

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*For freemen mightier grow,
And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe.*—SHELLY.

Good News.

THERE is good news for my readers. The orthodox conspiracy of silence over Dr. Torrey's libels on Paine and Ingersoll is being broken. A prominent Christian has felt his conscience stirred and has thought it his duty to speak out in the interest of his own faith.

Amongst those who had my *Dr. Torrey and the Infidels* pamphlet handed to them outside the Albert Hall was Mr. W. T. Stead, the editor of the *Review of Reviews*, and one of the best-known publicists in England. Mr. Stead had written a laudatory account of the Torrey-Alexander mission, based upon his experiences of it during a special visit to Liverpool. He had also made Dr. Torrey's acquaintance some years before at Chicago. He believed that Dr. Torrey was doing a great deal of good by rousing the souls of people who could not be reached in any other way. My pamphlet, therefore, caused him much disquietude, and he wrote to Dr. Torrey on the subject, asking him whether he could not see his way to withdraw the charges he had made against Paine and Ingersoll, which were apparently false and unfounded. Dr. Torrey's answer was so evasive that Mr. Stead thought it advisable to approach me. He asked me whether I would show him my "proofs." This I did with the utmost readiness. I had nothing to conceal. I wanted the truth to be known, and I wanted it to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Having seen my "proofs" Mr. Stead wrote to Dr. Torrey again, and this time more pressingly. This led to a long correspondence which lasted through the whole spring. Points arose on which Mr. Stead was obliged to consult me, and thus I was cognisant of all that was going on. A considerable amount of trouble fell to my share, in the form of letters and interviews, but I was willing to do anything to help a honest-minded Christian in bringing Dr. Torrey to book. Not that Mr. Stead's point of view and mine were quite identical. My object was the vindication of Paine and Ingersoll, and Dr. Torrey was an accident of the situation. Mr. Stead's object was to save Dr. Torrey in spite of himself, to bring him to a sense of his sin, and to get him to put himself "right with God."

I did not believe that Mr. Stead would succeed in this enterprise. I told him at the outset that, in my opinion, Dr. Torrey could not afford to accept either of the alternatives that were presented to him. If he tried to substantiate his charges against Paine and Ingersoll he would fail ignominiously. If he withdrew them he would fatally injure himself in the eyes of two classes of Christians: first, the out-and-out bigots, who regard the slander of "infidels" as legitimate and profitable; second, the fanatical mob who regard men like Dr. Torrey and Mr. Evan Roberts as being in the very counsels of God and endowed with a share of the divine infallibility. And the event proved that I was right. Dr. Torrey's letters were the most astonishing display of hair-splitting, evasion, shuffling, and

prevarication. Finally he terminated the correspondence, and Mr. Stead's idea was to print it as it stood, with a brief explanatory introduction. This would, in my judgment, have been the best thing to do. Those who read the correspondence would have had the whole case before them and been able to judge for themselves. But this would have damned Dr. Torrey—and Mr. Stead's object was to save him. Consequently he adopted a more merciful course. He wrote a special article on the subject for the July number of the *Review of Reviews*. I have seen a proof of it and I strongly advise my readers to peruse it. And when they have digested it let them pass it round to all their Christian friends and acquaintances. The more widely it is known the better.

In the course of Mr. Stead's article there will be found a long letter from Dr. Torrey, written with the shallow dexterity of a pettifogging lawyer and the cold venom of a pious slanderer who is disturbed in the pursuit of his loathsome occupation. Mr. Stead's reply to it is admirable as far as it goes, but I intend to say something more on this topic in next week's *Freethinker*. Dr. Torrey collects all the "charges" against Paine that he has been able to find, and piles them in a miserable heap over the great Freethinker's grave. My task will be to cart that heap away and deposit it at Dr. Torrey's door. It may be a scavenger's task, but I volunteer for the job. *Somebody* must volunteer for it, and I was never a shirker. And when I have thoroughly disinfected myself I shall have the pleasure of knowing that the grass and the flowers grow sweetly over the honorable grave of one of the finest heroes of Humanity.

Mr. Stead turns the tables on Dr. Torrey in his own way, and he does it brilliantly. He composes a sort of parody on Dr. Torrey's peculiar impeachment of Thomas Paine. Not that Mr. Stead intends it to be a parody, for he writes in all earnestness. What he does is to take Dr. Torrey's method of indictment and apply it to Jesus Christ. Without going outside the Gospels he gathers enough scandal about the being who to him, as well as to Dr. Torrey, is the Savior, to make a very good companion picture to the American revivalist's portrait of the author of the *Age of Reason*. And having done it, just to show how easy it is (although few could do it with such vigor and effectiveness), he says:—

"Of course, this grates horribly upon every devout reader. That is why I print it. I want it to grate. And why? Because it enables us to feel something of the pain and the sorrow which Christ must feel when He sees how Dr. Torrey and his kind deal with the least of these His brethren. If it is right to treat Paine and Ingersoll in the harsh, carping, uncharitable, malevolent fashion illustrated in the above letter, then it is equally right to apply the same method to the character of the Founder of our Faith."

Freethinkers will note that Dr. Torrey cannot defend the statement that Thomas Paine took away another man's wife and lived in adultery with her. But instead of regretting his mistake, if it was a mistake, he descends so low as to argue that if he did say that Paine lived with another man's wife it does not follow that he said that Paine lived with her in adultery!

Freethinkers will also note that Dr. Torrey makes no attempt whatever to justify his charges against

Ingersoll. Mr. Stead speaks out on this point handsomely. After explaining Ingersoll's action with regard to the Comstock laws, he writes as follows:—

"So far, therefore, from the action of Ingersoll in this matter justifying any imputation upon his morality, the facts show him to have taken a very high moral line on the question."

Mr. Stead then pays a tribute to the "idyllic purity and felicity" of Ingersoll's family life, which I am able to say that he has heard a great deal about from American friends of his own who have no sympathy with Ingersoll's unbelief.

Freethinkers will further note that, after the most careful sifting by Mr. Stead, all the important statements in my pamphlet stand unshaken. According to Mr. Stead, the doubts which Dr. Torrey throws upon his letters to Mr. Cain and Mr. James are "mere quibbles." "The authenticity of all the letters," he adds, "is indisputable. They bear 'Dr. Torrey, his mark' on every line." This will be an awkward set back to Dr. Torrey's supporters, who have been making the most of his suggestion that I concocted the libels on Paine and Ingersoll and attributed them to *him*.

My hope now is that Dr. Torrey, or some of his friends, will protest against Mr. Stead's article and provoke him into publishing the whole correspondence. But for the present I want to thank Mr. Stead, if he will allow me to do so, for the stand he has made in this matter. He is the only prominent Christian who has displayed any active conscience with regard to Dr. Torrey's atrocious libels on two of his own countrymen—for Paine as well as Ingersoll was an American citizen. When I consider what he has told me of the imploring appeals made to him not to say a word against Dr. Torrey I am bound to compliment him on his remarkable courage; for facing one's friends is a far more difficult matter than facing one's enemies.

G. W. FOOTE.

What Christianity Owes to Civilisation.

(Concluded from p. 421.)

IN contrasting the present teaching of Christian pulpits with that of only three or four generations ago, nothing is more striking than the gradual replacement of doctrines by ethical teaching. Whether this is something to be welcomed or decried is a matter for discussion; it is enough to note here the fact. The belief is yielding to the life, and a growing number of preachers assure us that the essence of Christianity is not the acceptance of certain beliefs, but the leading of a useful social existence. This change of attitude is striking because it is not only counter to all the traditions of orthodox Christianity, but also to the history of religion in general. In primitive times the distinction between ethics and religion had no practical existence. Religious beliefs dominate life to such an extent that all rules of life, whatever ultimate reference they may have, have immediate reference to the supposed supernatural beings by which man is surrounded. And when the distinction between ethics and religion begin to be established, the former is still subservient to the latter. Ethical teachings have to be squared with religious beliefs, and are judged by their conformity to them.

Early Christianity shows no departure from the rule; in some respects it undid much of the progress already made. Among the Greek and Roman writers attention was being directed to ethics in a constantly increasing degree; but from the first Christianity, with its emphasis on doctrines, tended to destroy this. And the more powerful Christianity became the more complete became the subordination of ethics to religious belief. Owing to the non-Christian influences at work during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, some progress was made; but the Puritan reaction of the seventeenth century threw this back, and mere doctrine began to play a larger part than

ever. The Church of England Articles and the Westminster Confession both lay down the explicit teaching that the essential thing is right belief, and that good conduct in the absence of belief partakes of the nature of sin. And it is significant that in all the evangelical revivals, which always represent a reversion to the cruder religious forms, the chief stress is laid upon right belief.

The change of front is, therefore, the more remarkable in view of the past history of all religion. And the cause of this change is, in a word, the pressure of social forces. In a society where the organisation is weak, and the sense of individual rights but little developed, and still less respected, the importance of conduct alone is bound to be inadequately recognised. But the development of society which involves a growing recognition of human rights and responsibilities, as well as a sense of the interdependence of human nature, creates a new standard of judgment, and, instead of conformity with speculative beliefs, it is the solid realisable results of conduct by which people judge themselves and others. It is the reaction of this developing social sense that is ultimately responsible for the altered tone of Christian teaching. As has been said, religion, to live, must bring itself into conformity with its environment. To preach nowadays that belief is of primary and conduct of only secondary importance, is to eliminate from the Churches their best members. The shrewdest realise this clearly enough; and therefore one may safely take the stress upon ethics as only another proof of the manner in which social forces secularise religious teachings.

What has been said also applies, with a slight change of terms, to the growing interest taken by preachers in social and labor questions. Neither religious beliefs nor a labor question are new things in the world. The labor question, in the shape of slavery, fronted Christianity from the outset of its career. Yet, far from finding it discordant with Christian beliefs, it accepted it as part of the necessary order of things; and later in its history created a worse form of slavery than was known to antiquity. And there is the further, and damning, fact that no Christian nation has yet given up the holding of slaves while keeping them was economically profitable. Moreover, the New Testament is notoriously deficient in anything approaching sane teaching concerning the structure of the State or the reciprocal duties of State and Citizen. So far as it touches these subjects, it is to inculcate submission to the established authority, merely because it is established; while throughout its history there is not, I think, a single instance of a Christian body running counter to the government of a State so long as the State patronised it in turn.

