

# THE Freethinker

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*If we are born for heaven, we are lost for earth.*—  
FEUERBACH.

## The Japanese Spirit.

*The Japanese Spirit.* By Okakura-Yoshisaburo. With an Introduction by George Meredith. London: Constable & Co.

FOR the first time in modern history the East has stood up and defied the West, facing armies with armies, meeting navies with navies, and answering the roar of cannon with the roar of other cannon. Japan's war with Russia is the first clear sign that the Orient is awakening. Asia is breaking with the old policy of passive submission to Europe. She recognises that the victories of European arms were not won by magic, and she is acquiring the science of destruction which enabled a handful of whites to cow and rule a horde of yellow or dusky people. Of course the awakening of Asia means more than this, but it means this first of all; and as fighting power has come to be regarded as a test of modern civilisation, it is natural that the prowess of Japan by land and sea should excite the wondering interest of the Christian world. In England the press has lately been teeming with books, some of them of real importance, on the history and characteristics of Japan; and one of the most instructive and fascinating is the work before us on *The Japanese Spirit* by Professor Okakura. It aims at presenting only the essence of the subject; it is written with charming modesty and candor; and it has the very unusual advantage of an Introduction from the pen of Mr. George Meredith.

"These Lectures," Mr. Meredith says, "by a son of the land, delivered at the University of London, are compendious and explicit in a degree that enables us to form a summary of much that has been otherwise partially obscure, so that we get nearer to the secret of this singular race than we have had the chance of doing before." This is high praise and recommendation, and (if we may say so) it seems to be thoroughly deserved.

Mr. Meredith turns a brilliant searchlight over the whole area covered by the Lectures, but very rapidly, so that we catch a few specially salient features. He remarks on the advantage the Japanese have had in "possessing a native Nobility who were true nobles, not invaders and subjugators." These nobles were men of sensitive honor, who slew themselves sooner than bear the least disgrace. Bushido, or the "way of the Samurai," is a "splendid conception of duty" which has been "displayed again and again at Port Arthur and on the fields of Manchuria, not only by the Samurai, but by a glorious commonalty imbued with the spirit of their chiefs." Such a people "must be unconquerable even if temporarily defeated," and that, as Mr. Meredith says, is not the present prospect of things. "Who," he asks, "could conquer a race of forty millions having the contempt of death when their country's inviolability is at stake!" He speaks of the Japanese as "Spartans in the fight, Stoics in their grief." Finally he has a pregnant word on the danger that some critics foresee from the victory of Japan.

"Concerning the foolish talk of the Yellow Peril, a  
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studious perusal of this book will show it to be fatuous. It is at least unlikely in an extreme degree that such a people, reckless of life though they be in front of danger, but Epicurean in their wholesome love of pleasure and pursuit of beauty, will be inflated to insanity by the success of their arms. Those writers who have seen something malignant and inimical behind their gracious politeness, have been mere visitors on the fringe of the land, alarmed by their skill in manufacturing weapons and explosives—for they are inventive as well as imitative, a people not to be trifled with; but this was because their instinct as well as their emissaries warned them of a pressing need for the means of war. Japan and China have had experience of Western nations, and that is at the conscience of suspicious minds."

This is expressed with Mr. Meredith's usual force and felicity. We have said it in a cruder way ourselves. If Japan has become a foremost expert in the art of slaughter it is because she has been driven into it by Christian example. She might exclaim with Shylock—"The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

Professor Okakura promptly states his own view that his countrymen are "fighting for the cause of wronged justice and menaced liberty." They are "showing the world page after page of patriotism and loyalty, written unmistakably in the crimson letters of heroes' blood." And what is their animating principle?

"Governed from time immemorial by the immediate descendants of the Sun-Goddess, whose merciful rule early taught us to offer them our voluntary tribute of devotion and love, we have based our social system on filial piety, that necessary outcome of ancestor-worship which presupposes altruism on the one hand, and on the other loyalty and love of the fatherland."

Buddhist metaphysics, and Confucian and Taoist philosophy, during fifteen centuries, have been "fused together in the furnace of Shintoism." And what is Shintoism? It appears to be a nature-religion, with a mild mythology and animism, and a strong practical side in the form of the deification and worship of great and good men who become "the guardian spirits of families, of clans, or the country." Buddhism is the religion of "night and gloomy death," while Shintoism is the "cult of daylight and the living dead." A very curious, tender, and even pathetic instance is given of how this works out in what we may call household religion.

"When the father of a Japanese family begins a journey of any length, the raised part of his room will be made sacred to his memory during his temporary absence; his family will gather in front of it and think of him, expressing their devotion and love in words and gifts in kind. In the hundreds and thousands of families that have some one or other of their members fighting for the nation in this dreadful war with Russia, there will not be even one solitary house where the mother, wife, or sister is not practising this simple rite of endearment for the beloved and absent member of the family. And if he die on the field, the mental attitude of the poor bereaved towards the never-returning does not show any substantial difference. The temporarily departed will now be regarded as the forever departed, but not as lost or passed away. His essential self is ever present, only not visible. Daily offerings and salutations continue in exactly the same way as when he was absent for a time. Even in the mind of the modern Japanese with its extremely Agnostic tendencies, there is still one corner sacred to this inhe-

rited feeling. You could sooner convince an ordinary European of the non-existence of a personal God. When it gets dusk every bird knows whither to wing its way home. Even so with us all when the night of Death spreads its dark folds over our mortal mind."

The last image is very beautiful, and the whole passage is well worth attention. The Japanese have not yet learnt the art of "Mafficking," and it is to be hoped they never will; their thought of the absent ones "at the front" is more loving and less egotistical. And if they fondly think of the absent ones, even when dead on the battlefield, as still somehow present, is not this a more pathetic superstition than that of the ordinary Christian who eaves his dead "with the Lord" in heaven, and soon forgets all about them in consequence of the immeasurable distance? Nay, is not the sentiment an adumbration of what will obtain under the Religion of Humanity, which Paine foresaw, and Shelley foreshadowed, and Comte tried to elaborate? For the essential life of the dead is still with us whether we recognise it or not, and the systematic recollection of them strengthens and purifies our own moral natures.

Let us now turn to something which is indicated in the last quotation—namely, the agnostic tendency of the modern Japanese mind. Some time ago we noted the statement of an American missionary that modern Japan, through its system of secular education, is training up a nation of Agnostics and Atheists. Much the same thing is implied in the following extract from Professor Okakura:—

"But ask a modern Japanese of ordinary education in the broad daylight of life, if he believes in a God in the Christian sense; or in Buddha as the creator; or in the Shinto deities; or else in any other personal agency or agencies, as originating and presiding over the universe; and you would immediately get an answer in the negative in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. Do you ask why? First, because our school education throughout its whole course has, ever since its re-establishment thirty-five years ago, been altogether free from any teaching of a denominational nature. The ethical foundations necessary for the building up of character are imparted through an adequate commentary on the moral sayings and maxims derived mostly from Chinese classics. Secondly, because the little knowledge about natural science which we obtain at school seems to make it impossible to anchor our rational selves on anything other than an impersonal law. Thirdly, because we do not see any convincing reason why morals should be based on the teaching of a special denomination, in face of the fact that we can be upright and brave without the help of a creed with a God or deities at its other end. So, for the average mind of the educated Japanese something like modern scientific agnosticism, with a strong tendency towards the materialistic monism of recent times, is just what pleases and satisfies it most."

Now this is a highly important passage. It throws a flood of light on a great problem. Is morality possible without supernaturalism? The educated Japanese believe that it is, and all the Japanese are now more or less educated. The vast majority of the Russians, only a quarter of whom have any education at all, believe that it is not. Have the Russians, then, shown themselves braver, more devoted, more truthful, and more humane than the Japanese? The whole civilised world knows that they have not. From every point of view the Japanese have demonstrated their superiority. And this lesson is gradually sinking into the minds of the Western nations. For this reason, therefore, we have repeatedly said that the success of Japan not only alters the balance of political power, but likewise alters the balance of religious argument. If a Heathen nation can beat a Christian nation in war, and also outshine it in moral as well as intellectual comparison, what will be the fate of Christian pretensions?

We should like to quote further, if space permitted, from this very interesting volume. We heartily commend it to our readers' attention. It deserves to be widely read by all who are concerned with the deeper problems of civilisation.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Religion in Russia.

THE Imperial Ukase granting liberty of religious worship to all classes in Russia—with the exception of the Jews—must be regarded, from any point of view, as a departure of the most momentous kind. Whether it will be applied in a proper spirit yet remains to be seen. In "Holy Russia" laws and regulations frequently undergo strange transformations between promulgation and application, and it would be far from unprecedented if the liberty allowed by the Ukase becomes greatly curtailed in operation. The orthodox clergy may safely be trusted to work against it, and those officials who have been in the habit of taking bribes from heterodox religionists will not willingly relinquish a source of profitable income.

One thing is certain. If the decree is properly carried out it is bound to bring a step nearer the downfall of the Russian autocracy. Not because the Russian dissenting sects are such a valuable national asset as English Dissenters, misled by a name, seem to imagine, but chiefly because the air of larger mental freedom produced by the change will bring this about. Liberal ideas that have hitherto been bound to live underground will come out in the light of day, and there will be seen a fresh application of a very old truth—namely, that it is not a revolution of hunger or of despair that an autocracy need fear, but a revolution of ideas. Every successful social revolution has been preceded by an intellectual revolution, and Russia will not be found to be an exception to this general rule. The recognition of the right to embrace *any* religion—that is, to reject all but one—must before long lead to the further right to reject all of them; and, with this, one chapter of Russian history will be closed.

For, hitherto, the Russian rulers have, since Christianity became the religion of Russia, gone upon the perfectly intelligible lines of treating faith in their own special form of Christianity and loyalty to themselves as one and the same thing. And events have quite justified this procedure. To an end all governments, as all other things, must come sooner or later; but anyone who carefully studies the history of Russia will realise that nothing but the religious instruction impressed upon the Russian people for now over nine centuries could have made the present Russian autocracy possible. No error is greater than that of believing that mere force can ever keep a people in permanent subjection. A strong military force may succeed in this for a time, but it is never successful for long. Wherever this has been tried we can trace either a rapid collapse or a transference of power to another party in the State, which in turn enjoys but temporary prosperity. Every form of government, to be permanent, must rest upon the avowed or tacit assent of the people; and in Russia the Christian Church, and that alone, with its army of priests, black and white, guiding and directing the minds of the people generation after generation, has been able to produce a mental state that has made the existence of the worst, and most Christian, government of modern times possible.

