

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVI.—No 10

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 1906

PRICE TWOPENCE

Do not ask who said this or that, but mark what is spoken.—LANDOR.

An Amusing Finish.

DURING the last four weeks I have been retelling the old story of the Atheist Shoemaker, and how I succeeded in exposing the fictions and falsehoods of the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. My readers will recollect—to put the whole thing in a nutshell—that Mr. Hughes played off upon the world a romantic and imaginary story of an eloquent and popular Atheist advocate who was brought to Christ through the agency of the West London Mission, and largely by the goodness of its "Sisters"; that this story was challenged from the very first by the leaders of the Freethought party, including the great Charles Bradlaugh; that Mr. Hughes evaded every effort made to obtain from him the name of his wonderful convert; that this calculated and deliberate reticence was condemned by several Christians, including the great Charles H. Spurgeon; that Mr. Hughes was at last compelled to see that something had to be done; that he then arranged a sham investigation between himself and the late Mr. George Jacob Holyoake; that this was done behind the backs of the Freethinkers, and that the investigation was carried on with complete secrecy; that Mr. Holyoake gave Mr. Hughes (who was privately a friend of his) a certificate of veracity; and that I was then lucky enough to discover the relatives of the dead "convert," and, by means of their testimony, and documentary evidence, to blow the whole pious deception to the four winds of heaven.

Mr. Holyoake, as I have shown, made no inquiries at all outside the charmed circle of the concocters of the Atheist Shoemaker story. He interviewed Mr. Hughes, and described him as a Christian minister who was entitled to be implicitly believed upon his word. He interviewed the "Sisters" of the West London Mission, and praised their goodness and grace, and suggested that only blackguards would doubt anything they said. The ladies appear to have captivated him. And I dare say they knew their business. Old gentlemen often have inflammable hearts, and good-looking young ladies of birth and education are never so distractingly bewitching as when they wear the raiment of renunciation, look demurely, and follow "charity" as an avocation.

One of the "Sisters" who met Mr. Holyoake on that occasion has been writing about it in the *Labor Record*. Why such a journal afforded her an opportunity to repeat the old falsehood of the Atheist Shoemaker, and to say vicious things about me, I do not quite understand. I can only conclude that piety is the prevailing element in the composition of its editor, Mr. F. W. Pethick Lawrence.

Mary Neal is the name of the "Sister" who enjoys the hospitality of the *Labor Record*. She discreetly speaks of the Atheist Shoemaker, who was won over to Christianity by the care and kindness of the "Sisters," as a "professed Atheist." She does not breathe a whisper of his eloquent public addresses on Atheism, and of his running Bradlaugh very close as an orator. She follows her "Chief" in minimising the "convert's" importance. And she says that "Mr. Foote poured out his wrath" upon the story

"in no measured and polite terms." Which is just the feeling that convicted criminals are likely to have towards the detective who has run them to earth.

Mr. Holyoake asked to see the "Sisters." They arranged for him to lunch with them first, and "after lunch he had a talk." It was a most beautiful and impartial investigation. Mary Neal (I am obliged to speak of her in this abrupt way because I do not know whether she is a Miss or a Mrs.) expected to meet a man with a "hard face and rough manner"—presumably like me. Instead of this she saw a feeble old gentleman. There was "no distant echo even of Mr. Foote." They instinctively felt that "he could be trusted"—and their instinct "was not belied." "Afterwards," the lady says, "he wrote a public refutation of Mr. Foote's attitude, and expressed the opinion that, given the missionary's point of view, which was sincere, that the story was quite true."

Yes, but after that? What about my finding the real name of the "convert" in spite of Mr. Hughes and the "Sisters"? What about my discovery of the "convert's" father and brothers? What about their denunciation of the "convert's" story as "a damnable lie"? What about the proofs I gave that the "convert" had always been a Christian, never an Atheist, and never an "orator"? On all this Mary Neal is silent. She stops at Mr. Holyoake's "vindication." She follows her dead "Chief" in his mendacious silence. And I perceive that she learnt her lesson well. She even hints on her own account that I wrote "bitter and impolite criticisms on all that we were trying to do for the poor and helpless in West London." Which is absolutely untrue. For my "criticisms" were confined to the story of their amazing convert, and were only "bitter and impolite" because I proved it was false.

And what a delicious expression that is about the story being true from "the missionary's point of view." What on earth can it mean except that the missionaries had a good intention. And what was that? The answer may be found in the seventh verse of the third chapter of Romans.

How delightful, too, is the lady's statement that the "Sisters" felt that Mr. Holyoake "could be trusted," with the gushing addition: "We took him absolutely into our confidence." Evidently they were not going to take him into their confidence until they were satisfied that he *could* be trusted—which throws a flood of light on the so-called investigation. You and I, reader, may smile at this pretty little farce, in which the lunch and the ladies were too much for the dear old gentleman. There is a comic side to nearly everything. Certainly there is a comic side to this. One side of a dispute appoint their own umpire, without so much as saying "By your leave" to the other side, and invite him to lunch, and smother him with charming and flattering ladies, and then take his judgment with the greatest satisfaction.

I beg Mary Neal to accept my best thanks for her little article in the *Labor Record*. She did not mean to do me a good turn, but she has done it in spite of herself. When the parties to an imposture begin talking they are sure to give the game away. It would be wiser to keep silence. He who says nothing cannot betray himself.

G. W. FOOTE.

Who are the Materialists?

THE other day Canon Hensley Henson very solemnly warned the public against the dangers of Materialism, with its "intellectual corollary scepticism." The warning is an old one, the antipathy of the clergy to the word Materialism, being only equalled by their dislike of another expressive word, Atheism. In the latter case the chief reason for the antipathy lies in the uncompromising nature of the word. Freethought has become sufficiently prevalent for many Christians to claim that they too are Freethinkers. Agnosticism is so indefinite in its application and implications that with many it assumes the character of a religion, and Agnostics are found expressing feelings of reverence towards nothing in particular and everything in general. And some Christians also profess to be Agnostics "to a certain extent." But none of them are found claiming to be Atheists. Here no compromise is possible. Atheism may be saddled with various sinister meanings by those who will not or cannot understand it; but its central assertion of not believing in a deity is grasped by all.

In the case of "Materialism" the clergy attain their object by using the word in two senses and while offering one, by a species of sleight of hand, substituting the other. For the word has both a technical or scientific, and a moral or social meaning. Scientifically Materialism may be taken as the assertion that all natural phenomena are ultimately explainable by mechanical formulæ, and that life, mind, and consciousness are also elaborated and complex products of the same forces that are everywhere at work around us. And from this point of view the connection between Materialism and morality is as evident and as necessary as that between geography and genesis, Marathon and midwifery, or Homer and Homeopathy. But the word has also a social significance which implies a devotion to mere sensual gratification, and a comparative ignoring of the higher social and intellectual pursuits. If preachers merely protested against this form of Materialism, Freethinkers would be the last to cavil at their utterances. But their policy is to confuse the two meanings, and having convicted certain people or opinions of Materialism, produce the impression that this carries with it the whole catalogue of social and moral offences.

Now the last thing that can be brought against either scientific or Freethought workers is that they are materialistic in this sinister sense of the word. They are, on the contrary, idealistic to a degree that has often earned for them the ridicule of a large number of their fellows. Scientific workers have not usually gone about the country parading their self-sacrifice, nor proclaiming their martyrdom with the unctuous selfishness of religious votaries, but the history of science is nevertheless full of records of men whose lives have been object lessons in devotion to the most unselfish of ideals. The very last thing that could be said of these men is that they devoted themselves to sensual pleasures, or that they took a low view of life. And the case of Freethought is equally striking. Up and down the country are scores and scores of men and women who have been for years devoting themselves to a cause that from the mere view of "worldly" advancement has positively nothing to offer. These men and women are content to go on year after year enduring misrepresentation, slander, and various persecutions, the harder to bear because they are usually petty in character, and all for an ideal that the average Christian rejects because the solid and immediate personal gain is insufficient for him. And this quiet, but none the less real idealism, is the more admirable because it is so often consummated in solitude. It is easy to undergo martyrdom in a crowd, even passive resisters have found their kitchen-clock and family-teapot martyrdom in clusters quite enjoyable; the test is when the martyrdom is undergone in solitude. It is then that there is demonstrated the presence of an idealism of a far from common character.

But if ever the "you're another" argument has any force, it is here. The Freethinker might turn round on the Christian and, with justice, accuse him of the most complete and the most vicious form of Materialism. In the first place, it may be noted that a great many of the objections to Secularism and Atheism actually involve the charge that the Freethinker is burdened with an overdose of idealism. Everyone is familiar with the statement that in destroying the belief in a God who punishes and rewards in a future life for deeds done in this, the Freethinker is sowing the seeds of a wide spread immorality. And what is this but reducing conduct to its lowest and most sordid proportions? It is saying that human nature is neither hopeful enough nor healthy enough to act on any other principle save that of a direct reward or punishment. The real charge brought against Freethinkers in such a statement is that they pitch their ideals too high, and take too lofty a conception of human nature. This may be true, but it is ridiculous for such as believe this to label their opponents Materialists. The Materialism plainly belongs to those who take the lower view.

There is the same feature in the Christian religion itself. Until Christianity succumbed somewhat to the pressure of modern culture what could have been more materialistic than the Christian conception of a future? What was there in it of the higher intellectual or social pleasures? To have asserted their possibility would have outraged Christian susceptibilities. Charles Lamb said that he always felt like saying grace before reading Shakespeare; and this is regarded as a joke in a Christian country. Had he actually said grace before reading Lear or Othello, Christians would probably have taken it as an insult to their faith. But if a man believes in God why not say grace before reading Shakespeare? The Christian, who is fearful of the effects of materialism, reserves his grace for his dinner. His æsthetic feelings centre about the neighborhood of his stomach; just as the ideal man in practice, if not in theory, in a Christian country, is he who has "made his pile," honestly perhaps, but at all events, made it.

We have to be on our guard against materialism, says Canon Henson. But, as a matter of fact, and apart from all theory, could life be conducted on a more materialistic basis than it is in this Christian country after centuries of Christian nurture? Among select circles the artist, the man of letters, the scientist, the reformer, may each receive a measure of appreciation. But what of the mass of the people? It is a sober fact that with them the successful prize-fighter, the famous footballer, the victorious soldier, cuts a far greater figure. What is the ideal character placed before young men just entering life? Not the man who has devoted his life to high ideals, but the one who begins as a poor boy, and by the practice of a miserable thrift, and by qualities of a more or less "toadyish" description has amassed a fortune in solid cash. And once the fortune is made, the man with the money-bags is nowhere so sure of servile attention, flattery, and adulation, as in Church or Chapel. Not even on the Stock Exchange is the man of money worshiped more than in the religious meeting-house. We starve and look down upon our hard working but poor student, we praise and pension our successful fighting man. Ruskin said that the motto of the Englishman was, wherever he was to get somewhere else, and whatever he had to get more, while the Christianity of England, in practice, is such, that if engineers could build a tunnel to hell, Christians would invest their money in it and close all the churches for fear of lowering the dividends. Is this more than a bare summary of facts? One would be only too pleased to say it was not true, but again, what are the facts? We have just passed through a general election, and we have been deluged with the speeches about the greatness and the might of England; our Christian humility being quite consonant with self-laudation of the most nauseous

character. But when we ask *why* is England great, where is its greatness threatened, and how is its greatness maintained, what do we find? Why that the ideal aimed at is that of an universal stores, and that we are disgraced should some other trader come along and filch from us some of our commerce. We are great apparently, because we make more cotton goods or sell more coal than any other country, even though our doing so involves the gradual degradation of family life. From none of our official leaders do we get the teaching that to maintain the character of our people is of infinitely greater importance than to build up a huge trade without regard to the conditions of its increase. That character is of more importance than cash; that the trade of a country may be increasing and yet its people be deteriorating, are teachings that *are* heard, truly, but they are heard as mere fantastical speculations rather than the most important of truths to which a nation can give heed.

