

THE

# Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*I have not loved the world, nor the world me :  
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed  
To its idolatries a patient knee,—  
Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud  
In worship of an echo.*

—BYRON.

## Spiritual Discernment.

WHEN Christian apologists are driven into argumentative corners they usually seek refuge in what is called Spiritual Discernment. The majority of them contend that all men are naturally endowed with a Spiritual Organ or Faculty, the function of which is the inward perception and appropriation of unseen and eternal realities. Such a faculty is distinct from and superior to the reason. It is the seeing faculty within us, the eye of the spirit, without the exercise of which the spiritual realm must remain unrecognised. In some people this wonderful organ lies latent—a mere potentiality, while in others it has been atrophied in consequence of persistent neglect. It is enthusiastic Christians alone who make the organ a joy-giving possession. Other and more orthodox divines teach that the spiritual faculty is a direct gift from the Holy Ghost, received by man at the moment of his regeneration. But all theologians alike are agreed that “spiritual truths must be spiritually discerned,” and that, generally speaking, unregenerate persons cannot discern them.

A few weeks ago, this subject was discussed at the Central Hall, Manchester, by the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., Warden of the Bermondsey Settlement, and Member of the London Education Committee, who, it must be freely admitted, displayed exceptional ability and candor in his attempt to meet the objections of unbelievers. But his argument, while superficially plausible, is radically fallacious. He ignores fundamental distinctions, and consequently his conclusions rest upon a foundation of sand. His lecture is undoubtedly one of the best in the present series. Its full title is “Spiritual Discernment, Its Place in Christian Evidences.” According to him, and in this respect he differs from most other apologists, Spiritual Discernment means, not that “a Christian has other means of understanding beside his reason,” but that he apprehends and accepts “certain relations as real,” and finds “in these relations that which his reason tells him is and must be the meaning of the world.” Having thus defined Spiritual Discernment, Mr. Scott Lidgett proceeds to tell us what it does for the Christian. For one thing, it furnishes the Christian with what claims to be a revelation of God as Father. This revelation comes through the “life-experience of Christ,” and the Christian enters into and shares this life-experience of his Master. The disciple too has a blissful experience of God as Father. He discerns that in the Divine love as exemplified in the life and death of Jesus is to be found a satisfactory explanation of the Universe.

But Mr. Scott Lidgett is most certainly wrong when he asserts that the reason accepts Christianity as a happy solution of the problems of the Universe. According to many philosophers, Christianity is, not

only above, but contrary to reason, and, from reason's point of view, unbelievable. God is not an object of knowledge, nor is the supernatural realm susceptible of verification. So-called spiritual realities exist only to faith, and the faith that accepts them is blind. Christians believe just exactly what they are told in the Bible; and they repose faith in the Bible on the authority of the Church. In their case, reason is in bondage to credulity, the only privilege granted to it being that of defending the indefensible. Mansel was right when he argued that any conception of God can be held only in defiance of the laws of thought.

Mr. Scott Lidgett maintains that Christians, by virtue of their union with Christ, enjoy a blessed experience of God as Father. “The starting point,” he says, “is a fact of personal experience.” “The experience is *there*,” he triumphantly observes, and being *there*, “is a verification of the teaching of the New Testament.” As a sample of the reasoning we will take this paragraph:—

“St. Paul has told us how he found Christ and what resulted from his surrender to Christ. Confining ourselves to a few of his statements, he received ‘the Spirit of adoption’ crying ‘Abba, Father.’ He came to possess illumination, joy, liberty, and the like. These become my experience as I believe in Christ. The results of my new attitude so entirely reproduce the consciousness of St. Paul that what was a strange world to me, or a mass of unintelligible words, becomes lit up by my own realisation of it. Henceforth these hitherto strange words become realities to me; nay, the supreme realities of my life.”

Such, in brief, is the famous argument from experience so confidently relied upon by progressive theologians. But experience, in this region, is entirely emotional. Believers *feel* God, and feeling him, enter into ineffably sweet fellowship with him. “According to their own testimony and to that of their acquaintances this experience has been a potent remedy for all the evils of their life. The entrance of it has brought new moral power, overcoming what they have felt to be the sinfulness of their hearts. It has brought comfort to them in sorrow, peace in suffering, strength in weakness, courage in danger, life in death. It has at once awakened the deepest longings and been the growing earnest of their perfect satisfaction. And the completer the belief the fuller the satisfaction.” Then Mr. Scott Lidgett adds: “To refuse to hear and weigh such testimony so often repeated is as foolish as for a man who has no ear for music to ridicule Handel and Beethoven; or for a color-blind man to pronounce the artists' efforts to reproduce the coloring of a landscape an insane delusion.”

Let me assure Mr. Scott Lidgett that if he imagines that Secularists do not listen to and weigh the testimony of Christian experience he is radically mistaken. It is *because* we have most thoroughly examined it that we are bound to regard it as a wholly unconvincing argument for the truth of Christianity. The experience itself may be perfectly genuine in many instances; but its genuineness possesses no evidential value whatever. There are people who verily *feel* God: but their feeling is the offspring of their faith. They feel him because they believe in him. How and why is it that God never addresses himself to sceptics? Why is it that, as admitted by the lecturer, the enjoyment of God is in

proportion to the faith in him? Why is it that experience is always the product of faith, in religious matters, and never the cause of it?

Far be it from us to ridicule Christians as hypocrites and knaves. Speaking of them as a class, we readily acknowledge the sincerity of their faith, and the genuineness of their experience. Our point is that their faith, however sincere, and their experience, however genuine, do not prove the objective reality of God, and Christ, and the spiritual world. At one time, belief in the personal existence of the Devil was well-nigh universal in Christendom. To Martin Luther the Devil was as real as the Pope of Rome, and much more powerful. His Satanic Majesty seemed to take special delight in worrying and harassing and opposing that great man. Indeed, the Devil and Luther were not above cracking jokes at each other. Thirty and forty years ago children used to stand in mortal dread of the Monarch of the Pit. Did he not live in the air, and was he not watching for an opportunity to waylay and destroy their souls? I have known adults, too, whose fear of the Devil darkened and blighted their whole life, and was often a stronger passion than their trust in God. Satan followed them like a roaring lion, seeking to devour them. He tempted them to evil, interrupted them in their devotions, filled their sky with threatening clouds, and so hid the face of heaven from their sight.

In the Bible the Devil is represented as a distinct, superhuman personality, and it is as such that he figures in the theology of the Church. Before Christ came, the Devil had the power of death; and it was to bring him to nought and to destroy his works that the Son of God was manifested. When a man was converted, it was supposed that the Devil's dominion over him came to an end, and that he found shelter beneath the shadow of God's throne. But even after conversion, the Devil would not leave the poor man alone, but tempted, and accused, and hampered him in every cunning way, and made his life a perfect misery to him. And the Devil, while not omnipotent like God, must have been omnipresent, for he was believed to be able to tempt all people at one and the same time. All believers, in particular, had daily experience of him. He was as real to them as the Holy Spirit. They feared the former just as much as they loved the latter.

But the progressive theologians of to-day have dropped the Devil from their system. They explain all Biblical and theological references to him as instances of dramatic or poetic personification. Probably an overwhelming majority of living divines do not believe in his personality. The evil one means the principle of evil, and the term, Devil, is applied loosely to any source of temptation to sin. There are not many to-day who can say, with Dr. Campbell Morgan, "I certainly do believe in a personal Devil." Dr. Campbell Morgan, however, shows great disrespect for this "personal Devil" by characterising him as a tramp or vagabond: "At present he has no fixed dwelling-place, as he is going about 'seeking whom he may devour.'" But the present trend of theological thought is away from belief in the existence of a personal Evil Spirit. This is generally admitted to be a fact.

Now, my point is that as long as men believed in a personal Devil they had experience of him: they felt him quite as really as they felt God. At present the majority do not believe in his personal existence, and consequently they have no experience of him. They do not feel because they do not believe in him. This is an illustration of the elusive character of the argument from experience. Experience accompanies faith, and its intensity corresponds to the strength of the faith. The fact that certain people enjoy what they call communion with God only proves that they believe in God, but not that God personally exists. Everything in religion is built upon faith, nothing upon knowledge. Mr. Scott Lidgett says that "the experience is *there*." So it is, no doubt; but what else is *there* besides belief? We admit the experience, but deny the validity of

the inference drawn from it. It is wonderfully easy to repeat Tennyson's sentiment that "nothing worthy proving can be proven"; but surely the belief that there is a God will never carry conviction to any Atheist. No one *knows* that God is, and comparatively only a few believe in his existence. There is no such thing as Spiritual Discernment. God cannot be perceived. You assert that "in him we live and move and have our being"; but your assertion has nothing behind it but your faith, while you cherish your faith with difficulty, and in defiance of the testimony of many facts.

Christianity offers no satisfactory solution of the problems of the Universe. Judging by the facts of life as we know them we are driven to the conclusion that Nature works unconsciously, blindly, and without any design. On the supposition that there is an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being in full command of all natural processes, the results are absolutely inexplicable. Surely such a Being could not tolerate the stupendous waste in which Nature seems to delight, or be responsible for the cruel sufferings and the destructive conflicts which abound on all hands. The fact is that no explanation of the Universe has yet been found. Science is dumb in its presence, and religion only increases the mystery. The idea of God introduces a hopeless complication into the problem. Had the Christian Heavenly Father been a reality, the Universe as we know it would have been a natural impossibility.

With all due deference to Mr. Scott Lidgett, I am convinced that he has misinterpreted the extract from Herbert Spencer's *Autobiography*. The Synthetic philosopher did not regard any religion as in the least a satisfactory explanation of the Universe. So far as we know the Universe is inexplicable. Science has no solution to offer. Philosophy has suggested many readings of the riddle, but not one of them has brought peace and satisfaction. "We grant at once," says Professor Haeckel, "that the innermost character of Nature is just as little understood by us as it was by Anaximander and Empedocles 2,400 years ago, by Spinoza and Newton 200 years ago, and by Kant and Goethe 100 years ago. We must even grant that this essence of substance becomes more mysterious and enigmatic the deeper we penetrate into the knowledge of its attributes, matter, and energy, and the more thoroughly we study its countless forms and their phenomena." That is precisely the confession made by Spencer at the close of his long and laborious life. He, too, sought in vain for answers to the great puzzling questions that have faced mankind from the beginning. But although he failed on rational grounds to explain the Universe, he did not turn to Christianity for consolation. He simply turned his face to the wall and died like a hero, convinced that man is Nature's child, and ought to spend his life in perfect loyalty to his mother, obeying her laws and utilising her gifts.

