

SPECIMEN

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVI.—No 12

SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 1906

PRICE TWOPENCE

*The wicked can never be prepared for death, the good always are.*—LANDOR.

## “Honest Doubt.”

TENNYSON started the talk about “honest doubt.” He said that there “lived more faith” in it than in “half the creeds.” He meant well. But he was mistaken. What is more, he was in a confusion. The whole passage was perhaps the weakest platitude in *In Memoriam*; and platitude so easily runs into sheer ineptitude.

It is assumed, in this unfortunate passage of Tennyson’s, that there is some special virtue in “faith” and some special vice in “doubt.” But it is perfectly clear, when you come to reflect, that “faith” and “doubt” must both have an object, and that the value of either depends upon what they are related to. If you have faith that the moon is made of green cheese, and I doubt the proposition, the difference is not one of transcendent importance. But if you have faith that a certain man will keep his word, and I doubt his fidelity, and the life or liberty of both of us depends upon his being true to his pledge, our difference is of tremendous importance. If you are right, we both gain; if I am right, we both lose. But the issue does not establish your moral superiority over me, or mine over you; it simply establishes the fact that your judgment was superior to mine, or mine to yours; and judgment is an intellectual process, which a bad man may sometimes perform better than a good one.

It is absurd to speak of “faith” in the abstract. When we are told that a man has faith, we should ask “faith in what?” He may have faith in a God of vengeance, or faith in a God of mercy; he may have faith in “grace” or faith in “good works”; he may have faith in moral rectitude or faith in Papal indulgences; he may have faith in reaching heaven through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ, or faith in reaching heaven through the gracious favor of the Virgin Mary; he may have faith in the Holy Trinity or faith in Mumbo Jumbo; he may have faith in holy water, faith in transubstantiation, faith in priestly pardon, faith in extreme unction, and faith in prayers for the abbreviation of purgatory, or he may have faith in simple human virtues, and regard all those things as superstitious inventions.

You may tell me that a man has faith, I may trust myself in his hands, and I may find that he is a Thug. By an act of faith he murders me. The deity he worships is pleased with human blood, and mine is shed for his gratification. The contents of my pocket may, at the same time, fall into the hands of the assassin; but the agent is entitled to some advantage as well as the principal.

John Huss trusted himself in the hands of the Catholic party, and they burnt him alive, because

they had a faith against keeping faith with heretics.

A man may doubt the wisdom of peace, or doubt the wisdom of war. A man may doubt the value of parliamentary government, or doubt the value of autocracy. A man may doubt the sense of free trade, or doubt the sense of protection. A man may doubt anything, or doubt its opposite. And what is the use of counting his doubts as moral or immoral? They are nothing of the kind. They are simply opinions, which he forms according to his information and intellectual capacity.

If one man works a sum and gives the right answer, he is not moral, he is accurate. If another man works the sum and gives a wrong answer, he is not immoral, he is inaccurate. And the bad arithmetician may be the better citizen of the two.

Learned and able judges try cases and give judgments, and their judgments are sometimes reversed by other judges. There is a difference of opinion in the two separate hearings. But it would be absurd to infer that the judge in the first instance was wicked, and the judge in the second instance virtuous.

Faith is but an opinion, and doubt is an opinion; and by no possibility can an opinion be moral or immoral. These terms only apply to actions and agents. Opinions may be sound or unsound; in other words, they may be accurate or inaccurate. They cannot be anything else.

This philosophy teaches charity. Although we cannot all see eye to eye with each other, we can dwell together in peace and goodwill. A fellow citizen may differ from me and not deserve locking up; and I may differ from him, without deserving the gallows.

People differ on the most important practical questions, and still regard each other as gentlemen; yet when they differ on speculative questions, as to which they are all very much in the dark, they scowl and hiss and spit at each other, and call each other vile names, and do each other terrible injuries, and sometimes cut off each others’ heads, or break each other to pieces, or burn each other to death.

All bigotry is bad, but religious bigotry is the worst of all. It is rare to find a Christian who admits that an “infidel” may be as good a man as himself. The priests and parsons naturally minister to this evil spirit. They treat unbelief as a sin. They represent those who reject their teachings as enemies of God. They speak the word Atheist as if it were the name of a monster. The better sort of them still talk of “honest doubts”—as though there could be dishonest doubts. Whenever they see an opponent they say (or look) “I am holier than thou.” And the police reports often show that they are not.

Even the Rev. P. T. Forsyth, M.A., D.D., one of the “great” Free Church divines, in a *Hibbert Journal* article some time ago, ventured to express himself in the following manner:—

“Much more doubt is voluntary and culpable than it is the fashion to admit. The mental confusion is due to



some moral weakness and discursiveness. It is not wholly mental error, but to some extent moral dulness (to say the least), which causes so many to pass over the historic Christ as lightly as they do in their survey of the field of fact."

It is only the professional exhorters who are allowed to talk in that way. Once they flung around the lightnings of persecution. Now they only wield stage thunders. But they look what they cannot execute. "Sir," they say to the infidel, "consider yourself blasted." And the infidel lifts his hat with an ironical smile.

Dr. Forsyth has not mastered the elements of psychology. Otherwise he would know how absurd it is to speak of doubt as voluntary. The will has nothing to do with the matter. A man cannot believe as he would; he believes as he must. It is impossible for him to disbelieve what he sees to be the truth—and impossible for him to believe what he sees to be a falsehood.

When a man passes over anything lightly he does so because he thinks it is unimportant. And when Dr. Forsyth speaks of "the historic Christ" he should remember—for he surely knows—that many sceptics do not believe in the historicity of that personage. They have looked into the matter and have found a different conclusion from that which is propounded by Dr. Forsyth. Were they to call him a scoundrel, he would be justly indignant; but it appears that he feels at liberty to suggest that they are no better than they should be.

Considering that at least a half of the people of this country never darken the doors of church or chapel, it seems high time that the men of God dropped these impudent airs of superiority. They are not wiser men, they are not better men, than their fellow citizens. And people are beginning to laugh at the clerical "swelled head."

G. W. FOOTE.

### Church or State?

It is not all a new phenomenon in human history that issues raised in the sphere of religion should be afterwards applied to social and political fields, or, on the contrary, that discussions commencing in the political field should afterwards be applied to questions of religion. Human life, we need to be constantly reminded, is more than a mere bundle of independent qualities; it is an organic whole, and forces once set in motion work themselves out in quite unexpected directions. A negative illustration of this is seen in the way in which the question of the relation of the State to Religion is constantly being raised by issues that have not, at first glance, any direct bearing on the subject. But the two subjects are so involved that either matters of State policy are injuriously affected by the unwillingness of statesmen to grapple with the question, or no clear principle is laid down when it is dealt with, with the result of sowing the seeds of continued trouble in future years.

