

# THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more  
strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.*  
—SHAKESPEARE.

## Hail Japan!

HOLY Russia has been beaten once more by Heathen Japan. The white Christians have been "licked" every time they have stood up to the yellow Pagans. On land the Russian armies have been broken and driven back again and again. On sea the Russian navies have been overwhelmed and annihilated. The Pacific Squadron met its fate at Port Arthur, and now the Baltic Fleet is smashed and destroyed. The Japs waited until they could strike one final and fatal blow. The moment arrived, the blow was delivered, and the Russian fleet was so mauled that one can almost say of it (in Hamlet's words) "the rest is silence."

What a tragi-comedy was the course of that Baltic Fleet! It was so like Holy Russia in this conflict with Heathen Japan. Starting out from the Baltic, creeping along in what was probably a mixture of "drunk" and "funk" to the Dogger Bank, firing in a frenzy of fear at British fishing boats, creeping along again to Eastern waters by straining the friendly neutrality of France, taking more than half a year to reach the spot where the silent deadly Japanese waited for it, and then swiftly wiped out of existence. Everywhere an insolent strain put upon other people's patience, until the day of reckoning came, and the comedy ended as a bloody tragedy. Poor wretched Russian sailors drowned with their sinking ships, or torn to pieces by the enemy's shells, what had they done to invite such a fate? Nothing. They were sent out to certain slaughter by the scoundrels at St. Petersburg, who yet, let us hope, will meet their day of doom.

Who in his senses could believe that the Russians would defeat the Japanese anywhere? The Russian Autocracy, with its hereditary absurdities and privileges, is simply an agency for oppressing and exploiting the Russian people. For that object it has a certain capacity. For any other object it is the incarnation of incapacity. The lie of its existence has eaten through the whole of its activities. During the present war it has not produced a single good general, and its naval commanders have been of the comic opera variety. And what are the Russians fighting for? The common soldier feels he is fighting for nothing. The Japanese, on the other hand, are fighting for their national existence. One and all feel this, from the highest chiefs to the humblest warriors. And who, as Mr. Meredith asks, could "conquer a race of forty millions having the contempt of death when their country's inviolability is at stake?"

It would have been a calamity to civilisation if the Baltic Fleet had met any other fate. That must be our consolation for the thought of the slaughtered thousands of Russian sailors. The world at large

will gain by the victory of the nation with the best brains, the best discipline, and the finest humanity.

What we have said in the *Freethinker* all along is now generally admitted. Even the *Daily News*, which had for long a sneaking sympathy with Russia as a "Christian" nation has discovered the following truth:—

"Nothing is more startling than the lesson which the uprising of this wonderful people is setting before civilised Europe. Japan, it would seem, expects a patriot to be honest in his dealing with Army contracts, courteous even to the enemy, not boastful, not seeking after a secret commission, not yearning for notoriety. Here is a land where statesmen do not make war without themselves sharing its peril and its cost."

This is a lesson, the *Daily News* says, which all Christendom will have to learn. Yes, and a Heathen nation is the teacher.

Christian boastfulness has received a severe check. Listening to Christian spokesmen, in the usual way, you would imagine that their faith had invented all the virtues. This idea is steadily impressed upon the supporters of missionary enterprise. But every properly informed person knows it is a lie. It never had a grain of truth in it. The sublimest virtue—not the virtue that weakly shuns temptation, but the virtue that manfully lives in the full stream of the world's affairs—was displayed by the great men of antiquity. And the spirit of those great men, who lived before the Christian era, has animated the really great men of modern times. Nelson was accounted a religious man, but when he flashed that historic message to his fleet at Trafalgar he dropped all the jargon of the creeds. He spoke as a man to men. "England expects that every man will do his duty" was worthy of the greatest of Plutarch's heroes.

It is in the spirit of Nelson's signal, a hundred years later, that the Japanese are acting. The motives that Christianity appeals to have really no place in their minds. The personal hopes and fears of the individual citizen are lost in the sublime inspiration of his country's honor and welfare. This is patriotism, it is true; but out of such patriotism, in due time, will come the best cosmopolitanism. For true humanity is not born of the weakness of nations but of their strength.

As religion is understood by Christians the Japanese are not a religious people. Long ago we quoted from the American missionary who wrote the *Gist of Japan* and deplored that the Japanese rulers, by their system of secular education, were training up a race of Atheists and Agnostics. Recently we quoted from Professor Okakura who wrote *The Japanese Spirit* and told the Western world that his countrymen felt that they could be "upright and brave without the help of a creed with a God or deities at the other end." This is the nation that has stood up and faced and struck down the giant liar and thief of the Northern steppes. "God and the Czar" has been the shibboleth of Russia. The Japanese care not a pin for either. They fight for their own rights, they have their own code of honor, and they act up to it. In this at least they are intensely practical. They do not understand the wisdom of pretending impossible virtues on Sundays and violating common morality all other days of the week.

G. W. FOOTE.



### Anthropomorphism.\*

ANTHROPOMORPHISM is an ugly word—ugly in appearance, in sound, and, generally, in effect. The thing itself is as old as human nature, and its influence has been responsible for more than a few of the confusions of thought against which clearer thinkers have been constantly fighting. Derived from the Greek words meaning "man" and "form," its nature may be described as endowing with human qualities forces or forms of existence that have no valid or logical claims to such characteristics. Viewed from one point of view, such a practice is in some degree inevitable, and therefore non-blamable; for it is as foolish to complain at the inevitable as it is to sigh for the unattainable. So long as man is man he is bound to express his conception of things in language derived from his own feelings, and there is thus truth in the remark made by one writer that "a non-anthropomorphic thought is a sheer absurdity." Only it is well to bear in mind that our language is largely anthropomorphic, and so avoid the error of confusing our verbal description of things with the things themselves.

Anthropomorphism, I have said, is as old as human nature; and to realise this it is only necessary to consider the nature of the language we constantly use, bearing in mind the fact that language embodies earlier thinking, just as the geologic strata carry the remains of extinct forms of life. We speak of the "pull" of the sun or the earth, the "moaning" of the sea, the "roar" of the storm, the "smile" of the sunshine, an "angry" torrent, a "pleasant" stream—all words which show plainly enough the source of their derivation. Many of these words are now recognised as mere figures of speech, poetic metaphors; but the truth is that our poetry embodies as symbols what once stood for concrete realities. Anthropomorphic expressions are, therefore, legitimate enough, and harmless enough, so long as we bear in mind that our language is largely symbolic. But when this is not done, when we first use a symbolic term and afterwards proceed as though it were a literal representation of an actual fact, then it is that confusion is introduced into thinking, and with disastrous consequences.

In selecting examples of anthropomorphism, the clearest and least questionable instance is found in the sphere of religion. All recent research and discussion have gone to prove the truth of Feurbach's recognition of theology as anthropology. Religions, as they surround us to-day, with all their reservations and ethical and social modifications, no more resemble the original article than the king of a modern representative State resembles the chief of a primitive savage horde. Pure religion exists only among savages, since it is the primitive mind that gives religion birth. And the more closely primitive thought is studied, the more evident it becomes that the gods owe their existence to the anthropomorphic tendency of the human mind. North, south, east, and west, the gods are built up in the likeness of those who worship them, and are furnished with characters that are a reflex of the prevailing geographic and social conditions. No one yet has ever been ingenious enough to endow the gods with other than human qualities, and for obvious reasons. And the nearer we get to the source of religion the more human the gods become; the farther from the source, the more abstract and metaphysical. But the god of metaphysics could never have laid the foundation of a religion. It cannot even keep one alive, with all the influence of heredity to help. Originally men believed in gods because they believed them to be similar to themselves in body and mind: and when this conception goes religions begin to decay.

\* These articles are written as a general reply to several correspondents who have written me lately on the subject, and who must, therefore, take them as an answer to both their questions and criticism.

It matters not which school of anthropologists one agrees with—whether with the school that holds the origin of religion to be due to man endowing the physical forces of nature with an intelligence similar to his own, or to that which believes that the gods began with ghosts, which in turn began with the mistaken interpretation of dreams, mania, epilepsy, etc. There is a fundamental agreement that the gods owe their existence to man's misreading of phenomena that a fuller knowledge showed rightly admitted of a quite different explanation.

And not only has religion this undeniably anthropomorphic basis, but a close study of mental evolution shows this process to be, given the conditions, inevitable. To understand this one must get rid of the notion that the mind of primitive man, because of the monstrosities it gave birth to, was governed by principles different to those which determine the thinking of his civilised descendant. Savage or civilised, scientific or unscientific, the laws of mental life are the same. There are errors of observation, errors of classification, errors of deduction, but the laws of mental life are the same for all. A right conclusion is seldom reached at once; usually this is attained by repeated failures, and the wrong conclusions of primitive man, expressed in his religious beliefs, were the precursors of the more scientific conclusions of a later age. I say "more scientific," because, as a matter of fact, primitive religion was the science of primitive man. As some theory of things had to be framed, our primitive ancestors explained phenomena in terms of the only force they knew—his own volition and his own intelligence. We do exactly the same, only in our case we recognise forces with which he was unacquainted. Causation was not understood, mechanical force was unknown, and therefore the forces of nature were likened to human intelligence, because that was the only force with which primitive man was directly acquainted. All power was likened to human power, and all motion as due to the same cause that determined human motion. From this point of view religion takes rank as a primitive science; it was, indeed, the science of the time propounded at a stage of human evolution that admitted of no more adequate explanation of things. The evil is that these explanations are persisted in when better ones are possible, and then when a changed environment makes the old explanation unsuitable, attempts are made, by obstructing knowledge or by teaching falsities, to create an artificial environment that may give the old beliefs a further lease of life.

One need not, indeed, go back to primitive man to note this anthropomorphic tendency at work. The fetishistic instinct is too deeply engrained in human nature for it to be without its living witnesses. The readiness with which we praise a good day or blame a bad one, the liability to swear at a stone over which we trip are evidences of its existence. Anyone who has occasion to walk through a wood at night time will know how prone one is to read life into the slightest sound out of the ordinary, just as when one is pulling in a boat on a choppy sea the crunch, crunch of the waves insensibly suggest the action of a living creature. Of course, in the adult these spontaneous suggestions are quickly overruled; but this is because we have a host of civilised ideas on which to fall back. Divest ourselves of these, and so place ourselves in the position of our primitive ancestors and it is not difficult to realise that these unchecked suggestions would soon aggregate themselves into definite beliefs.