J. T. LLOYD.

### A Word From Australia.

I AM pleased to find in the last three *Freethinkers* to hand some pretty full accounts of the Roman Congress, also a photo of the visit to the Bruno Monument. The only face I can recognise in the group is Mr. Foote's. Another generation has arisen in England that "knows not Joseph"; and I fear that, were I to return to the old land, few, if any, would remember me. Never mind! The inevitable is not to be gainsaid, and to dispute with the deeds of time were as bad as a tongue-contest with the wind.

The mention of the wind is forced upon one by the weather here. Talk about the climate of England or Scotland! The climate of Victoria—say, Melbourne and precincts—changes a dozen times

while yours changes once. This day week there was a frost all around us; the next day the temperature in the shade here was 94 deg. Fahr., in the sun it was 134 degrees. I worked in the open till I was tired of it. Since then we have had it very cold, awfully windy, boisterous, blusterous, squally, insane, in fact; and now it is raining, as I hope it may for the night. Last year we had no summer until February, after eleven months of almost continuous wind, rain, and cold. This season is about as bad. If a God or Demon, or anyone else, really does conduct or make Australian weather, he must be as mad as any occupant of Bedlam ever was. But the Christians here don't like for me to say that.

I have been out hoeing and weeding crops most of the day; and it occurred to me that I might spend the evening writing a line to the *Freethinker*—not, I hope to exclude better matter from its well-filled pages.

I am not surprised that the Congress at Rome should have given the Editor both pain and pleasure. It was a huge fact in human history. Our vile papers here ignored it—except to report that the Pope was annoyed; but it will appear in history. Whoever tries to ignore it, it must be considered one of the most significant facts at the opening of the twentieth century. For a body of open Freethinkers to gather to Rome from all parts of the civilised world was surely an event fraught with mighty consequences. In no Teutonic or Saxon nation of the world would the ruling classes have favored such a gathering; nay, the newspapers of those nations are so absolutely in the pay and service of capitalists, aristocrats, and clergy that they ignore the gathering.

The Latin race will be more thorough in its long-delayed Reformation—I may say *is* more thorough—than ours. Our Reformation was nine-tenths sham. We broke with Rome, but our Established Church was and is just as bad as the Romish—to the full measure of its power and opportunity. As some commentator on the Apocalypse put it, the Romish Church is the "beast" mentioned in that delirium tremens book, and the Anglican Church is its "image." The Dissenters are no better. In Italy, France, and Spain it is Popery or no religion at all; in England and America it is the leading Church or a thousand others; you can take your choice. The want of sects in the Latin lands compels the advanced to be still advancing; they must ever be on the move forward, for there are no halting places. In England and America, in fact all over Saxon speechdom, a man escapes from the principal Church traps to find himself caught in others. The Italians, French, and Spaniards, once out of Rome, are free. Hence they go the whole hog while we loiter or hesitate or halt between the past and future.

Unfortunately, our sects, from the Act of Parliament squad downwards, have grown enormously rich—by taking no thought for the morrow, by setting their affections on things above (higher dividends, banking accounts, collections, etc.), by preaching the blessings of poverty and the danger of riches, by diddling fools out of their money, and by wholesale State endowments filched from the people by the worst of rogues and given to "the cause of God"; which, being interpreted, means the cause of all selfishness and tyranny.

Being rich, our clergy, especially the Romish, hold the newspaper press in leading-strings. They have free access to it at all times, and the leading journals will publish the vilest rubbish the clerics can produce, but nothing rational in reply. Thus we have exchanged masters; we have flung over the priests and their scarecrows, but the newspapers cant the cant of the pulpits as unctuously as the clergy themselves; and all who refuse to cant must be rigidly excluded from their pages, ignored in general, but held up to public scorn whenever the newspaper owners find an opportunity.

Our governments, British and Colonial, are such vile things that no public servant, civil or military or naval, dares to show sympathy with our Free-

thought movement. Bribery and terrorism reign here; I suspect they still do in England also. 2870010

It is not so in the Latin nations. The people there hate the priests as they ought, hate them openly and glory in their mental freedom; therefore, the Italian Government could show the greatest courtesy to Freethinkers assembling in Rome. The Pope and priests have ceased to be terrors to them. It is not so here, I can assure you; quite the reverse. We Britishers have almost everything yet to do, for we have retained the clerics in power, though we know them to be the worst of all possible shams; and the newspaper press has sold itself to them and is under their direction.

Now a word about myself. I had hoped and intended to die on the battlefield slashing away at the foe to my latest gasp. The fates are against me. All the Freethought work or fighting I can now do consists in a word now and then, a letter now and then. I am not content, far from it; but I am helpless. I do not dislike my farm work, I take kindly to it; but then men of a quarter my intellect could do this as well as I can, and better. Still, I am powerless. Australians are just mad socially and politically, and are as deaf to reason as the Bible adder was to music. True, they have just opened the Melbourne Library and Art Gallery on Sundays, after I had worked twenty years for that end; and I am told that Sunday night concerts are being held in Melbourne now. My work has not been in vain, and I wanted to spend the whole of my life in the same way; but am shunted.

I have just received a letter from America inquiring if I am at liberty to conduct a Freethought journal there. That may, or may not, come to anything. Time will show. I am not worn-out; I have not lost my desire to do battle with man's worst foes, the clergy; nor have I lost the love of showing up and exposing the horrid religions of the crowd.

At present I must do what is straight and clear before me, and indulge the hope of being able to do more at no distant date.

I wish the *Freethinker* success, and the fullest triumph to Freethought everywhere.

JOS. SYMES.

Liberator Farm, Cheltenham, Victoria, Australia,  
November 22, 1904.

### The Blight of Secularism.

MR. C. SILVESTER HORNE is the minister of Whitefield's Church, Tottenham Court-road, London. He is reported, by the Dissenting press, to be a powerful preacher and to be doing a great work in his locality. One would be more impressed by these reports of a preacher's ability were it not that they are so very common, and that actual experience usually shows their genius to be so carefully hidden that without the puffing it would never have been discovered. The other Sunday evening Mr. Horne preached to his congregation on the subject of "The Christ that is to Be," and in the course of his sermon took occasion to deal with Secularism. He was not, he said, going to attack Secularism, at which one breathes a sigh of relief, "because if I tell you all that is in my mind I think Christ would be very much better friends with many of the Secularists than with many of the professing Christians, because I think they have got more of His spirit."

Probably Mr. Horne regards this as a compliment, although it would be well for him—and others—to bear in mind that no genuine Secularist regards it as such. Personally, at all events, I have no desire to be taken for a Christian, nor do I feel at all flattered at being told I have a deal of the "spirit" of Christ, if that is based upon any fair reading of the New Testament narrative. Secularists may at least be permitted to know their own minds and beliefs better than Christians can know for them,

and having expressly repudiated the New Testament Jesus and historic Christianity, there should be an end of that aspect of the matter.

After disavowing any intention of attacking Secularism, Mr. Horne hastens to add that "the spirit of Secularism has brought a certain blight into all departments of thought and activity to day . . . . Secularism having brought a certain blight upon faith, has left our great (political) departments of activity without the spirit and the soul which are the outcome of following the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . The same spirit of Secularism has blighted to a certain degree the intellectual life of England"; all of which is illustrated by the fact that we should be surprised if leading statesmen attended a prayer meeting, and that we have left the good old times when a scientist like Faraday would leave a scientific gathering to attend a meeting of an ignorant little sect like the Sandemanians. And bearing in mind that Mr. Horne regards this summary as showing that Secularism robs life of all its idealism, and brings us down to a money-grabbing materialistic conception of things, one wonders what he *would* have said had he resolved to attack Secularism in dead earnest.

Mr. Horne's reference to Faraday, by the bye, is doubly unfortunate. In the first place, it is unjust to Sir Oliver Lodge, who is so earnestly striving to convince the world that Faraday was not the only example of the combination of ability in one direction with downright foolishness in another. True, the religious theories advanced by Sir Oliver Lodge are not so flagrantly crude as the tenets of the now defunct Sandemanians, but we have advanced a generation since Faraday, and Sir Oliver has a claim to the gratitude of the religious world for what he *has* done. And, secondly, Mr. Horne ignores Faraday's candid admission that if he carried the same common sense into religion that he exercised in science he would not have believed in it. So that what Mr. Horne's illustration shows is not that Secularism has cast a blight on our intellectual life, but that it has extended its area.

One of the chief of Mr. Horne's complaints against Secularism is that it has weakened, and in cases destroyed, the habit of prayer. No Secularist is likely to find fault with this, as it is in itself a welcome, although unwilling, testimony to the power and prevalence of Secularism. Christ, says Mr. Horne, was always going apart to pray, and "would say that a prayer-meeting was more important than a Cabinet Council; that to hold intercourse with God was the source of all right living and right thinking." Well, bearing in mind how carefully the habit of prayer has been fostered, and what a large number of men of Mr. Horne's class are perpetually impressing upon the people the necessity of prayer, it surely is not idle to conclude that if people have given, or are giving, up praying it is because bitter experience has taught them that a prayer-meeting is *not* more important than a Cabinet Council, and that men and women may think and act cleanly and usefully without having previously hypnotised themselves with a number of meaningless formulæ. Of course, Mr. Horne regrets the dying out of this belief. But, then, he is a parson; and the very condition of his rule is that people should adopt the shut-your-eyes-and-open-your-mouth attitude, which is always a confession of weakness or helplessness.

Mr. Horne's complaint that Secularism produces what is called a materialistic view of life is a very common one; but a very little reflection shows it to be as stupid as his saying that Secularists have much of the "spirit" of Christ in them. Of course, Mr. Horne does not mean scientific materialism. What he does mean is the discarding of lofty ideals, the tendency to judge life from a too narrow standpoint, and the subordinating of the higher to the lower pleasures of existence. No one need object to this use of the word, so long as it is honestly used; nor need a Secularist object to even the word "spiritual," so long as that is intended to cover the higher human feelings. The only thing that need be pointed out

is that it is Christianity, particularly as expressed through its organisations and apologists, that tends to divest life of its higher aspects. And the curious thing is, that while at one moment it is complained Secularism is gross, materialistic, lacking in idealistic impulses. etc., the next we are met with the complaint that Secularism must fail because it has neither a heaven to reward, a hell to punish, nor an all-seeing God keeping man under constant supervision.