The controversy over the Education Act of the late Government has once more brought the subject into prominence, and the question is discussed in an ably-written article by the Rev. J. N. Figgis, in the *Church Times* for March 16. Mr. Figgis says that the question underlying the Education difficulty is, "Does the English people intend, or does it not intend, to turn the State into a Church?" This is probably true enough from a religious, or a professionally religious point of view; but it is not true from the standpoint of the citizen who is not a Christian. For what Mr. Figgis means by his statement is that, as the inculcation of morals and their cultivation has hitherto been the work of the Church, the secularising of our schools would mean the State taking up the Church's function. But the truth is that the cultivation of character is no more the work of the Church than it is of any other assemblage of men and women. It might, indeed, be argued, that the effect of the Christian Churches

on character has been anything but beneficial; at present, however, it is enough to emphasise the point that every gathering of human beings—Church, society, guild, or union—has, consciously or unconsciously, its effect on character, and does, consciously or unconsciously, inculcate morals. And if this is demonstrably true of smaller associations, it cannot avoid being true of society as a whole, or of the State, which is merely society's organised expression. The State always has inculcated morals, and always will; it cannot divest itself of this function even though it wished; and therefore the secularising of the schools would only mean, at worst, the elimination of one other teaching agency, and at best the strengthening of its own functions by the discharge of an obstructive element. There is no desire on the part of Freethinkers to convert the State into a Church; although there is a desire on the part of a large number of Christians to make Church and State synonymous and coextensive.

This last is the real point raised by Mr. Figgis's article, and it is one that, from a Christian point of view, seems to me both admirable and logical. While in practice the State has often had to control religion in order to prevent the usurpation of its functions, in theory there are only two logical principles from which to select. There is the Nonconformist principle—which is not believed in by the majority of Christian Nonconformists—that the State should stand absolutely aloof from religion; and there is its opposite, that the State, as representing society, should have and make an organised expression of religious belief. Both principles, granting certain premises, are equally logical; and the present writer has always been of opinion that a Christian who really believes in his creed is irrevocably committed to the latter. If Christianity be so important as its followers think, or profess to think; if its elimination from the schools means the development of a new generation less fitted to carry out its social work, and its ignoring in life involves the existence of people careless of the distinction between right and wrong, and blind to a sense of duty—then to say that the State should not concern itself in matters of religion is to invite the State to commit suicide. If the Christian position be correct, there is the same justification for the State taking charge of the religious welfare of the people as there is for its taking charge of anything else.

It may be noticed in passing that Mr. Figgis pays Dr. Clifford a much too high a compliment in taking him as a thoroughgoing adversary who has the courage of his logic. For Dr. Clifford, in common with the vast majority of Nonconformists, does not desire the separation of religion from the State. They do desire the disestablishment of the Episcopalian Church; and this is a distinction with a difference. But when it comes to a question of the State helping religion by grants of money, position, and enactments to prevent the spread of anti-religious ideas, Dr. Clifford and his followers are as fervid supporters of this form of State alliance with religion as anyone in the country.

Mr. Figgis thinks he proves his contention that the issue is the conversion of the State into a Church by pointing out that the former aims at exercising the function of moulding character. But there is this distinction between the State and the Church, and it is vital. The State in some form or other is an inescapable fact. We are all born members of some State or other. We can no more escape this than we can escape being human beings. And the basis of the State is obvious. It rests upon the association of human beings; it is a developed expression of the gregarious instinct. And as its basis is obvious its justification is plain. This is found in the increased comfort and protection gained by combination and co-operation. On the other hand, the Church is not essential. Society clearly may exist without it. It is something imposed on society as the result of various causes, with an assumed basis in an assumed other world, and a justification that can only be found, if anywhere, on the



other side of the grave. In assuming responsibility for the moral welfare of the people, the State is merely society in its corporate capacity consulting its own welfare. The Church, on the other hand, is an independent corporation claiming to exercise a special function and excluding the dominating influence of the social consciousness.

Mr. Figgis also perpetuates the common fallacy that persecution is due to the intrusion of the State into the Church. The reverse of this is true. Not the influence of the State on the Church, but the influence of the Church on the State has been the chief cause of all historic persecutions. Certainly the non-Christian Roman State was far more tolerant than ever it was in a Christianised form. Neither Greece nor Rome ever dreamed of exercising the same repressive influence over thought and speech that the Christian Churches maintained for so many centuries. Dissenters urge, with truth, that the Church of England was able to persecute as it did because of its alliance with the State. But there is the further truth that the same influence has been exerted by every church in every country whenever occasion offered. If we take Geneva as one illustration of this, we can see that persecution became acute with the establishment of Calvinism and relaxed with its disestablishment. In England and Scotland there is the same lesson learned. The Secular State which aims primarily at securing a right performance of duties is driven for the sake of its own security to practice some measure of toleration. The Church which aims at uniformity of opinion and belief is as irresistibly driven to intolerance. And the degree of intolerance in practice has been proportionate to the influence of religion on secular life.

Mr. Figgis closes his article with a rhetorical impeachment of the State as a creator of character. "Endow," he says, "the State with every attraction which may sway the imagination and impress the intellect; cover it with the romance of a kingship that goes back to Cedric or Wodin; invest it with the charm of the *living past*, and consecrate it with the blood and tears of a hundred generations; enshrine it in the common heart by unbribed administration, equal justice and a share in the laws; lift it above petty tyranny; conquer individual oppression, and wipe out economic wrong (if you can). One thing you can't do, though you have tried for centuries—that is, to turn the State into the Church, and make it the source of religious truth and the motive-power to right-doing. Often has the statesman tried; and he will always be tempted. In the long run he cannot succeed."

Well, it would be very easy to answer this burst of rhetoric with another by simply reading Church where Mr. Figgis writes State. For the Churches, too, have tried for generations to make themselves the motive power for right doing as they understood it. They have surrounded religion with all the glamor, all the fascination, all the attraction that money and influence could provide. And they have failed utterly and decisively. No one but the veriest bigot, would claim that the average of conduct inside the Church is higher than that outside; while many would be ready to assert that in many respects it is distinctly lower. It is also true that the Churches will be tempted to keep on trying along the same lines, and equally true that in the long run it will fail in the future as in the past. Nor must it be forgotten that whatever measure of success has met the efforts of those within the Churches is due to the secularising influences of life. It may be perfectly true that the long story of human evolution, the tale of stress and struggle, of victory and of defeat, sometimes hardly less glorious than victory, of human co-operation stretching throughout the ages with its promise of triumphs yet to be won, it may be true that all of this may not be enough to touch the imagination and rouse the efforts of some, it is true it has spurred the energies of many, and that where *this* fails wholly or partly discredited religious dogmas will not succeed.

C. COHEN.

## The Metamorphosis of Theology.

THE liberalisation of theology is one of the most interesting and significant processes of the hour. The culminating point in this movement at present is the new attitude to the apostle Paul. I have already referred to the most recent Life of this great missionary by Professor Weinel, an English translation of which has just been published by Williams and Norgate. Dr. Weinel pretends to be an enthusiastic admirer of Paul the Man and the Worker, but does not hesitate to express decided disagreement with Paul the Theologian. It is perfectly clear to all that Paul believed in the Fall, Original Sin, the Atonement, and the Sacraments; but Dr. Weinel does not believe in these doctrines. The *Daily News*, in reviewing the book, says:—

"The view given by Dr. Weinel will not commend itself to those who accept the traditional view of the place of the apostle in the ecclesiasticism of the Christian Church. The question he puts to his readers in the introductory chapter: 'Can Christianity be separated from the conceptions of the Fall, Original Sin, the blood-bought Atonement of God, and the Sacrament which it owed to Paul above all others when it entered with him on the great stage of the world's history?' is answered in the affirmative."