In the adult these instances are only examples of the primitive savage breaking through, for a moment, the thin veneer of civilisation that we have put on. In the case of the child the veneer has not yet been acquired, and the operation of the fetishistic instinct is, therefore, seen the easier. Here the anthropomorphism is naked and unashamed. Playthings are endowed with life, chairs or tables are beaten, and whole legions of non-existent beings created. Moreover, and this is even more suggestive as recreating the past mental history of the race,



while children are curiously logical, when we can get at the premises from which they start, they have no difficulty in believing in the existence of all sorts of curious monsters, and are quite ready to set the principle of causation at defiance. Lions with human heads and human speech, giants in seven league boots, fairies, witches, talking birds, and transformed human beings excite small wonder, and give rise to still less doubt. One need only realise that in this the child is retracing some of the stages in the mental growth of the race, just as in its embryonic development it has repeated its ancestral physical history, to further realise that we are touching the very source of religion; and that in the child's credulity, non-acquaintance with causation, general inability to discriminate between fancies and facts, and confusion of conceivability with actuality, we are in touch with the conditions that gave the gods birth.

Unfortunately anthropomorphism does not end with religion, and its operations in other directions will be noted in a succeeding article. C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

### Quid Pro Quo.

PROFESSOR A. S. PEAKE, M.A., Tutor at the Primitive Methodist and Lancashire Independent Colleges, is a prominent member of the modern school of advanced theologians. Himself a Higher Critic of no mean repute, he is anxious to keep in sympathetic touch with the great intellectual movements of the age. He realises the enormous difficulties which surround the position he occupies, and is not blind to the fact that the spirit of the age is decidedly antagonistic to the central doctrines even of progressive theology. Consequently, the publication of his Manchester lecture, entitled, "The Atonement of Christ," may be regarded as an epoch in the history of Christian Evidences. It must be admitted, at the outset, that this is an exceptionally able lecture; and if it fails to furnish a convincing defence of the doctrine it discusses, the failure must be attributed, not to any lack of apologetic skill on the part of the lecturer, but to the inherent unreasonableness of the doctrine itself. Had it been possible to make the New Testament teaching on the subject of the Atonement believable, Professor Peake would certainly have succeeded in accomplishing the task.

The lecture opens with a frank confession of the extreme difficulty that confronts anyone who has to discuss such a subject before a miscellaneous audience, "especially when he remembers how many controversies have been excited within the Church itself over this great doctrine, and how often the doctrine itself has been selected for special attack by those who are hostile to Christianity." "With reference to the wide divergence of opinion that has prevailed in the Christian Church," Professor Peake observes "that it is not in virtue of holding this or that theory of the Atonement that we are saved, but by the atonement itself apart from any explanations that theologians may put upon it." Does Professor Peake seriously believe that statement? He says that all Christians are agreed upon it. Dr. Dale made a similar statement in his famous work on the Atonement, and devoted much space to a presentation of what he called the *Fact* of the Atonement as distinguished from all theories. But can Professor Peake tell us what the Atonement itself, apart from all explanations, really is? Is not the very idea of atonement an explanation of the life and death of Jesus? Was not what Jesus is reported to have said about his own death an explanation of its significance? Does not Paul give us a doctrine of the Atonement, and is not the doctrine he presents his theory as to the meaning of the Crucifixion? Apart from all explanations and doctrines, and theories, the death of Jesus would

not have differed in the least from that which has overtaken many another unpopular teacher at the hands of his enemies. It is simply absurd, therefore, to talk about the saving power of the Atonement itself, because there is and can be no such thing.

As this point is of supreme importance I desire to press it on the reader's attention. In the seventies and eighties of last century, Dr. Dale's *Atonement* was deservedly the most popular of all theological works. Edition after edition appeared in quick succession, and there was no small excitement in the dovecots of divinity. Now, as Professor Peake knows well, Dr. Dale devoted the first chapters of his able treatise to an *interpretation* of the New Testament doctrine of the Atonement. But the fact to be borne in mind here is that Dr. Dale's interpretation of that doctrine differs materially from that adopted by other divines quite as competent to judge as himself. Indeed, scarcely any two theologians agree as to the meaning of New Testament passages bearing on this subject. Dale was a great man, with a clear, penetrating intellect; but so were Dörner, and Hodge, and Shedd, and Edwards. All of them alike claimed to be interpreters of the Word of God in the Bible; and they were all more or less at variance as to what that Word means. Is it not clear, therefore, that, even on the assumption that the New Testament gives us the Atonement itself, apart from all explanations, it is utterly impossible to discover what the Atonement itself is? On what ground, then, does Professor Peake affirm that men are "saved by the Atonement itself apart from any explanations that theologians may put upon it?" We hold that such an affirmation is absolutely groundless.

But let us proceed. Professor Peake lays down "certain principles," such as that God cannot act unworthily of himself or out of harmony with his own perfect justice; that He is love, and seeks man's highest good; that his perfect righteousness sets him in eternal opposition to sin; that sacrifice is the test of love's genuineness and the measure of its depth; that the fit consequence of sin is punishment, and adequate punishment; that there can be no schism in the Godhead; and that the death of Jesus must have an adequate cause, or, that no common-place explanation can account for so tremendous an event. Those are his "guiding principles," from which he never wishes to depart. In adopting them, he assumes "first of all the Christian doctrine of God, and then the Christian doctrine of Christ." He also assumes "the fact of sin," without which theology would be poor indeed.

Let us see how Professor Peake builds upon the foundation furnished by such principles and assumptions. He rejects several theories of the Atonement which have from time to time found lodgment in the Church. This is his description of one rejected theory:—

"A certain theory which was for many centuries held in the Christian Church, indeed from the early centuries right on to the time of Anselm, who gave it its death-blow, rested upon the conception of the death of Jesus as a ransom. Jesus had paid a great price to redeem mankind from slavery, and so the question arose, To whom was that ransom paid? It could have been paid, so it was argued, to no other than to him who held those slaves in his thralldom, and that was the Devil. And therefore for a long time, in one form or another, this strange theory held its ground, that the death of Jesus was a ransom-price paid to the Devil."

Our lecturer dismisses that theory without comment, but draws from it this "important moral":—

"It shows us to what monstrous conclusions theologians may be led if they wring out of Biblical metaphors the utmost drop of meaning they can be made to convey."

In my judgment the Professor is excessively severe upon this primitive theory. To the writers of the New Testament the Devil was a person of great importance, with whom Jesus had momentous dealings. He was held responsible for the ruin of



the human race, and for having held them in subjection through innumerable generations. It was to destroy his works that Jesus was sent into the world. The Apostles spoke of believers as having been redeemed and bought with the precious blood of Christ. And nothing was more natural, under the circumstances, than to take for granted that they had been redeemed and bought from under the dominion of him who had made them captives. I believe that this theory is as fairly founded upon apostolic teaching, to say the least, as any of the others.

Professor Peake rejects Anselm's theory of surplus merit, the so-called moral-influence theory, and the Governmental or Penal-Example theory. Then he elaborates and commends his own theory, which is, in reality, as open to objection as any of the rejected ones. It is a mystic theory which cannot be verified by facts. It has never been adopted by the orthodox Church, and it finds room in none of the great creeds and confessions. It is indeed an amalgamation of several conflicting theories. There is much in the Pauline Epistles which seems to confirm it; but there is also a great deal that flatly contradicts it. According to Professor Peake, Christ was God's representative to man, and man's representative to God. He made Atonement by bringing them into harmonious fellowship the one with the other. This Atonement is the ground of the forgiveness of sins and the channel of eternal life.

Now, it is needless to say that we do not believe in the Christian Atonement at all, and that Professor Peake's lecture only confirms us in our unbelief. The very idea that underlies the doctrine shocks our sense of right. Take one expression from a Pauline Epistle: "Him [Christ] who knew no sin He [God] made to be sin on our behalf." That means that man's sin was transferred to the sinless Christ, which would have been a highly immoral act. Take a similar expression from a Petrine Epistle: "Who [Christ] his own self bare [carried up] our sins in his body upon the tree." Mr. Peake does not like the term substitution; but if Christ bare or carried up our sins to the Cross of Calvary, was He not our substitute? We ought to have done it, but He did it for us, and so we are free. Professor Peake admits that "you cannot punish the innocent for the guilty and let the guilty go free without violating the fundamental principles of justice." Then what about God's appointment of his only begotten Son to suffer once for sins, "the righteous for the unrighteous"? Was not such an appointment "a violation of the fundamental principles of justice"?

Dr. Dale regarded the Atonement as the objective ground of the forgiveness of sins. The revival hymn says: "Nothing great or small remains for me to do." The central note is, "Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe." That is the doctrine preached by all the great revivalists of to-day; and their hearers swallow it with great avidity. But it is an essentially and absolutely false and pernicious doctrine. The forgiveness of sins is a vain dream. Sins cannot be forgiven. More strictly speaking, there are no sins to be forgiven. As Professor Peake says, "we seem to suffer the penalty of sin just as if Jesus had never suffered at all." Quite true, we echo; Jesus has made no difference whatever. The universe is now what it always has been, just as if He had never lived at all. The Rev. R. J. Campbell exclaimed the other Sunday morning, "The God against whom you sin is yourself." That is a kind of Pantheism which even Professor Haeckel might readily endorse, though Mr. Campbell does not always consistently teach it. If the word God must be used, I would modify the City Temple utterance thus: "The God against whom you sin is yourself *as a member of society.*" All sins are social in their effect, though primarily they may be committed against the sinner himself. Nothing is wrong unless it hurts society. Sin is that which injures; and it cannot be forgiven. The sinner may forsake it and in some measure make amends; but

its consequences are not under his control, but must work themselves out in society.

On this point Dr. Peake is thoroughly sound. He says: "If one man has deeply wronged another, and has simply repented for it and received forgiveness, he will not, I believe, consider that a completely satisfactory solution of the situation has yet been reached. . . . When the prodigal comes back will he not do his best to atone for the years of agony that he has caused his father?" Of course he will; but the father would never expect an innocent son to make atonement for the guilty one. He would never expect Thomas to bear the punishment due to James and let James go free. That would be cruel, brutal, unjust. And yet we must not forget that the prodigal James injures himself and Thomas as well as the father; and that threefold injury remains a fact forever.

But the doctrine of Atonement, as taught by the Church, has been productive of incalculable mischief in the world, and is doing enormous harm at the present time. We shall not get rid of it, however, as long as belief in the Christian God continues. What is required is a new sense of the greatness and nobility of human nature and of the responsibility of each individual, not to a personal God in heaven, but to his kith and kin on earth, or to himself as a living member of the race. In other words, we want to get rid of the theologian, who deals in dreams and shadows, and enthrone the moralist, whose work consists in studying social relations and in expounding the principles of social conduct. It is at-one-ment with society that we need above all else; and this atonement can be effected not through the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, but through the guilty learning by patient endeavor to become innocent, and to live in the service of all.