Consider for a moment what is the real nature of the issue between Christianity and Secularism. The essential issue is whether human nature, considered in itself and by itself, is adequate to bring about its own development, and, so far as it is realisable, its own perfection. The Secularist answers with an uncompromising affirmative; the Christian is equally ready with a negative. He asserts that, divest mankind of the belief in a future life, wherein good and bad meet with their deserts, divest it of the belief that it is in the inescapable presence of a being who will one day demand an account of all its actions, and even though a morality were possible, the development of the higher aspects of life would be an impossibility. That is, to put the argument in another form, human nature is naturally so vile, so incapable of self-development, that its only hope is to submit to the imposition of *materialistic* punishments, or the hope of equally materialistic rewards, and to feel itself under perpetual police surveillance. Surely, whether the Secularistic view of human nature be correct or not, it is certainly ideally more admirable. Nor can there be any question that it is far more helpful and inspiring to conceive human nature as a self-sufficing, independent whole than as a more or less mysterious product, with whatever goodness it possesses forcibly imposed from without.

It is symptomatic of the loose thinking of the average person that professors of a theory like Christianity, which is a virtual denial of human goodness, should denounce other theories of life for their sordid character and lack of idealism. Coleridge said that there was not one man in a thousand who had strength of mind or goodness of heart sufficient to be an Atheist. And one may add that there is not one Christian in *ten* thousand who has sufficient faith in mankind to discard theology and trust unreservedly to its developed instincts. In spite of all that may be said to the contrary, the essence of Christianity is pessimism, and not a little of the disaster it has worked may be attributed to its profound distrust of human nature.

It would, I presume, be useless to ask a preacher like Mr. Horne for actual examples of the way in which Secularism has brought "a certain blight into all departments of thought and activity." Otherwise one might inquire whether the influence of Mill in economics, Spencer in Philosophy, Darwin in science, Morley and Bradlaugh in politics, or Shelley, George Eliot, Swinburne, and Meredith in literature, has been productive of a moral or intellectual blight. True it is, that none of these have strengthened the desire to pray, or the belief that a prayer-meeting is of greater importance than a meeting of the Cabinet. But they have taught men and women the value of careful thinking and of accurate speaking, of exact observation and profound study, of self-reliance and co-operation: they have taught mankind that knowledge is the only kind of petition to which nature yields, and steady industry the only method by which mankind can be raised. And those who have grasped these truths can well afford to let the prayer-meeting "go hang."

C. COHEN.

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Great deeds bear fruit, and in the fruit are seeds that in their turn bear fruit and seeds. Great thoughts are never lost, and words of kindness do not perish from the earth.—*Ingersoll*.

Two Graves at Rome.—III.

VII.

SHELLEY'S ashes were soon to be buried in the Cemetery where the body of his son William was laid, and after it the body of Keats. The word *ashes* is used in his case advisedly, for his body was burnt in old Roman fashion; and thereby hangs a tale.

Shelley's death was untimely. He was drowned in the sea which he loved so well, and to the sound of whose music he had written so many of his loveliest verses. In the beautiful late spring or early summer of 1822 he had taken a residence near the fishing village of San Terenzo, in a deep cove on the eastern side of the Bay of Spezzia. Casa Magni had once been a Jesuit convent, and it was now to be the home of an Atheist poet. But for how short a time! In the month of August the waves closed over Shelley's head, and extinguished the voice of the most ethereal singer of that generation.

What Shelley might have done had he lived longer, or whether he would have lived much longer if he had not been drowned, are questions that have been canvassed, but they are idle questions, and it is a waste of time to consider them. Trelawny was of opinion that he would have lived to a good old age; Shelley himself, a few days before the end, said "I am ninety"—meaning that he felt that age inwardly, having lived so much more intensely, and even tragically, than other men. He was not born to plod a steady way to the grave. He was himself the Julian of *Julian and Maddalo*, the

*Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep  
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth.*

VIII.

While at Pisa in the earlier part of 1822 Shelley formed a new friendship, with Edward John Trelawny. Trelawny belonged to an old Cornish family, was the younger son of an officer in the British army, and was then in his twenty-ninth year. He had led a very adventurous life, and appears to have even dabbled in piracy. But he was a splendid fellow, possessing prodigious physical strength, as well as a fine taste in literature. The poet and he understood each other immediately; indeed, it is to Trelawny that we owe our best glimpses of the real Shelley. And it was this new friend who was most helpful when the August crisis came, and Mary Shelley and Jane Williams were widowed by the same stroke of fate. How good is a true man in these crises; one who has tears, but something better to do than to shed them—one who stands amidst grief-stricken helplessness, and the poverty of common friendships, like a tower of strength!

Trelawny, Williams, and Shelley had a boat built for them, but before she was launched she became the property of Shelley alone. The partnership had chosen the name of *Don Juan*, in honor of Byron and his great poem. Shelley afterwards wanted to call her the *Ariel*, but in the battle of nomenclature he was beaten, and *Don Juan* she remained.

One day, while the boat was building, Trelawny arrived at Casa Magni, bringing news of her. "Oh," exclaimed Shelley, "we must all embark, all live aboard; we will *suffer a sea change*." The words were from Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Shelley did not know how soon they were to be chiselled in the stone over his own grave.

On the eighth of July, 1822, Shelley and Williams, with a lad called Vivian to help them, sailed out of the harbor; a terrible storm overtook them some ten miles from land; when it cleared up the *Don Juan* was no longer visible. She had gone down in the tempest.

Can we say, with Milton of his Lycidas,

*It was that fatal and perfidious Bark,  
Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,  
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine?*

Or are we to believe that the *Don Juan* was deli-

berately run down by a felucca for the sake of robbery, which was frustrated by her foundering almost directly she was struck? It is said that a confession to this effect was made long afterwards by an old sailor who had been on board the felucca, and Trelawny says that the impression of foul play was general at the time. But what a savage sarcasm of Nature or Providence is this theory if it be true! The purest and most loving heart on earth stilled for ever by the hand of careless crime!

When the bodies of Williams and Shelley were washed up they were quite unrecognisable except to the keen eyes of Trelawny. They were first buried in the sand, and afterwards dug up and burnt on the beach. Shelley's body was burnt on August 16. The book he had been reading, the last poems of Keats, was consumed with it. Shelley's heart, choked with blood, would not burn, and Trelawny snatched it from the fire; giving the fragments subsequently to Mary Shelley.

The cremation of the body was necessary under the quarantine laws of Italy, because it had been determined by those most interested (Trelawny says) that Shelley's remains should be removed from where they lay, and conveyed to Rome, to be interred near the bodies of his child and of his friend Keats. The child's body, however, could not be found; and the grave of Keats is not near the grave of Shelley.

It was Shelley's ashes, then, that were sent to Rome. They were buried before Trelawny arrived "with the usual ceremonies." Which is enough to make one vomit. Trelawny, the ever helpful, had them removed from that resting-place. He purchased a recess, had two tombs built in it, placed Shelley's ashes in one, and left the other empty. After the lapse of some sixty years, his own remains were laid in the second tomb, beside the ashes of the friend whose memory had been the great light of his life.

How strange that two generations should have rolled by, in each case, before Severn and Trelawny began their last rest beside Keats and Shelley! And how holy are those two pairs of graves! When I left the Cemetery, and the first thrills of emotion had subsided, it was these noble companionships that stood out the firmest and serenest in my recollection. They illustrated the love stronger than death, without which the world would be a bitter desert, and all the prizes of ambition but Dead Sea fruit.

IX.

As far as I can make out a most elaborate inscription was provided by Mary Shelley and others for Shelley's tomb. But here again the strong hand and good taste of Trelawny made themselves felt. With some assistance from Leigh Hunt, he prepared the ideal inscription which still remains:—

PERCY BYSSIE SHELLEY

COR CORDIUM

Natus IV Aug. MDCCXCII

Obit VIII Jul. MDCCCXXII

Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.

Cor Cordium—Heart of Hearts! It was a happy inspiration. Shelley was the poet of love. "Love," he said, in the Preface to the *Revolt of Islam*, "is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world." In that faith he never wavered. It informed poem after poem which swarmed forth from his ever-teeming brain during the great seven years of his creative activity. Perhaps it is most magnificently expressed in the wonderful last speech of "Demogorgon" which fitly crowns the splendors of *Prometheus Unbound*; though it is no less apparent in the bright and exquisite last Chorus of *Hellas*, which closes with that pathetic sigh of hope too long deferred; and it pants through all the raptures of *Epipsychidion*, which is the sublimest hymn of love—purged, subtle, and only intelligible to the pure in heart and tender in imagination—ever chanted in the cathedral of the

world ; wherein the matchless lyrist seems as though he would

oversoar  
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,  
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

Shelley, more than any other singer of his time, conformed to his own description of poets as "the unacknowledged legislators of mankind." Measured by ordinary standards, his life was a failure; measured by the highest standard, it was a triumphant success. He met with the usual fate of true prophets; his generation hated him, trampled upon him, and cast him out; but in the wilderness he still delivered his message in ravishing song, which a few heard and treasured, which now commands a wider audience, and which is destined to be hailed as the beautiful gospel of Humanity when the earth basks in the sunshine of freedom and happiness. Shelley had some foresight of this—and it was his consolation. At times he felt baffled, if not frustrated; even the element in which he wrought seemed incapable of expressing his inmost sentiments.

Woe is me !  
The winged words on which my soul would pierce  
Into the height of love's rare Universe,  
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.—  
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire !

But as though with a prescience of his early death he sang on to the height of his power; hidden from the coarse world in the light of thought, and weaving in solitude and misconception the web of a mighty power over posterity.

Standing over the spot where Trelawny placed the ashes of Shelley, I thought of Matthew Arnold's description of "the beautiful ineffectual angel"—and I smiled. Beautiful, Yes; ineffectual, No. Shelley's real day had not then dawned. Now we see its light trembling over the eastern hills. Every reform demonstrates his wisdom; every step of progress is an evidence of his sagacity. For great thoughts, as Vauvenargues said, spring from the heart; and precisely because Shelley was "Cor Cordium," the heart of hearts, he was the greatest—that is, the deepest—thinker of his time.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### SHELLEY'S ATHEISM.

The principal fault I have to find is that the Shelleyan writers, being Christians themselves, seem to think that a man of genius cannot be an Atheist, and so they strain their own faculties to disprove what Shelley asserted from the earliest stage of his career to the last day of his life. He ignored all religions as superstitions. Some years ago, one of the most learned of the English Bishops questioned me regarding Shelley; he expressed both admiration and astonishment at his learning and writings. I said to the Bishop, "You know he was an Atheist." He said, "Yes." I answered: "It is the key and the distinguishing quality of all he wrote. Now that people are beginning to distinguish men by their works, and not creeds, the critics, to bring him into vogue, are trying to make out that Shelley was not an Atheist, that he was rather a religious man. Would it be right in me, or anyone who knew him, to aid or sanction such a fraud?" The Bishop said: "Certainly not, there is nothing righteous but truth." And there our conversation ended.

