

# THE Freethinker

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*All work of man is as the swimmer's: a waste ocean threatens to devour him; if he front it not bravely, it will keep its word. By incessant wise defiance of it, lusty rebuke and buffet of it, behold how it loyally supports him, bears him as its conqueror along.*—CARLYLE.

## The Rome Congress.—II.

V.

HAECKEL'S brief speech to the Congress took precedence of the letter from Berthelot, the great French scientist, which I translated for my readers in last week's *Freethinker*. But I gave Berthelot's letter first because I wanted to devote a special section to one whom I call the Darwin of Germany.

Haeckel is a striking and gracious personality. Tall, erect, florid, with a fine head, a most expressive face, and quite a delicate, youthful voice, he made it difficult for one to believe that he had already passed the three score years and ten. He looked almost good enough for another seventy years on this planet.

Several small personages were hovering around Haeckel, as though they wished to be thought "pals" of the great man. It was a long while before I had an opportunity of conversing with him. Mr. Lloyd and I caught him, on the third day of the Congress, in one of the committee rooms, and begged him to honor two English Freethinkers by shaking hands with them. He shook hands most cordially, and began talking in a most delightfully unaffected manner. He said—but he said it with a smile, and we laughed a negative—that he had completed his life's work, and was looking forward to a little rest and leisure and calm enjoyment at the finish. He had been laboring at intervals for twenty years on the big book which Mr. McCabe was translating into English. It contained all he wanted to say on the subject of Evolution in relation to Man, and he was going to leave the task of scientific and intellectual progress to the younger spirits.

All this, and a good deal more, was said with the bright, frank look of one who still kept the unspoiled heart of a child in his breast. But this is not wonderful, after all; for real greatness is always simple, because it is natural. Genius does not need to make pretences. It carries its own demonstration, and is ever self-assured. Shakespeare himself had not a particle of "side." He left it to the little people—who wanted it. His contemporaries, including Ben Jonson, thought of him as the "gentle" Shakespeare. And that very epithet came to my mind as I listened to Haeckel.

It is not given to any man to be supreme in all things. Shakespeare himself was not the greatest actor of his time. Neither is Haeckel a great orator, nor even an orator at all. For such a frame his voice, while charming in conversation, is very small on the platform. But his fame had gone before him, and he had a royal reception from the cosmopolitan crowd of Freethinkers who filled the courtyard of the Collegio Romano that Tuesday morning. Standing at a considerable distance from the speaker, I could only catch a word now and then. As far as I could make out, his brief speech was couched in three different languages—French, Ger-

man, and Italian. Everybody applauded vociferously as he sat down again. They were not so much applauding the speech as applauding Haeckel. And they were right. For here was a great scientist, one of the very first rank, who saw that science was only a weapon of life, that it was life itself that mattered, and that the man of science was "a lost soul" unless he felt his solidarity with the man in the street.

M. Michel Delines, of the Paris *Temps*, interviewed Haeckel at Rome. I could not get the *Temps*, but I saw the interview reproduced in the *Aurore*, which was kindly handed to me by Dr. Conway in the train while journeying back to Paris. Dr. Conway justly considered the interview as one of very great importance. Yet it only expressed, in a lighter way, the substance of what Haeckel had put forward in his pamphlet, *La Ligue des Monistes*, which he had printed beforehand and distributed at the Congress.

"Amongst other themes," Haeckel said to M. Delines, "I speak of the conception of the idea of God, and I affirm that, according to the latest conclusions of modern science, the idea of God cannot be retained, unless we regard God as the unknowable and hypothetical principle of Matter. In brief, we recognise that matter and force, or matter and energy, body and mind, are the inseparable attributes of the substance of Spinoza; and we are persuaded that man is subject to the law of substance like all the rest of the cosmos."

Haeckel confessed that he was not able to speak with any authority on the practical side of Monism. However, he was thoroughly opposed to the Papacy, and he demanded the abolition of the celibacy of priests, confession, the sale of indulgences, the trade in miracles, as at Lourdes and Marpingen, and the trade in relics, as at Aix-la-Chapelle and Trèves.

"But that is anti-clericalism," the reviewer exclaimed. "Well," said Haeckel, "that only proves that one becomes anti-clerical when one steps on practical ground." After stating that he had the greatest admiration for what France was doing just then, and that he revered the memory of Lamarck, Haeckel continued: "I have often asked why the first half of the nineteenth century gave France so many thinkers of the first order, and why such thinkers have since been so scarce; and I explain it by the predominance of the clerical spirit."

The interviewer asked Haeckel what they thought in Germany about "the bankruptcy of science," which the French literary reactionists have been talking so much about. The great biologist laughed, and said that men of standing in Germany did not indulge in such "pleasantries."

In reply to the question "Is Freethought widely spread in Germany?" Haeckel said that belief, as it was fifty years ago, no longer exists. Very few, for instance, believed now in the Bible story of Creation. Yet there were not a great many Freethinkers in the full sense of the term. Not even in the learned world. This was a little owing to the Emperor, who is a "dualist," and "loves to talk, and talks well." He likes to launch advanced theories, but at the same time he insists that traditions shall not be interfered with. Accordingly thinkers are reticent, and Kant is coming into fashion again. Under cover of his name, conciliation is sought for the most opposite extremes; attempts are made to



satisfy the heart and head. "And yet," Haeckel added, "one of those Germans who best incarnate the spirit of Germany—Goethe, if he were living now, would be with us. Yes, Goethe, in 1904, would be taking part in the Freethought Congress, in the Collegio Romano, with Berthelot, Buisson, Sergi, and Lombroso."

## VI.

After the introductory speeches, the Congress adjourned to the open space in front of the Colledge, and fell into a line of procession to the Porte Pia, where the Italian troops made a breach in the Roman walls on September 20, 1870, and Italy thus came into possession of its own capital. What the Congress celebrated, of course, was the triumph of the temporal over the spiritual power, the victory of the rightful State over the usurping Church.

Walking in a procession does not enable you to estimate its size. I can only say that there were many thousands of demonstrators. Rome was respectful, but it did not join in the manifestation. Nevertheless, the procession was imposing and inspiring. Bands played the *Marseillaise*, the *International*, and the new *Workers' Hymn*. Banners were as plentiful as autumn leaves. Perhaps the most interesting feature was the presence of a handful of Garibaldi's old Red-Shirts; old and feeble, but with the light of a great dead day in their patriarchal eyes. I confess that the sight of them made the blood run faster in my veins. They had sprung to Garibaldi's side when he offered the youth of his fatherland, not pleasure and profit, but hunger, wounds, and death—for Italy. They had helped to make it possible, and easy, for the soldiers of the King of Italy to enter Rome, in spite of the Pope, twenty years afterwards. Had it not been for their occupation of Rome in 1849, would the occupation of 1870 have happened? Gallant old Red-Shirts! My heart gave three cheers for the valiant pioneers, who had borne the first brunt of the fighting for freedom, and opened the way for multitudes of lighter feet to follow.

When the procession came to a halt, and a vast public meeting was formed, M. Furnémont, the honorary secretary of the International Freethought Federation, delivered an oration. He was rather hoarse, but he made himself heard. He declared that the anniversary of the entry of the Italian troops into Rome, and the consequent destruction of the temporal power of the Papacy, was one that Humanity might celebrate. Garibaldi's name was loudly cheered, Cavour's faintly, Mazzini's also loudly. M. Furnémont dwelt on the idea of international peace. Above all, he spoke of the dawning liberty of mankind from the fetters of faith. The first King of Italy had said that *L'Italia farà da sé* (Italy will take care of itself), and the peoples could now say that *L'Umanità farà da sé* (Humanity will take care of itself).

## VII.

All the way to the Porte Pia I walked arm-in-arm with Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, of Chicago, editor of the *Liberal Review*, whose writings I have lately been introducing to my own readers. I never met Mr. Mangasarian before, but I liked him at once, and I only hope he felt as much at home with me as I did with him. He is acquainted with the *Freethinker*, and he spoke very highly of its intellectual and ethical character. He said that we hit hard in the *Freethinker*, without any vulgarity; and that our attack against superstition was backed up by ample resources of information and critical ability. Of course I was pleased to hear him say so, if only for the sake of my colleagues, who will, I hope, take note of this appreciation of their work by a competent judge who stands a great way off and is able to form a general, unbiased estimate.

Mr. Mangasarian is of delicate build, and I should say that delicacy is the chief characteristic of his whole organism. Bodily and mentally he is cast in

a fine mould. I do not mean that he is frail. Far from it. He seems quite healthy at all points of the compass. The delicacy I speak of is not the delicacy of weakness or decadence. It is a higher delicacy—a vital delicacy. His eye is full of reflection, and gentle feelings have wrought their lines of expression around a sufficiently firm mouth. I venture to congratulate Chicago on having a man of Mr. Mangasarian's type representing American Liberalism. I can well understand that his scholarly, thoughtful, and imaginative addresses draw large audiences to the theatre in which he speaks on Sunday evenings. I hope his new magazine will achieve a splendid success. It is very ably conducted and perfectly straight. Personalities are avoided, but there is not the slightest compromise with the Christian or any other form of superstition. Mr. Mangasarian is a fine soldier of progress; and if his sword is of a more "precious" fashion than some others in America, it is none the less strong and trenchant.

Mr. Mangasarian presented me with a copy of the French edition of his well-known *Catechism*, which promises to have a great sale in France and Belgium. The English edition ought to be widely circulated in this country. It is written with power, knowledge, and dexterity. Placed in the hands of young people, in particular, it should do a world of good for Freethought.

I was pressed by Mr. Mangasarian to write something for his *Liberal Review*, and I promised to do so as soon as I could snatch the time. He also hoped that they would some day see me again in Chicago. All I could say in reply was that I sincerely hoped to see him again—in England.

## VIII.

The Congress met again at three in the afternoon, and held a tedious sitting.

M. Furnémont proposed and carried a "bureau" of representative Freethinkers from various countries, including "Mr. G. W. Foote, of the National Secular Society," as representative of England.

Then the speaking began, and it was very badly arranged; in fact, I called it a battle of the ancients. Three speakers in succession might have counted some two hundred and fifty years between them. And when it was all over the younger spirits, feeling that they had been "dished," held a brief meeting of their own. Being most of them French or Italian, and having been kept quiet so long, they naturally burst out with great vehemence. But they meant no harm; they were letting off bottled-up emotion; and it was perfectly absurd, or gratuitously malicious, on the part of the newspapers to call it "a free fight" or "a wild scene of disorder." It was nothing of the kind.

Dr. Conway, whose voice has become feeble with age, had about fifteen minutes. Such a modest period could not be grudged him. Part of it was occupied by Mr. J. M. Robertson, who read (in French) a portion of Dr. Conway's address. The rest was added by the speaker himself in English. What he said was well worth saying, but few of his auditors understood it—which was a pity.

