

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*The hardest thing on earth I find to free
A man's mind of some fixed nonentity
There grown since childhood, till it comes to be
Of superannuated infancy :
Some mountainous bubble, which one serious breath
Whiffs into air and inessential death.*

—PHILIP JAMES BAILEY.

Mr. Holyoake's Memories.

Bygones Worth Remembering. By George Jacob Holyoake.
London: T. Fisher Unwin. 2 vols. £1 1s.

MR. HOLYOAKE'S new volumes of Memories have already been referred to in the *Freethinker*. A special article was devoted to his chapter on the Blasphemy Laws, in order that a controverted question might be swept out of the way. That article, of course, was not to be taken as a review of Mr. Holyoake's book. I stated so at the time, and I promised to dip into the two volumes subsequently—which I now proceed to do.

First let me say a few words about the books themselves, not from a reader's but from a purchaser's point of view. Mr. Fisher Unwin has followed the general practice of publishers nowadays; he has printed the pages on thick paper and turned out a library edition at a price which only the well-to-do can afford. A guinea is a good deal of money for one book. It must be admitted, however, that Dr. Moncure Conway's recently published Autobiography beats Mr. Holyoake's hollow in this respect. Probably, if this sort of thing continues, we shall live to see books by Freethinkers and Radicals printed "for millionaires only." Let us hope that the high price in this case will be of real advantage to the author. Mr. Holyoake has always been busy with his pen, and has no doubt written very much for very little. Now that he is eighty-eight he may get something fairly handsome from the sale of this book. But what a long time it was to wait!

Next let me say that these volumes are adorned by several illustrations. The first volume contains a fine photogravure portrait of Mr. Holyoake himself; the second volume another, and, as I think, more pleasing one, from a photograph taken in his eighty-eighth year. There are also portraits of Joseph Parker, George Henry Lewes, Richard Cobden, Harriet Martineau, Cardinal Newman, Francis Newman, Mazzini, Jessie Mario, Emilie Venturi, Garibaldi, Mill, Gladstone, Spencer, Disraeli, Joseph Cowen, E. V. Neale, and C. D. Collet. The finest of all is the noble one of Cobden; next, in my opinion, the sweet gracious face of Harriet Martineau. The Disraeli is a failure.

And now a word for the Preface. Mr. Holyoake states what is the spirit of his book in a sentence from Mr. Allen Upward: "Let us try to tolerate each other instead of trying to convert each other." I confess I am not in love with this maxim, and I am sure it does not do justice to Mr. Holyoake as a publicist. People of any earnestness of mind should do more than tolerate each other. I find the very word "tolerate" as offensive as Paine and Goethe did. And why should we not try to convert each other, providing we set about it in a proper way?

Old Echoes.

This book being a supplement to *Sixty Years of An Agitator's Life*, which I reviewed at considerable length many years ago, it was natural that Mr. Holyoake should begin by supplying an omission. He forgot to tell his readers when he was born. This he tells them now. It was on April 13, 1817—less than two years after the battle of Waterloo. Napoleon was playing the last act of his great tragedy at St. Helena when Mr. Holyoake was ushered into the world. How strange it seems! Why, the veteran Secularist was between five and six years old when the waves in the Gulf of Spezzia hissed over the drowning head of Shelley. Facts like these are better than dead dates to show how far Mr. Holyoake's life reaches back into the past.

We are told why Mr. Holyoake called his first periodical *The Reasoner*. It was not an inflammatory title, or rather it should not have been, but it gained the editor a dreadful name in orthodox circles, where it was held—and quite rightly, from the orthodox point of view—that the man who reasons is lost. A sentence of Coleridge's stuck in Mr. Holyoake's mind: "I am by the law of my nature a Reasoner." That was what Charles Lamb would have called his "fun." However, it gave the name to the first Secular periodical.

But now comes something serious, and even solemn. Ah the dusty old chambers of memory, where every footfall is ghostly, where all the light is as that of the moon through heavily curtained windows! The veteran of eighty-six, leaning heavily upon his sword by the brink of an open grave, dreams of the maiden he lost all those years ago in the hour of his calamity—a loss that threw darkness upon very midnight. His firstborn child, Madeline, perished while he was in Gloucester Prison in 1842. "Perished" is Mr. Holyoake's own word, and it is true; for the poor child pined, and fell ill, and there was no money for medical skill, and even food was not too plentiful, and she died, and when her father's feet were once more free to walk where they would they could only carry him to her grave.

Mr. Holyoake says that in 1895 he had a brass tablet placed on the wall over her grave. It bears the following inscription:—

Near this spot was buried
MADELINE
Daughter of George Jacob and Eleanor Holyoake,
WHO PERISHED
October, 1842.

The cemetery authorities objected to the word "Perished," but when the circumstances were explained they allowed it to pass.

It would do some loud-voiced eulogists of "the bloody faith," as Shelley called it, good to go and read that inscription, and spend an hour in thought over that little grave.

Bradlaugh.

Mr. Holyoake is proud of the fact that he introduced Charles Bradlaugh to the world. "I took the chair for him," he says, "at the first public lecture he ever delivered." "He was," Mr. Holyoake says, "the greatest agitator, within the limits of law, who appeared in my time among the working people."

"Had he lived in the first French Revolution, he had ranked with Mirabeau and Danton. Had he been with Paine in America, he had spoken 'Common Sense' on

platforms. He died before being able to show in Parliament the best that was in him. Though he had no college training like Professor Fawcett, Indian lawyers found that Mr. Bradlaugh had a quicker and greater grasp of Indian questions than the Professor. It was no mean distinction—it was, indeed, a distinction any man might be proud to have won—that John Stuart Mill should have left on record, in one of his latest works, his testimony to Mr. Bradlaugh's capacity, which he discerned when others did not. Like Cobbett, the soldiers' barracks did not repress Bradlaugh's invincible passion for the distinction of a political career. In the House of Commons he took, both in argument and debate, a high rank, and surpassed competitors there of a thousand times his advantages of birth and education. That from so low a station he should have risen so high, and, after reaching the very platform of his splendid ambition, he should die in the hour of his opportunity of triumph, was one of the tragedies of public life, which touched the heart of the nation, in whose eyes Mr. Bradlaugh had become a commanding figure."

Mr. Holyoake pays Bradlaugh other compliments, but, as might be expected, he puts in qualifications. He refers to Bradlaugh's imperious manners, which he ascribes to "the coarse environments of his early life." He admits, though, that Bradlaugh "acquired courtesy and a certain dignity" in later years. There seems to be some exaggeration in the statement that Mr. Holyoake had "personal relations with him all his life." If this were quite true, there would be something strange in the observation that Bradlaugh once did him an act of kindness "in an interval of good will." Another of Mr. Holyoake's criticisms is the following:—

"The key to Mr. Bradlaugh's character, which unlocks the treasure-house of his excellences and defects, and enables the reader to estimate him justly, is the perception that his one over-riding motive and ceaseless aim was the ascendancy of the right *through him*."

The italics are Mr. Holyoake's, and the words are obviously meant, to a certain degree at least, as a censure. But they illuminate our view of Mr. Holyoake as well as of Bradlaugh. They simply mean that Bradlaugh was a man of action—and that Mr. Holyoake is not. Every man of action dreams of the ascendancy of the right through himself. To take himself out of the drama is to remove the one force with which he is most conversant, of which he feels most sure. That would be his theoretical justification. But the man of action does not give himself much trouble about theories. He follows the law of his nature. It is as natural for him to act as for others to criticise. He acts by instinct. And as a man can only act through himself, in the first instance, it is inevitable that it must be "through himself" that his cause is to triumph. This solidarity (if I may so express it) between himself and the cause is the strongest guarantee of his fidelity. Every other bond is in some degree accidental. This bond is absolutely vital. And the instinct of the people recognises the fact. They insist on taking their principles in an incarnate form. And in this I believe they are wiser than the professionally wise who lecture them on their folly.

Bradlaugh and the Oath.

Bradlaugh's great "parliamentary struggle," apart from any other incidents in his career, gives him an abiding place in English constitutional history. "I was entirely with him," Mr. Holyoake says, "and ready to help him." Then he proceeds to show how he was *not* with him and could *not* help him, but, on the contrary, had to appear as "opposed to him." The passage is important from Mr. Holyoake's point of view, so I quote it *in extenso*:—

"He claimed to represent Free Thought, with which I had been identified long before his day. My conviction was that a Free Thinker should have as much courage, consistency, and self-respect as any Apostle, or Jew, or Catholic, or Quaker. All had in turn refused to make a profession of opinion they did not hold, at the peril of death, or, as in the case of O'Connell and the Jews, at the certainty of exclusion from Parliament. They had only to take an oath, to the terms of which they could not honestly subscribe. Mr. Bradlaugh had no scruple about doing this. In the House of Commons

he openly kissed the Bible, in which he did not believe—a token of reverence he did not feel. He even administered to himself the oath, which was contrary to his professed convictions. This seemed to be a reflection upon the honor of Free Thought. Had I not dissented from it, I should have been a sharer in the scandal, and Free Thought—so far as I represented it—would have been regarded as below the Christian or Pagan level."

As I was actually "with" Bradlaugh in that great struggle, and actually ready to "help him," I feel that I have a right to say something on the subject now.

Mr. Holyoake had a right to differ from Bradlaugh, but he had no right to represent himself as the champion of honor and Bradlaugh as the champion of dishonor—for that is what his words come to, if we are to take them quite seriously. Certainly he had no right to suspect Bradlaugh's "courage." Whoever looked into his face and made that mistake, would be a poor reader of human character.