To-day numbers of the clergy are preaching on social topics, and assuring the world that Christianity is above all a gospel of social salvation. And the reason for this is not far to seek. Consciously or unconsciously the function of the Church has been to keep the "masses" in order for the benefit of the "classes." And, again consciously or unconsciously, the exploitation of the people has been rendered possible, or easier, by the frittering away of human energies on religions rather than on social subjects. Feuerbach's dictum that the joys of life have been built up from the miseries of earth has good economic, as well as philosophic, warranty; for the joy of future happiness has not only made people content with present misery, but concentrating attention on the next world has rendered possible the exploitation of this one. But ever since the French Revolution the peoples of Europe have been growing conscious of the possibilities of happiness here, a consciousness that has been aided by the general disintegration of religious beliefs. The result has been that the mass of the people, for whom organised religions are maintained, show a growing disinclination to interest themselves in religious subjects, and a still stronger disinclination to attend places of worship. They show a growing desire to hear more about questions that concern

their daily lives and their worldly welfare and leave the affairs of another life to all whom it may concern.

Once more the clergy have been compelled to restate their beliefs so as to bring them into closer harmony with the new spirit. We have seen a religion that never has had a social gospel to preach, a religion that has prided itself on setting at naught this world's happiness, and counted material progress as a delusion of the devil, preaching at last social reform as the essence of Christianity's message to man, and holding up Jesus Christ as the true type of the democratic social reformer. Not that clear headed social reformers are likely to be misled by such tactics. They see that the energy with which the clergy tackle such subjects as sanitation, housing, or Old Age Pensions, is nothing compared to the eagerness they show in building new churches, financing the missionary movement, or fighting for the control of the children in the public schools. If Christian leaders were in earnest over social subjects, many of our problems in this direction might be solved in the course of a single generation. They merely talk about them to "save their face," and the very people supporting the Churches give adequate proof that they are playing the old game of guarding vested interests by guiding, so far as it can be guided, a tendency it is impossible to strangle.

Still, so far as it goes, the altered state is proof of the way in which civilisation forces the Christian Churches to drop their more repulsive and more anti-social teachings, and ape the attitude of a saner creed. The evidence of this is overwhelming. It is seen in all those movements I have already dealt with, and in numerous other directions. It is seen in the dropping overboard of the doctrine of eternal damnation and the belief in a personal devil—both killed by the moral revolt of a more enlightened human nature. It is seen in the gradual transformation of God from an arbitrary ruler to a constitutional governor who interferes far less with the course of nature than does King Edward with the political machinery of Britain. It is seen in the dropping of such cardinal doctrines as the Resurrection and the Virgin Birth, by Christian leaders who are only making the pace for the mass of believers. And if Christianity was a set of beliefs only, it would have died long since. But religions become incarnate in institutions, these become turn powerful vested interests, and all experience is a witness of how tenaciously these cling to existence. Still, no institution is powerful enough to resist for ever the growth of an idea, or the gradual movement of humanity. Man civilises himself but slowly, yet the work is always in progress. And the reflex of this process is the discarding of his errors and the purification of his beliefs; while one of the lessons of his development is that all the gods in the world are man-made. In deciphering their features he is but studying the lineaments of his old savage self. The gods in time become humanised, and their humanisation is the condition of their disappearance.

C. COHEN.

Prayer.

RECENTLY the Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A., of the City Temple, has delivered several sermons on the subject of Prayer. This is a subject on which nothing new can be said. Mr. Campbell treats it precisely as a liberal theologian, who is also a mystic, would be expected to treat it. His central point is that "prayer does not change God's attitude to man, but may and ought to adjust man's attitude to God." Some of his hearers were not prepared to endorse that statement, and they addressed letters to him in which they gave expression to their dissent from it. Then he preached another discourse to explain and defend his position. As the point is of great importance let us examine it somewhat in detail.

Mr. Campbell exercises great care in his choice of terms. He distinguishes between God's attitude and God's action. The attitude is eternally unchangeable, but the action varies according to circumstances. God's attitude to man is one of benevolence and helpfulness. Prayer has absolutely nothing to do with God's attitude, but may have a great deal to do with his action. The reasoning is exceedingly ingenious and cleverly manipulated. Mr. Campbell is extremely anxious to give his theology a scientific expression. But the simple truth is that by scientifically explaining prayer he in reality does away with it. He maintains that "prayer in the general sense means simply a man's demand upon life." But the word prayer is seldom if ever employed in such a general sense. The merchant expresses his desire for wealth in indefatigable *work*; and if wealth comes to him it is the reward of that work. It is the same with regard to fame. It is the man who applies himself with all his might, and successfully, to some definite scheme of life who becomes famous. He does not kneel in the presence of life and cry, "O life, grant me fame and power and honor." If the desire for riches or fame expressing itself in strenuous labor can be called prayer, then it follows that the desire to possess a high-toned character embodying itself in enthusiastic endeavors to form it, is prayer in the same sense, though on a higher level. But why should God be introduced into the higher level and practically left out of the lower ones? If the same great law works on all the levels, does it not follow that a man can develop a noble character, as well as amass a fortune or win fame, simply by applying himself wholeheartedly to the work?

Mr. Campbell's language here is painfully vague. He says: "Prayer, as the spiritual man understands it, means that we stand at our highest when we pray, seeking God's highest for us." What is "God's highest for us" except an externalisation of our own conception of what we ought to be as members of society? The will of God is only a personification of the needs of society. Communion with God is, when analysed, nothing but communion with ourselves as we feel we ought to be and may become. Mr. Campbell possesses no knowledge which entitles him to give the lie to these statements.

What is God? Very glibly does Mr. Campbell talk about him and in his name; but what is He? Is He a person? This is how the preacher defines him here: "God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his wisdom, power, and glory." Again: "You cannot improve upon God, nor upon God's purpose for you. God is what He is, and never can be other. His action may be contingent on human action, but his attitude never is." Again: "God cannot give of his best until our best claims it. God ought not to wait, God never does wait, for our prayer to claim his beneficence, but our moral incapacity often makes us wait before we are able to take of the best which God has prepared." If there be a God, I wonder if He could recognise himself in that intimate dileneation! This is a new theology with a vengeance.

From the clouds of abstraction Mr. Campbell comes down to life in the concrete. Does God answer prayer? Here are parents passionately praying that He would spare a little child's life. The reasoning on this point is so sophistical that I must cite it. The preacher is addressing one of the praying parents:—

"You know, do you not, it is possible that, all the same, death may intervene, and to all outward seeming your prayer will not be answered? Is it any use praying? Yes, my friend, it is, for what you love in that child is God. Union between soul and soul is between both and God, and God has taught you by means of it, and deepened your nature thereby, and all that you seek in that child is waiting for you in God. Here or in heaven, the best that ever called forth your best lives indestructible. When you pray love's prayer in agony of spirit, you are praying *towards* that thing, that beautiful thing, that God gave you in your child. Here and now, if your moral nature is ready for it, the

lesson may yet go on, and love instead of pain shall be the teacher. God knoweth best, but either way the prayer is answered."

Comment is needless. Possibly it was bad drainage and foul air, co-operating with corrupt heredity, that killed the child; and the lesson that comes from the death can be learned only by paying greater heed to the laws of health. *No God could have spared that little child's life under the conditions that prevailed.* A child's death is always premature and therefore preventible. He would be a cruel God who would deliberately, and in cold blood, kill little children in order to teach lessons to the parents.

On the subject of Forgiveness Mr. Campbell's teaching is certainly unique. According to orthodoxy, the moment a man believes in Christ and repents, he receives from God the precious gift of full and free forgiveness. God, for Christ's sake, acquits him, sets him free, and remits all his sins. Conscious of the essential immorality of such a doctrine, Mr. Campbell rightly rejects it. But having rejected the real thing, why does he still cling to its shadow? Does God forgive sins in answer to penitent prayer? Yes, according to Mr. Campbell, but it is a most novel sort of forgiveness that He grants:—

"Forgiveness is denoted by your mood at this moment, and is expressed in your prayer. Forgiveness is the elimination of the capacity to sin again that sin which has made you grieve. Forgiveness is separation between a man and his sin. Forgiveness is the taking out of your nature the proneness to do what you have done. It has nothing to do with punishment save that the state of sin is itself punishment. You are forgiven for your sin by becoming incapable of that sin."

There is a strong element of ethical truth in that extract, but why use the word forgiveness, when, in the Biblical and theological sense, there is and can be no such thing? Forgiveness is the wrong term to use in such a connection.

It is difficult to discover wherein Mr. Campbell's Gospel consists. If God's best can be of no benefit to man until man's best claims it, what becomes of the evangelical doctrine of salvation by faith, which faith is the gift of God? No wonder the slums are so full of vice and misery! No wonder there are so many "unsaved sinners" up and down the world! But let us come to concrete cases, of which Mr. Campbell is so fond. Is God's best always available when man's best claims it? The drunkard's best is his desire to conquer the craving for drink, and God's best to such a man would be imparted strength to win the day. Well, here is a young man who at thirty years of age is a confirmed drunkard. He was brought up in a Christian home, and became at an early date a vigorous Christian worker. But the craving for alcohol, which he had inherited, asserted itself, and soon made him its perfect slave. O how ardently he used to pray God to deliver him from the dominion of the terrible tyrant. The very best that was in him went out in passionate desire to obtain the very best which he believed God capable of bestowing on him. But in spite of all his prayers and supplications to the God of infinite love, that young man of many admirable qualities, went down, despised and neglected, into a drunkard's grave. That is only one out of hundreds of similar cases that might be mentioned.

Mr. Campbell assures us that "God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his wisdom, power, and glory"; but how is it that being such He fails to come to the rescue of so many of those who sincerely call upon him? If Mr. Campbell can satisfactorily answer that question he will receive the grateful thanks of millions of people. Mr. Campbell comes to us and says, "Christ Jesus is the author of all that is good in you, and the dynamic of your prayer." If that is true, how is it that goodness is so terribly scarce in a world governed by the God of love? As the author of goodness Christ Jesus must be pronounced a dismal failure. But the preacher's assertion is not true. Not only is evil still rampant in the world in spite of God's

righteous government, but there is in it also not a little goodness with which Christ Jesus has never had anything to do. Mr. Campbell may not be aware that Secularism too can point to its reclaimed drunkards and reformed characters; but it is an undoubted fact in which many of us exceedingly rejoice.

It is not for me to affirm that honest prayer never does any good, that communion with an alleged God never bears good fruit, or that the Christian life generally is never beneficial to those who sincerely engage in it; but I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction that the moral improvements attributed to the regenerating influence of religion are mainly due to the sympathy, and support, and encouragement which good people extend to one another and particularly to "the under-dogs" of society, and that if prayer were to be superseded by enthusiastic devotion to the education of the masses in individual and social virtues, and to cleansing society from all its existing moral vices, and if the Churches were to become secular and ethical guilds and corporations, instead of training schools for Immanuel's Land, we would erelong have the privilege of witnessing infinitely grander and more enduring results than any we have seen hitherto. If clergymen and ministers were to speak in the holy name of humanity, and not in that of an imagined God, if they were to regard and treat morality as a purely social product, and as absolutely indispensable to social well-being, instead of as the result of supernatural interference, and if they were to drop the supernatural world, with its two hemispheres, and concentrate all the energies they possess upon furthering the highest interests of the present world, the harvest of their labors would be a million fold richer and more satisfying than it has ever been in the past.