Professor Hector Denis, a very able man, who made a very bad mistake, fired off a tremendous type-written discourse at the Congress. I should think that he suffers from chronic bronchitis, asthma, or laryngitis, if not from all three complaints. He was almost inaudible, and it was positively painful to listen to him. But he would have no mercy either on himself or on the Congress. He droned and gasped for the best part of an hour. Once a friend took his essay in hand in order to give him a rest. But the gentleman buried his face in the copy and made a frightful hash of it, and M. Denis returned to his task. It was heroic. He meant to get through that essay or die. Unfortunately, he forgot the fate of the audience. But at last the end came. And it was really fine. There was once, he said, the Pax Romanum



—the Peace of Rome; then came the Peace of the Church; and lastly there was coming the Peace of Humanity.

M. Denis' paper will doubtless make good reading. I know enough of his writings to feel pretty sure of that. But he ought not to have tortured the Congress with an inaudible address nearly an hour long. The time would have been far too much even for a brilliant speaker. And it is not to be wondered at that some of the young and eager spirits held a meeting "on their own." Perhaps it satisfied them that they were still alive.

## IX.

The Congress broke up about five o'clock into sections. I referred to these last week, and do not wish to add anything to what I said then.

There had been no *oratory* at the Congress on the opening day; nothing that could not have been easily bettered in England. Personally, I did not feel exhilarated as I walked towards our hotel with Mr. Cohen and Mr. Roger. We had to pass the Church of San Marcello, and we thought we would just look in. It was crowded, service was going on, and a young Italian priest was preaching. "What," I thought as I entered, "a woman preaching in a Catholic church!" But it was not a woman's voice after all. Its melody had deceived me. It was a golden voice—wielding a golden language; a voice such as one hears twice or thrice in a lifetime; a voice like nothing so much as Sarah Bernhardt's in its beautiful prime. My companions floated away, as I did, on the stream of its lovely music. It was not necessary to understand what was said to be delighted. It was like listening to a sonata or a "song without words." And as we left, after some ten minutes, we could not help reflecting that the Pope had beaten the Congress in the matter of oratory—at least in placing that special preacher in a church in the very same street. Yes, although we fight the Church, and hope to conquer it, we may yet learn from it how to organise, and how to suit our propaganda to the indestructible emotions of human nature. And we fighters in the desert salute those who will some day enter the Promised Land. They may not be born yet, but we salute them all the same. We may never know them; they may never know us. But we fought for them. We did not battle for tents on sand, though we had to rest in them. We battled for palaces of peace and temples of humanity in the land which our successors shall inherit.

## X.

That morning, an hour after we entered Rome, as we walked very early in the streets, after a wash and a cup of coffee, I saw a woman of the people, with black hair, black eyes, and a strong face, with a body of the antique Roman build, and a walk like that of a goddess. One could fancy her dressed in a toga and wearing it with consummate grace.

Earlier in the day, soon after dawn, as the train whirled through the Italian Alps, I had gazed from the carriage window at the sublime spectacle of the sun smiting a vast bare rock-summit, which stood out like one of the naked ribs of the world. Mr. Cohen was with me. We could hardly take our eyes from the sight.

That night as I sank to sleep, for I had been out of bed two nights and was very tired, I saw in my mind's eye that grand woman of the people, and that austere sun-lit rock, and heard that preacher's beautiful voice. Strange, was it not? Yet not so very strange, after all; for one had seen many public meetings before, and Congresses were no new thing, while those experiences that stood out in memory were fresh—with the dew, as it were, still upon them.

G. W. FOOTER.

(To be concluded.)

## Haeckel's "Three Superstitions."

(Concluded from page 628.)

HAECKEL'S theory, says Dr. Keeling, leaves us to account for four important events in the history of the universe, which we are told, "in the complete absence of knowledge," have occurred. These are, the "pyknotic" condensation of Substance, the formation of molecular matter, the genesis of chemical elements, and the appearance of life. "Talk of miracles," he exclaims, "can any miracle be half so astounding as any one of these four acts of mindless, uninformed energy?.....Can any continuous process, extending over millions of years, beginning with homogeneous substance and ending in human brain, be conceived possible apart from a Ruling Intelligence?"

To begin with, this is hardly a fair presentment of the case. The expression "in the complete absence of knowledge" is certainly calculated to mislead readers. There is no doubt as to these events having occurred. There can be no question that condensation has occurred; that molecular matter, chemical elements, and life have appeared, whether we believe in a Ruling Intelligence or not. Our knowledge is only incomplete so far as the precise steps of these transformations are concerned. And in this matter the conception of a "Ruling Intelligence" is not, and cannot be, of the slightest value. Merely saying that all this has been brought about by God is certainly not more enlightening than being told it has been brought about by natural forces. We still need to know the *how*. This, if it is to be found out, can only be learned by ordinary scientific methods of investigation; and if it is learned in this manner, "God" is once more reduced to a meaningless and useless appendage.

On behalf of a belief in a future life Dr. Keeling does not find it possible to say much. He confesses that, "so far as science is concerned, there is little to be said for it.....Our conviction is that, apart from tradition, any evidence for man's future life must rest on ethical and religious grounds; also that before these can have any weight, the doctrine of a Divine Creator and Ruler must be unreservedly accepted." Well, if one can accept the belief in God, it is, to say the least of it, a belated exercise of the critical faculty to reject the belief in a future life on the score of inadequate evidence; although it may be noted in passing that, historically, it has been the belief in a future life that has principally given the idea of God its value. Few people would have troubled about the "recluse in the skies" had it not been they believed that one day the termination of their life on earth would place them within his power. People have never been terrified, for any length of time at any rate, by the supposed existence of a God, but only through the terrors of a supposed after life. It is this that forms the grounds of all priestly power, and it is certainly the belief to which priests of all denominations attach the greatest importance.

There is a certain grim satire about Dr. Keeling's statement that "If God has any care to vindicate to us his character for justice and benevolence, the future life of man is even of more consequence to Him than to man himself." Well, there is something in this. So glaringly opposed to man's sense of right are "God's ways" that one of the favorite pleas on behalf of a future life is that it is necessary to redress the injustice and inequality of the present one. God, it is believed, made both this life and the next; he is praised for his wisdom and justice; he rules both this life and the next; and yet the average Theist claims a future existence in order to correct the bungling or the injustice of the one we are now living! There could not be a more complete admission of the justice of the Free-thinker's criticism of "Providence."

Not that a future life ever can redress injustice in this one. No amount of future joy can wipe out present suffering. Those who rot in slums, or suffer



by the action of others, can never have their misery and suffering undone by the fact that somewhere else, at some time, under quite different conditions, those who are responsible for their condition will meet with due punishment. At best the theory is an ingenious excuse to give God an extra half-hour for repentance—a plea under a kind of religious First Offenders Act. This world is God's first attempt, says the Theist; so do not let us be hard upon him. And the job is a bad one—so bad that, if he has not made a better one somewhere else, he had better have left the whole thing alone. This is the plea, and the answer is simple and complete. If God wished justice and happiness to prevail, it could as well have prevailed here as elsewhere; and, as it does not prevail here, there is no valid reason for presuming that things are any different in any other assumed existence. This is an old reply; but until it has been disposed of there is really no need to invent a new one.

The third of Haeckel's "superstitions" dealt with by Dr. Keeling is "Free Will." I do not see anything fresh in his treatment of this topic; and there is the old and vicious fallacy of treating "Will" as though it were a separate entity—something quite apart from motives or desires or feelings. And this leads to all sorts of confusion. To say that a man can control his will, or by a resolute exercise of will can do this or that, are expressions that are useful enough so long as they are properly understood; but it is always well to bear in mind that this separation is quite artificial. The will is not one thing and the man another; a motive is not one thing and the will another. The man is the sum of all his feelings, desires, and impulses. He thinks and acts as an organic unity, not as a simple co-operation of independent parts. And the man's will is not something apart from his motives, but merely their dynamical expression. I do not say these things believing for a moment that Dr. Keeling is not quite as well aware of them as I am, but because I cannot help feeling that a temporary neglect of them lies at the root of much that he says concerning "Free Will."

Dr. Keeling's complaint is that Determinism is true in part, but does not contain the whole truth, although it seems to me that there can be no compromise between the two theories. His criticism is mainly the usual one of attacking Determinism because he conceives it as weakening morals. If Determinism were true,—

"Man would clearly be nothing more than a conscious automaton controlled by internal mechanism and external circumstances. To none of his acts could any moral or ethical significance attach, since all would be determined by unalterable conditions. The distinction between right and wrong, the belief in liberty to choose between them, held, at least ideally, by most people, must then be attributed to ignorance.....A good man is without merit, a criminal cannot be blamed; saints and sinners deserve no such name, for all alike are the mere sport of forces and conditions arbitrarily fixed."

Now, to commence with, it is anything but a scientific method to settle the truth or falsity of a theory by an appeal to certain alleged unpleasant consequences. Suppose all that is said of the consequences of Determinism were true, that would not prove it to be false, but only unpleasant. If we are living in a fool's paradise, the result of our ignorance, let us open our eyes and find out where we are by all means. Sooner or later we shall have to face the facts, and we may as well face them with the determination to make the best of things, as wait until we are driven by sheer calamity to do so.

But are the facts unpleasant? Not in the least. No ethical significance can attach to human actions, we are told, if Determinism be true. Let us see. What is the ethical significance of, say, murder? It is twofold; there is the effect on the individual in developing certain habits and passions, and there is the effect on society in taking away or weakening that sense of personal security on the maintenance of which the existence of society depends. Now, in what way is either of these issues affected for the worse by Determinism? So far as society is

concerned, does it matter whether the murderer is an automaton or not? Not a bit. Society would have to protect itself to precisely the same extent against the murderer whether he murdered as the result of the operation of "internal mechanism and external circumstances," or as the result of the operation of a self-determining "will." The only difference would be that while on lines of Determinism calculations can be made and society protected against the murderer, on lines of "Free Will" this would be a sheer impossibility. And what is true of murder is true of every other action that one can think of. Its moral value remains absolutely unimpaired by Determinism. No one would dream of saying that we had no right to call the smell of a rose pleasant because it could not, if it would, stink like asafetida. And there is no sounder reason for challenging the moral value of actions because they are as much determined as the smell of the rose.

And so with praise and blame. Our attitude here is precisely what it is in relation to other matters in the worlds of colors or sounds. Our praise of a picture or a piece of music is an expression of pleasure. Our praise of a good action is also an expression of pleasure at the sight of conduct that we believe to make for an end in which we are all interested. Only in the case of conduct there is this additional feature. We cannot make a picture better by praising it; but, as we are dealing with conscious and intelligent beings, our praise not only records the fact of our own pleasure, but it may also serve as an incentive to the subject of our approbation to continue in the same path, just as our blame may serve as a deterrent in cases where the actions are of an undesirable character.