Certainly there were men of genius before the Christian era: there were men and nations not equalled at the present day.

A clergyman wrote in the visitors' book at the Mer de Glace, Chamouni, something to the following effect: "No one can view this sublime scene, and deny the existence of God." Under which Shelley, using a Greek phrase, wrote "P. B. Shelley, Atheist," thereby proclaiming his opinion to the world. And he never regretted having done this.

—Edward John Trelawny, "Records of Shelley,  
Byron, and the Author," p. 312.

For men have hitherto dwelt but little, or rather only slightly touched upon experience, whilst they have wasted much time on theories and fictions of the imagination.—  
Bacon.

#### Acid Drops.

What a farce is divine-right government. Just think of General Stoessel, who defended Port Arthur to the last gasp, and only surrendered when further resistance was impossible, crying "Great Sovereign, forgive!" to the feeble young man who sits on the throne of Russia and carefully keeps himself out of all danger.

Pagans, who believed that in giving their life in this world they were giving all they had, considered it a sweet and proper thing to die for their country. Christians, who believe in heaven, think it strange if a man does not cling to the present life with the utmost tenacity. We can well understand, therefore, that General Stoessel was staggered by what he heard from General Nogi. Quite naturally the Russian general was touched on hearing that the Japanese general had lost both his sons in the fighting at Port Arthur; indeed, he was more than touched, for he burst into tears—for which nobody will think the worse of him. But imagine his astonishment at finding that General Nogi needed no commiseration! on the contrary, he was quite happy in the thought that his sons had been sacrificed for the welfare of their country. This gave General Stoessel furiously to think, as the French say; and he came to the conclusion on the spot that "such a spirit was a glory to Japan and had much to do with her present position."

Surely the Christians have made a tremendous fuss about death. They talk about the sacredness of life so much that they breed cowardice. Yet at the same time they allow "the sacredness of life" to be outraged wholesale in the pursuit of gain. Letting that contradiction pass, however, we may fairly say that the world has gone backward in some virtues since the days of Paganism. It was thought almost an act of superhuman courage and self-control when Lord Roberts undertook the command of the British army in South Africa after losing his only son at Colenso. A sad blow, no doubt; but war means death to somebody, and one person is as eligible as another. When news was brought to a famous old Pagan, in the very midst of the fight, that his son was slain, he looked those who told him so calmly in the face, and said, "I knew that my son was mortal."

Heaven has at last resolved to bestow victory upon Holy Russia. The mayor and other officials, as well as the people, of the city of Sudja are sure of it. They say that during divine service held when the troops were being mobilised they saw a mighty iris-colored cross appear over the cathedral and move eastward across the firmament, gradually growing white. It was visible for a full hour. All the notabilities of the city have attested this "miracle" with their signatures, and the document has been forwarded to General Kuropatkin. The Japs will soon be defeated now.

"Providence" has been playing the deuce with the weather lately. New York has suffered from a terrible blizzard—the worst in the memory of the "oldest inhabitant." Mediterranean health resorts have been visited with snow and ice, and the Tiber at Rome has been frozen over, for the first time in centuries. At home we have been troubled mostly with fog, but when that gave over the East coast was attacked by a tidal wave, which wrought great destruction. Oh yes, we are getting on famously. As the Scripture says, "He doeth all things well."

"J. B.," in last week's *Christian World*, says that religion is "for ever delivered from the kind of attack made by the Voltaires and the Baron d'Holbachs of the pre-revolutionary age. The reason to which they so ostentatiously appealed has decided finally against them. It recognises, as they failed to do, the absolute reality and the supreme value of the religious facts and forces."

"Voltaires" is good—distinctly good. Mr. Brierley evidently thinks there were many of them; that Voltaires were really dirt cheap in the market. Whereas there was only one Voltaire. Men of that kind don't turn up in a hurry. So that "J. B." will have to mend his information or his manners. It may be all right to speak of the Brierleys of the Christian press. It is ignorance, silliness, or impudence to speak of the Voltaires of literature.

We have something else to say. If we are to believe in "J. B.'s" honesty and accuracy we must conclude that he has never read Voltaire and d'Holbach. D'Holbach was an Atheist. Voltaire was a Deist. D'Holbach fought against the very idea of God. Voltaire said that if God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him. We are not arguing

which of them was right. We are only arguing that to lump them together as holding the same view of "the facts and forces" of religion is the very puerility of criticism.

The West London Mission has re-opened at Hengler's Circus. We do not deny that this is very appropriate, but some of the nonsense talked at the meetings will be enough to upset any fairly intelligent horse that may happen to be on the premises.

Religious labels are to be applied more scientifically to the inmates of West Ham Workhouse. Hitherto they have been divided into two lots—sheep and goats. We beg pardon—Protestants and Catholics. This was on the principle of the old fighting and swearing Colonel, who formed up his men for church parade, and shouted, "Church of England to the right—Catholics to the left—Fancy Religions to the rear." Henceforth the unfortunate paupers are to be asked on admission whether they are Anglican, Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, or no creed. And "Catholic" is not to be used without "Roman" in front of it. A daily religious journal welcomes this as a step in the right direction. But why should paupers be religiously tabulated at all? Their religion, whatever it is, is a purely personal matter; and if they like to go to this church one Sunday, and another church next Sunday, and no church on the following Sunday, what does that matter to anyone but themselves?

One of the greatest public schools in England had a proviso in a recent scheme that all the thirty-two house masters, with six possible exceptions, should "be bachelors, or live as such." Only in Christian countries, we imagine, could such an unnatural state of things exist.

Mr. H. W. Hill, secretary of the English Church Union, says that 2,800 Communicants joined that body during 1904. This is a fact that Freethinkers should note. It throws a flood of cold water on the warm optimism of those who fancy that the battle against Christian superstition is nearly over—just because Mr. Blatchford has joined in the struggle. There is a lot of hard fighting to be done yet.

Last week's *Clarion* contained a most astonishing puff of Old Dowie and Zion City. It was nearly two columns long, and we expected to find "[Adv't.]" at the end of it, but there was nothing of the kind. It was therefore a *Clarion* article, and as such it was a curiosity. The pious part of it was particularly so. Take the following passage:—

"The mottoes of the city are: 'Where God rules man prospers,' and 'Christ is all in all,' and Christ does appear to be all in all here, for all seem happy and prosperous."

It is not our business to square this with Mr. Blatchford's views on Christianity as set forth in *God and My Neighbor*. We leave that formidable task to him—if he chooses to undertake it. We prefer to make another extract from this amazing article. After stating that the workers in Zion City are all professing Christians, and that they work eight hours each day, less one-fourth of an hour, which is devoted to prayer, the writer says:—

"The one-fourth of an hour devoted to prayer is the power-house of the whole city. Surely Shakespeare said: 'More things are wrought by the power of prayer than the whole world dreams of.'"

Surely Shakespeare never said anything of the kind. This pious writer simply Yankeeifies a bit of Tennyson's "Passing of Arthur." But that, in itself, is a matter of no importance. Half-educated advertisers are very apt to commit such blunders. But fancy such stuff appearing in the *Clarion*!

We saw a printed statement the other day to the effect that no attack on Christianity had ever caused such a sensation as Mr. Blatchford's. Those who talk like that don't know much of the history of the Freethought struggle. Paine's *Age of Reason*, for instance, quite convulsed England. Hundreds of thousands of copies of it were sold—and the population of England was not then a half of what it is now. Bishops denounced it in the House of Lords; one Bishop wrote a long reply to it; and it was preached against from thousands of pulpits. Those who sold it were persecuted and imprisoned. Scores of men and women went to gaol for selling it. Some of them spent years in prison. Richard Carlile spent nine years and seven months in English gaols for no other crime than publishing Paine's sceptical masterpiece. Those were days. It was the heroic period of English Freethought.

The Bishop of London doesn't like the great preponderance of women at Church services. No one (he has just said) honored more than he did women's work in the Church of England, and he would be the last to say a

word against it. But was the Church made up of women? Were they going to sit down and see the Church's work done by women? No, they must wipe away that reproach. He wanted to see the men cram the churches. Let them see as many bare heads as bonnets.

Q Evidently the Bishop of London has not learnt the wisdom (but then he doesn't look wise) of leaving well alone. He would be more sensible if he congratulated the Church on the support of women, instead of bewailing the lack of support by men. He will never get the men to church by whistling to them, and he may lose the women if he talks too much about their big majority. Some of them may slack off and make the balance more even—just to please him. And what will he do then?

"Ouida," the well-known novelist, who is not so well-known as a Freethinker, having received a copy of the Prize Essays on the Eton Hare Hunt, recently published by the Humanitarian League, acknowledged it in a letter from which we make the following extract: "It is a grotesque yet terrible thing that the nobility and gentry, the pastors and masters, of such a country as England should publicly uphold an amusement for youth, which consists in the torture and mutilation of the most timid and innocent of animals." These "pastors and masters" are Christians, of course.

A burglar broke into the Roman Catholic church at Nelson, in Lancashire, and was seen moving to and fro from the outside. Searchers went all over the building and failed to discover his whereabouts. At last attention was turned to the organ. Some of the searchers climbed to the top, where they found the enterprising burglar lying full length across the organ pipes. He is now doing two months' imprisonment. And if he knows his own business he will get converted and go revivaling. "The Converted Church Burglar" would sound well, and doubtless prove attractive. We make no charge for the idea.

Correspondence has been appearing in the *Daily News* on "The Y.M.C.A. and Young Men." One correspondent says that the Y.M.C.A. is a tall-hat society, and that the appearance of a working-class young man would throw it into convulsions. Another correspondent says that "The thinking young man rarely receives encouragement, but more often receives the reverse." Quite so. What else could be expected? The thinking young man—the real thinking young man—is never encouraged in any Christian society. He is worse than dynamite.

Marie Corelli is defeated, and Andrew Carnegie's "Free Library" has been opened by the Mayor and Corporation at Stratford-on-Avon. It is quite close to Shakespeare's birthplace. But the poet's interest in the matter is simply nil. We don't suppose he knows anything about it. If he does, he is probably laughing at both parties in this elegant quarrel. What are they but buzzing insects around a great reputation?

We are promised a keen fight over the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill next Session. All the Christians who don't want to marry the lady are down on the Christian who does. We hope that in time they will agree to let him alone. The question at issue is one for the lady and himself.

George Bardsley lectured on temperance. He also amused himself with burglary. Clergymen's houses were his speciality. But the police ran him down, and he is now doing five years. This gives him time to think out why the preachers of "Blessed be ye poor" offer such a temptation to persons of his profession.