J. T. LLOYD.

Religious Finality.

It has been reported that a Committee of a Workmen's Library in South Wales, have burned the copy they had of *God and My Neighbour*, and this is said to be the result of the revival. I can easily believe it, as I think that the revival in Wales and England is largely due, as a reaction, to the successful attack of the *Clarion* on Christianity. I have no doubt whatever, that in many cases it has been, at least, partially, created and fanned with a view to counteract the effects produced by the onslaught of Blatchford.

They burned the book. Their predecessors, not very long ago, would have burned the bad author as well as his book. And can anyone doubt that the fanatics who burned *God and My Neighbour* would gladly burn "Nunquam" or any other infidel if they had the power? What a laughing-stock they make of themselves! What a show they make of their imbecility! Would anyone, not demented by religion, think they could burn the thoughts and stop their progress by burning the book? Such an insane act, in the twentieth century, as a result of a religious revival, proves the revival to be more of a curse than a blessing to the people.

But what is the root cause of such fanaticism? How is it to be accounted for? Men differ from one another in everything almost. Some have blue eyes, some brown, some black. Some have black hair, some brown, some red. Some are tall, some short, some thin, some fat. They differ in tastes, habits, and fashions. They are not alike in anything scarcely. And no one dreams of trying to enforce uniformity, in any of these matters, or of quarreling with or persecuting their neighbors because they are not like themselves. Men can differ about history, poetry, trade, or work, without falling out and quarreling. But the moment you come to religion, there is division, bad blood, quarreling. What is the cause of it?

One cause, very probably, is the idea that there is merit in belief orthodox, and wickedness in it when heterodox. Orthodoxy is my doxy, heterodoxy is the doxy of another man who differs from me. But there is neither merit nor demerit in belief by itself. This is well expressed by James, "What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith and have no works? Can faith save him?.....faith, if it hath not works is dead. Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble" (James ii. 14, 17, 19).

Another cause is the free will fiction. Religion is built on the false conception that men can believe what they like, how they like, and when they like. But belief depends in the first instance on education. That is why Catholics and Protestants believe differently. In the second instance, on the capacity to think, investigate, and reason. Evidence commands belief, and we have no power to disbelieve. Change of opinions come upon us by the force of evolution, without our seeking or desiring, and often against our interest and will. Few, if any, change their belief because they desire it. Change comes upon us gradually, almost unawares, but as a rule with compelling force in spite of ourselves.

The priest is at the back of religious dogmas. Are they not the ambassadors of God? It matters nothing how much they differ, they are all infallible. And the priest of each church and sect warn their flock to beware of the deadly errors of all the others. Had there been priests of trade and color, divisions and quarrels would have been the result. The red hair church would condemn the black hair saints, and the black hair in return would damn all the reds. Any church that professes to be infallible condemns all but itself.

The bottom root of religious enmity, intolerance, and persecution is the doctrine of infallibility and finality. The creed of the Church is a divine revelation. Coming from God it is complete and free from error. God cannot make a mistake. It is impious to doubt and reject anything in it. Whatever is against it is a deadly error, and deserves punishment now and after. In religious matters which have been revealed by God, man must not think, must not question, must not cross-examine, must not reason, and must not even ask for evidence. His duty is to receive, believe, and confess without doubt or hesitation.

Is the church justified by Bible teaching in assuming that the Christian faith is final, complete, and infallible? The answer, I think, must be yes. Few quotations will be sufficient to prove it. "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints (Jude iii). Here we have one complete faith, once delivered, and no need for a second, or any addition or revision. "But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8). Here again the Gospel is perfect, complete, and final. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book (Rev. xxii. 18-19). The same doctrine is also taught in the Old Testament. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it (Deut. iii. 2). "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it" (Deut. xii. 32). These quoted texts are sufficient to justify all who believe the Bible to be the revealed Word of God, for maintaining that the faith is complete, infallible, and final. To profess and act on any other assumption would be an impeachment of God's knowledge and infallibility, and a rejection of the Bible as his revealed will. And this doctrine of the divine authorship of religion, its completeness, infallibility, and finality, is the chief source of

the divisions, quarrels, hatred, and persecutions caused by religion all over the world.

The dogma of the divine authorship of religion, and therefore its completeness, infallibility, and finality, has been, and continues to be, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, curse that afflicts man. This doctrine is not peculiar to Christianity. All religions claim to be divine in their origin. Mormonism came from heaven; Mohammedanism was revealed by God; the Pagan religions of antiquity were all God-given. Hence all have been intolerant and persecuting. All who reject Christ are enemies of God in Christian countries; and in Mohammedan countries all who reject the Koran are infidels and enemies of Allah. And to punish rebels against the divine religion, and kill them when possible, is an acceptable service to God.

The pernicious doctrine that religion is of divine origin must be destroyed before the spirit of intolerance is obliterated from the mind of man. As long as men continue to believe that their creed is divine they will be bigoted and arrogant, and will not cease to libel and persecute unbelievers as much as they can.

The doctrine is crystallised in creeds and confessions of faith, which have been, and are, barriers against knowledge, and blinds to keep the light away. In all the churches, chapels, and Sunday-schools the faith once delivered to the saints occupies the mind and prevents the entrance of newer and better knowledge. It is owing to this absurd doctrine that the Church in all ages opposed science, and persecuted whoever found and promulgated a new truth or discovery. If the Churches now are not so openly antagonistic to science as in former years, it is because science has triumphed all along the line, and they are powerless in the conflict. But the fact that science and general knowledge are kept outside the sanctuaries shows what the priests would do again if they had the power.

That the progress of the world has been retarded by religion, Pagan and Christian, is certain. It is very probable that many of the astounding discoveries of modern times would have been made thousands of years ago had not the rulers and priests ruthlessly suppressed and murdered all who found a new thought by thinking, or by research made a new discovery. The religions received from the gods were complete and final. There was nothing more to know, or needed; and all who ventured to add to them or to take from them were rebels against man and God, and were therefore unworthy to live.

Except in the sense that everything there is is divine, there is no such a thing as a divine religion. Every art and science, and every thought and doctrine, are of human origin and development. Religions, like all things, have grown from rude beginnings, changed, decayed, and died. The Christian religion is no exception. It is of human origin, like all others. In spite of priestly endowments, creeds, and confessions of faith, it is changing before our eyes, and no doubt in the future will decay and die, or evolve to some other and better system of ethics.

In all nature, as far as man knows, there is no finality, no standing still. Everything is moving and changing. Religious people are the only persons that pretend to believe in it. Scientists, teachers, politicians, and traders accept neither finality nor infallibility. If they believed in such an absurdity, research, discovery, improvement, and progress would be at an end. If the Churches were wise, they would discard finality and infallibility, and install science and general knowledge in their place. If they fail to do that, their doom is sealed.

R. J. DERFEL.

There is not any burden that some would gladly post off to another than the charge and care of their Religion. There be—who knows not that there be?—of Protestants and professors who live and die in as arrant an implicit faith as any lay Papist of Loretto.—Milton.

Acid Drops.

It is good to know that nothing seems likely to save the Russian autocracy. One of the last desperate devices of the titled ruffians who run it was to stir up a persecution of the Jews, in the hope that religious and racial hatred would supersede the revolutionary fever. Horrible massacres have taken place already in some places, although the trick is not successful in the great centres of population. At Jitomir we read of Jews being literally torn to pieces. "The appearance of the dead," a special reporter says, "is terrible—broken skulls, heads and legs dismembered, trunks disembowelled." This is what religious hatred does for the world. And the paltry little thing called the Czar sits and smiles at St. Petersburg. We beg pardon, not at St. Petersburg, but as near to it as he dares to come.

Those who have followed our campaign against Dr. Torrey will remember the case of Robert Pitman, the "converted Atheist." It is all set forth in our pamphlet on *Dr. Torrey's Converts*. Robert Pitman was introduced to the world by the Rev. Hugh E. Boulton, of Bristol. In a letter to Dr. Torrey, which that gentleman paraded for all it was worth in London, he described how Robert Pitman had been brought to God. It was a pack of lies from beginning to end, but whether Pitman deceived Boulton, or Boulton deceived Torrey, is a question we are not called upon to discuss, and perhaps life is not long enough to settle it.

Boulton has taken his show-up lying down. There is not a word about it in the May and June numbers of his Parish Magazine. But in turning over the pages of these publications, which a correspondent has sent us, we have come across something else which simply takes the cake for unctuous hypocrisy. It appears that Boulton has been offered a better job and has accepted it. This, of course, is a thing that every man is entitled to do; and if he acts in a straightforward way no one has a right to complain. But the pious Boulton breaks the news to his "Dear Friends" of the old parish in a most disgusting rignarole. Take his opening paragraph, for instance:—

"I have a communication to make to you which I am afraid will give some pain, and cause some disappointment. The offer of the living of Greyfriars, Reading, has been made to me, and after much prayer and deliberation I have come to the conclusion with much regret that I ought to accept the offer."

Language of this kind is enough to make decent people sick. Boulton regrets having to leave for Reading; then why does he go? Why not secure peace of mind by stopping where he is? What did he pray to the Lord for? And what assurance has he got that the Lord cares a farthing whether he goes or stays? Is not the explanation of his movement to be found in the fact that "the income of the Reading living is larger than that of St. Peter's"? Boulton denies it. He says that he and his wife (why drag her in?) have laid their money at the Lord's feet. "Thank God," he exclaims, "one can rise to a higher conception of the Christian ministry than that of £ s. d." Very likely. But the long and the short of it is that Boulton is going off with "great grief" to the higher stipend. And while he is getting ready we may offer him a bit of advice from Dr. Johnson—"Clear your mind of cant, sir!"

The following paragraph, from a contemporary's "Wisdom While You Wait," is unintentionally funny:—

"SIR OLIVER LODGE.

The world is a factory for the production of souls and characters. But the guider—the great mind in control of it all—is not outside it but working in it. At Birmingham."

"At Birmingham" makes the joke. Those who take it might ask, "Is it God or Joe?"

The Son of Man had not where to lay his head. Last week the new Bishop of Southwark was duly "enthroned." What a game it is! And what fools the people are to stand it!

The *Northern Echo* tells the story of little Amos Rame, the six-year-old son of a postman at Silpho, who was caught in the wheel of a timber-wagon, and shockingly injured. When he was taken home he asked: "Mother, if I ask God to mend me, will he mend me?" He died two hours later. Poor little fellow! He fancied he had been taught the truth.