Indeed, it is only on lines of Determinism that praise and blame are ethically justifiable. Of what earthly use is it praising or blaming an action that proceeds from a self-determining "will," which under the same circumstances may act in a precisely opposite manner? Logically, a "will" of this kind could not benefit either by experience, by praise, or by censure. On such a basis not only are such words as "good" and "bad" robbed of nearly all their value, but it destroys the slightest possibility of a science of ethics. Luckily, while many people think as Indeterminists, they always act as Determinists. Else would human society be in a poor way indeed.

C. COHEN.

### Altered Conditions.

A FEW Freethinkers may have doubted the wisdom of holding a Freethought Congress in the Eternal City, the headquarters of the Catholic Church. That such a doubt was groundless is abundantly proved by the fact that Rome received the Congress with open arms, and showered numerous favors upon the delegates. During the short time we were under the shadow of St. Peter's Church, two great truths forcibly impressed themselves upon our minds. The first is that Rome and the Vatican are by no means synonymous terms. Rome has thrown herself into line with all the progressive cities of the world. She loves and longs for freedom. Her sympathies are with advanced thought and emancipating measures. Bigotry and intolerance she hates with consuming detestation. The Vatican, on the contrary, glories in its narrowness and mediævalism. It is the relentless opponent of science, and liberty, and progress, and civilisation. Its one aim is to make the whole world its own submissive slave. The other fact made clear to us is the stupendous impotence of the Papacy. It has in its service some of the brightest and most powerful intellects in Europe. Its machinery is perfect. Its priests are shrewd, clever, and devoted. It has unity, too, which usually is strength. But Catholicism has lost the power it once possessed and could so effectually wield. Its anathemas no longer strike terror into the heart of the world, and its excom-



munications have been robbed of their sting. Verily, the Pope is a prisoner in his own palace. And the world moves on in spite of him. France is a Catholic country; and yet it sent upwards of a thousand delegates to the Rome Congress. Almost every country in Europe was represented at the unique gathering. But the Pope could do nothing but rage and fume in futile protest. Fifty years ago he could have prevented such wanton desecration of the Holy City, and three hundred years ago he would have burned all the Freethinkers within his vast dominions at the stake, as he did Giordano Bruno. To-day he is stripped of all his ancient power, and must content himself with issuing an angry, but impotent protest. "The intelligence which pretends to be independent of God," he says, "is guilty of sacrilege towards Him." In his opinion, the Congress was an incarnation of "the powers of hell" which cannot prevail against the Church. "Nevertheless," he adds, "the meeting of these forces in an international Congress of Freethinkers has in it something of the nature of an outrage and a provocation towards Rome, the tranquil and venerated seat of Christ's Vicar. We consider that it is an offence against God and against us, and we feel deeply grieved."

In that letter of the Pope to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome there is a vein of unspeakable pathos. Naturally, he felt deeply grieved at the holding of the Congress, and no one can blame him for uttering a vehement protest. But are not Freethinkers deeply grieved when they think of the Church's heartless cruelties towards their forerunners in the Middle Ages? Was it not "an outrage and a provocation" towards humanity to clap Galileo into a foul prison on the Pincian Hills, and to burn Bruno at the stake, merely for echoing new truths? Was it not perfectly justifiable, therefore, that Freethinkers should have availed themselves of the magnificent triumphs achieved by them in modern times and met together in happy conference at the very city which had been responsible for all the persecutions, disabilities, tyrannies, and atrocities meted out to their brave and noble ancestors? The Rome Congress was meant to be an irrefutable witness to the fact that the rights of Freethought demand universal recognition, and that Catholicism itself can no longer trample them under its iron heels, as it used to do of yore. The conditions have entirely changed during the last few hundred years, a truth which even his Holiness the Pope cannot deny.

There are those who assert that in spirit and disposition the Church is as intolerant now as it was in the days of the Inquisition, and that if she had the power she would still persecute and burn heretics and unbelievers. To a certain extent that is undoubtedly true; but it is also true that even the Church has been moving, however slowly, with the times. The late Pope was theologically in complete harmony with Thomas Aquinas; but in his administration of affairs he was a believer in compromise, and made unsuccessful experiments in it; and there are indications that Pius X. is disposed to follow his example in other directions. In any case, it is an incontrovertible fact that, even theologically, the Catholic Church is becoming more liberal and tolerant; that, in short, there is going on within her a subtle but sure movement towards Secularism. The altered conditions which obtain in the outside world are affecting, more or less perceptibly, the very essence of the Church.

This subtle process of slow disintegration is more perceptible still in the Protestant Churches. A hundred years ago it was the universal belief that all who died without knowing and believing in Christ went to hell, where they would remain, in unspeakable torments, for ever. All heathen nations were regarded as doomed to eternal damnation. Faith in Christ was the only means of salvation for the whole world, all religions except Christianity being absolutely false. It was this conviction that gave birth to the great Foreign Missions which have been in existence for upwards

of a century, and it is the same conviction that keeps them going to-day. Speaking at Bristol, the other day, on behalf of the London Missionary Society, Ian Maclaren said:—

"When I was a lad a promising young minister of the Church of Scotland, who is indeed now one of her leaders, suffered severe censure, and if I remember rightly only escaped trial by some conciliatory explanations, because he had expressed a hope regarding the salvation of the pious heathen. And I have read the utterance of another good minister still living who declared that he would not lift his finger again to work for Foreign Missions unless he believed that a man dying in ignorance of Christ would eternally perish. According to his idea, the ground on which one should give and labor for Foreign Missions was to save non-Christian people from the horrors of hell."

Later on in his speech, Dr. Watson added:—

"There was a day when a Christian missionary would have considered his time wasted in examining the religion of the non-Christian peoples among whom he was to work, because he regarded the pre-Christian religions as systems of darkness in which the people saw no light, or devices of the devil to lead them astray from God."

Now, Dr. Watson assures us that modern theology has repudiated that cruel dogma and teaches that all religions "above the fetishism of a savage" are "a prophecy and an anticipation, as well as a preparation for the Gospel of Jesus Christ." He quotes a long passage from the Republic of Plato to show that in Greek philosophy as well as in the prophecy of Isaiah we may find Christ and his Sacrifice. Plato's righteous man is identical with Isaiah's Servant of the Lord. What Christianity inculcates is "the culture of the soul by the principle of sacrifice"; and according to Dr. Watson this is also the great message of Buddhism. He admits that there are multitudes of saints outside the Church. He glories in the "unflinching honesty of Huxley, the unworldly ideals of Herbert Spencer, and the patient, modest industry of Darwin." Such is the attitude of modern theology, and we are bound to admit that it is a noble and praiseworthy attitude. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that this so-called modern theology is immensely in advance of the modern Church. Christians generally still cling to the older and narrower theology, which emphasises the impossibility of salvation without faith in the historic Christ. As soon as the newer theology begins to permeate the Church as a whole there will certainly be registered a substantial decline of zeal for Foreign Missions. When the average Christian has discovered that Confucianism is a good religion he will not make sacrifices to send missionaries to China. If Buddha and Jesus delivered essentially the same message, what is the use of endeavoring to convert Buddhists to Christianity? It is frankly admitted that in numerous instances Foreign Missions have accomplished incalculable good; but it is equally true that the people mostly benefited by them have been savages, not civilised races. The majority of present-day missionaries are primarily schoolmasters, and evangelists only secondarily. During the last thirty years there has been a radical revolution in the conduct of Foreign Missions. When the Christians at home realise the meaning of this change they will either withhold their financial support to Foreign Missions, or insist on their being transformed into civilising agencies.

It is safe to affirm that the older orthodoxy has had its day. It may linger in certain nooks and corners of the Church for another generation or two, but the Church as a whole is steadily renouncing it. Wider views and more reasonable conceptions are slowly gaining ground everywhere. Only the other day one of the most popular of living preachers said that the supernatural should be eliminated as much as possible both from the life and from the character of Jesus. The general tendency is to look upon the churches as agencies for social amelioration and ethical improvement. The belief in hell-fire is almost a thing of the past. The old plea for Foreign Missions has lost its force. We are told



that many professing Christians no longer believe in a future life. Verily, the old order changeth and giveth place to new on every hand. A serious attempt is just now being made to establish a church in London "untrammelled by creeds and dogmas"—a purely ethical organisation, with a thin sprinkling of supernaturalism, with Dr. John Hunter as its minister. Whether the attempt issues in success or not, the fact of its being made is a significant sign of the times. Dr. Aked tells us that Sunday-school teaching needs to be put on a totally new basis, which means that the evangel that was so effective fifty years ago is now obsolete.

Yes, the conditions are altered, and Christianity itself is being reconstructed upon more ethical and secular lines. The Church of the twentieth century is a very different institution from that of the eighteenth. Even its creed is largely agnostic. Not long ago a Christian minister listened to a lecture against the Supernatural, and at the close candidly confessed that it contained very little with which he disagreed. What is the meaning of all this if not that supernaturalism is gradually passing away? When modern science was born, the Church resolved to strangle it. Science survived repeated attacks upon its life, and is now flourishing like a green bay-tree. Its light has penetrated into every nook and corner, even into the pulpit, which reflects it upon the pew, and the world rejoices in the luminous flood. But the Church is being politely bowed out of existence by the very science it tried to kill in its infancy. Such is the irony of fate. If the truth of this is challenged, let the Church of to-day be compared with the Church of yesterday. The Church of yesterday was firmly rooted in supernatural soil, while the Church of to-day is said to be based on superior ethical principles. What will be the foundation of the Church to-morrow? Echo repeats the question.

JOHN T. LLOYD.

### The New Beatitudes.

DISCUSSING the dedication of the Subway Tavern in New York by Bishop Potter, of the Episcopal Church, Alfred J. Waterhouse has this to say in the *San Francisco Bulletin*:—

"I have not had the privilege of looking within the covers of Bishop Henry C. Potter's Bible and seeing what manner of spiritual (note that I do not say spirituous) message it is with which that smug follower of God and Mammon edifies both himself and his flock. But it is not necessary, for it is easy enough to imagine how its text must read. Here, for instance, must be some quotations from it:—

"Blessed is the good article in bottles or jugs, for the resulting jag shall not be unpleasant in the review.

"Blessed are they that mourn for the pure stuff, for they shall be comforted at Budge and Fudge's New Jerusalem Tavern.

"Blessed are they that drink consecrated goods, for they shall inherit the earth—till they recover from the effect.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst—particularly the latter—for the pure quill, for they shall be filled as long as they have the price.