We are a materialised people—materialised in the sinister sense of the word—and by what? Very largely by the religion that is so fond of affixing this epithet to all with whom it disagrees. A religion that had really held up lofty ideals, and based its teachings upon realities while aiming at a gradually perfected human society, might surely have provided during the centuries of its rule, an antidote to the money and commercial mania of the last four or five generations. The real worth of a Christian training is seen in the fact that it could offer nothing to oppose the demoralising tendencies of modern life but by its condemnation of scientific study and its indiscriminating condemnation of natural pleasures, paved the way for these tendencies to exert their fullest influence. The condemnation of theology, said one of the German philosophers, is its history; and the final condemnation of Christianity is to be found in its inability to present the existence of prevent evils, as well as by the part it has played in their production.

C. COHEN.

“Rationalism Laid in the Dust.”

LET us look more closely into the allegation that the campaigns of Voltaire, Bolingbroke, Hume and Paine “were triumphantly followed by the missions of Whitfield and Wesley,” and that “a splendid revival of Evangelicalism laid Rationalism in the dust.” This allegation is continually made by third-rate Christian apologists; and the confidence and pride with which they make it naturally impress and mislead the ignorant. To expose the utter shallowness and falsity of this apologetic, it is by no means necessary to underestimate the greatness and importance of the missions of Whitfield and Wesley. It is readily admitted that Whitfield and Wesley were men of extraordinary power. The former was a born orator, whose complete grip of the emotions of his audiences was a perpetual wonder. His musical rendering of the barren word Mesopotamia moved the people to tears. Wesley was at once a great orator and a marvellous organiser; and naturally his work bore fruit on a much larger scale. It is therefore accurate to state that the great Evangelical revival in England “left Wesleyan Methodism as its most conspicuous memorial.” It is also true that the movement operated very strongly on the English Church clergy, a considerable section of whom, distinguished for their zeal and earnestness, came to be known as the Evangelical School. But while guarding against an under-estimate of the results of the Evangelical revival, we must also be careful not to over-estimate them. “Whitfield,” as Lecky says, “was chiefly a creature of impulse and emotion. He had very little logical skill, no depth or range of knowledge, not much self-restraint.” He was a man of one talent, passionate oratory, and with this one gift he accomplished great things; but, lacking organising genius and personal authority, he left behind him only a few scattered congregations,

known as Lady Huntingdon’s connection, now under thirty in number. And even at Wesley’s death, in 1791, the total number of Methodists throughout Great Britain, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands, was only 57,562, while at the present time in England and Wales, of Wesleyan communicants there are no more than 593,471.

Now it is admitted in the *Harmsworth Encyclopædia*, that the Evangelical revival “left Wesleyan Methodism as its most conspicuous memorial,” and, according to official statistics, Wesleyan Methodists numbered, in 1791, 57,562, and in 1882, 507,598. In 1882, Great Britain gloried in 393,754 Wesleyan Methodists. The eloquence of these statistics is irresistible. When Wesley died his followers formed but a most insignificant fraction of the population, and the majority of them belonged to the most ignorant and superstitious classes. How, then, can it be reasonably maintained that the Evangelical revival “laid Rationalism in the dust?” As a matter of fact, the Evangelical revival never touched Rationalism at all—except with the brutal hand of persecution. Evangelicalism and Rationalism were confined to two entirely different sections of the community.

It should be remembered, in this connection, that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Rationalism essentially meant Deism. The four “colossal dialecticians,” Voltaire, Bolingbroke, Hume, and Paine, were not “dirty little Atheists,” as it is commonly supposed. They were firm believers in God, the only thing they rejected and opposed being revelationism and the Christian system based upon it. Well, in the form of Deism, Rationalism was at the zenith of its prosperity throughout the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth; but during the latter half of the eighteenth and the opening years of the nineteenth, a reaction set in caused, not by the Evangelical revival, but by the “diversion of interest from ideas as such to political and mercantile interests.” The orthodox Gray writes in 1750: “The mode of Freethinking has given place to the mode of not thinking at all.” But the lack of fresh Deistic literature by no means indicated a lack of Deistic opinions. “Whatever of exhaustion there was, entered into the whole speculative thought of the time, into its science and into its orthodoxy.” As Wiseman, in his *Dynamics of Religion* (p. 175), well puts it:—

“The energy of the nation had begun to drain off in non-intellectual directions—in new industry, in conquest, in war, in extending commerce. The active forces of Deism had been drawn from two quarters, the scholarly class and the educated upper class. But the educated upper class was more and more solicited to the pursuits of politics, travel, fashionable society, and above all, war. The period of maximum activity in the Deistic controversy was between 1713, the date of the Peace of Utrecht, and 1743, the date of the new embroilment of England with France. The first date is that of Collins’s *Discourse of Freethinking*; and the last notable treatise in the controversy, save those of Bolingbroke, posthumously published, and the later writings of Hume, is Dodwell’s *Christianity not Founded on Argument* (1743), which is a vigorous application, on dubiously orthodox lines, of the thesis thrown out later as a sarcasm by Hume, that faith has nothing to do with argument. From 1743 to 1748 there is war with France, with the rebellion of 1745 added; and war is resumed in 1756, going on simultaneously in India, North America, the Continent, and the high seas, and employing at least 100,000 men; this being the period of Pitt’s most energetic action, in which the nation put out more military strength and enterprise than at any previous period; which is equivalent to saying that its available intellectual energy was greatly reduced. And when the Peace of Paris was signed in 1763, the ‘barbarous and absurd faction’ entered on its wildest period, that of Bute and Wilkes, the period of rapidly changing ministries, of the Letters of Junius, and of the long quarrel with the Colonies, ending in the war of Independence, which runs simultaneously with manifold fresh war in Europe, lasting till 1783.”

Equally significant is the interesting story of the rapid extension, during the same period, of agriculture, industry, invention, and commerce. This story

cannot be told here; but it may be mentioned that Watt "patented his steam-engine in 1769; Hargreave the spinning-jenny in 1770; Arkwright the water-frame in 1771; Crompton the mule in 1779; and Cartwright the power-loom in 1785." This, too, was the period during which "the manufacture of iron was revolutionised, and the output quadrupled," and in which "the population, which before 1751 had never increased more than 3 per cent. in ten years, increased 6 per cent. in each of the next three decades, and 9 per cent. between 1781 and 1791." Gibbon and others tell us how deplorable the state of things became in the Universities, "where a student could do anything he pleased, except be known to read any sceptical philosophy."

Now, be it observed that it was this intellectually decadent period, this period marked by a lack of interest in ideas, and by the rapid growth of an industrial population largely illiterate, that gave religion its golden opportunity. The conditions were eminently favorable to the spread of Evangelicalism both within and without the Church of England; and one of the inevitable consequences was the elevation of mere orthodoxy to a position of paramount importance. All independent thought among the clergy was peremptorily forbidden. In a *Letter to a Young Clergyman*, written in 1716, Bishop Hare said: "Whatever you do, be orthodox: Orthodoxy will cover a multitude of sins; but a cloud of virtues cannot cover the want of the minutest particle of orthodoxy." "Whiston and Dr. Clarke," says Wiseman, "were two excellent clergymen of unblemished character, both champion defenders of the faith against the Freethinkers; but on the score of technical heresy on the point of the Trinity they were alike habitually defamed by Churchmen." Another result of the revival of pietistic religion was a vigorous resort to persecution. Freethinking Collins had to flee to Holland. Woolston was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, fined £100, and ordered to find £2,000 security for his future good behavior. Being unable to pay the fine he had to spend the last thirteen years of his life in gaol. Poor Jacob Ilive, for rejecting revelationism in a pamphlet, was thrice put in the pillory, and sentenced to a three year's hard labor. For ridiculing the Pentateuch, Peter Annet, then seventy years of age, and of unsound mind, was pilloried twice, and sent to a year's hard labor. No wonder that under such cruel conditions there was a scarcity of fresh Deistic publications. But, in point of fact, the Deists had finished their work. Their mission, as Deists, had been a glorious success. Rationalism was now to enter upon a new phase in its career. Hitherto it had been confined chiefly to scholars, whose appeal was to the educated laity. With Gibbon began a new era in the history of Free-thought. The great historian looked at every subject from an absolutely anti-theological point of view. He was one of the first genuine Secularists. After him came Thomas Paine who appealed to the people at large. Though a pronounced Deist, he too was a practical Secularist, whose one object was to secure the highest welfare of the people in this present world.

Persecution did not lay Freethought in the dust. It tended rather to extend and strengthen it, as persecution is bound to do in every case. Not even the French Revolution laid Rationalism in the dust, though it checked its progress for many years. The French Revolution was the work of the Democracy, and the French Democracy was already wedded to Freethought. In Great Britain the so-called common people were intellectually asleep, and religiously at the mercy of intolerant Evangelicalism. But Freethought, in spite of opposition, was slowly penetrating into and permeating the very substance of British thought. The Church gradually succumbed to its subtle influence, and is to-day to a great extent a Freethought institution. The Higher Criticism has already completely revolutionised the Church. Who initiated this revolution? Thomas Paine through his *Age of Reason*. Within the Church, Freethought has acted as a steadily disintegrating force, as regards both theology and Biblical criticism.

But Paine's emancipating work has been at least equally effective outside the Church, among the "common people." To say that no great success has "rewarded the attempts of Sceptics, led in the last century by Bradlaugh and Ingersoll," to dethrone the popular faith is to be guilty of gross prevarication. It is equally false to assert that Agnosticism, as taught by Huxley and Spencer, "fell flat, with all its cultured polish, on the minds of the masses." As a matter of simple history, this is the first age in which "is to be found the phenomenon of widespread critical Scepticism among the laboring masses." This is the first age in which the bulk of the people have been openly anti-clerical and anti-theological. This is the first age in which anti-religious organisations are to be met with throughout the length and breadth of the land, all engaged in a more or less active propaganda against all forms of supernaturalism. The Sunday League, with its Sunday concerts, Sunday lectures, and Sunday excursions, Labor Churches, Secular Societies, Ethical Institutions, Rationalist Associations, Clarion Fellowships, Clarion Scouts, Clarion Cycling Clubs, I. L. P. Branches—these and many other organisations are infallibly making for the disintegration and abolition of the Christian Faith. Bradlaugh and Ingersoll are both dead, but Bradlaughism and Ingersollism were never such a mighty force, and never had so many zealous and competent advocates as they are and have at this moment. This cannot be intelligently denied. The march of civilisation is away from religion, and towards the complete enthronement of reason and natural knowledge.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Pope's Version of the French Law of Separation.

THE Roman Catholic papers have published an official translation of the Pope's Encyclical Letter to the French clergy and people. This is a most important historical document; not, as will be imagined, a mere empty railing of a discarded impostor, but a protest in the name of the official head of a large and important section of the French nation against a very real and mortal injury to the institution he governs.