Apparently we are to have the latest science spread out for the edification of the uneducated in the halfpenny

morning papers. On Thursday, June 26, the *Daily Chronicle* published an article on "The Origin of Life" by Mr. Butler Burke, who claims to have produced something wonderful by the use of radium. What he really has produced does not seem very clear, and the matter is one for scientific experts rather than indiscriminate newspaper readers "These things are, on the whole," Mr. Burke says, "more like bacteria than like crystals, though they are certainly not the former, and I doubt if they are the latter." Clearly there is no particular cause for rejoicing yet.

Mr. Burke is careful—some may think over-careful—to state that, if he has produced organic from inorganic matter, it "does not really account for the origin of life, or for the vital principle, if such there be." But this is using the words "account for" in a metaphysical sense. If you produce organic matter from inorganic matter you have, scientifically speaking, the origin of life in a nutshell. Science is concerned with the *How* of Nature; Theology and Metaphysics are concerned with the *Why*. And the *Why* is endless—and useless. For as fast as one *Why* is answered another *Why* waits for solution.

The National League for Physical Education and Improvement held a big representative meeting at the Mansion House lately. One of the speakers was Mrs. Bramwell Booth, who somewhat indiscreetly quoted the Spanish proverb that an ounce of mother is worth a ton of priest. Yes, and it is also worth a ton of Salvationism.

Charles Bradlaugh once went to Hyde Park to demonstrate in favor of peace. He was nearly killed by the Jingoists, and had little help outside his own party. Nonconformist ministers were no more friends of peace than were Church clergymen. But since then peace has made many friends, and the Churches are now rushing in to nobble the peace movement, as they always do when the time has come to patronise what they can no longer persecute. One need not be surprised that the recent National Peace Congress at Bristol was practically run by Christians, who talked as if the peace movement belonged to them—as if they invented it. The President was a Bishop, and he preached a preliminary sermon, in which he talked of "a Christian country like ours." In his presidential address he spoke of the war in the East as having "shocked the sentiment of a vast number of Christian people"—as though there were no others. Another orator urged missionaries to emphasise in their teaching and lives "the peaceful nature of the Gospel." And much irritation was raised by Mr. Fox Bourne, an old friend of the peace movement, suggesting that missionaries sometimes did a good deal of mischief in Africa. Why don't these Christians run a Peace Society of their own?

Mr. Bryce, M.P., speaking at the anniversary of Hackney Congregational College, said (according to the *Daily News* report) that "we were shedding off some of the dogmas not essential to Christianity, under the influence of physical science and of the historic sense." This seems to us a roundabout way of saying that Christianity has to live by keeping up-to-date—which proves that it is not a divine but a human product. Were it of divine origin it would not be subject to the struggle for existence.

They have hit upon an original way of clearing off the £2,000 debt on the Methodist New Connexion chapel at Wallisend. Three members are going about the district with a mechanical piano, begging the villagers for pence. Apparently the natives are to be tortured into paying off that mortgage.

A signalman on the line between Bradford and Leeds suddenly went mad. Fortunately he put all the levers at danger. He had been attending Dowieite meetings. On leaving the signal-box he walked to another some distance down the line and told a colleague that God had called him to convert the world to the Dowie faith. His call was really to a lunatic asylum.

The parsons are up in arms against Sabbath desecration, as it used to be called, or the secularisation of Sunday, as they call it now. Nearly a column was devoted to the subject in the *Daily News* recently. Canon Scott Holland was quoted as declaring that the neglect of Sunday observance "constitutes a grave national peril." It appears that a new organisation is to be formed to safeguard the day of worship. Something must be done, or the Church will go to the dogs.

The Right Reverend Father-in-Gawd the Lord Bishop of Stepney has been chortling about Sabbath desecration.

Well, most of the Sabbath-breakers merely enjoy themselves on the "sacred" day, but the profession to which his lordship belongs work more on that day than any other.

Sky-pilots hate to see people enjoying themselves on Sunday. So they hold their open-air services at the seaside places, and appeal vociferously to the sinner to avoid damnation. But, as the wag said, although "many are called, few get up."

The hereditary dislike of the Puritans to the stage is shown by the frantic efforts of the various revivalists to show that they have made converts from the dramatic profession. So far the united efforts of the Howling Dervishes has resulted in the capture of a tenth-rate concert singer and a few Pierrots.

Lord Halifax, at the annual meeting of the English Church Union, declared "on behalf of thousands of laymen" that there was "no right they valued more dearly than the privilege of being able to attend a daily Mass." This is a pretty thing for "a loyal son of the Church of England" to say. According to the Thirty-Nine Articles the Mass is blasphemous idolatry. Not indeed that we have any special objection to it. Browning speaks of Italy as a place where you "see God made and eaten every day," and for all we care the same performance may be witnessed daily in England. Nor do we understand why Protestants object to it so fiercely. They also accept the unspeakable mystery of the Trinity, and after swallowing that everything else should be easy.

"General Booth," a late *Daily Chronicle* says, "arrived at Perth, Western Australia, yesterday, and was accorded a civic reception. The General afterwards left for the gold-fields." Ah yes, the General would not neglect them.

Dr. Agar Beet's *The Last Things* was withdrawn from circulation in deference to, and practically by order of, the Wesleyan Conference. He has now resigned his professorship in order to publish the book again. A new edition, in large part re-written, will be issued shortly by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, who make the following announcement:—

"In view of the great change of opinion in all Churches during the last half-century, Dr. Beet investigates, in this volume, the teaching of the Bible about the doom of the wicked; and endeavors to show that, while the New Testament affords decisive proof that Christ and His Apostles taught that ruin, utter and final, awaits all who reject and disobey Him, we have no adequate proof that their sufferings will be endless, or of the endless permanence of all human souls."

It appears from this that after all those hundreds of years it is reserved for Dr. Beet to investigate satisfactorily "the doom of the wicked." And who are the wicked? Why, all of us; for all have sinned, and there is none righteous, not one—not even Dr. Beet. His book, therefore, should be of interest to everybody—including himself.

It is particularly interesting to learn that the doom of the wicked is to be utter and final ruin. So much Dr. Beet regards as perfectly certain. But when he is asked what this "ruin" is he says "I'm very sorry, but I cannot tell you." So you are just where you were before. On the whole, Dr. Beet rather inclines to the opinion that all who "reject and disobey" Christ will be simply extinguished (after paying their shot), while the elect live on for ever in the paradise of God; presumably with the Lamb, and all the menagerie of the Apocalypse. This, although Dr. Beet may not be aware of it, is something like the opinion of Thomas Paine, who, of course, had his little weaknesses like other mortals. Paine wrote as follows in "My Private Thoughts on a Future State":—

"My own opinion is that those whose lives have been spent in doing good, and endeavoring to make their fellow-mortals happy, for this is the only way in which we can serve God, will be happy hereafter; and that the very wicked will meet with some punishment. But those who are neither good nor bad, or are too insignificant for notice, will be dropt entirely."

"This is my opinion," Paine adds. We don't believe it would be his opinion now. He was in advance of his own time. If he lived at the present time, he would not be behind it. He was a pioneer.

Paine's good man and Dr. Beet's are not exactly the same thing, however; the former endeavors to make his fellow-mortals happy, the latter accepts and obeys Christ. There are many good men in the world according to Dr. Paine's definition; how many are there according to Dr. Beet's? Who accepts Christ? One man says "I do."

Another man says "You don't." All the sects, and there are scores of them, talk in this way of each other. Every sect declares that it accepts Christ; and every other sect denies that it does anything of the kind. And who obeys Christ? The Peculiar People do on one point, and their fellow Christians send them to prison for it. This state of discord is really universal. And the case is no better if we take Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Millions praise this discourse as heavenly wisdom, but who thinks of following it? Here and there a simpleton or a fanatic, who is very lucky to find himself outside a workhouse, a lunatic asylum, or a gaol. If only those who obey Christ are to be saved, heaven will never be troubled with a population question.

Divine Providence was too busy watching the sparrows fall to notice such a trifle as the fall of a house painter from a second-floor scaffold. Unhappily the God-neglected painter fell on a policeman who was immediately below on point duty, to their mutual distress. If this sort of thing becomes common we shall have to clothe our policemen in bomb-proof armor.

Compositors are sad sinners; but they frequently add to the gaiety of nations. In a bookseller's catalogue we saw a book, *The Fatal Opulence of Bishops*, misprinted as *The Fatal "Corpulence" of Bishops*.

We were staggered when we saw Mr. Justice Grantham's sentence on Florence Doughty. The jury strongly recommended her to mercy, and the judge's mercy was seven years' penal servitude. If this indeed be mercy, we can understand how the old theologians found God's goodness in the very fires and pains of hell.

This poor young woman committed a crime. She fired upon a "respectable" solicitor and his son, and might have killed them. As it was, they were seriously injured. She also swallowed laudanum with a view to committing suicide. All this, of course, is very shocking. But what lay behind it? That is the important question. Nothing can be understood except in its circumstances. What were they in this case? Florence Doughty was taken advantage of by the "respectable" solicitor, who was old enough to be her father—and a married man besides. When he had enough of her, he not only refused to see her, but left her in a state of utter destitution. Maddened at such treatment, unable to eat or sleep, and wrought to a pitch of irresponsibility, from any scientific and humane point of view, she did the deed for which she was tried and sentenced. A man seduced her, a man arrested her, twelve men found her guilty, and another man gave her seven years' penal servitude. All those men were arrayed against that one poor woman. The jury gave her mercy—in words; the others gave her—what she has got.

Ah, poor women! Sacred vessels, if we only knew it, of the highest interests and holiest instincts of humanity, how are they broken and trampled upon by those who should be their helpers and defenders! And those who break and trample upon them talk of virtue and the safety of society! It is enough to make devils laugh and angels weep.

Who was the greater criminal of the two—the "respectable" solicitor or the young woman who is now in a convict's cell? Others can form their own opinion. We have ours. Not from a legal point of view, which is nothing—but from a moral point of view, which is everything—we have much sympathy for the woman, and none at all for the man, in this painful drama. Suppose he pleaded passion as an excuse for gratifying his appetites in the way he did, what can he plead as an excuse for turning upon her so brutally? What can he plead as an excuse for leaving her to shame and misery together? Emerson quotes somewhere with more or less approval the epitaph on an old English knight, wherein it is said that "if a woman gave him pleasure he remembered her in her pain." This is not first-rate ethics, but it is sound within its limits; and apparently, as the world goes, even in Christian countries, it is a pitch of virtue which judges and juries hardly expect, even in the case of "respectable" solicitors.

What we have to say in conclusion is this. Any self-respecting society would see Florence Doughty liberated as soon as possible. If she serves out her atrocious sentence it will be an infamy.

