious teaching is really denominational at bottom. So long as there are Jews, Atheists, Agnostics, and non-Christians in the community, Christianity will, in any honest sense of the word, be denominational. And all those who advocate "simple Bible teaching" will be acting towards non-Christians exactly as they protest other Christians should *not* act towards them. I repeat, it is impossible to believe that a man like Dr. Macnamara cannot see this. But Dr. Macnamara is a politician, he is in Parliament, a General Election is approaching; and although he has given up teaching, and is therefore no longer under the rule of some petty council, the Nonconformist vote may exercise an influence quite as demoralising as the tyranny of a village commune.

Another thing that Dr. Macnamara protests against is religious tests for teachers. Well, so does every right thinking citizen, not only for teachers but for everyone else. But, in the first place, if religious teaching is in the schools, religious tests are only a logical corollary. It is idiotic to kick up a row about the importance of religious instruction, and then say there shall be no tests for those who are to administer this "important" subject. If it is vitally important, the more stringent the test the better. If it is a subject that *anyone* can teach, then it is unimportant. This is only a further proof of the soundness of the Free-thinker's position.

In the next place, one would like to ask Dr. Macnamara, very seriously indeed, how on earth he ever expects to avoid theological tests so long as theology is in the schools? Does he really believe

that so long as there is a majority of Methodists on a council they will appoint Episcopalians or Roman Catholics where one of their sect is a candidate? Other things equal, will Episcopalians appoint Baptists and pass over Churchmen? Will Christians pass over a fellow Christian and appoint a known Atheist? Everyone knows they will not. Everyone knows that so long as speculative opinions are allowed in the schools appointments will be made with an eye to these opinions. And Dr. Macnamara must know from personal experience that under School Boards men and women were afraid to ventilate their opinions on religion, and were often penalised when they were known. If he does not know of such cases his experience must have been strange indeed, and I shall be pleased to supply him with cases.

Mr Jackson, the mover of the resolution, put the case in a nutshell. "The theologian," he said, "wanted the teacher to hold down the children while he administered the theological pills." This is the whole of the case. While religion is in the schools the teacher is the cat's-paw of the parson. And he is the parson's cat's-paw because the parson is making his last stand against the encroachments of modern civilisation. He cannot hope to get his creed accepted to-day by men who have grown up without it, and who have received a fair education. His only chance of perpetuating his religion is by perpetuating the type on which it lives. It is for this reason he fights for religion in the schools; and when it is banished from them we shall have seen the beginning of the end.

C. COHEN.

### "Why Pray?"

THAT is the question the Rev. Frank Ballard endeavors to answer in the twelfth of a series of lectures on "Is Christianity True?" delivered in the Central Hall, Manchester. He takes for granted, at the outset, that only a very small proportion of even professing Christians ever really pray. The natural inclination of human beings is to lead a prayerless life. Mr. Ballard calls the Bible "the Book of Prayer," and claims that "the Bible and Prayer stand or fall together." He says: "If I am asked why I pray, give me to assume the truth of the Bible, and I reply in a moment, because, according to the revelation of the mind of God therein enshrined, I find that prayer becomes the most natural, the most rational, the most worthy, the most helpful exercise of all the noblest faculties I possess. And that would be in itself, for every thoughtful man, a sufficient answer." But the fact remains that the majority of those who believe in the Bible scarcely ever pray, and that the majority of those who do pray do so more from an acquired sense of duty than from genuine pleasure. This is an admitted fact, and the question naturally arises, What is the explanation of this well-nigh universal disinclination to pray? On this point Mr. Ballard is silent, although it is the most important point of all.

But he makes an assertion which the facts of life loudly contradict: "Of this, I submit, we are well assured, that so long as a man is sincere in praying, real prayer is a guarantee for worthy character, and the young man or young woman who is truly given to prayer, in the full Christian sense, will be the very young man and young woman concerning whom we can afford to have least anxiety, and in regard to whose moral future we have more assurances than civilisation can give us in any other way." That many people who pray possess noble characters is undeniable; but it is a fallacy to infer that the nobility of their characters is the outcome of prayer, because there are others, although they pray with equal sincerity and fervor, of whose character we cannot speak in terms of admiration. I once knew a man who was specially gifted in public prayer, and it was well known that he habitually devoted about two hours each day to his private



devotions. He was a reverential student of the Bible, and could quote it with ease. He was regarded as the best Sunday School teacher in the community, and he took a prominent part in most other forms of Christian work. No one ever doubted the *sincerity* of his religious life, while all his neighbors were highly pleased whenever they had the opportunity of listening to his eloquent and moving prayers. But he was a notorious liar, he frequently gave way to drink, and he was not above doing mean tricks in business. Are there not many like him in society to-day? The most sincerely prayerful man I ever met defrauded his clients to the amount of £12,000, and fled the country. Is not Mr. Ballard aware that in commercial circles religious people are usually suspected and kept under careful watch? Character is not the product of religion at all, but of heredity and natural environment. Some are good and noble *in spite* of their religion, while the religion of others does not prevent them from indulging freely in the worst forms of wickedness. On the other hand, it is incontrovertible that some of the very best people living to-day have absolutely no faith in prayer.

Mr. Ballard is most anxious to give us a correct definition of prayer. According to him "there are seven distinct elements in real prayer, even as there are in this light." The seven distinct elements are, Adoration, Thanksgiving, Penitence, Resolution, Petition, Intercession, Submission. In other words, prayer means personal communion with God. I have no fault whatever to find with this definition; but, when unbelievers are urged to pray, their first question is, Who and what is God? They do not know him, and they seek in vain for the slightest proof of his existence. Even among Christians there is no unanimity of opinion concerning him. Some say he exists as a trinity, while according to others he is an absolute unity. Some believe that he became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, and others pronounce Jesus a mere man specially appointed to speak in his name. And if we leave the theologians and fall back upon the Bible our bewilderment will be greater than ever, for here the conception of God is sometimes crude, sometimes self-contradictory, and sometimes immoral. As a matter of fact, no one possesses any genuine knowledge of God, not even of the fact that he exists. There are innumerable pictures of him in the world; but no one has ever seen the original, each artist conjuring up both the features and the colors from his own inner consciousness. Well, how is it possible to commune with a God whom nobody knows, or can know? Indeed, there are Christian ministers who readily admit that to them God is a poetic symbol, or a fanciful personification of ideal qualities—not a being, but an ideal, and that when they pray they only give outward expression to their own wish to approach to a perfect human character, as they conceive it. But is it reasonable to address an ideal as if it were a living, self-conscious person—to adore it, to give thanks to it, to confess sins to it, to implore it to forgive, to intercede for others with it, and to promise submission to it?

Assuming that God does exist and has revealed himself in the Bible, what proof is there that he hears prayer? Is not the talking all on one side? In actual fact, prayer is not communion with God, but an address delivered to him, in which he is told how very high and good and noble he is, and how utterly sinful and unworthy a creature is man, in which also are tendered to him various items of information on almost every conceivable subject, and in response to which, through the atoning merits of Christ, he is humbly besought to grant certain favors. There is not the faintest trace of communion in all that. If God were to listen to some prayers how infinitely bored he would be. But there is no proof that he hears, any more than that he exists. His silence has never yet been broken. He gives no sign whatever that he is there. The communion is purely imaginary. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that in prayer man is in com-

munion with his own ideal self, and calls that ideal self God. Can Mr. Ballard disprove this? Neither he nor anybody else can prove that there is a God who in prayer enters into communion with man, or responds to man's appeal for fellowship. Christians assert that often, as they pray, God draws very near to them, so near that they feel his breath playing upon their spirits and giving them new life. But the only token of God's presence is their heightened emotions, their nervous excitement, the fast beating of their hearts, and this is no token at all, because all the phenomena are capable of a natural explanation.

Mr. Ballard tries hard to show that prayer is neither insulting to God nor injurious to man, but is to both the very opposite. Surely, if there be a God, to tell him lies is to insult him. Everyone that prays says: "O God, I am a miserable sinner, awfully and utterly undone, deserving of nothing but eternal damnation"; but no one believes that of himself. Everyone would hotly resent such a statement were it made about him by a brother man. And yet Christians expect God to listen quietly and patiently to deliberate falsehoods. Of course, they may retort that it is with the all-seeing God alone that they dare to be honest, an admission I do not intend to challenge; but it would be better in every way were they to begin to be honest with themselves and with society. The truth is, however, that, generally speaking, such terms as "miserable sinners," "utterly undone," "desperately wicked" are employed from mere habit, and mean nothing. All who pray make use of them, but not one sincerely believes that they are literally true. But would it not be an insufferable insult to an intelligent God to pour such false or unmeaning phrases upon him, and would it not be terribly degrading to those who did it?