J. T. LLOYD.

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### Theological Revivals and Moral Progress.

IT certainly gives one something of a shock to read the kind of comment constantly passed on the orgies of the Welsh "revival"—which now, alas! seems sadly drooping—by many sober newspapers and some otherwise sensible men. An ignorant collier goes round retailing the threadbare stuff about the "blood of Jesus," and singing threadbare hymns to fill up the void; crowds of primitive people are worked up to a state of hysteria; and, forthwith, there is much wise head-shaking at the wicked Atheists whose philosophy is thus confounded, and journalists and others profess to be profoundly moved by the whole episode. Without question, the extraordinary outburst of shoddy sentiment is the most striking feature in the entire affair. To believe that the mass of the journalistic backers of the "revival" are other than insincere is a strain on an ordinary man's credulity. Yet if they are not sincere, what shall one say of it all? Blood and brimstone, hysteria and hypocrisy, would sum up the strange, eventful history. And yet the whole thing is put forward, forsooth, as a supremely spiritual phenomenon, as showing that God is still alive in the twentieth century, though the tone of some of the godly prints would lead one to assume that they had a real secret fear that God Almighty had dropped dead, and that they are now delighted to be reassured by this remarkable evidence of his activity.

If, however, one were to judge from most of the newspaper glorifications of the business, one would imagine it was a *moral*, and not a mere theological, revival that was in question; one would think that Evan Roberts was an ethical reformer, and not a plain hot-gospeller. That is to say, in the very act of enthusing over a "spiritual" awakening there is a trick performed, and the applause of the simple-minded portion of the public is obtained on a spurious pretence. Never, however, was there a clearer case of the absolute divorce between morals and theology



than that of the semi-demented Welsh fanatic. You will have read that at this place or that (with the unpronounceable name) so many souls were "saved." Saved from what? Why, from the flames of hell. Nothing else. They were probably all, more or less, decent people before the inspired collier came on the scene; they will certainly be no better conducted afterwards. But they were in danger of "the wrath to come" before, and now they are safe. That is all. Evan Roberts ladles out the "blood of Jesus," to speak theologically and figuratively, and that is the beginning and end of the whole matter. As for any glimmering of a moral idea, or, for the matter of that, a theological idea, or any idea at all, the poor man, according to every account, is as innocent as any man can be. He simply sings and prays—stereotyped hymns, stereotyped prayers. And when the hymns and prayers give out, he sobs and sighs. So that, in nine cases out of ten, the meeting ends in a glorious hysterical debauch.

With people of ordinary common sense, it is, I take it, unnecessary to discuss the theological pretences of the whole affair. The very notion that a being of infinite justice selects one man to be the vehicle of a message which might, with much more certainty, have been implanted in the hearts of all, the very notion illustrates the crude theology at the back of the revivalist's brains. To the Freethinker, there is something farcical in all these claims to personal inspiration. Evan Roberts says, in so many words, "God inspires me." "No," answers the Pope in the Vatican; "he inspires *me*." And so they go round the circle. Certainly, from the Theistic point of view, it is inexplicable that any self-respecting God should allow his self-styled agents to make "him" ridiculous. Not but that these same agents make a fairly decent commission on the transaction. The old gentleman in Rome, whose predecessors have been in the business for a very long time, does not sleep in a manger by any means. And Evan Roberts, in his own way, seems to have prospered exceedingly since he began to have those struggles with Satan in his bedroom, of which such graphic accounts have reached the outer world.

If the revivalists, however, were in any way serious or had not entirely surrendered their common sense, there are a few questions one would wish them to answer. Why, for instance, should a business-like God have allowed a "revival" to become necessary at all? A "revival" implies that the thing revived was dying. Why, then, should the holy flame or divine spark, or whatever it is, have been let go so low? Thousands must have lived and died whilst things were in this wretched condition. A merely human housewife would be thought very inefficient if, say, on an important occasion, she let the kitchen fire get into such a state that great efforts had to be made to re-kindle it. The meat might get spoiled. Yet, according to the revivalists, God pays less attention to men's souls than a good cook would pay to a piece of beef. He goes at the thing in fits and starts, now and then. There was a "revival," it seems, in 1869. There may be another in 1950. In the meantime, things must just take their chance.

Then, again, why should Wales be the recipient of such special favors on the part of any impartial being? Why is the same tenderness not shown to England or France or China or Tibet? Again, we take a human illustration. A human being who deliberately makes distinctions between his children, showering kindness on one and treating another with indifference or hostility, has a very poor and faulty notion of the duties of parenthood. Yet the revivalists ask us to believe that an alleged Father of the whole human race is specially engaged putting forth great efforts to make a few thousand Welsh Nonconformists more religious still, whilst millions elsewhere are left untended altogether. The essentially egotistic nature of the whole religious idea was never better exemplified. Every man "saved" thinks that the personified consciousness of the Cosmos has been concerned about *his* welfare, to the neglect of the welfare of his fellow-men. Assuredly

the fostering of such foolish conceits does not constitute any moral advance, and the setting of a congregation of simple folk drunk with unintelligent emotion is no beneficial exploit. To rouse men to a noble enthusiasm in some good cause would be to evoke our admiration, but to set men maudlin over the question whether or no their wretched souls are "saved" or not, is merely to keep alive that foolish fear that has so often thwarted human progress in the past. In point of fact, however, the beliefs of the revivalists are pitiable. If there be a God who intervenes in human affairs every humane man will agree that he would be much better employed stopping the hideous carnage in the Far East than in carrying on wrestling matches in obscure Welsh villages with people like Evan Roberts. Realise the farce of it all! There are thousands of mere men who would stop that slaughter, if they had the power, to-morrow. Yes, the "God of Love" is too busy with Mrs. Jones and her coloured lights to attend to the matter.

The truth, of course, is that the only relationship which such "revivals" bear to moral progress is that, immediately, they tend to obstruct such progress, whatever be their ultimate effect. Moral advance is not produced by prayers or hymns. It is a slow growth. You may see men getting filled with the spirit before your eyes; men may find salvation, it seems, in half a second. But you can no more see men growing moral than you can see a child growing from hour to hour. Moral progress is the result of better education, greater leisure, more healthy material surroundings, more refined amusements, and a hundred human factors which have nothing whatever to do with theology. Those who declare, therefore, that Evan Roberts is working a moral revolution are talking arrant nonsense. It may be granted, of course, that men in a state of "religious" emotion sometimes become changed morally; what hitherto figured as virtues or quite harmless amusements may seem vices in their eyes, and, on the other hand, they may attach particular importance to religious ceremonials which before did not appeal to them. But there is no moral growth. That implies wisdom, and wisdom and revivalism are poles asunder.

FREDERICK RYAN.

#### WHEN DID THE GOSPEL WIN EUROPE?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Under the above heading Mr. J. T. Lloyd reviews in your columns my lecture on "How and Why the Gospel Won Europe." The topic in debate is an important one, and perhaps you will allow me to make some comments on his criticisms.

I am sorry to have to begin with just a word of personal remonstrance. Your reviewer writes: "Dr. Bartlet is afraid to give particulars, well knowing, no doubt, that they would be dead against him." Is this fair? Unless he knows me of old as a disingenuous writer, why insinuate an insincere motive under the cover of a "no doubt." Even a Christian is entitled to be treated on his own merits, and not judged off-hand as a member of a class which the critic deeply suspects. I cannot think that this, and the kindred comment that my lecture "ignores all the facts," is just criticism, or tends to the discovery of truth. Rather it is a breach of the ethics of debate. Of course, a brief lecture dealing with some three centuries is bound to consist largely of general statements. But if anyone cares to spend a penny, he can judge for himself whether mine deals largely "in vague generalities," or whether it contains a fair amount of definite statements which admit more or less of proof. Certainly Mr. Lloyd does not seem to have convicted me of any palpable inaccuracy; while, on other hand, he seems himself to have fallen into error on several points. Thus he writes: "They (professing Christians) were always (? in the Roman Empire) in the minority, as they still are to-day (in the world as a whole, we suppose). 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." On the contrary, Harnack, in his recent monograph on *The Extension of Christianity*, remarks (p. 436) that Gibbon mistakes the number attached to the chief church in Antioch for the total number of Christians in the city, who even earlier, under the anti-Christian Emperor Julian (362



A.D.) actually formed the majority in Antioch. And the same high authority, confining himself to reckoning the various regions of the Empire separately, names a number of provinces in which, before Constantine began to favor Christianity, it could claim "nearly a half of the population," and was already "the most widely-spread or at least the most influential religion"; and he goes on to specify many provinces in which it "formed a very considerable part of the population, and also possessed influence in leading circles and upon the culture of society as a whole" (p. 540). In certain other provinces its power was less felt; but these as a rule were the more unprogressive or out of the way parts of the empire. And all this before any Emperor had intervened, save by way of repression often severe and savage in its forms, while all the time Christianity was a religion lying under the ban of Roman law, with the death penalty as a possibility hanging over it.

"In one large diocese," my reviewer continues, "we are told, there were only about seventeen who professed faith in Christ." This applies to Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus, which was no "extensive diocese" (as Gibbon styles it) in the modern sense, but a city-state, including a country district beyond the walls. Further the writer who refers to the few Christians found in it in 240 A.D., does so in order to bring out their wonderful growth, in that the bishop who found only seventeen Christians, when he began his labors, before his death knew of only as many non-Christians in the same area.

I pass now to the chief criticism of all. Mr. Lloyd denies that the Gospel ever won Europe. "Europe has never accepted Christianity." What exactly is meant by these words is not made quite clear. Certainly a time did come when practically everybody in Europe, save the Jews and certain Mohammedan invaders, professed Christianity. This being so, my critic must here allude to a Christianity more genuine than any which the mass of European Christians have ever practised. This fits the general drift of his article, and especially the following admirable sentence: "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." But, then, this needful distinction between nominal and genuine Christianity, which justifies the thesis "Europe has never accepted Christianity" in the true sense, takes all real force out of his objection to my own distinction between "the Gospel," as taught in word and conduct by Jesus himself, and "Christianity," as the largely variable "body of actual beliefs and practices" in and through which Christians have professed to accept the Gospel. Without some such distinction no one can think or speak clearly on the history of Christianity, or of any religion that has a personal founder. Indeed, it was mainly in order to lessen the danger of confusion between these two senses of "Christianity" that I limited my account of "how and why the Gospel won Europe" to the first three centuries. For in that period, during which the Church grew by its own inherent resources—the State being no patron, but an enemy—the influence of "the Gospel" was at its freshest, and was less mingled with elements due to causes originally working outside Christianity in any sense. Later on such alien elements entered largely into actual Christian belief and practice, as was natural, and to a certain degree inevitable, in a world where every organism develops in correspondence with its environment. I hold, then, that it was the only scientific method open to one in a brief lecture, to study the action of Christianity in its early period of struggle with the ruling forces of a world as yet hostile to its spirit and ideals. And I claim to have shown that the Gospel had virtually won the Roman Empire, whatever the numerical proportion of its adherents to the whole population, before Constantine had even published his edict of equal toleration for Christianity along with other religions. His action did not so much create a situation as officially recognise it. As Harnack says: "A Constantine was bound to appear. Only, every decade made it easier for a Constantine to appear.....Thanks to his genius, he clearly recognised and as firmly grasped the inevitable. He employed no arbitrary or artificial means to lay the basis of the imperial State Church. All he did was to give the leading provinces the religion they desired: the other provinces had simply to follow suit" (p. 545).