Christian apologists are fond of talking about the "awful luxury" that prevailed at Rome when the disciples of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth were making the spiritual

conquest of the Roman empire. One would think there had been no such thing as luxury in the world since Christianity triumphed. Why, the *Daily Chronicle* of July 1 reported (as though it were a fine thing) a dinner given at the Savoy Hotel by a rich Yankee, which cost £2,000 for twenty-four guests—which works out at rather over £83 apiece. And not far off people were starving.

We see from a newspaper cutting that Evan Roberts is not going to be beaten by Dr. Torrey as an infidel-converter. At a Llangefni meeting the following occurred—at least it was reported: "A well-known ventriloquist, describing himself as an ex-Atheist and an old ringleader of Satan, prayed excitedly for forgiveness for having helped to send many souls towards destruction." It is a pity they did not give the man's name, but perhaps they thought reticence was judicious.

At the meeting where the ex-Atheist ventriloquist was converted Evan Roberts did nothing but "spent half an hour in a reclining attitude on the pulpit desk, with closed eyes, apparently engaged in silent prayer. Now and then his features convulsively twitched." While this lunatic or charlatan was doing his silent "turn" the place was full of noise. People shouted and shook as if with ague; many women waved handkerchiefs and many fainted; while the air was rent with cries of "Jesus Christ for ever!" And this is the movement that Mr. Lloyd-George blesses!

The dear *Daily News* has a column of literary extracts, entitled "The Realm of Gold." Among the selections we noticed a chapter of Isaiah and Mark Twain's *Jumping Frog*. When the pious editor wants another really funny story he might do worse than select the yarn of Jonah and the whale.

Dean Wace has been bleating about Sunday desecration, with special reference to Boulter's Lock. He wants to see the Christian ideal realised and Sundays "run" by the parsons and the publicans. In that delightful state of affairs the ordinary man or woman has the pleasing alternative of spiritual or spiritous intoxication.

The Right Honorable A. J. Balfour seems to be a worry to some of the Lord's followers. A speaker at the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Assembly seems to imagine that the Premier's soul is in a parlous state on account of his playing golf on Sundays. The editor of the *Guardian* also lectures the right honorable one, but does not use so many adjectives. Perhaps the true solution is that the author of *The Defence of Philosophic Doubt* plays golf on Sundays and the equally distinguished author of *The Foundations of Belief* looks after orthodox interests in the House of Commons.

Rev. William Bell, rector of Charlynch, Bridgewater, has been fined ten shillings and costs for assaulting a boy named Channing. The boy attended Sunday-school, and the rector alleged that he was extremely disobedient. The boy's version was that his offence consisted in not saluting the rector's wife. Anyhow, the man of God will probably keep his hands off boys in future. He knows now that the law of England is ahead of the Bible-teaching on this matter.

Some people have a touching trust in the Lord. When the Rev. John Waite, a Baptist minister, of Foxley-road, Brixton (so near the scene of Dr. Torrey's recent mission!) was arrested on charges of assaulting three little girls aged eleven, twelve, and thirteen, at the Dugdale-street Baptist Chapel, he said: "It is a plot against me, and I should like to know who is at the bottom of it. I suppose the Lord will see me through this trouble as he has always done." At the Lambeth Police-court the stipendiary offered to accept bail—one surety in £500 or two in £250 each. It is not reported that the Lord was one of them.

Rev. F. B. Meyer, one of the washiest of the Free Church leaders, has been saying that Catholic religious teaching "in every age and country has corrupted the soul's purity and strength." As between Catholic and Protestant such language is simply imbecile. We are opposed to both sides, but we know very well that, from the point of view of literature, art, and devotion, Catholicism beats Protestantism hollow. There is one thing, however, in which Protestantism excels—and that is cheek.

Taking up the Savior's cross and following his divine example is difficult. The Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon has done his little best. He has just returned from his Mediterranean tour greatly improved in health.

M. Sabatier has been telling us that "French thought at the present time is at once free and profoundly religious." We have got some of the same kind here, monsieur. How otherwise should the archbishops, the bishops, and the leaders of the fancy brands draw princely incomes in order to properly imitate the poor Carpenter of Nazareth?

There was a Welsh juryman who held out all night against the majority, and when the jury was discharged he declared that he had never met eleven such obstinate men in his life. That was one extreme. At the recent Devon Assizes the judge went to the other. He declared that a juryman who stood out against the other eleven "ought to be ashamed of himself." The juryman replied that his action was dictated by conscience. Good! That juryman was an honest citizen. He did his duty. It seems to us that the judge is the person who "ought to be ashamed of himself." Still, his conduct is not surprising in a Christian country, where logic and intellectual honesty are so little understood.

The President of Brown University, U.S.A., thinks that Church music should be "kept noble and good." "If your children," he says, "hear Wagner and other great masters in their schools, they will not be satisfied with 'Pull for the Shore' in Church." Commenting on this, an American paper says that there are worse Sunday-school hymns than that; the following, for instance:—

Dropping, dropping, dropping, dropping,
Hear the pennies fall;
Every one for Jesus,
He will get them all.

This is fit for a penny-in-the-slot machine.

The *Glasgow Weekly Mail* has been answering a correspondent who appears to be troubled, from a religious point of view, about the progress of Japan. Our contemporary ascribes this progress to Japan's imitation of Christian nations. But this is sheer nonsense. Japan has imitated Christian nations in providing herself with armies and battleships. She has imitated them in nothing else. And as the *Mail* denies that "crushing power constitutes progress," its little argument falls all to pieces.

The following is from "The Good Gray Poet," a series of papers on Walt Whitman, extracted from the diary of Horace Traubel in the *Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia) June 3, 1905:—

"April 29, 1888. Harned told Whitman that Gladstone had come out with a reply to Ingersoll. This excited W.'s humor. He laughed gently. Said he: 'Gladstone is no match for Ingersoll—at least not in such a controversy. Of course he is a great man, or was—has had a past—but in questions of the theological sort he is by no means much. Oh, there will be a funny time of it!' Here he put his two hands together scoop-wise. 'Bob will take him up in this fashion, turn him over (all sides of him), look at him sweetly, ever so sweetly, smile—then crunch him'—to illustrate which, W. worked his two hands together as if to crush their imagined burden. 'Yes, crunch him, much as a cat would a mouse, till there's no life left to fool with.'"

The *Daily Mail* has been printing (in what we may call its independent department) an article by Mr. Henry A. Reeves on "The Search for Religious Truth." The article is mainly an appeal to the Church to set its house in order and bring itself up to date. Mr. Reeves notes that the intelligent laity are reading and thinking for themselves, that only "18 out of 100 of the population go to places of worship, that candidates for holy orders are scarce and of inferior quality, that various devices have to be resorted to in order to coax people into churches, and that the congregations consist largely of women and children." He also notes that "most of the intelligent artisan class are agnostics." In these circumstances he says "it is time to revise our methods, and to appeal to the intellect first, so that the emotions may be rightly guided." This would suit Freethinkers to a nicety. Whether it would suit the Church remains to be seen. No doubt Mr. Reeves means well, but we fancy he is mistaken. It is really from the intellectual point of view that Christianity has most cause for apprehension. But the important thing, for the moment, is that Christians like Mr. Reeves see that the game is up unless it can be given a fresh turn.

I shall do what little I can to hasten the day when this earth shall be covered with homes, and when by countless firesides shall sit the happy and the loving families of the world.—*Ingersoll*.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(Suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton, Essex.—July 9, a. and e., Victoria Park; 16, m., Camberwell, a., Brockwell Park; 23, a. and e., Victoria Park.

OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged:—£139 9s. 3d. Received this week:—T. Roberts 2s. 6d., W. Large (Calcutta) 4s. 9d., R. S. Jones 3s. 6d., N. 6d., C. G. Whitwell 2s., C. Harvey 1s., S. Hudson 5s., J. C. Goodfellow 1s., G. Hill 1s., J. Smith 1s., J. B. 1s., J. W. 1s.

THE RIDGWAY FUND.—We have received: G. W. Foote 10s. 6d., Major G. O. Warren 10s., South Shields—K. Fitzpatrick 1s., J. Fothergill 1s., J. T. Horsman 1s., G. White 1s.

ERIMUS.—We do not know of any statistics of the rates and taxes which churches, chapels, &c. are relieved of in this country. It would be very interesting to know the exact figures, but how could they be obtained except by a special effort? If premises are not valued by the rating committee—whose object is purely practical—the valuation would have to be done independently.

A. L. COATES.—Cuttings are more useful if posted to us before Monday. Tuesday is a clearing up day with us, as we go to press in the evening, and space cannot be left open except for urgent matter.

R. PALMER.—Cannot waste our time on such rubbish. The "jealousy" is too silly. Nearly all the nice things in the *Freethinker* about Mr. Foote's colleagues are from his own pen.

T. ROBERTS (Swansea) writes: "I have read your open letter to Dr. Torrey. My verdict is Guilty, and I heartily contribute to the Fund to supply the rope."

M. JONES.—By all means send us the account of your conversion from Christianity to Secularism. Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* is a very profound work. It was translated from the German by the great novelist George Eliot, who also translated Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. It was published by Chapman in 1854. A new edition, in 1881, was included in Trübner's "English and Foreign Philosophical Library." The price is 7s. 6d.

A. DOWELL.—Orders for literature should not be sent to Mr. Foote, or to the editor of the *Freethinker*, but direct to the business manager at our publishing office. Glad to have your thanks for "the stand" we have taken "in the defence of such noble men as Paine and Ingersoll."

W. MARSHMAN.—No doubt it would be an advantage to have the contents of the *Freethinker* printed on the front page, and we hope to arrange for it presently. The difficulty is that we have so much to do, and no sub-editor now to help us.

J. CHAPMAN.—It was good of you. Thanks. Glad you "enjoyed a splendid Sunday from Cohen on the Newcastle Moor."

C. W. STRYING.—Thanks for a sight of the correspondence. Your share of it is good, and will do good—in spite of the editorial doctoring. Don't be discouraged. Peg away, as Lincoln said.

UNKNOWN FRIEND.—Thanks.

T. M. M.—Good wishes are always appreciated.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Yes, but only once. Thanks for the Suicide verses.

H. L. FIELD.—Thanks for cuttings, etc. See paragraph. The *Freethinker* shall be sent as requested.

NEWPORT (Mon.).—Send the cuttings when you please. Thanks.

W. CAIN.—Change of address noted.

JOHN RUXTON (Liverpool).—We cannot answer such queries by post. It is not true that Mr. Foote ever edited the *Agnostic Journal*. It is not true that Mr. Foote ever stated at a public meeting that the late Mr. Spurgeon did more for humanity than the late Charles Bradlaugh.