This Letter shows that not sufficient weight has been attached here to the Church's case against the French Government: a deficiency which is shown by the common conception that the State has simply withdrawn from the Church, and left it absolutely free and independent within the nation. That, according to the Encyclical, is incorrect. The position in France is that of the State forcing its own authority into the ecclesiastical organisation, while depriving it of its former privileges.

Naturally the Encyclical contains a number of things which read absurd to us. The Pope has no conception of the limit of secular functions. Of course, it may be said he is clear as to his own: that matter is simple to him—they have no limit; but, like all clergymen, he is unable to see that it is no business of secular organisations to do his "spiritual" work for him; therefore he is indignant that the French nation allows freedom of marital association, places schools in the hands of schoolmasters, and hospitals in the hands of doctors instead of ecclesiastics—or at least keeps them under the control of laymen; that those counter-jumpers, clerks, and professional failures who see a short cut to "gentility" through the doors of a seminary or novice-house are no longer exempt from the military service exacted from the remainder of the youth of the Republic; and that official religion has ceased in the Navy, the Courts of Justice, and from all other public institutions. These protests appear ridiculous because we are under the impression that the connection of the State with the Church in France is entirely broken. We retain most of those things in this country. We have religion in our Army, Navy, Prisons, Courts of

Justice, and Schools; but only because our Church is Established: it is far from being a separate and independent institution. It is one of the Estates of the Realm, and its rulers form one of the three Houses of Parliament. All these intrusions on lay institutions are factors in the establishment of religion—when that establishment ends necessarily they must cease; it seems clear, therefore, that their cessation in France is no grievance now that the State has ended all connection with the Church.

But the Encyclical shows that the connection of Church and State in France is very far from ended, and that, in actual fact, what has been done has been in reality the commencement of a process which will transform the Church in France into a purely State institution. So far from sending off the Church into an independent condition, it has contrived a system in entire opposition to its existing actual constitution, which will place its whole functions at the discretion and mercy of a Council of State. He who holds the purse rules; and the new law puts the whole of the Church property in the hands of laymen, while in all differences which may arise relative to goods, "the Council of State alone will be competent to decide"—that is to say, the State alone will own the whole property of the Church.

Now, the Church in France is a part of that Church which exists also in other lands, and has a branch here which is truly independent of the State. Therefore this enactment is exactly parallel with the passing of an Act of Parliament putting the property of the Oratorians at Brompton into the power of a State-created lay association, solely responsible to the Privy Council. In fact, the Church of France is put in the position the Salvation Army here would be in were all control of its property taken from Mr. William Booth and his hierarchy of officers, and put in the hands of committees of its privates, controlled by an overruling division of the High Court of Judicature.

It is almost impossible for us English to understand how great a revolution this is which is forced on the French. We are accustomed to our great independent Churches—some of whom, like the Wesleyans, the Friends, and Brethren, were founded as associations of laymen—being practically governed by laymen. To be lay, to exist as lay bodies, is the essence of their being. Even the Anglican Established Church, with its "vestries," has always regarded the association of the laity with the clergy as the normal course of religious life. But great changes have taken place practically since the Reformation in France, although none may have been made in the theory of the Church's constitution; and whatever liberties the old Gallican Church had, in the present age the theory and the practice have been identical, and this law entirely reverses that state of existence which Frenchmen have been bred to regard as normal in the Christian Church. The Pope, with the single-minded simplicity of a very unsophisticated character, puts the whole matter into two very short and easily-grasped sentences. The first is: "The Church rests on the Bishops and all its active life is governed by them"; and the second is: "As to the multitude, its only duty is to allow itself to be led, and, as a faithful flock, to follow the pastors." This is the actual fact of the constitution of the Catholic Church, and the intrusion into it to reverse that position, violently, against its consent, is an outrage on all liberty. If the State had withdrawn from the Church simply, and with a single intention, it would have left it to its own devices—as free from exterior coercion as the same Catholic Church is here and in America; but it has not. Actually there is no separation of Church and State, but a raid upon the power of the clergy and a deprivation of them of their ancient privileges and functions within the State, while the State grasps with a new and infinitely more powerful hold the life and existence of the Church. The Law of Separation is contrived solely against the clergy. In all that regards public worship the lay association alone has civil rights and responsibilities. The Pope

asserts: "These associations of worship will then be in such a state of dependence on the civil authority that the ecclesiastical authority will manifestly have no power over them." But independently of a whole litany of grievances the Encyclical gives, common sense shows that the position will be reversed, and the lay association will have the ecclesiastical body entirely in its power. The French curé of the future will be as dependent on his "association" as an English Nonconformist minister on his church members. This does not sound dreadful; yet we here would all resist an attempt to force such a constitution on such religious bodies—the Salvation Army, the Mormon Church, and Dowie, for example—as are formed on a hierarchical system.

There is no parallel with our own Reformation. Here the State frankly conquered the Church, and retained it as an avowed State institution. The State in France has professed a separation which is an unreality; and falsely, under the pretext of disconnection, has laid the foundation of an entirely new Church to be evolved within the structure of the existing Catholic Church. The law of the controlling lay associations, besides putting the curé at the discretion of the parish, gives a reforming or inimical association the power to immediately affect the observances or ceremonies performed within the churches, by putting the interior of the edifices in their charge, and giving them all the alms—which includes all the monies given by the congregations. They can cut down the whole of the paraphernalia to the last item actually demanded by the liturgies, and shear the rites by refusing to renew them. In fact the course of history has shown that such popular bodies, given control of the means of their former tyrants, will never rest until they have finally absorbed the whole of those means to themselves.

It is impossible that this law can work. The Church of France should have been frankly deprived of such of its ancient structures as it manifestly was not needing, and of the lands which had been left for purely ecclesiastical purposes, and then have been left absolutely free and subject only to the common laws. If the Encyclical Letter represents facts accurately, the Law of Separation is merely a demented outrage on elemental freedom, and will produce nothing but disunion within the Republic, and a gradually intensifying conflict of interests, which must eventually burst forth into civil war, although the religious character of that civil war will, in the greatest likelihood, be disguised by other nominal objects, such as the suppression of Socialism or of Anarchism.

It is—to put the matter as a crude utilitarianism—it is our interest that no attack should be made on any man's right, or on the rights of any body of men. Attacks on liberty and the violent coercion of others, when allowed to pass without observation or comment, lay the foundations of the domineering "rights" of the aggressors. Such attacks are quickly followed by others, until all rights are lost. It does not matter that the Pope laments the deprivation of power to override the State in matters which are not his business; when he shows that he is actually the victim of an aggression, and that an attempt is made to capture his ecclesiastical throne for the occupation of a secular Council of State, it is due to oneself to give him that mental support which consists in a clear perception of the exact facts of the changes which are being forced into the organisation he rules. It is a matter of self-preservation. If one association of persons may have its constitution revolutionised by an arbitrary statute, another may. If the State assumes the function of disposer of the resources of one body, it may another; so that there becomes no power of association whatever. Moreover, attacks on liberty, when once successful, do not remain confined to the countries in which they originate.

GEORGE TREBELLS.

Acid Drops.

Some eighteen months ago, in a series of articles (which we will finish presently) on "Defenders of the Faith," we dissected a reply to Mr. Robert Blatchford by the Rev. F. C. Spurr. This gentleman appeared to think himself the flower of courtesy, but he wrote with quite astonishing insolence, even for a man of God. We gave a sample list of his controversial Billingsgate, and it must have surprised even himself when he saw his manners in the mirror we held up to him. Well, this Rev. F. C. Spurr was the subject the other day of "a talk" in "The Churches" column of the *Daily News*. It seems that he has started a public Bible-class at his chapel in the Old Kent-road, and it is said to be four hundred strong, including "Agnostics, Socialists, Jews, and Christians." Now this is a delightful classification, to begin with. We did not know before that Socialists were a religious denomination. We thought that some Socialists were Agnostics, some Jews, and some Christians. We say we *thought* so. But we were evidently mistaken. They know better in the Old Kent-road.

We can quite believe that there are Christians in Mr. Spurr's Bible-class. But we believe the Jews and Agnostics are imaginary. The idea of Agnostics going to a gentleman like Mr. Spurr to learn the truth about the Bible is really rollicking. Yet the reverend gentleman, and his perhaps reverend interviewer, take it quite seriously. And here is a further description by Mr. Spurr of his wonderful Bible-class, which has made miraculous progress in six or seven weeks:—

"Some are professed unbelievers; others are men seeking light; others are vexed with disturbing problems. But all are earnest inquirers."

The light-seekers go to the Old Kent-road light-giver and are satisfied. Even the "professed unbelievers" are satisfied. But who are they? And where do they hail from? We suspect that they belong to the "tame infidel" variety which men of God often carry about in their bags, so to speak, with their other properties.

Mr. Spurr is clearly a brilliant critic. He says that "the best evidence for the Bible is just the Bible itself." Fancy a Bible-class, conducted on that principle, being attended by "Agnostics and professed unbelievers!" Out of what asylum did they escape?

"Many objectors to Christianity," Mr. Spurr observed to his interviewer, "talk about the Bible without any knowledge of its contents." Such ridiculous talk is only too common amongst the gentlemen of the cloth. We conceive it is highly probable that if Mr. Spurr were to read our *Bible Romances* and *Bible Heroes* he would receive some additions to his own knowledge of the blessed book.

Finally, Mr. Spurr looked forward to the Bible becoming "a living book to the masses of the people." But how can it be a "living" book to so many. The men of God *live* on it, but obviously they are supported by a lot of people who *don't* live on it. There isn't a "living" in it for all.

More idiocy from Wales! Exit Mrs. Jones's "lights," and enter the Senghenydd collier's "rappings." These mysterious noises follow the haunted collier about. And the scientific importance of the matter may be estimated when we say that the phenomena are being investigated by the Rev. D. Lloyd Rees.

The name of the haunted Welsh collier is James Craze. How very appropriate!

The mountainous courage of the Rev. R. C. Fillingham has labored and brought forth the mouse of submission. This man of God is a clergyman of the Church of England, but he has a passionate love for Nonconformists, and he would be more respected if he openly joined them. He defied his Bishop's orders and believed he could romp round the country ordaining outsiders "on his own." When proceedings were taken against him he laughed them to scorn. Would he give in? Would a *Fillingham* yield? Perish the thought. It was another thing, however, when it came to the sticking point. The Court of Arches gave him a fortnight to come to his senses. And he came to them. He regretted his error and promised not to repeat it. But his conduct could not go without some punishment. He is ordered to pay the costs of the case, and is suspended for two years from office and benefice. The warrior weeps.

Canon Ivens, of Sowerby Bridge, says that the three following rules should ensure success at Church bazaars: (1) No sale of intoxicating drinks, (2) No raffling, (3) No loss of temper. We thought the age of miracles was past.

Mr. Hyndman has asked why the European Powers, who read lessons to Turkey and Servia, do not read one to Holy Russia, where the vilest crimes are being perpetrated on an unparalleled scale by the Autocracy. Mr. Hyndman suggests that the European Powers should all recall their Ambassadors from St. Petersburg. But what answer has his letter received? None at all. The Christians who are so fond of lecturing the Mohammedan Sultan about massacre and bad government are all mum about massacre and bad government under the Christian Czar. They make no efficacious protest. They let the bloody drama unroll itself to the bitter end. And what a drama! Men arrested arbitrarily, and shot by the thousand, all the prisons filled with suffocating crowds of "politicals," and girls handed over to the soldiers to be stripped and lashed till the flesh is cut from their bones. Europe only protests against devilry when the culprits are not Christians. When they *are* Christians it is not so objectionable. That a cry of horror does not ring through the civilised world at the lashing to death of naked girls by Russian soldiers—a cry compelling every government to take some kind of action to stop it—only shows that Christianity has rotted the moral sinews of human nature.