But stripped of those wonderful doctrines Christianity is nothing but the shadowest ghost of its historic self. Were Paul to reappear he would pronounce his hottest anathemas upon it, as he did during his life upon any and every divergence from his own Gospel.

But it is not on the Continent alone that theologians venture to differ from Paul. In his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for March 15, Mr. R. J. Campbell, in answering an inquirer, performs the same marvellous feat. The passage that troubles the inquirer is Romans v. 12 and 19, and the question he puts is, "Can this possibly mean anything else than that one man's disobedience was the cause of the fall of all mankind?" Mr. Campbell's answer takes one's breath away. It is a true reply, no doubt, but coming from an Evangelical divine it must be terribly disconcerting to the orthodox. This is what Mr. Campbell says:—

"To be perfectly frank with you, I may say that I think in his earlier ministry St. Paul's theology was dominated by a belief in a historical catastrophe caused by the sin of a primitive ancestor. In his later teaching he does not dwell so much on this supposition; but even if he did, why should you be held bound by such a notion if it is not true? It is a mere excrescence on St. Paul's spiritual teaching, and is not essential to it. Jesus never said anything about it."

There can be no doubt whatever as to the frankness with which that statement is made, for which one is bound to give Mr. Campbell the mead of praise. But the point is that once it is admitted there are excrescences on Paul's teaching, it becomes impossible to determine what elements of truth his Gospel contains. Let us take Romans v. as a test chapter. Verses 12-21 do not stand alone, but are logically related to what precedes them. Mr. Campbell would probably refer to verses 1-11 as a part of Paul's "real spiritual teaching." He rejects the teaching of verses 12-21, because it is untrue, "a mere excrescence"; but how does he know that the first eleven verses contain nothing but the truth? He does not, he cannot, know. Paul's own position is easily understood because it is a perfectly logical position. His claim is that he received his teaching by a revelation from heaven. He says: "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 12). Now, there can be no doubt but that Paul regarded Romans v. 12-21 as an essential part of the Gospel committed to him from heaven by Jesus Christ. Mr. Campbell, however, rejects this paragraph because its teaching is totally irreconcilable with the testimony of Science as to the original condition of the human race. But on what ground does he accept the other paragraph as absolutely true? If Paul was mistaken



in his view of the relation of Adam to the whole human race, what proof have we that his teaching as to Christ's relation to mankind was right? There is positively no proof. I am in full agreement with Mr. Campbell on his rejection of Romans v. 12-21; but, in my case, the rejection of the second paragraph in that famous chapter necessitates the rejection of the first also. But if I could conscientiously believe the first paragraph to be God's revealed truth, I would feel bound to accept the second in precisely the same way, *in spite of all the Science in the world.*

Notwithstanding its critical attitude to the apostle Paul, progressive theology has an air of infallibility about it. Professor Haeckel's alleged dogmatism gives great umbrage to the divines, even from Sir Oliver Lodge to Mr. Ballard. In reality, Professor Haeckel is not dogmatic except on matters of verified knowledge. He believes in the spontaneous origin of life on this globe; but this he regards as only a hypothesis. Theologians, however, even the most liberal, are distinguished for their inveterate dogmatism; and they are dogmatic on questions which absolutely transcend all possible knowledge. Replying to another inquirer, in the same number of the *British Weekly*, Mr. Campbell gives us a fine sample of theological dogmatism. The subject under consideration is Prayer. To the inquirer, who judges from his own experience, "prayer for ordinary every-day benefits seems both useless and foolish." Mr. Campbell is of opinion that "prayer does not change the purpose of God, although to some extent it may affect his dealings with us." Here Mr. Campbell is altogether beyond his depth. The words he employs have no intelligible meaning. He does not even know that God exists, much less that prayer may "to some extent affect his dealings with us." Here is another dogmatic utterance: "The purpose of God in placing us where we are is to grow souls. We are not here either to be made happy or unhappy, we are here to be prepared for our true place in the eternal kingdom." The terms *God* and *souls* stand for unknown and unknowable quantities. We know nothing about either God or souls, not even that they exist. Mr. Campbell makes an imaginary Being, external to himself, responsible for the products of his own brain. He takes his own conception of the purpose or object of human existence and calls it God's purpose. But he has no right to do such a thing. He throws too heavy a responsibility upon the Divine Being. If God existed I believe He would decline to be held accountable for Mr. Campbell's representations of him.

Now, Mr. Campbell's conception of the object of human life is fundamentally false. To say that "we are here to be prepared for our true place in the eternal kingdom" is to set our life on earth in a totally false perspective. The "eternal kingdom" is a dream that may never come true; but our present life is a tremendous reality, and its purpose inheres in itself. We are here to live a complete life, not to learn to live somewhere else. We are here to serve our fellow-men and in that service to find our truest happiness. We are here to follow Nature, to be true to ourselves, to grow and develop unhampered by any supernatural considerations whatsoever.

Mr. Campbell is very fond of quoting Jesus; but to Jesus *soul* and *life* were synonymous terms. To him a man's soul was his life, and a man's highest duty was to take the utmost care of his life.

Liberal theology has abandoned a great many dogmas that used to be pronounced essential, cardinal, fundamental; but it has not given up its dogmatic note. It has renounced Genesis in order to embrace geology; but it has not dethroned eternity in order to crown time. It has denied the Virgin Birth because belief in it is unscientific; but it has not thrown overboard the Supernatural, although it possesses no knowledge of it. Yes, theology has been metamorphosed; but it is still theology, and as self-confident as ever, though much less logical. It still asserts that Christianity offers to the world the only saving knowledge of God and the only sound rule of conduct. It still declares that the redeeming love of

God in Christ is omnipotent, and yet is not staggered by the glaring fact that even Christendom is not redeemed. Mr. Frank Ballard has demolished both Professor Haeckel and Mr. Robert Blatchford; but although those two colossal Atheists lie slain in sight of all, the people are still drifting away from the Creeds and the Churches. Preaching at Birmingham the other day, in connection with the meeting of the National Free Church Council, Mr. Ballard himself was honest enough to admit that the Christian religion has not yet conquered the world. According to one report of his sermon this is the line he followed:—

"Starting with St. Paul's indictment of heathen immorality in his Epistle to the Romans, Mr. Ballard declared that the same charges could be proved against modern society on the evidence of the daily Press. This was a tragic demonstration of the comparative failure of Christianity. This was not the time for unqualified optimism. Optimism was good, but truth was better; and truth demanded the acknowledgment that the comparative failure of Christianity constituted the burden of our modern life."

