

# THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*For there is a crust about the impressible part of men's minds, which must be pierced through before they can be touched to the quick; and though we may prick at it and scratch it in a thousand separate places, we might as well have let it alone if we do not come through somewhere with a deep thrust: and if we can give such a thrust anywhere, there is no need of another.—RUSKIN.*

## If Christ Disappeared—?

MANY years ago Mr. W. T. Stead wrote a deeply interesting book entitled *If Christ Came to Chicago*. His eloquent delineation of the evils which were rampant in that great city gave serious offence to many people; but his contention was that if Christ only entered the town all would be well with it. After reading that book many were tempted to ask, "If Chicago is such a wicked city as Mr. Stead makes it out to be, and if Christ can cure all its diseases, why, then, does Christ delay his coming?" Mr. Stead's volume proved a God-send to preachers. For years after its appearance, a common title for sermons was, "If Christ Came to London," "If Christ Came to Glasgow," or "If Christ Came to Manchester," and so on without end, the message invariably being that Christ's coming to any city, town, or village would entirely transform its moral character.

Mr. Stead's book is now forgotten, and its title is no longer of service to the Pulpit. The underlying idea of the volume and of the numerous sermons suggested by it was by no means complimentary to Christ. It virtually threw the whole responsibility for the wickedness of the world upon the shoulders of God. Unbelievers were justified in asking, "If Christ is mighty to save, why is the world still unsaved?" But to-day the tide of Christian thought is running in the opposite direction. Ever since the Bishop of London boomed an obscure novel, called *When It Was Dark*, the pulpit has taken up the new catchword, "If Christ were to Depart—?" It is now asserted that Christ is present and at work in all the Churches, and that He has been present and at work in them through all the centuries. But what would happen if He were suddenly to take his departure?

On Sunday evening, November 12, I attended the Bloomsbury Baptist Central Church. The music, both instrumental and vocal, was excellent, and the people joined heartily in the singing of the hymns. The superintendent, the Rev. Thomas Phillips, B.A., occupied the pulpit and delivered an impassioned address, entitled "When it was dark, or London without Christ." He began, of course, by giving us the gist of the novel. As the result of a diabolical conspiracy the world had been induced to believe that Christianity was false. The people in general had ceased to be Christians. Atheism reigned supreme. What followed? Almost immediately the world began to degenerate; the devils of disorder, and anarchy, and malice, and hate were let loose, and the earth became the scene of indescribable horrors; morality was flung to the winds; woman was degraded; in short, the whole world became a perfect pandemonium.

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Mr. Phillips admitted that the novelist may have exaggerated. Then he proceeded to paint his own picture of the world without Christ; and if the novelist exaggerated then the preacher exaggerated still more. I have no doubt whatever but that Mr. Phillips was perfectly sincere in all he said, but sincerity is no excuse for indulging in ignorant and irrational assertions. Zeal, when not according to knowledge, that is to say, wild, furious, raging zeal, works inconceivable havoc. Mr. Phillips' zeal was in full evidence on this occasion, but it was not according to knowledge and reason. "Blot out Christ," he cried, "and you blot out all knowledge of God." That was equivalent to pronouncing all non-Christian religions utterly false, or to dooming the millions upon millions who do not believe in Christ to everlasting perdition. Mr. Phillips declared, several times, that eternal life means the knowledge of God as He is in Christ; but if eternal life means the knowledge of God as He is in Christ, it necessarily follows that all non-Christians are destitute of eternal life and must eternally perish. But to say that Christians possess the knowledge of God is to utter a falsehood. Clearly they do not, or else they would be in agreement with one another as to what He is. Mr. Phillips believes that God is personal, and that we may have personal dealings with him. But Mr. R. J. Campbell assures a correspondent, in the *British Weekly* for November 16, that "God is not personal." "God," he continues, "is your own true life." When Mr. Campbell prays it is to himself, or to the germ of good in his own nature, that he prays. Nobody knows God, but multitudes believe in God, and each believer paints his own picture of him.

"Blot out Christ," continued Mr. Phillips, "and you blot out morality." Was there no morality in the world before Christ came? The most smattering acquaintance with history would quickly annihilate that delusion. We are now finding out that the ante-Christian world was by no means so dark and dismal and evil as the theologians have been in the habit of portraying it. We know that at least two thousand years prior to our era there flourished in Babylon a magnificent type of civilisation, as the Khammurabi Code abundantly testifies. Read the Egyptian Bible, which was compiled fifteen hundred years before Christ, and you will find that it contains a code of morality second to none in existence to-day. Consult the Greek and Roman moralists, and you will discover that the type of character they advocated was in the highest sense noble and beautiful. From Plato and Aristotle downwards the moral tone was admirable.

Mr. Phillips evidently thought that many of his hearers would be wondering about Japan. He did not dare to challenge the statement that Japan has exhibited superior ethical qualities, such as patriotism, courage, endurance, and magnanimity, but he could not refrain from asserting that the virtues of the Japanese character are largely due to Christian influences which have been at work among the people through the agency of the missionaries. That method of meeting the difficulty was scarcely straightforward. Is it not a fact that cannot be denied that the missionaries fail to make headway in Japan? Do not they themselves sorrowfully confess that the Japs cherish an inveterate prejudice against Christianity? And yet the Japanese are a



highly civilised and moral nation; and they have acquired both their civilisation and their ethics without the instrumentality of the Christian religion.

"Blot out Christ," exclaimed the preacher, "and you will reduce woman to the wretched state of slavery in which Christ found her." According to Mr. Phillips, Christ is the best friend woman has ever had. Here again the preacher spoke without his book. In ancient Egypt, fully two thousand years before Christ, woman was held in great honor. M. Paturet tells us that she was "juridically the equal of man." Her husband had to look up to her, she being the head of the house, while he was only "a sort of boarder, or visitor, who had to keep up the establishment." In ancient Greece also woman was regarded as deserving of just and honorable treatment. Indeed there is a legend to the effect that polygamy was abolished by Cecrops in pre-historic times. And although in later ages only the courtesan enjoyed freedom and honor, while the wife was uneducated and a drudge, we must not forget that there was a strong cry against the injustice of such a state of things, and that legally woman as woman was entitled to many rights and privileges. Coming to Rome we learn that under the Republic woman occupied a position of great dignity. Who could study the classic portraits of Roman women and not admit that they have never been surpassed? It is true that at first woman was the slave of her father until she married, when she passed under the absolute control of her husband. But in course of time the despotism of father and husband began to weaken, and it continued to wane until "by the time of the beginning of Christianity woman had attained a liberty and distinction which she has not even yet completely regained."

Now, trace the history of woman under Christianity and it will be borne in upon you that she has always been looked upon as the weaker and inferior vessel, and kept in a state of subjection to man. Less than sixty years ago the laws of New England treated woman as of no account. She could not hold any property, she could hold no office of trust or power, she was not a person, she was not numbered among citizens, her husband owned her and could do almost what he liked to her, and she could call nothing her own. Even in our own country she is by no means treated as man's equal. She is denied many rights and privileges freely accorded to her "lord and master."

Mr. Phillips had, therefore, no ground whatever, either historical or logical, for his vehement assertion that without Christ woman would be robbed of all the honor and dignity she now enjoys. The facts are dead against him.

We have now discussed two suppositional statements, namely, "If Christ were to come," and "If Christ were to go—what would happen?" But there is a third conjectural phrase which might profitably be taken up, namely, "If Christ had never come—?" It would be foolish to be dogmatic in the region of pure conjecture. Far be it from me to contend that the establishment of Christianity conferred no advantages upon the human race; but it is incontrovertible that it has conferred disadvantages as well, and it is debatable whether the advantages or the disadvantages have predominated. One thing, however, is beyond controversy, namely, that the introduction of Christianity totally arrested, for the space of fifteen centuries, the progress of scientific inquiry and of the Greek idea in general, and that for a longer period the condition of woman and the slave was, on the whole, worse, and not better, than it had been under Paganism. As to morality, it is safe to state that, for at least a thousand years, it received only a secondary consideration on the part of the Church. It was allowed to linger untended in the background, the foreground being invariably taken up by beliefs, and rites, and ceremonies. Man's first duty was to believe in and worship God. To live a good life in the world was another matter and not nearly so essential. Salvation was by faith not by works. Piety was more than character and did not

necessarily include it. Therefore, morality must have lost rather than gained through being made a subordinate department of religion. Man's relation to God overshadowed his relation to his fellow-beings and naturally tended to impoverish his social life. Hence, I maintain that it would have been an advantage to morality had it never been associated with the Supernatural. In other words, if Christ had never come, it would have counted to the moral benefit of the world. Science would have been permitted to pursue its beneficent course of inquiry, and the great discoveries of modern times would have been made centuries earlier. The study of man as a member of the race would have been much further advanced than it is to-day. We would have known ourselves and our life much better than we do, and civilisation and morality would have attained to a much higher state of development. Being of this conviction with reference to the past, we have no hesitation in affirming that the passing of Christ now would not plunge the world into moral chaos, and confusion, and catastrophe, but would rather facilitate the advent of the Kingdom of Man which is righteousness, peace, and joy in Humanity.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Sir Oliver Lodge's Questions.

TWO or three weeks ago Sir Oliver Lodge, in his self-assumed capacity as knight errant on behalf of Christianity, lectured at the City Temple under the auspices of that very "philosophic" gentleman, the Rev. R. J. Campbell. It was a touching amalgamation of science and philosophy—to say nothing of religion—and a summary of the lecture appeared in most of the newspapers. At the conclusion of the lecture, however, a number of questions were asked by members of the audience, and a full report of these, with the answers, appears in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 16. These questions and answers are worth noticing for several reasons, not the least of these being that the report professes to be a verbatim one.

Sir Oliver Lodge, it will be remembered, has two theories concerning man. He propounds now one, now the other, occasionally both at once, and never with the slightest consciousness that they are mutually destructive. On the one theory there is a spiritual existence for each before material evolution began, and our "souls" take possession of our bodies so soon as the proper stage of evolution has been attained. According to the other theory material energies are driven along by some "psychic" force, associated with but independent of them, and, having individualised in the human organism, may retain its individuality when the connection is severed. That Sir Oliver can hold two such theories at the same time, each destitute of scientific proof, goes far to diminish one's wonderment at his self-assumed crusade.

Naturally, therefore, most of the questions bore some relation to these theories, and it is to be hoped that the questioners are to be congratulated on having derived information from the answers. Although Sir Oliver thought it "very likely" that we might have had previous existences, and shall have future ones, he admitted that he was not "talking science," and as, in answer to another question, he admitted that his reply was not philosophical, the lecturer can scarcely be said to have come out of the encounter unscathed. One questioner asked: "Why should we want to retain our individuality? Why not be content to be absorbed back into the 'abyss of Deity'?" And to this Sir Oliver replied that absorption would not come for a long time—not until we are much higher than we are now; "We shall change gradually, not suddenly"—a reply that neither answered the question nor removed any difficulties. For if, as Sir Oliver thinks, the individual "soul" is a portion of Deity; if it is incarnated time after time, gaining fresh experience



with each incarnation, only to be finally reabsorbed—that is, to become as it was at the start—one would fain learn the wisdom or the utility of the process? This is not making the universe intelligible; it is making it unspeakably idiotic.