There has been more trouble in France in carrying out the "Separation" law. At Mazamet something like a pitched battle occurred. Eight hundred soldiers were requisitioned and had to take the church by assault. At Champels the gendarmes were so fiercely attacked by the "faithful" that they had to use their revolvers, the result being that fifteen manifestants were injured, and two of them mortally.

While the religious circles of this country are agitated over the fresh "murder of missionaries" in China, it is just as well to look at the other side of the picture. Take the following Laffan telegram from Hong Kong, for instance, dated February 28: "Telegrams from Nanchang-fu state that the Sub-Prefect is in a precarious condition. He was stabbed by a Chinese Catholic convert, and it was this assault that caused the riot."

The *Daily News* published an interesting photograph of two English missionaries—Mr. and Mrs. Kingham—with their child, who "were massacred as the result of an anti-missionary movement among the Chinese at Nanchang." An interesting set-off to this illustration would be a photograph of one of the scenes of slaughter and violation of Chinese men, women, and children by the punitive expedition of the Allied (Christian) Powers after the Boxer Rising.

According to the New York *Truthseeker* the United States Minister at Peking discredits the rumor that there is a plot in China to massacre all foreigners. "If China were a Christian country like Russia," our contemporary says, "the rumor might appear to have more foundation."

The Liberation Society and the Dissenting Members of Parliament had a breakfast at the Holborn Restaurant. There was great jubilation over "the Nonconformist successes" in the general elections, and it was declared that disestablishment was in sight. Very well. But when the Nonconformists have disestablished the Church of England, other people may have to disestablish Nonconformity—in the public schools.

Amongst all that crowd of Nonconformist jubilators there was only one honest voice. Lord Stanley of Alderley said that they should "go nap" on disestablishment. And the way to do that was to carry the principle out to its logical issue—in schools as well as in churches. He hoped for the time when there would be no such thing as Nonconformity, for the simple reason that the State had ceased to have any connection with religion whatsoever. This was straight and true, and it must have given some of the breakfasters indigestion.

Dr. Clifford is a rare old joker. At the Hotel Cecil dinner of the Free Church members of parliament, two hundred strong, the Passive Resistance orator declared that "The Labor men in the House were the product of the Free Churches." We suppose he includes John Burns and Keir Hardie. And how they must laugh!

Dr. Clifford is a cunning controversialist, but he never writes a letter that cannot be turned against himself. In his latest letter against "preferential treatment to Romanists" in the matter of education, he quotes from a Roman Catholic writer to show that what Romanists are anxious about in schools is the religious part of the training. Mr. Augustine Wells, secretary of the Liverpool Roman Catholic Diocesan Association, said:—

"Why had they built their schools? Was it to teach geography? Was it to teach physiography? Was it to teach physiology, with its diagrams more fit for the shambles than the eyes of little children? All these things the kingdoms of the world sought, and enshrined in palaces at the public expense, but Catholics were not such fools as to build schools for any such purpose when they might have had them at the general cost."

Now this is a perfectly honest and straightforward utterance. The Catholic Church's interest in education is a religious interest, and it plainly says so. Dr. Clifford's interest in education is a religious interest too, and he does his best to hide it. If there were no religious teaching in the schools the Nonconformist leaders would have no interest in the Education question. They are no more after geography, physiography, or physiology than the Catholics are. What they are after is the control of the religious teaching. The whole struggle is a religious struggle. Education, as education, does not enter the field of battle.

The real interest of the men of God in the people's education has been detected by many able and penetrating thinkers. We have just been turning over again the pages of a capital book which we read some twenty years ago, and which has been slumbering on our bookshelves ever since. We refer to *Sketches of the Philosophy of Morals* by Sir T. C. Morgan, M.D., published in 1822. After dealing with the tremendous influence of early education, and commenting on the way in which religious dogmas are perpetuated by "catechisms and early drillings," this learned, powerful, and elegant writer went on to say that "Of late, it has been a fashionable notion among the privileged classes to obtain possession of public education, for the express purpose of continuing the existing order of things, independently of its merits; by instilling, *ex traduce*, an implicit belief that it is of divine origin, and the only one in which society can exist." This sudden and great anxiety after the spiritual welfare of the working classes was affected in order to keep them submissive and patient in temporal matters. But necessity had so well educated the more thinking part of the people that it had "opened their eyes to the views of the most designing of their would-be instructors; and led them to see in Bible Societies little less than a snare for their independence, and in Lancastrian schools nothing but an implement of taxation."

Dr. Clifford and his like are not perhaps so anxious about the dominion of the privileged classes. They are rather anxious about the prosperity of their own profession. They are spiritual doctors who want patients, and they know that the supply of these depends upon the efficacious advertisement of their "holy order" dinned into people's ears before they arrive at years of discretion. In fighting for religious education in schools they are fighting for their daily bread.

We once looked into a book of Dr. Clifford's called *Christian Certainties* (or something of that kind), and we found in it a lot of the poorest stuff we ever encountered. He is now delivering the Angus Lectures on "The Ultimate Problems of Christianity," which are afterwards to appear in book form. A careful summary report of the first lecture—probably inspired—was printed in the *Tribune*. The following paragraph will amuse some of our readers:—

"(2) Again, he asked, what has alienated men of culture and wide learning from the faith of Christ? How came Renan, in France, to turn from the profession of the priest and to seek in the scientific interpretation of the cosmos the inspiration and satisfaction he could not find in Christianity? What turned the feet of Bradlaugh and Holyoake and hundreds more of their day from the path of peace; what but that they judged Christianity by its popular representations, and not by its real character and contents?"

This sort of silliness would never have occurred to a Newman. But it is only too characteristic of your modern Protestant exhorter. Dr. Clifford affects to believe—perhaps he *docs* believe—that men like Renan, Bradlaugh, and Holyoake, were quite incapable of discovering the "real character and contents of Christianity," and only judged it by its "popular representations." In the case of Renan, who was a fine scholar and a great literary master, such an assertion belongs to the region of sheer drivel. In the case of Bradlaugh and Holyoake it is at least grotesque. Both of them were certainly as well-informed as Dr. Clifford, and

they had brains enough to know what they were talking about—which is far from being true of the average Christian expounder. Yet the Rev. Dr. Clifford suggests that it was incapacity and ignorance that led them into unbelief.

This is what Dr. Clifford and his like regard as being kind and brotherly towards unbelievers. The old argument was that the unbeliever had something wrong with his heart. The new argument is that the unbeliever has something wrong with his head. Both are impertinencies, and the latter is the more sickening.

The following imbecility is cut from the *Sunday Circle*:—

"These are the details you are seeking, 'Lay Reader.' The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse once declared at a public service in the Central Hall, Manchester, that five young men met in a public house, and agreed, wherever they might be, 'to go against Jesus Christ.' Then, each making an incision in his thumb, they registered the vow in their own blood. Two of the five committed suicide, one killed himself through drink, and the fourth died in prison. The survivor became a Christian, is now a Sunday-school secretary, and never ceases to praise the Divine grace which saved him. When Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., who was then living, heard of these facts, he indignantly denied them. He averred that Mr. Pearse's 'evident credulity' had been imposed upon by 'some untruthful person,' but doubtless withdrew his denial when full evidence that all the details were correct was duly furnished him."

It is enough to say that the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse was a close colleague of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. For the rest, Christianity too often leads to softening of the brain. Note the deliciously silly close of this extract. It about takes the cake.

A correspondent who was present at the Rev. A. J. Waldron's sermon in St. Edmund's, Lombard-street, on Thursday, March 2, informs us that the reverend gentleman stated that he visited the late Mr. Charles Watts on his "dying bed" by his special request, and that in the last conversation with him he said: "But back of the universe is not there something?" and Mr. Watts replied: "There must be something. There must be something." Our correspondent thinks that "our Rationalist friends had better be careful whom they admit to the bedside of dying unbelievers." We think so too. Not that we believe what Mr. Waldron says. Our idea is that the peculiar veracity of his profession should warn Freethinkers (or Rationalists) against giving such persons an opportunity of mischief.

"Please contribute to our Self-Denial Fund." This was the request of a lady in Salvation Army costume, who held out to us a box for the receipt of our contribution. But she didn't get it. We only smiled. The thing was such a joke. "Our Self-Denial." And anybody and everybody, including "infidels" were asked to give. Why not frankly call it "Our Annual Special Cadging Fund"?

Pity the poor clergy! Here's another of them. The Rev. Alfred Arthur Kaye Legge, formerly vicar of St. Andrew, Wigan, and latterly of St. Peter's, London Docks, who died on January 22, left estate valued at £51,109 11s. It is quite a case for tears.

Another poor apostle of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth! Rev. John Frowen Moor, for forty years vicar of Ampfield, Hants, and formerly curate of Hawley and Burton Agnes, has left £23,924. If we are to believe the Gospels he will never need another overcoat.

"My kingdom is not of this world." One-third of all the buildings in Bruges belong to religious societies.

Mrs. J. Alden Gaylord, the widow of a well-known New York stock-broker, is reported to be carrying on her dead husband's old business. But she gives it a dash of piety. The walls of the office are covered with Scripture texts, every clerk has a Bible and a hymn-book on his desk, and the day's work begins with prayer. All that is wanted to complete the thing is a brace of pictures of one of Elisha's bears and a bull of Bashan.

A case at last! Talmago-ism and Torroy-ism rejoice. A live Agnostic has committed suicide. We refer to the case of Albert Ozanne, otherwise J. K. Wilson, who shot himself near the police-station in Hyde Park. In the remarkably sensible and considerate letter he left addressed to the coroner he called himself an Agnostic. But the jury meanly whittled away the value of the case to the pietists by bringing in a verdict of "suicide while of unsound mind."

A good story may come from a palace. The German Empress builds churches though her subjects won't fill them. But with all her extravagant piety she is a good woman and a tender mother. And thereby hangs a tale. Her eldest boy was being spiritually drilled by a clergyman who said all human beings were sinners. Whereat the young Crown Prince frowned, and exclaimed, "Except mother. She is not a sinner!" The boy's heart challenged the doctrine of original sin.

The shade of Robert Burns must be smiling. The Presbytery of Ayr laments the fact that 960 members have been "deleted from the Communion roll" during the past year. And the lapsing of members is not all. There is "a growing neglect of the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper," and, worst of all, the funds are falling off. It is getting a bad time for the Holy Willies.

Mr. William Routhead has edited a very interesting new volume of "Notable Scottish Trials"—the *Trial of Dr. Pritchard*, the famous poisoner. This extraordinary criminal was capable of poisoning his wife, slowly and cruelly, and kissing her hypocritically when she lay dead, crying "Come back, my dear Mary Jane; don't leave your dear Edward." It appears that this unspeakable creature was very pious in his way. During his imprisonment he spent much of his time in prayer, and he regularly entered in his diary a prayer to the Holy Trinity that his wife might receive a welcome in the other world. He wrote to his daughter imploring her to pray that she might grow up a Christian woman. The day before his execution he wrote to his brother-in-law as follows:—

"Farewell, brother, I die in twenty hours from this. Romans viii, 34 to 39 verses. Mary Jane, Darling Mother, and you, I will meet, as you said the last time you spoke to me, 'in happier circumstances.' Bless you and yours, prays the dying penitent, Edward William Pritchard."