There is no ambiguity in that utterance. It is a frank confession of the practical failure of the religion of Jesus. And yet, while making such a mournful confession, Mr. Ballard expresses his boundless confidence in the saving power of the Cross. But why is the world not saved? Whose fault is it? In dealing with this point Mr. Ballard magnanimously exonerates God from all blame. God has done his best. He has miserably failed, but He is consoled by the thought that He has done his best. No wonder the reporter declares he did not enjoy Mr. Ballard's sermon. What honest Christian *could* enjoy being bluntly told that God has done his best and failed? Then proceeding, Mr. Ballard boldly announced that the fault is ours. Great Heavens! Just think of it. God has done his best and failed; but if we only did *our* best, we would succeed. Hear it, O earth, and listen to it, O heaven! We are mightier than God, and could redeem the world if we were only in earnest and did our best!

From a purely theological point of view Mr. Ballard's statement is laughably absurd; but from a practical point of view it is profoundly true. God has failed, Christ has failed, and the Holy Ghost has failed. Nothing can be more patent. He who runs may read the writing on the walls of the house of life; God has failed. Mr. Ballard spoke the plain truth. Supernaturalism has not uplifted mankind. But there is another truth which Mr. Ballard did not utter, namely, *that man's reliance upon God has hindered him from doing his own work.* We have been waiting on God, crying to him to make bare his arm, while the people were perishing for lack of knowledge and sympathy and love. Yes, the fault is ours, only our faith has so long kept us in the dark. Well, let us drop God and the whole machinery of supernaturalism, and let us tackle, with all our might, our proper work as loyal citizens of the only world of which we have any knowledge.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Catholic Position.

ONE of the most serious features of the present Education difficulty is presented by the Catholic Church. Naturally this Church looks upon the religious education of children, on its own lines, as absolutely vital; and if it is driven into adopting the policy of Passive Resistance, by the destruction of its schools, and the universal establishment of the Nonconformist plan of "undenominationalism," it will turn the Passive Resistance we have yet seen in England into the merest child's play. Freethinkers, also, should keep a steady eye on the Catholic Church as the logical organisation of Christian supernaturalism. From every point of view the Catholic policy is bound to be one of great import-



ance. And that policy has just been definitely reaffirmed, in relation to the existing state of things, by the Catholic Education Council, which represents the sixteen Catholic dioceses of England and Wales. It runs as follows:—

(1) That no settlement of the Education question can be accepted by Catholics which takes away from Catholic parents their right (a) to have for their children Catholic schools in which the teachers shall be Catholics and shall give definite religious instruction under Catholic control during school hours; (b) to have new Catholic schools recognised and maintained and enlargement of existing schools sanctioned where the needs of the Catholic population so demand.

(2) That no settlement can be accepted which does not safeguard the Catholic character of Catholic schools, either by retaining the existing proportion and powers of the foundation managers, or by some equally effectual means.

(3) That no settlement can be accepted which does not provide for the continuance and maintenance of existing Catholic training colleges and Catholic pupil teachers' centres, and which does not grant facilities for extending the means of giving Catholic training to Catholic teachers.

(4) That any proposal to lease, rent, or assign Catholic schools to the local education authority cannot but be viewed with grave anxiety, and that any such proposal which conflicts with their character must be rejected."

This manifesto is signed by the Duke of Norfolk as Chairman of the Council. He is a layman, of course, but Catholic laymen do not speak on such subjects without priestly inspiration. And the upshot of it all is that the Catholics do not intend to have their identity sunk in "undenominational" Christianity, or in any compromise that may be arranged between Church and Chapel.

### The Charity of Silence.

THE New York *Press Tipster* is aggravating his offence against the memory of Ingersoll. His original deviation from the path of truth consisted in quoting "they say" to the effect that upon his death-bed Ingersoll expressed remorse for having cast ridicule upon the Bible. Taken to task for circulating that known falsehood, he shifted to the point that Ingersoll's "defamation of the Scriptures for revenue" was what thousands of people were interested in. But it is not what interests the friends of the great Freethinker, who see nothing unique in the fact that Ingersoll received pay for his lectures. They care more to vindicate his motives and his sincerity in the face of pious lies and liars. The appended paragraph in the *Press* of February 21 shows how their efforts at getting the truth before the "thousands" are rendered futile:—

#### REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

"R. I. P.! The ghost of Bob Ingersoll will NOT down. At this late day comes another defender of the great iconoclast's eternal agnosticism, with a new version of the 'taking off.' Great Jupiter! Let his soul repose in peace! Rattle not his bones! This new comer in the arena signs herself 'Sue M. Farrell.' Now, Miss Farrell, everything was settled weeks ago. I do not purpose a resurrection of Colonel Bob. And—*de mortuis nil*. Has he been named for the Hall of Fame?"

Here is another transformation of this change artist: The *Tipster* now poses as the guardian of Ingersoll's last resting-place, and his exhibition is accompanied with the same violation of the unities as have been his previous performances. He at first gave us the "death-bed confession" of a man who died almost instantly in his chair, and now admonishes us to "rattle not the bones" of one who was cremated! A little more knowledge of facts would keep him from blundering ignorantly, whatever he might do with malice aforethought.

The plea for peace comes late, and in complaining that the ghost will not down the *Tipster* conveniently forgets that he is the person that raised it. Moreover, that plea is hypocritical. He does not want

repose for Ingersoll's soul, but for his own. He has got enough, and this is his way of crying quits. But there is a point where forbearance ceases to be a virtue; in this case it never began to be one. We have before known the malicious or mistaken, after having made a base and baseless attack on men whom death had deprived of the power to defend themselves, to ask, when called to account, that the mantle of charity be drawn over the faults of the person they had attacked. What they wished of the mantle of charity was that it might be flung between themselves and the light of truth. The charity of our silence was once invoked in the case of a man who misrepresented Freethought all of the time and betrayed the cause whenever an occasion to do so arose. We agreed to the silence, but of those who eulogised him we felt like inquiring what reward they had in store for those who had really earned their praise.

The "Miss Farrell" who has written to the *Press* is the lady to whom Ingersoll dedicated one of his lectures in the words, "To Mrs. Sue M. Farrell, in law my sister and in fact my friend." Mrs. Farrell's version of her brother-in-law's last moments would be the correct one, and the *Press* would have won honor by printing it. But the paper prefers to smother the truth by saying that "everything was settled weeks ago," when the original lie was vended. But a question is never settled until it is settled right. Ingersoll is at peace, but there will be no peace for his defamers so long as *The Truthseeker* is left to trouble them, and their souls will not know repose until they seek it in right and justice. We again advise the *Tipster* to acknowledge the truth and so bring himself into harmony with the universe, which abhors a liar.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

### Gems of Buddhist Poetry.\*

#### DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE.

BY DR. PAUL CARUS.

(From "The Open Court," Chicago.)

#### OURSELVES.

By ourselves is evil done,  
By ourselves we pain endure,  
By ourselves we cease from wrong,  
By ourselves become we pure.  
No one saves us but ourselves;  
No one can, and no one may,  
We ourselves must walk the path—  
Buddhas morely teach the way.