Following on this came a question, "Does the Infinite need to struggle?"—after perfection, presumably. On which Sir Oliver replied that this was a difficult question, and he could only take refuge in Christianity. This showed that God was not above this struggle of humanity, but a God who actually was tortured and put to death. "What that means I do not know; it is a mystery." So that Sir Oliver's conception of a scientific explanation is to offer a theory which "shows" something, but at the same time does not know what it means because it is a mystery. Not more of a mystery, one would suppose, than the lecturer's own mental state at that moment.

Asked whether sin against a First Cause was possible, Sir Oliver replied that "Sin is seeing the better and choosing the worst." A clear evasion of a fairly plain question. Asked about the nature of good and evil, Sir Oliver replied that he was getting out of his depth. The problem of good and evil was a most puzzling one. He would hand the questioner over to Mr. Campbell. Now I have no doubt that the problem of evil would be puzzling to both Mr. Campbell and to Sir Oliver, as well as to other religious folk. But the plain truth is that it is a problem that does not exist for any others, and ought not to exist to a scientist. For the problem owes its existence to a theory, and not to facts. If anyone starts by asserting the existence of an all-wise, powerful, and benevolent Creator, then the problem arises of how to reconcile evil with the existence of such a Deity. And that is a question with which non-believers need not concern themselves. But if one does not start with such a theory, then there is no problem left to discuss. Good and evil then become the equivalents of adaptation or non-adaptation to one's environment; and while there arises the questions of how adaptations have been brought about, or how non-adaptations may be removed, there is no problem in the religious sense of the word.

There was one very shrewd question—on Determinism—that Sir Oliver faced in anything but a fair manner. He was asked: "Given an Omniscient, Omnipotent, First Cause, is there any escape from unqualified Determinism? Our Consciousness of Free Will may be a complete illusion." The questioner might have gone farther and pointed out that whether Sir Oliver's "Psychic" force was a reality or not, Determinism was equally inescapable. So long as results are the equivalent of their components—and to deny this is scientific insanity—whether we call force psychic or material makes not the slightest difference. What is, in both cases, equally the expression of what has been and the Determinism is not evaded, only hidden, by the introduction of a new term.

However, Sir Oliver agreed that our consciousness of Free Will might be a delusion, but he did not think it reasonable to "throw away our consciousness and our experience or to disbelieve our sensations and general experience of life..... We have a sense of Free Will and choice; I say it is scientific, though I admit it may not be entirely philosophical to assert that, to hold to that, although you may not be able to reconcile it fully with some other things you may hold to." A more confusing, and on the whole, a more unscientific sentence was never strung together by a prominent scientific man. No one asks Sir Oliver to throw away his consciousness or his experience or to disbelieve his sensations. And no one ever denied the fact of choice. The invocation of consciousness is quite illegitimate. For that tells us nothing—in its uninstructed state—about the *causes* of our actions, only the fact of acting. Man's consciousness was once equally explicit on the existence of a flat earth, and numerous other things, until better knowledge corrected the error. And all that

the Determinist does is to point out that just as the crude appeal to the individual consciousness of the sixteenth was unscientific and unwarrantable, so is the appeal of the believer in "Free Will" to the raw consciousness of the twentieth century.

What our sensations tell us on the subject, or what they are supposed to tell us, I have not the slightest idea. Probably Sir Oliver thought that being in a Chapel, exactitude of speech would have been out of place. But what our experience of life tells us is quite plain, and it is dead against Sir Oliver Lodge. For no single human being ever yet acted on other than Deterministic lines. If a man steals or gives, loves or hates, murders or protects, we argue from the acts to the presence of motives. And if we set out to account for these motives we are driven to considerations of temperament, education, and surroundings. And in all our talk of social improvement, in the cry for criminal reform, housing, education, open spaces, etc., there is exactly the same lesson. One can safely challenge Sir Oliver Lodge or anyone else to indicate a single experience of life that supports his position.

There was yet another question asked that is worthy of notice before I close. Sir Oliver was asked what should be the attitude of truth seekers towards the biblical miracles? The reply was that the right way was to treat these things as not really supernatural, but natural, though misunderstood phenomena, and then went on to explain, (1), that some of the biblical miracles were never even thought to have happened by the writers, and (2), that we can do a great many things that to a savage would appear miraculous, and the balance of the miracles might be explained along these lines. And all that one need say in reply to this by no means original defence is that, the biblical miracles *are* narrated as matters of actual fact and not as mere poetic expressions. There is not the slightest trace of allegory about such miraculous occurrences as the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites, the adventure of Jonah and the whale, or curing the plague by the brazen serpent. People *have* made allegories of these stories, but that was when they had ceased to believe in them as true.

Nor is the second line of defence religiously stronger. It is probable that early ignorance regards as miraculous what later knowledge discovers to be the operation of normal forces. But this, while explaining some miracles, and saving them as actual occurrences, quite destroys their value so far as religion is concerned. For the whole religious value of these occurrences rested in the fact that they were believed to be the result of supernatural forces. They were witnesses of the supernatural—of deity. And if it is once admitted that they were the result of forces that any Tom, Dick, or Harry—given adequate knowledge—may set in motion, their whole value disappears. This is a simple point, and one that a man of Sir Oliver Lodge's standing ought to be able to appreciate. One does not expect ordinary appreciation of common sense facts from the average preacher, but from a prominent scientist one looks for better things. Unfortunately Sir Oliver is getting into a bad environment. A Chapel is not the place where people are accustomed to hear exact speech, or listen to careful thinking. And it is the misfortune of religious apologetics that it places a premium on the weakest points in a man's mental character, and encourages the development of most that ought to be rigorously suppressed.

C. COHEN.

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Men must either hereafter live, or hereafter die; fate may be bravely met, and conduct wisely ordered, on either expectation; but never in hesitation between ungrasped hope, and unfronted fear. We usually believe in immortality, so far as to avoid preparation for death; and in mortality, so far as to avoid preparation for anything after death. Whereas, a wise man will hold himself ready for one or other of two events, of which one or other is inevitable; and will have all things ended in order, for his sleep, or left in order, for his awakening.—John Ruskin.



## The End of Dr. Dixon.

MR. W. T. STEAD, who has returned from his mission in Russia, writes me that he has neither the leisure nor strength at present to reply to the Open Letter I addressed to him through the *Freethinker* on the subject of "Infidelity and Immorality," with reference to his own remarks on that subject at the end of his noble article on Dr. Torrey and his methods, in the July number of the *Review of Reviews*. Of course I very much regret this, but I am far from wishing to saddle Mr. Stead with any gratuitous obligations. When he suggests, however, that I may think, myself, that the time has gone by for reviving that controversy, I can only answer that I believe the question raised in that controversy to be far more important, in the long run, than anything which is happening in Russia just now. It involves the most substantial issue between Theology and Humanism, and affects the whole character of ultimate civilisation.

"This morning," Mr. Stead adds, "I received from Massachusetts the enclosed letters, which I am sorry to say do scant credit to their author. You are perfectly free to use them as you please."

Now before I print and deal with these letters I will refresh my readers' memory a little. Some time ago I reprinted from the New York *Truthseeker* a long statement, full of facts and dates, by Mr. Robert H. Griffin, who was Ingersoll's attorney in his action against the Rev. Dr. A. C. Dixon, flatly contradicting all the allegations made by the last gentleman in his letter to Mr. Stead, which was published in the *Review of Reviews* for August. Mr. Griffin showed, by a chronological list of the stages in the action, that it was Dr. Dixon and not Ingersoll who caused all the delays, and thus prevented the action from coming up for trial before a jury. Mr. Griffin also denied that he had ever written Dr. Dixon a letter on Ingersoll's behalf, stating that the latter would admit that he was acting with and for the vendors of obscene literature, if it were admitted on the other side that he was not paid to do so. Mr. Griffin's denial was absolute. Neither to Dr. Dixon, nor to Dr. Dixon's attorney, had he written such a communication; and he challenged the production of any evidence to the contrary.

With their memories thus refreshed my readers will be able to understand the true inwardness of the following letters.

The first letter is from "the Law Office of W. C. Beecher, 170 Broadway, New York," it is dated November 2, 1905, and runs as follows:—

"REV. A. C. DIXON, D.D.

My Dear Doctor. Yours of Oct. 30th is at hand. I am very sorry to be obliged to report the loss of all my old papers. In Sept. 1903, the old Broadway Bank building, where my office used to be, was gutted by fire, and all of my filed papers destroyed, among them all of the papers in the celebrated Ingersoll case.

Sincerely but regretfully yours,  
W. C. BEECHER."

The second letter accompanied the first. It is dated November 6, 1905, from Ruggles-street Baptist Church, Boston, Massachusetts, and runs as follows:—

"MY DEAR MR. STEAD:

I enclose to you a letter from my attorney, Mr. W. C. Beecher, of New York, which proves to you that it will be impossible for me to reproduce the letter Robert G. Ingersoll wrote me, in which he acknowledged that he represented the movement to have repealed the "Comstock Laws" against sending obscene literature and pictures through the mail, and in which he declared that he would dismiss the suit if I would confess that I had no proof that he was paid for his services. The men who have denied that he wrote such a letter were doubtless aware of the fact that the fire had destroyed Mr. Beecher's papers.

Very truly yours,  
A. C. DIXON."

Before dealing with this question of the missing letter, I wish to point out that Dr. Dixon has shifted

his ground very seriously in his communication [to Mr. Stead. He now speaks of Ingersoll as simply acknowledging that he "represented the movement to have repealed the 'Comstock Laws.'" But in his letter in the August number of the *Review of Reviews* he said that Ingersoll acknowledged "that he did represent the vendors of obscene literature and pictures." There is a vast difference between these two statements. The first statement merely implies that Ingersoll was against the Comstock Laws—which is admitted, although he did not ask for repeal but for modification. The second statement implies that Ingersoll was acting for the vendors of obscene literature and pictures. Dr. Dixon quietly tries to slip out of his responsibility for this statement. But I do not mean to let him escape in that way.

And now for the missing letter. I told Mr. Stead in August that Dr. Dixon would never produce his alleged letter from Ingersoll, nor any other letter from him. The story was an impudent falsehood on the very face of it. And my prophecy has been fulfilled.

Dr. Dixon suggests that Ingersoll's vindicators—including myself, I suppose—denied the existence of the missing letter because they knew of the fire at Mr. Beecher's office. On this point I have a question to put to Dr. Dixon. Did he know of the fire, and of the destruction of the alleged missing letter, when he wrote his precise references to it in the August *Review of Reviews*? If he did know of these facts, and kept them dark, he was simply playing a game of bounce; and it might even be called by a much worse name. If he did not know of these facts, how absurd is the suggestion that they were known to Ingersoll's vindicators! Fancy a man having the audacity to say: "I did not know of the fire at my attorney's, two years ago, and the destruction of all the papers relating to my famous action with Colonel Ingersoll, including a letter which he wrote to me, and which, I assert, damned his character for ever. Yes, I was totally ignorant of that fire, and its consequences. But those who challenged me to produce that damning letter, when I boasted of possessing it—they knew all about the fire and its consequences, and that is why they challenged me." Surely a man who is capable of saying this is capable of saying anything.