W. CHALMERS.—See paragraph.

W. P. PEABSON.—A further parcel, including Torrey pamphlets, is being sent to Liverpool.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Thanks for good wishes. We are still attending to all our *Freethinker* duties.

H. J. CATTELL.—Glad you are doing all in your power to increase our circulation.

R. CHAPMAN.—We hope every Branch will collect for the Ridgway Fund. Thanks.

MR. HOLLAND, 7 Norfolk-road, Dalston, London, N., supplies the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature.

C. HARVEY.—Shall make use of your letter next week.

J. C. GOODFELLOW says: "You are doing a first-rate piece of work" with regard to Dr. Torrey. He also tenders his thanks to Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd for their "excellent articles."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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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.

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FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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Sugar Plums.

Dr. Torrey has done "saving" London. He claims 15,000 converts, but does not say if his estimate tallies with the celestial register. What is certain is that our pamphlets have done him and his mission a lot of harm. They have also led to an article (which we refer to elsewhere) by Mr. W. T. Stead in the July *Review of Reviews*, taking Dr. Torrey to task for his slanders on Paine and Ingersoll. After a brief holiday the revivalist goes to "save" Plymouth and Sheffield. Our pamphlets will follow him up at both places, and we shall have to print another large supply for the purpose.

Mr. Cohen is very popular in Victoria Park. He has not been able to visit it for some weeks, but he lectures there to-day (July 9) both afternoon and evening, and is sure to have large audiences. There are reasons why the local "saints" should be in strong force around the platform.

Before the winter season arrives Mr. Foote will have a special communication to make to the Freethought party with respect to the financial side of the movement, including the prospects of the *Freethinker* and the publishing business generally. Meanwhile he had better make a preliminary statement in order to prevent misunderstandings. Amongst the changes that were contemplated, and only awaiting a better assurance as to Mr. Foote's health before being carried into effect, was one involving both an increase and a concentration of effort at 2 Newcastle-street. For some time it has been obvious that the National Secular Society and the Secular Society, Limited, required the Secretary's undivided attention and energy, if they were to be carried on in an up-to-date fashion. This would necessitate Miss Vance's being relieved of her duties in connection with the shop business, and it was not possible to do this until a suitable person could be found to take charge of that department. Such a person has been found in Mr. W. A. Vaughan. Miss Vance has taken up her quarters on the first floor, over the shop, where Freethinkers who want to see her on Society and other business will find her ready and eager to attend to their requirements. Right in the dog days, of course, it would be foolish to attempt a big splash; but in a few weeks there will be plenty of fresh work for Miss Vance to do under the new arrangement, from which we expect a considerable advantage to the movement. We may add, as some of her friends may be anxious on this point, that the change is no detriment to her financially. Not that we mean that her work for the movement rests on a commercial basis; that is far from being the case; only there is a commercial side to it, which is important in its way. Miss Vance still retains the secretaryship of the Freethought Publishing Company, as well as that of the N. S. S. and of the Secular Society, Limited, and long may she do so.

Mr. J. Partridge, secretary of the Birmingham Branch, thanks us on behalf of the Committee for what he calls our "splendid appeal on behalf of Mr. Ridgway." "We have already received a few nice contributions," he adds, "and have handed them over to Mr. Ridgway, and I assure you he was very much affected by what you had written of him and the response that had already been made." Mr. Partridge sends the following first list of acknowledgments:—

- H. Lees 5s., A Secularist 5s., M. Christopher 5s., Mrs. Fathers 10s. 6d., R. G. Fathers 10s. 6d., W. T. Pitt 10s. 6d., J. P. 10s. 6d., Birmingham Branch Benevolent Fund £3 3s., C. Steptoe 2s. 6d., F. Searle 1s., Joseph Close 2s. 6d., J. B. 1s., J. M. 6d., George Taylor 10s., J. Barry 5s., J. Hockin 2s., A. B. Moss 10s., N. D. 5s.—Total £7 19s. 6d.

Subscriptions to the Ridgway Fund should be sent to Mr. Partridge, 183 Vauxhall-road, Birmingham. Any sent to us are acknowledged in the "Correspondents" column. We trust the Freethought party will bear this Fund in mind.

The Birmingham Branch had its annual picnic on Sunday. Eighty-two members and friends went by special electric cars to Kinver. After rambling amid the beautiful scenery the party sat down to a splendid tea at Edge View Hotel; the function being brought to a close by a few appropriate remarks from Mr. R. G. Fathers, the Branch president. Altogether it was declared to be as successful an outing as the Branch ever had.

The *Shields Gazette* reports the annual meeting of the local N. S. S. Branch, and mentions "an increased membership and a most successful lecture season." "In particular," it says, "Mr. Foote's meetings at the Royal Assembly Hall were the largest held for some years, and Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd had also been well supported." Reference is made to the financial assistance rendered by the Secular Society, Limited. The Branch secretary is Mr. Ralph Chapman, 30 Madras-street, Simonside.

The Liverpool Branch is still prospering. Mr. Ward had a good meeting on Sunday night; he was also in good form, and his reply to a Christian critic was loudly cheered. Some new members were then enrolled. On Monday evenings some outdoor meetings are to be held at St. Domingo Pit. The "Protestants" are strong in that locality, and the "saints" should therefore rally round the Freethought platform. The outdoor meetings in St. George's-square and at Edgehill continue to be successful. The Branch picnic will take place early in August, and a "treat" is in contemplation for the children.

We have just received a letter from Major G. O. Warren, who will be remembered by the older readers of the *London Echo* for his outspoken contributions some years ago. Major Warren pays us the compliment of saying that the *Freethinker* seems to him "to improve with every issue." In a P.S. he says: "Glad you have given Torrey such a drubbing." No doubt his gladness will be increased when he reads our article this week.

Under its own heading of "Impudent Editing of Ingersoll" the New York *Truthseeker* reproduces our recent comments on the bowdlerised reprint of some of Ingersoll's lectures and essays by a "Rationalist" publishing house in London. Our contemporary, which is the leading Freethought weekly in America, says that "the criticism Mr. Foote makes is just and none too strong."

Mr. F. J. Gould did good work by bringing forward his "Secular Education" motion on the Leicester Education Committee. We printed it some weeks ago, and we venture to print it again:—

"That this committee recognises the desirability of confining the education under the control of local authorities to secular education only, and resolves to submit to a Special Sub-Committee the following points for consideration and support: (1) the manner in which the policy of secular education would affect the methods now carried out in the Council schools of Leicester; (2) the manner in which the policy of secular education would affect the relations between the Council and the non-provided schools of Leicester. The sub-committee to add any recommendation they may think fit."

This resolution was discussed on June 26. Mr. Gould moved it in a very excellent and able speech, which was well reported in the local *Daily Post*. Of course there was and could be nothing new in Mr. Gould's arguments, but he presented his case with persuasive power. By a subtle dexterity he never so much as mentioned the Bible, though this did not prevent its being dragged in by subsequent speakers. His speech was framed on general grounds. Church denominationalism and Nonconformist undenominationalism were both out of place in the nation's schools, and there would be no peace until this was recognised, neither could there be educational efficiency. Alderman Smith seconded the resolution, arguing that secular education was the only real unsectarianism. Amongst those who opposed was Canon Kendell, who waxed pathetic in explaining what his "feelings" would be if Mr. Gould's resolution were carried. The Chairman, while opposing, paid a tribute to Mr. Gould's urbanity and broad-mindedness. Finally the resolution was lost by 5 votes to 14. It was bound to be lost, but the debate was a great gain.

The *Daily Post* (Liberal and Nonconformist) in a long leading article on the debate on Mr. Gould's motion considered that the question was settled "for the present." But it warned its friends against thinking that it would never re-appear. "Sooner or later," it said, "it will have to be revived and redecided."

The Education of a Minister of God.

THE increasing importance attached in modern times to the purely human qualifications of the clergyman is fraught with much that is ominous if the Churches had eyes to see. Long ago, anyone who felt a "call" from God, was of a pious disposition, and could scramble through a not too onerous theological course was considered efficient enough for the service of the Almighty. God was expected to do the rest, and make up the deficiencies of the candidate for Holy Orders by the infusion of his Divine spirit. The budding priest was going out into the world to work for the Lord; surely the Lord would lighten his burden, smooth his path, and generally make the impossible possible. No reliance was to be placed on such vanities as human knowledge, human eloquence, and managing capacity. "The Lord is mindful of his own." Intellectuality was about the last thing thought of. All these qualities might be good and useful enough in their way, but it was almost blasphemy to say that they were essential in a capable minister of God. Who dare doubt that the power of God could convert the most mediocre specimen of humanity into a great and glorious Apostle of Christ, able to bring thousands to the foot of the Cross in tears and repentance? Consequently all human accomplishments were as naught; were mere dross and dust, which were more likely than not to impede the spiritual progress of their possessor, and impair his usefulness in God's service. Such was the old-fashioned view. A different note is being struck to-day.

Readers of the Reverend Mr. Peery's able book on Japan, from the Christian missionary standpoint, must have been struck by the business-like fashion in which he regards his subject. He is under no delusion that religious enthusiasm and exceptional piety form any adequate substitute for physical health, mental alertness, sound knowledge, and business aptitude on the part of the missionary in embryo. He frankly tells yearning aspirants for foreign mission work that unless they can boast the latter qualifications (with many others of a like nature) they had better conclude the Lord does not want them abroad at all. He puts it bluntly, but with refreshing candor.

In fact, nowadays, when we read of the manifold mundane requirements that are held to be requisite in a thoroughly capable clergyman either for the home field or for laboring in foreign missions, we are tempted to ask—Where does God come in? Not that Secularists need do aught but rejoice that even in a small degree professional believers in Providence are beginning to recognise that if anything is to be achieved here below it is only by human means it can be done. We need not doubt, however, that such admission—which, of course, is merely implied, not expressed—is being wrung from the Churches by the force of circumstances, and is not made voluntarily. In the case of Mr. Peery we can understand that it is a keen practical sense of the peculiar difficulties that dog the footsteps of the Christian missionary in Japan which has shaken his confidence in the all-sufficing efficacy of the Divine Afflatus. And he is sufficiently intelligent to grasp the fact that tactics and methods which might be successful enough with ignorant savages in the wilds of Africa will not go down with the Japanese. The natives of Japan are quite competent to take the intellectual measure of the hymn-singing gentleman who arrives with his sacred bundle of myths under his arm. On the whole they appear better able to appreciate the true value of these ambassadors of Christ than the people of our own land have yet learned to be. Some of the clerical gentlemen who are popular idols at home would, in Japan, be objects of a contempt even more withering than ridicule.