It so happens that I wrote an article in the very first number of the *Freethinker* (May, 1881), on "Mr. Bradlaugh's Advisers." I have just turned up that article and read it with several smiles. I pointed out that Bradlaugh had many advisers; that they offered him advice, and, as far as I could see, nothing else. Mr. John Morley, for instance, who was then editing the *Pall Mall Gazette*, told him that he should "refuse to take the oath," and decline to "comply with what he regards as a degrading formality and an unreal mockery." But when Mr. Morley himself went up to the House of Commons to take his seat for Newcastle he did not follow his own advice, although his religious views were wonderfully like Bradlaugh's. Mr. Holyoake himself had been in the way of seeking parliamentary honors. What did he mean to do if he succeeded? Did he intend to sit out in the cold until a new law was passed for his benefit? And would he have told the constituency so before the day of election? The fact is that Mr. Holyoake gave Bradlaugh advice in a situation in which he had never been placed himself, and such advice is proverbially unsatisfactory. Mr. Holyoake wrote to the papers recommending "consistency and honor, however much it may stand in the way of our interest or advancement." This recommendation would have been more genial had it been given when Bradlaugh was not pursued by bitter and unscrupulous persecutors. And it involved the false assumption that Bradlaugh's interest or advancement was the only point at issue. But the real point at issue was not his personal right to a seat in parliament, but his right to it as the legal representative of an English constituency. Moreover, it is an odd thing to talk of "the scandal" created by him in view of the scandal created by his enemies. He tried every method to prevent the desecration of the Oath—which was not *his* Oath, but *their* Oath. He applied to be allowed to affirm. He actually did affirm, and sat in the House and voted, *at his own risk*. Such was the chivalry of the gentlemen of England! It was only when the Courts decided against him that he claimed what he had never abandoned—the right to take the Oath. Bigotry declared war to the knife against him, and he had to fight it as he could. He fought it boldly and splendidly, and won every point in the end—when it had killed him. No one watched him in that battle more closely than I did, and no one admired him more profoundly. I said at the time, and I repeat it now, that he was, in my opinion, right in every move in that astonishing game against overwhelming odds. To say that he violated any principle seems to me absurd. Mr. Holyoake must have known unbelievers who took the oath in parliament without scruple. There might have been hypocrisy in their case. But there was none in Bradlaugh's. Everybody knew what were his opinions, and he told the country how he regarded the Oath. The promissory part was to him real and binding; the imprecatory part was meaningless. If, after that, the House of

Commons chose to leave the law unaltered; if it elected to compel Atheists to enter by uttering an idle form of words at the end of a serious declaration, or else to mingle with the general public outside; it had only itself to thank for the "profanation" that followed.

Mr. Holyoake read the essence of that struggle in one way. Bradlaugh read it in another way. This is an arguable difference of view, and both sides may be entitled to respect. What I object to is Mr. Holyoake's assumption that he was on the side of all the virtues.

Mr. Holyoake appears to have differed even from Mill on this oath question. But when he says that "Truth is higher than utility" he seems to be talking transcendental metaphysics. What is truth? asked Pilate, and the question was not answered. Had it been, he might have pointed out—at least Mill would have done so—that every virtue, truth included, is rooted in utility, and has ultimately no other explanation or justification. And is it not an abuse of words to quote in this connection the maxim that "Conscience is higher than consequence?" This is true, if you narrow the meaning of "consequence"; it is false if you broaden the meaning of "consequence" through space and time.

Personal Equations.

May I suggest that the personal equation operates in Mr. Holyoake's case as well as in that of others? He speaks of Dr. Joseph Parker's "intrepid tolerance." Why? Because the reverend gentleman spoke well of him, in spite of difference of opinion, and subscribed towards purchasing him an annuity. This is no doubt honorable to both. But I cannot help remembering that Dr. Joseph Parker refused to attend a Disestablishment meeting if Bradlaugh were allowed upon the platform. Where was the "intrepid tolerance" then?

I am bound to say that I find a good deal of the personal equation throughout this book. But that does not make it less interesting. It is true, although it is a satire upon Providence, that the conflict of egoisms is more fascinating than the quiet march of unalterable goodness.

Mr. Holyoake's Habits of Life.

This is not a systematic review. I am not going from firstly to nineteenthly. I am dealing in a cursory way with what my readers may regard as the most interesting contents of Mr. Holyoake's book. This explains my jumping from the previous high matter to the question of Mr. Holyoake's habits of life.

What is the secret of longevity? I remember seeing a number of replies by distinguished old men to this question. One smoked and another hated tobacco; one was an abstainer and another a moderate drinker; one ate but little and another heartily; one rose early and another late; and so on to the end of the chapter. The only common point was belonging to a long-lived family. Is that the explanation in Mr. Holyoake's case? Apparently not.

During the first half of his life Mr. Holyoake found moderate eating easy, because he never had too much. In the second half of his life he practised moderation on principle; limiting each meal to the "least quantity necessary for health," both as to solids and liquids. "Not thinking much of meat," he says, "I limited that to a small amount, and cereals to those that grow above ground." A tepid bath for the eye and a soap bath for the body every morning "ends the catalogue" of his habits. "My general mode of mind," he adds, "has been to avoid excess in food, in pleasure, in work, and in expectation." And he has never worried; thanks, in some degree, I suppose, to the safe little annuity. By taking care of himself he has attended the funerals of nearly all his old friends. "Had I been as strong as they," he says, with a pleasant twinkle, "I also should have died as they did. Lacking their power of hastening to the end, I have lingered behind."

The veteran's outlook is still cheerful. Quoting from Goethe, whose cherry-trees fared so badly, but who said that he would plant another if he had a garden again, Mr. Holyoake says:—

"My years now are 'dwindling to their shortest span'; if I should have my days over again, I shall plant my trees again—certain that if they do grow they will yield verdure and fruit in some of the barren places of this world."

This is the temper of one who has cherished no "great expectations," and says they are "as vain in literature as in life." It is not the temper of a great man of action. It could hardly at any time have been the temper of Bradlaugh. It is the temper of a patient friend of the people, who has heard "the still sad music of humanity," but has never let it sweep in Wagnerian storm-billows through his soul. And this also, perhaps, involves a certain calm watchful courage which has its proper place in man's higher evolution.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Our Greatest Need.

AMID the mountains of rubbish, oral and written, concerning the purity of primitive Christianity and its subsequent corruption, there is at least one grain of truth. This is that ideas and principles are at their purest when struggling for existence, and frequently lose their virility when they become popular. Victory is often a greater test of stamina than defeat, with both individuals and ideas. Many whom failure has failed to corrupt have succumbed to success, and the hour of triumph has marked the zenith of their usefulness. Struggle, success, corruption, and reformation or abolition would not, in fact, be an inapt summary of many of the world's most prominent ideas.

Partly this results from the fact that ideas are only really powerful so long as they exist as a strong individual conviction, and this is apt to lose its strength as it becomes common property. Then phrases begin to usurp the function of conviction, and in the general feeling that victory has been gained the old abuses, the old errors, the old superstitions begin once more to manifest themselves, disguised perhaps by a slightly different terminology. So it is that we find substantially the same evils showing themselves under different forms of government, and with different parties; while the same body of men who rose to power fighting against a particular abuse presently stand as its champion against a new party of reform.

Opinion would seem to be like a river. Confine it within narrow channels and it runs swift, strong, and helpful. Break the banks, allow it to spread over a wider area, and while there is brought about a greater area of water, its strength and utility disappear. So with ideas. One man of strong, independent mind, with clear and definite ideas, will count for more in the world's development than five hundred who, without any independence of mind, profess to hold the same views. All history and all experience proves this to be true; and there are not wanting signs that this principle is working itself out in the contest of Freethought against supernaturalism. To-day there is no lack of liberality of thought—in profession, at least. Nor is there any shortage of Freethinking—of a kind. Indeed, the liberal thinker—that is, the man who makes a loud profession of his freedom from intolerance, and who claims to look upon all opinions with equal toleration—is becoming so common, and, if the truth must be told, is becoming so much of a nuisance, that one sometimes longs for an exhibition of old-fashioned bigotry, where illiberality is expressed as a principle, and when one has at least the assurance of strength of conviction as a compensating feature.

It would be folly to pretend that independence of thought and expression has at all kept pace with the

spread of liberal or heretical ideas. Something might be said in favor of the thesis that real liberal thought has lost in strength as it has increased in popularity, although the more exact truth would be that the loss is relative rather than absolute. The number of independent thinkers may not have decreased, they may have actually increased; but the other variety who profess liberal opinions and yet lack the strength to do them justice, has increased in much larger proportions, and threatens to swamp their efforts. For it is not the constitutionally illiberal mind that is the greatest obstacle to the reformer. This type provokes attack, and so stimulates reform. But what can be done against the multitudes of people who evade attack by professing advanced opinions, and yet through temperamental weakness or mental confusion actually serve as the best friends of the opinions they reject? Propaganda *amongst* them is useless; they already agree with you. And propaganda *with* them is next to impossible, for the reason that they are usually ready to discover neglected virtues in old ideas, and in practice devote their energies to some less compromising form of liberal effort.

Advanced movements of every description have at all times suffered from these half-and-half reformers, and Freethought propaganda more than any other. A classic instance in this direction is that of the Lutheran reformation. Largely as the result of the lavish use of liberal terms by Protestant leaders while opposing the Catholic Church, and largely because of gross misrepresentation of historic fact by modern Protestant writers, there exists a popular impression that the Reformation was based on, and consciously aimed at, freedom of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth. The only freedom it was based on was the freedom that must always exist where one person contradicts another. And whatever freedom that it led to was adventitious, not designed. Apart from Protestantism, the Renaissance might have worked itself out to something like real Freedom, and would certainly have led to the speedier downfall of Christianity. But the half-way house of Protestantism saved the situation—for supernaturalism. Some of the more glaring abuses were removed or toned down. A few of the grosser and cruder intellectual absurdities were abolished. The pill of supernaturalism received a very thin coating of reason and was swallowed with due ease. The few clear-headed, independent thinkers were swamped; the multitude of compromising inefficient ruled, with the result of the growth of Puritanism, the development of a form of religion far narrower, and certainly as intolerant as anything that the Roman Church had fostered, and the arrest of European development for generations. Goethe's statement that the Reformation put back European development for two centuries is one that will appeal with profound force to all with a right appreciation of the facts.

And history is repeating itself under our eyes. Fifty or sixty years ago there existed in England a comparatively straight stand-up fight between Christianity and Freethought. If the number of avowed Freethinkers were the fewer than to-day, this was more than compensated by their sturdiness and definiteness of conviction. But as the mere number of Freethinkers increased compromises of various sorts began to play their part. In the first place the religious world, thus answering to the "counter-reformation" of the Roman Church against sixteenth century Protestantism, began to tone down its presentation of doctrines in order to make them more acceptable to the new modes of thought. And on the non-Christian side a number of bodies, Sunday societies, and the like, Freethought organisations with discreetly veiled objects and more "respectable" methods of attack, and all of which, if only from the mere fact of utilising the energies of those who might otherwise be taking a part in the genuine attack on Christianity, were really, although unconsciously, protecting Christianity from its greatest enemy.

It is not that those who take up with the work of societies, such as those named, have any desire to obstruct the development of Freethought. Their object is, in the vast majority of cases, the reverse of that. The work is carried on under the impression that so long as a rational entertainment, free from religion, is given on Sundays, or so long as a propaganda is conducted that excludes, without attacking, religion, Christianity is being weakened. And so, from one point of view, it is. But those who look a little ahead may see that the weakening affected by these methods is in reality a source of renewed strength. Every movement that merely forces Christianity to adopt a more liberal tone, to tone down or reject certain crude presentments of its teaching, is, as a plain matter of fact, helping to give it a new lease of life. Christianity pure and undefiled, Christianity as it has been held during the centuries, is not nearly so difficult to destroy as a Christianity that apes liberal sentiments and covers its real and objectionable character under a mask of social or ethical aspiration. It is this form of Christianity that has its best friends among those who, while agreeing with Freethought, decline associating themselves with an uncompromising form of attack, and so necessarily stand as a shield between Christianity and its real enemies.