Mr. Ballard calls Oliver Cromwell the strongest man in English history, if not in the whole history of civilisation, and accounts for his herculean strength by the fact that he was a man of unceasing prayer. But I positively deny that Cromwell's strength was in any sense the result of prayer. The Lord Protector of the British Commonwealth was strong by nature, and his much praying did not add a single grain to his might. We are told that before every military engagement he "spent much time in prayer with God"; but with what result? Was it under Divine guidance that, "in the heat of action," he put the whole Drogheda garrison without mercy to the sword? Was it in answer to prayer that he was led to enforce the same "execrable policy" at Wexford? Numerous were the crimes committed by this strongest man in British history, and from letters, despatches, and speeches of his extant the natural inference is that each atrocity was preceded by a solemn prayer; and it was his custom to make God responsible for all he did. I am bold enough to assert that his religion exerted an injurious influence upon his moral character. After the Drogheda slaughter he wrote thus: "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches."

Our lecturer is most severe on the man who says, "I never pray, and I never feel the need of prayer." I admit that such a man is not likely to be a seat-holder in any church or chapel, nor is he a subscriber to any religious organisation; but will Mr. Ballard affirm that he is, in consequence of his prayerlessness, a less valuable member of society, a less energetic worker for the good of humanity, or a less scrupulous merchant than he would have been had he been a man much given to prayer? One of the best, noblest, and most self-denying persons I have ever known neither attends church nor believes in God. It is my solemn conviction that if the churches were to drop the supernatural and carry on their work on purely social and secular lines, they would accomplish infinitely more than they now do. If they taught people to recognise the nobility of their own nature, the value of self-reliance and self-control, and the blessedness of altruistic service, they



would soon lay the world under a debt of endless gratitude to them.

Mr. Ballard closes his lecture by giving several examples of undoubted objective answers to prayer. He makes the following quotation from a book, entitled *God Answers Prayer*, written by Mr. John Wilkinson, a missionary to the Jews: "Let it be told for the glory of God, that the director of this Mission has never for twenty-six years been without £1 when he has needed it, and the Mission has never incurred debt. The director, though asked more than once, has never told anyone but God when his personal fund was low. All need has been supplied by the voluntary offerings of the Lord's people, who have contributed during twenty-six years more than £170,000 for Mission work." Another example is from Mr. Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission. This Mission was in great straits, and earnestly betook itself to prayer, asking for a hundred workers and £10,000 in one year. "Before the year was out there came to them £11,000 and five hundred offers of workers." But such examples possess no evidential value whatever. All Missions are supported by the people who believe in and are in sympathy with them; and I would not hesitate to predict that if a Missionary Society were to withhold periodical reports of work done and requiring to be done, it would not be long before that Society died a natural death. The directors and the missionaries might pray as much as they liked, but the funds would not be forthcoming. It is the clever, ingenious beggars who pump the money out of people's pockets, while poor, blundering ones secure but small returns. I am surprised that a man of Mr. Ballard's experience should have adduced such silly instances of responses to petition.

I maintain that all the prayers that are answered are self-answered. People answer their own prayers and give God the credit. It is a religious proverb that God helps only those who help themselves, which means that those who do not or cannot help themselves, and are not helped by their fellows, must of necessity go under in life's struggle. There never was a truer proverb. If God helps only those who help themselves, there is no possibility of verifying the supposition that he helps anybody. Mr. Ballard admits that most answers to prayer are natural, and then he begs the whole question by stating that their very naturalness proves their divinity, because God is immanent in Nature. But science knows nothing of the immanence of God in Nature. Mr. Ballard refers to Sir Oliver Lodge as a great scientist; but Mr. Ballard knows perfectly well that Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Russell Wallace, Lord Kelvin, and Sir William Crookes stand practically alone among the scientists of the day. They are truly great and honored men; but as Dr. Wallace himself frankly admits, so far as their religious views are concerned, the scientific world is dead against them. And yet, in spite of all this, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Ballard assure their public that science is now an ally of religion. *It is not true, and these men know or ought to know that it is not.* Science knows nothing of God, of answers to prayer, or of anything beyond or above Nature.

JOHN LLOYD.

### Book Chat.

Miss Frances Power Cobbe, who has just died at a ripe old age, was a busy journalist and the author of some books that at one time commanded a certain attention. She was one of the pioneers of the Woman movement in this country, and was considered rather "advanced" in her earlier days. But she never got very far, intellectually speaking; and in her latter days she was in some respects decidedly reactionary. Only a few months ago we had to correct her absurd confusion of Atheism and Vivisection. The result was that she printed a sort of apology for her mistake, but it made the mistake rather worse than better. The fact is, we believe, that she was quite incapable of seeing any active moral good outside the range of her own religious beliefs; which is the essence of all sectarian narrow-mindedness. Early in life she broke away from orthodox Christianity, and went as far

as Theodore Parker's position. But there she stuck. For her it was the be-all and end-all of religious progress. To the advancing tide of Freethought she said "Thus far, and no farther, shalt thou go." But, of course, it paid not the slightest attention to her orders. And the neglect made her angry.

As far back as 1872, Miss Cobbe had her say on "Darwinism and Morals" in the *Theological Review*. She was a champion of what is called Intuitive Morality, whereas Darwin was an Evolutionary Utilitarian. He saw that all beauty in nature was founded on use, and that this was as true in the ethical world as elsewhere. Moral laws were, in his view, but the general conditions of social health. Of course Miss Cobbe had a right to oppose this theory of morals if she thought it wrong; but she really had no right to talk bigoted nonsense about it in a respectable periodical. "I cannot but believe," she said, speaking of Darwin's principles, "that in the hour of their triumph would be sounded the knell of the virtue of mankind." To which Darwin replied in his calm and crushing way: "It is to be hoped that the belief in the permanence of virtue on this earth is not held by many persons on so weak a tenure."

We will not end, however, without an expression of gratitude for Miss Cobbe's efforts on behalf of her own sex, and in the cause of Anti-Vivisection. In spite of the bigotry we have complained of she must have done good in certain directions; and it is this, rather than anything else, that we would wish to remember her by.

A very interesting point was opened up by Mr. Cohen in last week's *Freethinker*. Answering the Rev. R. J. Campbell, he said that: "Darwin expressed the opinion that the feelings of a dog towards his master might not be profoundly different from those of a savage towards his god." And he added that: "Darwin's opinion has been endorsed by later writers."

No doubt Mr. Cohen was citing Darwin from memory; and, in the circumstances, it was not unnatural that he should press Darwin's observation a little farther, perhaps, than it was meant to go. The passage referred to, we presume, is the one in the third chapter of the first part of the *Descent of Man*. What Darwin actually said is as follows: "The feeling of religious devotion is a highly complex one, consisting of love, complete submission to an exalted and mysterious superior, a strong sense of dependence, fear, reverence, gratitude, hope for the future, and perhaps other elements. No being could experience so complex an emotion until advanced in his intellectual and moral faculties to at least a moderately high level. Nevertheless, we see some distant approach to this state of mind in the deep love of a dog for his master, associated with complete submission, some fear, and perhaps other feelings. The behavior of a dog when returning to his master after an absence, and, as I may add, of a monkey to his beloved keeper, is widely different from that towards their fellows. In the latter case the transports of joy appear to be somewhat less, and the sense of equality is shown in every action. Professor Braubach goes so far as to maintain that a dog looks on his master as on a god."

Darwin may have shared Professor Braubach's opinion in private, for his *Autobiography and Letters*, printed after his death, show that he was more of a sceptic than was distinctly revealed in his published writings. Still, he did not exactly adopt Professor Braubach's opinion; which, of course, Mr. Cohen does not say that he did. But he made another reference to the point in a footnote, where he cites Dr. W. Lauder Lindsay as saying that "Bacon long ago, and the poet Burns, held the same notion."

Now the interesting part of this reference is that relating to Bacon. Darwin was not a wide reader, or he need not have relied on Dr. Lindsay's authority. He might have quoted Bacon himself. It is in the essay "Of Atheism" that Bacon says: "For take an example of a dog, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man; who to him is instead of a God." Bacon's argument is that as the dog is better for having an earthly master, so man is better for having a heavenly master. But we need not stop to criticise this argument. Our object is merely to show that Bacon, who was a shrewd thinker as well as a perspicacious observer, put this point about the dog and man and God very tersely almost three hundred years ago. And someone may have



been before him. We do not recollect any anticipator, but there are some good bookmen amongst the readers of the *Freethinker*, and one of them may be able to refer us to even a far older thinker than Bacon. For, after all, there is nothing so very new under the sun; and some of the wisest and wittiest of modern sayings are, however unknown to their authors, but plates of resurrection pie.

### Acid Drops.

Tolstoy tells a *Figaro* interviewer that he does not see why he should wish any sort of ill to the Japanese. "True," he says, "the Japanese are a yellow race. But what of that? Our knowledge of the yellow races is very imperfect. Does anyone understand the conscience of the yellow man? At all events the Chinese despise war, and those who make it. Therein, at least, they show their superiority over us. I understand, too, that they know how to keep their word. That is a virtue none too common in Europe." Very much to the point! Tolstoy might have added, with perfect truth, that the Christian religion has never laid much stress on the virtue of veracity.