By its very nature militarism fails in producing a state of mind favorable to tyranny. Other things equal, its tendency is to provoke reaction. A national temper favorable to bad government can only be produced by a spiritual power which has some means of acting directly upon the character of the individual. In Russia this function has been well performed by the Church, as it has been in some measure in every other country where Christianity has exerted a preponderating influence. And the result is that Russian Christianity has succeeded in perpetuating a state of mind that is in many respects identical with that which existed in other portions of Europe during the Dark (and Christian) Ages, in robbing the peasantry of an independence it once

possessed, in producing a condition of almost unbelievable ignorance and superstition, and so safeguarding and perpetuating the autocracy.

In saying this I am not blind to the existence of a considerable amount of Freethought in Russia. And on this only two things need be said. First, whatever Freethought may exist, the bulk of it is to be found on the side of the people; and it is not without significance that those who have taken this side—and, doing so, have taken their lives in their hands—have recognised that the Russian Church was the greatest obstacle in the way of liberation. And, secondly, whether certain rulers or governors may have been Freethinkers or not—and it is said that the late Count Tolstoi and Prince Galitzin both come under this head—they were emphatically of the opinion that Freethought should not be spread among the people. They were to be kept religious at all costs. And this attitude showed clearly enough that they recognised the immense value of religion in perpetuating their rule. And here, again, Russia was only repeating the experience of the world. For, while it may be possible to find tyrants who have been unbelievers, it is impossible to find one who ever taught the people under him to reject religion. Consciously or unconsciously, there has been a recognition of the fact that the only security for physical tyranny is a spiritual despotism. A nation that is intellectually free may, by the accident of circumstances, fall into slavery, but it has within it the seeds of its own liberation. But a nation that is intellectually fettered offers itself as an easy conquest, a prepared victim, to the spoliator and the tyrant.

To understand Russia one must grasp the all-important fact that for the past nine centuries that country has been to all practical purposes a theocracy. Church and throne, God and Czar, have been one and indivisible. To oppose the Czar was to oppose religion, and to combat religion was to be guilty of disloyalty to the crown. Throughout her whole history the Russian Church has remained faithful to her task of training the Russian people to regard the autocracy as divinely ordained and sustained, and its efforts have been crowned with all the success that was possible. A numerous, bigoted, ignorant clergy, "like the odor of rancid oil," to use a figure of a Russian writer, penetrated everywhere, regulating every usage and every belief, and so gradually transformed a people originally independent, and even ultra-democratic, into what they afterwards became.

It is not my intention to enter into any lengthy account of the history of Christianity in Russia, but to point out what the influence of religion has been in that country, and to indicate the nature of the Dissenting sects, which are not in any way identical with dissenting bodies in this country, except in the one quality of not agreeing with the State Church. Since 1721 the religious affairs of Russia have been under the control of what was first called "The Spiritual College," but which is now well known, although not favorably known, as "The Most Holy Governing Synod." This Synod has under its control all questions of religion, marriage, divorce, and, during the last few years, education. Its members are appointed by the Emperor himself, and for obvious reasons. For nearly a generation the chief of the Holy Synod has been M. Pobyedonostseff, and who has thus been the controlling official voice in the whole mental and moral life of Russia. There is no reason for questioning the Procurator's sincerity in all that he has done; even his declaration that the recent St. Petersburg massacres made him feel twenty years younger need rouse no doubt on this head. And there is still less reason to question either his ability or his energy. A strong, able, and profoundly religious man, he has ever since his appointment been the most sinister figure in Russian affairs. His influence has been seen in the number of organised massacres of Jews, the withdrawal of privileges granted to them by previous rulers, the

wholesale closing of schools, and the enforced perpetuation of the ignorance of the peasantry as one of the means of maintaining the Russian Church and Government.

And in all that he has done the Procurator seems to have been acting upon fixed principles, which are, in fact, only the principles upon which the Russian Government have long acted. The sober, educated peasant or artizan has long been looked upon with suspicion by both Church and government. It is the vodka-drinking, uneducated individual who is viewed with the greater favor. How much the government cares for education was well enough shown in the University laws of 1884, which expressly declare that the Government Commissioners in granting degrees must not be guided by the degree of proficiency attained by the students. So long as he is loyal and well-affected to Church and State any intellectual shortcomings are to be passed over. And three years later a further step was taken by the issue of a secret circular to the governors of university cities instructing them to connive at the drunkenness of students, but to sternly repress disaffection; concerning which the students raised a well-merited protest in the columns of the *London Daily Telegraph*, and which then met with the usual official denial.

Much is made by apologists of Russia of the fact that Russia is a country of huge distances and bad roads, and that therefore the organisation of education is far from an easy matter. The plea has some weight, of course, and would account for Russia not being as well supplied with schools as this or other countries where geographical conditions are more favorable. But it cannot cover nor explain away the fact of the Holy Synod and the Government deliberately suppressing educational facilities and closing some thousands of schools opened, by permission, by various local bodies. And there is one other fact that such apologies fail to meet. In every other country the regulations lay down a *minimum* of instruction below which the schools must not fall. In Russia the regulations proceed the other way about, and lay down a *maximum* beyond which instruction may not rise; with the result that in the elementary schools that are permitted to exist education rarely means more than an elementary knowledge of the catechism, and of sacred history, reading and writing, and the elementary rules of arithmetic.

But even this is too much for the Christian Church in Russia. An Imperial Ukase—or rather two, one of June, 1884, and the other of May, 1891—transferred the whole of the schools of Russia to the clergy. Henceforth no one was allowed to give instruction outside these establishments; and inside the education was controlled by a clergy who are described by their own Bishops as a "poverty-stricken, avaricious, intemperate" body of men, and who are certainly the most bigoted and ignorant of all European clergy. In this way did the Procurator justify the Emperor's eulogy of him, that he had satisfied himself, by personal examination, "of the importance of the services you have rendered to the Orthodox Church.....and of your solicitude for the spread of education and the development of religious education among the people."

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

### When Did the Gospel Win Europe?

THE Rev. Prof. J. Vernon Bartlett, M.A., D.D., of Mansfield College, Oxford, delivered a lecture, a few weeks ago, in the Central Hall, Manchester, entitled, "How and Why the Gospel Won Europe." Dr. Bartlett confines his attention to one period of Christian history, namely, "that during which the Gospel penetrated and finally won the Roman Empire." But we are compelled to ask, and to press the question, *When did the Gospel win Europe?* In point of fact, Europe has never accepted Christianity, nor is there any likelihood of its ever doing so. It is true that Constantine made Christianity

the State religion; but that was a radically different thing from making the State Christian, except in name. Dr. Bartlett himself admits that even under Constantine the disciples of Jesus formed only about one-tenth, or at most one-fifth, of the population. They were always in the minority, as they still are to-day. Even at Antioch, one of the oldest and most prosperous Christian centres, sixty years after Constantine's conversion, the Church numbered only about one hundred thousand out of half-a-million. In the third century the Christians were only a handful. In Rome itself there were only about fifty thousand out of a population of a million; and the majority of them were drawn from the lower classes. In one large diocese, we are told, there were only about seventeen who professed faith in Christ. During the second and third centuries, there were no churches outside fairly large towns and cities, the peasants remaining loyal to their own gods and religions. "At the end of the second century," as Mr. John M. Robertson observes, "probably not a hundredth part of the population even of the central provinces of the Roman Empire was Christianised, while the outlying provinces were practically unaffected."

Dr. Bartlett refers, with great glee, to Pliny's famous communication to the emperor Trajan, in which the Christians were said to be exceedingly numerous throughout his province. But we must not forget that Pliny's province was in Asia Minor, on the Southern shore of the Black Sea, and included Bithynia and Pontus, countries in which Christianity was planted early and met with phenomenal success. Even granting that Pliny's letter is genuine and accurate, it furnishes no evidence whatever that the Christian Religion gained ground rapidly throughout the Roman Empire. The facts go to show that it developed slowly and with difficulty in most countries. And, judging by some of the Epistles, we would not be justified in affirming that the Christians in Bithynia-Pontus in Pliny's day were morally superior to their neighbors. It may have been their habit "to bind themselves with an oath, not to the commission of any crime, but against theft, robbery, adultery, breach of faith, or the denial of trust money when called upon"; but it does not follow, nor does Pliny state, that they kept their oath. Even their moral standard was not higher than that of their Pagan neighbors; nor is it likely that they lived much nobler lives.

Dr. Bartlett is afraid to give particulars, well knowing, no doubt, that they would be dead against him. Instead, he deals in vague generalities, and makes assertions which cannot be proved. He refers again and again to the purity and sincerity of the Christian life in times of persecution. Persecution always has the effect of uniting its objects and of, apparently, blotting out their own differences and divisions. Prior to the late South African war, there were several parties and factions among the Dutch people, which often reached perilous dimensions and caused many extremely bitter and harmful quarrels and bickerings. But when the nation realised that war with Great Britain was inevitable, all traces of its own internal troubles vanished, and it was able to show a thoroughly united front. It was the same with the Christians of the second and third centuries under persecution. Their fiery trials naturally brought out the very best that was in them. They were drawn together within the bond of brotherly love under the pressure of opposing forces. But surely union, even the deepest brotherly love, brought about under such circumstances, was no proof whatever of the divine origin and power of Christianity.

Dr. Bartlett makes a subtle distinction between the "Gospel" and "Christianity." By the former he means "the inner soul of the Christian message, as it reached and stirred the souls of men with what they felt to be new and strange power," while by the latter he understands "the body of actual beliefs and practices in which the Christian spirit was able, under conditions of place and time, to express itself

in terms of intellect, speech, conduct, and visible symbol." We are convinced that such a distinction is purely artificial and practically worthless. We might ask, How many souls has the Christian message? Wherein do these various souls differ from one another? Does the "inner" soul contradict the testimony of the "outer" soul? In what relation does "the body of actual beliefs and practices" stand to the "inner" soul, and also to the "outer" one? Furthermore, was it the Gospel, or was it Christianity, that won Europe? These are relevant questions to which the present lecture contains no answers.

Let us come to particulars. Where is this "inner soul of the Christian message" to be found? Does it exist somewhere unembodied or disembodied? If it does, how did Dr. Bartlett get at it? Had he to be disembodied himself in order to find it? If he discovered this "inner soul" embodied in the reported teaching of Jesus, we ask him again, *When did it win Europe?* According to the Book of the Acts, the early disciples did make an honest attempt to put their Master's principles into practice, but the result was a disastrous failure. So far as we are aware, never again was a serious and general effort made to translate the Sermon on the Mount into conduct. It is an incontrovertible fact that, in that sense, the Gospel never won Europe, or any portion of it, however small.