There are other points of importance on which I would gladly have taken up my reviewer's challenge, particularly as to whether Christ's "royal law of love," as he sympathetically calls it, has gained or lost in moral dynamic by including rather than excluding love to God, the heavenly Father, as conceived by Jesus himself. I cannot but think that Mr. Lloyd confines attention too largely to one type of Christian, the inconsistent, because the selfish, "disciples" of an unselfish Master, who bade men follow in his footsteps. The other type is not as rare as my critic suggests, the men whose attitude is expressed in David Livingstone's

words: "In the glow of love which Christianity inspires, I resolved to devote my life to the alleviation of human misery." It is a type, too, that is on the increase to-day; and it seems to me a thousand pities that lovers of their fellows like my reviewer cannot dwell more on what he and they have in common—even in the things of Christ, the Speaker of the Sermon on the Mount and the greatest exponent of self-sacrifice known to history. But time and space fail me to develop this thought, which yet his review leaves behind in my mind deeper than all others.

VERNON BARTLET.

## Acid Drops.

Alfred and Albert Stratton, the two murderers hung at Wandsworth last week, were about as bad as they make them. No crime could have been more disgustingly brutal and sordid than theirs. But the chaplain seems to have worked hard to prepare them for Kingdom-Come, and we suppose they are now singing the Glory Song in the beautiful land above. Albert's last words to his brother on the scaffold are reported to have been, "Alfred, has God forgiven you?" Not a word about the poor old couple they had murdered. How edifying! What a glorious thing religion is, to be sure!

Albert Stratton, who appears to have been the more easily moved to piety, wrote a very religious letter to his sister the night before his execution. We make the following extract from this illuminating document:—

"I have four letters here. One is from Mr. Crofton (Rev. Mordaunt Crofton), and one from my former Sunday-school teacher, which I am going to ask the Governor to send you with my clothes. These letters are priceless gems, as they have been the means of my turning to Our Lord Jesus Christ. Mr. Crofton, my Sunday school teacher's, priceless letter, and the two chaplains here combined, have succeeded in diverting my course to hell and directing me to heaven. How sweet the name sounds to me now. The only way I have to repay them is to pray for them, not only here, but also in the other world which I am about to enter. I hope you pray for me. I am praying for all of you, and especially for Alfred, as I do not think he has found God."

We have called this an illuminating document. And is it not so? It is full of egotism. The writer is concerned almost entirely about himself. If he thinks of others it is only incidentally. It is really a wonder he did not say that he entirely forgave the old couple he murdered.

No man is known, a wise epigram says, until he has power. And it is just the same with religions. Never believe them while they are in a minority. They will talk then about toleration as if they meant it. But watch them when they feel they can throw off the mask. Then you see how much they love toleration. There is not a Church in the world that would not ride roughshod over other people's rights if it only had the opportunity.

The Catholic Church in England pleads for religious liberty. The Catholic Church in Spain treads religious liberty under foot. It even protests against the opening of a new Anglican Church at Barcelona. So much excitement has been raised that King Alfonso has thought it advisable to send a reassuring letter to Cardinal Casanas affirming his determination to uphold the privileges (that is, the monopoly and impudence) of the Holy Catholic Church. King Alfonso's letter is a long one, but we give it in full, so that our readers may see for themselves what it really is:—

"Madrid, 1st May, 1905.

Very Rev. Senor Cardinal,—With great interest and profound sympathy I have read the letter which your Eminence was so good as to address to me on the 22nd ult., the contents of which go to confirm the news which I had already of the attempt to open a new Protestant chapel in the Catholic city of Barcelona.

"That it is my true endeavor to see this matter determined according to the clear dictates of the text of the fundamental law and the most recent executory dispositions of the same is proved by the fact of its having been discussed some days since in the Council of my Ministers, and of my having sought in conjunction with them the most effectual means to correct an abuse incompatible with the present legislation and the unanimous sentiments of the Spanish nation.

"As Catholic King and submissive and believing Son of the only true Church, I am deeply pained by this new attempt against the faith of our ancestors, and the religion of the State, whose destinies Divine Providence has deemed right to entrust to me in these moments, and I do not hesitate to assure you, Senor Cardinal, that I shall do all in my power, within the attributes of my constitutional Sovereignty, that the projects which your Eminence exposes



may be nullified by my Government, and I implore your blessing, reiterating to you all my respectful esteem and affectionate benevolence.

ALFONSO XIII.

This is the real game of "the only true Church" when she can afford to play it.

Rev. Dr. Horton told the Welsh Free Church Convention that "the sin of the Church was its forgetfulness of the world." It would be truer to say that "the sin of the world is its forgetfulness of the Church."

The London Diocesan Conference, representing a part of the Church of England, which was created by law, and has no other right of existence, protests against the law under which divorced persons can marry again, and declares that they mustn't be re-married in church, anyway. One would fancy that these clerical dogs fed themselves instead of being fed by the hands they are biting. A good whip is wanted for their wanton sides, and a muzzle for their insolent mouths.

The Bishop of Norwich "strongly deprecates games and amusements on Sunday, however innocent in themselves, that tend to destroy the sacred character of the day and its observance as a day for worship." Of course he does. What need was there for him to say so? Men of God open shop on Sunday; it is their principal, almost their only, day of business; and they naturally hate seeing their one chance ruined by counter attractions.

The *Daily News* is, of course, infallible. At the same time, it might look to its French. The other day it said that Mr. Balfour had received some French visitors at the House of Commons, and had made himself so charming that Mlle. Jenny Laure afterwards exclaimed that he was "si amiable et si simple!" Our contemporary was so proud of this bit of French as to print it also at the top of the column. It was "amiable" in both places. But "amiable" is English. "Aimable" is French.

Rev. F. B. Meyer, having returned from his soul-saving trip to America, has been interviewed by the *Daily News* and had a good deal to say about religious education. He informed the interviewer that "a great many people in America are realising that something more than secular education is needed in the schools," and that representative people (meaning, we suppose, representative Church people) are agitating for "the compulsory introduction of the Bible." This idea seems most excellent to the liberty-loving soul of Mr. Meyer. There cannot be too much compulsory Bible for his taste. And then the object of it all! He very plainly shows what it is. He regards "with great anxiety the tendency of the working people of America to decide their problems quite apart from religious considerations." Ay, there's the rub. It leaves the poor men of God out in the cold. And the only remedy for it is compulsory Bible in the public schools. But will Mr. Meyer live to see that in America? We fancy not.

Mr. Meyer chuckles over the flagrant abuse of the Girard Trust by American Christians. Stephen Girard, who founded and endowed the great Girard College, was a Freethinker. He ordered that no minister of religion should set foot within its precincts on any pretence whatever. Yet the Christians have got hold of the thing and are operating the Trust in spite of the wishes of the founder. They have actually set up a divinity chair in the College. And now Mr. Meyer tells us (with evident approval) something else that they have done. "The Faculty," he says, "in seeking a text-book for moral instruction, have come to the conclusion that no book would serve their purpose like the Bible." But it was stipulated by Stephen Girard that the Bible should not be taught. What can the Faculty do then? Why this. "They have taken the cover and title-page of the Bible away," Mr. Meyer says, "and admitted it under a new cover as their text-book." And this fraud is perpetrated in the interest of "moral instruction." And the Rev. F. B. Meyer wears a good fat oily clerical smile.

Mr. Lloyd George is chairman of the Welsh National Campaign Committee, and the Committee has issued a manifesto "To the People of Wales" concerning the Education quarrel. The whole document reeks of a religious faction fight. The Welsh are implored to stand up for "the faith of their fathers." Nonconformists are fighting Catholics and Churchmen. That is all there is in it. Citizenship is nowhere.

Sir Oliver Lodge presided at a recent meeting at the Psychical Research Society, and Professor Charles Richet

lectured in French upon his own "Observations of Clairvoyance." He told of a lady, Madame X, who knows not a single word of Greek, but goes into trances, and then writes out long passages from Greek authors. Professor Richet forgot that the strength of a chain lies in its weakest link. How does he *know* that this lady is really ignorant of Greek? It seems to us that he cannot possibly know anything of the kind. The lady's word is not scientific evidence, and all the Lodges and Richets in the world will not make it so.

After the entertainment afforded by Professor Richet the great Sir Oliver Lodge had a brief innings. He declared that many facts, not understood in the past, would be explained in the future. This is a probable and harmless prophecy. He also declared that we were coming to a period of subliminary power. This is very interesting, but how did he find it out? It has been said that the way to answer a prophet is to prophesy the opposite. Sir Oliver Lodge is answered.

Catholics of Cockstown and Coalisland have been playing cricket matches on Sunday. The Orangemen of Tullyhogue and Grange bitterly resented this desecration of the holy Sabbath. They pelted the Sabbath-breakers with sticks and stones, and bombarded the police who tried to protect them. Nobody was killed, but several were injured, and one man badly. Happy household of faith!

Rev. Dr. Horton is getting out a book entitled *Does the Cross Save Us?* Rev. Dr. J. M. Wilson has just published a book entitled *How Christ Saves Us*. We admit the importance of Christ to these gentlemen—and others of their profession. Christ *does* "save" them. He saves them from hard and dirty work, and precarious employment, and poverty and occasional destitution, and many other ills that afflict their "dearly beloved brethren."

Atheism is responsible for most suicides. Torrey says so—and he ought to know. But the Christians seem bent on putting the Atheists into the background. We have noted many instances lately. Here is another. Whybourn, the Hemel Hempstead draper, who cut his wife's head nearly off and then tried to do the same for himself, had written a letter and left it in the bedroom, and it was full of religious expressions. The word "God" occurred no less than six times. "May we all eventually meet at the throne of God," he wrote. If his estate would allow of it he wished £50 to be given to the Hurst-green Church Endowment Fund. This case ought to go into Torrey's notebook.

The man arrested for stabbing little boys in the stomach at Glasgow is a "stickit minister." His name is Robert M'Culley. He is said to be suffering from religious mania. His case doesn't prove that Christianity is not true. It would have been held to prove that "Infidelity" wasn't true if he had happened to be a Freethinker.