In brief, it is not the quantity of people who call themselves Freethinkers, but the quality, that tells. Real independence of thought now, as ever, is the chief thing that counts in the development of humanity. Our greatest need, as Freethinkers, is not to multiply the number of those who will on occasion, and in a way, profess dissent from Christianity, but to develop and encourage and sustain a type of mind which recognises that in intellectual matters no compromise is permissible, or should be tolerated. Freethought of a kind is, as has been said, tolerably common; but a Freethought clearly enough held to express itself fearlessly and fully is not so common as one would wish. And, from one point of view, the increase of the first class serve, if anything, to make the work of the latter harder than it need be, and comparatively ineffective. Wholly ineffective it can never be, nor can its ultimate triumph be prevented. There is, fortunately, a movement of humanity as a mass that overrides the efforts of individuals. But the presence of the less hardy makes the fight longer and more tedious. And it would be well if all Freethinkers realised the real significance of the readiness of the religious world to parley with the temporisers, and its undiminished hostility to other Freethinkers of a different character. It indicates that Christians feel, when in a tight corner, from whom they can secure—even though it be only temporary—a little respite.

C. COHEN.

Truth.

ONE is continually coming into contact with intelligent and thoughtful young people whose supreme ambition is to acquire knowledge. They are convinced that knowledge is power, while ignorance is a source of paralysing weakness. But occasionally they are irresistibly forced to ask themselves, What is the sphere of knowledge? Has knowledge its necessary limitations? Are there things which cannot be known? Such questions are apt to bewilder and confuse youthful minds, if not to plunge them into the miserable Slough of Despond. One of the mottoes adopted by Secular Societies is, "We seek for Truth." But no sooner is such a motto read than this pertinent question arises, What is truth, and where and how can it be found? Now, truth is the one legitimate object of knowledge. What we require to know is the truth about ourselves and the external world. Is such knowledge practicable? There is a visible, material Universe lying round about us, of which we ourselves form a part; is there another Universe, invisible and immaterial, beyond and above this? Physical science is the means by which we

get to know the former—is there such a thing as Metaphysical science by means of which we may reasonably hope some day to know the latter?

Let us consider Metaphysics first. As everybody is aware, Metaphysics was born in times of profound scientific ignorance. It is based on a series of unproved and unprovable assumptions. Professor Case, of Oxford, tells us that now at last Metaphysics is "tending gradually to reassert its ancient Aristotelian position as the science of being in general"; but who can give us the slightest idea of what is meant by "being in general?" Like "man in the abstract," of which we used to hear and read so much some years ago, "being in general" is a philosophic dream. Man in the abstract is nothing but an idea, derived from knowledge of so many men in the concrete. Even so great a man as Aristotle assumed the existence of mind or soul as a distinct entity; and upon that flimsy foundation he erected an argumentative structure of considerable dimensions. We have and can have no knowledge whatever of mind as a distinct and independent entity. Another metaphysical assumption is the existence of God. Nobody knows or can know that God exists either personally or impersonally; and to build a philosophical system on the assumption that He does, is even worse than to build a house on the sand. You cannot argue from the unknown to the known, nor explain the natural in terms of the supernatural. Thus we see that metaphysics presupposes religion, while religion again is the offspring of ignorance.

But apart from unproved assumptions metaphysics has no meaning. At any rate, it is an unassailable proposition that beyond the sphere of the physical and its manifestations we cannot possible pierce. Let our Freethinking youths bear this in mind whenever they are confronted by hard problems. Metaphysicians talk in high-sounding terms of the fundamental and necessary truths of reason; but of the existence of such truths, except in the minds of metaphysically befogged philosophers, there is absolutely no evidence. Metaphysics may furnish a magnificent training for our logical faculties, but from every other practical point of view it is utterly useless. A babe two days old has no ideas and truths in his possession. He does not know that two straight lines can never meet, or that three and two make five. All such truths must be learned by experience. Prior to experience there is no knowledge. What metaphysicians call *a priori* truths are pure inventions. Every child is only too painfully conscious of the fact that all his intellectual possessions are the rewards of experience. This was well reasoned out by the late George Henry Lewes, in the course of his ingenious attacks on metaphysics.

That two parallel lines cannot enclose space, and that two and two make four, are truths which babes and savages do not know. Ethical truths are likewise equally unknown apart from experience. A child must be taught the difference between right and wrong. No one enters the world dowered with a distinct idea of righteousness. Righteousness indicates a certain social relation; and of this relation there could have been no idea prior to experience of it. All morals are social developments. When Kant referred to the moral law within us as the most convincing proof of the existence of God, he was laboring under a strange delusion. Whatever moral law exists is the outcome of social experience. Strictly speaking, no such law exists at all. The ethical ideals of civilised peoples are utterly unknown to savages. But in no case are such ideals or laws suggestive of anything superhuman or supernatural. Visit an ant community and you will see an important stage in the evolution of morality. And yet there are those who teach that ethical truths are innate, and can be traced back to a divine origin. A slight acquaintance with history shows the infinite absurdity of such a claim. Ethical truths can be traced back to an origin; but, as we have seen, there is nothing supernatural about that origin. Man himself is a product of the evolutionary process, and so is every one of his ideas.

Such being the truth about ourselves and our ideas, what is the truth about the external world? Does such a world really exist, or is it simply a phantom? Our present Prime Minister, being a semi-Idealist, tells us that we cannot believe the testimony of our senses on this point. Indeed, according to him, our senses are never to be trusted. You think you see a green tree in yonder field; but Mr. Balfour regards all visual experiences as erroneous. There may be no tree there at all; or, if there is, it may not be green. The objective reality of anything we can see or touch is a pure assumption. But the average man and the scientist ignore the vagaries of Idealism, well knowing that if our senses deceive us we have absolutely no other guides. As a matter of fact, we have no alternative but to accept their testimony. There is nothing else to testify to us.

Now, studying the Universe as an objective reality, what do we learn concerning it? For one thing, we perceive that it is in a state of perpetual activity. It never takes a single day's holiday. It works, works, works incessantly. We also learn that it works mechanically. There is no method or design in its activity. Otherwise, the boundless waste that characterises it would be wholly inexplicable. An intelligent worker always observes a wise economy. But Nature begets ten children when she can support only one: the other nine she devours without pity. Her fruitfulness is on such a scale that it is quite impossible to attribute intelligence to her. All Naturalists are profoundly impressed by this stupendous wastefulness on Nature's part, and, consequently, most of them become avowed Atheists.

Another truth we learn about Nature is that she is a unity. Not only she works incessantly and blindly, but she is absolutely one. The sum total of her matter never changes. Not a particle has ever been added to it, nor has a single particle ever been lost. This fact is scientifically labelled The Indestructibility of Matter. The sum total of Nature's energy is likewise unchangeable. One force may be transformed into another; but in spite of all transformations the sum of force remains a fixed quantity. From this it follows that Nature is both infinite and eternal. Our conception of infinitude is of necessity most inadequate; but a limited existence is unthinkable. It is universally admitted that space is infinite; and it is a scientific truism that there is no such thing as empty space. But if space is infinite so also is time. Time and existence are, therefore, coeval. Indeed, we cannot conceive of either a beginning or an end to Nature. The solar system has had a beginning and shall have an end; but the matter and force by means of which it came into existence are eternal. New solar systems are now in the process of being formed, while old ones are on the way to dissolution. Nature is older than any existing solar system and may survive the very last. When people disbelieve in the infinitude and eternity of Nature, they have to provide themselves with an infinite and eternal God. But if Nature herself is infinite and eternal there is neither room nor need for an infinite and eternal Being distinct from and independent of her.

Such is the scientific view of Nature and the Universe; and I submit that it is a fair deduction from ascertained facts. Some of the philosophers admit the facts and yet reject the deduction. That is precisely the course followed by Professor Lloyd-Morgan and Sir Oliver Lodge. Such men say that scientists fail to solve the problem of the Universe because it is essentially a metaphysical problem. It is true that scientists have not yet succeeded in fully reading the riddle; but it is equally true that metaphysicians have done nothing beyond introducing hopeless complications into the problem. But the metaphysicians are entirely mistaken when they suppose that it is legitimate to answer natural problems in terms of the supernatural. Because we cannot tell what life is, is it fair to assume that it is a supernatural entity created or introduced by a supernatural Being? We

know it only as a transforming process within matter, while apart from organised matter it has never given the slightest sign or token of itself. This being a fact, what right have the philosophers to *assume* that life is a something *sui generis*? These men want to know the source and origin of the facts, and how it is that the sequence of these facts is that which we invariably find it to be. They insist upon knowing the reason why there is any experience at all, and why the sequence of events presented therein is what it is. All these, they claim, are metaphysical questions, the answers to which must be formulated in terms of Causation. Well, the conundrums asked by the metaphysicians cannot possibly be answered, and the answers which they themselves offer only suggest another set of conundrums much more bewildering than the first. The introduction of a First Cause does not solve existing problems, but it gives rise to a crowd of new ones. Professor Lloyd Morgan is candid enough to allow that the existence of a Cause is a pure assumption; but it is an assumption that inflicts an incalculable injury on the cause of truth. To know the truth about Nature we must keep on interrogating Nature herself, and flatly refuse to recognise any force whatever not included in her table of contents.

J. T. LLOYD.

Modern Christianity.

"Under the superscription, 'The Christianity of Christ,' there remains only a blank sheet from which all that was previously written upon it has been erased. And this is doubtless what the good people wish for; they want an open space, without limits or barriers, in order to launch their own ideas into the world without abandoning the name of Christianity; in other words, they make modern ideas sail under the Christian flag instead of under the flag of civilisation."—EDWARD VON HARTMANN, *The Religion of the Future*, p. 62; 1886.

"Let us have a Christian world. To this end let us revise our doctrines. Some are old-fashioned, grim, severe, unpopular; let us drop them out. Use the old phrases so as to please the obstinately orthodox, but give them new meanings so as to win philosophical infidels, who are prowling around. Pare off the edges of unpleasant truths, and moderate the dogmatic tone of infallible revelation: say that Abraham and Moses made mistakes, and that the books which have been so long had in reverence are full of errors. Undermine the old faith, and bring in the new doubt; for the times are altered, and the spirit of the age suggests the abandonment of everything that is too severely righteous, and too surely of God."—C. H. SPURGEON, *No Compromise*.