The Bishop of Ripon boasts that at present the number of square miles under Christian government is 40,817,200, while that under non-Christian influence is only 8,782,300. He also maintains that the Christian Church of to-day can claim one-third of the population of the world—that is, that out of 1,500,000,000 people in the world 500,000,000 are Christians, while 890,000,000 live under Christian rule. How utterly misleading such optimistic statistics are will appear the moment we begin to examine the facts. In the first place, the adjective, *Christian*, cannot legitimately be applied to a single existing government under the sun. Take the government of Great Britain, and who has the audacity to say that it is moulded upon the Sermon on the Mount? Among our laws, can you find the royal law of love? Do you find a beautiful exemplification of "the inner soul of the Christian message" in our law-courts, or in the conduct of our prisons? Are our standing army and navy an expression of the Christian spirit? Our so-called Christian governments are armed to the teeth against one another, and it would be a horrible crime against the truth to call them Christian. In the second place, not a single nation is entitled to be denominated Christian. The Bishop of Ripon is obviously under a terrible delusion when he says that the Christian Church to-day can claim one-third of the population of the world. Why, it cannot claim one-third of the population of England. It can scarcely claim one-fifth of the population of London, Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham. Dr. Boyd-Carpenter cannot ignore these facts. The German Emperor is reported to have said the other day that Christianity is rapidly losing ground in Germany; and the same is true of Great Britain.

To return to Dr. Bartlett. If it be true that even to-day the Gospel is not supreme in Europe, what proof is there that it was supreme in the fourth century? None. Even according to so ardent a Christian as the late Bishop Lightfoot, the proportion of Christians to the world population at the close of the third century was 1 in every 150. Gibbon estimated that the Christian population of the Roman Empire before the days of Constantine was only one-twentieth of the whole; and Lightfoot regarded that estimate as too favorable. But surely a cause that can claim only one-twentieth of the population cannot truly be said to have conquered. However worthy and noble the cause may be in itself it has not won the day at that figure. It is true that under Constantine the number of Christians quickly increased; but Dr. Bartlett himself admits that the alliance between the Church and the State under

that ruler was "big with loss as well as gain for the Gospel, as many since Dante have seen and confessed."

Let us pause here in order to examine the testimony of history. Constantine was never a profound and enthusiastic Christian. There was within him, almost to the last, a lurking sympathy with Paganism. He never felt called upon to completely dethrone Apollo. He was an autocrat of the ordinary type, neither much better nor much worse than his Pagan predecessors. He promised to preserve the lives of Licinius and his son; but he afterwards strangled them both. He murdered his son Crispus, a nephew, and his wife, Fausta. He was thus guilty of bad faith as well as of wanton cruelty. Indeed, his acceptance of Christianity seems to have been more of a political than of a religious act. He was an extremely capable man, and of great administrative genius; but as compared with Augustus and Marcus Aurelius, his rank is by no means of the highest.

Let us now look at the Church in this period. Of its ordinary members we know but little; but its bishops were unscrupulous theological fighters. It was now that the bitter controversy between Athanasius and Arius was at its height. Each had a large and influential following, and each was determined to win the victory. Constantine called an Ecumenical Council, the famous Council of Nicaea, to settle the dispute. That Council was a perfect farce, for out of some 1,800 bishops, only 300 were present. The party of Athanasius won by a majority vote. Arius was sent into exile; and the majority of the bishops on his side were deposed. After that the Arians were persecuted in the most brutal manner, while the old quarrel became more furious than ever. But the tide turned. Arius was recalled from exile, and he and his party took their turn at persecution. The Church was rent asunder by its theologians; and the common people took sides from interested motives. During the first fifty years after the union of Church and State took place, upwards of 20,000 Christians were butchered by each other in the name of religion. Dr. Bartlett calls our attention to the Christian ideal of Love, to the brotherly esteem in which the early Christians held one another, and to their spirit of mutual helpfulness; and yet the fact is that during the 1,500 years which followed the triumph of the Gospel in Europe, fully 10,000,000 men, women, and children were done to death to the glory of God. Well, Dr. Bartlett must be a very bold man indeed if, with the history of Christianity during the Dark Ages before his mind, he can say that its conquest of Europe was a blessing to mankind. In his lecture, he paints an ideal picture untrue to life, and ignores all the facts. It matters not what this or that preacher may have said, it matters not what solemn oaths may have been taken, or what loud professions may have been made, if it can be proved from history that Christianity conducted a system of persecution more cruel than that in which Paganism had indulged, and that it not only stopped but actually put back, for many centuries, the clock of human progress.

Dr. Bartlett argues that love to God "constrains to self-forgetting devotion to the service of man." This is a total perversion of history. Speaking historically, there is not a grain of truth in it. And yet Dr. Bartlett says:—

"Of all the superstitious into which some Secularists have fallen, the most patent, in the light of human history, is the idea that Christian love to God diverts men from the love of man, rather than enhances their devotion to humanity."

Through what distorting spectacles Dr. Bartlett must have read human history. We rejoice in the fact that among Christians, in all ages, have been found humane people devoted to altruistic service; but it is at the same time only too true that, as a class, Christians have always been supreme self-lovers, caring only for the salvation of their own souls, which salvation was secured as the result, not

of good works, but of faith. Many prominent Christians to-day are cruel sweaters. Multitudes of our large employers are brilliant members of Christian Churches; but the ardent love to God which they affect does not prevent them from living in grand palaces and driving about in splendid conveyances, while their work-people occupy miserable hovels, and can scarcely keep the wolf from their doors.

Our conclusion, therefore, is that the ethical gospel specified by Dr. Bartlett has never won Europe, while the triumph of organised Christianity under Constantine, and its reign during the Dark Ages, have been a curse, and not a blessing, to the world.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Providence.

ALL religions are founded on a belief in a personal God or Gods, who interfere in the affairs of man, and are amenable to be influenced for or against by prayers, praise, rites, and offerings. The God worshipped under the name of Jupiter or Jehovah, or any other name, is supposed by the devotees to be a personal being, apart from nature, who is all-powerful, and able to see, hear, and answer and bless them. The lowest savage would not pray and make offerings to an idol of stone or wood unless he believed there was a god in it, though apart from it. A savage would know that a stone or a piece of wood had no power in themselves to bless or hurt. What he worships is a god whom he supposes is present in the idol. Of course, a little thinking would discover the fallacy and folly of the belief, but thinking is not a forte of any religion, Pagan or Christian. A moderate amount of clear thinking would cause all religious structures to collapse like a house of cards.

Even the worship of ancestors is founded on the belief that the ancestors are alive and able to help and bless their descendants. If it was possible to trace ancestor-worship to its source, it is very probable the origin of it would be found in the death of some powerful chief or king whom the people believed to be still alive, and more powerful than ever before.

Christians believe their religion is founded on a revelation from God, which is contained in the Bible. In this they are mistaken. The origin of Judaism, from which Christianity partially developed, is vastly older than the Hebrew Bible. All religions, including Christianity, have a common origin, far away in the remote past, and they are therefore near blood relations, however much they differ from one another.

But, in arguing with Christians, we must assume that Christianity is founded on a revelation from God, which is contained in the Bible. To the Bible, therefore, we must go to see what is the teaching of revelation about Providence.

Providence is explained in the dictionary as "the foresight and care of God over all his creatures." The most superficial knowledge of the Bible is sufficient to convince anyone that it teaches that the Deity is a personal, interfering God. He watches, pries, listens, and dogs the footsteps of his creatures like a detective shadowing a suspected man. He keeps a book in which he writes full particulars about his creatures. This is not an inference, but a Biblical fact. When Moses was in the mountain with God, the people made themselves gods of gold; a great sin—a sin that religious people are very apt to commit, even now. After lecturing the people on the awful crime of making gods of gold, Moses returned to the Lord to try to appease his wrath, and said: "Yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin; and, if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus xxxii. 32, 33). The name of the book which God is writing is "The Book of Life" (see Phil. iv. 3).

The book of life must be a very extraordinary one.

It may, perhaps, contain photographs and finger prints of all men, as it contains details of other things quite as marvellous. Hear what the psalmist says: "Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" (Psalm lvi. 8). Here is another gem: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name" (Mal. iii. 16). A book of remembrance is necessary and useful to man; but why an infinite God should want one is a mystery impossible to solve.

The book of life contains the minutest details. This is not an inference, but a direct teaching of the Bible. Jesus Christ said: "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. x. 30). And again: "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. xii. 36). An inference here will be quite legitimate. If every idle word in down in the book, we may take it for granted that every idle look, every idle thought, every hope, desire, and mental curse; in fact, the total life of man will be down in the book of life. And apparently, the lives of other creatures are recorded also, for we are told: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God" (Luke xii. 6). "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father" (Matt. x. 29). And surely we may infer that Providence does not end with the sparrows, but extends to all creatures, including the microbes, bacilli, and germs, which play so great a part in the economy of life and death. Nor are we to suppose that Providence is confined to living creatures. God not only feeds the fowls of the air, but also feeds and clothes the grass of the fields, as the following verses prove: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them.....Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith" (Matt. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30). It is clear from the teaching of the Bible that Providence includes everything.

When God made the first man and woman he placed them in a garden, told them what to do and what not to do. He visited them and talked with them. When they disobeyed his commands he turned them out and placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way to prevent them returning (Gen. iii. 24). God was a familiar friend of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Moses, and many others. He visited them, talked with them, ate with them, wrestled with one of them, and to one of them he showed his back parts. He blessed and cursed in turns, gave them promises and made covenants with them, divided a sea to make a road for them, rained manna to feed them, and drew water from a rock for them to drink. And more wonderful than all, he made the moon and sun stand still a whole day to enable his people to slay their enemies (Jos. x. 12, 13). There is no room to doubt the Providence of God on behalf of his chosen people, for he interfered not only with men, but also with nature and the universe on their account.

Further, the Bible teaches that the effects of actions and conduct are dependent on the will and interference of God, and not on the laws of nature. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus xx. 12). Here long life depends, not on food, clothing, housing, cleanliness, sanitation, exercise, and rational living, but on honoring father and mother, which contains nothing

to nourish life with. Honoring father and mother is a duty when they are worthy. All parents are not worthy. Many of them deserve no honor from offspring or anybody else. Besides, the morality of the precept is not very high. Worthy parents are to be honored because they are parents, because they love and cherish their children, and provide for them, and not because the honor will secure long life. The same false conception of duty runs through nearly all the codes of religion. You are to obey because God commands, and not to do so because he forbids. You must be good to escape hell. Please God, and gain heaven. It is a low idea of duty. The true idea is to do good because it is good, and avoid wrong because it is wrong.