#### UNFAILING.

Nowhere in the sky,  
Nowhere in the sea,  
Nor in the mountains high,  
Is a place where we  
From the fate of death can hide,  
There in safety to abide.  
Nowhere in the sky,  
Nowhere in the sea,  
Nor in the mountains high,  
Is a place where we  
From the curse of wrong can hide,  
There in safety to abide.  
But where'er we roam,  
As our kin and friends  
Welcome us at home  
When our journey ends,  
So our good deeds, now done, will  
Future lives with blessings fill.

#### THE HEART.

A hater makes a hater smart,  
The angry cause alarm;  
Yet does an ill-directed heart,  
Unto itself more harm.  
Parents will help their children, sure,  
And other kin-folks will;  
But well-directed hearts procure  
A bliss that's greater still.

\* Selected from the Dhammapada, Sutta Nipata, and other Buddhist Scriptures.



## THE ROOF.

Into an ill-thatched house the rains  
Their entrance freely find;  
Thus passion surely access gains  
Into an untrained mind.

Into a well-thatched house the rains  
Their entrance cannot find;  
Thus passion never access gains  
Into a well-trained mind.

## THE BANE OF MAN.

As fields are damaged by a ban,.  
So 'tis conceit destroys the vain.  
As palaces are burned by fire,  
The angry perish in their ire.  
And as strong iron is gnawed by rust,  
So fools are wrecked through sloth and lust.

## BOUNDLESS LOVE.

Do not deceive, do not despise  
Each other, anywhere;  
Do not be angry, nor should ye  
Secret resentment bear.  
For as a mother risks her life  
And watches o'er her child  
So boundless be your love to all  
So tender, kind and mild.

Yea, cherish goodwill right and left,  
All round, early and late,  
And without hindrance, without stint,  
From envy free and hate,  
While standing, walking, sitting down,  
Whate'er you have in mind,  
The rule of life that's always best  
Is to be loving-kind.

## A BUDDHIST MAXIM.

Who injureth others  
Himself hurteth sore;  
Who others assisteth  
Himself helpeth more.  
Let th' illusion of self  
From your mind disappear,  
And you'll find the way sure;  
The path will be clear.

## Acid Drops.

The miners in the French "Black Country," in which Courrières is situated, appear to have many just grounds of complaint, and their demands are really very far from being revolutionary. One of their grievances is worth calling attention to in our columns. According to the special correspondent of the *Daily News*: "They complain of favoritism, of an exceedingly vexatious character—shown in the preference given to out-of-work miners recommended by the priests. They say that this is no fanciful grievance; that priests distinguish between the 'faithful' and the Socialist workman, whom they stigmatise as 'atheists,' and that the employers are influenced by the clericals." Priests have always played this little game for all it is worth.

"Under the British Flag" is the heading of an article in the *Christian World*. The British Empire covers a fifth of the habitable globe and includes 400,000,000 of people, of various colors and many different religions. But, according to the Local Government Board Blue-Book, only 5,521 are enumerated as Agnostics, and 376 as Deist. This seems to comfort the heart of our pious contemporary. But was there ever a more foolish consolation? There is no religious census at all in the United Kingdom, and it is not compulsory anywhere, and a large number of people decline to make any declaration on the subject, these objectors being presumably not too orthodox. If the *Christian World* really believes that there are less than 6,000 "unbelievers" in the British Empire it must be softer-headed than we thought it was.

Rev. F. L. Donaldson, of Leicester, says that the Labor party and the Church must at some future time coalesce. Like the lion and the lamb, perhaps. He doesn't say which will be inside.

Body-snatching was once a recognised occupation. What might be called soul-snatching is now more prevalent. Mr. T. P. O'Connor ended his article on the late George Jacob

Holyoake, in the last number of his *Weekly*, with the statement that Holyoake was a Christian without knowing it. A similar statement appeared in last week's *Athenæum*. That journal refers to Holyoake as "a great fighter, and a revolutionist in religious matters," but "a good Christian *sans le savoir*." The cool cheek with which the Christians appropriate every distinguished Freethinker they could not convert is simply astounding; or rather it would be if we were not familiar with the history of Christian tactics in relation to "infidelity."

Anthony Comstock, the libeller of Ingersoll, and the friend of Dr. Torrey and Dr. Dixon, gets his living by looking after the morals of Americans generally. His latest crusade in New York is against Sabbath breakers. One of his intended victims was the manager of the Metropolitan Opera, who was prosecuted for giving "a certain entertainment or stage performance of an opera and public show, commonly called Verdi's 'Requiem' on Sunday." Happily the summons was dismissed and Comstock was left biting his thumb.

The *Sunday Companion* prints a portrait of "Mr. James Sweeney, of Leeds, who was once a leading Infidel, and is now a Christian preacher." We do not recognise his features, and we never heard of any "leading infidel" called Sweeney. This convert, whoever he is, went through a course of "drink and gambling" before coming to Christ. Our readers will see it is the same old game.

*Light*, the Spiritualist organ, chortles over the exposure of Eldred, the medium, and his manager, Mr. Ellis; and the chair in which he kept the "properties" he used in his dark sances is now on view at the office of that journal. But there is something to be said for the theory that the *Light* people only exposed him in order to avert a greater scandal. Eldred, we understand, has been exposed before—at Nottingham, for instance; but he still went on doing a profitable business with the Spiritualists. Even now, while dropping his public performances, at least for the present, he will doubtless enjoy a lucrative private practice. For some people cannot be undeceived.

The movement against religious bazaars continues. A Church meeting at Enfield was marked by some very plain speaking on the subject. One gentleman said that it was taken for granted that money must be got for Church work "worthily if you can, but get money, and blessed is the man who gets the most." Another speaker said that raffles were allowed, ale and whisky could be had, and tips could be received by the ladies who waited on the customers. Mention does not seem to have been made of the kisses sold by pious ladies at so much each (or was it per dozen?) to raise the wind for the dear men of God.

Prayer did Old Dowie no good. But the climate of Jamaica has done what "Providence" could not effect. The prophet's condition is improving. He can now walk. Therefore he should be watched. For when Old Dowie walks off he generally carries something—which belonged to others before he took possession.

Profanity is spreading. The *Penny Illustrated Paper* published a cartoon, a few days ago, of a battered old couple sitting on what might be a doorstep in anything but agreeable weather; and under the cartoon was the following letterpress:—

## "WILLIAM'S IDEA OF BLISS.

Jane: 'Ugh! I'm so cold. I wish I was in 'eaven.'

William: 'I don't. I wish I was in a nice pub.'

Jane: 'Ain't that just like yer—always wants the best o' everythin'!'

No "Glory Song" for them, evidently—while they could keep out of the chorus.

A Wiltshire parson, writing to the *Spectator*, tells how he amused some of his villagers—including two farm laborers, a cowman, and two grooms—by reading Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* with them. They all declared that they were "took up with it." We hope other clergymen will follow suit. "Shakespeare," as the *Evening Standard* says, "speaks as a man to men, whereas some of the 'amusements' provided by 'the quality' in country villages are better adapted to the intellects of children." But even this seems a slur upon the children.