CHRISTIANS of to-day are busily employed in pouring new wine into old bottles, in defiance of their Savior's advice. The old signs and symbols are to remain, as the late Mr. Spurgeon caustically remarked, "so as to please the obstinately orthodox," but they are to bear new meanings for the more advanced. The six days of Creation can be stretched into as many millenniums as science requires. The Flood is a magnified tradition of a local inundation. The Bible is inspired the same as Shakespeare and Goethe are inspired, and is belauded, not as God's Word, but merely as a piece of fine literature. Miracles are reduced to the operation of natural laws imperfectly understood. The Devil is dead, and consequently the fires of hell have gone out for want of attention. In fact, heaven and hell, we are now informed, are not places at all, as our grandmothers fancied, but states of the mind. Jesus himself is dethroned from his Godship, and is regarded as merely an affable young man, very good to the poor, who came into collision with the authorities for teaching a sort of Socialism, for which he was condemned to death. He was the Son of God in the same way that every man is a son of God.

Mr. Mallock has a lively wit, and in the *Nineteenth Century* for December he allows it to play upon one of these perverse and fantastic combinations of modern science and ancient faith, viz., the attempt by the Bishop of Worcester to adapt the story of the Fall to the demands of modern science. Now, the Fall is the fundamental doctrine upon which the whole structure of Christianity rests. "For as in

Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,"* says Paul. But if Adam and Eve were not the first pair, and if they did not eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden then there was no Fall and no transgression. And if there was no Fall there was no Redemption. If there was no transgression there was no need for God to send his only begotten Son down to redeem us from the hereditary effects of Adam's sin, and the whole fabric falls to the ground. But science knows nothing of a Fall of Man. Evolution teaches of a slow and gradual rise of man from a former animal state. The Bishop of Worcester is aware of it; and as to the account in Genesis, "This evidence," says Mr. Mallock, "the Bishop frankly dismisses as a late patchwork of discrepant Oriental myths, in which it would be idle to look for anything like literal history." To admit all this without qualification is to strike at the very roots of Christianity; so the Bishop, says Mr. Mallock—

"elaborates a doctrine of his own, that an event which did not happen at the only date ever assigned to it, happened a million, or perhaps a hundred million, years before, when a pair, or perhaps several pairs, of missing links, whom he calls 'anthropoid animals,' received an 'inbreathing' of some new 'spiritual capacity,' which they at once proceeded to misuse; 'and from this pair or group,' says the Bishop, 'humanity has its origin..... There was, therefore,' he proceeds, 'a fall at the very root of our humanity.....a lapse into an approximately animal condition.' Now the Bishop, of course, may believe this if he pleases; but is the world in general likely to believe it also? The first widely felt difficulty in the way of orthodox faith arose out of discoveries admitted by the Bishop himself, which run directly counter to the idea that any such event as the Fall has ever taken place during the existence of the human species; and what has the Bishop done to make this difficulty less, beyond calling Adam and Eve a 'pair of anthropoid animals'? He only makes the story seem more incredible than ever by thus inviting us to compare it with the revelations of evolutionary science."

It may well be asked, concludes Mr. Mallock, "how high-principled and educated men can have allowed themselves to flounder into this quagmire of feeble sophistries." For our part, we are more curious to inquire how these gentlemen reconcile these feats of intellectual thimble-rigging with a character for common honesty and integrity? If the methods of these pious apologists were carried into the business transactions of ordinary every-day life there would be an end to all commercial morality.

What a difference between the teaching of these dexterous quibblers and the transparent sincerity of Bunyan, Wesley, and Whitefield, of whom it might be said, as it was said of Baxter—

He preached as though he ne'er might preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men.

But these men lived before natural science had discredited the Bible, and before comparative mythology had assigned Christianity to a niche in the Museum of the Natural History of Religion. The last preacher of any influence who taught the old faith in the old way was the late Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, who drew a large congregation to the Newington Tabernacle, mainly composed of those who were dissatisfied with the latitudinarian teaching of the more advanced preachers, and who wanted to hear the old doctrines they had been taught in childhood, undiluted by modern science and modern thought.

Mr. Spurgeon had an unmitigated contempt for these juggling professors, these "light believers in our casual creeds," and he was not above telling them a few home truths. He says:—

"Men seem to say—It is of no use going on in the old way, fetching out one here and another there from the great mass. We want a quicker way. To wait till people are born again, and become followers of Christ, is a long process: let us abolish the separation between the regenerate and unregenerate. Come into the church, all of you, converted or unconverted. You have good wishes and good resolutions; that will do:

* 1 Corinthians xv. 22.

don't trouble about more. It is true you do not believe the gospel, but neither do we. You believe something or other. Come along; if you do not believe anything, no matter; your 'honest doubt' is better by far than faith. 'But,' say you, 'nobody talks so.' Possibly they do not use the same words, but this is the real meaning of the present-day religion; this is the drift of the times. I can justify the broadest statement I have made by the action or by the speech of certain ministers, who are treacherously betraying our holy religion under pretence of adapting it to this progressive age. The new plan is to assimilate the church to the world, and so include a larger area within its bounds. By semi-dramatic performances they make houses of prayer approximate to the theatre; they turn their services into musical displays, and their sermons into political harangues or philosophical essays—in fact, they exchange the temple for the theatre, and turn the ministers of God into actors, whose business it is to amuse men" (*No Compromise*, a Sermon by C. H. Spurgeon, October 7, 1888).

Those who turn "their services into musical displays" would apply very well to the Revival Missions. Further on he refers to those who are making "the Lord's house either a joss-house full of idols, or a political club, where there is more enthusiasm for a party than zeal for God." The "joss-house full of idols" of course means the Ritualists, and "political club" churches would apply admirably to the tabernacles of the Passive Resisters.

The wrongheadedness of those who strive to amalgamate modern science with ancient faith is bad enough; it is, in fact, only equalled by the perverseness of those who profess to find a panacea for all the economic ills that flesh is heir to in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The fact is—and it cannot be asserted too often or too firmly—that the Gospel Jesus never had the faintest idea of bettering the condition of the poor in *this* world. He declared, "The poor ye have always with you," as if that were a settled and indisputable fact, and always would be so. He taught that the rich received their reward here upon earth, but that no rich man could by any possibility enter heaven. The poor, on the other hand, would be rewarded in heaven for the tribulations they had passed through in this life. He did not wish to improve the world; his disciples were to have nothing to do with the world; they were to concentrate their thoughts upon the future life. Yet we are told that our civilisation arises from our Christianity, and that it will ultimately give us a perfect condition of society! No wonder that Robert Buchanan declared that Christianity was "a synonym for disingenuousness or hypocrisy."

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

"Mr. Evan Roberts, the Welsh revivalist," the *Daily News* says, "has given £200 to the funds of Moriah Calvinistic Methodist Church at Loughor, of which he is a member. This statement is made on the authority of one of the deacons of the church named." Before this revival started Mr. Evan Roberts was earning some thirty shillings a week as a pitman. He seems to be doing a lot better now—thank the Lord!

The secretary of the Torrey-Alexander Mission tries to make out that 687,500 persons have attended the meetings at Cannon-street and the Albert Hall. He arrives at these figures by a process of religious arithmetic. According to secular arithmetic these figures are a great exaggeration. Our pamphlet distributors have noticed the same faccs again and again.

A gentleman of our acquaintance, who wrote to Dr. Torrey hoping that he would reconsider his attacks on the characters of Paine and Ingersoll, received the following reply, which is addressed to nobody, and type-written throughout, including the signature:—

"I am not in the habit of replying to anonymous challenges or paying any attention. There is no person for whom I have more contempt than the man who can attack another by name and not give his own name. A pamphlet has been circulated outside our mission by the thousands and this pamphlet is anonymous. It is remarkable how unbelievers rejoice in writing anonymous letters and pamphlets."

One of Dr. Torrey's statements is accurate. Our exposure of him has been circulated outside the Albert Hall "by the thousands." All the rest is humbug. Our pamphlet is not anonymous. Its authorship is stated. Dr. Torrey is simply telling one lie to cover another.

The general press boycott of our Torrey pamphlets is as bad as ever. Quite recently a reference to it was refused insertion in the *Daily News*. It occurred in a letter from Mr. Henry S. Salt, the honorary secretary of the Humanitarian League, who, by his long devotion to good causes, has earned a better right to be heard than any hiring journalist can possess. Mr. Salt's letter was simply burked. It ran as follows:—

DR. TORREY AND ANTI-VIVISECTIONISTS.

SIR,—Much satisfaction is being expressed by anti-vivisectionists at Dr. Torrey's recent condemnation of vivisection. But to some of us his utterances on this subject can carry little weight until he has had the courage to withdraw the grossly calumnious statement made by him about one of the greatest and truest anti-vivisectionists that ever lived—the late Colonel Ingersoll. These statements have been publicly refuted by Mr. G. W. Foote, a personal friend of Ingersoll, in a pamphlet which has had a wide circulation; they have also been challenged by Sir Hiram Maxim in a letter published in the *Daily News*. Surely, then, Dr. Torrey is bound in honor to make some reply. It is intolerable that a man who is daily addressing large audiences on the conduct of life should take refuge in stubborn silence when his own conduct is in question. Readers of the *Daily News*, which has done so much to assist Dr. Torrey's mission, have a right to expect that he will explain himself in this matter.—Yours faithfully,
CROCKHAM HILL, KENT, MARCH 19. HENRY S. SALT.

Mr. Alexander has married Miss Cadbury. That lady's uncle, Mr. George Cadbury, of cocoa fame, is the proprietor of the *Daily News*. No wonder that pious journal is ready to shield Dr. Torrey.

The organ of the Nonconformist Conscience treats its readers to a long extract from Channing, whom it praises absurdly by ranking him "almost along with Emerson." One part of the extract condemns those who try to promote their creed by "penalties of law or penalties of opinion," and still more those who "dug dreary dungeons, kindled fires for the martyr, and invented instruments of exquisite torture." All this is very good in its way. But is it not rather cheap nowadays? Our contemporary reminds us of those who built the tombs of the prophets. It is so easy to denounce past iniquities—wrought by people who are in their graves. Why not denounce iniquities a little nearer in time and place. The *Daily News* knows very well that Dr. Torrey lies like a trooper—we beg pardon, like a theologian—about the characters of Paine and Ingersoll. Why does it not rebuke *him*? and give us less gas about racks and dungeons.

Rev. W. H. Carnegie, the new Vicar of Birmingham, is gently taken to task by the *Daily News* for his mistakes policy while preaching the mid-day sermons last week at St. Paul's Cathedral. It appears that the reverend gentleman seemed to fancy that he was "addressing an audience of sceptical theological students," and his sermons were "largely composed of out-of-date arguments to prove the existence of a personal God." Now an argument can never be out-of-date until it is perceived to be bad. We gather, therefore, that Mr. Carnegie has been arguing absurdly about the existence of God. But why is he singled out for censure? Is there any preacher who does *not* argue absurdly about the existence of God? Is there any Theistic argument that will stand five minutes' logical criticism? We are sorry to see the *Daily News* playing the part of a bull in its own china shop.