He also referred to John i, 37. All these texts assured the pious scoundrel of a reserved seat in heaven. What an edifying spectacle! And what a blessed religion!

Mr. A. E. Fletcher writes the book notices in the paper in which Mr. Robert Blatchford has for three years been attacking religion. He feels, therefore, that his own religion must not be obtrusive. But he cannot conceal it altogether. It peeps out every now and then, and assures us of the existence of the same old Mr. Fletcher whom we had to reprove for claiming Shelley as a Christian. Last week, reviewing a new book of verse by an "infidel," Mr. Fletcher said that: "Browning, by the way, was an evolutionist before Darwin was heard of, and still remained 'very sure of God.'" Now in the sense in which Browning was an evolutionist there were evolutionists two, and perhaps three, thousand years ago. In that sense of the word, Lucretius, the Roman poet, was an evolutionist some eighteen hundred years before Browning was heard of; although he was by no means "very sure of God"—being, in fact, an Atheist. It was in quite a different sense of the word that Darwin was an evolutionist. He *demonstrated* evolution. He established it on a scientific basis for ever. This only had to be done once, and Darwin did it. That is why his name is immortal. And that is why Mr. Fletcher's little attempt at a sneer is so pitiable.

Browning—whom Mr. Fletcher and the Browningites generally reverence for the worst part of him; not his poetry, but his theology—was "very sure of God." And at this fact Mr. Fletcher clearly rejoices. But a little later on he rebukes the "infidel" poet he is reviewing for being "so positive upon questions towards which the right attitude is doubt." Clearly the "very sure" attitude is only admirable when it is adopted by persons of Mr. Fletcher's own way of thinking.

Our readers will recollect how disgracefully the *Daily News* dealt, some weeks ago, with a letter of ours which it had no sort of right to print at all. Mr. Robert Blatchford makes the same kind of complaint. This is what he says:—

"I cannot trust the *Daily News*. Not long ago the *Daily News* asked me to write a few lines upon some public question. I wrote them, and they were not printed as written.....And Edward Hartley tells me that he sent a letter to the *Daily News* in reply to Mr. M., and that his letter was garbled."

Evidently the ethics of journalism at the *Daily News* office should be revised. Some religion might be exchanged for a little common honesty.

A new looking-glass in one of the dining-rooms of the House of Commons bears the inscription "Fear the Lord." Some wags say the "s" has dropped off. But this ill-timed frivolity is to be deprecated. England is a Christian country,

and the Bible is God's Word by Act of Parliament, and the Bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. No doubt the person who had that inscription put up wanted the members of the House of Commons to make a beginning.

Four hundred Oxford undergraduates have presented the Bishop of London with a pastoral staff. It is made of ebony and silver, enriched with carbuncles. With this staff the Bishop will go about looking for lost sheep. And we dare say he is proud of it. But fancy Jesus Christ carrying such an article! The poor Carpenter's apprentices look down upon his rural simplicity.

A religious editor calls attention to the "busy and exhaustive life" led by the Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan. On one day, after preaching at noon at Leicester, he hurried up to London to preach at Woolwich Tabernacle at five, after which he conducted the week-night service at Westminster Chapel. Busy and exhaustive, no doubt; but why should the case call for sympathy? This love of chatter is a form of disease. Religious people call it zeal. Medical men call it by another name.

A SONG.

Oh, earlier shall the rosebuds blow,
In after years, those happier years,
And children weep, when we lie low,
Far fewer tears, far softer tears.

Oh, true shall boyish laughter ring,
Like tinkling chimes, in kinder times!
And merrier shall the maiden sing:
And I not there, and I not there.

Like lightning in the summer night
Their mirth shall be, so quick and free;
And oh! the flash of their delight
I shall not see, I may not see.

In deeper dream, with wider range,
Those eyes shall shine, but not on mine:
Unmoved, unblest, by worldly change,
The dead must rest, the dead shall rest.

—W. Cory, "Ionica."

And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladness.
Pleased by any random toy;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling leaf.

—Wordsworth.

IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH.

Whoever hesitates to utter that which he thinks highest truth, lest it should be too much in advance of the time, may reassure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realise the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes; and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction; leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles, and repugnance to others. He with all his capacities, and aspirations, and beliefs, is not an accident, but a product of the time. He must remember that while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future; and that his thoughts are children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die.—Herbert Spencer.

WOMAN AND RELIGIONS.—For religions woman is mother, tender guardian, and faithful nurse. The gods are like men; they are reared and they die upon her bosom.—*Michelle*, "La Sorciere."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 11, Stanley Hall, Junction-road, London, N. (near "The Boston"): 7.30 p.m., "Does God Help Man?"

March 18, Stanley Hall; 25, Coventry.

April 1, Manchester; 8, Stratford Town Hall; 22 and 29, Queen's Hall.

May 6, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 25, Stanley Hall. April 1, Stratford Town Hall; 8, 22, and 29, Liverpool.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 11, Liverpool; 18, Liverpool; 25, Liverpool; 31, Hetton Downs. April 1, South Shields; 15, Stratford Town Hall.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND:—Miss Vance acknowledges 15s. from the Huddersfield Branch of the N. S. S., and invites gifts of cast off clothing from friends.

RIDGWAY FUND.—J. Partridge (183 Vauxhall-road, Birmingham) acknowledges: Blundell Sands 5s. Subscriptions to this Fund, to make up the £50 asked for, are still needed, and will, we hope, be forthcoming promptly, in order that the Fund may be closed at an early date.

X. Y. Z.—Sent as requested.

A. THOMPSON.—*Brimstone Ballads*, by G. L. Mackenzie, is out of print.

R. H. CURSON.—Thanks for your lively leaflet. We hope it means that the members generally of the Independent Labor Party at Dover see through the humbug of religion, which covers and befriends all the other great humbugs of the world. Of course we cannot deal with politics in the *Freethinker*; one thing at a time is wisdom in a case like ours; but our personal sympathies have always been with the people, though we have never stooped to flatter them. The more they read, the more they think, and the more they display an intelligent interest in their own welfare, the better we are pleased. Truth and reason are the real saviors of the world. Humanity is but their expression through the emotions. For, as Maeterlinck beautifully says: "All that is highest in wisdom entwines around all that is purest in love."

W. HENDERSON.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. JAMES.—Pleased to hear from you, and obliged for the cuttings, but we don't propose to deal with Collier Craze's "rappings" any further at present. If the matter takes a fresh turn we may say something more.

H. BOULTER.—All right. You will be able to read our criticism shortly.

GEORGE JACOB.—We don't see anything "extraordinary" in Mr. Mackenzie's statement concerning Mr. Holyoake. As a matter of fact, Mr. Holyoake, in calling himself an Agnostic, explained that, in his view, the Agnostic went even further than the Atheist. A quarrel over a word ought not to be allowed to hide a substantial agreement. Thanks for cuttings.

J. BROUGH.—Glad you think "the Atheist Shoemaker is dead now, if he never was before." But we fear he will go on living in Christian circles, where lies for the glory of God are a hardy, perennial growth.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

H. R. C.—We are obliged. See "Acid Drops."

E. EASTHAM.—We tender our best thanks to the Wigan Branch for its action in the matter. With regard to a former question of yours, which we overlooked, we have only to say that N. S. S. Branches have always been free to engage what lecturers they please for their own platforms. This freedom, of course, is accompanied by the usual moral responsibility.

T. HUNT.—We are rather astonished to hear that the Labor Church at Stockport chants the Lord's Prayer. As you say, it seems to call for a little advice from Mr. Blatchford.

E. GWINNELL.—We note your recommendation *re* tracts, especially the one to contain the reprint of the old Blasphemy Act of William III., which would probably be very useful.

W. BEAN.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks. We cannot give you the "necessary date" for putting your Christian friend right on the matter. We are not aware that there are any data.

JOHN DAWSON.—Glad to learn that, after reading the *Freethinker* for two years, you "would not miss it for a good deal now." It is a pity you are too deaf to hear us lecture at Glasgow, but pleasant to know that you so enjoy reading our books and articles.

W. MANN.—New address noted. Our best wishes go with you.

A. O. DRIVER.—It is as you say. Freethought is making the Christians drop their old cargo overboard.

R. W. CUTHILL.—Sorry we cannot answer your question. Thanks for good wishes.

J. H. DODD.—The penalty under the Act has always been fine or imprisonment. Sorry the Sabbatarian bigots are down on you.

R. W. (Dumbarton).—We cannot take the responsibility for other writers' quotations. The passage in Isocrates is rendered as follows in Farrer's *Paganism and Christianity*, p. 187: "That which it angers you to suffer from others, that do not to others yourselves." The distinction sometimes drawn between the

positive and negative form of expressing this sentiment seems to us fantastic. It is really only as a sentiment that the "Golden Rule" is useful. As a practical guide it is frequently either useless or misleading.

T. HOPKINS.—Pleased to have your humorous and breezy letter, with its undercurrent of kindness and good sense.

ITALIAN FREETHINKER.—We cannot deal with such cases while they are *sub judice*.

H. MOUNTAIN.—Glad you are pleased; see paragraph.

CELSUS.—We will look into the Rev. T. Child's book when we have leisure.

A. H. COWELL.—Thanks: see "Sugar Plums."

R. H. LEAK.—We should be happy to assist in forming a new N. S. S. Branch at Nottingham, with a view to carrying on Freethought propaganda there; but the co-operation of the local "saints" is indispensable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The new course of Stanley Hall lectures opened well on Sunday evening with a good audience, which will probably still further improve as the course continues. Mr. Foote's lecture was followed with a close and gratifying attention, and was very warmly applauded at the end; and a great many questions were asked and answered afterwards. In the absence of Mr. Victor Roger, who was unable to attend, the chair was taken—and well taken—by Miss Vance. When the public meeting was over a private meeting of Freethinkers was held with a view to starting a new Branch of the National Secular Society. One gentleman offered the Branch a meeting-place rent free for a start. Several names were taken by Miss Vance, and another (business) meeting will be held this evening (March 11) after Mr. Foote's lecture.

"Does God Help Man?" is the title of Mr. Foote's lecture at Stanley Hall this evening (March 11). We hope the friends who took copies of the neat pocket programs of the lectures on Sunday evening will distribute them to advantage during the week, and thus help to crowd the Hall with Christians, who are the people we specially want to get at.

West Ham and district Freethinkers will remember the special course of lectures in the Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evenings, April 1, 8, and 15, with Messrs. Foote, Cohen, and Lloyd as the lecturers. The meetings are under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, with the co-operation of the West Ham N. S. S. Branch.

Mr. G. Scott, of Glasgow, whose name is now fairly well-known to our readers, delivered two lectures for the Liverpool Branch on Sunday. Our correspondent informs us that Mr. Scott "proved himself to be a very valuable speaker in the movement. He has a good fund of humor, and his two addresses were thoroughly enjoyed by the audiences." Mr. John T. Lloyd begins to-day (March 11) his engagement for three consecutive Sundays at Liverpool, and we trust to hear that the Milton Hall has been well-filled each time. Mr. Cohen is to take three Sundays in April, and the great Picton Hall has been engaged for a special lecture by Mr. Foote on the first Sunday in May.