"Blessed is the merciful bartender, for he shall dispense the real thing.

"Blessed are the sound of stomach, for they shall be able to hold the most.

"Blessed are the booze sellers, for they shall be called the children of the Bishop.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted by a great thirst, for they shall be filled at Budge and Fudge's New Jerusalem Tavern.

"Blessed are ye when men shall ask you in and persuade you, and shall say, 'What'll you have in yours?'

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for Budge and Fudge are now open to all of the thirsty who have the price, for so winked they at the dry which were before you."

USING A GIFT OF HEAVEN.—Bridget was none too truthful, and her mistress had been using all her eloquence to make her see the error of deceitfulness. But her would-be reformer owned herself routed when Bridget turned upon her a beaming Irish smile, and said in a most cajoling tone: "Shure now, ma'am, and what do ye suppose the power o' desavin' was given us fer?"

### Acid Drops.

Dr. Clifford has been "sold up." This is a grandiose way of saying that he has refused to pay his rates, because the Church of England got the better of the Nonconformists in the latest Education deal, and has had a couple of silver trowels, and a few other Christian luxuries, seized and sold by public auction. Of course the purchase of these things was all arranged beforehand, and Dr. Clifford's "martyrdom" was made as easy as possible.

Dr. Clifford is a rare old joker. His martyrdom as a Passive Resister was made as mild as milk by the considerate Bailiff; in fact, the two worthies were photographed for the *Crusader* in quite a brotherly pose. When the Bailiff was coming Dr. Clifford got some things ready for him and laid them out on the drawing-room table. Amongst them were two silver trowels presented to the reverend gentleman for laying chapel foundation stones. No doubt he calculated that the chapels in question would buy them back. Which they did. We believe Dr. Clifford is Yorkshire. He might even be Scotch—from Aberdeen.

The Congregational Union, in annual Congress assembled, gave some attention to the sad case of the United Free Church of Scotland, which has been grievously wounded in a very sensitive spot, namely, the pocket. In the course of his observations on this matter, the Rev. P. T. Forsyth, President-elect of the Union, made a very noteworthy confession. "At the bottom of the whole matter," he said, "was the subject of the Higher Criticism." And what is the Higher Criticism? The study of the Bible that has been forced upon the Churches by outside scholarship. The real founders of the Higher Criticism were Spinoza, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine. The clergy, as usual, come in at the twelfth hour.

"What the Churches had to do," Mr. Forsyth added, "was to keep in view, first, the supremacy of the Bible; secondly, the autonomy and vitality of the Church; and, thirdly, the power to revise its doctrines." Evidently the game of religion is just what it was two thousand years ago, when a distinguished Roman expressed his inability to understand how two augurs could meet without laughing in each other's faces. Catholics accept the supremacy of the Church. Protestants accept the supremacy of the Bible. Both are idolators; the difference between them is the difference between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee. But in the matter of logicity and sincerity the Protestants are much inferior to the Catholics. The Catholic Church boasts of its unchangeableness; its doctrines are of God, and with him there is no variableness or shadow of turning. The Protestant Churches, on the other hand, while upholding the Bible as God's Word, see the necessity of discovering fresh meanings in it from time to time, as their position becomes endangered by the progress of science and criticism. Of course the meaning of God's Word cannot possibly change. It must be the same now as when it was first written, and it must remain the same to the end of the chapter. This is obvious enough to the commonest intelligence. "Yes," say the Protestant Churches, "that is true enough; but we have misread the Bible in the past, and interpreted it wrongly. It is not the Bible that changes. It is we that change. We become wiser and better informed, and we are thus led to correct our interpretations of it. What it meant yesterday it does not mean to us to-day; and what it means to-day it will not mean to us a hundred years hence. It is our duty, therefore, to revise our doctrines as the light grows clearer." Just so. But as the fresh interpretations are always made under outside pressure, and always on the lines dictated by self-interest, it is clear that the Protestant Churches are human institutions with a keen eye to the main chance.

The Congregational Union was bound to discuss "the Education Question." Naturally, too, it passed another hypocritical resolution. It pledged itself "to maintain an earnest and unceasing effort to secure full educational and administrative efficiency, with complete civil and religious liberty, and especially (1) complete control by the people over the schools which they maintain; (2) the exclusion of sectarianism from the official curriculum and the atmosphere of State-supported schools and State-aided colleges; and (3) the exemption of State-paid teachers from sectarian tests." There were other things in the resolution—which, by the way, was carried unanimously—but they have no importance in the present connection.

Let us take these three points seriatim. The first has no special relation to Nonconformists. They are not "the people," however much they may think so; and the prin-



ciple that the expenditure of public funds should be under public control belongs to secular politics. The second is simply a falsehood masquerading as a truth. The Nonconformists do not want to exclude "sectarianism" from the State-supported schools. They want to keep sectarianism there, only it must be sectarianism of their own pattern. The third point is precisely of the same character. The Nonconformists have no intention whatever of excluding "sectarian tests." They desire to maintain Bible reading and Christian teaching in the State-supported schools, and they are quite ready to discharge any number of teachers who cannot take part in it conscientiously. This was plainly admitted by a Wesleyan who wrote recently to the *Daily News*. He remarked, quite as a matter of course, that a teacher who could not join in Bible reading and teaching was an "undesirable" person in the scholastic profession. What is this but an admission that Nonconformists are as "sectarian," in their own way, as Churchmen or Catholics?

Rev. George Hooper, a Stratford Passive Resister, harangued the magistrates at the East Ham Town Hall, and, as he was only summoned for one shilling, he had his money's worth. In the course of his lengthy address he said that he objected to the Education Act because Parliament "had stepped out of its proper sphere and encroached on the sacred domain of conscience." What he meant was that Parliament had encroached on the sacred domain of the Nonconformist Conscience. We never could discover that Nonconformists had the slightest respect for anybody's "conscience" but their own.

Cardinal Newman reminded the Protestants that the Bible was a very composite book, from which you can prove almost anything. An illustration of this truth was afforded by a recent Passive Resistance case at Dudley. One of the magistrates and the Passive Resister quoted texts against each other. At the end the honors were easy, but the magistrate, of course, had the odd trick.

Mr. Michael J. Fitzgerald, a prominent Roman Catholic, of Bermondsey, did not see "why he should not join the noble army of martyrs at a cheap rate." So he refused to pay 9d. on account of the Education rate, and, on being brought before the "beak," he explained that he could play the Passive Resister just as well as his Nonconformist brethren. He had as much conscience as they, and as good a grievance. Capital!

The *Western Morning News*, in the course of a silly article on the International Freethought Congress at Rome, found fault with the Pope for giving "a very unnecessary advertisement to that egregious gathering of nobodies." Further on it speaks of "a few cranks, mostly from France." Well, the few cranks amounted to more than three thousand, and two-thirds of them came from America, Great Britain, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Italy, Bohemia, and other non-Gallic countries. And the cranks included Haeckel, the Darwin of Germany, and scores of professors, lawyers, doctors, and members of parliament. After all, if Haeckel is a crank and a nobody, what on earth is the editor of the *Western Morning News*? We are glad to see that Mr. Eden Phillpotts, the able novelist, reads him a lesson in "courtesy." He might have added in "common sense."

The *Catholic Herald* denounces the "faithful" who want silence preserved over the Freethought Congress at Rome.

"But a thing issued in with so much publicity and pomp, organised and promoted with such explicit and designed affirmations of insult to Papal Rome, shall not remain hidden." From which it appears that articles in the *Catholic Herald* are written by foreigners who cannot write correct English.

After going almost into fits over the Rome Congress of Freethinkers, the Pope is now meddling with American women. His Holiness has sent an order to Archbishop Farley, of New York, forbidding women to sing in Roman Catholic choirs in church. Boys must be trained to sing soprano and contralto parts. Unless tradition lies, boys used to be trained in former times by the surgeon's knife. We suppose they wouldn't stand that in America. But we are not too sure, after the vagaries of fashionable New York.

The Gentle-Jesusites are going for the Jews again in South Russia. Of course they are playing the old game; robbery seasoned with murder, or murder seasoned with robbery. Jewish shops are broken open and looted, and Jews in the streets are eased of watches, cash, and other valuables. Piety and theft have always gone well together.

Sam Jones, the Yankee revivalist, does not improve in his platform style. A correspondent of the *New York Truth-seeker* attended one of Sam's "bush meetings" in Virginia, when his subject was "Colonel Ingersoll." Here is a sample of Sam's chaste eloquence: "Such a creature as Bob Ingersoll ought not to have had a hearing in any civilised community. He ought to have had a muzzle on and been obliged to feed through his ears. Do you deny it? Did you ever tamely listen to his rot? Beware of hell fire, you lousy devils, you." We fancy Sam reads the Bible too much.

Preaching in Georgia lately, Sam saw a well-dressed young man leaving the church. "Young man," he thundered, "would you rather go to hell than sit here and hear me finish this sermon?" "Yes, sir," said the young man, "I think I would." And he walked out.

"Providence" did not warn Trinidad (Colorado) that the reservoir was going to burst, and a town of 5,000 inhabitants is practically wiped out.

"May God forgive me!" wrote William Carter, of Queen's-avenue, Willesden-green, before jumping into the Grand Junction Canal. This suicide was not an Atheist, either.

Another non-Atheist suicide (of course they all ought to be Atheists) is the Rev. Denwood Harrison, of Charlton Kings, Cheltenham. The reverend gentleman selected decapitation on the railway.

English newspapers reported the case of a Baltimore Atheist, named Whitney, who invited God to strike him dead, and was immediately obliged by the Almighty. We see by our American exchanges that the story is one of Mr. Ben Trovato's. In other words, it is a pure (or impure) pious invention. But the *Sunday Circle* is not a paper to stand on trifles. It tells the apocryphal Whitney story, and gives a portrait of the hero. We should like to know where our godly contemporary bought the photograph. A long way from Baltimore, we guess. What was it Hamlet said? "'Tis as easy as lying."

*Church Bells*, another pious paper, argues that the abolition of corporal punishment, especially in the shape of flogging, is sapping the "virile manliness of the race." We hope this is not a subtle reference to flogging as an aphrodisiac. Anyhow, we have no objection to the editor of *Church Bells* being flogged once a week. He seems to want it—if flogging produces manliness.

A restaurant keeper in Portsmouth, Ohio, refused to serve a colored Methodist Bishop with a drink of soda-water. He is probably a Christian. Perhaps he has applauded the old clap-trap about "brotherhood" which does so much duty on Christian platforms. In church it is "our dear black brother." Outside it is "damned nigger."