When it comes to "out-of-date" arguments," the *Daily News* might have sagacity enough to see that Dr. Torrey is open to the strongest animadversion. This gentleman's arguments are so "out-of-date" that they smell like Limburger cheese. There is hardly a five-o'clock-tea curate who wouldn't be ashamed of Dr. Torrey's arguments to prove the Bible the Word of God. Of course the *Daily News* knows this very well. But its advertising department and *esprit de corps* keep it silent on the matter. On the one hand, it urges people to listen to Dr. Torrey; on the other hand, it advises people to read the Dean of Westminster's pamphlet on Inspiration. These gentlemen's views of the Bible are naturally destructive. But what of that? Each bamboozles a different set of people. And so the great Christian game is kept going.

The brother of "Messiah" Pigott, the Rev. George Herbert Smith Pigott, rector of Kingston Seymour, Somerset, has been the subject of an "enquiry." Several charges

are presented against him as a clergyman. One of them is "That by his haste and want of reverence in the performance of Divine Service he has inadequately performed such services." It is reported that the reverend gentleman went in for one-minute sermons. But is this a crime? We should rather consider it a mercy. Many other parsons might "cut it short" when they do the exhorting.

Rev. W. Spencer, of the Antley Wesleyan Mission, Accrington, is working "A Big Drum Revival." He plays the drum himself out of doors. Being hollow, it makes a great impression on hollow "sinners"—and sometimes on full ones. We see by the papers that Mr. Spencer converted a man who was full of beer. The preaching, the praying, the big drum, and the beer so worked upon him that he "broke down utterly"—and sacrificed two bottles of beer he had in his pockets. The "Master" would have put them by for the next marriage feast, but, under Mr. Spencer's management, their contents were poured into the drains; which was hardly fair to the teetotal rats.

"Lord, make us dare-devils," prayed a young woman at a revival meeting at the Sailors' Bethel, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Probably the prayer will be answered.

Rev. Martin Anstey, of Dewsbury, says that every act of sin on man's part "wrings afresh the heart of the living God with unutterable anguish." Amongst the sins he reckons every oath, every bet, and every extra glass. Good God! What a time this reverend gentleman's God must be having! Let us hope it isn't true.

In one of its lucid intervals the London *Star* said a true thing about the "Do We Believe?" correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph*, which has since been published in volume form. "A quarter of a century ago," the *Star* said, "the *Daily Telegraph* would not have ventured to publish an epistolary debate on this question. Then the question was, 'Do We Doubt?' That is the question no longer. We all doubt. In fact, doubt is the strongest form of belief, for to-day doubt is common form in all the Churches except the Roman Catholic."

The Roman Catholic Church in Germany is going to get up public dances to which none but Catholics will be admitted. This is intended to prevent young Catholics from going to mixed dances and falling in love with Protestants. Catholics cannot be made now, but the Church thinks they may be bred.

Mr. J. B. Firth has contributed *Constantine the Great* to the "Heroes of the Nations" Series. It is difficult to see what claim Constantine has to the title of a *hero*. Some of his crimes are set forth by Mr. Firth:—

"He had on his conscience the assassination of his son and his wife. These were but two out of a terribly long list of victims, which included his father-in-law Maximian; his brother-in-law Licinius; and Licinius's young son, Licinianus; another brother-in-law, the Cæsar Bassus; and many more besides."

After this it is comforting to read of "the sincerity of his convictions," and to learn that "even the atrocious crimes with which he sullied his fair fame cannot rob him of the name of Christian."

The following story of "A Pious Burglar" is taken from the letter of a Sydney correspondent of the *East Anglian Daily Times*:—

"The other Sunday morning the landlady of an hotel at Port Melbourne, Victoria, was robbed of £30 worth of jewellery by a burglar. The unwelcome intruder was discovered by the landlady's little daughter, who was aroused by a noise in her mother's room. Going there, she was amazed at seeing a strange man reading her mother's Prayer-book by means of a shielded light. The burglar was so deeply interested in the contents that he failed to notice her approach. When he awakened to the fact that he was seen, he jumped out of the window on to the roof of the billiard-room, and then made his escape over the roof of a neighbouring house, taking with him £30 worth of assorted jewellery. By a strange coincidence the book was open at the prayer prescribed for the Offertory, so that the burglar was probably pondering upon the sentence: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,' when circumstances compelled him to take a header through the window."

A religious paper would have given that story a different ending. The burglar would have been struck to the soul by the "mother's Prayer Book." He would have fallen on his knees and accepted Christ on the spot, instead of clearing off with the swag.

The *Daily Telegraph* went to the expense of cabin across the Atlantic the fact that the Rev. Frank Cordova

of New Jersey, had been convicted of deserting his wife and children. No doubt it was a very bad case, but there are enough men of God who go wrong over here without drawing on America to swell the catalogue.

Church of England parsons have plucked up courage to face discussion after their Thursday evening lectures at Christ Church Schools, Liverpool. Several Freethinkers have attended the meetings with Mr. H. Percy Ward, who kept one reverend gentleman busy for quite half an hour answering very searching questions. We hope it will do the parsons good.

"After attending a revival meeting at Shoeling, near Southampton," Tuesday's *Morning Leader* said, "Albert Edward Veal, a market gardener, became much worried and read his Bible a great deal. On Sunday he mutilated himself with a knife, and died from the loss of blood. 'Suicide while of unsound mind,' said the jury last evening." We suppose this poor Veal took Dr. Torrey's advice and tried to "Get Right With God."

Miss E. S. Huxtable, evangelist, is conducting "a great revival" at Wigan. According to the local *Observer* she "was once a pronounced platform infidel." Where? We invite the *Observer* to ask that question of those who gave it the information. There is an awkward mistake somewhere.

We referred recently to the arrest of Mr. Moses Harman, of Chicago, editor of *Lucifer*, on account of certain copies of that paper sent through the American mails. We called this an infamous act of persecution. No obscene language, as far as we know, ever appeared in *Lucifer*. The obscenity, therefore, is not actual but constructive; in other words, it is Mr. Harman's *opinions* that are branded as obscene—which is a shocking absurdity. We are utterly opposed to his "Free Love" doctrines, but that is no reason why we should not defend his right to express them. We are utterly opposed to Christianity, too, but that is no reason why we should not defend a Christian's right to be heard, if there were any necessity for doing so. We are glad, therefore, to see the same position taken up by the editor of the New York *Truthseeker*. Mr. Macdonald calls Mr. Harman's social teaching "tommyrot," but protests against calling it "indecent" or "obscene" as an abuse of language. Our American contemporary pays the following tribute to Mr. Harman personally:—

"Moses Harman is now about eighty years old. He is one of the most kind-hearted men we ever met—honest and truthful, encroaches upon no one's liberty of thought or act; an estimable citizen, a true friend, intelligent far beyond the average; in short, a man of the most exemplary kind. If the world was peopled exclusively by men like him there would be no need of policemen, judges, or law-courts. The court which condemns him will condemn itself. The law which imprisons him is a brutal law. The persons who are persecuting him have no conception of what he considers his work to be, and are only desirous of making out a case to enrich their records of convictions. But it would be better—a thousand times better—that they drew their wages of sin for doing nothing than that they should work such an infamous injustice as to imprison a man like Moses Harman for printing some foolish stuff from writers who mean well even if they do not know."

We desire to say "ditto" to all this.

The interest aroused by Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis* has led to the publication of some anecdotes concerning his prison life. We have the following story from a friend who himself heard it related by a retired prison officer, one of the warders at Reading Gaol during Wilde's imprisonment there. Wilde was much irritated by the darkness of his cell, and on one occasion, when the chaplain was visiting him, he expressed to the reverend gentleman what he felt at being shut off from the sight of the sky, his window being a small pane of frosted glass. The man of God at once saw his opportunity, and began to improve the occasion. "Do not trouble about the window," he was saying, "but lift up your mind to One who is above"—when Wilde indignantly exclaimed, "Get out, you d—d fool," and thrust him through the door. For this he was reported by the chaplain, and punished.

Holy Russians cannot show common decency in their dealings with Heathen Japanese. The newspapers report that 320 of the 527 soldiers and officers released on their word of honor after capture at Port Arthur have been sent to rejoin their regiments at the front. The crews of the *Varzag* and *Korietz*, also liberated on parole, are now serving with Rojdestvensky's fleet. What the Japs must think of Christian honor!

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, April 2, Royal Assembly Hall, South Shields: at 3, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible; with Remarks on Dr. Torrey"; 7, "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan."

April 16, Manchester; 30, Liverpool. May 7, Stratford Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—April 2, a., Victoria Park; 9, Glasgow; 16, Liverpool; 17 and 18, Debate at Skipton; 23, a., Victoria Park, e., Stratford Town Hall; 29, Hetton-le-Hole; 30, South Shields; 30, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 30, Stratford Town Hall; May 7, Merthyr Tydfil; 21, Failsforth.
- J. F. HEDLEY.—Thanks for your trouble. We will think the matter over. You will see, of course, that we cannot spend our whole life in running down dirty little orthodox liars about Thomas Paine. We "go for" Dr. Torrey, not because he is of any great importance in himself, but because he is put forward as a Christian representative by a combination of Christian Churches.
- J. S. CLARKE.—Better try another subject.
- W. A. BEVAN.—Pleased to hear from you.
- F. RICH.—Shall be sent. Thanks.
- E. R. WOODWARD.—Thanks. Old Baxter and Torrey make a precious pair.
- WELL-WISHER.—Starring the *Freethinker* on newsagents' lists as not "on sale or return" is a perfect fraud. The paper has been sold over the publishing office counter on those terms ever since the first number. You should insist on being supplied accordingly. You can see for yourself what tactics are resorted to for our injury. Sorry to hear your local paper does not understand intellectual hospitality.
- J. W. E. BENNETT.—It is not surprising that the orthodox gentleman did not want to see you any more when you came armed with the *Bible Handbook*.
- J. BROWN.—Always glad to receive cuttings. There must be more than "a few" who read the *Freethinker* in Hull, if you could get at them.
- G. H. CROZIER.—Herbert Spencer's "Unknowable" was simply a big word for the full extent of human ignorance. The creation of that metaphysical bugbear was his worst day's work. The mystery-mongers make a lot of it, but they ignore the really valuable parts of his Synthetic Philosophy, which are to be found in such practical volumes as the *Psychology*, the *Sociology*, and the *Principles of Ethics*. Glad to hear you so highly appreciate this journal. Torrey pamphlets sent.
- F. J. PINNELL.—It is an absolute falsehood that any person called Robert Pitman, either at Bristol or elsewhere, ever had any connection with the *Freethinker*. The Yankee evangelist is evidently driven into his last ditch. We are glad you think our pamphlets are responsible for his altered tone about his "converted infidels." He is certainly singing a lot smaller.
- J. DAVISON.—The secretary of the new Cardiff Branch is S. C. Hurford, 16 Cyfaithfa-street, Routh, Cardiff.
- R. CHADDERTEN.—Pleased to hear you are so glad to have had the *Freethinkers* sent you.
- CORDELIA.—Very pleased to hear from you. We note your high opinion of Florence Robertson's letter.
- ANDREW LOMSON.—See acknowledgments in list. Convey our compliments to your subscribing workmates.
- S. C. HURFORD.—Mr. Foote is writing you about lecturing at Cardiff.
- W. P. PEARSON.—Thanks for your letter in the *Wallasey News* calling attention to the bigoted exclusion of the *Freethinker* from the Earlston Reading Room.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- TWO CLIFTON ADMIRERS.—Thanks for the address. The Pitman case is a perfect fraud; a match for the "Atheist Shoemaker."
- M. COOK.—It arrived very late, but we have strained a point to insert it.
- G. TAYLOR.—Miss Vance showed us your jocular letter. Glad to see you so lively.
- J. T. H. McCLOSKEY.—Too late for this week.
- E. PACK.—Thanks for the document, which has been useful.
- BRISTOLIAN.—The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse seems to economise the truth as well as his old friend the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes did.
- W. H. DOWLING.—Accept our best thanks. It seems pretty clear, as you say, that the Robert Pitman "conversion" is an imposture from beginning to end.
- A. K. MONRO.—We have directed your letter to Mr. H. Percy Ward. His address is, 4 Redgrave-street, Kensington, Liverpool.
- JAMES WESTON.—Glad to hear you are "watching our fight with Torrey" with so much interest.
- JAMES NEATE.—We hope you will have a grandly successful season in Victoria Park.

OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged. £96 5s. 11d. Received this week: F. J. Pinnell 1s., Well-Wisher 2s., Alec Fraser 1s., David Bell 1s., Andrew Lomson 1s., Daniel Fleming 1s., Robert Marshall 1s., William Daly 1s., James McPherson 1s., David Terrie 1s., Thomas Reid 1s., M. Ruth 1s., Samuel Harrington 5s., James Russell 6d., A. Hamilton 1s., James McDiarmid 1s., Alec McDiarmid 1s., A. Campbell 2s. 6d., Thomas Ferguson 6d., William Bell 1s., V. Page 1s., O. T. D. 2s., Mr. Varley 1s., W. Lancaster 1s., James Weston 10s. 6d.

SOME correspondence has to stand over till next week for want of space.

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.

Personal.

I AM writing this on Tuesday, just before this week's *Freethinker* leaves my hands for the printer's, and I beg my readers to note carefully what follows.

I am daily expecting a case, in which I am the defendant, to be called in the Court of King's Bench. Of course I cannot say anything about it publicly at this stage. But I have a right to warn my readers against newspaper reports, which are pretty sure to be misrepresentations. The great "free press" of this country ignores me except when it thinks it can do me an injury. Readers of the *Freethinker* will have all the facts before them next week. G. W. FOOTE.

The Pursuit of Dr. Torrey.

DR. TORREY is evidently wincing. He is feeling the truth of the old text, "Be sure your sin will find you out." His curses on Paine and Ingersoll have come home to roost. He is now, indeed, like a rat in a corner, looking which way to spring. Letters of his that I have seen are positively pitiful. He dare not deny that he uttered those libels against Paine and Ingersoll; neither can he afford to admit that he uttered them. What he does now—although that will not serve him long—is to stand strictly on the defensive, like a prisoner in the dock. He has not the candor to declare "Yes, I said that," or "No, I did not say that," but he asks "What can you prove against me?"

Dr. Torrey reminds me of the Irishman in the story, who was placed in the dock, indicted for theft, and asked whether he was guilty or not guilty; and who replied that he could not tell until he heard the evidence.

One of Dr. Torrey's poor little tricks is to tell people who write to him about my pamphlets that he cannot take notice of anonymous attacks. Now this is absolutely childish. My pamphlets are not anonymous. Nevertheless I have made assurance on this point doubly sure by addressing the following letter to Dr. Torrey, and sending it by registered post:—

2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street,
London, E.C.,
March 27, 1905.

DEAR SIR,—

I understand that you are professing ignorance as to who is the author of the pamphlet "Dr. Torrey and the Infidels," of which thousands of copies have been distributed outside the Albert Hall. Indeed I have seen

letters by you stating that this pamphlet is anonymous. I have therefore to draw your attention to the fact that every copy of the pamphlet contains an announcement at the end that it was written by the editor of the *Freethinker*. This is a perfectly sufficient identification of the author. The editor of the *Freethinker* is a well-known person, and his name appears in bold letters right under the title in every copy of every issue of that paper. However, in order to destroy that loophole of escape, I hereby inform you that I am the editor of the *Freethinker*, that I am the author of the pamphlet "Dr. Torrey and the Infidels," and that I am determined to continue my public exposure of your infamous libels on Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll until you have the manliness to retract them as openly as you made them.

With this letter, in the same registered envelope, I enclosed a copy of the pamphlet and a copy of the current number of the *Freethinker*, so that there might be no possibility of misunderstanding.

We must not let this libeller escape us. We must pursue him to the bitter end. I have reason for believing that others will soon be joining in the hue and cry. But everything depends in the meanwhile upon ourselves. We must print and distribute more copies of the pamphlet which is giving Dr. Torrey so many bad quarters of an hour. We must also print and circulate the other pamphlet I am preparing for distribution at the approaching Brixton mission. This one will deal with Dr. Torrey's imaginary "infidel" converts during the Albert Hall mission. And I invite the Freethought party to furnish me with adequate funds for this effort. They should help me to make the most of this golden opportunity.

A *Freethinker* reader at Bristol has been making inquiries about Robert Pitman, the "infidel" converted during or after Dr. Torrey's mission at Bristol. This "converted infidel," it will be remembered, was represented as a reporter for the *Freethinker* or the *Clarion*, or both; and as having distributed 20,000 "infidel" leaflets at Dr. Torrey's meetings. He was also stated to have written to Mr. Foote and Mr. Blatchford announcing his conversion, and neither of them gave him a reply.

Our correspondent has taken a lot of trouble to investigate this mare's-nest. And the following is the result.

It is now asserted that Robert Pitman "found Jesus," not in 1903, but on January 28 or 29 of the present year; so that, in any case, he is not one of Dr. Torrey's "converts." Apparently he is claimed by the Rev. A. Trengrove, of the Redcliffe-crescent Chapel.

Robert Pitman is reported to us to be a softish youth, nineteen years of age, who has been for some years looking for work. His own mother never heard him say that he was an Atheist, and never knew he had any leaning that way. Nobody else in Bristol appears to have heard him utter a word in favor of Atheism. Those acquainted with him never thought he had brains enough to form any opinion on such a subject. In the spring and summer of 1904 he attached himself to a band of people called the Stokes Croft Chapel Mission. So far from being the blatant Atheist he is represented he repeatedly gave out the hymns sung at the Mission meetings in St. James's Park. Being acquainted with Mr. Bindon, who once had a few of our "God at Chicago" leaflets, he obtained two or three copies from that gentleman. These few leaflets, if he ever gave them away, are the 20,000 (now figuring as 40,000) "infidel tracts" which he distributed.

Such is the "converted infidel" that Dr. Torrey has been bragging about at the Albert Hall.

I propose to include this case in the new pamphlet I am getting ready for Dr. Torrey's mission at Brixton.

We can crush this slanderer of dead Freethinkers, this Christian mountebank with his menagerie of tame "converted infidels." And why should we not do it? I say we ought to do it. The pamphlets exposing this man should be circulated by the hundred thousand. And Freethinkers who honor their noble dead, and detest liars and libellers, will surely find the necessary sinews of war in such a campaign as this.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Tyneside Freethinkers will note that Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (April 2) in the large and handsome Royal Assembly Hall, Shields. The subjects are live ones, and there should be big audiences.

Mr. Foote had good meetings at Coventry on Sunday. The evening meeting was larger than that on the occasion of his former visit, and the lecture was very much applauded. A considerable number of ladies lent a pleasant touch of color to the assembly. Nor must we omit to mention that a party of more than twenty "saints" journeyed over from Birmingham, and helped the Coventry friends with their day's work. Mr. Partridge, who likes a job with plenty to do and little to say, lent an experienced hand at the bookstall; and Mr. Pitt seemed to be agreeably occupied in counting up the collections. The chair was ably taken at both meetings by Mr. A. G. Lye, the Coventry Branch secretary, who is an indefatigable worker for Freethought.

The *Midland Daily Telegraph* gave a brief report of Mr. Foote's "two well-attended lectures" at Coventry.

The Bethnal Green Branch begins its 1905 open-air campaign in Victoria Park to-day (April 2) when Mr. Cohen lectures both afternoon and evening. No doubt there will be the usual crowd.

We are glad to report that Mr. Lloyd had an excellent audience at Stanley Hall on Sunday evening, and delighted them with a very able and interesting lecture. That ended the March course. It would have been a good thing to continue the Sunday evening meetings there during April. But there are two reasons against it. First, the Easter holidays would make an awkward break; secondly, the collections have been so far short of covering the expenses during March that economy cries out "Halt." Perhaps the Stanley Hall effort may be resumed before long. We are anxious to see a good strong active N. S. S. Branch formed in that part of London.

Mr. Ward has had excellent audiences at Liverpool lately and the Branch has enrolled several new members. The third supply of our Torrey pamphlets has been exhausted there, and the Branch is asking for more. On Tuesday next, April 4, the Branch will have a Social and Dance at the Alexandra Hall, the whole of the building having been engaged for the occasion. Every possible arrangement is being made for a record entertainment and a record attendance. The tickets are only 1s. each; or 1s. 6d. for lady and gentleman. Some days later, on April 9, the Branch will hold its annual meeting after a short lecture by Mr. Ward. All members should make a special effort to attend.

A Friend, thinking the two volumes of Mr. Holyoake's *Bygones Worth Remembering* contain a wealth of information of great interest to Freethought and Progressive Societies, would have the work sent at half price to such as might have difficulty in buying the guinea edition, on the condition that they send half a guinea to Mr. Holyoake, who would have the two volumes forwarded, the Friend in question paying the other half. Applications to be made to G. J. Holyoake, Eastern Lodge, Brighton.

Lord Avebury, speaking lately at the annual meeting of the Booksellers' Provident Institution, said that one way to be happy was to try to make others happy. We are glad to see Ingersoll's aphorism passing current. Freethinkers will remember it:—

The place to be happy is here,
The time to be happy is now,
And the way to be happy is to try to make others happy.