Dr. T. J. Macnamara, M.P., was addressing a meeting at Stratford on "How I would Amend the Education Act." In the course of his speech he said that he would view the exclusion of the Bible from the schools as a grave disaster. Councillor Leggett, a well-known Secularist, jumped up from his seat on the platform and asked "Why?" Dr. Macnamara

answered that he was only giving his own opinion. Councillor Leggett again asked, "Why, Why?" Dr. Macnamara then replied: "Because the elemental truths of Christianity, as revealed in the Bible, sweeten and beautify life. I say I would like my own children taught the Bible." "Well, I differ," said Councillor Leggett, "and I have the cleverest children in the borough." There were cries of order and hisses, but Councillor Leggett can shout as well as the rest, and his voice was heard over the din, exclaiming: "You can howl and hiss as long as you like. That is characteristic of the Christian. I am not going to have the Bible thrust down my throat."

The South Shields friends have secured the large Royal Assembly Hall for Mr. Lloyd's lectures on April 1. It is hoped that the Tyneside "saints" will rally round and make the effort successful. Mr. Lloyd will also lecture for the new Branch at Hetton-le-Hole.

Mr. E. Eastham, secretary of the Wigan N. S. S. Branch, informs us that the local Public Library has agreed, at the Branch's request, to place a copy of the *Freethinker* on the reading-room table. Freethinkers should see if this cannot be done in other towns that have Free Libraries.

A lady Freethinker at Manchester, who has just successfully undergone a severe operation, writes us that "the doctor is immensely pleased," and that the people in the hospital were "astonished that an Atheist could face death without kicking up a fuss."

Mr. Lloyd-George, in addressing the Free Church members of parliament at their Hotel Cecil dinner, felt bound to check their jubilation with a reminder that "there are others." Fifty per cent. of the people of England, he told them, were outside organised Christianity; they were with Nonconformists in principle; but Nonconformists must be careful lest they endeavored to carry Parliament further in matters of detail than that fifty per cent. could quite appreciate for the moment. He therefore urged Nonconformity to "comport itself with wisdom and restraint in the hour of its triumph"; otherwise it might meet with a catastrophe. Quite so. Church and Chapel have both overlooked the vast body of citizens who may cry "A plague on both your houses!"

Mr. B. Price writes us from Johannesburg on behalf of the newly-formed South African Secular Society. They hear that Dr. Torrey is to "honor" their country with a visit shortly, and they want to prepare a reception for him by distributing a lot of copies of our pamphlets exposing him as the slanderer of Paine and Ingersoll. "Will you kindly supply us," our correspondent asks, "with a quantity of the Torrey pamphlets, say ten thousand. We have plenty of willing workers who will do the distributing." A postal order for 10s. is enclosed towards the cost of carriage, with a promise of a contribution towards "the Fund" in a week or two.

The funeral of the late Mr. William Clarke, of Leamington, whose death we recorded last week, took place in the local cemetery, and passed off very quietly, although it was rumored that there would be lively scenes. There was a good attendance of persons who respected the deceased, and a Secular address was read at the graveside and reported verbatim in the *Leamington Courier*. Mr. Clarke was converted to Freethought at the age of 67—at the time of the prosecution of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant. He remained a steadfast Freethinker to the end, and was the means of bringing others to "the truth."

Several readers of ours at Leicester have had to order the *Freethinker* direct from our publishing office by post, in consequence of some difficulty, which we do not quite understand, in obtaining it at the Reform Book Store, which is part of the Secular Hall building. We should be glad to hear from Mr. Gould or someone that this difficulty has been removed.

IDEAL LIFE.

Everyone has within him, and revealed to him sometimes, an ideal of what he might be. It is the very spirit and true person of our conscience. It tends always to square us with our circumstance; to make our duties co-extensive with our opportunities; or it conjures us to abdicate from the midst of powers whose beneficence we are incompetent to fulfil. The grandest health streams through this part of us, and arrives in our minds, and in our bodies, in exact proportion to the fidelity of our lives.—*Garth Wilkinson.*

Pagan Priests.

WITH a general study of ancient history, especially that of the Romans, as well as recent travels in countries where Roman Catholicism is seen at its best—or worst, I resolved to employ myself in inquiries, and to carefully notice the foppery and ridiculous performances of that grossly idolatrous, superstitious, and most dangerous religion known as Roman Catholicism, which had made so strong an impression upon me.

I fancied myself wandering about old Heathen Rome, observing their religious worship, when I witnessed ceremonies plainly copied from the ritual of primitive Paganism, and handed down by an uninterrupted succession, from the priests of old, to the priests of new Rome.

With much learning and close reasoning, many have effectually proved the rank idolatry and crass superstition of the present Churches; but new generations have arisen, and as many of these have since spurned the religions in which they had been brought up, this present discourse may be acceptable. Moreover, these facts are constantly denied, by Romanists especially, and are more often than not evaded with jesuitical subtlety peculiar only to their caste.

The similarity between Christianity and Paganism appears so clearly that I resolved to explain and demonstrate the certainty of it by comparison with irrefutable evidence, which any man can be furnished with who sees Popery as is exercised in Italy, Spain, or France, full of pomp and pageantry, and practised in all its devices without either caution or reserve.

To show the origin of all these ceremonies and the exact conformity of them with those of their Pagan ancestors in full would occupy more space than could be allowed.

The first thing that a stranger must necessarily notice immediately upon entering the churches is the odor. The offence received from the smell, as well as the smoke with which the whole place continues filled for some time after the service (the more solemn the service, the thicker the smoke), makes one think of the nonsense of incense, which has been directly received and continued from Paganism. This odor recalled the old description of the heathen temples and altars, and I imagined myself transported into the temple of Paphian Venus described by Virgil:—

"Her hundred altars there with garlands crowned,
And richest incense smoking breathe around."

Again, where heathen sacrifices are represented on the old sculptures, a boy in sacred habit is observed with a box, in which this incense was kept for use at the altar, and a priest close by. In the same manner to-day, there is the boy—an acolyte, as he is called—in surplice, waiting upon the priest at the altar with the thuribulum, or vessel of incense, which the priest, with ridiculous motions and crossings, waves, as it smokes, over and around the altar, as if a devil were lurking too near, and needed blinding and choking. This incense appears to inconvenience the priests themselves, for I heard them make disagreeable guttural noises, which led me to inspect the places where these fellows had been standing; and behold, there lay several filthy lumps of expectoration!

Having shown that incense is a Pagan ceremony modernised, the next part of the performance which attracted my attention is sprinkling with holy water. Worshipers never enter or leave a church without either being sprinkled by the priest or doing it themselves, from a plentiful supply of holy water in a vessel something like a baptismal font, near the doors.

Now, this ceremony is notoriously and directly transmitted from Paganism. A vase of holy water was placed at the entrance of heathen temples for sprinkling purposes, and even the Jesuit Cerda admits in his notes on Virgil: "Hence was derived the custom by the Church to provide purifying or holy water."

The ancient Greeks had two vessels, one gold and the other silver, given by Croesus to the Temple of Apollo, at Delphi, for the customary sprinkling which formed part of their religious offices; the composition of the holy-pot being nothing more than a mixture of ordinary water and common salt. The Pagan sprinkling-brush, commonly called the aspergillum, is much the same as that which is now used, and can be seen on ancient coins wherever the insignia or emblems of the Pagan priesthood are depicted. The primitive Fathers spoke of it as a heathenish custom, and *condemned it as detestable*. Justin Martyr says: "Holy water was invented by demons."

Thus it may be seen, apart from its heathen origin, what contradictory notions the Church have of this ceremony. The one condemns it as abominable, while the other holds it as edifying and useful to Christian piety. The first says it is a devilish concoction to delude mankind; the second holds it as a security for mankind against the wiles and assaults of his Satanic Majesty.

But what is still more ridiculous than the tomfoolery of sprinkling is to see a long roll of miracles in attestation of the virtue which the water is said to possess. We may aptly apply to the priests of to-day what was said of the Pagans who used this self-same ceremony:—

"Ah! easy fools, to think that a whole flood
Of water e'er can purge the stain of blood."

I do not recollect whether the ancients went so far as to use holy water to purify or bless their animals. With much solemnity, every January, asses are sent up to be sprinkled singly at the church doors by a surpliced priest, who received payment according to the zeal and ability of the two-legged ones.

Advancing further into the church, and looking around, I saw many lamps and wax candles constantly burning before the shrines and images of their saints. This is another parallelism between modern and Pagan worship. There are many of the "heathen" writers who describe their perpetually burning lamps and candles before the altars and statues of their deities. Herodotus tells us of the Egyptians who had famous festivals, the principal ceremony of which was lighting lamps and candles, and the other primitive writers point out the absurdity of this custom. "They light up candles to God," says Lactantius, "as if He lived in darkness; and do not they deserve to pass as madmen, who offer light to the author and giver of light?"

Presents and donations from private persons of lamps and candlesticks to the temples and altars of their gods are numerous, according to the ancient inscriptions. And this zeal continues to-day. Massive gold and silver lamps and candlesticks have been extorted from princes. The altars, on celebrated occasions, are covered with gold and silver plate—some of which, by the way, originally belonged to St. Paul's Cathedral, but is now locked up in the treasury of a Spanish church. But a visitor will not be more surprised at the number of lamps and lights than at the numerous votive gifts hanging around, in consequence of vows made in time of danger, or in gratitude for deliverances and cures; another practice also common among the heathen.

"Now Goddess, help, for help thou can'st bestow,
As all these pictures around thy altars show."

A friend of Diagoras the Philosopher, an Atheist, having found him once in a temple, says: "You think the gods take no notice of human affairs. Do you not see here, by the number of pictures, how many people have been saved in storms at sea?" "Yes," replied the Atheistic philosopher, "I see how it is, for those are never painted who happen to be drowned."

A remarkable tablet is still preserved, having been found in the ruins of the Temple of Æsculapius, at Rome, upon which the learned Montfaucon makes this reflection, "that in it are either seen the wiles of a devil to deceive the credulous, or else the tricks

of Pagan priests, suborning men to counterfeit diseases and so-called cures."

This piece of old superstition, a relic of Paganism, has been so beneficial to the priesthood, who could not fail to take it into their schemes, where it is found to this day, in full height and vigor, as in the ages of Pagan idolatry.

Wax arms, legs, noses, an ear, or a donkey depict the miraculous interpositions of the saints invoked—the *blessed* Virgin receiving the largest share, that it may be equally said of her as was said of the Goddess Isis: "Many obtain a handsome livelihood out of her."

What the Pagans ascribed to the imaginary help of their deities, the priests cunningly impute to the favors of their saints.

It must be borne in mind, however, that these tawdry gifts exposed always to public gaze are the fruits of vulgar zeal, from the inferior people. Royalty and wealthy persons, as in Paganism, frequently make votive offerings of large vessels, and even statues of massive silver and gold, with diamonds and other precious stones of incredible value. These are invariably locked up, and may be viewed—by payment.

Tertullian observes that "the choicest stuffs were given to dress the miraculous images, some wearing rich habits of great variety, bedecked with precious stones." One idol of "Our Lady, Queen of Heaven," has a triple crown of great value, presented by Louis XIII.

Is it less ridiculous to worship images erected now than those of Agrippa, or those which Nebuchadnezzar set up? Why, there is one of an antique statue, I believe, of a young Bacchus covered with drapery, and now worshiped under the title of a female saint.