A young Welsh woman, at Llanelly, stopped in the house all night, and declined to go for the doctor, although her husband was seriously ill. At midnight he became unconscious, and he remained in that state until the morning, when he died. Of course an inquest was held, and the wife had to give evidence. She stated that it was not a proper thing for a young woman to be seen out at ten o'clock at night, and she could not do it, even to save her husband's life. Well, well! They do things differently amongst the Welsh revivalists. Even the women think the evening is quite young at ten. Some of them reach home a little before the milk.

The newspapers report that a Caerphilly football team, composed entirely of converts of the Welsh religious revival, played Caerphilly United, and were defeated by eleven points to none—although a Nonconformist minister kicked off the ball! It is to be hoped that the converts are better

at other things than they are at football; or the Lord help them when they come to compete in the open market with the "unsaved."

Evan Roberts has a rival. While he is occupied in South Wales, a new revivalist has sprung up in North Wales. His name is Evan Lloyd Jones. He is said to be remarkably like Evan Roberts, but still younger, being only twenty years old. He has had no preparation for the soul-saving business, but he has been "called"—from the position of a quarryman. No less than twenty-eight converts were bagged at his first meeting.

Gipsy Smith (the attraction is the Gipsy) has been holding a ten days' mission in the Potteries. His success there is described as "remarkable." Hundreds of people (probably all Christians before) have "found Jesus." We understand that revivals are very popular in the Potteries. Is that the reason why the quieter clergy have been calling it the most immoral part of England?

Hundreds of persons, it is said, have been "converted" at Gipsy Smith's meetings. "On Wednesday night," we read, "one town councillor and many prominent public men broke down with grief and sobbed like children, and were led away by Christian workers into praying-rooms." This debauch of emotion is called "religion," and is enough to make that word stink in the nostrils of intelligent people.

Gipsy Smith was "overcome with joy." "May God," he cried, "sweep the whole of North Staffordshire into his kingdom." Well, we don't suppose Old Nick is much alarmed.

Rev. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple, is suffering from "overstrain," and has been ordered to take a holiday. Another artist in the same predicament is Mr. James Welch, of the Drury Lane pantomime. Both of them, we hope, will soon be able to resume their performances.

A recent number of the *Daily News*, in puffing Dr. Torrey's new Mission in London, referred approvingly to his strong opposition to the "Higher Critics." The same number of that journal refers to the "timely and courageous utterances" of the Dean of Westminster, one of the most notorious of these "Higher Critics." Evidently our Non-conformist-Conscience contemporary means to be impartial—except where downright "infidels" are concerned.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts acknowledges an anonymous donation of £1,000, and another of £500. No doubt the money will be spent judiciously, and £1,500 worth of Gospel-propagating will be done abroad. But when is Gospel practice going to begin at home? Clearly, if those anonymous donors had obeyed Jesus Christ, they would not have had £1,500 to give. That they disobeyed Jesus Christ is, of course, a good thing for the gentlemen—and ladies, too, for that matter—who run the aforesaid Society.

What an awful time some of the Passive Resisters have! Mr. Isaac Picard, market gardener, Ossett, was liberated on Saturday morning (Jan. 7) from Wakefield Gaol, where he had been committed for the frightful term of four days for refusing to pay his Education rate. Happily, the prison calculation of four days is merciful, or no one knows what might have happened in this distressing case. Mr. Picard's imprisonment included part of Wednesday: that was one day. Thursday and Friday were two days more. The morning of release is reckoned as a whole day also. And that makes four. Some of us begin to understand how Jesus Christ put in three days between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. All you have to do is to calculate on the basis of Mr. Picard's imprisonment, and double the value of the two nights on Trade Union lines—and there you are, don't you know.

Religious instruction in the elementary schools seems to be a very grand thing, and the children understand the Bible so beautifully. Some specimens are given by Dr. Macnamara (who believes, or says he does, in religious education) in the Christmas supplement to the *Schoolmaster*. Here are a few of them:—

Mixed.—A child, in writing of Elijah, said: "As Elijah went up to Heaven he dropped his mantle, and Queen Elizabeth walked over it."

Samivel!—Inspector: "Why was Elijah sorry when the Shunamite's son was dead?" Ind: "Because he didn't like being left alone with a widow." (Inspector smiled.)

Thoughtful Samuel.—"What was the first thing that the

little boy Samuel did when he got up in the morning  
"Please, sir, he carried up a cup of tea to Eli."

The One Thing Necessary.—Venerable Archdeacon (Diocesan Inspector):

"Now, my dear children, I will ask you a few questions in your Catechism. Which of you can tell me the two things necessary in Baptism?"

"Quite right, Water. Water is one thing, and what is the other? What! can none of you think what else is necessary? Well, little girl, what do you say?"

Little Girl: "Please, sir, a baby."

Moses and the Burning Bush.—At the close of the lesson on Moses a teacher questioned his pupils to gauge their interest, and among other questions he submitted the following: "Why did Moses take off his shoes before approaching the bush?" Judge of his consternation when he received the following reply from a little fellow of eight years: "Please, sir, to warm 'ees' feet."

After this we may congratulate Dr. Macnamara on his dread of Secular Education.

One of the "converts" of the new Welsh revival, a young man called Daniel Devine, after making a public announcement of his conversion at a Swansea meeting, went and stole £6 from a local baker who had befriended him and given him work. He is now doing four months' hard labor. His excuse before the bench was that the money tempted him. (Of course it did! But why did he rob his benefactor, of all men? And so soon after his conversion! It seems that his religion not only did not keep him from crime, but had not even the power to make him feel thoroughly ashamed of his rascality.)

The supply of Welsh Atheists still holds out. The Central News correspondent at Cardiff is responsible for the following, as having happened at a local church on new year's eve:—

"A few atheists sought to argue with the pastor of the church, and a scene of great excitement followed. 'Is there a Christ?' demanded the atheists. 'No,' they answered. There was a rowdy element in the gallery, and the situation looked serious, when Miss Annie Rees, one of Mr. Evan Roberts's evangelists, sang, 'Lead, kindly Light,' and then the meeting broke in with 'Songs of praises.' The atheists retired, but two remained and were converted. One cried loud and long in his agony of mind, and fell prostrate in his seat. A few minutes afterwards he rose and said he had found the Savior, and was now happy. The meeting lasted six hours, terminating at nearly one o'clock yesterday morning."

It ought to be easy to give the names and addresses of those two converted Atheists. And we ask for them.

The *South Wales Daily News* of Saturday, January 7, contains a Welsh revival report with the following headings:—"The Belief in God—Agnostic Challenge—Awesome Scene—Paroxysm of Emotion." It appears that Evan Roberts was conducting a meeting at Pentre dwr, some five miles from Swansea, when a tall man stood up in the gallery and said "I am an Agnostic. I am looking for truth. I am searching for it." There was a hubbub at once, but over all the noise the voice of the Agnostic was heard, saying, "You say only believe, and you will know there is a God. Now, show me there is one." Evan Roberts's only answer was "Pray, brother, pray." The Agnostic said he didn't want prayer; he wanted the truth. Whereupon, with the Bible clasped in his arms, Evan Roberts prayed, and all the people with him, except that Agnostic and a few other "infidels" in his company. It was a perfect frenzy. Some got up on seats, others thumped the desks, and many shouted themselves hoarse. Evan Roberts sobbed and wept; women fainted and had to be carried out. Finally, the Agnostic and his "infidel" friends said, "You have been praying much, but it has had no effect upon us." And all Evan Roberts could say was "The Lord is going to answer." He did not say when. It should be added that the Rev. F. B. Meyer was present at the meeting and witnessed the failure of prayer to move the unbelievers.

Christmas (Old Style) at Bethlehem was marked by a bloody fight between the Greek and Latin clergy. How they love one another!

The vicar of St. Edward's, Barnsley, has been giving his opinion of Yorkshiremen. He doesn't love them. He says they have many failings, including closeness in money matters. The reverend gentleman has been three years in Barnsley. During that time he has had a magnificent new church built, and installed the finest organ in the neighborhood at a cost of £1,000. Still, Yorkshiremen are "mean." Evidently the reverend gentleman will never be satisfied until he gets a congregation of Carnegies.



**Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.**

Sunday, January 15, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W., 7.30 p.m., "The Last Fight for the Soul: Sir Oliver Lodge's Reply to Haeckel on Matter and Mind."

January 22, Glasgow: 29, Manchester.  
February 12 and 19, Camberwell.

**To Correspondents.**

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road Leyton.—January 15, Forest Gate; 22, Queen's Hall.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—January 22, Birmingham; 29, West Ham; February 12, Leicester; March 12, Glasgow; 19, Liverpool; May 7, Merthyr Tydfil.
- F. SMITH.—We hope the "pleasure" with which you subscribe will be more than equalled by the pleasure with which you hear, in due course, of the result.
- J. WILLIAMS.—Yes, a good deal *can* be done in that way. We hope our readers will keep on forwarding addresses to which we may send copies of the *Freethinker*.
- E. NEVILLE.—It is pleasant to know that we have "aided you in your mental emancipation." We thank you for your efforts to promote the circulation of our "splendid journal," as you are good enough to call it. Of course we quite understand that many of our readers who would like to subscribe cannot do so for want of means during these hard times. We regret it for their sakes as well as for that of the cause.
- J. W. HUTTY.—Thanks for your wish expressed in the words "May the *Freethinker*, Freethought, and yourself flourish." The third is involved in the other two.
- HENRIC.—Pleased to hear you were "delighted" with the first part of "Two Graves at Rome" and "anxiously waiting" for the next instalment. We fancy the contradiction you refer to will disappear if you read the second paragraph again. Thanks for the addresses.
- T. DIXON.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with our "Two Graves at Rome." The articles were, of course, written *con amore*, and, after all, the way to interest one's readers is to be interested oneself. Thanks for new year's good wishes and newsagent's address. We wish you, in return, all you could wish yourself.
- W. DODD.—We should be happy if our success equalled your wishes.
- C. E. SMITH.—Tunbridge Wells address duly noted. Thanks.
- F. J. VOISEY.—Ticket sent as requested. Your good wishes for the success of the Annual Dinner were valued, though we would rather have had your presence.
- J. C. POINTON.—Sent as desired. Sorry you had to be at sea at the Annual Dinner time. In wishing us continued health you wish us the best gift of fortune. As poor Keats said: "Nothing is so bad as want of health—it makes us envy scavengers and cinder-shifters."
- J. BARRAULT.—Glad to hear you have been able to circulate the *Age of Reason and Bible Romanes* amongst your friends and acquaintances. We note your hope that a great many of our readers will subscribe to our Anti-Torrey Mission fund, and that we shall succeed in "opening the eyes of a few" at any rate.
- H. HOYE.—Your cuttings are welcome. Mr. Foote is keeping tolerably well at this trying time of the year; better than he expected. He hopes to pay West Ham another visit when the Stratford Town Hall, or some other eligible building is available.
- NITHSDALE.—Your letter is well written and reads like that of an honest man. Unfortunately your distress is only too common in this Christian country. We sincerely pity you, but are quite unable to find you the real help you want—namely, employment. It is just possible that one of the Glasgow Secularists may know of something you might do. There is no harm in inquiring, anyhow. Go amongst them, and you will get courtesy for certain. Ask to see Mr. Robertson or Mr. Turnbull, and state your case. We earnestly wish you better luck.
- G. L. G. MACKINNON.—Thanks for cuttings.
- H. P. HUNTER.—Private propaganda, such as you carry on, is very effective. We wish *all* Freethinkers would act as missionaries. Each of them could introduce Freethought to scores of other persons every year, by means of conversation and judicious circulation of literature. The "underground" Reform movement in Russia is carried on entirely in that way, and we are beginning to see with what results. We thank you for your encouraging letter, and are glad to know that the reading of our pamphlets, which fell into your hands accidentally, was the first step in your mental emancipation. With regard to your letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, you could hardly expect it to insert such a strong indictment of Christianity. The letters in the "Do We Believe?" correspondence were carefully selected, and we dare say carefully edited.
- A. L. ANSELL.—Thanks for address, which is duly noted. We quite understand that Smith's bookstall manager refused to supply you with the *Freethinker*. Smith & Son will not handle this wicked paper. It is part of the boycott we have to fight against, and ought to give us a claim on all that our friends can do to counteract it.