R. J. DERFEL.

(To be continued.)

### Acid Drops.

Mr. Balfour, Prime Minister and author of a plea for Philosophic Doubt, danced the tightrope (see *Gulliver's Travels*) before the annual gathering of the Primrose League, which was held at the Albert Hall, an extremely suitable place for the performance after the recent exploits of Dr. Torrey. Speaking for the Unionist party, Mr. Balfour said: "We were called into existence to preserve the Crown, to preserve the Empire, and to preserve religion." That is how it was printed in the *Daily Telegraph*—Crown and Empire with capitals and religion with a small r, as being of inferior importance. Now we have nothing to say here about the crown, except that King Edward will probably smile at Mr. Balfour's solicitude. Nor do we wish to say anything here about the empire. But when it comes to religion we think we may follow Mr. Balfour a little further. When he poses as a special friend of religion he tempts us to ask what his own religion is. Nobody could find a satisfactory answer to that question in the right honorable gentleman's writings. He is a friend of religion—but apparently any religion will do—for it is the function of religion to keep people quiet and contented; both, if possible, but anyhow, *quiet*. Mr. Balfour, in a candid moment, if he ever has one, might tell the world what *he* believes. It would probably not take him long.

Mr. Balfour told the Primrose Leaguers not to think that religion is in less danger now than it was twenty years ago; and on this point we cheerfully admit his accuracy. Religion is not in *less* danger; it is in *more* danger. And we feel sure that Mr. Balfour knows it. For he is not a fool; oh dear no—not a fool.

The London Missionary Society, whose deficit on last year's working was £17,000, making a total deficit of nearly £27,000, is congratulating itself that it will be in clover again shortly. Difficulties connected with the will of the late Robert Arthington, of Leeds, have been settled, and the Society will soon receive £250,000 for extension work. There is joy amongst the breadwinners of the London Missionary Society.

While religious bodies get hold of these vast sums of money—through the wills of rich men who are in doubt as to their position in the next world, and wish to be on the safe side if possible—religion will live on in a certain fashion. It will not enlist the best brains in its service, and is already feeling *that* truth, but it will be able to hire brains enough to give it a certain air of respectability in the eyes of the multitude. Moreover the money enables it to bribe in all sorts of directions. Even the "glorious free press" has an open hand.

A correspondent sends us a picture-postcard, on which he has written "A Typical Revivalist Harem." It depicts a male evangelist, with two ladies sitting close up to him, one on either side, and three other ladies standing behind him. We admit that the picture has rather a Solomonic suggestion, but our correspondent should remember the motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. These are not the days of David George and the Munster Anabaptists. Religious fanaticism is a much purer thing in our glorious twentieth century. We advise our correspondent to go to the penitent-form. And the sooner the better, if he wants to "Get right with God."

The "Higher Criticism" manifesto from a considerable body of clergymen, which we referred to recently, has called forth many protests. Amongst them is one by the

Council of the Bible League. The gentlemen composing that Council talk to the listening world as follows:—

"They regard the manifesto as unmistakable evidence of the widening apostasy from 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints,' and feel the necessity for bold and outspoken testimony against the fallacious and sadly harmful attacks made within the Church of Christ upon the foundations of our faith. They rejoice in the protests and statements of faith which the manifesto is calling forth from other communities, and recognising this as a common ground for all true believers, would hail with gladness further uninvited effort to resist the encroachments of modern rationalism from whatever source."

Thus the "Higher Critics" are classified as "Rationalists."

A letter from Miss E. M. Vance, which we print on another page, calls attention to a matter of some importance. It shows that the "editing" of Ingersoll by those responsible for the issue of the sixpenny selections from his lectures and essays still continues. When the first selection was issued we were provoked by the publishers themselves into a reference to the fact that the editorial Preface, written by a person of no particular standing in the world of literature or Freethought, actually confessed that the text had been amended in order to bring it nearer to the level of taste affected by the editor and his associates. We did not take the trouble to go through the volume to see how far the process had been carried; not even when an anonymous statement was circulated flatly contradicting the editor's confession. Such a statement was obviously a poor attempt to evade an insufficiently foreseen difficulty. Moreover, it involved the dilemma that either the editor or the person who circulated the evasive correction was plainly dealing with the truth in a very free-handed manner; and we were not profoundly concerned to settle the degree of moral responsibility between them. But now that Miss Vance calls our attention to an unconfessed instance of "editing," which she detected by looking at a selection with which she happens to be especially familiar, we thought we might as well go into the matter more fully. And in doing so we are bound to recognise that her complaint is rather under than over the mark. The case, indeed, is one calling for the gravest reprobation. Words written by Ingersoll are struck out and others substituted for them, and whole paragraphs are deliberately omitted. We say *deliberately* because the alterations are *methodical*. On one side they are designed as an advertisement; on the other side they are designed to represent Ingersoll as a less trenchant heretic than he was. The disposition to make a little money out of his name is modified by the desire to sustain a reputation for "respectability." And the result is a performance of which the "Pirate King" of the musical world, of whom the papers have been writing recently, has probably never so much as contemplated. We believe it has not been alleged of him that he castrates the composers he plunders.

Ingersoll's "Advice to Parents"—the piece in question—was really written in answer to the following query, which we understand was submitted to him by the editor of the New York *Truthseeker*:—

"Should parents who are Infidels, unbelievers, or Atheists send their children to Sunday schools and churches to give them the benefit of Christian education?"

This question is omitted altogether in the volume we are dealing with, thus making it easier to change the word "unbeliever," which Ingersoll used in his replies, into "Rationalist," which we believe he never used anywhere. "Infidel" and "Atheists," of course, are awful words to these bowdlerisers of Ingersoll. Even "Agnostic" seems to be getting too strong for them; for when Ingersoll writes "My advice to all Agnostics" they change it into "My advice to Rationalists." This little trade dodge, however, is not the worst offence. To do wrong for a sheer living is not as bad as doing it for a less imperative motive. For this reason we object still more strongly to the following perversion. "Hypocrisy," Ingersoll wrote, "is not a virtue, and, as a rule, lies are less valuable than facts." But the bowdlerisers could not stand "lies." "Respectable" people don't use such language. They felt that they must make Ingersoll as "respectable" as themselves. So they decided to knock out "lies." Somebody, perhaps, suggested "falsehoods," and that was ruled out too. At last the genius of "respectability" found the right wrong word and inserted "untruths." The force of dullness could no farther go. But it was not *only* dull, it was criminal. If Ingersoll wrote "lies" and you print it as "untruths" you only show that the word "lies" is a necessary one—for you lie. Indeed, we venture to say that this sort of thing is far worse than burglary. Burglars tell no lies, violate no trust, practise no deception. Theirs is a straightforward crime against which there are easy defences. But duplicity and treachery are quite another matter. They strike at the very root of that

confidence between man and man which is a vital principle of human society.

It would be illuminating to see these bowdlerisers at work on (say) Shakespeare—if so bold a writer is not altogether too much for their delicate nerves. When Emilia lets herself sublimely loose upon those who have done Desdemona to death she does not mince her words. They come out round and charged like lyddite shells. Othello informs her that her husband told him that Desdemona was false, and she flashes back her answer:—

If he say so, may his pernicious soul  
Rot half a grain a day! He lies to the heart.

When Iago admits that he told Othello so she flashes the same fierce truth on him:—

You told a lie; an odious, damned lie.

And sound-hearted people who listen to her hold their breath and rejoice, and say to themselves that Truth and Honesty are talking at last.

Ingersoll could not have written "untruths" in the foregoing passage. He was rebuking those who do not believe the Bible to be inspired and yet teach their children that it is. Such persons *lie* to their own children. That is the proper word—and Ingersoll wrote it; and those who shrink from it should just leave him alone.

All the strongest paragraphs in Ingersoll's "Advice to Parents" are omitted. The public are allowed to fancy they have what Ingersoll wrote, and they are deceived. The following passage must have horrified the bowdlerisers, who could not bring themselves to print it—for Rationalists:—

"Why, then, should an unbeliever, an Infidel, send his child to an orthodox Sunday school, where he is taught that he has no right to seek for the truth, no right to be mentally honest, and that he will be damned for an honest doubt; where he is taught that God was ferocious, revengeful, heartless as a wild beast; that he drowned millions of his children; that he ordered wars of extermination, and told his soldiers to kill grayhaired and trembling age, mothers and children, and to assassinate with the sword of war the babes unborn?"

"Why should an unbeliever in the Bible send his child to an orthodox Sunday school, where he is taught that God was in favor of slavery, and told the Jews to buy of the heathen, and that they should be their bondmen and bondwomen for ever—when he is taught that God upheld polygamy and the degradation of women?"

Every clause is a lash, and was meant to be. Ingersoll was a man. He loved and he hated. He was not of the little commonplace people who can do neither. And the little commonplace people, with their smooth little maxims and their blameless little platitudes, should recollect (or be taught if they do not know it) that he is one of their betters; that he does not need their patronage, and still less their white-washing.

The May number of the *Orchestral Times* has an article on "Church Orchestras," in which it is admitted that the baldness of religious services in the "good old times" has given place to a happier state of things, music being brought in to "help the minister in his work." Other improvements are also made. "Every church or chapel," the writer says, "is made pleasing to the eye; it is even warmed, and furnished with cushions, a condition that our Puritan fathers would have strongly resented." Altogether the article shows, though not intentionally, that many things besides religion are now necessary to draw congregations; which is practically an admission that the power of religion itself is declining.

Good Friday in this city had the force of a public holiday with the Stock Exchange and other exchanges, which closed on Friday and Saturday. Some of the courts closed also, though they had no warrant for that course, except to give public employees a day off. The people who do the world's work cannot afford so many idle days as those who live by the sweat of others. The Church profits much by the human proclivity to loaf, its holidays being most assiduously kept by the class of parasites who draw their salary by telephone.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Dr. Macnamara, M.P., who looks after the interest of the Teachers' Union in parliament, and poses as a friend of religious education in State schools, recently stated in the *Daily Chronicle* that he had a very hard examination sum to do when he was a small boy—namely, to "multiply £19 19s. 11½d. by itself." He describes this as "a possible" problem. Will he kindly tell us how it is done? When he enlightens us on this point we may be able to understand the arithmetic of the Bible.