An Anglican bishop is the writer of an article in *The East and the West* dealing with missionary life in Korea. One thing he says is, of course, commonplace, but it is worth remembering. The missionary is free from the jurisdiction of the native law. "So long," the writer says, "as the treaty which his Government has concluded is respected he enjoys the same protection which he would enjoy at home." Here you have a fruitful source of difficulty and danger. The missionary does as he pleases, subject only to the interference of his own Government. He is above the law of the country in which he has chosen to reside; and this leads him to look down upon the local authorities, while they, in turn, look upon him as an interloper and a busybody. It is significant that one of the first acts which showed that Japan was strong enough to take care of herself was her notification that all foreigners, including missionaries, would have to be amenable to the Japanese courts—precisely as they are to the local courts in all other "civilised" countries. Everybody who knows the facts, too, is well aware that what stimulated the Boxer movement in China was the presence of foreigners, including missionaries again, who lived amongst the Chinese and yet were only amenable to the laws of another country thousands of miles away.

Nor is this all. There is a still worse fact behind; though it is naturally not dwelt upon by the episcopal writer in *The East and the West*. The missionaries are always trying to extend their own privileges to their converts. This was the case in China, and it exasperated the natives who preferred to cling to their native religion. Mr. George Lynch, the war correspondent, states that the same root of mischief exists in Korea. In his able and interesting book, *The Path of Empire*, he says that one can see in Korea, even more than in China, the "motives which lead orientals to profess Christianity." The people are heavily taxed and ground down, it appears, although this is by no means a phenomenon confined to Korea, being pretty common all over the world, and often obtaining very badly even in Christian countries. Well, the people in Korea, as elsewhere, are quite willing to throw off their political and social burdens; and the only way open to them is to get under the friendly shelter of a missionary. Mr. Lynch quotes from the *Korean Review*, a periodical conducted by a Protestant ex-missionary, the statement that "Hundreds of people apply each year for admission to the Protestant missions, hoping thereby to escape official oppression." And their hopes are not disappointed. They receive what they expected, and something in addition. "They have," Mr. Lynch says, "the support of the missionary power in all their disputes and lawsuits with their neighbors, and a powerful friend at court if they find themselves in the dock." How nice! But how this must make the unconverted Koreans love the missionaries!

Mr. Lynch, not being a missionary, but a mere journalist, lets the cat out of the bag; that is to say, he tells the truth. And the following passage is rich reading:—

"There are constant complaints being sent of the Christian natives by local magistrates to the Imperial government at Seoul, and it takes up no small part of the time and attention of the foreign ministers there to keep the peace between the missionaries and their followers, and the Koreans, or to settle the disputes arising between Christian converts of various denominations. For some time past there has been very serious trouble going on in the province of Whang-Hai between members of the two Christian Churches which claim

the largest number of adherents. Finally, the government sent up an Imperial inspector, who reported that the missionaries there had apparently usurped the power of the magistrates, were levying money from the people for building churches, were issuing orders for arresting people, and inflicting punishments upon them."

Just fancy! And these are the mild, inoffensive, and self-sacrificing soul-savers, whose virtues are periodically sung at Exeter Hall! When they get into trouble, as *must* sometimes happen, they do not trust to the Lord. They howl for gunboats.

Many of these Christian missionaries in Korea are "housed in what are the most palatial residences in the land." Mr. Lynch says he is tempted to give "some biographical sketches which would be really amusing" of this missionary business. But he adds that the subject is a delicate one, that people dare not speak their minds for fear of being misconstrued at home, that the power behind the British and American missionaries is great, and that the brand of "Atheist" is soon attached to anyone who speaks out the truth.

Bishop Corfe, the writer already referred to, admits that the greatest difficulty the Christian soul-savers have to face in Korea is the presence of the representatives of European civilisation; a civilisation which, in some of its representatives, is so inferior to the long-established, eminently respectable civilisation which it would supersede. Exactly so. The Koreans judge the tree by its fruits. They look at Christians as object lessons in the moral value of Christianity. And the result is that they wish to keep it as far off as possible.

There were some partisan, misleading paragraphs on Bishop Corfe's article in the *Daily News*. But on another page of the same issue of that pious journal there was an item headed "A Noble Chinaman," containing a story from Mr. Whigham's *Manchuria and Korea*; a story which, our contemporary says, would be "hard to beat in the annals of human virtue."

"A Cossack, in a fit of drunkenness, had shot a Chinaman, and it was necessary to bring several of the men to the bedside of the dying victim for purposes of identification of the culprit. The Chinaman, however, refused absolutely to single out the guilty man, saying 'Why should he be killed, since I must die in any case?' Then they explained to him that the man would only be severely punished, to which the Chinaman responded that since he forgave the culprit there was no reason why he should suffer. Then the theory of punishment was induced as an argument—the Cossack must be punished in order that he might not repeat the offence. 'But,' said the Chinaman, 'he will never do it again when he knows that I forgive him,' and there the matter ended."

"One would wish to know," our contemporary says, "what system of philosophy, acting on a fine nature, enabled him to attain to this heroism of the gentle life." Confucianism and the higher Buddhism are quite equal to these things. The question put by the *Daily News* writer does credit to his heart, but little to his information. We advise him to "read up" on the inner side of Chinese ethnology.

The Bishop of Norwich, presiding at the Norwich Diocesan Conference recently, bewailed the fact that there was not at the present time that bright and hopeful feeling among Churchmen which had prevailed until within the last few years. There was a fear that religion was by no means gaining ground throughout the country, that a definite belief in the Bible was on the wane, and that the forces of indifference and irreligion were gaining strength. Well, we think the Bishop has legitimate reason for his grief—and we hope he will have more in the future. He is certainly correct in stating that definite belief in the Bible is on the wane. It is on the wane even inside the Church itself. What else does the Higher Criticism mean?

The Churches throughout Canada are carrying on a "spirited campaign" against Sunday freedom. They have nobbled the Dominion Government, which is now taking the opinion of the Supreme Court, and if that is favorable a Bill will be brought in immediately to penalise all labor and business, with the exception of works of mercy and necessity, on Sunday, and putting an end to all pleasure excursions, rifle practice, and sports on that day. Amongst the works of mercy and necessity, no doubt, will be included preaching and soul-saving. How else are the preachers and soul-savers to live?

Mr. Robert Blatchford no doubt intended to be fair in allowing Christians to have their say in the *Clarion* against his attacks on Christianity. But he has not done much good by his well-meant liberality, and it seems to us that he



had better shut up the discussion as soon as possible. We could have told him from long experience that those who will come forward to defend Christianity in debate are seldom worth listening to. They are generally like those who rush in where wise men fear to tread. Men of ability on the Christian side may answer Mr. Blatchford, more or less directly, but they will not do so in his own paper; for reasons obvious to themselves, and that ought not to be impenetrable to him. The *Clarion* headline, therefore, "Christianity on its Defence," is rather far-fetched. What is printed under it is often enough to make well informed Christians, no less than well-informed Freethinkers, laugh consumedly. Would it not be prudent on Mr. Blatchford's part to take the opinion of some scholarly and critical friend of his own as to what he should do? There are times when knowledge is even more necessary than a bright pen.

Mr. Will Crooks, M.P., was fifty-two on April 6. This is an interesting fact, and the newspapers did well to record it. There is another fact, however, which we regard as still more interesting. Mr. Crooks is said to have a religion. What is it?

The *Daily News* is progressing. It has just made the great discovery that "some form of exercise is necessary to health." There is reason to hope that our contemporary may form a speaking acquaintance with the law of gravitation presently.

The following letter (we reproduce it in full) appeared in a recent number of the *Daily News*:

"HUMANE DIET.

"Sir,—A Parsee may be excused for supposing that Christian leaders should be opposed to the slaughter of animals, seeing that his religion absurdly reverences all life, but why should Christians respect the lives and sufferings of animals?"

"Christ Himself said: 'How much better is a man than a sheep,' which, of course, as the Rev. Frank Ballard, of Sheffield, once said publicly in my hearing, justifies the vivisection of any number of sheep for the good of humanity.

"Vegetarians would have us believe that the Founder of Christianity had an aversion to bloodshed, but our Parsee friend should know that Christian ministers regard reverence for any life but that of man as mere silly sentimentality, and, rightly so, we will have our roast beef in spite of sickly sentiment.—Yours, &c.,

"CHRISTIAN."

This letter may really have been written by a Christian—for it does express in a crude way the spirit of the Bible and of historic Christianity. But, on the other hand, the *Daily News* may simply have been "had." It is quite conceivable that some "infidel" wrote this letter as an exercise in satire; in which case, it is by no means without merit.

Rev. Ernest Murray Robinson, Vicar of Merton, Surrey, cut his throat from ear to ear in the presence of his wife at Brighton. The jury brought in the usual verdict of "Suicide whilst of unsound mind." There is no moral attached to the incident. There would have been one if the suicide had been a Freethought lecturer.

We suppose the *Freethinker* is alluded to in a letter to the *Daily Mirror* by the Warden of the Settlement for the Promotion of Kindness to Animals in Lambeth. This gentleman refers to "a contemporary" which makes "a charge of neglect in the inculcation of man's duty to animals against every branch of the Church." Of course it would never do to mention a paper like ours. The result might be an earthquake—or the sale of some more copies.

Rabbi Silverman, who is in the religious line of business, is hardly a disinterested witness to the statement that Ingersollism has disappeared from polite society, and that "atheism and agnosticism are now looked upon as evidence of inferior intellect." A trade announcement like this is wired across the Atlantic and printed in English papers which (including the *Morning Leader*, we regret to say) will hardly ever print a word of what "atheism and agnosticism" are saying for themselves.