All that Dr. Dixon produces, in proof of the existence of the alleged missing letter, is the statement that there was a fire at his attorney's office. Simply this, and nothing more.

Was the missing letter in that fire? It was not. And I will prove it. Yes, I will prove it.

*Proof I.*—Dr. Dixon, in the *Review of Reviews*, gave a copy, within inverted commas, of the reply which he said he wrote to Ingersoll's alleged letter. Now if he had access to the copy of his own reply, he would also have access to Ingersoll's letter. If one document was in his attorney's hands, the other would be so too—and vice versa.

*Proof II.*—Dr. Dixon, in the *Review of Reviews*, represented Ingersoll's letter as having been written to him personally, and not to Mr. Beecher. "He wrote me," were his words; and his answer was "my reply." This shuts Mr. Beecher out of the matter entirely.

*Proof III.*—Had the alleged missing letter passed into Mr. Beecher's hands, had he filed it with the papers in the action, had he also received and filed Dr. Dixon's alleged reply, he could not have forgotten it. Ingersoll was perhaps the best-known man in the United States; his personality and his opinions were the theme of endless talk and discussion. A libel action by such a man was a great public event. And a document like the alleged missing letter would have been of transcendent interest and importance. Mr. Beecher must remember it if he ever saw it—or even heard of it. But he carefully avoids alluding to it in his letter to Dr. Dixon. He does not take the slightest responsibility. He leaves it all with Dr. Dixon. And I say that this is sufficient to enable any man with a grain of common sense to form a pretty certain conclusion.



Dr. Dixon has proved himself a shocking shuffler. He is really worse than Dr. Torrey. Dr. Torrey repeated other men's lies. Dr. Dixon invented his own.

I leave it to the Christians to say whether men like Dr. Dixon and Dr. Torrey really represent them. Very few of them have yet uttered a word of protest against the infamous tactics of these defenders of the faith. I profoundly honor Mr. Stead for the stand he made. But I must observe that one swallow does not make a summer. And I must add that the Christian conspiracy of silence over Mr. Stead's articles is a more terrible indictment of Christianity than anything I have ever written against it myself.

It has been my melancholy duty to expose these two libellers. In themselves they hardly rose to the level of my disdain. But I was animated by a love for Paine and Ingersoll, and it inspired me to do the work thoroughly. With this last exposure of Dr. Dixon I think I may write "FINIS."

G. W. FOOTE.

### Joseph Barker's Career.

By HISTORICUS.

JOSEPH Barker was born at Bromley, near Leeds, in Yorkshire, England, May 11, 1806. His father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were natives of the same locality, moving in the humbler walks of life without producing any stir. His parents were devotees of the old Methodist connection. They were intensely pious and had but little education, barely sufficient to read their Bible and hymn book. They were believers in witchcraft and fairies. Their son Joseph dwells upon many phases of their lives which to the general reader seem queer, eccentric and superstitious.

The family contained eleven children. They were brought up in poverty and their educational advantages were greatly restricted.

Joseph read many books chiefly of a religious character. Considering his lack of early education, and the influences by which he was surrounded, it is surprising that he made the progress he did in liberating himself from the trammels of his earlier life. His temperament, early antecedents, and a certain fickleness of mind doubtless were responsible for the reactions to which he was subject in later life. He was evidently an omnivorous reader. He absorbed very readily, but it would seem his mental digestion was at fault.

As a speaker and debater he was fluent and produced a good impression upon his audiences. When 16 years of age he had joined the Old Connection or Wesleyan Methodists. The earlier Methodists were fervent and zealous and infected the such hearers as were brought under their influence. The rank and file wrestled with such problems as "entire sanctification," the "witness of the spirit," and other peculiar tenets of the faith.

With these people "getting religion" was a tangible process, mere formalism being scouted to the winds. "Experimental" religion was believed to be the only genuine article and all others were viewed as makeshifts to lull their subjects into a mistaken or fancied sense of security. Some noted Freethinkers are descended from Methodist ancestry.

At the age of 20 Joseph Barker became an itinerant preacher in the Old Connection, and necessarily had good advantages for the study of human nature. He records multitudinous experiences in his early autobiography entitled *Confessions of a Man*, which he issued in 1846, just before he ceased his connection with the ministry.

He travelled three years as an itinerant preacher. At the end of the first year he severed his connection with the older and became a devotee of the newer branch of Methodists which he believed afforded greater liberty.

He married in 1830. About this time he began to have doubts which he recorded in his note books. In 1832 he gave up the use of ardent spirits, and became a teetotaler one year later.

To become thus singular and opposed to popular customs, savored very strongly of heresy in the eyes of the general public. But Barker was determined to carry the reform still further by quitting the use of tobacco, tea, and coffee. He remained a Methodist for about twenty-five years and a preacher for twenty years, when he was expelled for what was deemed heresy.

From 1837 to 1840 he conducted his first paper known as the *Evangelical Reformer*. For several years after his expulsion he associated with the Unitarians and latterly became a Deist.

In 1849 he came to America, but returned the same year. His letters to England contained much information for intending emigrants.

In 1851 he removed with his family to America. Just before his expulsion in 1846, he had issued *The Confessions of a Man*, in one volume, with the promise of at least one more. The work was completed after his death by his sons and was entitled the *Autobiography of Joseph Barker*.

In America he had become known as an ardent religious and social reformer, and was received very cordially by the Anti-slavery and other reformers.

He first moved his family to Akron, in Northern Ohio, but later removed nearer to the central part of the state. He delivered local lectures and aroused a good deal of opposition in that early day, so much so as to invite bitter enmity and persecution. He then removed to Salem in eastern Ohio, but his path was not one of roses.

He attended the Women's Rights Convention at Akron in 1851, which reform was then a novelty and was popularly held to be a vagary of "short-haired women and long-haired men," or still worse the freak of "weak-minded men and strong-minded women." These epithets are now forgotten, but once passed for current coin. An Anti-slavery Anniversary was also held in Akron in 1851.

These meetings were followed by a Bible Convention at Salem in 1852. This also was an innovation and was attended by such men as William Lloyd Garrison, Henry C. Wright, and many others of equal prominence.

In June, 1853, another Bible convention, which has become historic, was held at Hartford, Conn. Barker acted as president. Pillsbury, Wright, Garrison, etc., with many orthodox clergymen were present, all of them participating in the discussions. Students from the theological seminary were present and created some trouble.

The same year Barker delivered lectures to the Sunday Institute, in Philadelphia. He was challenged for a discussion by a Presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. W. L. McCalla, who years before had entered the lists with Abner Kneeland and Frances Wright.

This debate took place in the Chinese Assembly Hall and continued for four nights, when it terminated in disorder. McCalla was personally very abusive and was utterly unfitted to discuss a subject of this character.

Barker had to make his escape from the mob, who were determined to harm him. He took refuge with the Motts. But the clergy and others were not satisfied with the debate and determined to put forward a new champion in the person of Rev. J. F. Berg of the German Reformed church, who it was believed would do credit to the Christian side.

The debate took place in January, 1854, at Concert Hall. The attendance on the most inclement nights was 2,000, but generally reached from 2,500 to 3,000. The debate occupied eight nights. The writer read this debate in 1858, it being in fact the first anti-Christian argument he had ever read. A copy of the debate is now before him and still makes interesting reading. The debate was also taken down by a son of James G. Birney, who later became a general in the Civil War and a recent contributor to the *Truth Seeker*. Mr. F. L. Taylor was then a member of Dr. Berg's church, but later became a Freethinker.

The discussion caused great excitement over the whole country. It was probably the most noted discussion of the kind that had been held up to that time. Robert Owen and Rev. Alexander Campbell had a discussion on the "Evidences of Christianity" in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1829. One or both of the foregoing disputants met Archbishop Purcell, a Catholic dignitary, later.

Berg lost his temper and descended to personalities. Of course his supporters claimed a victory, but unprejudiced hearers thought otherwise. Barker was at his best, and the great audience acted as a stimulus upon him. The majority of the audience were in sympathy with his opponent, yet it was admitted the discussion produced many "Infidels."

He returned to England in 1855, and held a debate with the notorious Brewin Grant. The latter was a hurricane debater, whose stock in trade was abuse, brag and bluster. Barker took occasion to administer some well merited rebuke and castigation to his opponent. He had traits of self control which the other disputants lacked, and which did their cause great harm.

On his return to America shortly afterward, he removed with his family to Nebraska territory, which then barely had 5,000 people living in its limits. In his journeys to the East he delivered lectures at various points, notably at Mansfield, Ohio, where he had the noted disputant, Rev. J. B. Walker, for an auditor. He then lectured at East Liverpool and Salem, Ohio. He thence proceeded to Philadelphia, where in fact he lectured every year from his arrival in 1851 to his final return to England in 1860. During this time he was what was then known as a "comeouter," a term elastic in its significance which had its origin through the Anti-slavery agitation.



During the financial panic of 1857, great revivals of religion were inaugurated, especially in the larger centres of population. For a Freethinker to hold counter meetings was viewed by the orthodox as impertinent. Barker's lectures raised the ire of the clergy, notably that of the Rev. Dr. John Chambers in Philadelphia, who later became noted for his eccentricities in his attitude during the Civil War, his stand making him very unpopular. Barker lectured at Assembly Hall, Tenth and Chestnut-streets, in the morning, and at Franklin Hall, Sixth and Arch, alternately, several times weekly.

In 1860 he returned to England and again commenced to propagate Secularism. He became associated with Charles Bradlaugh in conducting the *National Reformer*. Each was to have charge of one-half of the paper. Barker had already commenced modifying his opinions, which in 1863 landed him wholly in the Christian camp. In a review of *Elements of Social Science* he so grossly misrepresented the Secular party that his association with the *National Reformer* seemed to be no longer possible.

He later returned permanently to America and professed to feel great sorrow and contrition for his apostasy from the Christian faith. While he endeavored to make amends for his blacksliding, yet he evidently never became just the same Christian he was twenty or more years previously.

He posed at camp meetings; and at the Methodist Episcopal camp at Landisville, Lancaster Co., Pa., he was heralded as the "Great Converted Infidel." He also preached at Steelton, adjoining Harrisburg, Pa. Here many English artisans, evidently former acquaintances, were found.

In 1874 he issued *Modern Scepticism; A Journey Through the Land of Doubt and Back Again*. This book, published in Philadelphia, is partly a history of personal experiences and partly an endeavor to counteract "Infidelity."

The book is incoherent and lacks method. Its arguments are far-fetched and grotesque.

One of the most scorching replies made to Barker was published in a tract of some thirty pages, in England, by "Bookworm," in which Barker is handled without gloves. It is in fact an arraignment of Barker against Barker. It contrasts his arguments when a sceptic with those he used when he was a Christian before and after. Barker was put in a most unenviable plight by the criticisms that were used against him.