Charles Louis Bedford, the Birmingham swindler, who is "wanted" by the police as well as by a large number of victims, was well known in local religious circles. The fervor of his piety was notorious. "A day or two before his flight from the city," the *Gazette* says, "he wheedled £500 from a relative, and directly the money was handed over he offered up a prayer and concluded by singing a hymn." He would make a first-rate revivalist.

The cry is still they come! Mr. David Shepherd, who has gone wrong at Cardiff, with a deficiency of several thousand pounds—of other people's money, was "a prominent Wesleyan" and "conspicuously identified with the arrangements for the forthcoming evangelical mission to be conducted by Messrs. Torrey and Alexander." We don't suppose Torrey will have much to say on that subject. He prefers libelling dead "infidels."

According to a Reuter telegram, the more fanatical Doukhobors in the Saskatoon district of Winnipeg have turned their cattle and horses loose, and have commenced a fresh march to meet the Messiah. The Government will deal with these fanatics as before, in order to save them from the terrible consequences of their own folly.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been having a fine old time in America. His most constant companion seems to have been Mr. Pierpont Morgan. Birds of a feather! The rest of the proverb is somewhat musty.

"I suffer not a woman to teach." So said Saint Paul, and he was specially converted (by a miracle or a sunstroke)



to correct the deficiencies of the twelve regular Apostles. If anybody was ever inspired, he ought to be. Nevertheless, he is being treated as an old fogey, even by orthodox Christian Churches. There are many women preachers in America, and the first has just appeared in England. Miss Gertrude von Petzold, M.A., has taken the pastorate of the Leicester Free Christian Church. She is described as "a young lady of prepossessing appearance, with a clear voice, a slight German accent, and a pleasing delivery." We congratulate her, of course; but is it not rough on poor old Paul?

Miss Von Petzold has been interviewed by a *Daily News* correspondent. She tried to explain away Paul's utterance "Let your women keep silence in the churches." She said that Paul was referring to female chatterers in the house of God. Which reminds us of the Gospel Temperance man who said that when Paul told Timothy to "take a little wine for thy stomach's sake," he meant it for external application. Miss Von Petzold should really be a little bolder. Why not set Paul aside altogether? Why palter with us in a double sense? Surely she must be well aware that the Pauline text she quotes is a part of a general condemnation of woman as naturally inferior, and therefore rightly subordinate, to man. The text we have already quoted, "I suffer not a woman to teach," blows away the lady preacher's fantastic interpretation. On the whole, we hope Miss Von Petzold's sermons will be better than her exegesis.

The Catholic Truth Society (what a funny title!) has been holding its annual Congress at Birmingham. Father Gerald read a paper urging the importance of means being taken through the medium of popularly-written literature to counteract the pernicious influence of the Freethought movement. Archbishop Bourne expressed himself very sensible of the danger. We are glad to hear it.

A Catholic Sunday Football League has been formed in London. Such a fact should go like a dagger to the heart of the Rev. R. J. Campbell. But there is one consolation. The Catholic Clubs will only play with Catholics. They will not tempt Protestants into Sabbath desecration.

The Dean of Norwich is ill-advised in rebuking young people for courting in church. It is well known that many of them go there for no other purpose. When the church ceases to be a social centre—a place for meetings, and introductions, and all the rest of it—it will soon empty. The Dean of Norwich is simply committing suicide.

A parson once remarked to a country lad that he was better fed than taught. "Yes," said the lad, "I feeds myself, and you teaches me."

Had this story been known to the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple, it might have saved him from repeating some ancient nonsense of his about the British working man—with whom, by the way, he has probably a very distant acquaintance. Mr. Campbell seems fond of his own words. He appears to think that they cannot be said or printed too often. In an article on "Sunday Observance" in the *National Review* for October, he loses his temper over the growing secularisation of Sunday in England. He rates the wealthy classes for their share of this lamentable heterodoxy, and he falls upon the masses with teeth and nails. The British working man, he says, is "often lazy, unthrifty, improvident, sometimes immoral, foul-mouthed, and untruthful." The reverend gentleman's instinct of self-preservation leads him to explain that there are exceptions. His description only applies to the majority.

Suppose what Mr. Campbell says is true. Who is most to blame? Why, the working man's teachers. They had hold of him in the day school, and dosed him with their "religious instruction," day after day, week after week, and year after year. They had hold of him also in the Sunday-school, and dosed him once a week more with the same medicine. They monopolised him. They kept everybody else off him. And if he turns out a "wrong 'un" at the finish, it simply proves that they miseducated him. Which is a fact that they would do well to lay to heart, instead of railing at the evidence of their own failure.

Might not the British working man turn round upon Mr. Campbell, and give him a taste of his own plain-speaking? "My dear sir," the British working man might say, "it may be perfectly true that I am as bad as you represent. I won't discuss it now, for, as far as you are concerned, I don't know that I care twopence whether you think me a saint or

a sinner. But since you begin jawing at me, I'll just take a turn at you. What about *yourself*? Are you all you ought to be? Do you call it an honest game to preach 'blessed be ye poor' and take twelve or fifteen hundred a year for doing it? Jesus Christ died on the cross; it strikes me you live on it. You call me 'unthrifty.' Perhaps I am. But did you ever try thrift on thirty bob a week? I fancy I could save a bit myself on your wages. You say I'm foul-mouthed. Well, perhaps I'm that too. I do bring out a 'damn' now and then. But I learnt it in church, you see, when I was little. And, after all, I don't mean much harm. I wouldn't hurt the chaps I swear at. It's just a way of blowing off the steam. But I believe you damn people really. Don't you send a decent 'infidel' to hell for differing from you? I wouldn't do that—not even on Sunday—damn me if I would. Live and let live's my motto. Perhaps the cocksure chap'll be all wrong at the finish. And as for being 'lazy,' old man, I guess you'd better try my job for a week before you say any more about it. Get up in the morning and go to work when I do, and ride on shanks's mare when you're tired, instead of your blooming motor-car. You'll know what's what then; and that's more than you do now. I ain't a liar and a humbug, anyhow; so put that in your pipe and smoke it, mister. And don't be so hoity-toity in future. I've seen some of your trade in a blooming mess in my time!"

A Leicester doctor, giving evidence at an inquest, kissed his thumb instead of the blessed book, and a juryman asked him to osculate the proper article. But the doctor declined. He may not have had as much religion as the juryman, but he had more science, and knew the danger of licking up other witnesses' microbes. He was backed up by the coroner.

Several Roman Catholic churches have been robbed in London lately, and the depredations are believed to be the work of one gang. We daresay they are Protestants. Perhaps they regard such burglaries as spoiling the Egyptians.

Rev. Arnold D. Taylor, of Churchstanton rectory, Honiton, writes what is on the whole a very sensible letter to the *Daily News*, in reply to that facile paradox-monger, Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Mr. Taylor points out that plenty of good men and women are thoroughly "agnostic" to Christianity as a supernatural religion; that they profoundly believe in its purely natural origin; that they are well provided with moral earnestness and sincerity; and that their position "is not to be successfully assailed by means of mere brilliant verbal sword play." This is all "right as far as it goes. But is Mr. Taylor quite correct in saying that these Agnostics "don't hate" Christianity, they "even love it"? Two instances of this Agnosticism are given—Mr. F. J. Gould and Dr. Stanton Coit. It is news to us that Mr. Gould "loves" Christianity. We are not sure about Dr. Coit.

We see by the local *News* that a "converted Freethinker" has been discoursing in the Home Mission Hall, Hawick. His name is given as Mr. James Stobbie, of Edinburgh. Can any of our readers in that city throw a little light upon this gentleman? We do not recollect ever hearing of him before.

Mr. Stobbie told his audience (or should we call it *congregation*?) that "no Atheist had peace of mind." Well, to put it mildly, we say that he is mistaken. He may not have had peace of mind himself. The first condition of peace of mind is having a mind, and we do not see that Mr. Stobbie has any. He states, for instance, that he was converted by picking up "a scrap of a sermon by Mr. Spurgeon in the street." Such a confession shows his intellectual calibre—if the word "intellectual" may be used in this connection.

Within an hour of Mr. Stobbie's conversion (so he told his Hawick audience) two souls were saved through his instrumentality. This may be called "lightning conversion." If the Edinburgh converted infidel goes on at this rate he will soon cut out Gipsy Smith and General Booth.

Abraham's posterity were to have been as countless as the sands upon the seashore. After the lapse of some four thousand years (we believe that is something like orthodox chronology) the Jews scattered over the whole world only number about eleven millions. More than half of them are in Holy Russia, and a fine time they have there! About half a million Jews live in New York, and 1,263,218 in the United States altogether. They have four members of Congress and one Senator. Not one of them, however, has a nose like General Booth's.



### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, October 9, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W., at 7.30, "Who and What was Jesus Christ?" Admis- sion free; front reserved seats one shilling.

October 16, Glasgow; 23, Leicester; 30, Birmingham.

November 6, Coventry; 20, Manchester; 27, Liverpool.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—October 16, Forest Gate; 23 and 30, Queen's Hall, London. November 6, Glasgow; 13, Birmingham; 20, Coventry; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Leicester; 11, Liverpool.

H. P. WARD.—Accept our best thanks. It had escaped our notice. We hope you continue to make progress at Liverpool.

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

F. J. VOISEY.—Much obliged. Returned as requested.

A. WEBBER.—Thanks; see paragraph. Glad to hear you "devoured" our first article on the Rome Congress and are "looking forward to the next."

T. J. T.—Thanks for cutting. See paragraph. Perhaps you will introduce yourself to Mr. Foote at Liverpool on November 27.

AGNOSTIC (Port Elizabeth).—We are finding room for your communication. No wonder the South African papers refused to insert it. They are tied by commercial considerations. The circulation of an ordinary newspaper is more delicate than the circulation of the blood—and just as important. We have often pointed out that the "free press" is one of the silliest delusions of the age. The only free press in the world consists of a few papers like the *Freethinker*.

R. E. HOLDING.—The theme invites Gargantuan treatment, but we had only room for a paragraph. Thanks for your personal enquiries. Mr. Foote is keeping well.

A. G. LYE.—Pleased to think our advice was useful, and very glad the matter has ended so satisfactorily—at least for the present. You have done well.

E. H.—(1) You took the right line in your letters to the local newspaper. We are not surprised that the Nonconformist answer is simply "Mum." They are not honest in this struggle. Passive Resistance is not even a spontaneous movement; it has been carefully worked up by the Nonconformist leaders for political and ecclesiastical purposes. What they want is a new Liberal government in power, with Nonconformists ruling the roost behind the scenes. (2) Chambers' *new English Dictionary* defines "dogma" as "a settled opinion: a principle or tenet: a doctrine laid down with authority." And "dogmatics" as "the statement of Christian doctrines, systematic theology." You can judge for yourself how far religion, especially in schools, is possible without such dogma. "Simple Biblical teaching" cannot, in our opinion, help being dogmatic; for it starts with the dogma that the Bible is apart from, and above, all other books.