But in these days of fierce competition it is not in the export market alone that the need for a higher standard of quality in the manufacture of professional exponents of Christianity is sorely felt. The

last number of the *Hibbert Journal* contains an article by the Bishop of Ripon, entitled "The Education of a Minister of God." In this article the writer attempts to set up a standard of aim before those "who have to send forth men to exercise full and legitimate influence as Christian teachers in the world," and endeavors to indicate "the methods which may contribute to the attainments of such a standard." Dr. Boyd Carpenter has much to say that is interesting and suggestive, dealing, as he does, with his subject in its relation to the intellectual, social, and moral conditions of our own times. The article is noteworthy as embodying at least a halting recognition on the part of a high dignitary of the Church of England that men of the highest intellectual stamp are reluctant to enter the ranks of the Christian ministry at the present day. Of course, however much this fact may have been ignored by the ecclesiastical authorities, it has been obvious enough to outside observers for some time. The Bishop of Ripon is sufficiently cautious in his utterances, but his article is really a plea for the broadening of the clerical outlook on life, and for bringing the clerical mind into line with scientific methods of thought. The good Bishop may well despair of the latter consummation, so far as the present generation of clerics is concerned, if he peruses some of the articles contributed by reverend writers even to such an advanced Review as the *Hibbert Journal*. There is much more sheer theological raving in them than evidence of scientific methods of thought.

Here is part of what Dr. Carpenter says respecting the ideal Christian minister:—

"We desire that he should be intelligent, alive to the conditions of his own age—if not learned with the learning of an expert, yet sufficiently learned to appreciate the general direction of the tide of thought and the way in which it has been influenced by currents set in motion in other days. He must be alive to the changes of mental attitude and of standards of value which have arisen in modern times. On questions of thought, scientific discoveries, and criticisms, he needs to be abreast of his age. In these matters we desire his adequate intellectual equipment."

And in summing up towards the close he says:—

"We should train men to know their own times; to extend their study beyond the narrow limits of a few centuries; to explore the facts of religious consciousness in all systems, and in all ages.....Historical study, if we give a wide meaning to the words, must hold a conspicuous place in preparation. This study would include the study of what man is, and of what are the needs which his lame endeavors after religion reveal....."

Dr. Carpenter does not omit reference to spiritual fitness as being also necessary in the prospective clergyman, but that we may pass over. What we have quoted shows he has no narrow view of what goes to make a really educated man. It occurs to us, however, that if the Bishop of Ripon's ideas on the intellectual training of candidates for Holy Orders were faithfully carried into practice very few of the latter would be honestly prepared to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles at the close of their educational course.

It has, we think, been frequently pointed out in these columns that the churches, of late years, in view of the destructive nature of both the Scientific and the so-called Higher Criticism, have evinced a desire to shift the battle-ground of controversy from dogmas and miracles to the question of ethics. There is no reason why Scientists or Secularists need have any fear to meet religionists on this last ground. As a matter of fact they have none. But the anxiety displayed by certain Christian apologists to take up a fresh position and entrench themselves behind an ethical rampart is a tacit confession of their defeat on the field of the dogmatic and the miraculous. Their attitude may be expressed thus: Let us—they would say—Let us waive discussion of dogmas and miracles. Even if they are not true in the old sense of their interpretation we have still

the glorious inheritance of Christian ethics, which are indispensable to the moral advancement of the race. It might be unjust to Dr. Carpenter to charge him with wishing to facilitate this change of ground when he emphasises "the increasing importance of recognising the ethical bases of religious belief." Indeed, he himself immediately attempts to minimise the force of his own emphasis. But *litera scripta manet*, and consciously, or unconsciously, the Bishop of Ripon is lending his countenance to those who would fain evade unreserved acceptance of the orthodox tenets of their Church and concentrate their efforts on an enforcement of the value of its ethical message.

The arrogant claim that Christianity has been the moral leaven which has raised society, and without which it would speedily sink into corruption is very effectively met by Dr. Carpenter himself. Though we do not for a moment imagine he had any such intention when he penned the following passage, which, lengthy as it is, we would wish to quote in full. We would ask, from a Christian, no more ample confession of the abject failure of Christianity as the moral regenerator of the world:—

"If the worshiping Christian world were once to recognise the significance of this word of Christ (First be reconciled with thy brother) and to act upon it, mankind would witness the most stupendous example of religious earnestness which it has ever seen. If every Christian man felt that he must straighten out his relations with his brother man before he could enter into the spiritual harmony with God, and were to act upon this conviction, there would be more wrongs righted in a week than a hundred years of legislation could effect. Duties would be fulfilled which are now allowed to lapse; employers would share more largely with their workmen; workmen would give hours to amend the work which they had scamped; plumbers would go to houses to put into honest sanitary condition the drains which through wicked avarice they had left murderously defective; directors of public companies would repudiate glowing and alluring prospectuses; old feuds which pride had long kept up would be reconciled; gentle apologies for angry words would be made; cruel insinuations would be withdrawn; the dishonorable action, justified in the name of religion, would be seen in its true light as the wickedest affront to religion. The revolution which would result would be deep and widespread; it would enter into every house; the petty irritations, the angry nagging, the chilling sulkiness, would be felt to be wrongs which no approach to the altar of God could atone for; they must be righted in the house."

Ah!—IF! O small and most potent word!

We scarcely know whether it is pathetic or merely ludicrous that a Christian bishop should make such an avowal in the twentieth century, and yet believe that Christianity is going to begin now and accomplish a task which she has been essaying for nineteen hundred years without success. Is it possible that Christians have still got to be converted to Christianity? And not the laity alone but the clergy as well?

G. SCOTT.

Correspondence.

WHEN DID THE GOSPEL WIN EUROPE?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Perhaps you will allow me to sum up the case as it now stands between Mr. J. T. Lloyd and myself, as regards the above subject, in the light of his fuller exposition of his position in your issue of June 25.

I will not revert to the difference of opinion between us as to whether Gibbon, writing in the eighteenth century, or Harnack, the most recent authority on the subject, is nearest to the truth touching the actual number of Christians in the Roman world when persecution ceased. I always treated the matter as of quite secondary moment, compared with the broad fact that the quality and moral influence of the Christians—who had on any showing multiplied surprisingly in face of the combined religious and political forces of the empire—were already by 312 A.D. such as to convince a statesman like Constantine that the Church was the most hopeful element in society on which to rely for the unity

and welfare of the State. This is what I meant in saying that "the Gospel had virtually won the Roman Empire, whatever the numerical proportion of its adherents." It had won over *the conscience of the soundest* elements in society: otherwise Constantine's policy, as policy, becomes unintelligible, and his preference for the small Christian minority a manifest courting of failure and of successful reaction on the part of the pagan majority. But where the conscience of the better representatives of humanity at a given period is won by a faith and an ideal of conduct, the society in question is "virtually won"; for it is but a matter of time ere the bulk of their fellows render a homage, more or less real, to the same religion.

"But," replies Mr. Lloyd, "if the Gospel had won Europe, Europe would have shaped its life into harmony with Gospel teaching." That is one of those statements which sound self-evident, but are far from it. To do homage in the depths of one's conscience to an ideal, and to obey it consistently in one's life, are very different things for the ordinary run of mankind. Conscience operates in varying degrees, and we cannot classify all men as either absolutely consistent or inconsistent with their own underlying convictions. To this every ideal system that runs largely counter to the selfish and self-indulgent instincts in our nature—be that system religious or otherwise in form—bears familiar witness. "The good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practise." "But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good"; "I delight in" it "after the inward man." These are utterances not of St. Paul individually, but rather of human nature. Moreover the fact that genuine Christianity, as Christ taught and as the first two centuries largely practised it, was obscured to the minds of men, as an ideal of conduct, by a debased dogmatic and sacerdotal form of it—which dulled the appeal to the individual conscience; this robbed it of much of its earlier and legitimate power over personal and social life. Accordingly the collective life of Europe may be said to have been "shaped into harmony with Gospel teaching" in very varying senses and degrees, as one thinks of different circles and aspects of that life. This fact I have never ignored. And yet it may be true that the Christian ideal controlled the conscience of Europe more than any other factor, and that it was largely effective for good amid conditions which made it very difficult for any high or humane influence to do its work at all, as was the case particularly after the barbarian irruptions and during the Middle Ages as a whole. Thus so dispassionate an historian as Lecky witnesses to the workings of a humaner spirit in certain directions due to the influence of the Gospel in its broad outlines, such as even the mixed Christianity prevailing from the fourth century onwards could not but be conscious of. And that the deeper and purer life persisted beneath the general lowering of the average, which resulted from much nominal rather than real discipleship after the alliance of Church and State, is shown by the frequent protests from within the Church itself against the general shortcomings. Particularly was this so towards the latter part of the Middle Ages, as the Gospel ideal stood out afresh to minds, here and there, in contrast to traditional Christianity. It is this power of reformation from within, wherever the New Testament has not been shut off from Christians at large, which most marks Christianity among religions, and which challenges the serious attention of all students of history. It is the absence of this influence within the Russian Church until quite recent times—and the repressive policy of the Russian Church-State towards "unorthodox" reforms—that goes far to make Russia contrast so unfavorably even with most other parts of Christendom (save Spain perhaps, and for like reasons).

Mr. Lloyd asks, "If the Gospel, or genuine Christianity, has not won Europe, does it not of necessity follow that the Gospel has proved a colossal failure?" Moral success and failure are, as we have seen, terms that have only a relative sense as applied to history, where human freedom has to be allowed for, in order to make morality a reality at all, and where many other factors, physical and intellectual, condition the effectiveness of a moral idea for a given time. Judged by this light, I do not find the Gospel to have been "a colossal failure," unless indeed one believes that its work is well-nigh done, whereas I regard the Middle Ages as but preparatory, and the intervening centuries since then as transitional to a more Christian era already dawning. In this the Gospel, freed from its intellectual swaddling-clothes, from the alien sway of authoritative metaphysics, and the false notion of "faith" relative thereto—viz., orthodox credulity, rather than moral conviction leading to personal trust in Christ and in the Father revealed in and through His life—promises to assert itself as spiritual power over life more fully than ever before, save in the limited circles of souls selected by inherent affinity who formed its first adherents. The "supernatural origin" of the Gospel, in this connection, to me does not mean that it dispenses with ordinary or

"natural" methods of persuading free human beings of its inherent truth; but that it convinces men in such a way that they become conscious in the process that they are being lifted above what they or their fellows could have reached, even in idea, by their own native resources. The conception, on the contrary, that such an origin must needs ensure "a complete success from the beginning," so that "every human being, in all the Christian countries, would have been a bright and shining Christian," seems to me to imply a mechanical and blankly coercive view of the Divine action on the human soul, which is belied by all our usual moral judgments on men and the conditions necessary to its psychological development. It is also contrary to the time-notions of an evolutionary reading of history.