He was now getting old and could no longer contend with the keen disputants, who wielded weapons to which in that transition period he had become a stranger. He purposed in his last book to issue others in opposition to Buckle, Mill, and Strauss. But this he failed to accomplish. He went to Nebraska the following year, dying at Omaha in 1875, aged nearly 70 years. He had led a busy and laborious life, filled with turmoil and disputation.

For nearly fifty years Joseph Barker was before the public. He was elected to Parliament, but did not take his seat. At times he owned considerable property and at other times he was impoverished. Once he lost a large portion of a considerable library. He received much notice and attention at times and at other times was treated with scorn and opposition. He was a man of many good traits, but he possessed others that brought much criticism. He had very warm friends as well as many bitter enemies. He lost very warm friends by his advocacy of diametrically opposed opinions.

While his style of advocacy secured him great attention, yet it seemed to have little effect upon the better equipped. He was not an original thinker, but seemed to absorb and marshal a great amount of knowledge. His presentation of facts appealed strongly to the average hearer, and he was accredited with having made many "Infidels." It is doubtful whether any radical speaker save Frances Wright before him had larger audiences in America. He lacked the quickness of repartee that Ingersoll possessed; also his eloquence; and he lacked vivacity.

Probably the influences of heredity and early life had much to do in moulding his disposition. Pictures of him late in life show him to be a man of rugged exterior and serious expression, and aged beyond his years.

Doubtless he lacked tact in handling and discussing unpopular subjects, and probably gave needless offence by his manner of advocacy. Many of his relatives and friends followed him and live in various parts of the Union.

His memory is chiefly recalled in a spirit of aversion by those with whom he had been successively associated. In fact, he is little alluded to by either. But as a free lance and by his connection with different phases of thought and his return to earlier opinions his career affords an interesting illustration.

The nearest approach to Barker in this direction was Orestes Augustus Brownson, who from being a Presbyterian became a Universalist and later a disciple of Robert Owen. He then became a Channing Unitarian, after which he gradually changed to more liberal forms. He then became a Roman Catholic!

Other changes have occurred, notably those of Huntington and Hepworth, of Collyer and Savage; that of the Newmans, and others. However, these cases are not so extreme as those first mentioned.

Even the Freethought ranks have had examples, such as Thomas Cooper's and others that are recalled.

But after all, these lapses and changes have little significance. Because a man of prominence entertains certain opinions is no reason why they should be correct. Christians don't regard them so unless they favor their own side. They lay great stress upon the fact that professional men, lawyers, doctors, and statesmen accept their system! The fact is too often, if not invariably, that the acceptance is based on mere authority. The premises are accepted as a matter of course, and the conclusion must follow. To doubt the premises is considered sinful. The mind which vacillates from one side to the other, "everything by turns and nothing long," has a basis entirely different from that which progressively changes from one conclusion to another more advanced. The latter has been the career of almost every emancipated mind liberated from the trammels of an authoritative theological system.—*Truthseeker (New York)*.

## Acid Drops

Mr. Augustine Birrell's new volume of Essays contains one on the life of Charles Bradlaugh. Mr. Birrell remarks that Bradlaugh's life was a hard one from beginning to end. He had no advantages. And he was often abused, but never criticised. "In a single sentence," Mr. Birrell says, "he was never taught the extent of his own ignorance." No doubt this is true. We suspect it is equally true of Mr. Birrell. It is very unusual for anyone to understand the extent of his own ignorance. Consequently the point is hardly worth mentioning in relation to Bradlaugh.

Bradlaugh thought well of minorities. Upon this fact Mr. Birrell comments as follows: "Unpopular thinkers who have been pelted with stones by Christians slightly the worse for liquor are apt to think well of minorities." With regard to the Bradlaugh debates in the House of Commons, Mr. Birrell says that the very worst thing that can happen to religion is to be discussed in such a place. The self-elected champions of faith in that assembly are enough to make Piety hide her head for shame. "Rowdy noblemen," Mr. Birrell says, "intemperate country gentlemen, sterile lawyers, cynical but wealthy sceptics who maintain religion as another fence round their property, hereditary Nonconformists whose God is respectability and whose goal a baronetcy, contrived with a score or two of bigots thrown in, to make a carnival of folly, a veritable devil's dance of blasphemy."

We agree with Mr. Birrell that "the debates on Bradlaugh's oath-taking will make melancholy reading for posterity." But we do not agree with him that "two figures, and two figures only, stand out in solitary grandeur, those of a Quaker and an Anglican—Bright and Gladstone." There was a grander figure, that of an Atheist—Charles Bradlaugh.

The *Christian World* is one of the very few religious papers in this country that speak a word of truth now and then. Referring to the massacre of the Jews in Russia, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's brotherly letter to the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, our contemporary hints that the correspondence is a bit of a joke. It suggests the complicity of the Russian clergy in the massacres, and smiles at the Archbishop's simplicity in taking it for granted that "the Russian Church as a whole was as sorrow-stricken at the terrible scenes recently enacted as are Christian men in this country."

An English resident in Odessa, the *Daily Chronicle* says, writing to his father, a well-known tradesman in the Crystal Palace district, says that in one house the Jews tried to defend themselves, but all to no purpose. "The mob gained access to the house, and after screwing the inmates' arms and legs off, hurled the mutilated bodies to the 'wild beasts' below." According to another report in the same newspaper, the rioters and soldiers at Kazan impaled the women and children on the points of their bayonets. They put out the eyes of some victims, and cut off the ears and noses of others. The gentle Jesusites!

An English lady, who is a governess at Odessa, wrote to her sister at home, giving an account of the recent reign of



terror there, and a long extract from it was printed in the *Daily News*. Here is a choice morsel:—

"Mr. — himself has seen things so terrible that they do not seem possible. He went to the places where the dead Jews were taken; they were lying thick on the ground, and you had to step over them. They were so frightfully mutilated, and you could see how they had been tortured to death. Women and others came while he was there and recognised their dead, and he said that they went into hysterics and laughed as if they were mad. Some of the victims were so frightfully disfigured that it was impossible for their nearest and dearest to recognise them. There were women with their breasts cut off, women disembowelled, and women who had suffered nameless tortures; there were bodies burnt and half roasted, men who had been killed by nails being driven into their skulls, and people who had been nailed up to beams by their feet."

And the wretches who perpetrated these horrors were Christians! It gives a new point to the old Spanish proverb that the devil lurks in the shadow of the cross.

The Czar has not found a word to say against the massacres of Jews and "intellectuals" that have been going on in Russia. On the contrary, he has thanked the Odessa garrison for their "exemplary conduct" during the late disturbances, when they helped the hooligans to murder and pillage. Nero was nothing to this pious gentleman.

The Bishop of Bristol attributes the vast increase in lunacy in this country to the absence of rest. Well, we cannot all be Bishops.

John D. Rockefeller's income this year is estimated at £8,000,000. Subject to that handicap he follows Christ as fast as possible. A man with a load like that couldn't be expected to overtake a man carrying nothing.

Sir Alfred Thomas having declared himself in favor of Secular Education, the Rev. Thomas Law, secretary of the National Free Church Council, hastens to say that he is quite sure this gentleman does not speak in the name of Wales. He declares that in England the vast mass of Free Churchmen are entirely opposed to Secular Education, and will never consent to the banishing from the schools of the Bible and Christian hymns, with the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. He even warns the Liberal party that half the seats which might be won at the General Election would be lost if Secular Education were made the election cry. Well now, we are glad to hear Mr. Law talking in that way. It bears out all we have been saying about the Passive Resistance movement. Nonconformists are simply fighting the Church of England, and the prize they are striving for is the control of public education.

Mr. F. Victor Fisher, writing to the *Daily News*, warns the Rev. Thomas Law, and all others concerned, that "any attempt to seize the educational policy of this country on merely Nonconformist lines will complete the alienation of Labor."

The *Daily Mirror* printed a four-fold cartoon on "Christian Science Delusions," in which the representative of Christian Science appeared with an ass's head. We have no particular objection to this. We only wish to say that ridicule of Christian Science is rather cheap—for it has not many friends. We should prefer to see the *Mirror* ridiculing the more popular forms of Christian superstition. There is no courage where there is no danger.

The Bishop of Liverpool has also been good enough to tell the clergy of his diocese that they need "the quickening power of the Spirit of God." We can well believe it. Judging from the rest of the Bishop's address on this occasion, the principle object of solicitude in the Liverpoolian Church is cash.

Dr. Chavasse was also good enough to say that while Church difficulties were not greater at Liverpool than elsewhere, the outlook was undoubtedly full of anxiety. "We have," he said, "to face a growing spirit of ungodliness. Materialism is entrenched and strong. We are face to face with a virtual paganism, which is earthly, sensual, and selfish. The order of the Commandments of the Gospel is being reversed. Love to our neighbor is placed before the love of God." Shocking! If this sort of thing goes on and spreads, the ten and twenty thousands the Bishop referred to as rolling in for churches and church work will roll in another direction. The money will be devoted to the benefit of humanity instead of the worship of God. No wonder the Bishop calls Freethought ill names. His hatred

of it is so natural. Think of the difference its triumph would make to *him*.

The Bishop of Liverpool is trying to take the sting out of the Higher Criticism. This is how he goes to work. He advises the clergy to hold fast three facts: (1) That the Bible is God's Word written; (2) that in God's Word there is a human element as well as a Divine—just as in the person of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, the human and divine natures are found together; (3) the Church nowhere defines inspiration. This is nearly as good as the three-card trick.

A Kentish clergyman advertised for a headmaster in an elementary school near Tonbridge. In reply to one communication he wrote a very ill-composed letter stating that the successful applicant would have to be a good organist, presumably for the reverend gentleman's church. This was brought before the notice of the Board of Education, who informed those concerned that the "organist" business was a violation of Article 15 of the code. The man of God has resigned. It is really a foolish thing to have clericals on school committees at all. We include Nonconformist ministers as well as Church parsons.

The *Daily News* evidently wants to keep Mr. John Morley out of mischief. It expresses a hope that he will "complete his great gift to us and to a future generation by writing a life of John Bright, which may stand side by side with his masterpieces on William Ewart Gladstone and Richard Cobden." This bears a certain resemblance to Samson grinding corn for the Philistines. At least, it is very odd that an Agnostic should be called upon to write the Lives of three leading Christian statesmen.

A *Daily Chronicle* reviewer spoke of the author of a new romance as deliberately setting himself the task of "aggravating his readers." This is one of the ways in which slapdash journalism is degrading the English language. To aggravate a reader would be an extremely difficult task, for it means to make him heavier. Of course the reviewer meant "irritate," or something similar. We hope our contemporary will not be irritated at this correction, or consider that our "wicked principles" aggravate our offence.

Amongst those who have signed the National Temperance Manifesto are the Bishop of London and Mr. John Burns. We are sorry to see "honest John" in such questionable company. It is easy to understand why the Bishop is in favor of Sunday closing, but it is difficult to understand why Mr. Burns supports such a clerical interest. Assuming that it is wrong to drink beer, it must be wrong from Monday to Saturday inclusive, as well as during the blessed Sabbath; and if it is right to drink beer, it must be as right during the blessed Sabbath as from Monday to Saturday inclusive. Sabbatarianism, of course, would make a difference in these days. But is Mr. Burns a Sabbatarian?