J. W. MACDONALD.—Glad to hear you have found *Bible Romances* such "entertaining reading." Ingersoll was born in 1834, and died in 1899. We understand that an authoritative "Life" is being prepared by the Ingersoll family. Our opinion of Ingersoll's eloquence has been given before. We consider him Gladstone's superior in all the higher arts of oratory.

G. JACOB.—Thanks for cuttings.

ROME CONGRESS FUND.—John Rothwell 5s.

N. D.—Acknowledged as requested. Further subscriptions are not solicited for the Rome Congress Fund. But the N. S. S. can always do with all the money it can get—and with more.

C. E. SMITH wishes the address of a newsagent who supplies the *Freethinker* at Tunbridge Wells. Can any reader oblige?

J. WEST.—We have seen that old Rowland Hill bill before; but thanks, all the same. Pleased to hear you do your best to circulate the *Freethinker*. We need all the help our friends can give us, for the boycott against us is still very severe.

MAURICE RAPHAEL.—You are probably correct in saying that the masses in Christian England think a great deal more about Bill Bailey than they do about Jesus Christ.

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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.

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### Sugar Plums.

Despite the heavy rain, and generally miserable condition of the weather, Mr. Foote had a capital audience at the Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening. His lecture on "What do we Know of God?" was followed with deep interest, frequently relieved by laughter or applause. Some questions were asked and answered, but there was no discussion. Perhaps there will be some when the weather is finer. Christians used to say that they would not pay gate-money to oppose Freethought lecturers. Are they also going to fight shy of debate when the admission is free?

Mr. Foote was in no hurry on Sunday evening, as he was staying the night in London. This gave him an opportunity of shaking hands and chatting with some of the "saints" from distant parts of London. A bright little band came from Woolwich, where they hope before long to be able to form a good N. S. S. Branch. Quite a respectable contingent came from far South London, partly in consequence of the open-air propaganda on Clapham Common. Others came from the extreme north of London, and others from the East End. Altogether it was an audience of which any speaker might have been proud.

The Queen's Hall platform will be occupied by Mr. Foote again this evening (Oct. 9), his subject being "Who and What was Jesus Christ?" Should the weather be tolerable, this lecture ought to draw a crowded meeting. There will be ample opportunity for discussion.

The Glasgow Branch has selected two up-to-date subjects for Mr. Foote's lectures next Sunday (Oct. 16): "Wee Kirkers, Free Kirkers, and the Disputed Cash-Box," and "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan." Crowded audiences are expected.

Mr. Cohen had excellent audiences at Manchester on Sunday, when he opened the new session for the N. S. S. Branch. We hope this is the beginning of an active and successful winter's propaganda. Also that the local "saints" will rally round the Branch committee, and give it both moral and material support.

Mr. John Lloyd, who is now so well known to our readers, pays Liverpool another visit to-day (Oct. 9), and delivers two lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Alexandra Hall, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Branch. We hope to hear that Mr. Lloyd had audiences worthy of his ability, earnestness, and eloquence; in other words, crowded meetings.

Mr. H. Percy Ward delivers two lectures to-day (Oct. 9) at the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school. He should have good audiences and a hearty welcome.

A Rationalist journal, in what purports to be a report of the Rome Congress, states that "Mr. J. W. Gott, Mr. Grevez Fisher, and Mr. Johnson represented the British Secular League." This will be news indeed to all but the first. Mr. Fisher did not go to Rome at all, and Mr. Johnson (of Manchester) was one of the N. S. S. group of honorary delegates.

The Montreal *Sunday Sun*, dated September 4, contained a lengthy notice of our penny edition of Ingersoll's lecture on the "Mistakes of Moses." The reviewer drew attention to "the wide circulation which this class of literature now enjoys throughout the United Kingdom among all classes." The Church, he said, is alarmed, and has resolved to combat Freethought propaganda by "circulating orthodox literature at equally cheap rates." With regard to Ingersoll, the reviewer praised the charm of his style, and wound up by saying that "the present cheap edition of one of his most celebrated lectures will doubtless familiarise his arguments and his sarcasms to many additional readers in Montreal." We hope so.

The *Journal de Charleroi*, a Secular-Socialist newspaper, sometimes gives its readers a translated extract from the *Freethinker*. The last number to hand contains a long extract from Mr. Lloyd's recent article against Pessimism.

The International Freethought Congress at St. Louis, the city of the great Exhibition, is to be held on October 15—18. It has naturally been spoiled by the mighty gathering at Rome. The orators will be mostly American. We are



pleased to note amongst them: Judge C. B. Waite, Henry Rowley, M. M. Mangasarian, and J. E. Remsburg.

Time was when every "infidel" was a scoundrel. Things are changing now. We extract the following from a sermon by Dr. Watson ("Ian Maclaren") in the *British Weekly*:—

"Nor can we refuse our admiration to those eminent persons who have not been able to accept the intellectual creed of the Christian Church, but who, by the moral beauty of their lives, have borne witness to the Grace of God. What an example unto the professed disciples of Christ has been set by the lofty life of Spinoza, the finest philosophical mind of modern times, by the unflinching honesty of Huxley, by the unworldly ideals of Herbert Spencer, by the patient, modest industry of Darwin!"

"Infidels" are getting on. Perhaps we ought to say that Christians (some of them) are mending their manners.

The *Darwen News* prints an able letter by "Observer" on "Darwen's Religious Youth." The writer pleads for schools freed from all priestcraft, whether Catholic, Church of England, or Nonconformist; and asserts that the world has had enough, and even nineteen centuries too much, of Christianity. We are always glad to see such letters in local newspapers.

The *Coventry Herald* replies to the abuse of the Rev. Mr. Bainton, a local Nonconformist, and defends itself against the charge of illiberalism, which is preferred against it because it does not see eye to eye with the Passive Resisters. Both sides of the dispute may be left to take care of themselves. What we are concerned with is the *Herald's* reminder that Free Churchmen have helped to create their own Education difficulty. "Nonconformists," our contemporary says, "have their own responsibility for present discontents; their principles, logically applied, demand that public authority should stand apart not only from religion in the Church but in the School; if, years ago, they had taken this line, there would now be no religious difficulty." Precisely so. That is what we have said all along.

"Do We Believe?" has been discussed by correspondents in the *Daily Telegraph*. The discussion has not amounted to much, but it is good to see such a question raised in a great newspaper.

The late Professor Finsen, who discovered the light cure for lupus, and brightened the lives of many who were suffering from a peculiarly distressing disease, was himself a martyr to ill-health—which renders his achievement all the more remarkable. His funeral was attended by the royal family and by representatives of all sorts of institutions. The streets through which the funeral procession passed were lined with people, who uncovered their heads as the hearse passed. Such a scene would scarcely be possible in stolid England, with its bleak, hypocritical, and pharisaic Puritanism. They do these things better on the Continent—in spite of that horror, the "Continental Sunday."

The *Humanitarian* (organ of the Humanitarian League) for October is an interesting number, and contains a special supplement on "Flogging in the Navy." We commend this admirably conducted little paper (price 1d.) to the attention of our own readers.

We see that the Humanitarian League has arranged for a debate at Essex Hall, Strand, on Wednesday evening, November 23, at 8 o'clock, on "Non-Resistance." This is a question that has been coming to the front lately; largely, of course, through the teaching of Tolstoy. The chief speakers will be Mr. Aylmer Maude, one of Tolstoy's translators, and Captain Arthur St. John. Tickets for free admission can be obtained by applying to the League's secretary, 53 Chancery-lane, London, W.C.

Rev. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple, has taken over the editorship of *The Young Man*. The October number contains his introductory address to the readers. He will do well if he lives up to it. We mean editorially. He frankly confesses that "Much of the so-called Christian journalism of to-day is a sham and a moral mischief." "The only orthodoxy," he says, "which can stand the test of time is that of goodness." Which does him credit, though it is not exactly a Christian utterance. At the end of the magazine, under the heading of "The Editor's Correspondence," Mr. Campbell writes on "God at Chicago"—dealing with a copy of our Tract bearing that title, sent to him by a young man at Bristol. We shall reply to Mr. Campbell's criticism next week, not having space left to answer it properly in this number of the *Freethinker*.

## The "Douay" Bible.

AS our readers may be aware, the edition of the *Holy Bible* provided for the use and edification of English-speaking Roman Catholics is known as the *Douay* version. It is so called from the fact that the Old Testament section of it emanated originally from the English College at Douay, France. The English College at Rheims is responsible for the translation of the New Testament that is incorporated with the older books. To the copy of the *Douay Bible* which lies before us (no play upon words intended) there is prefixed a letter written by Pope Pius the Sixth setting forth the benefits the faithful may derive from their having the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. It is a letter which could not be extensively paralleled among Papal documents; for it is matter of common knowledge that the Roman Church has not encouraged the indiscriminate circulation of the Scriptures. In this respect she has differed from her Protestant rivals, and has thereby displayed that wisdom of the serpent which has always been a prominent feature of her ecclesiastical polity.

Roman Catholic apologists repeatedly tell us that their Church does not withhold the Bible from the laity, and this is so far true that, at the present day, a copy of the approved Roman version can be purchased readily enough. But the fact nevertheless remains that the Bible is seldom alluded to in Roman Catholic pulpits; never recommended therefrom for perusal by the congregation; and—with the exception of certain selected passages from the Gospel narratives and the Epistles of Paul—studiously kept in the background by the clergy. As a necessary consequence of this repressive system a Roman Catholic layman with a first-hand acquaintance with the Old Testament is somewhat of a *rara avis*. And hence we have this curious but not unnatural state of affairs, that the religious body which most strenuously and consistently upholds the authenticity of the Bible is the very Church whose adherents have least knowledge of the contents of that marvellous book. Belief in the Bible is generally found to be in inverse ratio to knowledge of its contents. We mean, of course, knowledge of the Bible in its entirety, not merely acquaintance with specially chosen texts.

Gifts passing between Roman Catholics of a devout turn of mind very frequently take the form of prayer-books, rosary-beads, scapulars, medals, images, holy pictures, etc.; but the Written Word of God, so common a gift amongst Protestants, is rarely, if ever, presented by one Catholic to another. The Bible is, we think (and we speak from personal experience) about the last thing the average Roman Catholic would dream of buying for presentation purposes. Doubtless the fact that the Bible has always been the vaunted bulwark of Protestantism goes far to explain the lack of enthusiasm displayed in its favor by the Roman Church in modern times, and causes it to be looked upon almost with suspicion by the Roman Catholic laity.