Some day or other, when its truth is generally recognised, the Christians will claim it as their own. They claim most things. But this one will be Ingersoll's all the same.

An excellent letter on "Dr. Torrey and his Eulogisers" appeared in the *Hull Daily Mail* by "C. (Agnostic)." Attention was drawn to Dr. Torrey's slanders of Paine and Ingersoll and to the unanswerable reply in our pamphlet.

We are happy to state that the *Freethinker* has been steadily improving in circulation lately. This is doubtless owing to two causes; first, the efforts of our friends in all parts of the country—which we hope will be continued; second, the wide distribution of our Torrey pamphlets, every copy of which contains an unobtrusive advertisement of this journal.

The Book of Daniel.—V.

(Continued from p. 187.)

WE come now to the visions ascribed to the mythical prophet Daniel by the pious Jew who beheld the brutal outrages perpetrated on his countrymen by Antiochus Epiphanes. These visions, as already stated, referred to events of past history known to the writer. I shall take first that recorded in Chapter IX., which professes to have been seen in "the first year" of the imaginary king "Darius the son of Ahasuerus"—the occasion upon which Daniel is represented as making a frenzied supplication to the Lord for Jerusalem and its afflicted inhabitants, as already noticed. In this memorable year Daniel is described as saying:—

"I, Daniel, understood by *the books* the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years."

From this passage we learn that the writer had read the book of Jeremiah (xxv. 11; xxix. 10), if not also that of 2 Chronicles (xxxv. 21) and Ezra (i. 1). The Hebrew scriptures had at that time been collected, and were regarded by all Jews as inspired and authoritative; it was therefore unnecessary for him to name them otherwise than as "the books." This collection was not made until more than a century after the time of Daniel, but the author of the latter book was probably unacquainted with this fact. The writer, furthermore, makes his imaginary prophet say:—

"Whilst I was speaking in prayer the man Gabrielbeing caused to fly swiftly, touched me *about the time of the evening oblation.*"

Here reference is made to one of the sacrifices which were offered daily in Jerusalem after the return from the exile in Babylon, but not offered in captivity. A person living in the age and position of Daniel would know nothing about "the time of the evening oblation," but to one dwelling in Judæa at a later period, say in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, such an expression would correctly indicate an hour known to every Jew in the kingdom.

The angel Gabriel is next represented as revealing to Daniel certain events which were to happen at some future time. This revelation reads as follows:—

"Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. Know therefore, and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto an anointed one, a prince, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks.....And after the three score and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have none belonging to him: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the Sanctuary.....And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and upon the pinnacle of abominations shall be one that maketh desolate" (ix. 24-27).

The expression "seventy weeks," all critics are agreed, was intended to signify 490 years (a week standing for seven years)—the period between the proclamation of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1-4) and the setting up of a kingdom of "everlasting righteousness." This kingdom, we learn from other visions, was to be a Jewish kingdom; Christian commentators, however, represent it as the kingdom of Christ or gospel dispensation. The latter view can easily be shown to be unqualified misrepresentation; but it is unnecessary to go into the matter here. Furthermore, as to the "seventy weeks" or 490 years, it would be sheer waste of time to attempt to extract anything reliable from this period, unless we knew that the writer had an accurate knowledge of the number of years which had elapsed between the age in which he had placed Daniel and the latest time to which reference is made in his visions. Upon this point we have conclusive evidence from his own pen that

he knew neither the number nor names of the kings who had reigned during the Babylonian and Persian dynasties. The "seventy weeks" was simply suggested by the "seventy years" which he had read in the book of Jeremiah and in Ezra i. 1. Setting aside, then, the exact number of years symbolised by the "seventy weeks" we come to the later events of which the writer had a more accurate knowledge. These are the following:—

(1) After the lapse of a long period from the edict of Cyrus an "anointed one, a prince," was to be "cut off."

(2) The "people of the prince" who reigned after this event were to "destroy the city and the sanctuary."

(3) This prince was to "make a firm covenant with many for one week."

(4) For "the half of the week" he was to "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

(5) Upon "the pinnacle of abominations" there was to be "one that maketh desolate."

(6) The expiration of the full time—"seventy weeks"—was to "bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place."

The foregoing events, with the exception of the last, are historical, a fact in no way astonishing, for they all occurred in the writer's own day—that is to say, in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. These events may be briefly stated as follows:—

1. The "anointed one, the prince" who was to be "cut off" was the venerable high priest Onias, who had led a blameless life during a long period of office, and was treacherously murdered, B.C. 171. His position in the Jewish nation corresponded to that of "prince" in other kingdoms.

2. Onias had held the high priestly office in the reign of Seleucus IV.; the "prince that shall come" was Antiochus Epiphanes, whose "people," under Apollonius, destroyed "the city and the sanctuary."

3. This hostile prince was to "make a firm covenant with many for one week." Antiochus made a covenant first with Jason, then with Mene-laüs, to whom he sold and re-sold the office of high priest. He also made covenants with many other Jews upon matters unconnected with the high priesthood (See 1 Macc. i. 11-13). These covenants were made between B.C. 175 and 168, which period the writer calls "one week."

4. The tyrannical Syrian prince was to "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" for "half a week" or 3½ years. According to the two books of Maccabees, the daily sacrifices were discontinued for exactly three years; but the author of the book of Daniel reckoned the time as 3½ years or "half a week."

5. Besides prohibiting the offering of the daily sacrifices and making the Lord's "sanctuary" desolate, the persecuting prince was to set up an "abomination of desolation," or what the Jews regarded as an abomination. Antiochus caused a statue of Jupiter Olympius to be erected in the Lord's holy temple, and offered sacrifices of swine—an "abomination" to the Jews—upon the sacred altar of burnt offering. The term "abomination of desolation" was applied by the Jews only to the desecration of the temple and its altar by this king—never to anything else. The writer of the First book of Maccabees, which is perhaps the most historical of the Hebrew sacred writings, says of the "people" of Antiochus:—

"They set up an abomination of desolation upon the altar, and in the cities of Judah on every side they builded idol altars. And at the doors of the houses and in the streets they burnt incense" (i. 54-55).

There cannot, then, be the shadow of a doubt as to what the author of Daniel was referring.

6. The end of the "seventy weeks" was to see the formation of a kingdom of "everlasting righteousness," and "the anointing of the most holy place." After the persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes had continued for several months, an

aged priest named Mattathias, with his five stalwart sons, set up the standard of revolt against the Syrian monarch, and were soon joined by a large number of patriotic Jews. Contrary to all expectation, this heroic band, under the leadership of one of the sons of Mattathias—Judas surnamed Maccabæus—obtained a complete success over its enemies, and after routing three separate Syrian forces, came to Jerusalem and restored the worship of Yahveh (B.C. 165). Hence, "the anointing of the most holy place" referred to the purification, refurnishing, and consecration of the temple by Judas Maccabæus. It is recorded of Judas that "he chose blameless priests, such as had pleasure in the law: and they cleansed the holy place, and bare out the stones of defilement.....and built a new altar after the fashion of the former; and they built the holy place, and the inner parts of the house; and they hallowed the courts. And they made the holy vessels new, and they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offering and of incense, and the table, into the temple" (1 Macc. iv. 42-50). Thus was the "anointing of the most holy place" properly executed.

The author of the book of Daniel firmly believed that his countrymen, with the help of the Lord (and the more material assistance of Judas and his brother Jonathan) would succeed in establishing their independence, after which the Hebrew nation would become a kingdom of "everlasting righteousness." No more visions and prophecies would then be needed, for Yahveh himself would be their king and protector. This he states very plainly in some of the so-called "visions." His belief was based upon various passages in the Hebrew scriptures, more especially the following:—

Isaiah lxvi. 18-23: "The time cometh, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory.....And they shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations.....to my Holy Mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord.....And of them also will I take for *priests and Levites*, saith the Lord.....And it shall come to pass that from one *New Moon* to another, and from one *Sabbath* to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."

Zech. xiv. 9, 11, 16: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall the Lord be one, and his name one.....And there shall be no more curse; but *Jerusalem shall dwell safely*.....And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of *Tabernacles*."

Here we have two predictions of the new Jewish kingdom of "everlasting righteousness," and it can be plainly seen that in neither passage is there any reference to Christianity—as Christian commentators and others allege. The mention of priests and Levites, New Moons and Sabbaths, and the Feast of Tabernacles—all ordinances prescribed in the Mosaic Law—leave no doubt as to the meaning. Unfortunately for the sacred writers, these comforting prophecies were destined never to be fulfilled, and, it may be safely said, never will be. The whole world will never now be converted to obsolete Judaism. Yet that such was the belief of the credulous author of Daniel is unquestionable, as is clearly seen from other portions of his egotistical vaticinations.

With regard to the "Abomination of desolation" set up by Antiochus Epiphanes, it may be noticed that the primitive Christian who composed the grand prediction relating to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world (Matt. xxiv.)—which was ascribed by a later generation to Jesus Christ—understood the event predicted in Daniel as referring to the demolition of the temple by the Romans under Titus (A.D. 70). Consequently, Jesus is represented as saying to his disciples:—

"When therefore ye see the Abomination of desolation which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place.....then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains," etc.

Almost needless to say, Christian commentators and apologists, following their usual system of distortion,

completely ignore the events of the reign of Antiochus, and give the same interpretation as that attributed to Christ. Such an absurd exposition scarcely merits notice. Apart from the fact that the "seventy weeks" would end more than a century before the time of Titus, it is not easy to see, if the latter were "the prince that should come," where the "Abomination of desolation" comes in. The Jews themselves during the last year of the siege of Jerusalem defiled the temple daily, turning it into a regular slaughter-house. Titus, at the very most, merely permitted the sacred building to be set on fire. Again, according to the book of Daniel, the time between the "cutting off" of "an anointed one" and the setting up of the "abomination" was to be only "one week," that is, seven years. The destruction of the temple under Titus ought, then, to have taken place seven years after the Crucifixion (the "cutting off" of an "anointed one"), instead of forty years, as was actually the case. It thus becomes clearly apparent that the most notable facts of history are powerless to deter professional Christian advocates from unscrupulous misrepresentation.

ABRACADABRA.

Correspondence.

LORD COLERIDGE'S "CHARTER."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR FOOTE,—When I have spoken of Lord Coleridge's judgment at your trial, I have recognised that its merit lay in its restatement of earlier judgments, increasing their authority by his concurrence, "amounting to a new charter of conscientious discussion." The principle of toleration on which you rely, which Lord Coleridge reiterated, had been heard from the judgment seat long before his day. Mr. Justice Erskine declared it on my trial in 1842, who said: "Man has a right to entertain opinion opposed to the religion of the State and to express it. Judges make no law. We would have freedom of inquiry restrained by no laws but those of decency. Our law has adopted that rule." Lord Coleridge repeated this in Pooley's case in 1857. Thirty years later he restated it on the occasion of your trial. Lord Coleridge made no new charter of emancipation of heretical bequests. Whether you have discovered a trapdoor through which Freethinkers may escape with a legacy left them, will only be known when a case has been decided against Christian claimants on the authority of Lord Coleridge's words.