The writer of "The Churches" column in the *Daily News* backs up Dr. Dawson Burns's protest against the "fulsome and adulatory dedication to King James printed in our Authorised Version of the Bible." This writer runs amuck against the character of James I., and declares that he "did not possess one single kingly trait." But what has that to do with it? The dedication would have been made in just the same language to the best or the worst of kings. The dedicators were pious loyalists, they believed in the divine right of kings, and they wrote accordingly. No doubt the modern sentimental Christians would like to see the dedication excluded. We, however, hope it will be retained. It shows what lickspittle loyalty the Bible and Christianity engendered in "the good old times." And it serves as a warning against both to the modern democracy.

An effort was made to obtain a theatre for Mr. Foote's last lectures at Liverpool, but it was unsuccessful. Christians, of course, have no difficulty in this respect. They are in the majority and the lessees of licensed premises run no risk by dealing with them. But they do run a risk in dealing with the minority. Why? Because the majority, being Christians, are bigots, who use public machinery for the promotion of their own faith and the persecution of their opponents.

We see that the Rev. Harris Lloyd, of the South-west London Wesleyan Mission, has taken the Elephant and Castle Theatre for a series of Sunday services. The first of the series took place last Sunday, and included an address



to "men only." This is a notice common to lavatories and religious meetings.

Dr. Barnardo did not leave a great estate, but it was not one to be sneezed at. His estate is valued at £13,485 5s. 10d. gross, and £10,732 8s. 3d. net.

Mr. Frank T. Bullen, the novelist—who is not exactly a Meredith or a Hardy—is a Christian, and often puts in a good word for the orthodox faith. Lecturing at Leeds the other day, on "Whales and Whale Fishing," he rebuked the people who pooh-pooed the story of Jonah and the whale. They affirmed with all confidence that the mammoth of the sea was incapable of swallowing anything larger than a herring, but he had himself seen in the stomach of a whale a shark fifteen feet long, besides other "small fry" in the shape of dolphins and cod. It is a pity that Mr. Bullen did not say where he had seen this, and whether anybody saw it but himself. Was it a right whale that had the fish-market inside it? And does Mr. Bullen mean that such a whale as he referred to is ever found off the east coast of the Mediterranean? Even if he answers these questions satisfactorily, we must remind him that swallowing Jonah was nothing to keeping him alive and in fairly good health for three days and nights. What did Jonah do for air? How did he resist the whale's gastric juice? We beg Mr. Bullen to explain. If he says, "Oh, the whole thing was a miracle," we should have to tell him that he is wasting his time in trying to explain it, and wasting other people's time if he doesn't mean to carry on the explanation to the very end.

Dr. Torrey got over the "air" difficulty very airily. No one who believed in an Almighty Being, he said, would be at all upset by that problem. Such a person—to use his very words—

"will have no difficulty in believing that He could without the least difficulty prepare a fish with a mouth and throat big enough to swallow not only Jonah, but the whole ship too, and with a belly capacious enough to furnish Jonah with all the space and air for three days and three nights' lodging, even without occasionally coming to the top of the water for ventilation."—*Hard Problems of Scripture*, p. 38.

Passing over the strange notion of a fish breathing through its belly, we may observe that Dr. Torrey does not appear to have thought out the mathematics of this problem. If he had done so he would have known what an enormous quantity of air, without renewal, a single man would require to breathe in for seventy-two hours without asphyxiation. What a frightful distention the "sea monster" assumed by Dr. Torrey must have suffered! We never heard of another such case of wind on the stomach.

Emperor William has been bursting out again. At the swearing in of the recruits of the Potsdam garrison he reminded them that to be a good soldier one must be a good Christian. Has he never heard of Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar? Has he never even heard of the builder of the Potsdam palace, and the founder of modern Prussia, his own ancestor, Frederick the Great, who was a Freethinker and the friend of Voltaire? Really, if the divine William goes on in this way, people will be suggesting that he should attend an evening school.

The Queen's subscription, in starting the national fund for the unemployed, was £2,000. This is practically earmarked for the Salvation Army and the Church Army, which she stipulates are to have £1,000 each. Her money goes, therefore, to two religious organisations, presided over by duly ordained men of God. Freethinkers will be able to judge for themselves what good it is likely to do.

Mr. Keir Hardie, M.P., had the courage to tell an interviewer that: "The charitable appeals of the Prime Minister and the gift of the Queen, however well intentioned, are but soporifics, and, like all modern charity, are having a deadly, demoralising effect upon the life and character of the nation." Thanks, Mr. Hardie! Perhaps it was not for nothing that your father and mother were staunch Secularists.

There was some welcome plain speaking at a recent Poplar Town Hall meeting of the unemployed, presided over by Alderman Banks. The chairman said that the sums given to the Salvation Army and the Church Army would overlap, and that a lash was being made of the whole thing. If the Queen and Premier thought charity would satisfy them they were mistaken. Another speaker objected to the unemployed being called "loafers." "Money," he said, was not found to feed the hungry, but plenty was wasted on royalty and

armaments." Another speaker went a bit farther. "People like the Rev. W. Carlile and General Booth," he said "were exploiting the unemployed. All the sentimentality about religion should be stopped." Exactly. But it won't. How are clericals to prosper except by exploitation?

Princess Louise Augusta made what is called "a charming little speech" the other day at a meeting on behalf of the Church Army's rescue work held at Wimborne House. "I think," she said in the course of this address, "that the wonderful example set us by the Church Army, followed by the proceedings here to-day, is more than encouraging. If I can do anything, Mr. Carlile can always call on me. We have not only the unemployed but the poor always with us." Dear good lady! How kind she is! And how grateful the unemployed and poor ought to be! Of course we have no sympathy with those who would tell a Princess that, at bottom, it is not the unemployed and poor who are always with her, but she who is always with the unemployed and poor; and that idle wealth at one end is the natural antithesis of idle poverty at the other.

We see it announced that the Rev. E. Griffith Jones, B.A., is making steady progress with his projected big book on "Providence." We hope "Providence" is duly grateful.

Jesus Christ said "give to every one that asketh," but a Burnley man of God says that indiscriminate almsgiving is one of the greatest curses of the age. Which is right—the preacher or his Savior?

"When you come to church," the rector of St. Benedict's, Ardwick, says, "bring three things—a prayer-book, a hymn-book, and a coin." He might have added, "And if you forget one of them, don't let it be the coin."

Those who advocate the exclusion of religious teaching from elementary schools, the *Bolton Evening News* says, only aggravate an already aggravated position. We understand our contemporary, although this is a misuse of the word "aggravate." And our contemporary is wrong. It is the religious teaching which is the cause of all the present trouble. Take that away and we should have a peaceful and efficient system of national education. While it remains we shall have strife and inefficiency.

The *Daily News* naturally complains of the postcard, containing the resolution of the London Trades Council against the "secret conferences between leaders of political Nonconformity and carefully-selected representatives of Labor," which we printed with pleasure in our last issue. "The least said about this postcard," our contemporary says, "the better." Then it goes on to preach on behalf of political Nonconformity, and warns both the London Trades Council and the *Clarion* that "they are alienating many of their supporters by their efforts to prevent a better understanding between the Free Churches and Labor—efforts which we are glad to know are futile." What we are glad to think is futile is the effort of the Free Church leaders to nobble the Labor movement. These gentlemen are simply after business.

Admiral Togo is said to be coming to England next year with a squadron. Those who say he is a Christian can then settle which Church he belongs to.

Mary and Miriam Bramwell Booth, two of General Booth's grand-daughters, who are still in their teens, are reported to have "made forty-three converts as the result of two meetings they conducted in the Croydon Theatre." These people count up their "converts" as anglers count up their fish or sportsmen their bags of game. We wonder how many of the "converts" are enrolled in the heavenly record.

Elsie Woffinden, of Market-road, Doncaster, dressmaker and Sunday-school teacher, drowned herself in the river Don. In a letter she left behind her she hoped "God would bless the little kiddies at school." Not an Atheist, this one, Dr. Torrey.

Pasha Liffey, the Basuto, who was hung at Glasgow for murdering a miner's wife, received confirmation in, and died a member of, the Church of England. We hope the Church of England is duly proud of the fact.

Evan Roberts appears in a new avatar. He talks fluently and wears a black frock-coat. When the revival dies out he may have an eye on the pill trade.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 26, Stanley Hall, near the "Boston," Junction-road, London, N.; at 7.30, "What Has Christianity Done for Russia?"

December 3, South Shields; 31, Leicester.

### To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton, Essex.—November 26, Manchester. December 3, Birmingham; 17, Forest Gate.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 26, Neath, South Wales. December 3, Forest Gate; 10, Coventry.
- P. W. M.—Thanks for the cuttings and your good wishes. Change of address noted. Shall always be glad to hear from you.
- WALTER CHESHIRE.—Your letter would be inserted if we had not decided to terminate the controversy, which was taking too personal a turn.
- HARRY C. B.—We went carefully and elaborately into the question of the Tacitus passage about Christ in our *Sign of the Cross* (price 6d.), to which we refer to. No one ever heard of that passage till the fifteenth century. Many Freethinkers do believe that Jesus Christ is a mythical character. We cannot answer questions based on statements in *God and My Neighbor*. Your obviously proper course is to apply to Mr. Blatchford himself. Glad to know you "greatly enjoyed" our evening lecture at Liverpool, and pleased to hear from you as a "recent convert."
- GUSTAV ROLEFFS.—Thanks for cutting and your new address.
- T. A. PARKIN.—See "Acid Drops." Always glad to receive cuttings on which we can write a more or less "telling" paragraph.
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks again for cuttings.
- A. G. LYE.—Pleased to see the report in the *Coventry Herald*, which has not always been so fair to Secularism. Your suggestion *re* Labor and the Free Churches shall be considered.
- H. EARTHY.—When other people's halls are hired it is not always easy to secure good ventilation. However, we will see what can be done. The matter is certainly one of great importance.
- A. LEWIS.—Sorry it was overlooked. Thanks for fresh addresses.
- J. CLAYTON.—Thanks. We believe the divorce of the English people from the land is the principal root cause of the present distress. You must remember that the birth-rate has gone on steadily falling. There is not so much to be done in that direction now as there was thirty years ago.
- ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—W. A. 5s., A. Lewis 2s. 6d., J. O. Bates 2s. 6d., A. C. Brown 5s.
- E. PUTMAN.—W. J. Chivers may be a friend of yours, but his relation to ourselves, as stated in your letter, is purely imaginary; and his tract, which you enclose, is beneath contempt. You write as though you were an Atheist. Are you not pretending to be one?
- D. N.—Acknowledged in this week's list. Pleased to read that you "look forward every Thursday morning for the *Freethinker*," and that you "feel it would be a calamity if our work were hindered for want of funds."
- G. DIXON.—Fully made up, and more, as you will see.
- RICHARD GREEN.—Glad to have your "high regards" as well as your response to the circular.
- M. RAPHAEL.—Sorry we do not know of a miniature portrait of Paine such as you desire.
- G. WOODWARD.—It was "hateful" in the book quoted from, and we think this reading is defensible, as meaning "hateful to the multitude." You are quite right about the *fammini*. It was a blunder.
- J. HENSON.—May we print your letter as it stands?
- J. W. DAY.—Sorry for the ill news, but the prospect will doubtless improve presently. Order executed.
- H. R. CLIFTON.—Glad to see the further correspondence in the *Croydon Chronicle*; your letter especially. We note your hope that Dr. Torrey will have a good "send off" in the shape of a liberal distribution of our pamphlets at his last meetings in England.
- W. P. PEARSON.—A further supply of the most important Torrey pamphlets is being printed, so that you may be able to dose Torrey's farewell meeting at Liverpool with copies. Glad to hear your Branch is making a collection in aid of the Fund.
- D. W.—Thanks for a copy of your letter. As you say, the subject is much misunderstood by dabblers.
- R. B. FLETCHER.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- F. S. EDWARDS.—Your letter is interesting and encouraging.
- J. WEST.—We cannot drag the quotation in, but we may work it in some day.
- J. W. E. BENNETT.—Cuttings received with thanks.
- W. H.—It was a very good letter, and must have done good in a paper with such a large circulation.
- F. A. HEDGES REA.—We don't quite understand what really happened. Your letter is too vague. Your meetings cannot be prohibited on account of your opinions. That is an absurdity.