But to say truth, those who have not dipped into the pages of the *Douay Bible* have missed a fruitful source of amusement. We do not now refer to the body of the work, which does not materially differ from that of other versions. Our allusion is to the foot-notes with which the *Douay* version is furnished. These foot-notes are by way of elucidating the text, and purport to be culled from the writings and Scripture commentaries of the "Fathers." We are sorry to seem to asperse the other sex, but really a perusal of the Biblical notes in question suggests "Grandmothers" rather than "Fathers"; and grandmothers in their dotage at that! Certainly the naivete and child-like artlessness of many of the comments are such as must bring a smile to the countenance of the intelligent reader. One wonders at what stage of intellectual development such puerile explanations of the text could be considered satisfactory by presumably educated men.



There are some particularly brilliant gems of critical exegesis appended to the various chapters of the Book of Genesis. Thus a note to chap. i. v. 6 describes the firmament as "the whole space between the earth and the *highest* stars." It is safe to say that the original author of the note imagined that the world was flat and stationary. And when the sapient commentator goes on to tell us that "God created on the first day, light, which being moved from east to west, by its rising and setting, made morning and evening; and on the fourth day he *ordered and distributed* this light, and made the sun, moon, and stars," it is evident he believed that light was something entirely distinct from the sun and could be manipulated independently of that luminary.

The phrase "Let us make man to our image and likeness" is ingeniously discovered to contain the earliest suggestion of the Trinitarian doctrine. We are told that "God speaketh here in the plural number to insinuate the plurality of persons in the Deity." We are amazed at the stupendous acumen which perceives in the simple use of a little word of one syllable the revelation of a spiritual truth of such magnitude! If it had not been for this learned annotator we would have remained under the erroneous impression that the use of the plural pronoun in the quoted text possessed no more significance than the conventional *We* of journalist, monarch, or pope.

It is interesting to learn that Noah, in the judgment of the Fathers, was not guilty of sin in being overcome by wine: "because he knew not the strength of it." This is reassuring. But as Noah had reached the respectable age of somewhere about 600 years, it does seem as though at that advanced stage of his career he ought to have been better able to gauge his quantity of liquor.

It has long ago been noted that the curses and punishments meted out in the Bible very often fall upon the wrong party. In this case of Noah's lapse from the path of sobriety and decency the venerable hero of the Deluge, instead of cursing Ham who shamed him, cursed Chanaan the son of Ham. Our commentator meets the difficulty in this instance by suggesting that Chanaan must have been the first to notice his grandfather's sad condition and call the attention of the others to it. In this way he merited the curse. It seems possible to find a reason for anything if one possesses the requisite inventive faculty.

The exact pre-nuptial relationship subsisting between Abraham and Sarah has evidently puzzled the Fathers. This is not surprising. The great difficulty in dealing with a liar is to discover when he is speaking the truth, as he *must* do some time. As is well known, Abraham passed off his wife as his sister, and touching this point the Douay Bible supplies a note as follows: "This was no lie; because she was his niece, being daughter to his brother Aran, and therefore, in the style of the Hebrews, she might truly be called his sister, as Lot is called Abraham's brother." We are then referred to Gen. xx. 12. But turning to the latter passage we find, *not* that Sarah was the niece of Abraham, but that she was his step-sister ("the daughter of my father, and not the daughter of my mother"). Lot was the son of Aran, but we find it nowhere stated in the Douay version that Sarah was the daughter of Aran. But apart from this confusion of kinship, if it be not a lie for a man to assert that his wife is his sister, with the clear intention of deceiving those with whom he comes in contact, we should much like to have a definition of what is a lie.

The commentator also informs us, on the authority of Augustine, that Jacob, in deceiving his old and blind father for the sake of the "blessing," was not guilty of falsehood "because this whole passage was mysterious, as relating to the preference which was afterwards to be given to the Gentiles before the carnal Jews, which Jacob by prophetic light might understand." Of course, any apology for a reason is good enough when it is a question of explaining

away a Biblical difficulty. But it might have occurred to Augustine, as it would occur to any ordinary reader who approaches the Bible minus preconceived notions as to its supernatural origin, that a lie is a lie no matter what light it may be viewed in, and even though that light be a *prophetic* one. It is a trite retort of the Christian believer that our ways are not as God's ways, and we are pleased that this should be true. For if the ends and objects of the workings of the Deity are such as Christianity would have us to believe, we are positive that no intelligent man would attempt their achievement by the insane and idiotic methods detailed in the Old Testament.

Looking at this story of Jacob and Esau from a common-sense point of view, it should seem that if God were so desirous to secure the blessing for the former, his omnipotence might have compassed that end without any deception on Jacob's part and without Esau being cozened out of his birthright. Would it not have been much simpler for God to cause Jacob to be born before the other twin? Or, seeing that the Almighty was on colloquial terms with the patriarchs, would not a quiet intimation to Isaac have made matters all right? And even supposing Esau had managed to secure the first blessing from his father, what magical spell lay in the words of Isaac that could constrain the Lord of heaven and earth against his will to bestow his favour and his gifts in a certain direction? The patriarchs and prophets of old seem to have utilised Jehovah much after the manner in which the characters in the *Arabian Nights* requisitioned the services of their Genii.

One should really apologise for treating the absurd legends of the Bible in a serious fashion at this time of day were it not that our opponents still compel us to continue doing so. So long as they persist in presenting to the people *one* aspect of the Bible and one aspect alone, so long must we insist that the Bible be taken as a whole or not at all. We cannot permit the Old Testament to be "bowdlerized." Nor can we allow that a skilfully prepared moral extract should be distilled from specially selected chapters and offered to the public as the pure essence of the Bible. The *immorality* of the Old Testament must be taken with its morality; and the bloodthirsty proclivities of the Bible God must be regarded conjointly with his more amiable qualities. Either the Divine inspiration claim must be unequivocally renounced (which is being largely done) or defenders of the Bible must be inexorably saddled with the onus of justifying its contents from cover to cover.

G. SCOTT.

## The Conservatism of Woman.—II.

(By M. M. MANGASARIAN, in the "Liberal Review," Chicago.)

"Free thought is not only a right, but a duty."—SIR LESLIE STEPHENS, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

But why wound the tender feelings of a mother? Here I ask permission to tell a personal story. A few years ago I returned to the old country to see my parents. It was the first time since I had resigned from the Christian ministry. I was advised very strongly by former acquaintances to withhold from my mother, to whom the Christian faith was a source of cheer and comfort, my resignation from the faith in which she had reared me. I would not promise it. I had argued in my own heart that I had a thought of which there was not the least reason to be ashamed, a thought which was beautiful because rational, and ennobling because honest, and hopeful because free and daring, and I could not see why I should be nervous about it. Instead of behaving or acting as if I had ceased to care for anything in this world, and had grown indifferent to truth and goodness, now that I had changed my faith, I laid my new ideas before her, told her how I



had arrived at those conclusions, what it had cost me—spoke feelingly and kindly of what the old faith had done for me and the good I had found therein. I related to her how the old faith had ceased to satisfy my increasing needs, and how I ventured forth in search of more light, believing in my inmost soul that there was more light, and how I had not been disappointed. This, far from shocking the mother who was devoted to her church, enlarged and corrected her impressions of liberal thought, and I had her respect. It is the spirit in which we preach that sometimes hurts and wounds. "Farewell, Babylon," said the early Puritans when they left the old country for the shores beyond the seas. But, later, a new kindness softened their spirits, and when their grandchildren left England for America, they said, "Farewell, dear England." This is the spirit in which we should come out of the old when it crowds us out into the open. They satisfy our parents, thousands still find food and shelter there, but we, younger in spirit and seeking movement and progress, say, without the least desire to quarrel with those who prefer to remain at the old wharves, "Farewell."

Another criticism is that woman is more sentimental than man, and is more readily influenced by such images and symbols which appeal to the senses. She is moved by chants and prayers more profoundly than by pure and abstract thought. Myths, legends, rites and ceremonies, with their color and tone, speak more eloquently to her than clear reasoning. The Madonna with her child, the crucifix, the candle-lit altars, or, in the more liberal faiths, the thought of a personal Father in Heaven who dries their tears, and the hope of immortality holding forth the promise of a glorious reunion of friends on the other side of the grave—all these work upon her imagination with irresistible force. It is said also that women are ecstatic, devout, and dreamy. Yet the great mystics have not been women, but men. Swedenborg, who rose to the imaginary heavens on wings of ecstatic contemplation, was a man. The truth is that it is not so much the natural qualities that make the mystic, but the occupation of the mind. A Frenchman argues that in those cloisters where the monks spent most of their time in prayer and penance, in worship and meditation, mysticism reached to a higher degree than in those where the monks were occupied with teaching, writing and translating books; and that there was still less mysticism in those where the monks went about toiling for the poor, nursing the sick, and preaching love and justice to the licentious princes and peoples. It follows from this that if woman is more ecstatic and fonder of prayer meetings and devotional exercises, it is not because of any radical difference between her and man, but because thus far she has been excluded from the active interests of life. She has been confined to a narrow sphere, with the great living world hidden from her gaze, and in retirement she has become a mystic. But now that she has descended into the full arena, equipped for the noble work of life, with her brain and heart aglow with the enthusiasm of new possibilities, she has grown more practical, and is interested only in those great thoughts which can be converted into things.

Another obstacle to the success of free thought among women is said to be the natural weakness of her character. She is compared to the vine, because she finds her strength in clinging to some stronger self than her own. The loss of a child, or of a mother, or of a husband, bereaves and afflicts her soul, clouds her horizon, and opens the fountains of grief in her soul to an extent with which men are not acquainted. Therefore, it is claimed, she needs in a superlative degree the comforts of theology.

Our reply to this objection is that, if woman must cling to some power, let her cling to a power that can save. It is not intended to take her support away from her, but to give her one which shall be more real because more human. If there is help in obsolete dogmas for our sorrows, how much more will the religion of honest and rational thought

inspire and console us? It is a mistake to suppose that the orthodox minister with his books and creeds has the advantage over us at the bedside of the sick, or at the grave of the dead. The consolations of rationalism are far more effective and elevating. If the words of the Sheiks of Arabia or Palestine can console us, how much more those of the philosophers and poets of Europe? If the thought of the least enlightened ages and countries can help us, how much more the thought of this brave day?

The larger thought, far from cramping and contracting our souls, will make us twice the power we were before. When we have light, we will walk with a firmer step and swifter pace. Once freed from cumbersome luggage, we shall be more agile and active in the great charities and graces that ennoble and broaden human nature. When our credulity is replaced by knowledge, we will make a better world for ourselves to live in.