Dr. Agar Beet, of the Richmond Wesleyan College, was practically ordered by the Conference to stop publishing his book on Immortality. He caved in and withdrew the book. He has now resigned his professorship, and the book will be published again. We are glad to see that he has plucked up his courage. What the Conference will do is a matter of speculation. If it does nothing, it will stultify itself; if it casts out Dr. Beet, it will make itself a byword and a laughingsstock.

The bowdlerisers of Ingersoll, who were recently pilloried in our columns, have thought it advisable to offer an explanation. This they should have offered in the reprint itself. If persons have the cheek to "edit" Ingersoll, they ought also to have the honesty to tell the readers what they have done. To alter a writer's text, and say nothing about it, is a falsification—and the short English word for that is a lie.

The bowdlerisers begin by confessing that in reprinting the *Mistakes of Moses* they omitted "the first portion of the Preface" as being "mainly of an ephemeral character." Fancy now! Mediocrities who couldn't write Ingersoll's poorest sentence for their very lives telling him that the "ephemeral" character of portions of his work compels the said mediocrities to cut away the said portions before venturing to present the said work to the British public! Just as though Ingersoll begged them to publish him. Just as though they didn't publish him for their own profit.

These high and mighty mediocrities (it is only mediocrities who *are* high and mighty) credit themselves with "rectifying many misquotations" in Ingersoll's lecture on



Shakespeare. Evidently they have the standard text of Shakespeare in their possession. How did they get it? Do they use the First Folio, or Dyce's Shakespeare, or the Cambridge Shakespeare; or have they made up a special edition of their own? And does it rest upon the principles of textual criticism avowed in the following paragraph?

This is what the bowdlerisers of Ingersoll have the audacity to avow. We give their exact words:—

"One or two liberties—perfectly justifiable and almost necessary—have been taken with the text of the 'Advice to Parents' and the 'Tribute to George Jacob Holyoake.' In one case, where the evident meaning was 'untruths' and not 'lies,' the former word has been substituted for the latter. Then, again, 'Infidels, Unbelievers, or Atheists' is changed to 'Rationalists'—an improvement which Ingersoll would readily have acquiesced in if his permission could have been asked."

How do these people know what Ingersoll would have acquiesced in? The statement is pure impudence. Moreover, it has nothing whatever to do with the point at issue. The point is not what Ingersoll *would* have written, if these people had been at his elbow to advise him, but what he *did* write. This, and nothing but this, is what the purchaser expects when he lays his money out on any author. And those who cannot, or will not, see this ought to give up the pretence of Freethought and join Dr. Torrey.

The explanation that Ingersoll's strong word "lies" was altered to the weak word "untruths" because that was what he evidently meant is really worthy of Dr. Torrey. And nothing is said about the omission of the two strongest paragraphs from the "Advice to Parents." Which again is worthy of Dr. Torrey.

The Ingersoll bowdlerisers announce that they contemplate the issue of a sixpenny edition of Paine's *Age of Reason*, with a biographical introduction by Mr. J. M. Robertson. Well now, this is original. The Twentieth Century Edition of the *Age of Reason*, with a biographical introduction by Mr. G. W. Foote (which, by the way, Mr. Holyoake has described as "masterly") has been in the market for five years. The Secular Society, Limited, published it in the best style at the price of sixpence. More than 20,000 copies have been sold. But the get-up is such that a profit is impossible. This, however, is of no great importance; the publication being regarded as a propagandist effort.

There does not appear to be any particular necessity for another sixpenny edition of the *Age of Reason*, and it is difficult to see why Mr. Robertson should assist these people in a rivalry which is nothing but sheer imitation. However, he knows his own business best, and we are not offering him advice. We simply wish to point out, for his own sake, and for the sake of his reputation which is a Freethought asset, that he stands in danger of being associated with a bowdlerised edition of Thomas Paine.

"Who and What Are the Infidels?" is the heading of a report in the *Aberdare Leader* of a sermon by the Rev. W. E. George. It is curious to note that while the Rationalist bowdlerisers of Ingersoll shrink with horror from the word "infidel" the reverend gentleman says that Jesus himself was "an infidel to his Jewish countrymen." "The infidels of the world," he said, "included some of the greatest, best, and noblest souls that ever lived. They, with Jesus, had been the world's leaders in all that was pure and lofty." We begin to feel quite respectable.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor and Rev. R. J. Campbell attended the inaugural dinner of the Association of Advertising Agents. Naturally.

A newspaper says that the following official notice could be read over the mantelpiece of the coffee-room at Hatchett's, the old coaching hostelry in Piccadilly, before it was rebuilt and modernised: "The Royal Mail Coach will start hence Tuesdays and Thursdays, God willing and weather permitting. The Mail will start on Fridays, whether on not."

The consecration of a portion of a new cemetery was being discussed on a Town Council. "I had my back yard consecrated, Mr. Mayor," a member said, "and it has worn well." He voted for consecrating the whole of the cemetery.

According to the *Christian World* Dr. Torrey "possesses the American gift of telling a story." Especially about Paine and Ingersoll.

Dr. Torrey, the *Brixton Free Press* says, told a drunkard story and "mimicked a drunken man's attitude and speech

admirably." A week before the revivalist prayed that Christ would come again that very night. Fancy the Lord Jesus dropping down suddenly, for the last time, and finding Dr. Torrey giving imitations of drunken men!

The drunken man that Dr. Torrey imitated walked into one of the revivalist's meetings, and was led into Dr. Torrey's office, where he "took Christ." Probably there was nothing else to take.

#### SIR OLIVER LODGE AND PRISON REFORM.

We have had occasion, more than once, to call attention to the peculiar apologies of Sir Oliver Lodge in defence of religion. We are, therefore, all the more pleased to present Sir Oliver to our readers in a much more intelligent guise—that of an advocate of a reform in our prison system. Most advanced thinkers are agreed that our present system in dealing with criminals is costly and ineffective. As Sir Oliver says, "we seek merely to punish, not to educate, stimulate, reform." We brutalise where we should humanise, and degrade where we ought to elevate. And, what is more stupid still, we yearly let loose on society thousands of individuals with their anti-social tendencies as strong, or stronger, than when they entered prison, and with an absolute conviction that they will immediately return to their old and evil courses. Society, as Sir Oliver points out, has a right to protect itself, but it has no right to break a man's character and undermine what little intelligence and strength of character he possesses. In taking charge of a criminal, society makes itself responsible for his future; and no effort should be spared, nor no consideration of cost stand in the way, to turn him out a decent and serviceable citizen.

There is nothing in Sir Oliver's address that will be new to readers of the *Freethinker*, or to students of the history of Freethought. Freethinkers have always taught that the criminal is a social product, to be studied from the standpoint of the interaction of organism and environment, and that the problem of the right treatment of the criminal is to be solved along the same lines as the treatment of the insane. And it may be noted that while the treatment of the insane was left in the hands of religionists, the result was as disastrous as is our present treatment of criminals. We note Sir Oliver's address, first, to show that when a man drops religion his conclusions are apt to be far more sensible than when he mixes his religion and his sociology; and, second, because we wish to emphasise the fact that Sir Oliver is here, although perhaps unconsciously, following a Freethought teaching that is at least as old as the unbeliever, Beccaria.

Unfortunately, Sir Oliver Lodge does not keep his religion out of his sociology for long; and at the conclusion of his address he perorates about a "new state of things" that is beginning owing to the recognition of "real and vital Christianity." Now, with every desire to be as polite as truth will permit, we cannot avoid characterising such expressions as pure rubbish. The only influence of Christianity on the problem has been to retard its solution and stereotype the brutalising treatment of the criminal. The biblical teaching is an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. The historic Christian philosophy on the subject has been that the wrongdoer was instigated by the devil, that he did wrong because of the exercise of his free will, or that justice demanded the infliction of punishment for an evil committed and as a warning to others. And there is not one of these conceptions that has not had to be destroyed in order to pave the way for a more intelligent method. The devil is no longer believed in, not even by his friends, the clergy. The theory of free will has to be given up, because so long as crime is regarded as the expression of an autonomous and irresponsible "will," one might as well flog the sea to keep back the tide, as punish a "will" that is uninfluenced by it. Nor is there any sense in punishing merely because of what has been done. What is done is done, and no amount of punishment can undo it. The rational object of punishment is not retrospective, but prospective. It should be administered, if administered at all, with a view to the future of the criminal, not to his past. In any other than a remedial spirit, punishment degrades both those who inflict and those who suffer. And finally a man of Sir Oliver's eminence ought to be able to realise the absurdity of these phrases about a "real and vital Christianity." Real Christianity showed itself in the prisons of Europe as they existed until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The reforms commenced with the work of the Italian Freethinker, Beccaria, and it was carried on by the Freethinkers of Italy, France, and England, and Christians at best have only helped a little at a work that both their religion and their philosophy prevented their initiating.