C. DAVIES.—Sorry we cannot refer you to a pamphlet on the subject.

F. RAM.—We presume it refers to Welsh clergymen of the Established Church.

W. B.—You are wrong in your chronology. The Logan-Foote debate did not end Freethought organisation in Bristol; it resuscitated the organisation, and highly successful meetings were held for three or four years afterwards, chiefly in the Shepherd's Hall. The new-formed Branch then went to pieces owing to local causes, which we need not enter into at this time of day. Mr. Foote is quite willing to visit Bristol again if a suitable hall can be obtained, with freedom of discussion after the lecture—a thing that was stupidly denied on Sundays at St. James's Hall.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

The National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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### Sugar Plums.

There was a largely improved audience at Stanley Hall on Sunday evening, and it included a considerable proportion of strangers. No doubt the hall will be full, if not crowded, this evening (Nov. 26), when Mr. Foote occupies the platform again and lectures on "What has Christianity done for Russia?" We regret to hear that there has been a little grumbling over the limitation of free seats. It must be remembered that this is inevitable. There were 160 odd persons in the free seats on Sunday evening, and their contribution to the collection averaged less than one penny per head. Obviously the expenses of the meetings cannot be met in that way. A charge of one shilling for front seats, and sixpence for second seats, is therefore made, and must be continued. It is easy to see that the expenses must fall on somebody, and it is hard to see why it should not be chiefly borne by those who attend the lectures.

Tyneside friends will please note that Mr. Foote lectures at South Shields next Sunday (Dec. 3). His meetings, afternoon and evening, will be held in the large and handsome Royal Assembly Hall. The subjects chosen are new ones—"The Gospel according to Sir Oliver Lodge," and "What has Christianity done for Russia?" There will be some good music before both lectures.

We are glad to say that the circulation of the *Freethinker* has been steadily, if slowly, improving this year. No doubt this is largely owing to the advertisement accruing from our Anti-Torrey crusade. The distribution of such a vast number of our pamphlets, both in London and in the provinces, must have done a great deal of good in other ways, besides exposing Dr. Torrey and vindicating the characters of Paine and Ingersoll. We hope the *Freethinker* will continue to make progress in the new year. To that end we once more invite our friends to send us the addresses of persons who might become regular subscribers to this journal if they were only brought acquainted with it. We will forward gratis post-free copies to all such addresses for six consecutive weeks.

Mr. Cohen lectures in the Secular Hall, Manchester, to-day (Nov. 26), and we hope the district "saints" will give him good audiences and a hearty welcome.

Mr. Lloyd informs us that his lectures at Neath to-day (Nov. 26) are in connection with the Ethical Society. At the time of writing he did not know the address of the meeting-place.



Mr. John Lloyd found Glasgow in a wretched pea-soup fog on Sunday, and such weather naturally had a bad effect on his meetings. Still, there was a fair audience in the morning, and in the evening the hall was well filled; and a correspondent informs us that "the audiences were delighted with the fervor and eloquence of Mr. Lloyd's lectures." Mr. Lloyd lectured on Monday evening at Falkirk, and on Tuesday evening at Paisley, both meetings being conducted by the Glasgow Branch.

It is to be hoped that the weather will be better at Glasgow to-day (Nov. 26), when Mr. Percy Ward lectures in the Secular Hall. Mr. Ward also lectures, under the auspices of the Glasgow Branch, on Monday evening at Ardrossan and on Tuesday evening at Paisley.

The *Coventry Herald* gives a lengthy and fair report of Mr. H. Percy Ward's lecture on "What Secularism offers in place of Christianity," and pays him some pretty compliments as a speaker.

Mr. Foote has received the following further subscriptions in response to his personal circular *re* the Paris Congress Fund:—Dr R. T. Nicholls 10s., D. N. 10s., W. Clarkson £2, G. Dixon 10s. 6d., Richard Green £1, Ewart Hopper £1, J. O. Bates 2s. 6d., F. J. Voisey 5s. Everything is now settled up in connection with the N. S. S. delegation. And as the circular brought to Mr. Foote rather more than he asked for, he has ventured to place the balance in hand to the credit of the Anti-Torrey Fund, which needs it to complete the distribution at Plymouth, Oxford, and Liverpool.

Our old friend Mr. McCluskey, writing to us from Plymouth, hopes that want of funds will not stand in the way of our sending a big supply of the Torrey pamphlets to Liverpool for distribution at Dr. Torrey's "monster farewell" meeting there. "There was," he says, "a considerable deficit to be met by the committee of the Torrey-Alexander mission in Plymouth, and there can hardly be any doubt that 25,000 of your pamphlets carefully distributed over four weeks' meetings is largely responsible for such a (from our standpoint) satisfactory result. Then the advertisement of our movement, of the *Freethinker*, and of yourself, cannot fail to do good. Such an opportunity does not often present itself. Two of our distributors were on duty every night. What is a small donation to the Fund, from those who can afford it, compared to such service as this?"

An effort is being made to revive Freethought organisation in Plymouth, and it is hoped that Mr. Foote will lecture there shortly. A meeting of local Freethinkers, with a view to future action, is called at the Royal Hotel (room 33) to-day (Nov. 26) at 11 a.m. All interested will be welcome.

Freethinkers are invited to pay particular attention to the contents of Mr. Foote's article this week on "The End of Dr. Dixon." The libellers of Colonel Ingersoll are now hunted out of their last hole, and the way is clear for the publication of the final pamphlet in which Mr. Foote intends to pass the matter on to future readers. For a work of this kind, once done so completely, should not be allowed to pass out of sight.

Rev. W. W. Chynoweth Pope, of the Unitarian Christian Church, High-street, Lewisham, preached last Sunday on "Ingersoll or Torrey: Which?" He defended Ingersoll against Torrey's base and brutal attack, and quoted some prose poems from Ingersoll's funeral orations, describing them as "lovely as lilies, and fragrant as roses." The preacher wanted to know why Torrey left Chicago, which is one of the wickedest cities on earth, and where he might be wanted. He also thought that the £17,000 spent on the Torrey-Alexander mission in London might have been more profitably expended on the unemployed.

We are printing the requisite supply of Torrey pamphlets for distribution at his farewell Liverpool meeting next Wednesday (Nov. 29). The local "saints" will have the greatest pleasure in distributing them.

Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, the British chief military representative with the Japanese army, has published an account of his experiences under the title of *A Staff Officer's Scrap Book*. He says that the Japanese are great soldiers mainly because they remain in touch with nature and lead a simple life. On this point he utters a significant warning. "The hour is at hand," he says, "when the modern world must begin to modify its ideals, or prepare to go down before some more natural, less complex, and less nervous

type." Of the Japanese women he speaks in the highest terms, calling them "the most charming example of the feminine gender in the world." "Looks," he says, "may be a matter of taste, but charm is not. The smile of the Japanese girl is an enchantment; she looks exquisitely good, and I am sure those looks at least do not belie her."

Even the Manchurian Chinese were "a startling revelation" to Sir Ian Hamilton, who admits that he had all his life been "duped and misled by the stereotyped European and American delineations of the Heathen Chinese." "I can only discover in them," he says, "qualities so admirable that they fill me with alarm when I think how far we have fallen behind them." This tribute will help to destroy the false impression created by the missionaries. These professional soul-savers have gone all over the world lying about its inhabitants, in order to justify their craft and stimulate the inflow of subscriptions.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman, writing to the *Daily News*, suggested that there might be coöperation between the Liberals, Radicals, and Socialists during the approaching general election. There were certain things, he said, on which all these parties were, or should be, agreed; and they might act together for a while if the Liberals would only put forward a program instead of remaining in the present nebulous condition. One point of this program should deal with Education. On this subject Mr. Hyndman wrote as follows:—

"Then education. The old demands which, I well remember, roused enthusiasm when I was a young man were free, compulsory secular education in all the common schools, with opportunities for attaining to higher culture for all. We have got the gratuitous instruction, poor as much of it is, and it has been made compulsory upon parents to send their children to school. But we are still dominated by denominationalism, the schools have been removed from direct popular control, the children leave school too early, the education provided is not nearly so good as it ought to be, the teachers are in many cases greatly overworked, and the lack of feeding and clothing and the general physical condition of the pupils are often so deplorable that they cannot take advantage even of the sort of instruction which they get. The recent Education Acts have made things worse rather than better. Now are Liberals prepared to deal with these questions in a serious manner, or are they going to leave the whole of the real agitation to be conducted by Socialists, as they have done hitherto; not committing themselves even to the least difficult points? We hold that nothing can possibly be more important to the whole of this community than the health, strength, and well-being, in short, the physical, mental, and moral development, of the children from the earliest age, through the common and secondary schools up to—I should say as high as anyone can go. But specially important at present are the provision of maintenance and the removal of religious teaching."

We are glad to see Mr. Hyndman so insistent on the point of Secular Education. We fear, however, that the Liberal party is too much dominated by the political Nonconformists to allow of its adopting a straight policy on this question.

Mr. John Davidson, who is one of our few real poets, has been telling an interviewer that the educated people of this age "no longer believe in Heaven and Hell, in God and Sin, as material things." They are myths to us, he says. We have "creeds," but creeds are only "the fossils of dead religions." Which is a great truth admirably expressed. With regard to the subjects of tragedies—and Mr. Davidson, it must be remembered, is a dramatist—he delivered himself in the following rather startling manner:—

"We are, moreover, limited to humanity. We can suggest nothing beyond this life, save as a myth. We cannot discuss even the conventional ideas of God and Heaven and Hell seriously upon the stage, simply because we do not believe in them. How is a tragedy possible under conditions like these?"