It appears there are two great locksmiths in the world: the Sultan, who is the spiritual head of the largest of the Mahometan sects, and an American—Houdini. The one occupies himself with making locks, the other by showing that the most elaborately contrived are futile. What a singular exemplification of the genius of the two countries, Turkey and America; and of the two peoples, the Turks and the Americans; and what a most appropriate avocation for the head of a Church and a despot!

The information that Abdul Hamid-Othman, or whatever his name may be, is a locksmith comes from Mr. Quilliam, who has founded a mosque at Liverpool, and is the head of the Moslems of England, who have made upwards of four hundred English converts during the last ten years or so. Now, this is distinctly good news. The strength of Christianity in Europe is that it is not attacked from without by any religion wholly distinct from it, and is not confronted by those demonstrations that its doctrines and rites are not unique, and in no sense its sole possession, which so forcibly strike well-informed travellers in the East. Notwithstanding all its divisions and intestine warfares, there is sufficient doctrine held in common by Christians to raise a general fraternal sympathy when any local Church is attacked by non-believers, as was shown during the great French Revolution, and is shown now, by people who have no sympathy with monasticism, to the monks and nuns expelled from France, who, in defiance of a law passed expressly to prohibit or to control the immigration into the country of such persons, have been allowed to settle here by tens of thousands simply because they are regarded as Christians persecuted by Freethinkers.

Could we get an active *open* propaganda of the great Oriental religions, we should see the conceit very considerably knocked out of the ordinary Christian bigot. Such an assertion, for example, as that which Gladstone elaborated, "that the Church of England was the most intellectual society in the whole world," would be difficult to make in the face of a successful propaganda here of the Oriental religions among the classes from which the Buddhists, Mahometans, and Vedists of India boast that they draw their converts.

One thing is very certain. Existing Christianity is saturated to an amazing extent by occultism, run by Spiritualists, Theosophists, Freemasons, and semi-pagans of the type of the late Dr. Mivart, so that among its professors are an incredible number only awaiting an energetic attack from without to burst out into an open neo-heathenism, in the manner Romanism revived in England after Newman had prepared the country for it, and Ritualism flamed out openly when the Tractarian secret societies had permeated the Anglican Church.

We English who subscribe our millions—or allow our millions to be subscribed—to convert the heathen do not realise that it is the heathen who convert the missionary; that more English officials adopt Hinduism than high-class natives become Christian, and that in the idol processions of India the Roman Catholics fall into rank and are the most extravagant in their magnificence. We carefully and systematically drop such facts as that Clive publicly worshiped Vishnu, and that a magnificent jewel he offered this god is exhibited by the priests of one of his temples to this day; that Lord Ellenborough, when Viceroy, caused his state elephants to kneel in adoration of the gates of a temple our soldiers had recovered from a state that had looted them in a bygone war, when those gates were solemnly restored, and he, or his representatives, went out officially to receive them. Another significant thing we do not keep sufficiently to the front is that it was the Brahmins and the Confucians who captured the Jesuits and produced the scandals of the Malabar and Chinese rites; not the Christian missionary who in any way affected the intellect of China or India.

We do not mean any disrespect to the National Union of Teachers which has been holding its annual Conference during the Easter holidays at Portsmouth, but it must be borne in mind that this society is after all a Trade Union, whose primary object is the plain and simple one of promoting and safeguarding the interests of school teachers. When these teachers meet together and talk about religious education, or other matters of principle, they are only entitled to be heard as citizens. As teachers they have really no special business with such matters. Consequently, the resolution they carried on the vexed religious question is not of very great importance. What it really proves is that the average man of any big profession is just the average man of the nation at large.

We shall therefore add but very little to what we said on this subject last week. Since the "Acid Drop" referred to was written, the Teachers' Union has protested against any abandonment of the Cowper-Temple clause in connection with the religious teaching in the denominational schools. That is all right, as far as it goes; but what is to be said about what follows? The Conference resolution declared that in the schools, formerly called Board schools, and now known as Council schools, representing about one-half of the school provision for the country, there does not exist any "theological test on teachers." Now in a certain sense this



is true. There is no definite theological test, but there is a very effective one nevertheless, and it operates against Freethinkers of every variety. Sometimes a conscientious Freethinker, who cannot play the hypocrite any longer, even or his daily bread, speaks out what a good many others are thinking, and states that he does not attach the religious significance to the Bible which he is expected to attach to it in his lessons to the scholars. And what happens then? The answer is supplied in the case of Mr. F. J. Gould, who was practically driven out from the service of the London School Board, although he was (and is) a man of quite exceptional intellect and character. The Teachers' Union knew of Mr. Gould's case, and we dare say it knows of other cases of a somewhat similar character; yet it goes on repeating that there is no theological test on teachers!

Just another word. If religion is taught at all in the public schools there ought to be a religious test on the teachers. They are tested in other subjects, and why not in this? Is the religious teaching of millions of children to be left in the hands of tyros and amateurs? Why should there not be specialism in every subject? And if it is impossible, owing to religious jealousies and disputes, to have specialism in the subject of religion, that is a very good reason for banishing the subject altogether from the public schools. The proper place for it (outside the home) is the church or the Sunday-school—where specialism is possible.

Apropos of Judge O'Connor Morris's letter to the *Morning Post* on the Irish Land Acts, the *Daily News* asks indignantly: "What would be said in this country, we wonder, if one of our judges amused himself in his leisure hours by writing in violent condemnation of an Act of Parliament which he has to administer when on the Bench?" But how circumstances alter cases! Magistrates in England have actually quitted the Bench, got down on the floor of the Court, and denounced the Education Act—and then returned to their judicial seats. And did the *Daily News* rebuke them? Oh, dear, no; it patted them on the back. It smiled all over its Dissenting face when one of the judges joined the Passive Resistance movement, walked into a magistrates' court, and delivered a heated harangue against an Act of Parliament.

Mr. Foote's two brief questions to Nonconformists in the *Daily News* remained unanswered. Twelve months later Mr. Harold Johnson, of the Ethical Society, addressed them some pertinent questions through the same organ. We prophesied that they would remain unanswered too, and our vaticination has not been falsified by the event. The Nonconformists have neither the courage nor the honesty to answer a straight question on the subject of religious education in State-supported schools.

We now see that the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, who has always been in favor of Secular Education as a matter of principle, asks through the *Daily News* a question of Dr. Macnamara. Mr. Headlam wants to know definitely (just fancy: definitely!) whether Dr. Macnamara and his friends, when they talk of the School Board Syllabus, wish to "maintain the Board's rule—that the principles of the Christian religion are to be taught in the schools." Mr. Headlam continues:—

"There are some who feel most strongly that if the principles of the Christian religion are to be taught at the rate-payers' expense, and with the children regimented by the School Board visitors in school hours to receive that teaching, the mere existence of the Cowper-Temple clause is no guarantee as to what kind of religion will be taught, and that, if Bible religion is to be taught, it is impossible to refuse similar facilities for teaching Church religion. There are others who feel that, whatever may be done with extracts from the Bible, it is not the duty of the State to deal with, and therefore to manipulate, religion at all. It seems to me idle to talk about agreement unless men are prepared to say that they will treat undenominational religion in the same way they would treat any other religion. Is Dr. Macnamara prepared to say this? If so, shall all religions be kept outside and paid for by their supporters, or all be equally established and endowed?"

Thus far Mr. Headlam, who puts his posers quite politely. We shall now look out for Dr. Macnamara's reply.

Rev. T. F. Minchin, a Passive Resister, of Leigh, Essex, told the Court at the Rochford County Petty Sessions, that the Education Act was "conceived in priestcraft, born in sin, and shapen in iniquity." This is pretty vigorous language for a man of God in a Court of Justice, but allowance must be made for the influence of the Bible, which may almost be called the swearer's manual. Mr. Minchin seems to be used to expressing himself vehemently. He said he would go to the stake before he would yield an inch of obedience to the Education Act. Fortunately the stake is a long way off, and the boast is tolerably cheap.

Mr. Minchin does not see that, as Church religion in public schools is priestcraft to him, so his policy of Bible reading is priestcraft to all non-Christians. We advise him to give this fact his attention.

Passive Resisters had a regular beanfeast last week at Brighton. Their distrained goods were put up to auction in the sale rooms in Black Lion-street, and the rooms were "packed," as the *Daily News* reports, with "local Nonconformists," who had "everything their own way in the bidding." What followed had better be told in our contemporary's own language:—"The whole of the lots were knocked down to their representative for the exact amount due for the rate and costs. The auctioneer, Mr. Thos. Chapman, put everybody in good humor by his tact and lively sallies, and expressed his entire sympathy with the movement." The "martyrs" pooled, and had their fun as cheaply as possible. Each got his own sticks back, and settled with the general "representative." Oh the Comedy of Passive Resistance!

At the close of the sale a "veteran" Nonconformist delivered "a powerful and pungent speech." His name was George Jacob Holyoake. He denounced the Education Act as "a violation of the conscience of the majority of Christians in this country." We congratulate the "majority" on their distinguished and disinterested friend.