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

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

**To Correspondents.**

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—June 4, Dalston; 11, Conference at Liverpool.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 4, Merthyr Tydvil; 11, Liverpool Conference.
- OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND. Previously acknowledged:—£117 13s. 8d. Received this week:—Dr. R. T. Nichols 10s., A. Lewis 2s. 6d., H. Cowell 2s. 6d., A. A. 1s., J. M. Day 2s., J. Bowring 6s., T. C. R. 1s., J. D. Stephens 2s. 6d., Jas. Woodall 2s. 6d.
- UNO.—Glad to read your account of the spread of Freethought in Monmouthshire. Pamphlets being sent.
- R. DAVIES.—We have ceased inserting Ethical Society lecture notices since *Ethics* declined to insert Secular lecture notices. Ethical Societies, if they desire a change, have the remedy in their own hands.
- PICTURE.—We have said before that the *Freethinker* illustrations cost a good deal of money and bring no adequate return.
- G. GROVE.—We are obliged; see paragraph.
- JAMES DALZIEL.—Yes, the Camberwell Public Free Library, under the Borough Council, places the *Freethinker* in the reading room. The only suggestion we can make with regard to Glasgow is that you keep pegging away. The thickest heads open to sense in time.
- J. ARNOLD SHARPLEY.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- A. BUTTON.—(1) We have read through the report you kindly send us of the Rev. A. G. Prichard's sermon, and his meaning seems to be as elusive as the nimble pea in thimble-rigging. It is hard to criticise what cannot be apprehended. It is like fighting a cloud. (2) Yes, Mr. Foote's health does continue to improve. He has been working very hard for some time, and is none the worse for it.
- J. McCLELLAN.—Sorry we cannot give you the reference for Mr. Washburn's statement, in *Facts Worth Knowing*, about God having "told Abraham to lie." There was no need to tell Abraham to lie. He was a ready-made liar. See our *Bible Heroes*, where the old fellow has a chapter to himself.
- A. R. WAUGH.—Cuttings welcome.
- A. LEWIS.—Torrey pamphlets are being sent. Glad to hear you can "do some good with them."
- G. GREENFIELD (Rangoon).—It is pleasant to hear of your propagandist efforts in such a difficult locality.
- W. P. BALL.—Always glad to receive your well-selected cuttings.
- B. STEVENS.—We quite understand your friend's figures, but is that multiplying a concrete quantity by itself?
- J. PARTRIDGE.—Letter with enclosures received. Shall be glad to meet you and your fellow delegates from Birmingham at the Conference and talk the matter over. It will be highly advisable for the President to make a brief careful statement to the Conference on a matter of such grave importance. Further publicity than that would be injudicious at the present stage.
- E. LARKINS.—Thanks, see paragraph.
- A. WEBBER.—Thanks for your encouraging letter. We have dealt with the extract.
- T. ROBERTSON.—Very sorry to hear you will be unable to attend the Liverpool Conference, but glad to hear that Glasgow will be represented by Mr. G. Scott, who will be heartily welcomed.
- A. A.—Pleased to hear that, poor as you are, you consider it "a matter of conscience" to contribute something to our Anti-Torrey Mission Fund. It is good of you to say that you would rather wait for the new pamphlets than have them at the expense of our health; but they are off our hands as their writer, and the question now is merely one of mechanical production.
- J. M. DAY.—Yes, it is true that we have promised to visit Mountain Ash as well as Cardiff, after the Conference. Shall be pleased to shake hands with you at either place. We note your satisfaction at the way we are dealing with Dr. Torrey, and your hope that "those who have Freethought at heart will supply sufficient funds to carry on the work." The rank-and-file subscribers, if we may call them so, those who can afford to send anything from a shilling to half-a-crown, have not quite done their duty in this matter yet. They must do it soon, if at all, for "the sands are running out."
- H. S. STOCK.—Pamphlets being sent. Pleased to hear from you as a recent reader who likes the *Freethinker* well and tries to push it about.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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

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

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

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

**The Pursuit of Torrey.**

MY first two Torrey pamphlets, it will be remembered, were *Dr. Torrey and the Bible* and *Dr. Torrey and the Infidels*. A very large number of copies of both were distributed outside the Albert Hall, and quite as many in various parts of the country. The first pamphlet is now dropped, but the second remains in print. To this one I have added two others, so that we have three pamphlets for distribution during the course of Dr. Torrey's last month's mission in the Strand.

Pamphlet I. is *Dr. Torrey and the Infidels*. This is the famous one refuting his infamous slanders on Paine and Ingersoll. A few small press blunders had crept into it. They were of no particular importance, but I have corrected them in the new impression. I have also put my name at the end in the notification that the author is the editor of the *Freethinker*. Thus I have met Dr. Torrey's hypocritical objection that the pamphlet was anonymous.

Pamphlet II. is *Guilty or Not Guilty?* This is of the same size as the former. It is an Open Letter to Dr. Torrey. In it I deal with his pretence that he never uttered those slanders on Paine and Ingersoll. I prove that he lies upon his own lies. I print fresh letters of his, besides those that appeared in the *Freethinker*, and thus show (as I say in the Open Letter) that he is both odious as a libeller and contemptible as a coward. This pamphlet is of the highest importance, and should be as widely circulated as Pamphlet I.

Pamphlet III. is *Dr. Torrey's Converts*. This also is sixteen pages, but of a different shape, which is intended to throw the Mission audiences off their guard. In this pamphlet I expose the apocryphal stories that Dr. Torrey has circulated about his "converted infidels" in England, winding up with the Robert Pitman case, which is positively grotesque.

By circulating these three pamphlets we shall carry on the exposure of Dr. Torrey, and at the same time make him look ridiculous. I appeal to Freethinkers not to get tired, not to relax their efforts, but to persist to the end. Remember Paine! Remember Ingersoll! And hunt down the libellous liar who attempted to defile their graves.

With regard to the *cost* of this effort, I do not ask those who have contributed to contribute again. I ask the rank and file of the party to do something. There are hundreds who could send a subscription, if they would, of anything from a shilling to half-a-crown. When they see this let them get a postal order and send it to me. That is all they have to do. It is not much. It is nothing to my share of the work.

G. W. FOOTE.

**Sugar Plums.**

The Liverpool Conference is now near at hand. We hope there will be a large and representative gathering on Whit-Sunday. The Conference Agenda is printed in another part of this week's *Freethinker*. It will be seen that several important questions are down for discussion. But, apart from such things, the Conference may also be considered as a Freethought Demonstration; and to make it successful as such is the duty of Freethinkers in all parts of the country.

Delegates and visitors desiring hotel or other accommodation are requested to communicate with Mr. H. Percy Ward,



4 Redgrave-street, Kensington, Liverpool, who will see to their requirements. On Saturday evening there will be a reception at the Washington Hotel, near Lime-street Station (not at the Alexandra Hall, as announced last week), and delegates and visitors are invited to put in an appearance there if they arrive in time. As far as possible trains will be met by members of the local committee. Those who wish to make sure of being met should inform Mr. Ward by what train they may be expected.

Members of the local committee meeting the trains on Saturday will wear the old Bradlaugh colors, and will thus be easily recognised. Should any "saints" miss being met, by any accident, they should go straight to the Washington Hotel. A cab will not be necessary. The Hotel is right opposite Lime-street Station.

Sunday's luncheon, at 1 o'clock, has been arranged to take place at the Washington Hotel, at 2s. per head. There will also be a tea provided at the same place at 1s. per head.

Delegates and visitors who mean to join the Monday's excursion to Chester should let Mr. Ward know as early as possible, as arrangements have to be made with the Great Western Railway Company for reserved carriages.

We have several articles by esteemed contributors in type, which there is no room for in this week's *Freethinker*. We hope to include a good part of them next week. Our readers will be delighted to see "Chilperic's" signature again, and a fresh article by "Abracadabra" will be much appreciated.

Mr. John Lloyd visits Merthyr again to-day (June 4) and will give another lecture on Monday evening at Mountain Ash. The committee of the new N. S. S. Branch have taken a large hall that will seat 1,500 people, and are confident of getting it filled. They are working hard, and we hope their efforts will be crowned with a splendid success. Mr. Lloyd was at Manchester last Sunday and had enjoyable meetings with capital discussion.

Both the new Branches at Cardiff and Mountain Ash requested a visit from Mr. Foote, but he was obliged to reply that he could not possibly come until after the Conference, which always entails upon him a lot of extra work. The Cardiff friends are looking out for a large hall.

The West Ham Branch begins the new season's open-air propaganda this evening (June 4) at 7 o'clock at the old place—the Grove, Stratford. We hear that the Corporation is trying to close this spot for public meetings. This should induce the local "saints" to rally to the Branch standard.

The Glasgow Branch has its annual excursion to-day (June 4). The party will leave St. Enoch's by the 9.15 train and travel to Auchmountain Glen, near Greenock. "Saints" and friends will take their own tickets at the station and bring their own provisions with them—for the day is Sunday and the country is Scotland; but tea and milk will be provided *ad lib.* at the Glen. Hitherto the summer outings of the Glasgow Branch have been very enjoyable, and we hope this one will be no exception. It will be a festive winding up of a remarkably good season's propaganda; the Branch having had crowded meetings, the membership being considerably increased, and (wonder of wonders!) the financial balance on the right side being largely improved. Both "Free Kirkers" and "Wee Kirkers" had better beware a common enemy.

Mr. F. J. Gould's challenge to the Passive Resisters at Leicester, which we announced a fortnight ago, has not elicited a single reply, although a hundred large posters were displayed about the town and one is still in the window of the Secular Hall. What heroes these Passive Resisters are! They dare not discuss with Catholics, Churchmen, or Freethinkers. They simply go on shouting that if they can't govern the game they won't play. We wonder what will happen, or whether anything will happen, when Mr. Gould brings forward the motion he has given notice of at the June meeting of the local Education Committee.

Mr. Lloyd's article in the *Freethinker* of May 21, criticising a Central Hall (Manchester) lecture by the Rev. Prof. J. Vernon Bartlet, has induced that gentleman to write a rejoinder which we gladly print this week. We have supplied Professor Bartlet with a proof of his letter,

which he has duly revised; our desire being always that an intellectual opponent should have fair-play and courtesy extended to him. One point raised is of the highest interest, namely, what was the real spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire prior to Constantine's making it the State religion. We have our own opinion on this question, but we will not interpose it. We leave the question, just now at any rate, in the hands of Mr. Lloyd and Professor Bartlet. We should add, for the sake of those who do not know, that Professor Bartlet is of Mansfield College, Oxford.

Mr. Quiller-Couch, the novelist, presided lately at a lecture by the Rev. J. G. Stevenson at St. Austell Congregational Church, and made a striking speech on religious education. We extract the following passage from the report in the *Western Evening Herald* :—

"Was there a man in that church he asked, who merely as a matter of practical business would trust a fellow Christian with a five pound note, simply because he was an Anglican, or because he was a Bible Christian or a Congregationalist? Which of them, having an errand boy, would trust him the more because he was top of his Bible Class? He confessed he had won Scripture prizes in his days, and he knew how miserable a business it was. Why was it that a very large proportion of the very best men he had met in his life had been Agnostics? He said the best men, not only men whose word was their bond, but men who would go to the stake rather than tell an untruth; men who were pre-eminent for those virtues which were supposed to belong pre-eminently to Christianity. Why was it? He admitted he could not answer the question."

These home truths were enough to make the more pious part of the audience sit up.

Our esteemed contemporary, the *New York Truthseeker*, has shifted from Lafayette-place, where it has been located for ever so many years, and is now settling down at 62 Vesey-street. The cause of the change was insecurity of tenure. We wish the *Truthseeker* long life and prosperity in its new quarters.

## The Opposition of Religion and Science.—II.

(Concluded from page 347.)

THE first great scientific teacher who arose during the Middle Ages was Roger Bacon, born at Ilchester, in Somersetshire, about 1214. "More than three centuries before Francis Bacon advocated the experimental method, Roger Bacon practised it," says Dr. White, and he adds, "Few greater men ever lived." In his masterpiece, the *Opus Majus*, he gathered together the whole knowledge of his time on every branch of science which it possessed, and suggested improvements in nearly all. In the words of Dr. Whewell, it is "at once the Encyclopædia and the *Novum Organum* of the thirteenth century."