"And how," I naturally asked, "supposing all this, is the new idea of Tragedy to arrive?"

"It must be," said Mr. Davidson in effect, "by the poetry of Science, of Fact, of Matter—by an idea of the Universe as material to us as were the old ideas of Heaven and Hell, and God and Sin to our forefathers. It will come when we begin to recognise that not only this earth, but we ourselves, our flesh and bone and blood, our mind and soul, are composed of the same elements that exist in the farthest stars—of oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus, sulphur, sodium, potassium, magnesium, iron, silicon.

We have to understand, in short, that Man, with all his faculties, his loves and hates, his fears and hopes, is just himself the Universe made conscious, and that this is all he knows or needs to know."

Mr. Davidson went on to speak of Heaven and Hell as "sub-conscious recollections" of the light on high and the horror below in the beginning of things in this world. "What is God," he asked, "but the all-present, all-pervading Ether from which everything springs, to which everything must return." The clergy will think that Mr. Davidson is "far gone."



The Hundred Best Books—II.

(Concluded from p. 742.)

UNDER the circumstances we think that a list of the best books from a Freethought point of view might be useful, more especially to the young who are at the parting of the ways. To illustrate our meaning we will suppose the case of a youth who has been brought up by strictly orthodox parents to believe the Bible is inspired and that Christianity is the only true faith. One day the youth reads a Freethought pamphlet or hears an open-air Freethought lecture. It gives him to think, as a Frenchman would say. For the first time the momentous question presents itself, *Suppose this religion is not true?* Then the problem arises, *How am I to find out for certain whether it is true or false?* He feels that it is no use applying to anyone else, because they might be laboring under a delusion too. The only way out of the wood is to find out whether science has anything to say as to the accuracy of the Bible, the origin of the world, the origin of man, or the origin of religion. Then another problem presents itself—*What books am I to read to find out the truth about these things?* To a youth who has reached this stage the following list of works is offered as a guide.

The case we have supposed is no fancy sketch, but faithfully represents the present writer's Pilgrim's Progress from superstition to the open air and sunlight of Freethought.

Perhaps the youth will inquire how he is to procure these works, some of which are very expensive and others out of print. Well, if he has a real enthusiasm for knowledge, he will follow the present writer's example, and, provided with a pencil and notebook, wend his way to the nearest free library. Nor need the would-be student be dismayed by thinking that scientific works are necessarily dry. Among the very first authors we read were Buckle, Lecky, and Büchner, and we found them more fascinating than any novel. Huxley, Tyndall, and Clifford also were not only scientists, but artists of the highest literary skill. And where is there a finer writer than Heine, who possessed "the secret of speaking with a voice that every heart leaps up to answer," or a more brilliant than Nietzsche, the reading of whose writings has been compared with drinking champagne. Then there are Schopenhauer, Jeffries, Winwood Reade, Voltaire, Froude, Morley, and Francis Newman; all writers in the first rank. Compare them with an equal number of contemporary theological writers and mark the difference. The Freethinkers write with crystal clearness; they write to be understood. The theologians, on the other hand, write to confuse and trick the mind, they juggle and conjure with words until they distort them into meaning exactly the opposite to what they have always been understood to mean. As Mr. Holyoake remarked, you always feel as though they were fencing with you.

We have not limited our list to one hundred as we cannot see any particular sanctity attaching to that number. Neither do we claim that our list is the best possible selection. We only claim that among the books we have read, these appear to be the best, in our opinion, to recommend to an inquirer, and we should have been glad of a similar guide when setting out in our search for truth. If the publication of this list should lead to the compiling of a better one by a more competent hand, no one would be better pleased than the present writer. The list is as follows:—

EVOLUTION.

Dennis Hird	... <i>An Easy Outline of Evolution.</i>
Aveling	... <i>Darwin Made Easy.</i>
Huxley	... <i>Lay Sermons.</i>
Tyndall	... <i>Fragments of Science.</i>
Winwood Reade	... <i>Martyrdom of Man.</i>
Vogt	... <i>Lectures on Man.</i>
Lester Ward	... <i>Dynamic Sociology.</i>
Ball	... <i>The Earth's Beginning.</i>
Spencer	... <i>Essays.</i>

Helmholtz	... <i>Scientific Lectures.</i>
Metchnikoff	... <i>The Nature of Man.</i>

ATHEISM.

Lange	... <i>History of Materialism.</i>
Feuerbach	... <i>Essence of Religion.</i>
Buchner	... <i>Force and Matter.</i>
Strauss	... <i>The Old Faith and the New.</i>
Heine	... <i>Religion and Philosophy in Germany.</i>
Grote	... <i>Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion.</i>
Hume	... <i>Dialogues.</i>
McCall	... <i>Final Causes.</i>
Schopenhauer	... <i>On Religion.</i>
Topinard	... <i>Science and Faith.</i>
Holyoake	... <i>Trial of Theism.</i>
Haeckel	... <i>Riddle of the Universe.</i>

ORIGIN OF RELIGION.

Tylor	... <i>Primitive Culture.</i>
Spencer	... <i>Principles of Sociology.</i>
Lubbock	... <i>Prehistoric Times.</i>
Hume	... <i>Natural History of Religion.</i>
Tiele	... <i>Outlines of the History of Religion.</i>
Frazer	... <i>The Golden Bough.</i>

BIOGRAPHY.

Wheeler	... <i>Dictionary of Freethinkers.</i>
Clodd	... <i>Pioneers of Evolution.</i>
Bradlaugh-Bonner	... <i>Life of Charles Bradlaugh.</i>
Wheeler	... <i>Voltaire.</i>
Morley	... <i>Voltaire.</i>
Moncure Conway	... <i>Life of Paine.</i>
Foote	... <i>Darwin on God.</i>
Grant Allen	... <i>Darwin.</i>
Jeffries	... <i>Story of My Heart.</i>
Harriet Martineau	... <i>Autobiography.</i>
Gebler	... <i>Galileo Galilei.</i>

HISTORY.

Buckle	... <i>History of Civilisation.</i>
Lecky	... <i>History of Rationalism.</i>
"	... <i>History of European Morals.</i>
"	... <i>History of England in the Eighteenth Century.</i>
Leslie Stephen	... <i>History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.</i>
White	... <i>The Warfare of Science.</i>
Draper	... <i>The Conflict of Religion and Science.</i>
Gibbon	... <i>The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.</i>
Hallam	... <i>Europe During the Middle Ages.</i>
Lea	... <i>History of the Inquisition.</i>
"	... <i>History of Sacerdotal Celibacy.</i>
"	... <i>Superstition and Force.</i>
Sismondi	... <i>History of the Crusades Against the Albigenses.</i>
Motley	... <i>Rise of the Dutch Republic.</i>
Chandler	... <i>History of Persecution.</i>
Prescott	... <i>Conquest of Mexico.</i>
"	... <i>Conquest of Peru.</i>
Lamartine	... <i>History of the Girondists.</i>
Moshiem	... <i>Ecclesiastical History.</i>
Gieseler	... <i>Ecclesiastical History.</i>

GENERAL.

Foote and Ball	... <i>Bible Handbook.</i>
Mill	... <i>Three Essays on Religion.</i>
Froude	... <i>Short Studies on Great Subjects.</i>
Hartman	... <i>The Religion of the Future.</i>
Luys	... <i>Functions of the Brain.</i>
Maudsley	... <i>Body and Mind.</i>
Leslie Stephen	... <i>Essays on Freethinking.</i>
"	... <i>Hours in a Library.</i>
"	... <i>Struggles for Life.</i>
Greg	... <i>Enigmas of Life.</i>
Cohen	... <i>Foreign Missions.</i>
Symes	... <i>Lectures and Essays.</i>
Wheeler	... <i>Footsteps of the Past.</i>
Foote	... <i>Infidel Death-Beds.</i>
Voltaire	... <i>Philosophical Dictionary.</i>
Maudsley	... <i>Natural Causes, Supernatural Seemings.</i>



- Collins ... .. *Liberty and Necessity.*  
 Hume ... .. *Essay on Miracles.*
- OLD TESTAMENT.
- Huxley ... .. *Science and Hebrew Tradition.*  
 Kalisch ... .. *Commentary on the Pentateuch.*  
 Colenso ... .. *The Pentateuch and Book of  
 Joshua Critically Examined.*  
 Giles ... .. *Hebrew Records.*  
 Bradlaugh ... .. *Notes on Genesis.*  
 Strange ... .. *The Bible, is it the Word of God?*  
 Edwards ... .. *The Witness of Assyria.*  
 Boscawen ... .. *The Bible and the Monuments.*  
 " ... .. *From Under the Dust of Ages.*  
 Wheeler ... .. *Bible Studies.*

## CHRISTIAN MYTHOLOGY.

- Robertson ... .. *Christianity and Mythology.*  
 " ... .. *Pagan Christs.*  
 Strange ... .. *Source and Development of  
 Christianity.*  
 Sharpe ... .. *Egyptian Mythology and Egypt-  
 ian Christianity.*  
 Bonwick ... .. *Egyptian Belief and Modern  
 Thought.*  
 Gerald Massey ... .. *Natural Genesis.*  
 Johnson ... .. *Antiqua Mater.*  
 Inman ... .. *Ancient Faiths and Modern.*  
 Parsons ... .. *Our Sun God.*  
 " ... .. *The Non-Christian Cross.*  
 Barr Mitchell ... .. *Chrestos; a Religious Epithet.*

## THE LATENESS OF THE GOSPELS.

- Cassells ... .. *Supernatural Religion.*  
 Giles ... .. *Christian Records.*  
 Waite ... .. *History of the Christian Religion  
 to the year A.D. 200.*

## JESUS CHRIST.

- Strauss ... .. *Life of Jesus.* (George Eliot's  
 translation.)  
 Meredith ... .. *The Prophet of Nazareth.*  
 Scott ... .. *The English Life of Jesus.*  
 Newman ... .. *Christianity in its Cradle.*  
 Soury ... .. *Jesus and Israel.*  
 Foote and Wheeler ... .. *Jewish Life of Christ.*  
 Mead ... .. *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?*

## CHRISTIANITY.

- Farrar ... .. *Paganism and Christianity.*  
 Newman ... .. *Phases of Faith.*  
 Greg ... .. *Creed of Christendom.*  
 Huxley ... .. *Science and Christian Tradition.*  
 Feuerbach ... .. *Essence of Christianity.*  
 Morison ... .. *The Service of Man.*  
 Dill ... .. *Roman Society from Nero to  
 Marcus Aurelius.*  
 Middleton ... .. *Free Inquiry.*  
 Ingersoll ... .. *Lectures and Debates.*  
 Baring Gould ... .. *The Lost and Hostile Gospels.*  
 Conybeare ... .. *Monuments of Early Christianity*  
 Wheeler ... .. *Frauds and Follies of the Fathers*

## ETHICS.

- George Eliot ... .. *Essays.*  
 Clifford ... .. *Lectures and Essays.*  
 Spencer ... .. *Data of Ethics.*  
 Cohen ... .. *Outline of Evolutionary Ethics.*  
 Guyau ... .. *Morality Without Obligation or  
 Sanction.*

In conclusion we would remark that what is needed to-day, is not so much new theories and discoveries—although they are always welcome—but the dissemination of what is already known.