We see that the Salvation Army is going to have a great International Congress in London towards the end of June. It is going to be a big thing, and is sure to be well reported. Perhaps the Moses of the movement will secure a friendly speech, or a letter at least, from the "Father of Secularism." Who knows? General Booth obtained handsome cheques from "Agnostics" like the late Marquis of Queensberry and the late Mr. Samuel Laing.

The Torrey-Alexander firm is now doing business at Bristol, and we see it is still puffed by the *Daily News*. After what we said in our article "A Word to Christians" it is to be assumed that the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience does not disapprove of Dr. Torrey's blackguardly policy of libelling Freethinkers; or, at least, that its disapproval is too platonic for publication.

The *Daily News* has a way of burking or mutilating letters from our own pen, so we do not attempt to make a protest against Dr. Torrey's blackguardism through its columns. But what a chance there is for Mr. G. J. Holyoake! His letters to our contemporary seem to be always welcome, and he is a professed admirer of Paine and friend of Ingersoll. Why doesn't he call attention in its columns to Dr. Torrey's libellous plan of campaign? We make the suggestion in sober earnest.

Who on earth is Mr. J. W. Boulding? He seems to be a man of great importance, but his fame is not exactly universal. Perhaps he is one of the "coming" men, and has been "discovered" by the newspaper which reports his recent address to the London Spiritualist Alliance. It appears that Mr. Boulding's mother died soon after he was born, but lately she has communicated with him by means of automatic writing, and given him valuable business advice, for which he is so grateful that he has knelt down at the altar where his mother was married and "vowed that he would battle with agnosticism, materialism, and infidelity." It is a dreadful outlook for agnosticism, materialism, and infidelity. They have survived many powerful attacks, but the great Boulding has arrived at last, and it is all over now.

Barnum and Bailey's circus has got a chaplain. The Rev. W. H. Sheak has just accepted the job. His duties are to do soul-saving for the 1,100 men, women, and children connected with the show, and also to lecture on the animals in the menagerie. What an odd combination! We wonder which is reckoned most important.

"Lord have mercy upon me." Thus wrote Mr. Gilbert Hart, of Crouch-hill, before shooting himself on Hampstead Heath. It is curious, as Talmage said, how Atheists will commit suicide.

A New York clergyman has just had a painful experience of the American boy. He was giving a lesson on the story of the Prodigal Son, and he laid stress on the fact that only one person failed to share in the joy over the wanderer's return. "Who was that one?" he asked. A boy shot up his hand, and called out his answer: "Say, I know, it was the fatted calf." That boy has a future—if they don't trap him into the ministry.



### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, April 17, Printers' Hall, Bartlett's-passage, Holborn, E.C., at 7.30, "The Future of the Bible: with Reference to Canon Hensley Henson's Bombshell Article."

April 24, May 1, 8, 15, Printers' Hall.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—April 17, Stratford Town Hall; 24, South Shields; May 1, Victoria Park; 8, Coventry.

J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 17, Merthyr Tydvil; 24, Failssworth.

MISS E. M. VANCE would be glad to hear from any Freethinker who can recommend a reliable man to distribute the London Lecture Notices; a conscientious person would be liberally treated.

EBLANA.—They are "chestnuts," though you may only have heard of them recently. Lots of things we printed in the *Freethinker* twenty years ago are now "going the round" as original jokes. With regard to the clergy, you are probably quite right; they will do any amount of trimming rather than give up their jobs—and salaries.

B. H. FLETCHER.—Why trouble us on the subject? We are not responsible for the paper or the organisation you refer to, and we believe it is very absurd to say that three-fourths of the members of the House of Commons are Atheists or Agnostics.

L. B. G.—Thanks for the cuttings. Shall be glad to receive more. You will see that one of your cuttings has been useful to us in our leading article.

E. LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY.—If you read the *Freethinker*, to which you send Lecture Notices, you would see that they are useless if they reach us after Tuesday morning.

C. J. ATKINSON.—We wish you and your co-workers success. See "Sugar Plums."

D. HARGREAVES.—(1) Of course we cannot take up replies to Mr. Blatchford. If we did so it might suggest that we thought him incapable of defending himself. We will say this, however, that the Letter vii. by "Zeno" in the *Rosendale Free Press* is a scandal to Christian apologetics, and would never have been inserted by any editor who understood what he was doing. Christian scholars would laugh at this writer's references to the Acts of Pilate and similar forgeries. You will find a careful chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in our *Crimes of Christianity*, and the Tacitus passage on Christ fully dealt with in our *Sign of the Cross*. (2) Thanks for your personal good wishes. Mr. Foote is very much better.

W. LAMBERT.—Always glad to receive cuttings that may serve as a peg for an "Acid Drop." We quite agree with you that what journals like the *Freethinker* and the *Pioneer* really want is liberal advertising. Thanks for your efforts to promote their circulation.

W. P. BALL.—Your useful cuttings are always welcome.

F. S.—Thanks for copy of the *Manchester City News* with the leaderette on Canon Henson's article on "The Future of the Bible" in the *Contemporary Review*. We had already been reading the Canon's article, and had marked it for criticism. For the present we note the *City News's* statement that the article has "fallen like a bombshell among the orthodox."

A. WEBBER.—We have had the matter seen to. Sorry you had the trouble of writing about it. With regard to the Evangelist Clarke, who is doing the Lord's business at Dartmouth, you may put him down as a brazen liar at once for saying that he had the testimony of the doctor and nurse that Charles Bradlaugh died a most awful death. It is really astonishing that even Christians, at this time of day, can listen to such rubbish.

VICTOR ROGER.—Many thanks, but it arrived too late for this week's *Freethinker*. We will use it in our next.

W. BIXDON.—Sorry we cannot visit Bristol just now and give Revivalist Torrey a side advertisement. He wants it badly, and the Bristol Freethinkers want waking up too. We are booked for the present in London.

T. HIBBOT.—Order handed to right hands for execution. It is a compliment that you feel "quite lost" without your *Freethinker*.

BANK AND FILEN.—Received: thanks.

C. D. STEPHENS.—Always pleased to hear from you. Thanks for the Dictionary references. Your information about the verses is very interesting. We are glad to think of your activity in that long-ago. Yes, our health continues to improve. We really hope to throw off the dregs of our indisposition during the summer.

J. SMITH.—Pleased to hear you so much enjoyed Mr. Lloyd's "splendid lecture" at Manchester on Sunday evening. Your question about Irenæus and Polycarp cannot be answered satisfactorily in a few lines. We will try to find time to give you a full reply shortly. Meanwhile you may take our assurance, for what it is worth, that the testimony of both to the historical Jesus is worth about as much as your own.

GEORGE JACOB.—There is no cowardice in an Atheist's calling himself also a Secularist, for the two terms have no essential relation to each other. Atheism only relates to Theism; Secularism relates to the more definite systems, generally "revelations," that divert man's attention from this world and life to others of which nobody knows anything.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

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### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote begins the Sunday evening Freethought lectures at Printers' Hall, Bartlett's-passage, Holborn, today (April 17). We repeat that Bartlett's-passage is right behind the famous furnishing house of Wallis & Co., and can be approached on the east from Bartlett's-buildings, and on the west from Fetter-lane. The situation is as central as any place could well be in such a far-stretched city as London, and there ought to be no difficulty in reaching it from any quarter whatsoever. The London "saints" should try to give this enterprise "a real good start," as the Americans say. We trust to see Printers' Hall quite full at the opening lecture.

The subject of Mr. Foote's opening lecture at Printers' Hall will be "The Future of the Bible" with special reference to Canon Hensley Henson's article bearing that title in the new number of the *Contemporary Review*. This article has caused a tremendous flutter in the orthodox doves, and is worthy of attention by Freethinkers, as indicating the line of retreat from an untenable position which is likely to be adopted by the more knowing clergy. Mr. Foote will also deal with Dr. Clifford's views on the subject opened up by Canon Henson. Altogether this lecture should prove very interesting to Freethinkers and Christians alike.

Neat announcement cards of the Printers' Hall lectures can be obtained from Miss Vance at 2 Newcastle-street by London friends willing to circulate them; also posters by those who are able to display them or get them exhibited anywhere.

Stratford Town Hall, which is a fine one, was packed on Sunday evening with an eager and enthusiastic crowd. The hallkeeper said it was the biggest meeting he had ever seen in the place. Happily it included a liberal proportion of ladies, who were in no way behind the male part of the audience in sympathetic interest and attention. Mr. Foote had a splendid reception, and his lecture on "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan" was cheered to the echo. A great number of questions were afterwards asked and answered.

Mr. Leggatt, the chairman, complained of the boycott of Freethought meetings by the West Ham press. Mr. Foote, however, added that the Freethought movement had not been made by "the press," and could not be unmade by it. The Freethought movement owed next to nothing to "the press"; it was the most independent movement in the country; and it could bring together a magnificent meeting, like the one in the Stratford Town Hall, just to hear a lecture, without any collateral attractions, and without the slightest help from the local newspapers. And as long as Freethought speakers could draw the people to hear them, by their own special announcements, they could afford to smile at the ridiculous silence of the self-appointed organs of "respectable" opinion.