A "Negro Don Juan," as the newspapers style him, has just been sentenced at the Clerkenwell Sessions to twenty-one months' hard labor. He came to England from Sierra Leone in 1898, and has been living by fraud ever since, chiefly on the religious lay. His preaching powers, or some other attraction, made him very fascinating to that portion of the female sex commonly called "the ladies." Through a church meeting in 1902 he became acquainted with a certain family, and soon afterwards induced a daughter to go away and live with him. The police found a large quantity of letters from feminine admirers in his possession. These were couched in the most affectionate terms. One writer threatened to commit suicide if she had to live without him. Perhaps the explanation of this is to be found in the by-paths of physiology.

Mr. Alfred Huntington, after being fined £1,000 by the Liverpool Cotton Association, shot himself dead at Crumpsall Cemetery, leaving a widow and six children to do their best without him. In a letter found in his pocket he urged the children to protect their mother and not to fail in their attendance at church. He reminded them that their duty in life was "first to God." This is another illustration of Dr. Torrey's statement that Atheism is the great cause of suicide.

Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., the well-known lay Wesleyan, is indignant at the idea of Secular Education being advocated by Nonconformists if it means "the exclusion of Bible reading or teaching from the schools." In a letter to the *Daily News* he states his firm conviction that "an attempt to turn the Bible out of the schools would break up the National Council of the Free Churches, and split the Liberal party." Mr. Perks goes on to say "the working classes will never consent to the Bible being turned out of the schools." Evidently this gentleman has never heard that the Trade Union Congress, by more than a million votes to five thousand, has declared absolutely in favor of Secular Education. Trade Union delegates have a right to speak for the working classes. Mr. Perks has none.

Dr. Horton has hastened to say that he has been misunderstood, and that his letter to the National Education Association was not meant to be a declaration in favor of Secular Education. This is what he says:—

"Amongst other things it has been treated as a repudiation of the Newcastle programme of the Free Church Council; and it has been regarded as a pronouncement in favor of what is called Secular Education. But it is in the strictest harmony with Section 6 of the Newcastle Programme, 'that no distinctively denominational teaching or formulae be given or used in public schools in school hours, but simple Biblical instruction may be given according to a syllabus as in general at present in provided schools.' And it does not advocate any system more secular than that of the present provided schools.

"It is true that certain extremists regard simple Biblical instruction, with well-known hymns and brief prayers, as 'godless' and secular. But I do not accept the derogatory term.

"I am persuaded that the Bible teaching and devotional exercises, which nine out of ten ordinary schoolmasters or mistresses would conduct, and actually do conduct, are sufficient to redeem the provided schools from the charge of irreligion. But what I urge is that in the extraordinarily divided state of our English Christianity that is all we can rightfully get in schools supported by public money and under public control."

We understand Dr. Horton now; or rather we understand him a little better than we did before. He is for any sort of education, call it what you will, as long as it includes such religious teaching as the Nonconformists may consider advisable. This is positively charming.

Dr. John Hunter, the well-known Free Churchman, does not see eye to eye with Dr. Clifford and the Passive Resisters. He goes to the length of saying that "the procedure of so many Christian ministers in assigning all their distrainable goods to their wives is such a low lawyer's trick and subterfuge, that it ought to have been left entirely to blackguard company promoters and speculators."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton can write to the point when he chooses to be reasonably serious—or seriously reasonable. His recent letter-article in the *Daily News* in reply to the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett's attack on Secular Education contained some excellent points. One passage enforces what we have said all along in the *Freethinker*:—

"Now, the Bible compromise is certainly in favor of the Protestant view of the Bible. The thing, properly stated, is as plain as the nose on your face. Protestant Christianity believes that there is a Divine record in a book, that everyone ought to have free access to that book; that everyone who gets hold of it can save his soul by it, whether he finds

it in a library or picks it off a dustcart. Catholic Christianity believes that there is a Divine army or league upon earth called the Church, that all men should be induced to join it, that any man who joins it can save his soul by it without ever opening any of the old books of the Church at all. The Bible is only one of the institutions of Catholicism, like its rites or its priesthood; it thinks the Bible only efficient when taken as a part of the Church; it no more thinks that a man can get the use of Scripture simply by reading the Bible than that a man can get priestly powers merely by having his hair cut. This being so, a child could see that if you have the Bible taught alone, anyhow, by anybody, you do definitely decide in favor of the first view of the Bible and against the second.

"In a word, if you teach the Bible in the Protestant way, you are teaching the Protestant view of it. Obviously, a man teaches a great deal by what he does not teach. Suppose we agreed to teach the lives of the Twelve Apostles. And suppose the Roman Catholics coolly said, 'To shorten the lessons we will confine ourselves to one Apostle—a person named Peter.' Mr. Scott Lidgett would very truly say to them, 'When you teach only Peter you teach the supremacy of Peter. And when you teach that you teach Popery.' Precisely in the same sense Mr. Scott Lidgett wishes to teach Protestantism."

Mr. Chesterton evidently agrees with us that "unsectarian" religious teaching is impossible, and that if there is to be religious teaching at all in the public schools it must be the quantity or quality of this, that, or the other sect, or combination of sects.

Mr. Bernard Shaw has a pretty reputation as a wit. We hope the temptations of such a reputation will not be too much for him. He is reported in the *Morning Advertiser* to have lectured the Emerson Club on the dangers of materialism, and to have told them (apparently) that Darwin was not really a great man but only a "pigeon fancier in excelsis." We all know, of course, that Mr. Shaw has settled the hash of Shakespeare; but is he really competent to do this sort of thing all round? Have we at last a critic who is an authority on everything?

There was a marvellous sentence in last week's *Christian World*. In a paragraph notice of the new edition of *John Inglesant* it said that the book is bound to be popular "even though some of the religious view expressed do not appeal to all readers." Does our Christian contemporary know of any religious views that appeal to all readers? If it does, the passage we quote is all right; if it does not, the passage is an ineptitude.

People who profess Christianity often know the least about the Bible. In the last number of *T. P.'s Weekly* the Bible text is quoted: "He who spareth the rod spoileth the child." Now there is no such text in the Bible. The nearest approach to it is Proverbs xiii. 24: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son." How curious it is that Christians so frequently leave accurate knowledge of their own Scriptures to the "infidels."

Mr. Henry James, the great novelist, belongs to an English family although he is by birth an American, and for many years he has been living in England. He is now revisiting America, and will perhaps give an account of his impressions. Meanwhile there is an interesting talk he has had with Mr. Julian Hawthorne, the son of the great Nathaniel. In the course of that talk he referred to President Roosevelt, who is reckoned a great man in the United States simply because he powerfully reflects the characteristics of the average citizen. Mr. James spoke of him as follows:—

"He seems to be a very good creature! He was very kind to me, invited me to tea, and so on. But I wasn't attracted to him. I had had some prejudice against him since the Cuban war—which I hated—in which he took such a prominent part. And his books—those books! And the way he has of talking to the people, his preaching to them, those platitudes, they seem so queer in a man in his position. That sparkle of humor at the bottom of his eye—it filled out the sentence."

This hits off the Transatlantic "Teddy" to a nicety. The American President (we hope our American friends will not be annoyed by our saying it) is no more a Cæsar, a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius than is the British King.

I know few Christians so convinced of the splendor of the rooms in their Father's house, as to be happier when their friends are called to those mansions, than they would have been if the Queen had sent for them to live at Court: nor has the Church's most ardent "desire to depart and be with Christ," ever cured it of the singular habit of putting on mourning for every person summoned to such departure.—*Iuskin.*



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

Whit-Sunday, N. S. S. Conference.

**To Correspondents.**

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—May 21, m., Dalston, a., Victoria Park; 28, a. and c., Victoria Park; June 4, Dalston; 11, Conference at Liverpool.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—May 21, Failsforth; 28, Manchester.
- G. LIPSCOMBE.—Your inviting us to come to Victoria Park to oppose the Rev. J. Tuckwell at your own Christian Evidence meeting is sufficiently comic, and shows you are not deficient in assurance. Perhaps it may occur to you that you are not Mr. Tuckwell, and that "the Bible and the Monuments" has a very remote connection with the first chapter of Genesis.
- A. R. WAUGH.—We hope so too.
- E. E. TAYLOR.—The matter is not overlooked. We shall deal with it at the first real opportunity. Thanks for the papers.
- W. SANBLES writes: "I think your complaint that 'Socialists have only lately fallen into line as Secular Educationists' is hardly fair as regards one section of the Socialist movement—namely, the Social Democratic Federation." We cheerfully admit that the S. D. F. has long, if not always, had Secular Education on its program, but it gave little prominence to that article, and rendered no support when the London Secular Federation ran Mr. Hubert Bland (a Socialist) at a School Board election in Finsbury. Some years afterward the N. S. S. returned good for evil by voting a subscription towards the election expenses of three School Board candidates in London who included Secular Education in their addresses, although all three of them happened to be S. D. F. men. And it is worth remembering that the one who said the most about Secular Education, and was supported on the platform by local Secularist speakers, polled far and away the greatest number of votes.
- A. R. WAUGH.—Thanks; see paragraph. Yes, it was a "grand meeting" at Stratford Town Hall.
- J. H. WAY.—Useful cuttings are always welcome.
- A. RIVETT.—Will deal with it next week.
- A. ALDWINKLE.—Pleased to receive your genial letter, and to hear you say: "You are a constant source of comfort and encouragement to me in this life of struggle." To hear one reader say that is better than seeing excited crowds hurrying to the penitent-form. You need be under no immediate apprehension about our health. We are gradually getting out of the wood, and feel like doing a lot of work for Freethought yet. There is no official Secular Burial Service, though we should like to see one. Mr. Foote's photograph is not on sale at present. It may be obtainable again presently.
- J. GARVEN.—Glad to know you have distributed "a large number" of the Torrey pamphlets at Paisley with good results. We are going on the war-path again, and you may expect some more interesting literature for free distribution. Never mind Christian insults. It is the way of the meek and lowly ones.
- E. OLDING.—The "Myra" who wrote "before Tacitus" about Jesus Christ looks like an entertaining figure. We have not the honor of his acquaintance. Seriously, your informant is romancing.
- J. BLACKHALL.—No room this week. Thanks.
- E. G. ELIOT.—Council Schools cannot, directly or indirectly, make attendance at religious instruction compulsory. The Conscience Clause gives parents full protection if they only avail themselves of it.
- J. W. E. BENNETT.—See paragraph.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- E. PINDER.—Obliged to hold over till next week.
- OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £116 0s. 2d. Received this week:—Paisley Saints, per J. Garven 7s. 6d., Coventry Branch 5s., E. Simpson 1s., T. Wombwell 2s., A. Addy 1s. 6d., Oxhill and Stanley Freethinkers 2s.
- T. ROBERTSON.—Your letter and cuttings nearly took our breath away. You should break such news more gently. Fancy the godly city of Glasgow voting for the Sunday opening of Museums and Art Galleries! Our warmest congratulations to the Glasgow Branch on its share of the victory.
- H. ALLEN.—Enclosures shall have attention. Glad to hear your wife reads the *Freethinker* as well as yourself, and "with pleasure and profit."
- 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.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- 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.