The *Scotsman* sadly confesses that the average Scotch sermon "has not kept in touch with the vigorous life and fresh ideas of the age; in many respects it is a fossil survivor of an earlier intellectual and ecclesiastical epoch. Even in morality it is often a morality warped by ancient dogma and



denominational prejudice." The leading newspaper in Scotland expresses sympathy with "the people who find themselves under the painful necessity of keeping out of earshot of the pulpit, if they would preserve their consciences and their morality from irremediable injury."

The *Oban Times* is shocked by Mr. Edward Clodd's little book on *Animism*. When he says that evolution shows the mental difference between man and the lower animals to be "only of degree and not of kind," our contemporary gravely observes that "Evolution is all very well up to a certain point." But it does not indicate the point. Perhaps it means that the editor of the *Oban Times* must not be placed in too close relationship with (say) a goose or a jackass.

Some time ago the *Christian World* declared itself in favor of Secular Education. Now it has wobbled back into the old road of "undenominationalism"—which, of course, needs "Christian" in front of it to make it intelligible. It speaks of "the partisan fury of Catholics and Anglicans, which insists that the unsectarian religious teaching so successfully carried on in the provided schools is an endowment of Nonconformity." Well, it is an endowment of Nonconformity. If a system of religious education which Nonconformists approve, and which is rejected by all other Christian denominations, as well as by all Non-Christians—if this is carried out at the expense of all who reject it as well as of those who accept it—it is either an endowment of Nonconformity or the English language has lost its meaning. The Church party never wanted any other endowment in the schools. All they wanted was to have their religion taught to the children, or at least as much of it as they thought necessary. And this is precisely what the Nonconformists demand.

The Parliamentary Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Church sent a deputation to Mr. Birrell, to lay before him the views of the Wesleyan Methodists on the forthcoming Education Bill. Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., who acted as introducer, and delivered himself as follows: "For fifteen years the Wesleyan Conference had urged the necessity of a national system of elementary education with only one class of school, in which the religious instruction should take the form of simple Biblical instruction given by the teachers. This policy was now even more necessary, since the cost of elementary education was met by the State. The Wesleyan Church asked for no preferential treatment, and they were not prepared to concede any to any other religious community. They were unanimously of opinion that the religious difficulty might be met by granting facilities for further instruction if desired out of school hours at the expense of the Churches, and on demand of the parents, but only in the non-provided schools. All religious Biblical teaching in school hours should be subject to a Conscience clause and the Cowper-Temple clause. They were opposed to the imposition of sectarian tests on teachers, and they also felt that a smaller school area than that of the country should be arranged if efficiency was to be secured and popular interest in the work of education excited."

Let it be noted that only the last clause of this statement concerns education in the general sense of the word. All the rest is about religious teaching. This is what the Churches really care about. When they say that they care about anything else they are only pretending.

The Wesleyans want "one class of school." This means that they want to see all the Catholic and Church of England schools (as such) abolished. They think this would enable them to carry out the Nonconformist policy in a large number of those schools—at the public expense. And every school they could control would be a gain to them in their fight with "idolrous" Rome and "despotic" Anglicanism.

The Wesleyans want "simple Biblical instruction" in all the schools. It just suits their book. But they know it is hateful to all Catholics and most Churchmen. Nevertheless they want it established by law in spite of all opposition. And these are the champions of religious liberty.

The Wesleyans want this simple Biblical instruction to be given by the teachers. Why? Because they know that Nonconformist ministers would never take the trouble to give it, although many of the Church clergymen would. As far as Nonconformity is concerned, the simple Bible instruction (generally very simple) must be given by the school teachers or not at all. So they put all their money on the school teachers.

The Wesleyans want "no sectarian tests on teachers." Quite so. The plural statement is quite accurate. They do not want tests. They merely want a test. One will do. The simple Biblical teaching given by the teachers must be believed by the teachers. Any teacher who expresses disbelief and begs to be excused from the simple Biblical teaching, or any teacher strongly suspected of disbelief, will sink down, down, down, until he is lost altogether—without a job and without a salary. Verily the Wesleyans, and all the rest of the Nonconformists, are hopeless hypocrites on this question.

When you listen to Protestants denouncing the "bloody tyranny" of the Roman Catholic Church you would imagine that they were perfectly innocent themselves, and that butter would not melt in their mouths. But the truth is that they have always persecuted others to the full extent of their power. If they have persecuted less it has been because they had fewer opportunities. Here in England the Nonconformists, who reckon themselves the true blue Protestants, have never lifted a finger against the persecution of Non-Christians. They fully concurred in the imprisonment of man after man, and woman after woman, for publishing Paine's *Age of Reason*. They have allowed the Blasphemy Law—which makes the denial of the truth of Christianity punishable with imprisonment—to remain on the Statute Book; and it is curious that the only effort made outside the ranks of Freethought to abolish this relic of ancient bigotry, has been made by Church clergymen like the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, the late Canon Shuttleworth, and others connected with the Guild of St. Matthew. Nonconformity has lent no assistance whatever.

We earnestly appeal to Freethinkers not to place any sort of trust in Nonconformists. No appeal is necessary to them in the case of Churchmen and Catholics. That is why we confine the appeal to the case of the so-called Free Churchmen. They are Christians—and that says all. Freethinkers should never trust Christians, as Christians, when the rights of other people, and especially of "infidels" are in question. You may tame a tiger, but some day or other you will find that he is a tiger still.

What the Protestants are capable of doing when they have the chance may be seen by looking at Ireland. One of the most interesting articles we have read for a long time is Mr. Arnold White's on "Illiberal Ulster" in a late issue of the *Daily Chronicle*. Mr. White points out that the Protestant bigotry there is engineered by long-headed men, who make it "a sound business proposition involving an annual outlay of two million sterling." Roman Catholics form seventy-seven per cent. of the Irish population, yet the bulk of Irish expenditure remains in Protestant hands, and "especially that portion which is available for jobbery, privilege, and incompetence." "At least £1,500,000 a year," Mr. White continues, "is thus secured by clever lawyers and placemen who syndicate their Protestantism and sink their Christianity for the benefit of their pocket." Mr. White instances the city of Derry, to show how remunerative are the Ulster methods of advancing Protestantism:—

"In a population of 42,000 the Catholics outnumber the Protestants, including Jews and persons of 'no religion,' by some 2,000 souls, but the Protestant ascendancy is maintained in the municipality (a) by gerrymandering the wards with the aid of Dublin Castle, (b) by the institution of a test pledge exacted from Unionist municipal candidates binding them to vote only for a Protestant Mayor—a pledge which in practice is applied to all the more highly paid appointments. To-day, the Mayor of Derry is a Presbyterian Unionist, the town clerk an Episcopalian and Unionist, with a salary of £1,200 per annum. His deputy and assistant deputy are also Protestants. There is no Catholic in the town clerk's department. The mayor's clerk and his deputy are Episcopalian, while the petty sessions clerk and city surveyor, his deputy and assistants, are all Protestants, and, of course, 'Unionist.' Now the point of this sectarian patronage is that a considerable portion of the cost of this extravagant establishment is paid for by the Irish Society—a public trust, and therefore bound in equity to see that the funds acquired by former confiscation of Catholic land are spent for the benefit of the population of Derry, and not merely on a minority. No young Catholic has the smallest chance of appointment to any one of the better paid municipal offices, while municipal distinction is wholly beyond his reach. Even the medical sanitary officer (£500 a year) and his assistants are Protestants. On the Poor Law Board and Harbour Board Trust I can only discover one of the better appointments held by a Catholic, and he is the schoolmaster, who could not well be anything else."