When Bacon commenced his studies he found almost incredible difficulties in his path. He tells us that the neglect of mathematics "hath nearly destroyed the entire studies of Latin Christendom." He had no instruments, and "without mathematical instruments no science can be mastered"; and he complains afterwards, "and these instruments are not to be found among the Latins, nor could they be made for two or three hundred pounds."\* Tables of the motions of the heavenly bodies, he tells us, "are worth a king's ransom, and could not be made without a vast expense. I have often attempted the composition of such tables, but could not finish them through failure of means and the folly of those whom I had to employ." Books were scarce and expensive. The principal works of the ancient philosophers had not been translated into Latin, which was at that time the literary language of Christendom. "The temper of the age was against scientific or philosophical studies," says the historian Green, "philosophy was discredited, literature in its purer forms became almost extinct. After forty years of incessant study Bacon found himself, in his

\* Cited in Green's *Short History of the English People*, vol. i., pp. 262-265. Ed. 1892.



own words, 'unheard, forgotten, buried.' He seems at one time to have been wealthy, but his wealth was gone."\* Ruined and baffled he, in a fit of despair, renounced the world and became a friar of the order of St. Francis.

The greatest and best of the ancient Romans were agreed in denouncing the new religion of Christianity as a malignant and debasing superstition. If they could have seen the Holy Roman Empire twelve hundred years after the birth of Christ, would they not have found their verdict justified? "The whole labor of the ancient world in vain!" cries Nietzsche; "I have no words to express my sentiments with regard to a thing so hideous."

We cannot refrain from citing more from this brilliant writer, who has seen the "poison of the Crucifix" more clearly than any writer with the exception of Feuerbach and Professor Clifford:—

"Natural science, in alliance with mathematics and mechanics, were on the best of all paths—the *sense for fact*, the last and most valuable of all senses, had its schools and its tradition already centuries old!.....the open look in presence of reality, the cautious hand, patience and earnestness in details, all the *righteousness* in knowledge, it was already there—already more than two thousand years ago! And added thereto the excellent refined tact and taste.....*All in vain!* Ere the morrow merely a memory! The Greeks! The Romans! Nobility of instinct, taste, methodical investigation, genius for organisation and administration.....choked in the night, not by any accident..... but put to shame by crafty, secretive, invisible, anæmic vampires! Not conquered—only sucked out. Hidden vindictiveness, petty envy become *master*. Everything wretched, suffering from itself, visited by bad feelings, the entire *Ghetto world* of soul, *uppermost* all at once! One has but to read any Christian agitator—Saint Augustine, for instance—to be able to *smell* what dirty fellows have thereby got *uppermost*."†

But to return to Roger Bacon in his friar's cell. His friend Guy of Foulques, having in 1265 been elected Pope under the name of Clement IV., shielded him for a time, and he then composed the *Opus Majus*. But when he attempted to perform a few experiments before a small audience, all Oxford was in an uproar. It was believed that Satan was about to be let loose. "Everywhere priests, monks, fellows, and students rushed about, their garments streaming in the wind, and everywhere rose the cry, 'Down with the magician!' And this cry, 'Down with the magician!' resounded from cell to cell and from hall to hall."

"The most conscientious men of his time," says Dr. White, "thought it their duty to fight him, and they fought him steadily and bitterly." Greatest of all his enemies was St. Bonaventura, the "seraphic Doctor" who became general of the Franciscan Order, and, as Bacon's master, forbade him to lecture. All men were solemnly warned not to listen to his teaching, and he was ordered to Paris, to be kept under close surveillance by the monastic authorities.

"The reasons for thus dealing with Bacon were evident. First, he had dared attempt scientific explanations of natural phenomena, which under the mystic theology of the Middle Ages had been referred simply to supernatural causes. Typical was his explanation of the causes and character of the rainbow. It was clear, cogent, a great step in the right direction as regards physical science; but there, in the book of Genesis, stood the legend regarding the origin of the rainbow, supposed to have been dictated immediately by the Holy Spirit; and, according to that, the 'bow in the cloud' was not the result of natural laws, but a 'sign' arbitrarily placed in the heavens for the simple purpose of assuring mankind that there was not to be another universal deluge."‡

The Franciscans and Dominicans vied with each other in the fight against science. "St. Dominic solemnly condemned research by experiment and observation; the general of the Franciscan Order took similar ground. In 1243 the Dominicans inter-

dicted every member of their order from the study of medicine and natural philosophy, and in 1287 this interdiction was extended to the study of chemistry." The end soon came, the Cross of Christ again rose victorious, as it had done over the mangled body of the beautiful Hypatia.

"In 1278 the authorities of the Franciscan order assembled at Paris solemnly condemned Bacon's teaching, and the general of the Franciscans, Jerome of Ascoli, afterward Pope, threw him into prison, where he remained for fourteen years. Though Pope Clement IV. had protected him, Popes Nicholas III. and IV., by virtue of their infallibility, decided that he was too dangerous to be at large, and he was only released at the age of eighty—but a year or two before death placed him beyond the reach of his enemies. How deeply the struggle had racked his mind may be gathered from that last affecting declaration of his, 'Would that I had not given myself so much trouble for the love of science.'"\*

It is maddening to think of the position to which we might have attained if the shadow of the Cross had not arrested the progress of civilisation. If the evolution of science had gone on continuously from the time of the ancient Greeks until the present day without a break! Or even from the time of Roger Bacon. As Dr. Andrew White truly says:—

"He held the key of treasures which would have freed mankind from ages of error and misery. With his discoveries as a basis, with his method as a guide, what might not the world have gained! Nor was the wrong done to that age alone; it was done to this age also. The nineteenth century was robbed at the same time with the thirteenth. But for that interference with science the nineteenth century would be enjoying discoveries which will not be reached before the twentieth century, and even later."†

For three hundred years the Church rested secure in their victory. If anyone doubted the scientific authority of Moses during that period, he prudently kept his doubts to himself. It is true that in 1543 Copernicus published his great work on *The Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies* unnoticed by the Church; but this was solely owing to the fact that Osiander, the printer, to save his own skin, inserted a grovelling preface to appease the theologians, by saying that the doctrine of the earth's movement was not taught as a fact, but as a hypothesis. In any case he was beyond their reach, for he died a few hours after the work was placed in his hands on May 24, 1543. Sixty-six years later, an optician, Hans Lipperhey, of Middleburgh, in Holland, invented an instrument by means of which distant objects were brought nearer and could be seen very plainly. Galileo—at this time the greatest living scientist, and who, for his many discoveries, was known as the "Archimedes of his time"—heard of this marvellous invention, and the report being confirmed by one of his former pupils, he was induced to reflect upon the means by which such an effect could be produced. By the laws of refraction he soon attained his end. He invented a telescope which made objects appear three times nearer and nine times larger, and ultimately constructed an instrument which magnified an object nearly a thousand times, and brought it more than thirty times nearer. Galileo began to use the instrument to some purpose. In January, 1610, he discovered the moons of Jupiter, and what was more to the purpose, that they exhibited motions precisely similar to those which Copernicus had assumed for the whole solar system. Moreover, it was placed beyond all doubt that our planet was not the centre of all the heavenly bodies, since Jupiter's moons revolved round him. Added to this was the—according to prevailing views—humiliating discovery that Jupiter had four moons while the earth had only one.‡ It had been objected to the system of Copernicus that if his theory was true Venus would show phases like the moon, to which—at that time—there was no answer. The telescope of Galileo showed the phases of Venus.

\* Ibid, p. 263.

† *The Antichrist*, pp. 347, 348.

‡ White, *Warfare of Science*, p. 388.

\* *Warfare of Science* p. 389.

† Ibid, p. 390.

‡ Gebler, *Galileo*, p. 20.



This was too much for the Church. Galileo was hauled before the Inquisition and forced to recant his opinions under fear of torture and death. Pope Paul V. promulgated a decree that "the doctrine of the double motion of the earth about its axis and about the sun is false, and entirely contrary to Holy Scripture." The same decree condemned all the writings of Copernicus and "all writings which affirm the motion of the earth." Upon the death of Paul V. and the succession of Urban VIII. to the Papal throne, Galileo published another defence of the new truth. He was again brought before the Inquisition and forced to pronounce publicly and on his knees his recantation, as follows:—

"I, Galileo, being in my seventieth year, being a prisoner and on my knees, and before your Eminences, having before my eyes the Holy Gospel, which I touch with my hands, abjure, curse, and detest the error and the heresy of the movement of the earth."<sup>\*</sup>

The rest of his life was spent in exile under close surveillance, away from his family and friends; he was forbidden even to speak of his great discoveries.

Galileo has been blamed for recanting, but it should be remembered that only a few years before—in 1600—Bruno had refused to recant his astronomical heresies, the special charge against him being that he had taught the plurality of worlds. For this refusal Bruno was publicly burnt alive, and there is no doubt that Galileo would have shared a similar fate upon a similar refusal.

After Bruno's death, during the first half of the seventeenth century, René Descartes—one of the greatest thinkers who ever lived—seemed about to take the leadership of human thought. The writings of Copernicus, Bruno, and Galileo, inspired him to combine all knowledge and thought into a *Treatise on the World*, to which he himself could have added an immense store of new and fertilising ideas, for he had already written his theory of vortices, and had given eleven years to the study of anatomy alone. In 1641 he published his *Meditations Upon First Philosophy*, but this work gave such offence to the clergy that he was forced to fly the country. "The execution of Bruno occurred in his childhood, and in the midst of his career he had watched the Galileo struggle in all its stages. He had seen his own works condemned by university after university under the direction of theologians and placed on the Roman Index."<sup>†</sup> Worn down by continuous persecution, he faltered, his courage failed, he consigned his great masterpiece, the *Treatise on the World*, the work of his life, to the flames.<sup>‡</sup>

Buffon, the famous naturalist, was also compelled to bring his scientific studies into agreement with the Bible. He was compelled by the Faculty of Theology at Paris, in 1751, to publicly recant scientific conclusions, which Sir Charles Lyell, the greatest geologist of our time, declares are as firmly established as the rotation of the earth. This recantation which he was also forced to print in the next edition of his *Theory of the Earth*, runs as follows:—

"I declare that I had no intention to contradict the text of Scripture; that I believe most firmly all therein related about the Creation, both as to order of time and matter of fact; I abandon everything in my book respecting the formation of the earth, and generally which may be contrary to the narration of Moses."<sup>§</sup>

Sir Charles Lyell, speaking of the seventeenth century, says:—

"They who refused to subscribe to the position that all marine organic remains were proofs of the Mosaic deluge, were exposed to the imputation of disbelieving the whole of the sacred writings. Scarcely any step had been made in approximating to sound theories since the time of Præcastoro (about A.D. 1517), more than a hundred years having been lost in writing down

the dogma that organised fossils were mere sports of nature. An additional period of a century and a-half was now destined to be consumed in exploding the hypothesis that organised fossils had all been buried in the solid strata by Noah's Flood."<sup>\*</sup>

Sir Archibald Geikie, the geologist, in his Presidential Address to the British Association, Edinburgh, 1892, declared that "for many long centuries the advance of inquiry into such matters was arrested by the paramount influence of orthodox theology," which "helped to retard inquiry and exercised in that respect a baneful influence on intellectual progress."<sup>†</sup>

Yet in the face of all this damning evidence of the manner in which Christianity has fought against science, Christians have the impudence to claim that our civilisation and progress are the result of Christianity!