The third and last of this course of lectures in the Stratford Town Hall will be delivered this evening (April 17) by Mr. C. Cohen. He will explain what Atheism is and what it is not, and his lecture will thus be instructive as well as interesting. We hope he will have a bumping audience.

The new Tivoli Theatre at South Shields, where Mr. Lloyd had good meetings recently, has been engaged again



by the local Branch for three lectures by Mr. Cohen on Sunday, April 24. Freethinkers in the district will please note the place and date, and try to advertise the lectures amongst their friends and acquaintances.

We reproduce on another page a letter from Mr. J. W. de Caux, J.P., of Great Yarmouth, on the Passive Resistance movement. The letter appeared in the *Eastern Daily News*. We are delighted, as we believe most Freethinkers will be, to see this trenchant blow at the Nonconformist bubble, dealt by one whose intelligence and character are admired by all who know him, and whose sacrifices for Freethought have been lifelong although so unostentatious.

The *Morning Leader* is coming to its senses again, after its debauch with the Nonconformists. In a leaderette on "The Straight Course in Education" it recognises that the "logical solution" of the religious difficulty is "secular education—and nothing else." We hope our bright little contemporary will waste no more time on the "nothing else."

The Tokio correspondent of the Paris *Figaro* sends to that journal an account of an interview he has had with M. Inoue Tetsujiro, a Japanese philosopher and recognised leader of Japanese thought. "The war," said M. Tetsujiro, "will be a great moral lesson. In the first place, Russia will learn to her cost that faith must be kept even with the races of the Far East. For us the war will be a lesson in political morality. If we win, it will be by the force of our free institutions. We shall prove that, in case of war, it is only under a régime of liberty that a nation can express its unanimity. The frequent justification of absolute power for reasons of military necessity is quite indefensible. With us opinion is free; we have no internal revolt to fear." In the event of the ultimate victory remaining with Japan, this Japanese philosopher believes that Japanese thought will draw further inspiration from Europe. "Our Shintoism," he declared, "is too summary, our Buddhism is dying out amid a mass of superstition, our Confucianism is incompatible with the otherwise liberal régime. We do not want the Christianity of Europe, but we need scientific methods, and its new ideals, a new religion of Humanity."—*Daily News* (Paris Correspondence), April 9.

The International Arbitration League is arranging a Dinner to congratulate Mr. W. R. Cremer, M.P., on being awarded the Nobel Prize. The dinner will take place in the Venetian Chamber of the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, May 4, under the presidency of Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P. Several members of parliament have promised to attend, and other friends of Arbitration, including Mr. Andrew Carnegie. During the evening Mr. Cremer will state how he intends to apply the large sum awarded to him by the Nobel Committee. The tickets are 4s. each, and evening dress is optional. Application for tickets to be made to Mr. Howard Evans, 11 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.

A few "saints" are trying to organise a Branch of the N. S. S. at Marsden, near Huddersfield. We are asked to announce that a meeting is to be held at the Market Cross on Saturday evening, April 16, at 8 o'clock, when addresses will be delivered by Mr. George Whitehead and Mr. C. J. Atkinson; the former replying to the Rev. V. E. Cook's pamphlet, "Why I am not a Secularist," and the latter dealing with "The Present Position of Freethought in England." Freethinkers willing to join in forming a Branch are earnestly invited to attend.

The National Secular Society's Executive decided to accept the invitation of the Liverpool Branch, and was arranging to hold the Annual Conference in that city on Whit-Sunday. But there is, unfortunately, a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip in this case, as, according to the proverb, there is in so many others. Application was made locally for the use of the large Picton Hall for the evening public meeting, and it was pencil-marked as engaged, subject to the usual approval of the Hall Committee at its next meeting. Well, the Committee met, and decided to refuse the Hall to the Secularists. Which is a noble instance of Liverpoolian liberality.

Negotiations are now going on for the holding of the Conference in a Yorkshire town, where it may be possible to secure a fine theatre for the evening public meeting.

In the meanwhile Branches of the National Secular Society, and individual members, who are also entitled to attend the Conference and speak and vote, are asked to remember that notices of motion for the Agenda must be in the General Secretary's hands by Thursday, April 28. They must reach Miss Vance at the office, 2, Newcastle-street, London, E.C., by midday on that date, at the very latest.

## The Limits of Humanity.

(From Goethe.)

When the primeval  
Holiest Father  
With easy hands scatters,  
From clouds that are rolling,  
Lightnings like blessings  
O'er the earth broadcast:  
I then kiss the lowest  
Hem of his garment,  
With faith and a childlike  
Awe in my heart.

With the Gods never  
Let any mortal  
Measure his strength:  
If he soars upwards  
Till his head touches  
Even the stars,  
The soles of his feet, then,  
Uncertain rest nowhere;  
The sport he becometh  
Of clouds and of winds.

If he stands solidly  
On his feet planted,  
On the immovable  
Durable earth,  
Then doth his stature  
Rival not even  
That of the oak-tree  
Or of the vine.

How do Gods differ  
From human beings?  
Thus: in *their* presence  
Many waves hasten,  
Stream without end;  
*Us* the wave tosses,  
*Us* the wave swallows,  
In it we sink.

A tiny ring  
Contains our lifetime;  
And all our generations,  
Unnumbered, are gathered  
Round the unlimited  
Chain of *their* life.

—Eugene Lee-Hamilton, "Poems and Transcripts."

## The Better Land.

"We return no more."—See Scott's introduction to *Rob Roy*.

THERE is a better land,  
Far, far away;  
And, we're told, a happy band  
Shining as day.  
But though mortal man send out  
Soul and wits upon the scout,  
All seems dark, and wrapp'd in doubt,  
Far, far away.

Here is a world we know,  
Each passing day;  
And fairly pleasant, though  
Some folks say nay;  
Nor are they all earthly who,  
Warm with life, prefer it to  
Land unknown, beyond the blue,  
Far, far away.

If there's a better land  
So far away,  
Best let it be, they think,  
Till a far day:  
When we're cold, and box'd in black,  
Gone the unreturning track,  
Then, though we would fain be back,  
Back there's no way.

H. BARBER.

TRUTH.—Truth is a point, the subtilist and finest; harder than adamant; never to be broken, worn away, or blunted. Its only bad quality is that it is sure to hurt those who touch it; and likely to draw blood, perhaps the life blood, of those who press earnestly upon it.—*Lundor*.



## Story of the Inquisition.

BY DR. J. E. ROBERTS

(Minister of the Church of This World, Kansas City, Mo.)

(Concluded from page 236.)

IT IS not generally known that the Inquisition found for a time a foothold on the American continent. There were at least three tribunals established here, two in South America, and one in the city of Mexico. This took place in 1570 or 1571. In 1570 the first auto-da-fe occurred at Mexico, when a Frenchman and an Englishman were burned alive, having been tried and found guilty of being Lutherans. The histories tell us that this event was attended by the most elaborate and gorgeous ecclesiastical processions, ceremonies, and pageants.

Where could a man flee? Where, under that fearful reign, was he safe? The pope had already issued a decree requiring the sovereign of each and every kingdom or state to apprehend and return to Spain any fugitive Jew, Moor, or other heretic who had taken refuge in his dominions. It may be said, to the credit of the sovereigns, that as a general thing the infamous edict was disregarded. Queen Isabella at one time wrote a letter to a bishop in extenuation of the charges which were made that the Inquisition was being used simply to rob the people. It was a fact that the Jews in Spain possessed the greater part of the property and wealth of the kingdom. They and the Moors were the artists, mechanics, scientists, scholars, and very many of them progressive and successful agriculturists. The idle and rapacious nobility and ecclesiastics looked with eyes of envy upon all their possessions, and all that was necessary to do to acquire their wealth was to have them denounced as heretics, and their goods confiscated and divided between the clerics and nobles.

The letter of Isabella uses frankly these words: "I have caused great calamities, I have depopulated towns, provinces, and kingdoms for the love of Christ and of his most holy mother, but I have never touched a particle of confiscated property, and I have employed the money in the education of the children of the condemned." The historians answer by saying that the public documents which have recently been disclosed show that Queen Isabella simply lied.

The effect of this institution upon Spain is one altogether proportionate to the enormity of the crime. The effect is one that has been operating through the centuries since, and whose fell and resistless curse is still manifest. The first and inescapable result was to debase religion, to degrade morals and civil society. It is plainly impossible that any people could live under such a constant espionage, under an hourly dread of suspicion and denunciation, without becoming terror-stricken, without losing respect for authority, and without having developed within them the artifices and resources of deception and hypocrisy. The result was to drive the industrious and the loyal from the kingdom and to enslave and brutalise those who remained. The effect of that institution is seen until this day, when there is no country on the map upon which the shadow of the Spanish flag has fallen but it has fallen like a withering curse. This is the more noticeable from the fact that the time was when the Spaniard was the type of chivalry, honor, bravery, patriotism, and loyalty, and now the name Spaniard is almost a synonym for the hypocritical, the subtle, and the treacherous. These were the inevitable results, and one of the students of history cries out: "An enslaved people, a corrupt church, a hollow religion, a century of blood, and three centuries of shame followed as the results of the Inquisition; the land that had been foremost among the powers of Europe; the land of Seneca, of Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius; that land which under two successive warrior kings had successfully defied the crusades of

all Europe and the temporal and spiritual power of haughty and ambitious Rome; the land that Scipio and Cæsar had hardly conquered was enslaved by the dead hand of a Dominican monk."