- THOMAS EVANS.—Very glad to hear from one who has read the *Freethinker* since its commencement, who considers it is now better than ever, and would feel a dreadful loss in failing to get his weekly copy.
- J. MARTIN.—Thanks for subscription and good wishes. Yes, we *have* plenty to do; in fact, we have never been short of work since the end of our enforced twelve months' rest in Holloway Gaol.
- W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.
- WILLIAM VILE.—Yes, every little *does* help; a fact which the great majority of our readers unfortunately overlook.
- PETER BRIDGER.—Pleased to hear from you again. Annuitants are proverbially long-lived, and Brighton air conduces to longevity; so you may reasonably expect to tarry a good while in what your Christian friends call "this miserable vale of tears." What you say about newsagents is quite true; if they would only treat the *Freethinker* impartially its circulation would double or treble, and those who work for it would get a more decent remuneration. The Christians have discovered that boycotting Freethought is better than a frontal attack.
- OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £18 14s. 3d. Received this week: A. Hurcum (omitted from last list) £1 1s., T. Dixon jun. 2s. 6d., W. Dodd 5s., J. Barrault 2s., F. Smith £2 2s., J. W. Hutty 2s., William Vile 2s., Peter Bridger 2s. 6d., E. Wilson 5s., J. Martin 10s., J. M. Gimson £2 2s., David John 2s., J. Sage 2s., R. Denny 2s., V. Page 1s., Varley 1s., J. E. Pearson 1s., T. Thelwall 4s., C. D. Stephens 2s. 6d., J. McK. 2s. 6d., Rhondda Miner 1s., R. Child 2s. 6d., C. Bowman 10s., P. Rowland 5s., W. R. C. 2s. 6d., A. J. Fincken 10s., E. J. Hirsch 8s., H. C. B. £1, L. Devereux 2s. 6d., George Taylor £1.
- J. M. GIMSON, subscribing to our Anti-Torrey Fund, says, "I am glad you are going to meet in this way the mixture of hysterics and imbecility which is dignified with the name of religion nowadays." Mr. Gimson also kindly corrects an error in our last "Book Chat." We referred to George Meredith's *Vittoria* as "now *Sandra Belloni*," whereas it is *Emilia in England* which now bears that fresh title. The point is not *very* important, but it is always best to be accurate, even in the smallest matters, and we thank Mr. Gimson for the correction. The blunder was made easier for us by the fact that we have never seen a copy of *Sandra Belloni*: our own copy of both books being the original three-volume edition.
- E. MEAN.—We shall be happy to make use of you in distributing our Torrey pamphlets, but you live a long way from the Albert Hall. Had you not better wait until Torrey comes nearer your district, as we understand he is going to. Glad to hear that the *Freethinker*, in your opinion, improves with every issue; and that you are one to whom it was "introduced" eighteen months ago. We are confident that our readers could, if they would, advertise this journal into a far better circulation, by simply taking the trouble to introduce it to their friends and acquaintances.
- T. THEWALL writes: "In response to the suggestion made in the *Freethinker* last week I have asked my newsagent to give a certain number of copies away to anyone he thinks will appreciate the gift. The idea is good, and I hope will be widely adopted." This correspondent also hopes our Anti-Torrey Fund will be well supported.
- J. E. PEARSON.—There is no law compelling women to go through "churching" after childbirth.
- RHONDDA MINER.—Thanks; see "Acid Drops." The other points shall be dealt with next week.
- W. DENSLEY.—Being sent as requested.
- J. S. EAGLESON.—We presume you did not wish your letter to be printed: some of the matter is so personal—though what you say generally is only too true.
- DAVID JOHN.—Your letter with enclosures to hand. The matters you write about shall have attention.
- R. DENNY.—Yes, we shall do what we can to "make it hot for Torrey," but it will be all the hotter if Freethinkers give us proper support.
- V. PAGE.—It is a pity your old friend gave money towards paying the expenses of local lectures when he wanted it for his own subsistence.
- VIOLA.—In our next.
- C. D. STEPHENS.—Always pleased to hear from you. Your good wishes are appreciated.
- J. MCK.—Thanks for your wish that your subscriptions were larger. Too many Freethinkers don't give even what they could.
- W. P. PEARSON.—Pleased to have your letter. The matters you enquire about are being attended to.
- R. CHILD.—We can quite understand the low opinion you formed of Dr. Torrey after seeing and hearing him at Brighton. It is shocking, as you say, that such stuff a performer should be taken up by the "respectable" Churches.
- As we go to press we learn of the death of Mrs. Thornton Smith, who was well-known to London Freethinkers some years ago. Her age was forty-four; the cause of death rapid consumption. The funeral takes place at Finchley Cemetery (Jan. 13) at 3 p.m.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C.
- THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted. FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

Owing to the unfortunate breaks in the continuity of the Queen's Hall lectures, the audience has to be worked up afresh with every new course. As soon as possible we shall see what can be done to remedy this state of things, but for the present we must work as we can under undesirable conditions. Sunday evening's audience was a fair one, though not quite "good" for Mr. Foote. No doubt there will be the usual improvement this evening, when he occupies the platform again, taking for his subject "The Last Fight for the Soul: Sir Oliver Lodge's Reply to Haeckel on Matter and Mind." This ought to prove interesting and attractive. And once more, as there are no bills printed for this course of lectures, we beg our London friends to give the lecture publicity amongst their liberal-minded acquaintances.

Mr. Herbert Burrows informs us that during his recent visit to America he came into touch, by letter, with Mrs. Sharman, widow of the Rev. W. Sharman, the Unitarian minister, who was such an active member of the old Society for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Mrs. Sharman asked Mr. Burrows to convey her kindest wishes and regards to all her husband's old friends in this country; and, as far as the *Freethinker* reaches them, we have much pleasure in making an announcement to that effect. Mr. Sharman threw up his pulpit at Plymouth at the time of our imprisonment in 1883, and devoted himself "heart and soul" to the Society just mentioned, for which he acted as secretary. He attended the St. James's Hall and other meetings convened by the Society. He was also a zealous advocate of Charles Bradlaugh's right to take his seat for Northampton in the House of Commons. Mr. Sharman was a *man*, and his death was a great loss to the cause of progress. His widow need not fear that he will be forgotten. One Englishman, at any rate, will recollect him while memory lasts.

Mr. J. W. de Caux, of Great Yarmouth, a veteran Freethinker, and our very good friend, had almost a leading article to himself in Friday's (Jan. 7) *Daily News*. It appears that Mr. de Caux happened to be Chairman at the local Petty Sessions when an application was made for the transfer of the license of a public-house called "The Duke's Head," owned by a firm of Norwich brewers. This gave him an opportunity of saying something of great importance to the ratepayers. Mr. de Caux pointed out that brewers put managers in their houses at a low nominal rental; the difference, of course, being made up by exclusive dealing; and by this means they escape their proper share of the local burdens. But when their licenses are extinguished, and compensation has to be made, they say nothing whatever about the rental, but make a claim based upon trade and profits. Thus they win both ways, and the public purse is virtually defrauded. It is rather odd, perhaps, that this point should be left for a wicked "infidel" to raise, when there are so many Christians who are fanatical in their opposition to the drink trade. But a Freethinker is a man who thinks, and Mr. de Caux amply sustains the character of his "denomination."

We were surprised, but of course delighted, to find a glowing eulogy of Thomas Paine in a leaderette in the *Forfar Herald*—which makes us ask with special emphasis, "Stands Scotland where it did?" Our readers will be interested by the following: "Never in the history of the world was a nation, numerically enormous, so completely at the mercy of a mere handful of tyrants. 'Holy' Russia, sunk in superstition, is at last slowly awakening to the awful absurdity of being led blindfold by those mealy-mouthed, immemorial mischief-makers, the priests, and a few despots, with the engines of tyranny behind them. The power and glory of a state rests in the freedom and happi-

ness of those that comprise it. Such were the sentiments of the immortal Thomas Paine, one of the ablest advocates of the rights of man, a humanist whose statue should be in every town, a zealous participant in the glories of the American and of the French Revolutions. Oh that a Russian Thomas Paine would arise to lead the down-trodden and vanquish the oppressors."

Mr. Harold Elliott, a new Freethought lecturer, occupied the Liverpool Branch platform on Sunday, and his two addresses were well appreciated. The same platform is occupied to-day (Jan. 15) by Mr. Joseph McCabe, whose subjects should draw large meetings.

### Our Anti-Torrey Fund.

MESSRS. TORREY AND ALEXANDER, the successors of the Moody and Sankey combination, are going to carry on a three months' Mission at the Albert Hall, London; and I am bent on counteracting their work.

All the Churches are coöperating to promote the success of the Torrey-Alexander Mission; and I am asking all the Freethinkers to help me in counteracting it.