**The Pursuit of Dr. Torrey.**

DR. TORREY'S mission at Brixton concludes at the end of May. Early in June he opens another mission near the Strand. Then he goes off to some other part of the country.

I have not been able to ply the Brixton meetings with pamphlets as well as the Albert Hall meetings, at which Dr. Torrey admits that they were distributed in tens of thousands. The reason of this will not be strange to my readers. I was waiting for something to happen, something that would give the whole matter quite a new turn, something about which I shall have a little more to say next week. I have waited in vain so far, and I do not intend to wait any longer. I must go upon the warpath again, and make the most of the remaining weeks of the Torrey-Alexander mission.

Dr. Torrey must be hunted down. We must give him no peace. He is a liar and a libeller, and he must not only be accused but convicted. I have seen many letters written by him during the past month. They exhibit such a shuffler as I hardly thought it was possible to exist. He feels himself between the devil and the deep sea, and his antics are extraordinary. One of his dodges is to hint and suggest that he never uttered those slanders on Paine and Ingersoll. I have cut the ground from under his feet with regard to the hypocritical objection that my pamphlet was "anonymous," and I also intend to cut this fresh ground from under him. I am setting forth, in pamphlet form, the evidence of his absolute guilt. This will put him in a worse light than ever, and leave him no way of escape. And the exposure of the silly stories of his "converted infidels" will make him ridiculous as well as contemptible.

There will thus be three pamphlets in the field—"Dr. Torrey and the Infidels," "Dr. Torrey's Converts," and the newest one whose title is not yet decided. I shall have them all ready for distribution during the last week of the Brixton mission, and throughout the whole of the Strand mission.

This will be going ahead of my resources. But I cannot afford to lose another minute. I must trust to Freethinkers to supply me with the necessary means, and to the distributors in London and elsewhere to place the pamphlets in people's hands.

This is Tuesday, May 16. I hope to have the pamphlets ready by Saturday.

G. W. FOOTE.

**Sugar Plums.**

A plebiscite has been taken at Glasgow on the question whether the Museums and Art Galleries should be opened on Sundays. The figures are 53,389 for, and 45,181 against. The majority for Sunday opening is thus 8,208. Bailie Shaw-Maxwell, who was many years ago secretary of the N. S. S. Glasgow Branch, fought the question on the City Council for a long while; and it was only when he was disgusted and weary at the hypocritical cowardice of his fellow councillors that he sought a popular verdict. No doubt the character of that verdict owes something to the labors of the Glasgow Branch, which worked vigorously behind the scenes. No less than 120,000 manifestoes were delivered during the week preceding the plebiscite, the hoardings were placarded with huge posters, and a great number of sympathetic letters were sent to the various newspapers. It is just possible that the Branch's efforts turned the scale.

The Bethnal Green Branch has been carrying on Sunday afternoon lectures in Victoria Park for some weeks. Today (May 21) it starts the evening meetings again. Mr. Cohen will be the lecturer on both occasions.

We are pleased to hear continued favorable reports from Liverpool. Mr. Ward had excellent meetings on Sunday, and the collections were much above the average. Mr. Joseph McCabe occupies the platform to-day (May 21). On the following Sunday, after the evening lecture, there will be a special Branch meeting for the consideration and adoption of revised rules.

We have not heard from Liverpool yet as to the coming Conference arrangements. Doubtless we shall hear in time for a full statement in next week's issue. The chief points are hotel accommodation and the proposed Monday excursion. The other points are of a more routine character.

We regret that notice was not sent to us earlier of Mr. H. Percy Ward's week's mission at Coventry. He began open-air lecturing there on Monday in the Market Place, and continues there every evening at 8 until Saturday. To-day (May 21) he delivers two indoor lectures at the Assembly Rooms, West Orchard. We hope to hear of good meetings and good results.

Mr. Lloyd's recent visit to Mountain Ash, in the very centre of the Welsh revival, was what may be called "an experience." He was brought into contact with real Christian rowdyism. The hall was packed to suffocation, and there were as many people outside clamoring to get in and refusing to take No for an answer. Mr. Lloyd had a tolerably fair hearing, but every now and then there was uproarious excitement of the revival order. The Nonconformist minister who was reported to be coming did not appear, but there was a whole army of well-meaning opponents who delivered little revival speeches. Not one argument came from the whole lot. Some of the soberer Christians told Mr. Lloyd on going out that they were sorry the opposition was not more reasonable, and begged him to return and deliver a similar lecture in Welsh, which he said he was perfectly ready to do.

The young men who form the backbone of the new N. S. S. Branch at Mountain Ash appear to be in every sense worthy of praise. They are sensible, devoted, and courageous, and will do excellent work for Freethought. Mr. Lloyd says he felt proud of them. He also wishes it to be understood that he does not resent the behavior of the Christian crowd. They were ignorant and emotional, and "booed" at him for all they were worth, but probably did not mean any harm.

Now that the *Daily News* has declared that the "secular solution" of the Education problem is inevitable it is admitting letters in favor of that position. Monday's issue contained one from Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who is now able to state that there is "a secular conscience as well as a Nonconformist conscience." "Let Nonconformity," the veteran concludes, "stand for comprehensive, impartial justice, and it will attain a respect never yet accorded to it, and command the honor of those who may not share its tenets."

Mr. F. J. Gould has issued in the form of a poster a "Challenge to the Passive Resisters in Leicester." He offers to "debate publicly with any Minister of Religion or any Layman, and maintain the following proposition: That the Passive Resistance Movement, unless it aims at purely Secular Education (coupled with provision for Secular Moral Instruction) is illogical and unjust." Will this honest Challenge be accepted? Is there any Nonconformist minister willing to take it up and meet Mr. Gould on the platform? We have our doubts. Of course it would be absurd to pretend that Mr. Gould's challenge is one that ought to be overlooked. Mr. Gould is not a nobody. His ability is beyond question; he represents the Leicester Secular Society, which is a live body and an important one too; moreover, he is a member of the Leicester Town Council and sits on the Education Committee. These are handsome qualifications. It will therefore be want of courage on the part of Nonconformists if the glove he has thrown into the arena be allowed to lie there.

At the recent annual meeting of the Congregational Union a rider to the official resolution on the Education question was carried unanimously, or at least without dissent. The rider was as follows:—

"That no teaching in religion be given at the expense of the Education authority, and the school curriculum should be so framed as not in any way to violate religious equality." Mr. Gerard Ford moved this rider, which was seconded by the Rev. W. Robinson, of Farnworth. Mr. Ford supported it in a frank speech in favor of Secular Education. The *Christian World* reports it thus:—

"It was urged by Mr. Ford that the Free Churches were not true to their principle if they went to the country as advocates of a scheme of undenominational teaching. How were they going to meet their friend the enemy fairly with such a policy? The undenominational platform would be struck from beneath them, and it would deserve to be. They had no right to impose on Churchmen a policy to which many of them objected as strenuously as they themselves objected to sectarian teaching. He did not think they were wise in endeavoring to defend the teaching of the Bible merely as literature."

The last point is one that we have insisted on all along.

## A Word With Friendly Critics.

THERE seems to be an impression abroad in the higher (to take them at their own valuation) intellectual circles of Ethicism and Agnosticism that the work in which the National Secular Society and the *Freethinker* have been for many years engaged is no longer necessary. They (the aforesaid N. S. S. and *Freethinker*) are, forsooth, out of touch with the New Freethought, and have ceased to be a virile and vitalising force in dealing with the live issues of the age. The giant of superstition, we are told, has been slain; the priest has been dethroned; the old imposing structure of dogmatic theology is to-day naught but a crumbling mass of ruins. We are—like the Russian heroes of the Battle of Dogger Bank—blazing away at an enemy that has no existence save in our own imagination. The Biblical and theological ideas and beliefs against which we are still directing the hundred ton guns of our argument and the howitzers of our ridicule have been long since blown into the eternal ether, and a further carrying on of the campaign on the present lines is a sheer waste of powder and shot. To put it in another way, if we do not turn our hands (and our heads) to some new propagandist work, and widen the scope of our activities, we shall speedily find ourselves in the ranks of the intellectually unemployed. Speaking paradoxically, the work we are busily doing has already been done. Consequently, we, as an organisation, have no future, and members of the Secular Society may at once prepare to occupy a case in the antiquities department of the British Museum labelled *Extinct Species*.

We have little doubt that those of our readers who have been as many years connected with the Secular Society as the present writer has been months must have heard something like the above over and over again. Of course, frequent repetition of a truth—if it be a truth—makes it none the less true. But one is apt to disregard any prophecy the fulfilment of which has the appearance of being postponed indefinitely.

Now we do not say that the spirit which animates criticism of our movement, such as we have indicated above, is not, in some respects, a commendable one. Attached to every reform movement are always to be found men and women of exceptionally sanguine temperament and combative disposition who wish to hasten the lagging pace of progress; who, like Alexander, sigh for more worlds to conquer—or rather, we should say, fret because they are not more rapidly conquering this one world. They forget the old Latin maxim, *Festina lente*. They are usually young. It has been said that, whereas a man at twenty-one sets out with the intention of reforming the world, at forty-one he is very fortunate, and should be very thankful, if he has managed to reform himself. That by the way.

Let us inquire, *Are* the methods of the Secular Society hopelessly belated, inasmuch that it is ponderously bringing its big guns into position to cannonade an enemy who has vanished from the field and left it to shell the air?

This is, of course, to ask, *Has* ecclesiasticism been overthrown? *Has* religious superstition been swept away? *Have* the people of this country been emancipated from the clutch of the priest—Anglican, Roman, Nonconformist, it matters not which?

Have we purged the minds of the people of those habits of thought that inevitably lead, in the long run, to their abject surrender to the mystery-monger in some shape or other? Have we rescued the children from the control of the clergyman? Have we removed from the schools the blighting and poisonous influence of that Upas tree, the Bible? Have we secularised the State? Have we so destroyed religious bigotry and intolerance that an avowed Atheist is as welcome a figure at a public gathering of citizens as the gentleman who has "Reverend" in front of his name, and wears his collar the reverse way? Is it as easy for a confessed Infidel in this

country to obtain a seat on the School Board, or on any local or parish council, as it is for a Church member to do so?