Let me mention as briefly as possible some of the methods that prevailed at the trials of the Inquisition. It must be remembered that while some that are familiar to the readers of history are left out, our study this morning is simply with the Inquisition of Spain. Other people in other lands devised other means and instruments of grace, and far surpassed the Spaniards in the gentleness of the conduct of trials for heresy, but here are some of the most important used in Spain. The first was called the queen of torture. The hands of the condemned were tied behind him; a rope was attached and joined to others that passed up and over pulleys fixed in the four corners of the ceiling of the lofty room. The victim was then drawn to the ceiling, and by a sudden slackening of the rope permitted to fall within a few inches of the floor. This was usually continued for one hour, or until the victim confessed himself guilty of heresy. By that time the wrists, the elbows, and the shoulders would be dis-jointed. The second form of punishment was to attach a rope to each one of the wrists and ankles and pass the rope over these four pulleys as before. The victim would then be raised and lowered to a block, or instrument like an anvil, rising from the surface of which was a dull spike. The body would be lowered so that the spine would rest exactly on the spike, thus supporting the whole weight of the body. The third was called the slight form of torture, and was applied to women. It was to wrap the hands with cloth or tow covered with pitch and then set them on fire and allow them to burn until the flesh was consumed. The fourth method was that known as the water treatment. The victim was securely bound upon his back and his nostrils and mouth covered with a fine, soft, linen cloth. Water was constantly poured upon this cloth, and the effort of the victim to breathe would finally draw the cloth into the throat. The frantic struggles would almost always result in the bursting of blood vessels, from which the sufferer would die. Still another was to place the feet or ankles in a sort of stocks and place beneath the naked feet a brazier of live coals, after first oiling the soles of the feet in order that the fire might penetrate more deeply.

Yet another, and the last one to be mentioned, was death by the pendulum. The victim was bound in a groove upon a bench or table with his head immediately under a huge pendulum swinging transversely across his face. The pendulum was constructed as a disc, having the lower edge exceedingly sharp. It was arranged with some kind of mechanism or clockwork so that with each movement it would come the fraction of an inch lower. The victim would lie there and see it come nearer and nearer to his face, until at last it would cut the skin of his nose, and the pendulum gradually lowered itself until the sufferer was dead.

These are some of the fiendish ways in which the Church, the Christian Church, endeavored to win men to the love and service of the meek and lowly Christ. I would not have you think that this is to be charged altogether and entirely upon the Roman Catholic Church. There were Popes now and then that were good enough and great enough to cry out in horror against the atrocities performed by their brethren and their fellow-believers in Christ; on the other hand, there were many of them that lent their aid and gave their approval to these most unspeakable crimes. The fact is that the character, the variety, and the extent of the persecutions depended entirely upon the character and the morals of the men that executed the power. The Pope of Rome was a good man when the Pope of Rome was a good man, and he was a scoundrel when he was a scoundrel.

It was not until 1820 that the Inquisition was finally abolished in Spain and Portugal. As late as the first part of 1820 an officer of the Spanish



Army remarked to a woman in a restaurant in Seville about the rain that had just come after a great drought. For six months the kingdom of Spain had suffered with the drought until finally the ecclesiastics had called a day of prayer that the Lord would send rain. They fixed the day of prayer at the time of one of the moon's changes. The rain came. This woman, remarking to her friend about it as a great manifestation of the divine power, was answered by a laugh. "You do not believe that prayers had anything to do with bringing the rain, do you?" She turned away without a word and went and denounced him to a priest. That night he was arrested and was never seen again. In the year 1820, the people of Lisbon, Portugal, who had lived for years seeing an old building and paying no attention to it, moved by some impulse, went up to it, broke in the doors, and examined it. It was one of the last buildings that had been occupied by the Inquisition in that State. It was an oblong building, three stories high, built around an open square or garden. Beneath the floor level were rows of dark dungeons, and on each of the floors above the ground a row of dungeons extended around the entire range of the building. Each row of dungeons on the first and second floor was arranged with a secret passageway above and a little aperture through which a man could look, or by which he could listen, was made in the roof of the cell. Along this hidden passage above the cells spies would pass in cloth shoes and listen to the speech of the man or men in the cells. It was frequently the case that a familiar or agent of the Inquisition would be placed in the cell with the accused to draw from him some admission of his guilt. At the aperture above the cell a fellow conspirator was listening. The row of cells on the third floor had openings like a chimney. When the people of Lisbon broke open this building they found many skeletons, and evidences of quick-lime, which showed that the sufferers had been left to die of thirst and starvation, and quick-lime poured in at the openings to destroy the bodies.

At Seville, in 1820, when the last prison of the Inquisition was opened, there were found people who had been there three years, who did not know the name of the city in which they had been imprisoned, never had seen their accusers, and did not know what crime they had committed or what was charged against them. After the discovery made in Lisbon, one of the members of the public assembly offered this resolution: "That these words be inscribed upon every building in the kingdom which has ever been used as a prison or headquarters of the Inquisition, 'May maledictions forever fall upon every Portuguese who does not hold in eternal abhorrence such an infernal institution as this.'"

Some deductions are, I think, not only plain, but imperative. The first is that power of a temporal kind corrupts and debases any religion. This world has never known a religion good enough, dispassionate enough, nor sufficiently just, to hold any measure or degree of temporal power without becoming thereby degraded and brutalised. There never was a man good enough or great enough to wear a crown representing authority from Heaven, and to hold the sceptre representing authority on earth.

The second is this, that it is our duty as lovers of freedom to insist upon it more and more that in this land that has never yet known much of an alliance between Church and State every lingering, remaining vestige of such an iniquitous compact shall be eliminated until nothing of the kind remains. In order to do this it will be necessary to insist again and again that no single dollar of the public funds be appropriated for the support or employment of a chaplain in any public place or function, upon battle ship, in regiment, legislature, state or national, or anywhere, or in any place soever. It will be necessary to insist that this Government refuse to make war because of the losses or sufferings of American

citizens who wilfully expatriate themselves as foreign missionaries. If men and women believe in the supremacy of their religion, and that the world's salvation depends upon its extension—if they believe that, and must go to foreign lands, let them go and submit themselves to the laws and customs that govern in those lands. Let it be understood that the flag does not follow the fanatic. It is an insolent thing for any man to go under the guardianship and protection of the American government to a foreign people and attempt to supplant their religion by his own. General Chaffee, in a speech at New York City one night last week declared that he never yet heard an intelligent Chinese say that he desired the introduction of the Christian religion, or the presence of Christian missionaries.

Another thing to insist upon is that all property owned and controlled by the Church, of any name, for any purpose whatever, shall be taxed exactly and equally as any other property is taxed. We have learned our lesson from the past. That story of blood, while it is not to be remembered to increase religious animosity, or widen schisms, yet it is to be held for ever in remembrance lest in some moment of infatuation we make the mistake of the past.

And last and most important of all, it must be now, always, and for ever insisted that all public schools and universities be kept free from religious control, domination, or influence of every kind. By these means, and by these alone, can liberty, justice, and peace be guaranteed to the future.

### The Passive Resistance Movement.

A YARMOUTH J.P.'S. VIEW.

(From the *Eastern Daily News*.)

SIR,—As an old-fashioned Radical and a nonconforming agnostic I am interested greatly in the passive resistance movement, and am anxious to know what is the real ground of complaint. It seems to me that passive resisters say one thing and mean another, and this to my mind is nothing more or less than an endeavor to obtain popular sympathy by means of false pretence.

Not long ago I called your attention to a statement that was made before the Yarmouth magistrates in the most deliberate manner by a passive resister. His words were:—"We contend that no sectarian tenets or doctrines of any kind should be taught in schools supported by public money." That is what he said, but he did not mean it. What he meant, as he afterwards explained—but not until I had called public attention to his assertion—was that the Bible should be treated as a school book, he well knowing that the three hundred and odd Christian sects base all their dogmas on the contradictory statements that are contained in the Bible.

This is a qualification that makes an immense difference—a qualification that ought to be distinctly stated whenever resistance is offered to the laws of the land. Was such a qualification plainly made before the Norwich magistrates on Friday last? It was not. Why not?

The advocate for the passive resisters contented himself with arguing that "no human government" had a just right "to compel law-abiding, peaceful, and loyal citizens to pay rates for the support of specific religious teaching in which they do not believe." That is a declaration to which every freethinker will subscribe; but is it an honest declaration? Is there not behind it an *arrière pensée*? Is it to be interpreted by the meanings ordinarily attached to the words of which it is composed, or according to the principles which guide the higher critics in their interpretation of the Bible? That is, by regarding one and the same word as having several different meanings, and several different words as having one and the same meaning.