A Fund has been opened for this purpose; a number of subscriptions have been already received, more will be very welcome, and the sooner the better, as the Mission begins early in February.

My desire is to distribute myriads of copies of an exposure of Dr. Torrey's vile slanders on Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll; also, if possible, myriads of copies of a second pamphlet, showing that Dr. Torrey's orthodox views of the Bible are not now entertained by the leaders of the Churches that are organising his Mission. This, I fancy, will be a real eye-opener, and will set some Christians thinking.

I ought to be able to make a perfectly definite statement next week; otherwise I shall have to say that Freethinkers want a "revival" worse than the Christians.

G. W. FOOTE.

The accusations against Liberalism—that it is more negative than are the churches, and less positive than they—originated with our Christian opponents, and have been repeated by them so long and so persistently that even Liberals have come to believe they are true. They are not true, as any thinker ought to see. By force of circumstances Liberals have had to stress their negative position relative to certain Christian affirmatives more frequently than they have their affirmative position as to philosophy, science, and morality, and, although I am in favor of working more along positive lines than we have hitherto done, I have no patience with those who belittle the negative side of our work. I have had my say at the expense of those who harp upon what they do not believe and refuse to do anything else; nevertheless, with an orthodox church in every community blatantly offering as true and salutary dogmas we know to be false and pernicious, we cannot cease altogether our negative work, and, as is admitted by Dr. Conway in his great essay on "Dogma and Science," this has hitherto been the strongest bond for uniting Liberal and Freethinking people. As for every hill there is a valley, so for every negative idea there is a positive one, and as hills and valleys succeed each other in the topography of the country, so do the negative and the positive succeed each other in thought.—*J. D. Shaw*.

### LOVE, HATRED, AND INDIFFERENCE.

Most of us have no real loves and no real hatreds. Blessed is love, less blessed is hatred, but thrice accursed is that indifference which is neither one nor the other, the muddy mess which men call friendship.—*Mark Rutherford*.

With regard to authority, it is the greatest weakness to attribute infinite credit to particular authors, and to refuse his own prerogative to time, the author of all authors, and, therefore, of all authority.—*Bacon*.

### Some of the Claims Made for Jesus Considered.

THE claims made for Jesus by Christian apologists are so extravagant and outrageously overdone that it may be useful to examine a few of them. According to Christians, Jesus was the acme of perfection in all things. As a speaker he excelled all others; as a teacher he was superior to all others, for he taught as one having authority; as an exemplar he was a perfect model in all things for all. All wisdom and knowledge were focussed in him. Truth reached its highest and final triumph in him. Language has been exploited of all its superlative terms to extol all the perfections centred in Jesus Christ.

And as long as Christians continue to believe in the Bible as the Word of God, and in Jesus as God himself born as a man, they would be guilty of unfaithfulness if they spoke of him in any other strain. If Jesus was a real God, all the claims made for him must be conceded, or his Godhead be disputed. If he was an infinite God he must have been perfect in all things, and a model in all things for all; he had all knowledge and wisdom, and naturally he could speak better than the greatest of finite men.

A question might arise here, and Christians ought to explain. Was the life of Jesus his life as a man, or as a God, or both? I have never been able to comprehend manhood and Godhood in one person. Of course, it is my fault for not having inward spiritual eyes to see the mysteries which are clear to some Christians. For myself, I cannot see how a right view of the life of Jesus can be had without first having a clear conception of the manhood and Godhood of his person. A God-man is such a complex phenomenon that ordinary intelligence fails to unravel its tangles. And without comprehending the mysterious connection between God and man in the person of Jesus, how is it possible to know whether it was God or man that was eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, speaking, suffering, and dying, or was it both?

God is infinite, man is finite. When God became man did the infinite become finite, or did the finite man become an infinite God? There seems to be more than a little difficulty in both ideas. An infinite God is immortal, man is mortal. In becoming man did God become mortal? Did he die on the cross? Was God buried with Jesus? Whilst Jesus was dead was the universe without a God? In becoming God, Jesus did not cease to be mortal, for otherwise he could not have died. If God did not die with or in Jesus, where was he when Christ died? If God was not a part and parcel of Jesus, in him and with him—eating, drinking, walking, preaching, suffering, and dying—where was he? What was the connection between them? Unless God did and said everything that Jesus did and said, how can the words and acts of Jesus be divine?

Whichever view you take of Jesus, as a God-man or man-God, they are all full of difficulties. If God, in becoming man, did not become finite and mortal, how could he suffer and die? If he did not live and suffer like the man, of what good was he to him? On the other hand, if man became God, he became infinite and immortal; and, as a God, how could he suffer and die? Was he made infinite and immortal first, and then re-made into a mortal, that he might die? If God did not die, and the mortal man only died, of what good was the divinity to him? If God did not die with him, what merit could there be in his death more than in the death of any other man? As man, Jesus could die without becoming a God; and if God did not become man that he might die, what did he become a man for?

The difficulties and mysteries are endless, but they belong to the Christian. In order to discuss the question we must accept Jesus as a God in the flesh.

If investigation proves him to be not quite so perfect and good as a God ought to be, those who claim him as a God must suffer the consequences.

That Christians are justified in claiming all perfections to Jesus can be proved from the Bible. Let me quote a few examples: "When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. vii. 28, 29); "And they were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark i. 22); "The officers answered, Never spake man like this man" (John vii. 46); "Who did no sin, neither was guile in his mouth" (1 Peter ii. 22); "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8). These quotations claim for Jesus: Perfection—he did no sin; immutability, a divine attribute—"the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever; superiority over all men as a speaker—"Never spake man like this man." The claims made by Christian apologists are often stronger than the Biblical, but the Biblical are strong enough for my purpose.

Is it true that Jesus was the greatest orator that ever lived, and uttered the greatest thoughts and highest orations? No one can be a great orator without being a great thinker. But where are the great thoughts and orations delivered by Christ? The scrappy thoughts and utterances recorded in the Gospels are not adequate to impress an unbiased mind with the idea of greatness. As the thoughts of a mere man, most of the sayings are only commonplace; but as the thoughts of a God they are truly disappointing. If Jesus was God, and spake as no other man ever spake, it was no discredit to man to be beaten by a God, for no man could ever hope to compete successfully against an infinite God. But who are the witnesses that testify to Jesus's oratory? Those who wrote the Gospels never heard him. They have nothing to go by but traditions. It was the crowd who listened that said no man spake like him. Were they qualified to judge? Some officers also said, Man never spake like this man. Who were the officers? Were they qualified to judge? Is there a single witness who heard Jesus speak that says he was a great speaker or a great thinker? What struck his audience was that he spoke as one having authority. There is nothing in that to prove his greatness. All agitators and revivalists speak as if they had authority—that is to say, they speak dogmatically, as if they possessed all truth and knowledge, without any admixture of error. It is a characteristic of General Booth, and all fanatics and founders of Churches and sects; and that, no doubt, is the secret of their success amongst the ignorant masses.

Demosthenes was a great orator, and we have positive evidence of his greatness from qualified judges who heard him and witnessed the effects of his oratory, as well as in his preserved speeches. In our own country, as well as in others, we have had during the last century many eminent orators, such as Gladstone, Bright, Bradlaugh, and many others. There is no room to doubt their greatness, as the evidence of tens of thousands who heard them, and of their speeches in our possession, is overwhelming. But where is the evidence of the greatness of Jesus as a speaker? Nowhere to be found. Where are the great speeches which he delivered, showing deep, profound, and sustained thought on any great and important subject? Not in existence. There is no direct first-hand evidence whatever that Jesus surpassed all other men as a speaker. Jesus, a very ordinary man in intelligence and achievements, has been made a divine idol, and praised and glorified accordingly. It is the idol that is magnified and worshiped, and not Jesus as a man. His name has been given to a fetish, and that is about all that is retained of him. As a man he is probably the most over-rated in all the world.

R. J. DERFEL.

(To be continued.)

## John Morley's "Atheism."

WHAT brains and courage the ordinary journalist displays when he comes face to face with religion! There was an article on Mr. John Morley in the last number of *T. P.'s Weekly*, and the writer, signing himself "G."—which may mean God, for all we know—was very anxious to have it understood that "Honest John" was not to be considered *too* heretical. He detected "a religious note" in Mr. Morley's utterances on religion—thus using a noun and its adjective in two quite different senses. The same confusion is exhibited in the reference to Mr. Morley's view as to "the possibility of religion divorced from dogmatic belief." Dogmatic belief about *what*? Had the writer asked himself (and answered) that question, he would have seen that the "religion" of Mr. Morley had absolutely no relationship to the "religion" of the multitude, or even to that of "G." And what nonsense it is for this writer to argue that people do Mr. Morley a wrong in speaking of him as "a militant atheist." One is impelled to ask whether the "militant" or the "atheist" is the objectionable word. Surely, if there is no harm in being an atheist, there can be no harm in being a militant atheist. Are we to understand that atheists are under some special obligation to keep their opinions to themselves? It must be "atheist" itself, then, that is objectionable. But the absurdity of even this is apparent when "G." proceeds to tell us that Mr. Morley's attitude towards religious matters is indicated in a passage he quotes in one of his Essays from the late Mr. Frederick Myers on George Eliot:—

"I remember how at Cambridge I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity, on an evening of rainy May; and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet calls of men—the words God, Immortality, Duty—pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the *first*, how unbelievable the *second*, and yet how peremptory and absolute the *third*. Never, perhaps, had sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensing law. I listened, and night fell; her grave majestic countenance turned towards me like a Sibyl's in the gloom; it was as though she withdrew from my grasp, one by one, the two scrolls of promise, and left me the third scroll only, awful with inevitable fate."

This is a very fine passage, and in citing it "G." can only mean that George Eliot's attitude and Mr. Morley's are identical. In that case, Mr. Morley believes in Duty, but does not believe in Immortality or in God; and if that be *not* Atheism, will "G." kindly tell us what *is*. It is getting rather too late in the day to pretend that Atheists are persons who go about button-holing their friends and acquaintances, and saying, "Here, have you heard the latest news? There is no God!" Theists are persons who think there are adequate reasons for believing in God; Atheists are persons who think those reasons are not adequate; and both frames of mind are, in themselves, equally respectable.

There is one consolation, however, involved in "G.'s" absurdity. Three hundred years ago orthodoxy, in the pride of its power, would have burnt Mr. Morley to ashes as "a filthy Atheist." Now, in the humility of its weakness, it patronises Mr. Morley and pretends that he is not so different from itself, after all, if you only look at him in the right way. Yes, there is consolation in *that*.