In future articles we will deal with the opposition of religion to science in modern times. W. MANN.

## National Secular Society.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ALEXANDRA HALL, ISLINGTON SQUARE, LIVERPOOL.

WHIT-SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 1905.

#### AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.  
Motion by Finsbury, Birmingham and Liverpool Branches:  
"That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.  
(a) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: J. G. Bartram, J. Barry, Victor Charbonnel, H. Cowell, R. Chapman, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, F. A. Davies, J. F. Dewar, R. G. Fathers, Léon Furnémont, T. Gorniot, John Grange, J. Hammond, W. Leat, W. C. Middleton, J. Neate, Dr. R. T. Nichols, J. Partridge, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, William Pratt, C. G. Quinton, J. H. Ridgway, Thomas Robertson, Victor Roger, J. Ross, F. Schaller, W. H. Spivey, Charles Steptoe, Joseph Symes, S. R. Thompson, W. B. Thompson, T. J. Thurlow, John H. Turnbull, E. M. Vance, Frederick Wood, W. H. Wood.  
(b) Motion by Executive:—  
"That Mr. S. Samuels be elected a vice-president."
7. Election of Auditors.
8. Report on following Resolution carried at last Conference: "That a sub-committee be appointed from the Branches themselves, and that this committee report to the next Conference on the whole question of Branch subscriptions to headquarters."  
(a) The Birmingham Branch submitted the following resolution to other Branches: "That all Branches shall pay 5s. for every 25 members, or fraction of 25, on its books, and that no Branch shall be allowed to vote on financial matters until such contribution be paid."  
(b) Only 8 Branches voted by letter on this resolution. South Shields and Kingsland supported. Newcastle, Coventry, West Ham and Finsbury voted against. Glasgow suggested a reduction of the present subscription. Liverpool suggested an annual collection instead of subscription.  
Correspondence, etc., on this matter will be read by General Secretary to the Conference.
9. Motion by Glasgow Branch:—  
"That the fee of 1s. per member at present payable by Branches to headquarters be reduced to 6d. per member."
10. Motion by Liverpool Branch:—  
"That the affiliation fee for Branches be 3d. per member, and that a Certificate of Membership be issued to all members of the Society, as formerly."
11. Motion by Liverpool Branch:—  
"That it be decided at each Conference where the succeeding Conference shall be held."

\* White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. i., p. 142.

† White, *Warfare of Science*, p. 57.

‡ Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*, p. 105.

§ Cited in Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, vol. i., p. 57, eleventh edition.

\* *Principles of Geology*, p. 37.

† *Nature*, August 4, 1892, p. 319.



12. Motion by Manchester Branch :—  
 "That in place of the late *Secular Almanack* the Society should publish yearly the President's report, together with particulars of the Society, for general distribution."
13. Motion by C. Cohen :—  
 "That this Conference, while noting with pleasure the growth of Freethought opinions, and bearing in mind the fact that advanced opinions have always had more reason to fear lukewarm and timorous friends than open and avowed enemies, records its conviction that a definite and uncompromising Anti-Christian propaganda is more than ever necessary in order to avoid distinct and important issues being lost sight of or slurred over as the effort of a desire to placate a certain section of the liberal public, and which for temporary ease or gain risks, or at best postpones, ultimate victory."
14. Motion by Mr. T. J. Thurlow :—  
 "That the sole object of the National Secular Society should be the carrying on of an effective propaganda against all phases of supernaturalism embodied in the religion of Christendom."
15. Motion by Liverpool Branch :—  
 "That having regard to the fact that many unattached persons have followed with interest the recent theological controversy in the *Clarion*, the Executive be instructed to issue a manifesto to be published in that paper, drawing attention to the Principles and Objects of the N. S. S. and inviting all in sympathy to become members. In addition, it might be stated that the Executive will, on receipt of a requisition, signed by six persons who are prepared to assist in carrying out the necessary arrangements, send a lecturer to deliver Freethought lectures and organise new Branches in districts where none at present exist."
16. Motion by Executive :—  
 "That the N. S. S. be strongly and independently represented at the International Freethought Congress at Paris in September, and that the Executive take the necessary steps to secure this object."
17. Motion by Executive :—  
 "That Secularists should make a special effort to withdraw their children from religious instruction of any and every kind in the elementary public schools."
18. Motion by Executive :—  
 "That Secularists should do their utmost to promote the increase of civil marriage before the Registrar, as one of the most important means of breaking the power of the Churches."
19. Motion by the Executive :—  
 That this Conference reaffirms its conviction that the whole difficulty of the religious education question in the elementary schools of England and Wales has been created by the treachery of the Free Churches to the essential principles of Nonconformity in relation to the State; and that this Conference reaffirms its belief in Secular Education as the only just and wise solution of the problem, and hails with satisfaction the return of the *Daily News* to the "secular solution" which it had unfortunately abandoned in the supposed interest of Nonconformist Liberalism.

The Conference will sit in the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool; the morning session lasting from 10.30 to 12.30, and the afternoon session from 2.30 to 4.30. Both are business meetings for members of the N. S. S. Only members of the N. S. S. can speak and vote. A public meeting will be held in the evening at 7 o'clock in the Picton Hall, William Brown-street. The President of the N. S. S. will occupy the chair on each occasion. A Luncheon for delegates and visitors will be provided at the Washington Hotel, Lime-street, at 1 o'clock.

By order of the Executive,  
 G. W. FOOTE, *President*.  
 E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

Correspondence.

ANOTHER CONVERTED ATHEIST SHOEMAKER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me to supply the information asked for by Mr. Bryce concerning the conversion of a "zealous infidel propagandist."  
 Some years ago Walt Woolham earned his bread and butter as a disciple of St. Crispin by mending soles, and, in order to qualify as a missionary, he also tried to "save souls" at the Lady-lane Mission in Leeds. He afterwards drifted into the ranks of the Socialists, and spent some

years at the Whiteway Colony in Gloucestershire. Tiring at length of this fad, he returned to Leeds, and became a kind of Tolstoyan. In the beginning of last year several semi-public debates with an "anti-infidel" creature showed him the hideous nature of the popular Christian superstition. He then professed to be an Atheist, and took part, along with the writer, in a number of Secular propaganda meetings. About the middle of summer he took up the cause of the starving unemployed, and brought their wretchedness so prominently before the authorities that they started an Unemployed Bureau and found work for several hundreds in improving the public paths, extending the tram system, etc.

A few months ago illness and slack work made him tell some of his friends he would have to do "something desperate" to retrieve his cruel fortune; so, when it was proclaimed that Walt had "found Christ," they "winked the other eye." Ordinary prayers had been tried on him without avail, but the advent of the Welsh Revivalists in Leeds, with duets and quartettes in prayer for a change of heart in our hero, made him finally succumb. I have heard Woolham testify at meetings that reason and common sense had nothing whatever to do with his conversion, but that Jesus Christ took possession of his heart in answer to his mother's prayers! The Rev. Chadwick, who has been beating the big drum over the affair at Newcastle, has evidently his doubts as to the genuineness of the case, for at a meeting in the Coliseum he declared that "what value there was in the conversion remained to be seen."

The most that can be claimed by the Revivalists after all is that a poor sheep has been brought back to the Christian fold after a year's sojourn in the Atheistic camp, during which time he performed better work for the general good than he is ever likely to equal as a Christian.

When Thomas (or Robert) Cooper prophesied that if ever he became religious he would "either be a knave or a fool" he had great difficulty, after he was "born again" in explaining away this peep into his future; and friend Woolham, it seems to me, is placed now in a similar predicament.

GEORGE WEIR.

In Memoriam.

DEAR comrade, if it be true  
 There is more joy in heaven  
 When sinners of the blackest hue  
 Repent, and die forgiven—  
 The angels weep for you.

Forever damned! Yet will your soul arise  
 To help some brother man (ah, who can tell,  
 Some hopeless devil whom God did despise)  
 To find some happier niche in deepest hell  
 Nearer God's proud inhuman paradise.

Oh! were all nature false, were all priests true [him;  
 And were their God the fiend that they would make  
 Even such a monster whom you never knew  
 In his blind wrath thinking you did forsake him)  
 Could not afford to damn you.

GEORGE WOODWARD.

SHAKESPEARE AND JEHOVAH.

And then I read Shakespeare, the plays, the sonnets, the poems—read all. I beheld a new heaven and a new earth. Shakespeare, who knew the brain and heart of man—the hopes and fears, the loves and hatreds, the vices and virtues of the human race. Whose imagination read the tear-blurred records, the blood-stained pages of all the past, and saw falling athwart the outspread scroll the light of hope and love. Shakespeare, who sounded every depth—while on the loftiest peak there fell the shadow of his wings.

I compared the Plays with the "inspired" books—Romeo and Juliet with the Song of Solomon, Lear with Job, and the Sonnets with the Psalms, and I found that Jehovah did not understand the art of speech. I compared Shakespeare's women—his perfect women—with the women of the Bible. I found that Jehovah was not a sculptor, nor a painter—not an artist—that he lacked the power that changes clay to flesh—the art, the plastic touch, that moulds the perfect form—the breath that gives it free and joyous life—the genius that creates the faultless.

The sacred books of all the world are worthless dross and common stones compared with Shakespeare's glittering gold and gleaming gems.

—Ingersoll.

What we like determines what we are, and is the sign of what we are; and to teach taste is inevitably to form character.—Ruskin.



**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.**

**OUTDOOR.**

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, F. A. Davies.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, R. P. Edwards.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, at 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "How God Treated His Chosen People"; Brockwell Park, 3.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Who is the King of Glory"; Brockwell Park, 6.30, W. J. Ramsey.

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., "What Is Man?"

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Thus Saith—Torrey."

**COUNTRY.**

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam Bey, "The Balkan Question Today"; 7, H. Percy Ward, "The Only True Religion in the World." Adjourned Members' Meeting re New Rules after Evening Lecture.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market Place): 7.30, Conference Agenda, etc.

WARRINGTON (Druids' Hall, Sankey-street): Tuesday, June 6, at 8, H. Percy Ward, "Is There a God?"

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