What about even the recent past? Does not the experience of the last thirty-three years throw a fierce light on the momentous question now at issue? When did these passive resisters, or any one of them, ever trouble about the consciences of those "law-abiding, peaceful, and loyal citizens" who differ with them respecting religious teaching and religious observances? Never! Indeed, so far from having treated with respect those who conscientiously differ from them, they have, to the best of their ability, enforced against the Jew and those whom they designate Infidels every one of the unjust laws which at present disgrace the Statute Book. And on one occasion their pet politicians—Sir William Harcourt and the late Grand Old Man—imprisoned



for twelve months, and caused him to be treated with the greatest rigor whilst in prison, one whose sole offence was a question of "conscience," one who was their equal in intellectual ability, and their superior in all those virtues which go to make up the truly noble man.

But are we coming at last to the parting of the ways? Let us hope so. That what was said on Friday last by the advocate of the passive resisters is really meant by passive resisters everywhere, that "they seek no favor; claim nothing more nor less than justice; and that what they claim for themselves they are perfectly ready to concede to others." All this means, if it means anything at all, that the sabbatarian and blasphemy laws which now disgrace the Statute Book should be revoked.

As an agnostic I take exception to the adjective "law-abiding," as applied to passive resisters, for he who resists the law cannot be a "law-abiding" subject. Moreover, these passive resisters, in the course which they take, disobey "divine" as well as "human" law; for does not scripture, which they are so fond of quoting, declare thus:—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake" (Rom. xiii. 1, 2, and 5).—Yours truly,  
April 10, 1904. J. W. DE CAUX.

#### CHRISTIAN BLASPHEMY.

I go to a theatre and find a Christian audience, very tenderly sensitive as to its own religious feelings, rolling with laughter and thundering applause at the representation of a ballet-girl Jupiter ascending in a car like a monstrous coal-scuttle, with a deboshed mechanical eagle nodding its head tipsily to the pit; a male Minerva, spectacles on nose, who takes sly gulps from a gin bottle and dances a fish-fag carmagnole; a Bacchus sprawling about drunken and brutish as Caliban; all uttering idiotic puns and singing idiotic songs. And if other mythologies were equally familiar, they would doubtless be maltreated with equal contempt. You thus deliver over to your dismal comic writers, to your clowns and merry-andrews and bayaderes, the gods of Homer and Eschylus, of Herodotus, Pindar and Phidias, you the sanctimonious and reverent modern Britons; and you cry out aghast against "atrocious blasphemy" touching a Divinity who was first the anthropomorphic clan-god of a petty Syrian tribe, who grew afterwards into a vague Ormuzd with the devil for Ahriman when his tribe had been captive in Babylonia, whom you have filched from this tribe which you still detest and disdain, with whom you have associated two colleagues declared by this tribe (which surely ought to know best) utterly spurious, whom you worship with rites borrowed from old pagans you decry, and discuss in divinity borrowed from old philosophers and schoolmen you sneer at; who gave to his tribe some millenniums back laws which you preserve in the filched book of your idolatry, but which not one of you dare read to his wife and children; whose son and colleague gave you laws which are certainly readable enough, but which you are so far from obeying that you would assuredly consign to Bedlam anyone seeking to act upon them perfectly.—James Thomson ("B.V.")

#### VOLTAIRE'S RIDICULE.

It has been claimed by the Christian critics that Voltaire was irreverent; that he examined sacred things without solemnity; that he refused to remove his shoes in the presence of the Burning Bush; that he smiled at the geology of Moses, the astronomical ideas of Joshua, and that the biography of Jonah filled him with laughter. They say that these stories, these sacred impossibilities, these inspired falsehoods, should be read and studied with a believing mind in humbleness of spirit; that they should be examined prayerfully, asking God at the same time to give us strength to triumph over the conclusions of our reason. These critics imagine that a falsehood can be old enough to be venerable, and that to stand covered in its presence is the act of an irreverent scoffer. Voltaire approached the mythology of the Jews precisely as he did the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, or the mythology of the Chinese or the Iroquois Indians. There is nothing in this world too sacred to be investigated, to be understood. The philosopher does not hide. Secrecy is not the friend of truth. No man should be reverent at the expense of his reason. Nothing should be worshiped until the reason has been convinced that it is worthy of worship.—Ingersoll.

Piety, like small-pox, comes by infection. Robinson Crusoe, however, caught it alone on his island. It is probable that he had it in his blood.—Dod Grile.

#### The Celestial Scalp-Surveyor; or, the Heavenly Hair-Totter.

"The very hairs of your head are all numbered."—GOD, JUNIOR (in a speech to Jewish working-men, A.D. 31).

The Lord may be this, and the Lord may be that,  
But he numbers the hairs of your head;  
The Lord may forget that you haven't a hat,  
But he numbers the hairs of your head.  
Though infidels say that the Lord doesn't care  
If children go foodless, with nothing to wear,  
He can't be so bad as blasphemers declare,  
Since he numbers the hairs of their heads.

Your life may be blighted with numberless fears,  
But he numbers the hairs of your head;  
The Lord may ignore all your sighs and your tears,  
But he numbers the hairs of your head.  
The love of a mother with God's cannot vie,  
Although for her child she is willing to die;  
Her love for her child never prompts her to try  
To compute all the hairs of its head.

Remember! when life is encircled with gloom,  
That he numbers the hairs of your head;  
Remember! when longing for rest in the tomb,  
That he numbers the hairs of your head;  
To Heav'n you may go, but you never can tell,  
At any rate, always remember this well:  
'Twill cheer you to mind, whilst you're burning in hell,  
That he numbered the hairs of your head!

In battles, he blundered in counting the slain,  
Yet he counted the hairs of their heads;  
In floods, he mis-counted the inches of rain,  
Yet he numbers the hairs of your heads;  
He blundered in counting the years of our race—  
In fact, you can't read, with a serious face,  
His notions of Number, of Time, and of Space,  
Yet he counts all the hairs of your heads!

A feeble old woman may perish in flames,  
But he numbered the hairs of her head.  
He plays at eruptions, and similar games,  
Whilst he counts all the hairs of your head.  
This Hair-totter's gender and number may be  
Androgynous, masculine, neuter, or she,  
A plurally singular unit of three,  
But, computed are hairs of your head.

To number your *heads* is sufficiently hard,  
But he numbers the *hairs* of your heads;  
Not merely your noddles (like spheroids of lard,  
That is, if they're bald ones—wigs, doubtless, are  
barred)  
But the *hairs* on them, *hairs* of your heads.  
At figures, God always was lacking in care;  
He numbers *himself*: Unit, Triad, and Pair!  
And yet is attempting—my word! I declare!—  
To compute all the *hairs* of your heads!

The Lord might find something much better to do  
Than surveying the hairs of our heads;  
He might, perhaps, say if he's one, three, or two,  
And enlightened the *brains* of our heads;  
He might let us know that he is—if he be;  
That Love, Power, Wisdom, and Evil agree,  
And show that he reasons as justly as we—  
And be hanged all the hairs of our heads!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

#### APRIL.

But, when April comes,  
A mighty wave of life will bubble up  
From the deep rootlets of the naked plants,  
And run through barked fibres, and produce  
A very mirth of green. I hear the hymn  
Of woods, of vineyards, and of hedges sweet,  
Of crops and meadows, and a harmony  
Of many tints, of many pungent scents,  
Of humming bees, of gently rustling leaves,  
And tuneful nests of birds. And I plunge deep  
My soul and senses in that mighty life,  
And live again for joy! O ye who lie  
Within the silence of the dusky grave,  
Say, have the dead an April? Wondrous things  
Does Faith profess; and Science tells us—nought.

—Eugene Lee-Hamilton; from the Italian of Arnaboldi.



**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.**

PRINTER'S HALL (Bartlett's-passage, Holborn, London) at 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Future of the Bible: with Reference to Canon Hensley Henson's Bombshell Article."

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, W. H. Thresh, "What are we to Believe?"

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30. C. Cohen, "Atheism: What it is, and what it is not."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Alderman W. Sanders, L.C.C., "The Education of London."

FINSBURY PARK DEBATING SOCIETY (79 Grove-road, Holloway, N.): 7, Debate, "Is Spiritualism to be Taken Seriously?" Discussion.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, H. Johnson, B.A., "The Bible as Great Poetry."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Gustav Spiller, "The Place of Education."

WOOD GREEN ETHICAL SOCIETY (Fairfax Hall, Portland-gardens, Harringay): 7.15, Fred Verinder, "The Blasphemy Laws."

**OUTDOOR.**

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Gospel of Atheism."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Grove, Stratford): 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Slavery: Black, White, and Yellow."

**COUNTRY.**

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): H. P. Ward, 12 noon, "Haeckel's Riddle of the Universe"; 6.30, "An Atheist's Criticism of God and My Neighbor."

LEEDS (Covered Market, Vicar's Croft): 11, George Weir, "Ghosts"; Woodhouse Moor: 3, "The Devil"; Town Hall Square: 7.30. W. Woolham, "Why I Reject Christianity."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. M. Robertson, 3, "The Problem of Free-Will"; 7, "The Sermon on the Mount."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. L. Hare, "The Philosophy of Christianity."

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, April 21, at 8, R. Chapman, "Herbert Spencer."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' Quarterly Meeting; 7, George Berrisford, "Christianity's Defence."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Final arrangements for Mr. Cohen's lectures.

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