We have long been of opinion that the greatest service to our cause would be the compilation of a "Pocket Cyclopædia," compiled from some such list of books as the above and allowing these master minds, wherever possible, to speak for themselves.

It could be of the same size as Saxon's *Pocket Cyclopædia*, and with small print it would contain an immense amount of valuable information.

Here is a hint to anyone who has time and money at disposal for such a grand undertaking.

We believe with Buchner that "To render this victory of science over obsolete faith and superstition complete and enduring, all that remains to be done is to withdraw it from its monastic and corporate seclusion, so that its great results may become the common property of peoples. As soon as this is done, and thus some philosophic light shall have entered the heads of the masses, all spiritual and clerical tyranny must for ever cease, since it only reigns by taking judgment captive, deceiving men's consciences and confusing their minds." Our duty is to hasten that time by all means in our power.

We have not included poetry and fiction in our list for fear of overloading it.

W. MANN.

## A PERFECT WOMAN.

She was a Phantom of delight  
 When first she gleamed upon my sight;  
 A lovely Apparition, sent  
 To be a moment's ornament;  
 Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;  
 Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;  
 But all things else about her drawn  
 From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;  
 A dancing Shape, an Image gay,  
 To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,  
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too!  
 Her household motions light and free,  
 And steps of virgin-liberty;  
 A countenance in which did meet  
 Sweet records, promises as sweet;  
 A Creature not too bright or good  
 For human nature's daily food;  
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene  
 The very pulse of the machine;  
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,  
 A Traveller between life and death;  
 The reason firm, the temperate will,  
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;  
 A perfect Woman, nobly planned,  
 To warn, to comfort, and command;  
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright  
 With something of angelic light.

—Wordsworth.

The great remedy for calumny, as for afflictions of the heart, is time. If people find fault with our principles or our conduct, good or bad, the best course is to pay no regard to them, and go on as before. After a short time the subject will become stale, and the slanderers will cease talking about it, in order to hunt the trail of some fresh scandal. And the more we show ourselves steadfast and consistent in pursuing our own course, regardless of all idle gossip, so much the sooner will that which was at first condemned as strange or unreasonable be seen in another light and acknowledged as rational and sensible. The world always comes round in the end to the views of those who firmly persist in following their own path, and ends finally by giving up its own opinions and adopting theirs. Whence it results, as is well known, that the weak live as the world wills, and the strong as they will themselves.—*Leopardi.*

The people have begun to suspect that one particular form of their past misgovernment has been, that their masters have set them to do all the work, and have themselves taken all the wages. In a word, that what was called governing them, means only wearing fine clothes, and living on good fare at their expense. And I am sorry to say, the people are quite right in this opinion also. If you enquire into the vital fact of the matter, this you will find to be the constant structure of European society for the thousand years of the feudal system; it was divided into peasants who lived by working; priests who lived by begging; and knights who lived by pillaging.—*John Ruskin.*

As the bee collects nectar and departs without injuring the flower, or its color or scent, so let the sage dwell on earth.—*Buddha.*

Self-respect guides our morals; regard for others controls our behavior.—*Goethe.*



## SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS.

A resolution "condemning the Sunday newspaper, agreeing not to subscribe for such edition, and protesting against the appearance in the Sunday press of any and all notices pertaining to Sunday church services, Christian Endeavor gatherings and the coming evangelistic campaign" was "unanimously" adopted at a union meeting of the young people's religious organisations of Minneapolis, Minn., in the Henepin Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church on the evening of October 6. The meeting was preparatory to "the coming Chapman revival meetings." The resolution was as follows:

"Whereas, it is the sentiment of the Christian young people assembled in this meeting, members of the Minneapolis Christian Endeavor Union, of the Presbyterian Young People's Union, of the Baptist Young People's Union, of the Congregational Young People's Union, and of the Minneapolis Epworth League, that the Sunday newspaper is a hindrance to Christian activity and progress, and not conducive to the proper spirit of worship and devotion on the Sabbath.

Therefore, be it resolved that we do hereby protest against the entrance into our Christian homes of any Sunday newspaper, and that we will not subscribe for such Sunday edition.

Be it further resolved that we protest against the appearance in the Sunday press of any and all notices pertaining to Sunday church services, to Christian Endeavor gatherings, to the coming evangelistic campaign, and to that end we will endeavor as far as our own churches are concerned to see that the spirit of this resolution is adopted as far as possible."

It is strange that people who do not want the Sunday newspaper should have to protest against its entrance into their homes. Does the Sunday newspaper enter homes by force, so that they are powerless to keep it out?—*Truthseeker* (New York).

## KANSAS GRIEF.

The *Fulton Gazette* (Kan.) reports that a minister of that town was moved by the grief of a husband whose wife was to be buried, and sought to commiserate him in the following manner: "My brother, I know that this is a great grief that has overtaken you, and though you are compelled to mourn the loss of this one, who was your companion and partner in life, I would console you with the assurance that there is another who sympathises with you and seeks to embrace you in the arms of unfailing love." To this the bereaved man replied by asking, as he gazed through tears into the minister's face, "What's her name?"

## The Pope and the Earthquake in Calabria.

"Now, all good Catholics, list to me,"  
Quoth Sarto the Pope,  
In the truthful *Observer* of Rome,  
"While I try to explain as plain can be  
How earthquakes and such small fiddle-de-dee  
In the hand of God—in infinite scope—  
Are truly a font of eternal hope.  
Why, the way they encourage the love of home  
Could hardly be writ in a fair-sized tome."

"The fear of God and contentment, you see,"  
Quoth Sarto the Pope,  
In the sanctified Roman journal;  
"Forbearance, fortitude, piety,  
And the blessings of Christian charity  
By earthquakes are quickened to sweeter hope.  
E'en Atheists vile for their God will grope,  
Leaving their blind unbelief infernal,  
When the finger of Providence touches their kernel."

Till you really believe by the words so fair  
Of Sarto, the fraud—  
The marvellous Catholic fakir—  
He was almost upset that he wasn't there  
When that earthquake jumbled each court and square,  
When each roof and steeple was rocked by God  
To make work for the unemployed, with the hod.  
When he buried his faithful flock by the acre  
(Like an omnipotent Sweeney Todd),  
To save them the cost of an undertaker.

G. E. W.

That wandering ship of the drunken pilot, the mutinous crew and the angry captain, called Human Nature.—*George Meredith*.

## From the New York "Truthseeker."

The *Chicago Record-Herald* prints the following item of religious intelligence: "Piety has fallen into dull days, according to Rev. Nestor Clarkson, an evangelist, who pleaded poverty yesterday when Judge Mack asked him why he should not pay alimony to his wife, Mrs. Mabel Clarkson, who is suing for divorce. The dominie has been holding meetings in a tent, and he told the court the weather was so cold that his attendance had fallen off. Attorney F. B. Moseley, for the plaintiff, suggested that the evangelist might live on grace if he chose, but that Mrs. Clarkson preferred a more substantial livelihood. He advised a change of occupation for the minister. The defendant denied a charge of 'swearing like a trooper' and of being cruel."

A Los Angeles newspaper describes a scene in a court of that city when two Methodist ministers, the Rev. William Green and the Rev. D. F. McCarty, asked the law to settle a dispute between them over money. Each called his brother a liar, and the court said it might believe both only it was convinced that one or the other was a perjurer and ought to be in State's prison.

The Belknap household of Des Moines, Ia., have long had upon their walls the framed motto, "God Bless Our Home." It is there no longer. The other day Mrs. Belknap lost her temper, and being impulsive she took the motto down and smashed it on the bald head of her husband, who went to the hospital to have his scalp repaired. Mr. Belknap explained to the doctors, apologetically, that his wife "is given to rashness when aroused." What is home without a motto?

When Sergius Witte, the Russian peace envoy, reached Europe after serving his country at Portsmouth, he dispensed on several public occasions the information that President Roosevelt had acted in behalf of Russia throughout the peace negotiations. Mr. Roosevelt was at the time quoted as remarking privately, but in his best platform manner, that Witte was the most infernal liar who ever came out of the East. A letter written by Count Witte is being copied by the press. In it he says, among other things, that "when one speaks with President Roosevelt he charms through the elevation of his thoughts and through that transparent philosophy which permeates his judgment."

## HER UNBIASED JUDGMENT.

A clergyman who had accepted an invitation to officiate at Sunday services in a neighboring town, intrusted his new curate with the performance of his own duties. On returning home he asked his wife what she thought of the curate's sermon.

"It was the poorest one I ever heard," she replied promptly; "nothing in it at all."

Later in the day the clergyman, meeting his curate, asked him how he got on.

"Oh, very well," was the reply. "I didn't have time to prepare anything, so I preached one of your unused sermons."  
—*Harper's Weekly*.

Surely our clergy need not be surprised at the daily increasing distrust in the public mind of the efficacy of Prayer, after having so long insisted on their offering supplication, at least every Sunday morning at eleven o'clock, that the rest of their lives hereafter might be pure and holy, leaving them conscious all the while that they would be similarly required to inform the Lord next week, at the same hour, that "there was no health in them!"—*John Ruskin*.

I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all evils.—*Bacon*.

I do not much lament the dead, and should envy them rather; but I very much lament the dying.—*Montaigne*.



## 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.

STANLEY HALL (near the "Boston," Junction-road, N.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "What Has Christianity Done for Russia?"

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 3, A. C. Bain, "The Basis of Morality"; 8, Annual General Meeting.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "The Early Christians."

### OUTDOOR.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Rushcroft-road, Brixton): Open-air meeting every Wednesday evening at 8.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, Nov. 30, at 8, A. Barber, "Shelley."

CARDIFF BRANCH N. S. S. (Maskell's Café, St. Mary-street): Monday, Nov. 27, at 8, E. Shea, "The Why and the Wherefore."

FAIRFORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): Charles Watts, 2.45, "Secularism: Past, Present, and Future"; 6.30, Ethics and Religion: a Comparison."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (110 Brunswick-street): H. P. Ward, 12 noon, "Which Came First—the Hen or the Egg?" (a Lecture on the Origin of Life); 6.30, "Infidelity and Immorality."

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Monday, Nov. 27, at 8, Mrs. Ward, "Edward Carpenter."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "The Evolution of Man." With Lantern Illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. Arnold Sharpley, 3, "Maeterlinck's Drama 'The Sightless'"; 7, "Has Secularism Done Its Work?—The Rallying Cry of Man." Monday, 8, Rationalist Debating Society.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): C. Cohen, 3, "Breaking the Idols"; 6.30, "The Non-Religion of the Future." Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, Nov. 30, at 8, W. Wright, "The Simple Life."

PORTRH BRANCH N. S. S. (Room, Town Hall, Porth): 6.30, O. Simmons, "Religion and Science."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Final arrangements for Mr. Foote's lectures.

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