G. W. F.

We believe in the natural. We believe in home and fireside—in wife and child and friend—in the realities of this world. We have faith in facts—in knowledge—in the development of the brain. We throw away superstition and welcome science.—*Ingersoll.*

## An Unknown Freethinker.

IN the early part of 1899, when I was fighting the battle of the *Freethinker* at West Ham, a little elderly gentleman, who was far from looking like the popular idea of a millionaire, gave me a handsome subscription, which was duly acknowledged, though not after his name, as he did not desire to be publicly known. Soon afterwards he had an interview with me. He said that he was himself a Freethinker, that he took an interest in my work, and that he would like to help it along. With a business eye he saw that the *Freethinker* was the pivot on which everything else turned. Accordingly he offered to put money to my credit at the bank, with a view to advertising the paper, and promoting its circulation generally; or, as others might assist, if something practical could be done, he would join in a syndicate for the purpose. Out of that offer, and that suggestion, grew the Freethought Publishing Company. I am not sure that it would not have been wiser to have accepted his original offer; but I acted, as I thought, for the best, and especially for the interests of the Freethought movement; and my new friend went along with me in every step I took.

Mr. Chancellor—for that was the gentleman's name, and I may state it now—was the "London Friend" who appeared in the preliminary list of supporters as promising to take 500 Shares in the Company. Another gentleman's name was also in the list for 500 Shares; *his* name being George Anderson.

Mr. George Anderson hinted that my anonymous friend might be a bogus one. "Well," I said, "I will bring him to see you." And I did. He was not too civilly treated, but he was very slow to take offence; for his nature was wonderfully sweet, and he had brains and experience enough to know that many men are a bit odd, and that it takes all sorts to make up a world.

When the Company was formed, it was not the "bogus" Freethinker who failed to redeem his promise. Mr. Anderson only paid for 25 Shares in all—thus leaving the Company sadly short of working capital. Mr. Chancellor took his 500 Shares and paid for them in full.

I do not want to go through the story of how the wealthy Mr. Anderson made me bankrupt. I only want to remind those who read the story at the time how he played to get hold of my 1,000 Deferred Shares. Mr. Chancellor knew all that was going on, and he purchased those Shares for £200; mainly, of course, that I might make Mr. Anderson a valid offer of that amount—which represented the full balance of what could, in any case, be considered due to him—on condition that he took his Shares in the Company; but incidentally the transaction placed my Deferred Shares in a position of safety.

When the Freethought Publishing Company removed from Stationers' Hall Court to 2 Newcastle-street, it became necessary to find an *individual* who would be responsible for the rent, by actually becoming the tenant. Without a moment's hesitation Mr. Chancellor undertook this responsibility.

Some months ago Mr. Chancellor had to undergo an operation. It was successful, but it appears to have brought on other troubles. He had not the slightest fear of death, but he did hope that he might escape a lingering illness. Unfortunately the event proved otherwise. After a too long period of suffering, he died on December 29 at his residence in London, and was buried on January 2 at Walton, in Somerset, where he was born seventy-three years ago, on March 4, 1832.

Charles Chancellor was one of the world's elect. He was very intelligent, and widely interested in human affairs. He was very benevolent, although he never gushed, nor betrayed any symptoms of self-consciousness or other forms of insincerity. He asked for no reward of virtue beyond the

natural fruits of its practice. He never sought publicity. He was one of those who "do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame." I had the highest admiration for his great simplicity of character: and, taking him for all in all, I wonder if I shall ever look upon his like again.

G. W. FOOTE.

Correspondence.

FRIENDSHIP AND FREETHINKERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—The charming little article by Mr. F. Greig (Dec. 18) on this subject appeals very strongly to a kindred sentiment which I have for some time entertained—that is, since I joined, in purpose as well as in heart, the ranks of Secularists.

Friendship is an essential of success in any movement which requires to be worked from within as well as from without, from the hearth as well as from the platform. And in no movement is the divine torch of human love and sympathy so necessary to keep the fire of union and strength steadily burning as in this immense struggle against prejudice, custom, and social environment, in which we are all engaged.

If man is the brain and sinew, woman should most assuredly be the very heart-pulse of the cause. Hitherto this has not been the case. The path has been lit only by the pale, cold rays of intellectual illumination. The mind of the movement has been liberally catered for, but the heart has been starved and frozen.

"I suffer not woman to speak in the churches," was the arrogant dictum of Paul in the past. "She may speak," says the modern Atheist, "but we have no time to study her, or try to bring things within the grasp of her mental and physical capabilities."

You are fighting a hard fight, my brothers; and, as yet, you form but a very small portion of the vast armies marshalled on the world's battle-field. Can you have too many allies? Can your weapons be too finely tempered? No; emphatically, No! Have you any idea of the quiet, far-reaching influence lying in the hollow of an intelligent, warm-hearted woman's hand? Friendships between men and women of intellectual superiority prove that even as a sex we are competent to share high thoughts, comprehend sharp struggles, sympathise with and tactfully soften the sting of defeat, and rejoice unselfishly with victory. We have all read of Petrarch's Laura, Dante's Beatrice, of the brave Italian Countess whose fearless friendship took half the sadness from Byron's embittered life. We know what friendship did for Keats, and we feel sure Shakespeare had some kind woman friend whose name is not recorded in history, for his ignorant, unsympathetic wife could never have helped to keep alive the spirit that lives in every line of his poetry. In our own days one plea advanced to prove Herbert Spencer not to be the cold, hard-hearted scientist some would have him is his long, warm, and most faithful friendship for George Eliot—a woman whose broad mind and large, generous heart made her a friend "beyond price" to any man fortunate enough to reach her ideal.

None of these women were the wives of the men they befriended. So young Freethinkers need not get alarmed and think that we girls are going to make a "dead set" at them and marry them right away. Not a bit of it.

I have heard it asserted that a pure and intimate friendship cannot exist between men and women without some alloy sooner or later getting in. If this be so we have advanced no further towards the "higher life" than any canting Christian who uses his religion as a cloak to hide his shortcomings. Yes, I maintain that the firmest staff and truest help to a man fighting in a great cause is the friendship of a generous, loyal-hearted woman.

Now, in this society of ours there is very little encouragement given to woman to help. We cannot live for ever on the cold mountains of intellectual greatness. We get dazed with the light—icy and starlike; we want a soft ray from the warm sun of natural feeling. We stumble often on the giddy heights of fame, and want to creep into the sheltered valleys where human joys, aye, and human sorrows, nestle.

A true woman's friendship once gained is rarely lost, even should its object prove unworthy. I have even known a woman faithful to her friendship in the face of black ingratitude, caprice, and unkindness, sacrificing brain and heart and life in the furthering and improving of a man's career. Yes, believe me, woman's friendship is worth cultivating, her help and co-operation worth obtaining.

This movement would spread more rapidly if a more social element were added to it; something to bring men

and women more together, so as to make the interchange of their thoughts, ideas, and sentiments more common and more thorough.

Up to the present, the atmosphere of Secularism has been too frosty, and women shrink and shiver, get chilled, and fall away from the movement. It would be worth while to consider us a little more—to infuse more social charm into the Society. You cannot carry on the work wholly without us, and if the women of the present generation are not won to an interest in your cause, what possible hope can you have that women of the next generation will act any differently?

Again, the literature of the Society is above the standard likely to attract most women. Some there are, of course, who can appreciate the graceful caustic wit of Mr. Foote, the level-headed logic of Mr. Cohen, and the sledge-hammer force of Mr. Lloyd. Still, we women want something lighter—a little touch of human passion—human weakness. I would suggest, very timidly indeed, that a couple of pages in the *Freethinker* be given up to us. Suppose a short story, or little chatty articles, were inserted every week. There need not be anything particularly religious or non-religious about them. I think you would gain many recruits by this means. Many would take the paper for the sake of the tale, and would gradually be led to read the other portions, either wholly or in part.

If this idea were started with the New Year and properly worked out I venture to predict that the number of subscribers, and, consequently, the number of Freethinkers, male and female, would be more than doubled before 1906.

JOURNAL.

Bad Company; or, The Christian's Crony.

As sun's and moon's relations show  
When the tides are springs and neaps,  
A person's character we know  
By the company he keeps.

The Christian "walks with God," although  
The "Creation" bleeds and weeps;  
A person's character we know  
By the company he keeps.

As Christians "walk with God," we know  
That their ways are ways of guile,  
Because their Crony's records show  
That his thoughts and deeds are vile.

"Believers" try—when not asleep—  
To resemble, in their ways,  
The God whose company they keep,  
The Exemplar whom they praise.

The Christians must, of course, agree  
With the God they all frequent;  
And so, with all the ill they see  
They are piously content.

The Christians always hold, of course,  
That their Mentor's ways are right,  
Although conflicting; so, perforce,  
They maintain that black is white.

Though "harmonizing" hostile facts  
May religious joys dispense,  
The habit banefully reacts,  
And degrades the moral sense.

The Gods are relics of the days  
Of our brutal racial-youth;  
We now abandon Godly ways  
For the manly ways of Truth.

O Christian! turn—although your creed  
May be linked with "daily bread"—  
Be honest! Think! To Truth give heed,  
And attempt to use your head!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

It was well answered by him who was shown in a temple the votive tablets suspended by such as had escaped the peril of shipwreck, and was pressed as to whether he would then recognise the power of the gods, by an inquiry, But where are the portraits of those who have perished in spite of their vows? All superstition is much the same, whether it be that of astrology, dreams, omens, retributive judgment, or the like, in all of which the deluded believers observe events which are fulfilled, but neglect and pass over their failure, though it be much more common.—*Bacon*.

**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.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Last Fight for the Soul: Sir Oliver Lodge's Reply to Haeckel on Matter and Mind."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 3.15, Religious Freethought Parliament: Louis B. Gallagher, "The Unity or Plurality of Worlds"; 7.30, F. A. Davies, "The Manchester School of Christian Evidence."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Some Old Problems with Modern Answers."

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Bull Ring Coffee House): Thursday, Jan. 19, at 8, W. T. Easthope, a Paper.

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): Failsworth String Band.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class. Open discussion; 6.30, Social Meeting in commemoration of Burns and Paine.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchie-hall-street): Monday, Jan. 16, at 8, David G. Lindsay, "The Population Factor in Social Progress."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Rev. D. Basil Martin, of Hereford, "Inspiration."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Joseph McCabe: 3, "The Legend of the Virgin Birth"; 7, "The Religion of Sir Oliver Lodge." Monday, at 8, Rationalist Debating Society, Sydney Style, "What is Positivism?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 6.30, Harold Elliot, "Thomas Paine."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School-room, Market-place): 7.30, Lecture program.

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