Tully publicly dedicated the statue of a prostitute under the name and title of the Goddess of Liberty. "Who dares," may we say ironically with the old Roman, "to violate such a goddess as this—the statue of a whore?"

There are many instances like the foregoing, and, as ridiculous as they appear to men of sense, are still urged as being of divine origin, and sufficiently colored to keep off impious opposers.

"As Mars our Fathers once adored, so now
To thee, *Saint George*, we humbly prostrate bow."

The next act is one of cannibalism—eating Jesus Christ; but it must be confessed that there is not its like in Pagan worship. Men are so daft as to believe and tell us that they actually chew God! No old Roman would do this, and it was too gross even for the Egyptian idolators to swallow. "So sottish a sect, or law, I never found," says the Arabian Averroes, "as these Christians, who with their own teeth devour the God whom they worship." Yet, with a scowl, I am told that if I do not believe I shall be damned; but I am afraid I must be so before I do.

S. PAIN.

Ruskin on Religion and Art.

AN IMPORTANT UTTERANCE.

[In his *Lectures on Art*, Ruskin just mentions the question of how far art has been inspired or ennobled by religion, and then passes on with an implied promise to deal with the subject at length on some future occasion. The promise was never fulfilled, but in the new collected edition of his works, now in course of publication, the editors publish as a note to the *Lectures*, the following taken from his MSS.]

"How far has art been strengthened by her employment in religious service? Many careful thinkers on this subject, and I myself, very strenuously in past years, have contended that the occupation of artists in the representation of divine histories or persons, has stimulated and purified the powers of the art so employed. It is not, of course, possible for me to-day to enter with you even on the first steps of so vast an enquiry; but it will be part of my subsequent duty to lay before you the grounds

of my now fixed conviction that few of the greatest men ever painted religious subjects by choice, but only because they were either compelled by ecclesiastical authority, supported by its patronage, or invited by popular applause; that by all three influences their powers were at once wasted and restrained; that their invention was dulled by the monotony of motive and perverted by its incredibility; that the exertion of noble human skill in making bodily pain an object of morbid worship, compelled a correlative reaction in making bodily pleasure an object of morbid pursuit; and that the successes, of whatever positive value they may be, reached under the orders of Christianity, have been dearly bought by the destruction of the best treasures of heathen art, by the loss of the records of what was most interesting in passing history, by the aversion of all eyes from what was lovely in present nature, and by the birth, in the chasm left by the contracted energies of healthful art, of a sensual art fed by infernal fire.

Thus the best achievements of so-called religious art have been dearly bought, even supposing their excellence had been otherwise unattainable. But you will see further reason to regret the sacrifice, when you perceive, as I shall be able to show you by strict analysis, that the merits of sacred art itself were never owing to religion. Observe: I say, 'of sacred art itself.' I do not speak of the consummate art power, but of its reserved and regulated beginnings. As to its highest attainments, there has never been any question but that they were founded entirely on the beauty and love of the present world. I told you many years ago that there was no religion in any of the works of Titian, and that the mind of Tintoret only sometimes forgot itself into devotion. But I then thought that all the nascent and dawning strength of art had been founded on pious faith; whereas I now with humiliation, but I dare not say with sorrow, recognise that they were founded, indeed, upon the scorn of death, but not on the hope of immortality—founded, indeed, upon the purity of love, but the love of wife and child, and not of angel or deity; and that the sweet skill which gave to such feelings their highest expression came not by precept of religion, but by the secular and scientific training which Christianity was compelled unwillingly to permit, and by the noble instruction received from the remnants of that very heathen art which Christianity had done her utmost to destroy.

The reserve and the rapture of monastic piety were only powerful in creation when they involuntarily opened themselves to the sight, and stooped to the sympathies, of common human life; and the skill which enforced with vividest imagery the doctrines of the Catholic faith was taught by spirits that had incurred its condemnation. If ever you are able in some degree to measure the skill that has been spent by Luini, La Robbia, or Ghiberti on the vision of the Virgin, you will also know it to have been received at the feet of Athena and Artemis; and from them, not as Queens of Heaven, but as Queens of Earth, permitting no idleness to virtue and promising no pardon to sin. The grace of the redeemed souls who enter, *celestamente ballando*, the gate of Angelico's Paradise had been first seen in the terrestrial, but pure, mirth of Florentine maids. The dignity of the Disputa del Sacramento was learned from the laurelled patience of the Roman and gentle bearing of the Greek.

If thus the influence of Religion upon Painting and Sculpture is determined, virtually its effect on Architecture is decided also. But as doubtless the subject is here more questionable than in any other of its branches, I will endeavor to set it before you in the form in which it may be dealt with clearly. Here, under the shadow of St. Mary's Spire, or in the front of any English or French Cathedral, it ought to be difficult for you so much as to put the question to yourselves. You would say that architecture was consummated in these. It was so. But we are not enquiring about its consummation, but its development. And to examine into that rightly, you must

first separate whatever modes of architecture were learned in useful works, as aqueducts and sea-walls; then whatever was learned in war, and the forms of tower, of battlement, and window, and gateway required for defence; next, the forms dependent on humble domestic requirements, as the gables of roofs built steep, or dormer windows enriching their slope, or turrets for winding stairs, or projecting niches of windows for looking up and down streets, or lifting of merchandise and the like; after that, whatever forms resulted from social and civic requirements; the spans required for halls like those of my own Christ Church, or of Westminster, or of the room of the greater council at Venice; the dignity of town halls and brolettos with their towers of pride or warning and arcades of state. Lastly, you must separate whatever exquisiteness was reached by completed art in palatial decoration, in loggias, ceilings, sculptured and painted saloons and galleries from Vicenza to Versailles; and then examine carefully what speciality is thus left as the result of ecclesiastical influences.

The best you will say, still; the ecstasy and perfectness of all this poured out in devotion. You will find, when you look into it, as I will endeavor partly to show you, that this power was used not so much to express devotion as to recommend and to direct it. But the point before us is, with what effects on the architecture? Mainly with these three—the introduction of spectral effects of light and shade, rendering architecture sensational instead of intellectual; the excitement of quite frantic efforts to obtain height and richness of ornament, ending in the corruption of style; and lastly, the taking away the funds and strength which would have made wholesome the houses of the poor, cleansed the streets, and cultivated the field."

Ingersoll's First Lecture.—VI.

(Continued from p. 139.)

THE common people of France were in slavery for fourteen hundred years. They were transferred with land, and women were often seen assisting cattle to pull the plough, and yet people have the impudence to say that black slavery is right, because the blacks have always been slaves in their own country. I answer, so have the whites until very recently. In the good old days when might was right and when kings and popes stood by the people, and protected the people, and talked about "holy oil and divine right," the world was filled with slaves. The traveller standing amid the ruins of ancient cities and empires, seeing on every side the fallen pillar and the prostrate wall, asks why did these cities fail, why did these empires crumble? And the Ghost of the Past, the wisdom of ages, answers: These temples, these palaces, these cities, the ruins of which you stand upon were built by tyranny and injustice. The hands that built them were unpaid. The backs that bore the burdens also bore the marks of the lash. They were built by slaves to satisfy the vanity and ambition of thieves and robbers. For these reasons they are dust.

Their civilisation was a lie. Their laws merely regulated robbery and established theft. They bought and sold the bodies and souls of men, and the mournful winds of desolation, sighing amid their crumbling ruins, is a voice of prophetic warning to those who would repeat the infamous experiment. From the ruins of Babylon, of Carthage, of Athens, of Palmyra, of Thebes, of Rome, and across the great desert, over that sad and solemn sea of sand, from the land of the pyramids, over the fallen Sphinx and from the lips of Memnon the same voice, the same warning and uttering the great truth, that no nation founded upon slavery, either of body or mind, can stand.

And yet, to-day, there are thousands upon thousands endeavoring to build the temples and cities and to administer our Government upon the old plan. They are makers of brick without straw. They are bowing themselves beneath hods of untempered mortar. They are the babbling builders of another Babel, a Babel of mud upon a foundation of sand.

Notwithstanding the experience of antiquity as to the terrible effects of slavery, bondage was the rule, and liberty the exception, during the Middle Ages not only, but for ages afterwards.

The same causes that led to the liberation of mind also liberated the body. Free the mind, allow men to write and

publish and read, and one by one the shackles will drop, broken, in the dust. This truth was always known, and for that reason slaves have never been allowed to read. It has always been a crime to teach a slave. The intelligent prefer death to slavery. Education is the most radical abolitionist in the world. To teach the alphabet is to inaugurate revolution. To build a schoolhouse is to construct a fort. Every library is an arsenal, and every truth is a monitor, iron-clad and steel-plated.

Do not think that white slavery was abolished without a struggle. The men who opposed white slavery were ridiculed, persecuted, driven from their homes, mobbed, hanged, tortured and burned. They were denounced as having only one idea, by men who had none. They were called fanatics by men who were so insane as to suppose that the laws of a petty prince were greater than those of the Universe. Crime made faces at virtue, and honesty was an outcast beggar. In short, I cannot better describe to you the manner in which the friends of slavery acted at that time, than by saying that they acted precisely as they used to do in the United States. White slavery, established by kidnapping and piracy, sustained by torture and infinite cruelty, was defended to the very last.

Let me now call your attention to one of the most immediate causes of the abolition of white slavery in Europe. There were during the Middle Ages three great classes of people: the common people, the clergy, and the nobility. All these people could, however, be divided into two classes, namely, the robbed and the robbers. The feudal lords were jealous of the king, the king afraid of the lords, the clergy always siding with the stronger party. The common people had only to do the work, the fighting, and to pay the taxes, as by the law the property of the nobles was exempt from taxation. The consequence was, in every war between the nobles and the king, each party endeavored by conciliation to get the peasants upon their side. When the clergy were on the side of the king they created dissension between the people and the nobles by telling them that the nobles were tyrants. When they were on the side of the nobles they told the people that the king was a tyrant. At last the people believed both, and the old adage was verified, that when thieves fall out honest men get their dues.

By virtue of the civil and religious wars of Europe, slavery was abolished, and the French Revolution, one of the grandest pages in all history, was, so to speak, the exterminator of white slavery. In that terrible period the people who had borne the yoke for fourteen hundred years, rising from the dust, casting their shackles from them, fiercely avenged their wrongs. A mob of twenty millions driven to desperation, in the sublimity of despair, in the sacred name of Liberty cried for vengeance. They reddened the earth with the blood of their masters. They trampled beneath their feet the great army of human vermin that had lived upon their labor. They filled the air with the ruins of temples and thrones, and with bloody hands tore in pieces the altar upon which their rights had been offered by an impious church. They scorned the superstitions of the past not only, but they scorned the past; for the past to them was only wrong, imposition and outrage. The French Revolution was the inauguration of a new era. The lava of freedom long buried beneath a mountain of wrong and injustice at last burst forth, overwhelming the Pompeii and Herculaneum of priestcraft and tyranny. As soon as white slavery began to decay in Europe, and while the condition of the white slaves was improving about the middle of the 16th century in 1541, Alonso Gonzales, of Portugal, pointed out to his countrymen a new field of operations, a new market for human flesh, and in a short time the African slave-trade with all its unspeakable horrors was inaugurated.

This trade has been the great crime of modern times. It is almost impossible to conceive that nations who professed to be Christian, or even in any degree civilised, should have engaged in this infamous traffic. Yet nearly all of the nations of Europe engaged in the slave-trade, legalised it, protected it, fostered the practice, and vied with each other in acts, the bare recital of which is enough to make the heart stand still.