We might extend the above list of questions, but let it suffice. Is there a single one of them that could be answered in the affirmative? How, then, can anyone maintain that there is nothing left for the Secular Society to do? We have enumerated some of the objects that the Freethought party has in view. They are not yet accomplished. Is there any likelihood of their being achieved in their entirety next year? Or next generation? The truth is we have still to leaven the inert mass of the middle class, and we have yet to educate the great bulk of the people to the pitch of demanding—and irresistibly demanding—the reforms above mentioned—not to speak of many others.

Let us not deceive ourselves. There is no question that the holding of a Freethought Congress at Rome—the head centre of priestcraft—marks a new era in the history of progress. But if any individual, contemplating that momentous episode in history, imagines that we have finally and forever routed the forces of religious bigotry and clerical obscurantism, he is living in a fool's paradise.

The present writer has every sympathy with reform in various directions. There are superstitions in other domains besides that of religion. But (this, of course, is merely a personal expression of opinion) we think it would be a fatal mistake for the Freethought party as represented by the Secular Society to advocate officially from its platform any other *ism* but Secularism.

It is the mission of the Secular Society to foster the growth of the secular spirit, to destroy the anthropomorphic personal or quasi-personal conception of God as contained in the Bible, and still believed in by millions (*pace* our critics), as also to wrest the minds of men from visionary contemplation of another world to a regard for the realities of this.

This is by no means all that the Secular Society can do or perhaps ought to do. Let us, however, never lose sight of the fact that the Secular Society is primarily an anti-theological society, an anti-Christian society, an anti-supernatural society. It is opposed to all that is conveyed in the words "ecclesiasticism" and "priestcraft"—to all that these words imply for the deluding and exploitation of the people. And it is a distinction we should not readily cast aside—this unambiguous attitude we hold on religious questions.

The Secular Society has its own particular sphere of work, and how effectually it is doing that work anyone can gather who has observed the trend of affairs during the last decade or two. Without boasting it may be asserted that it is largely through the operations of the Secular Society and the exertions of the lecturers and writers connected therewith—operations and exertions continued over a series of years—that the present extensive market for cheap advanced literature has been created.

The influence the Secular Society has exercised, and is exercising, on the community is not to be measured merely by the extent of its affiliated or paying membership. The Secular Society—year after year—by its lecturing and general propaganda work, together with the dissemination of its literature, is manufacturing free and independent thinkers—men and women who may never become members of the Society, but who inevitably go to stiffen the ranks of reform in all departments of social activity.

There are very few men and women prominent in connection with any advanced movement, or as workers on behalf of the social betterment of the people, who are not practical—if not avowed—Atheists. The very fact that they are so strenuous and indefatigable in such earthly work is sufficient proof that they are not disposed to place much reliance on Providence so far as amelioration of the lot of their suffering brethren is concerned. They have imbibed at least so much of the Secular spirit that they have come to realise the futility

of waiting patiently on the Lord, or of expecting that the Churches will ever accomplish the task of elevating the masses. They have so far got rid of the cant and superstition associated with Christianity as to see that the poor and the miserable and the down-trodden may fester and rot and die in their kennels by the score without eliciting any sympathetic response from God. They have learned that only by man can the salvation of mankind be effected. And it is much to the credit of the Secular Society that it has been so instrumental in inculcating that lesson. But the time has not yet come for it to make any wide divergence from the educational path it has hitherto consistently followed.

Let us not be understood as wishing to discourage members of the Secular Society from giving their countenance and active support to those societies that are attempting to grapple directly with practical issues in the political and municipal world. The enthusiastic and strenuous men and women who throw themselves so heartily into this class of work are but giving eloquent proof of the extent to which they have become imbued with the Secular spirit. And it is fitting matter for congratulation that the Secular Society so often lays the foundation for the life-work of such individuals. It is no small achievement that the Secular Society is instrumental in implanting in so many breasts the swelling impulse of revolt against prevailing conditions in society. We are far from desiring to throw cold water on the efforts of advocates of reform, who, as we have already pointed out, are really obeying the promptings of Secularism. Our remarks in this article have been directed simply as a protest against the assumption—as we think, the unwarrantable assumption—that the work of the Secular Society is nowadays a work of supererogation, and that the time has arrived for the Society to make a radical departure from its traditional method of procedure.

We have observed a strong tendency on the part of some Rationalists and Agnostics to infer that a large proportion of our population is as far advanced on the path of heterodoxy as they are themselves. This is an inference that is not at all deducible from a calm survey of the general situation in these countries. And until the sanguine views of our friendly critics receive a little more justification in the way of substantial facts there will still be work for the Secular Society to do—even on the old lines.

G. SCOTT.

## Correspondence.

### A BOWDLERIZED INGERSOLL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The second series of the late Colonel Ingersoll's Lectures and Essays, published by Watts & Co., Johnson's-court, bears on its title page the words "a selection." It does not mention that it is a bowdlerized edition, or that it is intended for the use of "babes and sucklings," or in any way indicate that not only has a selection been made from Colonel Ingersoll's writings, but that the essays themselves have been "edited" after a fashion to which the courage of the average "rationalist" would certainly not have been equal had the noble Colonel been still alive.

For an unknown journalist to undertake to correct the English of such a master of prose as Colonel Ingersoll, writing "untruths" where he wrote "lies," "rationalist" where he wrote "unbeliever," is simply consummate impudence; and to leave out whole passages because the feelings of some of the editor's "rationalist" friends might possibly be hurt is—well, perhaps one of the "altered methods" recommended in the April number of the Rationalist organ. But it is not honesty, though it may, from the financial point of view (and perhaps, after all, that is to some people the most important), be good policy. Ingersoll was not given to calling a spade an agricultural implement, nor to using vague terms which, expressing nothing, should hurt nobody; and those who cannot read Ingersoll's lectures as Ingersoll wrote them would do well to leave them alone entirely.

I quote from one essay only—"Advice to Parents.—Keep children out of church and Sunday-school"—as that happened to be one I knew by heart, and naturally turned to first, having used it for years in tract form for propagandist purposes. I shall be happy to send a copy to any of your readers who, like myself, are satisfied to read Ingersoll in the original.

EDITH M. VANCE,  
Secretary, National Secular Society.

#### CONVERTED INFIDELS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The difficulty of "putting salt on the tail" of alleged converted infidels has been frequently shown, especially in the recent issues of the *Freethinker*. One more instance may not be without interest.

At the beginning of March the Rev. S. Chadwick, of the Leeds Wesleyan Mission, publicly asserted here in Newcastle that a "zealous infidel propagandist" had been converted at Leeds as the result of some evangelical effort. This was reported in the local press, and I wrote to Mr. Chadwick, at Leeds, asking him to kindly favor me with particulars, or put me in communication with the "convert." The rev. gent.'s reply, dated March 16, stated that he did not know the "convert's" address, but if I would write to the Rev. Mr. Ogden, of the Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Dewsbury-road, Leeds, where his conversion had taken place, I would no doubt be supplied with the information. Mr. Chadwick further stated that Mr. Woolham, the convert, was well known in Leeds as "an agitator and infidel propagandist."

I accordingly wrote to the Rev. Mr. Ogden, candidly stating the circumstances, and saying that one of the reasons for troubling him was a desire to know by what mental process Mr. Woolham had been led to accept Christianity. Mr. Ogden's acknowledgment of my letter is dated April 4—*i.e.*, a fortnight later.

In the meantime (March 25) I received a communication, covering twelve pages of note-paper, from a Mr. Ferris, of the Brotherhood Church, Beeston, Leeds. Mr. Woolham, he said, had handed him my letter to Mr. Ogden, with the suggestion that he attempt to resolve my doubts! This letter appears to be an attempt to reconcile theological dogma with scientific truth; and in due course I replied to the many points it raised.

On April 4, as I have said, I had an acknowledgment of my letter from Mr. Ogden, saying that he had handed it to Mr. Woolham, who would be well able to give an account of himself. The following is an extract from Mr. Ogden's letter:—

"Of one thing I can confidently speak, and that is, that it was by no mere *mental* process, as you suggest, by which he passed into the Light and Life of God. It was by *spiritual* power—through the Word of God—through the Blood of Jesus Christ—through the united prayers of Christian people—through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity. Hallelujah!"

On April 11 I received a second long letter from Mr. Ferris, to which I also replied at length. I then pointed out to him that, while I was happy at all times to cross swords with a worthy foe, my object in writing, in the first instance, was to obtain confirmation of the public utterance of the Rev. Mr. Chadwick relating to the conversion of a "zealous infidel propagandist." I wanted to ascertain whether this Mr. Woolham answered to such a description, and all that the claim implied. "Why," I asked, "did not his friend himself write a plain, straightforward answer?" Why should he hide his light under a bushel? Surely it behoved him, having been publicly held up as a trophy, to give a reason for the hope that is in him.

I had been twice assured that Mr. Woolham would reply; but, although two months have passed since I first wrote, I am waiting yet.

One is forced to the conclusion that this "zealous infidel propagandist" has been wrongly labelled.

Perhaps some of the readers of the *Freethinker* who reside in Leeds may oblige with a statement of the extent of the loss to Freethought by the secession of this "agitator" and "infidel propagandist" from its ranks.

With good wishes for the increased success of the *Freethinker*,

JOSEPH BRYCE.

#### THE "SPECTATOR" AND RICHARD JEFFERIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am glad to see your remarks on the "conversion" of Richard Jefferies. In a correspondence which has lately taken place in the *Spectator*, the editor, after inserting a long account of Jefferies's return to the Christian faith (mostly a repetition of what was printed, sixteen years ago, in the *Girls' Own Paper*), has suddenly closed the discussion, and has refused me the right of reply, to which I was by courtesy

and custom entitled, in a controversy which arose out of an editorial criticism of my book.

I need hardly say that I do not propose to acquiesce in the *Spectator's* dogmatic assertion that the "allegation" that Jefferies did not return to Christianity is now finally disposed of, but that, on the contrary, my disbelief in the reality of the conversion is, if possible, strengthened by the dishonest alacrity of the *Spectator* to exclude the evidence which tells against its own conclusion.

HENRY S. SALT.

#### National Secular Society.

REPORT of Executive meeting held on Thursday, May 12. The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair.

There were also present:—Messrs. J. Barry, C. Cohen, H. Cowell, F. A. Davies, W. Leat, J. Neate, C. Quinton, V. Roger, S. Samuels, H. Silverstien, T. J. Thurlow, F. Wood, and the Secretary.

This was a special meeting for the purpose of receiving the notices of motion from Branches for the Conference Agenda. The resolutions to be moved in the name of the Executive having been drawn up, the various matters were ordered to be placed in the hands of the Agenda Committee.