Swift said that most men had religion enough to hate each other. With the knowledge of to-day before him he might have added, "and to rob each other."

The English newspapers, in reporting the death of Miss



Susan B. Anthony, the greatest of the women pioneers of last century in America, praised her virtues and achievements, but discreetly omitted to mention her Freethought proclivities. When it comes to such things our "glorious free press" is an agency for the suppression of news.

The Bishop of London spoke at the recent meeting of the Booksellers' Provident Association, and was as foolish and flatulent as ever. He confessed that he had little time for reading; indeed, it dawned upon him that he did too much talking; yet Mr. Longman, the famous publisher, who was present, referred to "the power the Bishop had in the book trade," and said that "he had only to mention a book publicly and it ran into thousands of copies." Fancy taking literary "tips" from a man who finds his ideal in *When it was Dark*. What a Bishop! And what a public!

Lord Roberts, like most fighting men, is a good Christian. The other day he was among the guests on the platform at the ninth convention and annual meeting of the Soldiers' Christian Association, which took place, of course, at Exeter Hall. The principal address on that occasion was delivered by the Rev. John E. Wakerley, who declared his unshaken belief in a personal Devil, and deplored the common falling away from many doctrines of the grand old faith. What used to be called sin was now disguised under other names. By the same process, an infidel was called a freethinker. This was simply shocking. The reverend gentleman is evidently going to do his level best to prolong the life of the word "infidel." It is like flinging a brickbat at those who cannot believe Christianity—and this is naturally grateful to such professors of Christian charity as the Rev. John E. Wakerley.

Rev. J. F. Clifton Dunn, rector of Dunton, Fakenham, died suddenly in the vestry of his church. The cause was heart failure, and there is no more to be said. But what a lot would have been said if a Secular lecturer dropped on the platform and died in the anteroom. Circumstances alter cases.

"Providence" is afflicting poor Japan after the war. The failure of the rice crops has brought about a terrible famine in three of the northern provinces. There will be a shocking loss of life by starvation without outside aid.

The *Review of Reviews* refers to Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., as "Mr. Bradlaugh's political heir." We confess that we cannot follow this. Political heritage, in any case, seems to us rather fantastical. But in this case there is something more. Mr. Robertson is a Socialist; at least he was, and we have not heard of his recantation; whereas Bradlaugh was an Anti-Socialist. Indeed, it was his strong opposition to Socialism that gained him much of the favorable regard of the House of Commons during his later years.

Jesus Christ said that if a man steals your coat you are to give him your cloak. Rev. R. H. Little, of 50 King-gardens, Plymouth, does not agree with Jesus Christ on that point. He charged Henry Whitehead with stealing *his* coat, and the unfortunate prisoner tried to commit suicide in his cell. We advise the reverend gentleman to explain.

Another poor apostle of the destitute carpenter of Nazareth. Rev. Dr. Harward Turner, of Clifton, Bristol—a place much affected by sky-pilots anxious to keep out of heaven—has left estate valued at £15,941. His will contained the curious clause that no one benefited by it should attend his funeral. He requested his executors to erect a brass plate, bearing his name and arms, in Great Yarmouth parish church.

Thomas Henry Barnard, of Rectory Farm, Delamere, has to pay £250 damages to Ethel Elizabeth for seduction under promise of marriage, under the verdict of a jury at Chester Assizes. Some curious evidence was given in the case about drugs to procure abortion. It transpired in court that Barnard was a churchwarden.

"Christian workers ought to attract people by the very look in their faces." So says the Bishop of London. He might recollect the text, "Physician heal thyself."

"Friend, the Bible tells thee to swear not at all." "Oh, well, I don't swear at all; I swear only at those I am mad at."

#### POPULAR MENTAL HAZINESS.

For the most part, the general reader of the present day does not exactly know what distance he goes: he only knows that he does not go "too far." Of any remarkable thinker whose writings have excited controversy, he likes to have it said that "his errors are to be deplored," leaving it not too certain what those errors are; he is fond of what may be called disembodied opinions, that float in vapory phrases above all systems of thought or action; he likes an undefined Christianity which opposes itself to nothing in particular, an undefined education of the people, an undefined amelioration of all things; in fact he likes sound views, nothing extreme, but something between the excesses of the past and the excesses of the present. This modern type of the general reader may be known in conversation by the cordiality with which he assents to indistinct blurred statements: say that black is black he will shake his head and hardly think it; say that black is not so very black, he will reply "Exactly." He has no hesitation, if you wish it, even to get up at a public meeting and express his conviction that at times, and within certain limits, the radii of a circle have a tendency to be equal; but on the other hand, he would urge that the spirit of geometry may be carried a little too far. His only bigotry is a bigotry against any clearly defined opinion; not in the least based on a scientific scepticism, but belonging to a lack of coherent thought, a spongy texture of mind, that gravitates strongly to nothing. The one thing he is staunch for is, the utmost liberty of private haziness.—George Eliot.

#### THEIR GOD.

What is the philosophy of the Church—of those who believe in the supernatural? Back of all that is—back of all events—Christians put an infinite Juggler who with a wish creates, preserves, destroys. The world is his stago and mankind his puppets. He fills them with wants and desires, with appetites and ambitions—with hopes and fears—with love and hate. He touches the springs. He pulls the strings, baits the hooks, sets the traps, and digs the pits. The play is a continual performance. He watches these puppets as they struggle and fail. Sees them outwit each other and themselves—leads them to every crime, watches the births and deaths—hears lullabies at cradles and the fall of clouds on coffins. He has no pity. He enjoys the tragedies—the desperation—the despair—the suicides. He smiles at the murders, the assassinations—the seductions, the desertions—the abandoned babes of shame. He sees the weak enslaved—mothers robbed of babes—the innocent in dungeons—on scaffolds. He sees crime crowned and hypocrisy robbed. He withholds the rain and his puppets starve. He opens the earth and they are devoured. He sends the flood and they are drowned. He empties the volcano and they perish in fire. He sends the cyclone and they are torn and mangled. With quick lightnings they are dashed to death. He fills the air and water with the invisible enemies of life—the messengers of pain, and watches the puppets as they breathe and drink. He creates cancers to feed upon their flesh—their quivering nerves—serpents, to fill their veins with venom—beasts to crunch their bones, to lap their blood. Some of the poor puppets he makes insane—makes them struggle in the darkness with imagined monsters with glaring eyes and dripping jaws, and some are made without the flame of thought, to drool and drivel through the darkened days. He sees all the agony, the injustice, the rags of poverty, the withered hands of want, the motherless babes, the deformed, the maimed, the leprous—knows the tears that flow, hears the sobs and moans—sees the gleam of swords, hears the roar of the guns, sees the fields reddened with blood, the white faces of the dead. But he mocks when their fear cometh, and at their calamity he fills the heavens with laughter. And the poor puppets who are left alive, fall on their knees and thank the Juggler with all their hearts.—Ingersoll.