It has been calculated that for years, at least 400,000 Africans were either killed or enslaved annually. They crammed their ships so full of these unfortunate wretches, that, as a general thing, about ten per cent. died of suffocation on the voyage. They were treated like wild beasts. In times of danger they were thrown into the sea. Remember that this horrible traffic commenced in the middle of the 16th century, was carried on by nations pretending to Christian civilisation, and when do you think it was abolished by some of the principal countries? In England, Wilberforce and Clarkson dedicated their lives to the abolition of the slave-trade. They were hated and despised. They persevered for twenty years, and it was not until the 25th of March, 1808, that England pronounced the infamous traffic in human flesh illegal, and the rejoicing in England was redoubled on

receiving the news that the United States had done the same thing. After a time, those engaged in the slave-trade were declared pirates.

On the 28th day of August, 1833, England abolished slavery throughout the British Colonies, thus giving liberty to nearly one million slaves.

The United States was then the greatest slave-holding power in the civilised world.

We are all acquainted with the history of slavery in this country. We know that it corrupted our people, that it has drenched our land in fraternal blood, that it has clad our country in mourning for the loss of 300,000 of her bravest sons; that it carried us back to the darkest ages of the world, that it led us to the very brink of destruction, forced us to the shattered gates of eternal ruin, death and annihilation. But Liberty rising above party prejudice, Freedom lifting itself above all other considerations,

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,—
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

And on the 1st day of January, 1863, the grandest New Year that ever dawned upon the continent, in accordance with the will of the heroic North, by the sublime act of one whose name will be sacred through all the coming years, the justice so long delayed was accomplished, and four millions of slaves became chainless.

(To be concluded.)

A Parable of the Revolution.

The stricken Titan, now on earth reclining,
Breathes forth his agony to the affrighted sky.
A midnight moon, her tresses intertwining,
Looks sadly down; and to his wavering eye
The stars are streaming, thus to see him lie.

But yester'een full mightily he wandered,
Right jestingly he fell upon the foe,
And now—in shame all his fair hope is squandered.
E'en the o'er-slighted enemy at length doth know
How his own lust conceived this overthrow.

Limb writhes on limb, and heart and brain are burning
Of a most glutton fever. His talons swim
In his vile flesh, even in madness learning
How deep the cunning tumor is, and grim;
But only his own blood comes out from him.

A loathsome canker sits within him, swelling
E'en as he lifts mad hymnals to the sky.
His strength is on the wind. The vulture dwelling
'Neath the wide heaven echoes it on high.
The grey wolf hears the hungry gale go by.

He heeds them not, his tired face upturning
Lest the hard bloody Earth should mock again,
Hearing anew his sullen sigh of yearning;
Seeing the frown of anguish, as his brain
Dulls at the thought that he has sighed in vain.

His fellow Titans come on him at dawning,
And gird at him because his eyes are dim;
They kick at him with a most lofty scorning
For his proud swollen paunch and shrunken limb,
But lo! The plague is on them as on him.

Yea, upon all mankind. The priest is smiling
Betwixt our ignorance and freedom's light,
From labor's withered limb the blood beguiling
The autocratic belly's swollen blight, O Night!
Stands there—the priest. Lend him thy name.

Yea, within each of us hidden—defiling,
Where kingly brain is slave of appetite,
Our warlike blood to festering feast beguiling,
Procrastination sits—Lord of our might,
Crouching within—the priest of our own night.

GEORGE WOODWARD.

Everything hath two handles; the one, by which it may be borne; the other, by which it cannot. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold on the action by the handle of his injustice, for by that it cannot be borne; but by the opposite, that he is your brother, that he was brought up with you; and thus you lay hold on it, as it is to be borne.—*Epictetus*.

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 (Junction-road, N.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Does God Help Man?"

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 3.15, Louis B. Gallagher v. Rev. J. Jerrard, "Modern Freethought."

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

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): J. McCabe, 3, "The Religion of Sir Oliver Lodge"; 7, "The Evolution of Man." With limelight views.

FAIRFORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Oldham Clarion Vocal Union.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (110 Brunswick-street): Mrs. H. B. Bonner, 12 (noon), "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in"; 6.30, "Morality Without Religion."

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Monday, March 12, at 8, George Scott, "Random Reflections."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): John T. Lloyd, 3, "The New Education Bill"; 7, Professor Haeckel's *Last Words on Evolution*."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Sanders, "An I.L.P. Criticism of the Women's Suffrage Crusade."

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, March 15, at 8, — Tyas, "Revolutionary Socialism—the Only Remedy."

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Room, Town Hall, Porth): 6.30, George Dolling, "Socialism v. Individualism."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Mr. Lloyd's Lecture Arrangements, etc.

TRUE MORALITY:

Or, The Theory and Practice of Neo-Malthusianism,

AS, I BELIEVE,

THE BEST BOOK

ON THIS SUBJECT.

Superfine Large-paper Edition, 176 pages, with Portrait and Auto-graph, bound in cloth, gilt-lettered, post free 1s. a copy.

In order that it may have a large circulation, and to bring it within the reach of the poor, I have issued

A POPULAR EDITION IN PAPER COVERS.

A copy of this edition post free for 2d. A dozen copies, for distribution, post free for one shilling.

The *National Reformer* of September 4, 1892, says: "Mr. Holmes's pamphlet.....is an almost unexceptional statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice.....and throughout appeals to moral feeling.....The special value of Mr. Holmes's service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation, with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

Orders should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, EAST HANNEY, WANTAGE.

A BARGAIN.

THE EVOLUTION OF MAN.

BY

Professor ERNST HAECKEL.

Author of "The Riddle of the Universe."

A Popular Exposition, with many Plates, Diagrams, and Illustrations. 1,027 pages. Two volumes.

Well Bound. Recently sold at

THIRTY-TWO SHILLINGS.

Price Now

HALF A GUINEA.

Carriage Paid.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

Manufacturers Remnants.

I have just bought another big lot of Manufacturers pattern lengths in all colors of Tweeds, also Black and Navy Vicuna Cloths.

I can send you two full Suit lengths $3\frac{1}{2}$ yds. each, 56 in. wide. Or I will make you a smart Gent's Lounge Suit to your own special measure

FOR **21s.** ONLY.

Don't Misunderstand.

Two Full Suit Lengths.....**21s.**

OR

One Gent's Suit to Measure...**21s.**

THEY ARE WORTH FULLY DOUBLE.

Measurements required for a Suit.

Length of coat at back.

Length from centre of back to full length of sleeve.

Round chest, over vest measure.

Round waist, over vest measure.

Length inside leg of trousers.

Width round top of trousers.

Your height. Your weight.

During all 1906 you will not have another offer equal to this.

J. W. GOTT, 2 and 4 Union Street, Bradford

THE SAFEST AND MOST EFFECTUAL CURE FOR INFLAMMATION OF THE EYES.

Thwaites' Celandine Lotion.

Cures inflammation in a few hours. Neglected or badly doctored cases. 3 or 4 days is sufficient time to cure any case. For sore and Inflamed Eyelids. Nothing to equal the Lotion for Dimness of Sight. Will remove Skin or Film that sometimes grows on the Eye. As the eye is one of the most sensitive organs of the body, it needs the most careful treatment.

Cullpeper says in his Herbal Book that if the virtues of Celandine were generally known it would spoil the spectacle-makers' trade. 1s. 1½d. per bottle, with directions; by post 1s stamps.

G. THWAITES,

HERBALIST. 2 CHURCH ROW, STOCKTON-ON-TEES.

INTERNATIONAL FREETHOUGHT CONGRESS.

A Photograph of the National Secular Society's Delegates taken beneath the Voltaire Statue in Paris, September, 1905.

Well Mounted for Framing, 15 by 20 ins.

ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF COPIES.

Price **HALF-A-CROWN.**

(Securely Packed and Post Free)

From—

THE SECRETARY, N.S.S., 2 NEWCASTLE-ST., E.C.

Take a Road of Your Own

Or, Individuality and Mental Freedom

By **COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL**

PRICE ONE PENNY

THE SECULAR SOCIETY,

(LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantees.

Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—E. M. VANCE (Miss).

This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1. in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK

FOR FREETHINKERS AND INQUIRING CHRISTIANS

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND W. P. BALL

A New Edition, Revised, and Handsomely Printed

CONTENTS:

Part I.—Bible Contradictions. Part II.—Bible Absurdities. Part III.—Bible Atrocities.

Part IV.—Bible Immoralities, Indecencies, Obscenities, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies.

The above four useful parts, convenient for the pocket, may be had separately, FOURPENCE EACH, or the whole, bound in one volume, 1s. 6d.; Best Edition, bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

"This is a volume which we strongly commend to all interested in the study of the Judaic-Christian Scriptures. It is edited by G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball, and Published by the Freethought Publishing Company, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C., price 1s. 6d. Indeed, we cannot conceive any Christian as having a faith worth regarding unless he has studied this remarkable volume. Teachers in Sunday and elementary schools will find it of special value as an aid to the exposition of the Christian religion from a thoughtful and critical standpoint. It is a perfect army of facts and comparisons. Since 1888 it has been the standard volume of the subject with which it deals, and its popularity is emphasised by the fact that the public have demanded a new edition."—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

Under the Ban of the London County Council.

THE POPULAR EDITION

(Revised and Enlarged)

OF

"BIBLE ROMANCES"

BY

G. W. FOOTE

With a Portrait of the Author

Reynolds's Newspaper says:—"Mr. G. W. Foote, chairman of the Secular Society, is well known as a man of exceptional ability. His *Bible Romances* have had a large sale in the original edition. A popular, revised, and enlarged edition, at the price of 6d., has now been published by the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, for the Secular Society. Thus, within the reach of almost everyone, the ripest thought of the leaders of modern opinion are being placed from day to day."

144 Large Double-Column Pages, Good Print, Good Paper

SIXPENCE—NET

(Post Free, 8d)

THE PIONEER PRESS 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

SUNDAY EVENING FREETHOUGHT LECTURES

AT

STANLEY HALL,

JUNCTION-ROAD, LONDON, N., Near "THE BOSTON."

- March 4.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE: "ROBERT BLATCHFORD AND THE 'BOTTOM DOG.'"
 March 11.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE: "DOES GOD HELP MAN?"
 March 18.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE: "IS THERE A FUTURE LIFE?"
 March 25.—Mr. C. COHEN: "THE OTHER SIDE OF CHRISTIANITY."

Admission Free. Front Reserved Seats 1s. and 6d.
 Doors Open at 7 p.m. Chair taken at 7.30 p.m. Discussion Invited.

A WONDERFUL BARGAIN.

"THE RIGHTS OF MAN"

BY
 THOMAS PAINE.

Well Printed on Good Paper, 164 pages,
 WITH A BIOGRAPHY OF PAINE BY J. M. WHEELER.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Post Free, EIGHTPENCE.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY EDITION OF THE AGE OF REASON

By THOMAS PAINE.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION AND ANNOTATIONS BY G. W. FOOTE

Printed on Good Paper, and Published at the
 MARVELLOUSLY LOW PRICE OF SIXPENCE.

Postage of Single Copies, 2d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET LONDON, E.C.

"MISTAKES OF MOSES"

BY
 COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL
 (THE LECTURE EDITION)

Thirty-two pages, good print, good paper
 ONLY A PENNY

Twelve copies post free for tenpence for gratuitous distribution
 THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.