The Secretary received final instructions for the Conference Meetings and the meeting closed.

EDITH M. VANCE, Secretary.

N.B.—Delegate forms now in the hands of Branch secretaries should be filled up and forwarded to the office without delay.

#### Saintly Sinner.

PILLAR OF THE CHURCH DISPOSED OF AT THE OLD BAILEY.

SAINTLY sinner and sanctimonious scoundrel. Such was Charles Fowls, aged thirty-seven. He was sentenced at the Old Bailey to four years' penal servitude for forgery and fraud. It was richly deserved. He made use of religion apparently to victimise several wealthy people. Of good family, Fowls was educated at Tooting. From a scholar at St. Nicholas Church, there he rose to teacher, and subsequently secretary of a slate club in connection with the church. Twenty-two years ago he became a solicitor's clerk at the office of a city firm. The knowledge thus gained, coupled with a plausible manner and the pretence of living a Christian life, enabled him to enrich himself at the expense of his friends and other people he came into contact with. In 1896 Fowls purchased some property in Church-terrace, Mitcham-road, Tooting, for £825. Part of the money he borrowed from a Miss Dugdale, a life-long friend, for whom he acted as legal adviser. This lady had £3,000 in Government stock at the Bank of England which had been left to her under her mother's will. Such confidence had Miss Dugdale in Fowls, who, as a boy often discussed religious matters with her, that she allowed him to have full control of her financial affairs. For over ten years Fowls had adopted the expedient of raising repeated mortgages on his Tooting property without disclosing the fact that it was encumbered many times. He had also, in the guise of financial agent, prepared bogus mortgage deeds in fictitious names. The worthless documents were palmed off as profitable investments to clients who had such confidence in Fowls that they never asked to be introduced to the borrower. Had they done so the frauds would have been disclosed earlier. In this and other ways he had obtained sums amounting to £4,980 from the following people:—Miss Dugdale, Mr. Sullivan, St. Nicholas-road, Tooting; Alfred Ward, of the Golden Bull Hotel, Dumfries; Mr. and Mrs. Fryer, of Carshalton; and other persons. Between 1896 and 1899 Fowls was in partnership with a City-road stationer, and in the following year he was trading as a broker in Queen Victoria-street. In 1900 he was a sidesman at the West Hackney Church, and was treasurer of the East of London Church Fund. He was also a licensed reader, and for his services to the Church was presented by the Bishop of London with a set of candleabra. Subsequently he went to live in Over, Cambridge. He lived in good style at a house in Newmarket-road, Cambridge, and was appointed churchwarden there. Not only did he read the church lessons, but he presided over religious meetings. The churchwardens' fund, of which he practically had control, was found to have only £3 standing to its credit instead of £120. Pressure brought to bear on Fowls led him to realise on his household goods to restore the deficiency. Then he departed for Bacton, Suffolk, where he was living when Detective-inspector Kemp and Detective-sergeant Ball, of New Scotland Yard, took him into custody. Many of Fowls' frauds were of a heartless character. In the cases of Miss Dugdale and Mrs. Fryer, their losses represented almost, if not all, their wealth.—*News of the World*,

### His Worst Offence.

In these days when sentences are coming the Rev. Cordova's way two at a time, how many recall that Cordova's first offence, that of primarily running away with Julia Bowne, interrupted the promising career of a "reformer?" Such is the fact. At the very time when the reverend young gentleman pulled out with the blacksmith's daughter, he was engaged in the moral purification of South River, N. J., and had just preached a powerful sermon against Sunday baseball.

I have heard all the accusations against Cordova, and it seems to me that this attack of his on the right of South River boys to play ball on Sunday is the only one for which there is no conceivable excuse. The charges he was convicted on were assault and desertion. When his wife put her head in at the door and called Miss Bowne an indelicate name he threw a dishpan and other household matters in her direction, and then deserted her. Undoubtedly her language was calculated to provoke a breach of the peace, and might cause almost any quick-tempered preacher to begin heaving utensils at the crack in the door whence the language proceeded. Mrs. Cordova had my sympathy up to the time she demonstrated the sort of woman she is by going into court and reporting her husband's trial for a yellow journal. I would not expect any clergyman to live with a woman who could do that. Mrs. C. formed the negative and repelling pole of the battery; the positive and attractive point was Miss Bowne, and the two together generated that "terrific force of uncontrollable circumstances" to which Mr. Cordova admits that he yielded. Now, I hold tenaciously that a man should rise superior to all circumstances, but when it happens that one fails to do so, I do not deem myself infallible enough to say there was no excuse, and instead of using all my thought to frame a condemnation of him, I reserve some of it to devote to the hope that I may never find myself in a situation where my own self-control will be subjected to the same strain.

There are certain inextinguishable elements in the human system. One of these is the tendency to get away from an uncongenial person, and another is to foregather with the party who is congenial to one's nature. Mr. Cordova chose the choir singer, a creature easily caressed, and which can be heard to a great distance. Thus he obeyed the elemental force. The plea may be incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial in a New Jersey court, but it is a strong card to play, if I may employ that simile, at the bar of human experience.

But this man Cordova got up in his pulpit and called upon the officers of the law to join him in suppressing Sunday baseball by arresting the juvenile players. He would rather that a boy should spend Sunday in gaol than in a vacant lot playing ball. I like to be charitable, but when I search my interior after forgiveness for Cordova's course in this regard, I don't get a trace. In preaching a crusade on Sunday ball playing a minister can have but one motive, if the desire for notoriety is not it, and that is the sordid one of earning his salary. Woman is a weakness or an "aggerator," but bigotry is malicious mischief, and the case of Cordova is to be summed up in the remark that the law does not take cognisance of his worst offence.

—George Macdonald, in the "Truthseeker" (New York).

### Love in Latin.

LOUD sounds the convent's noonday bell,  
Low sings afield the throistle,  
The prior in his narrow cell  
Reads, nodding, some apostle.

Three monks, who would a vigil keep,  
In spite of rule and rector,  
Slip down to where a cellar deep  
Conceals its Rhenish nectar.

Each bears a bumper in his fist,  
And books—I would not libel,  
But, safe to say, these last, if kissed,  
You would not kiss the Bible.

The cellarer is Father Paul,  
And Father Ambrose lector,  
And Father John, the last of all,  
Is beer and wine inspector.

Each bears a book (but not a bell),  
And, if you read their titles,  
And only trusted saints—ah, well!  
The truth might shock your vitals.

For Father Paul loves Ovid best,  
And Father John loves Horace better,  
And Father Ambrose takes as test  
The love in every line and letter.

And in these pagan psalters set  
Are saints to fit all fancies,  
From Venus, that divine coquette,  
To Juno's haughtier glances.

With bumpers and with books galore,  
What monk need grieve or grumble?  
First sip the winecup's golden store,  
Then read how godheads stumble.

They read of beauties, heavenly brides,  
Of Danae's shower golden,  
And have to hold their laughing sides  
At all these follies olden.

For who knows better Cupid's wiles  
Than these old sinners wrinkled?  
And each recalls a thousand smiles  
When Love's star, rising, twinkled.

Your Cupid, though in toga dressed,  
And fooling Greeks and Latins,  
Is just the self-same rogue confessed  
To-day by monks at matins.

—Cleland Kernesstaffe, in "Pebbles and Pearls."

### COLLAPSE OF A MIRACLE.

A certain parish priest, disheartened at his failure in reforming the morals of his people, devised a new plan, from which he expected complete success. In concert with his sacristan, he set up a statue of St. Joseph with a movable head. The sacristan, concealed behind a curtain, was to pull a string, and thereby cause the head to nod affirmatively at certain points of the priest's address. On the Feast of St. Joseph the parishioners were assembled in great numbers. In his sermon the priest reproached his people with their hardness of heart, and, continuing, said: "But since you refuse to hearken to my entreaties, you will, perhaps, give ear to the words of St. Joseph. Let me ask him, in your presence: Is it not true, glorious saint, that there is far too much swearing and dissolute conversation in the village?" The statue nodded—to the great amazement of the people. Continuing, the priest said: "Is it not true that drunkenness and brutality are disgracefully common among us?" The statue nodded again, and with force. "Is it not true," the priest continued, "that company-keeping is often carried on in unbecoming fashion?" Now, strange to say, the head remained immovable! "Is it not true, great saint," the priest repeated, "that young couples walk in the streets in a very reprehensible manner?" No sign of assent! "St. Joseph, I beseech you, confirm my words; is it true?" At this point the sacristan, putting out his head from behind the curtain, called out: "Mr. Parish Priest, the string is broken."

### A PRODIGAL SON.

Johnnie, not liking his work, ran away from home, and in his wanderings came across the parson, who, with many words, entreated him to return. The boy was reluctant, and insisted that he was afraid to face his angry father. "Do not fear," said the parson; "your father will receive you with open arms. You will be as welcome as the Prodigal Son, and your father will kill the fatted calf at your return." The boy was persuaded, and returned timidly. A few days after the parson met him again. "Well, Johnnie, has it not been as I told you? Has not your father killed the fatted calf?" "No, indeed, sir," said Johnnie, mournfully; "he very nearly killed the prodigal son."

"The girls that sold kisses at the church social so's to get a new velvet carpet for the preacher's house is bein' much praised for their cleverness," remarked Uncle Silas; "but if poor old crippled-up Gil Burdick's girls 'ud sell some so's the old man could raise the mortgage on the farm, wouldn't there be an awful howl raised?"—*Detroit Tribune.*

"Reverend Sixthly is always thinking up some way to fill his church with women," says the friend. "He argues that if he gets them to come, they will bring their husbands with them." "Not bad reasoning, that." "No, indeed. Why, last Easter he had nearly the whole town to hear him preach." "He did?" "Yes. He announced that instead of passing the usual plates for the collection, pattern bonnets from the leading milliners would be substituted."—*Life.*

**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.**

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, W. Gregory, "First Century Christians: The New Religion."

**OUTDOOR.**

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, at 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Thus Saith Torrey"; Brockwell Park, 3.15, Louis B. Gallagher, "Why I am a Freethinker"; Brockwell Park, 6.30, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and Women."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, C. Cohen.

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, May 25, at 8, A Paper by one of the Members.

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): Two Services. 2.45, John Lloyd, "The Romance of South Africa"; 6.30, "The True Gospel." Hymns and Choruses by the Choir, assisted by the Failsworth String Band.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, Joseph McCabe, "The Decay of Catholicism"; 7, "The Welsh Revival."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints'): 6.30, John Rhind, "Science and the Bible" (postponed from April 30).

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market Place): 7.30, Financial Business.

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