Not only is it true that women are entering into the higher and broader thought, but they are entering therein in larger numbers than men. Already the educational forces are falling under the control of women. These young women in our public schools are shaping the clay of future humanity and imparting their impress to the spirit of the child. Some day when the mist clears, and the long night, pierced by the rays of light, falls shivering from the mind of man, we may see standing in glorious array an innumerable host of young women, cultured, free, broad and rational in thought, pure and powerful in spirit, clad in the armour of a great purpose, gleaming on their heads the helmet of the ideal, in their hands the sword of truth. See in the distance the dim outlines of the approaching forces. Hear the sound of their footsteps. They are coming! They are coming to demand the reconstruction of society, purity in politics, honor in business, love in the home, fraternity among men, and freedom and progress in religion.

When woman is rationalised, the sway of superstition will be at an end. When the mother is sane, her children will be proof against the vendors and inventors of religious wares. When she is brave and free there will be no longer priests with keys of heaven and hell in their hands. A sensible man is only a sensible man, but a sensible woman is a sensible family, a sensible nation, a sensible humanity. Knowing this fact, the old religions have addressed themselves to the women more than to the men in the world. If, as Goethe has told us, the Eternal Womanly leads us on, how important it is that she be won over to the better and freer thought.

Everything points to the emancipation of women in the state, the home, the church. This is the most beautiful and beneficent sign of the times. This makes the day in which we live the turning point in human history. This throws athwart the future which is bearing down upon us a light that has never yet shone on land or sea. Rise, woman! Rise, mother of men! And error, and fear, and hate, and war, and wrong and slavery, and the monster, superstition, shall be no more—no more!

### Solomon's "Porcupines."

MISS HONNOR MORTON sends the following interesting contribution to the discussion on flogging in the Navy:—  
"Vice-Admiral Penrose Fitzgerald designates as idiots and cranks those who do not accept Solomon's dictum on the rod. But why dogmatically assert Solomon's parental methods and not his matrimonial methods?"

"A small boy was lately set to write an essay on Solomon as a penance, and he wrote:—'Solomon was a very wise man, and he was very fond of animals, and he kept 300 porcupines.' Now, though porcupines is not exactly the right term, there is no doubt that Solomon had very strong animal instincts.

"I take it for granted that Vice-Admiral Fitzgerald controls, or hides, certain of his animal instincts, but would ask him to do the same with all, for sensuality and flogging are very nearly allied."



## Gipsy Smith's Mission

AS VIEWED THROUGH THE SPECTACLES OF AN AGNOSTIC.

[The following communication was refused insertion in several South African papers. We insert it in order to show that there are other people besides Christians in that part of the world.]

PROMPTED by natural curiosity I wended my way last evening into Gipsy Smith's meeting, and as Nonconformists do not compose the totality of your readers, it may be interesting for the public to know the spirit in which the more liberal minded of your subscribers view the Mission.

The hymn-singing by the choir was attractive and emotional, and I can quite understand its appeal to uncultured minds in the world of music, the hymn sung while the collection was being taken having quite a "cake walk swing" about it, which rhythm in the theatrical world so delights the riff-raff of the gallery. But to those who have listened with an educated ear to the immortal and soul-inspiring secular masterpieces of Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Handel, Mozart, Sullivan, and the many others who have enriched the world with the product of their genius, Gipsy Smith's stock-in-trade cannot be regarded by them as other than worthless refuse.

The Missioner endeavored to bring home to the minds of his audience the primitive doctrine of Christianity as taught by Christ, which 2,000 years have not only proved to be ineffective but impracticable. He dwelt at some length on the subject of repentance, the importance of which he urged as against belief, stigmatising the words "only believe" as a trap of hell. Yet Christ distinctly teaches "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." He reminded his audience that Christ's first words preached were "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," and impressed upon them that his last words were an exhortation to spread this gospel of repentance. Those acquainted with the Bible will no doubt remember, however, that Christ's last words uttered while on the cross were "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The God in whom he had trusted deserted him in the agonising throes of death on a cross; the happy dream of his life proved an illusion at death.

Gipsy Smith appeared as ignorant as the Christ he follows with regard to the great Science of Astronomy, and any man or woman, having a natural trait of humor in their characters, could not suppress a smile when he arrogantly stated that, after Christ had received a glorious welcome in heaven and was fraternising with angels, archangels, saints, and prophets, he popped his head through the sky and commanded poor Paul, smitten with sunstroke, to go and preach this gospel of repentance. Science has, unfortunately for the poor Gipsy and his followers, extended the heavens of the primitive Christian, and the sky is no longer supposed to be the veil of heaven, through which curtain one can shove one's head at will, and the stars heavenly candles, which Matthew, in his childish innocence, talks about falling from heaven. Science has supplanted their heaven, and instead, by the aid of the telescope, has given us illimitable space full of ether and matter, in the shape of countless worlds, to gaze and speculate upon.

He also ranted about purifying the heart, and gave fantastic illustrations of how it can be effectively done; as if the heart was the seat of thought, instead of, what it actually is, the engine of the physical body. But then metaphysics, apparently, formed no part of the Gipsy's education in a tent, tinkers' tents not being renowned for much else than filth, drunkenness, and debauchery generally; and, like the credulous few who responded to his appeal, I daresay he considers in all earnestness that his thinking, directing, and imaginative faculties—in other words, his brains—are buried in his chest.

His gospel-mongering tactics excel those of Booth's disciples. The manner in which he endeavors to get the audience to bow their heads and play at "Hide-and-Seek" like children while he proceeds in a whining, plaintive tone to artfully play on the emotions of those possessing facile dispositions by assuring them that "no one's looking," "stand up," and "thank you, sister," "thank you, brother," as they stand, is amusing. But when, as a last attempt, he patronised those who, carried away by his mesmeric, active, emotive suggestions, yet had diffidence in leaving the hall, by promising his special prayers on their behalf if they stood up, and on several complying with his request, the manner in which he immediately requested them to retire to the ante-rooms was a complete betrayal of trust reposed, and, in consequence, utterly contemptible.

Repentance or renunciation, which, as the Gipsy pointed out, means the giving up of all earthly joys and social happiness, and, to quote Scripture, that "the father shall be divided against the son and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the

mother, the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law," is no longer considered feasible by practical, logical minds, if for no other reason than that renunciation creating such a social catastrophe is unnatural. The days of Inquisition and fagots are gone. "I came to send fire on the earth," and if history records correctly, if there is a world beyond, the wail of souls of butchered millions will testify that the prophesy of the lonely Nazarene has at least been fulfilled so far as blood and fire are concerned. And the like religious fervor which fanned those flames and left blotches in the world's history feeds the present spirit of Revivalism, which, however, will as surely pass away when people, by a better acquaintance with natural laws, cease to exhibit that religious madness which the Gipsy so malignantly displayed and accused his audience of being likely to manifest last evening.

I encroach on your space, Mr. Editor; but I ask the masses of Port Elizabeth, before handing over any further portion of their hard-earned money to support the pious and useless mission of an itinerant proselyte who lives in what to the bulk of the masses would mean the lap of luxury, and, by his own confession, occasionally in the society of millionaires, to buy bread, clothing, and bodily comforts for themselves and families; for those who adjourned to the ante-rooms last evening did not appear to be the well-fed, well-groomed, or well-educated and successful members of our community. On the contrary, I am sorry to say the majority seemed to be composed of those who at present feel more or less poverty's pinch owing to our bad times, and quite a number of those whom the cruel, cold hand of ostracism crushes socially on account of their color, as also a few young, emotional girls in their teens, over whose heads have not yet passed the years of discretion necessary for ripe deliberation and discrimination in matters spiritual.—I am, etc.,

AGNOSTIC.

Port Elizabeth, September 6, 1904.

## Correspondence.

### ROMAN HERETICS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In last week's *Clarion* there is a quotation from a Mr. Noel, a Christian Defender of the Faith, who says that there is no objection to Christians reading the works of Rationalists "except this: that they will find the religion against which these gentlemen direct their attack much more effectually demolished by the leading theologians of the Anglican, Roman, and Presbyterian communions."

I am aware of the fact that some theologians of the Church of England have expressed very broad views of late, but I think Mr. Noel is mistaken in supposing that there are "leading theologians" in the Roman Catholic Church holding similar views. As an ex-Catholic I should be greatly interested to know who these heterodox "leading theologians" are, and what they have said or written.

MEDICUS.

### A CHANGE IN THE CLERICAL CUT.

William Dean Howells was at Oxford, where an honorary degree had been conferred upon him. He was walking down High-street with an aged fellow of Brasenose College. The talk turned to the passing of one literary school and the rise of another, and the Oxford man said:—

"I am reminded of an old clergyman I used to know in Woodstock.

"He was very old. The only person in his parish of equal age with him was a tailor, and the tailor and he were great friends. They often called on each other.

"Well, one evening the clergyman sat in the tailor's shop. He was quiet and thoughtful. He gazed into the fire in silence for a long time. Finally he said with a sigh:—

"James, I can't tell why it is that our congregation is getting smaller and smaller. I am sure I preach as well as I ever did, and I must have gathered a great deal of wisdom and experience since I first came among you."

"Ah, sir," said the tailor, sadly, "old parsons, nowadays, are like old tailors. I am sure I sew as well as ever I did, and my cloth is the same, or better, but it's the cut—the new cut—that beats me."

EUPHEMIA QUOTES.—Deacon Jones: "Labor is the universal burden. Everybody has to do some sort of work. Mrs. U. Phemism: "Yes, deacon, there can be no doubt as to that. The Bible, you know, says that man must live by the perspiration of his forehead.—*Boston Transcript*.



**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.**

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

**LONDON.**

QUEEN'S (Minor) HALL (Langham-place, W.): G. W. Foote, "Who and What Was Jesus Christ?" Doors open 7, Chair taken 7.30. Discussion invited. Admission free. Reserved front seat, 1s.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): Doors open 7 p.m., chair taken at 7.30 p.m., J. W. Marshall, "What Must I Do to be Saved?"

**OUTDOOR.**

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Station-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; Brockwell Park, 3.15, R. P. Edwards; 7.30, Conversation, to be held in the North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road.

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): Thursday, October 13, 8, M. Klein, Coffee House, Bull Ring, "Russia."

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane, Failsworth): 8, H. P. Ward, "Has Man a Free Will?" Monday, "Can Co-operation Solve the Capital and Labor Problem?"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): John M. Robertson, 12 noon, "Mr. Balfour's Irrationalism." Committee meets at 1.30 p.m.; 6.30, "The Compromises of Christians."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, John T. Lloyd, "What Shall We Do With the Bible?"; 7, "What Think ye of Christ?" Monday, 8, Rationalist Debating Society.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 6.30, Charles Stewart, "Our Food Supply in Time of War" (from a Vegetarian point of view).

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7.30, Important meeting; Lecture arrangements.

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