As to what else you say, I can only answer as Lord Melbourne did to "Tom Macaulay" when Assertion far outran Proof, "I wish I was as sure of anything as" Mr. Foote "is of everything."

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

Brighton, March 20.

[I do not regard Mr. Justice Erskine's declaration as on all fours with that of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge at my trial in 1883. At any rate, Mr. Holyoake practically concedes my point, that it is not now in itself a crime to oppose Christianity. For the rest, I can only say that he overlooks the chief contention of my last article; namely, that a legacy to the Secular Society, Limited, or any kindred Society, could not be disputed in the way he suggests. The "cocksureness" is a personal matter which it would be idle to discuss.—G. W. F.]

FREETHINKERS AND FRIENDSHIP.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I shall trespass on your kindness just once more, and shall then leave the matter under discussion to abler brains and more fluent pens. My idea was to raise the standard of Freethought by widening and culturing the minds and hearts of ordinary women. In his article on the "Welsh Revival," March 5, Mr. Derfel says: "We shall never win the battle until we get the women and children into our ranks." Such is also my belief. The co-operation of women is necessary to the perfect organisation of the movement. If to desire ardently to see my own sex more capable of sharing in the grand struggle for intellectual independence be "romantic," then indeed I plead guilty. Women as a sex are placidly opposed to Freethought. They will not take the trouble to think; or, if they do, they soon tire and turn aside. I hoped that something might be done to lure them into deeper reading, by which a wider range of thought might be cultivated. I saw no paper so capable of doing such a work as yours. A Freethinker.

thinker, male or female, requires a more solid educational basis to build on than a Christian; for this reason, that we are entirely subject to our own guidance. We form our own standard of morality, and live up to it, not through fear of punishment, or hope of reward, but simply because we believe it right to do certain things and leave others undone. Well, the keener the intellect is through culture, thought, and education, the more exalted our standard of morality is likely to become. The great majority of women are not educated; and, I blush to own it—but it is too true—do not want to be educated. There are plenty of noble exceptions, but I speak of the rule. Again, the Churches hold some snake-like fascination for women. Start a bazaar, fancy fair, concert, or amateur theatricals in aid of a Church fund and women will flock to them in thousands. Get up any such entertainment in aid of Freethought, and how many women will attend?

I thought some pages of a lighter nature might lead women to read the *Freethinker*, and result eventually in their enlightenment and conversion. Well, it seems to me I am altogether wrong. So I shall leave others to make more popular suggestions, and shall content myself with "ploughing in my own furrow."

By the way, it seems to me we have started the "Aunt Marjory" column right away. Here we are announcing our ages—real or otherwise—describing our beauty or lamenting our want of it; trotting out for admiration with the most charming modesty our very nicest qualities. I dare say we shall soon come to exchange photos and visiting cards. I find Mr. Randall stepping down from his pedestal and proposing a kind of Directory likely to lead to private correspondence between some of us. Well, "all things come to those who wait." *Quien sabe?* Mr. Randall smiles at me for defending myself. He must remember I am not a Christian, and having been smitten on one cheek, don't feel inclined to turn the other to him to be slapped also. I admire many of his views and sentiments. Time and thought will soften some of his rough edges. I am quite willing to acknowledge that I have misjudged him in a few instances. I am sorry he will not write again. There is much in his letters to enlighten and interest; and, though he has treated me very harshly in them, I should be glad to read more of them for the sake of their honesty and vigor. I do not object to such a foe, though I should prefer him as a friend. I notice he has been very polite to all the other ladies engaged in this discussion. They are "charming young ladies," "plucky little women," etc. Me he has designated as an "uninteresting female." What wonder if the "iron entered into my soul" there and then; but worse was to come. In his last letter he declares I am a *microbe*. Now, indeed, is the cup of my humiliation full! It was only when he found me spreading an epidemic that he intervened and tried to crush the dangerous germs. Well, if he is a volcano and I a microbe, I am sure to be consumed, therefore I had better retire from the contest, and, following Mr. Randall's advice—not addressed to me—try to show by my life that, though an Atheist, I am not an imp of Satan. By the way, I am truly pleased to find Mr. Randall so far converted to my views about sympathy and friendly feeling as to regard a few words of appreciation as a "veritable pick-me-up," and to acknowledge that it is always "cheering to have one's opinion supported." This from Mr. Randall is a great concession, and I feel inclined to give myself the tiniest pat on the back. I thank you, Sir, for allowing me so much space in your paper, and I hope Mr. Randall will still continue to express his views on matters more worthy of discussion than

JUVERNA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—This correspondence has produced quite a glut in juvenile scribes; therefore, hoary hermits, hold! and let the babbling babes take counsel.

To be under the age of twenty-four seems to be a necessary qualification for participation in this discussion. "E. B." (what a splendid little woman she must be!) is under the age of twenty-one; Alfred E. Randall is only three-and-twenty; and the present writer strikes a very happy medium. I have not yet had the pleasure of reading "Juverna's" confession of qualification. I present my compliments, and venture to express a desire to the effect that when she has finished picking the bones of Mr. Randall she shall allow me to read the burial service.

The brunt of the battle seems to rage round the blood-stained figure of this gentleman. Still he waves the tattered banner of his convictions and urges on his battalion with voluminous advice. I had read with pleasure Mr. Randall's letters until he came to the question of matrimony, and advised Freethinkers to marry Christians. Then—like Mr. Randall—I saw the danger of the outburst becoming epidemic, and therefore intervened.

Just below the termination of his letter there appears a very appropriate quotation from Goethe: "One should advise only about matters in which one is prepared to co-operate." And I respectfully suggest to Mr. Randall that he give his convictions the test of a little practical experience before he ventures to advise *others* upon such a momentous question. He is far too sanguine about the *conversion* of the Christian wife. At best it is a speculation, and Mr. Randall would do well to remember that "one bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." I would also like to supplement my suggestion with a hint that when Mr. Randall decides to try the experiment, he begins with a CATHOLIC. It will accelerate the sport considerably, and I can assure him that the fact that he is not "pleasing to look upon" will have no bearing on the matter.

To be serious, Mr. Randall, you are only *presuming* the conversion of the wife. And what if you fail? And the offspring? No, Sir; where it is possible, marry a woman who is already a convert to Freethought, and the children will all be soldiers under the same flag; but marry a woman who is intellectually a stranger to your ideals, in the hope that you will subsequently convert her, and you lay yourself open to almost certain domestic friction, followed by silent regret. Charles Dickens was conscious of this when he wrote *David Copperfield*, and he expressed it in a beautiful passage, which I cannot now recall, but which some readers of this letter may remember.

"Spreading the gospel" is a good thing for those who are independent in more ways than one; but there are many of us who have constantly to remember that if we used enough rope we should hang ourselves.

In conclusion, the progress of Freethought largely depends upon the sociability of its devotees. Freethinkers *should* be friends. In the "To Correspondents" column of the *Freethinker* there is a note of personal goodwill such as I have not noticed in any other journal. To this note of fellow-feeling the *Freethinker* will owe its future development. Apologising for this tax upon the patience of yourself and readers, I am,

INFANT.

THANK GOD!

Has this God good sense?

Not always.—He creates his own onemies and plots against himself. Nothing lives except in accordance with his will, and yet the devils do not die.

What is the matter with this God? Well, sometimes he is foolish—sometimes he is cruel, and sometimes he is insane.

Does this God exist? Is there any intelligence back of Nature? Is there any being among the stars who pities the suffering children of men?

We do not know.

Shall we thank Nature?

Does Nature care for us more than for leaves, or grass, or flies?

Does Nature know that we exist? We do not know.

But we do know that Nature is going to murder us all.

Why should we thank Nature? If we thank God or Nature for the sunshine and rain, for health and happiness, whom shall we curse for famine and pestilence, for earthquake and cyclone—for disease and death.

—Ingersoll.

Obituary.

I HAVE to record the death of William Steele, a veteran Freethinker, who, at the age of 65, passed away after three weeks' illness on Wednesday, March 22. Our old friend had been a member of the N. S. S. since January 9, 1883, and no member could possibly fight harder against the powers of ignorance and superstition than he had up to the last. He was a firm friend of the late Mr. Bradlaugh, and assisted him in his many struggles to the full extent of his means and ability. He had been a constant subscriber to the *Freethinker*, and had over twenty-five years' back numbers carefully piled up in his bookcase, together with all the numbers of the *National Reformer*. He had been the medium whereby the light has been introduced into this benighted North of Ireland where his personal influence could reach, and beyond that limit many of the books and pamphlets which he distributed found their way. He was often approached by the broadcloth fraternity, but his quick wit and keen logic were too much for his assailants, who had to retire beaten and baffled. He maintained his Freethought principles to the very end, and expressed a wish shortly before his death that the Secular Burial Service be read over his grave; but unfortunately this wish was not complied with, there being no Freethought representative here, and Freethinking friends lacked the confidence to perform this duty. He leaves a widow (who is also a Freethinker) and a daughter of 14 years to mourn his loss.—M. Cook.

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.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 3.15. Religious Freethought Parliament: Henry L. Woods, "Charles Dickens"; 7.30. Conversazione for Members and Friends.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15. C. Cohen.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, April 6, at 8, E. V. Deakin, a Paper.

FALLSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30. Friends Adult School Handbell Ringers.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, H. P. Ward, "After Death—What?"; 6.30, "Marriage and Divorce: a Freethought View." Committee meets at 1.30 p.m.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchie-hall-street): Monday, April 3, at 8 p.m., Miss Pettigrew, "The Future of Woman."

LEEDS (Advanced Literature Depot, 61 Portland-crescent): 8, Important business meeting. Saturday, April 3, at 8, Meeting to initiate Junior Debating Society. All young advanced thinkers cordially invited.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone Gate): 6.30. Sunday School Operetta.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, W. C. Schweizer, "Pagan Philosophy Contrasted with Christian Theology"; 7, J. Arnold Sharpley, "An Atheist's Appreciation of Jesus of Nazareth." Monday, March 3, at 8, Rationalist Debating Society: Tom Pacey, "Some Social Superstitions." Tuesday, March 4, at 8, Social and Dance.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 6.30. W. Sanders, "Some Topics of the Hour."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Royal Assembly Hall, Ingham-street, off Mile End-road, near Railway Station): 3, G. W. Foote, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible: With Some Remarks on Dr. Torrey"; 7, "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan."

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