Mr. Lloyd thinks my handling of history mistaken because my "faith controls my intellect, and that I write from "sentiment rather than from knowledge." That is a charge very easy to make—and as easy to retort. For "faith" here means one's ultimate convictions as to the meaning of certain psychological data common to us both as men. If Mr. Lloyd reads man as an automaton, so that he *could* be worked into moral sympathy with a given ideal with mechanical precision, within the life-time of each generation since Christ embodied that ideal—that is a kind and degree of "faith" that I cannot share; but it is in any case a stupendous act of faith, which must "control his intellect" in reading the facts of Christian history, and determine what he regards as "knowledge" touching the laws or principles he sees running through that history. No, none of us can live or judge save by "faith" of some kind: and Mr. Lloyd is no more entitled to be certain that my "intellect" has been less rigorously used to verify the contents of my "faith," than am I in relation to his faith and intellect. We are all thinking as men and on like terms.

As to his remark that "Christian love to God has, times without number, diverted men from the love of man," I, too, am convinced that so it has been. But what then? It may have been otherwise in yet more instances, and the latter may have been more legitimate outcomes of "the Gospel" than the former. Not every "Christian" has had a truly Christian idea of God; and "love to God" must act according to one's idea of Him. Christians, even when sincere, have often had inadequate notions of God, derived it may be from "authoritative" Church teaching mingled with non-Christian elements. This, like all else in religion, must be tested, according to the Founder of Christianity, "by its fruits." If it leads to different fruits from those in Christ himself, it is but proved to be a different idea of God in some respect. This is exactly what St. John means when he says: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." He is bringing *professed* love to God to the test of "fruits," and proving it vain in this way. He does not regard love in its fulness and purity as kindled other than by the Divine love itself, manifest in Christ: "We love, because He first loved us." That is simple fact touching the greatest lovers of their kind, from St. Paul to Francis of Assisi, and from Francis to our own day, as voiced in the sentence quoted from David Livingstone in my former letter. As to the final reflexion that "no consciousness of God" leaves a man "free" to pour out his whole love on the brother whom he does see, I simply ask, Is it true to analogy? Is the son who has never known a mother's love for himself or his brothers, thereby the freer to pour out his whole love on his brother, unembarrassed by the necessity of returning that mother's love? Does not her love for all rather become the standard to each of patient, forgiving love, and so help to kindle afresh the sacred flame when a brother's unworthy conduct threatens to quench it? So acts the genuinely Christian idea of God. "But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing (or despairing of no man); and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for He is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." And for practical purposes, this has sometimes taken the form: "I must love men truly and unselfishly, because Christ so loved them." Such are the real dynamics of Christian love—those of enhancement by the greater love, not of diminution by competition.

VERNON BARTLET.

So far as I am concerned, I have made up my mind that no organisation, secular or religious, shall be my master. I have made up my mind that no necessity of broad, or roof, or raiment shall ever put a padlock on my lips.—*Ingersoll*.

The light which we have gained was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge.—*Milton*.

GOD AND THE FUTURE.

Strictly speaking, the question of the existence of a God is not a human question. Besides, the bare fact that for these thousands of years, and throughout the world, the existence of God has remained an unsolved question, suggests that in all probability it will never be decided by mortals. Certainty about the future is equally impossible. Of course, we do not know what light science may throw upon these problems to-morrow, but speaking modestly, and without dogmatism, every honest soul must admit, with Shakespeare, that the future is still an "undiscovered country." The essential thing in religion is not that we should believe in a God or in the hereafter, but that we should be truthful. When we are invited to say a few words at the house of mourning, or at the open grave, we feel that religion requires of us never to pretend to a knowledge which we do not possess. The priest knows, or says he does, where the departed has gone, what kind of life he leads there, what will be his lot in eternity, and whether we shall meet again or not. He speaks of these things with the assurance of a schoolboy reciting a page which he has learned by heart. But he is only pretending to possess information which, as a matter of fact, no one possesses. He knows no more of a personal God, nor of a future life, than anybody else. If we cannot predict what will happen in the next hour, how can we talk with assurance of the secrets of the unending future? If we do not quite understand ourselves, or the world which we daily see, how can we boast of any certain knowledge of any Being who is said to be infinitely and absolutely and incomprehensibly different from us? Silence is more religious than the gossip one hears about such a Being. Modesty is more reverent than dogmatism, and the agnostic is more honest and more eloquent than the garrulous preacher. If you wish to know where the Eternal is, who he is, what he does, what his intentions are, how he should be praised, what humors or provokes him, how many manifestations or persons there are in his godhead and when he first began his operations, etc., you will have to go elsewhere for this information, as we are unable to supply it. Again, if you desire to listen to a man, who is sure of the hereafter, you must go to the spiritualists, who have seen spirits and heard messages from the distant shore, or to the clergy, who believe in ancient ghost stories, although they deny the spiritualistic appearances of to-day. We are not speaking for or against spiritualism or the Christian faith. We are simply confessing that the knowledge which they claim, we do not possess. We do not deny a future life; we realise how, under certain circumstances, another life would be desirable—although everlasting life, that is to say, to live forever, and ever, and ever,—and never to be able to die, might turn out to be an unendurable blessing. But here, too, we are only speculating. Before we can desire a thing we must know whether it is desirable. Who can describe the nature of eternal existence? The orthodox heaven is surely not worth an eternity of our time, and as yet no one has pictured a future world which, speaking for ourselves alone, we could wish to dwell in *forever and ever*. Nevertheless, let us leave the question open. To all great questions a small answer is worse than no answer at all.—*Liberal Review* (Chicago).

VOLTAIRE.

I read Voltaire—Voltaire the greatest man of his century, and who did more for liberty of thought and speech than any other being, human or divine. Voltaire, who tore the mask from hypocrisy and found behind the painted smile the fangs of hate. Voltaire, who attacked the savagery of the law, the cruel decisions of venal courts, and rescued victims from the wheel and rack. Voltaire, who waged war against the tyranny of thrones, the greed and heartlessness of power. Voltaire, who filled the flesh of priests with the barbed and poisoned arrows of his wit, and made the pious jugglers, who cursed him in public, laugh at themselves in private. Voltaire, who sided with the oppressed, rescued the unfortunate, championed the obscure and weak, civilised judges, repealed laws and abolished torture in his native land.....To the bar of his conscience, his reason, he summoned the barbarism and the barbarians of his time. He pronounced judgment against them all, and that judgment has been confirmed by the intelligent world. Voltaire lighted a torch and gave to others the sacred flame. The light still shines and will as long as man loves liberty and seeks for truth.—*Ingersoll*.

A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believes things only because his Pastor says so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy.—*Milton*.

Will Suicides Go to Heaven?

(The Salvation Army Headquarters' Staff says: "Yes, if insane, because they would not be responsible.")

Since suicides go heav'nward, if insane,
And Lunatics have no responsibility,
The millions whom Carlyle yecept inane,
Should prize their Godly gift of imbecility.

The feeble man does foolish things, perforce,
Because his mental bounds are insurmountable;
To heav'n he'll therefore go, since folk, of course,
Are not, for being "jerry-built," accountable.

As madmen ne'er are blamed for being crazed,
And go to heav'n although they lived destructively,
The sane, who can't for being sane be praised,
Condemned may be—by converse rule, deductively.

That is: the thoughtful folk, perforce, do well—
Controlled by thought, as fools are ruled by vanity—
And yet, though wise, perhaps they'll go to hell,
Because they're not responsible for sanity.

With plus, or minus gifts, *unsought*, we're built,
Whence springs resistlessly our whole mentality;
So maugre social views of worth and guilt,
We claim for *all* a Heav'n of blest equality.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

HOW THEY LIVE IN CALIFORNIA.

It was a lovely summer evening. Three of us were travelling together in the mountainous districts of California, bound for the same village, I remember how we watched the fire-flies as they lifted themselves up from the lower meadows until they danced above our path with a slow and caressing motion or flew higher yet as if seeking the company of the stars. There still remained some miles between us and our destination when we passed one of those hill chapels so frequently to be met with thereabouts. A little higher up, back from the road, was the priests cottage nestling under the hill; its goatsleaf hedge flowering in a blaze of white. One of my companions knowing the reputation for hospitality of the local clerics, suggested that we should pay a visit for refreshment. The idea was quickly acted upon, but I can assure you the reverend gentleman gave us no chance to knock for admittance. Almost before we knew it we were seated at table enjoying broiled pheasant, for he had but just commenced supper. After we had eaten as much as we would permit his generosity to force upon us, with several flasks of "Christ's tears" to wash it down, he brought out a pack of well-worn cards and we played and drank and smoked till the chapel bell tolled the hour of evening mass. Then our host would be off to officiate, telling us he had not missed a mass for thirty years.

There the funny part of our adventure commenced. Truth to tell, the old fellow was more than three sheets in the wind, and could scarcely walk without our support. However, as he insisted on going, we helped him into cassock and stole and proceeded to the church. We took seats near the chancel. Mass was said, albeit in a hicoughy voice. Then the good old man bent his head in prayer. He remained so long in this position that the congregation became uneasy, and the sacristan, kneeling on the steps behind the pulpit, began to shuffle audibly. Thereupon the parson raised his head, looked round at the kneeling man, and, bringing down his fist on the desk with a thump, roared out "ace of spades." "I go nap on the lot." We did not wait for the upshot, but betook ourselves to the road again, reaching our village within the hour.

—From *L'Asino*.

It is an old custom for writers to dedicate the work of their hands to some one reader, though it is designed to serve many.—This old custom appears to be of the same origin with that for authors, when they are speaking of themselves, or of what they have done, not to say *I*, but *we*. Both practices would seem originally to have been an open avowal of that conviction, which forces itself upon us in writing books, more strongly than in any other employment,—namely, that the individual mind cannot produce anything worthy, except in a bond of love and of unity of spirit with another mind, associated with it as its helpmate. For this is one of the purposes of life and of its labors, that a man should find out how little there is in him that he has received in and through himself, and how much that he has received from others, and that hereby he may learn humility and love.—*Schubert*.

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, E. Edwin.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. Cohen will Lecture.

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. "Is Jesus a Perfect Ideal?"

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; Brockwell Park, 3.15, W. J. Ramsey; 6.30, W. J. Ramsey.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7, W. J. Marshall, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House Bull Ring): July 13 at 8, H. Lennard, Miscellaneous Recitations.

CARDIFF BRANCH N. S. S. (Roath Park): 3 and 7.30, J. Bennett, of Mountain Ash.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform" (by special request). Outdoor Lectures: 3, Islington-square (if wet, inside Hall); Monday, 8, Domingo Pit; Wednesday, 8, Edgehill Church.

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