#### JUSTICE.

Justice, Justice: woe betides us everywhere, when, for this reason or for that, we fail to do justice! No beneficence, benevolence, or other virtuous contribution will make good the want. And in what a rate of terrible geometrical progression, far beyond our poor computation, any act of injustice once done by us grows; rooting itself ever anew, spreading ever anew, like a banyan-tree, blasting all life under it, for it is a poison-tree! There is but one thing needed for the world; but that one thing is indispensable. Justice, Justice, in the name of heaven; give us Justice, and we live; give us only counterfeits of it, or succedanea for it, and we die!—Carlyle.

The immoral book is the book which hides Truth and creates a Fool's Paradise.

—W. R. Paterson, "Benjamin Swift."



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 25, Public Baths Assembly Hall, Coventry: 3, "The Fable of Jesus Christ"; 7, "Robert Blatchford and 'The Bottom Dog.'"

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 25, Liverpool; April 1, South Shields; 2, Hetton Downs; 15, Stratford Town Hall.

RIDGWAY FUND.—J. Partridge (183 Vauxhall-road, Birmingham) acknowledges: J. Weston 5s., J. Terry 5s.

D. B. W. writes: "Surely Landor wrote—

'I warmed both hands before the fire of life,'

not *against*." We have looked into the matter again. Forster, in his *Life*, prints it *against*. Curiously enough, he gives a facsimile of Landor's letter in which the verse occurs, and according to the manuscript Landor wrote *before*. And *before* is the word in the same verse printed by Landor himself at the back of the dedication of the *Last Fruit off an Old Tree*. Why Forster printed *against* we don't know, unless he had, or knew of, a subsequent emendation by Landor himself. Somehow or other we prefer *against*; as Shakespeare uses it in the noble words he puts into the mouth of Cordelia:—

"Mine enemy's dog,

Though he had bit me, should have stood that night  
Against my fire."

And the more open sound of *against* is a relief to the monotony of close sounds in the line as it stands otherwise. However, we have stated the facts—which is the main thing; readers can judge for themselves—and we know that we are very far from being infallible. Finally, we thank our correspondent for calling attention to this matter, and thus helping to illustrate an interesting point.

JOSEPH BATES.—Pleased to hear that the "saints" exposed Eldred and Co., the Spiritist mediums, when they were at Nottingham, and that this was the cause of their removal. We shall be pleased to hear further of the proposed Freethought propaganda in your city.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your ever welcome cuttings.

W. H. WEST.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

F. ATTWOOD.—We are obliged to you for your trouble in making the suggestion, although we cannot see our way to adopt it at present. "Topics of the day" are, as far as they come within our province, already dealt with in "Acid Drops." Besides, nothing is more tiresome (in a very short time) than labored jocularity. The man who "jokes with difficulty" is often a bore, but the man who never does anything else is a greater one. Heine, who was a splendid wit himself, well said that "Wit without reason is a sneeze of the soul." And is there not a danger in making too much of "the man in the street"? He is not everybody, after all; there are others; and it would be a very bad thing for the world if there were not.

G. SCOTT.—To hand. Thanks.

D. GARLAND.—*Freethinker* shall be sent for six weeks to the address you send. Glad to hear you obtained two new readers in this way during the past year, and that "both are staunch 'saints' now."

WOMAN FREETHINKER.—You say that the Anglican monk referred to in Gerald Grey's article on "Luxury" devotes his life to suffering humanity and is a friend of the people. We note your statement, in fairness, but cannot find room for a personal discussion.

C. K.—The Protestant Church of England was created by law, its Prayer Book was imposed upon the nation by law, it is governed and regulated by law, and the last of its statutes, the Clergy Discipline Act, was passed under the late Mr. Gladstone's government. Being a creature of law, and all its revenues being used under a Trust created by the State, its properties are all national properties, and may be devoted to any national purpose, as the Irish Church saw, and as the Anglican Church will find out when disestablishment comes.

L. HARRISON.—Pleased to learn that you have become a regular reader through having six copies of the *Freethinker* sent to you, and that it is just the paper you had been looking for. Thanks for good wishes.

T. HUNT.—We dealt with it last week.

SECULAR SAINT.—We don't know why Canon Horsley wants people to eat snails. Perhaps to make them as slow as the clergy.

M. JONES.—(1) Hueckel is an Atheist. (2) Theism does not stand or fall with the God of the Bible.

J. T. G.—Our compliments to your wife as one of our appreciative readers. Glad you find our *Bible Romances* good to read and good to lend.

W. A.—See paragraph. Thanks. Of course we cannot always make use of material sent us.

T. BENNETT.—Will you write your full address more plainly? Welsh names are a little baffling sometimes to English readers. Sorry to hear of more religious bigotry within the Independent Labor Party, which ought to be above such things.

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 Stanley Hall meetings have gone on improving Sunday after Sunday, and the audience would probably crowd the place before very long if Mr. Foote could only give the time to working it up. A very good class of people have been attracted to these meetings, and the number of ladies has steadily increased. On Sunday night, after Mr. Foote's lecture on "Is There a Future Life?" many questions were asked. A little encouragement from the lecturer, who explained that he liked being interrogated, brought several persons to their feet when the proceedings would otherwise have promptly terminated. This evening (March 25) Mr. Cohen occupies the Stanley Hall platform, and as this is the last lecture of the present course it is to be hoped that the local "saints" will do their utmost, in the way of advertisement, etc., to secure another good meeting.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (March 25) in the large Public Baths Assembly Hall, Coventry. The Rev. Frank Ballard has just been delivering some Christian Evidence lectures in the town, under the auspices of the District Free Church Council, and this should excite additional interest in Mr. Foote's lectures on the opposite side, especially as one of them bears the bold title of "The Fable of Jesus Christ."

Next Sunday (April 1) the new course of lectures at the Stratford Town Hall will begin. They are under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, with the co-operation of the West Ham N. S. S. Branch. Mr. Cohen is billed to start the ball. Mr. Foote takes April 8, and Mr. Lloyd winds up on April 15. These courses of lectures have become almost an institution in this populous district, and there is pretty sure to be good audiences, but the local "saints" should strive to make them bumpers on this occasion.

It has been suggested that the charge for admission Sunday after Sunday may handicap the Liverpool Branch in its present special effort. A decision has been come to, therefore, to adopt the plan of free admission until further notice. There will be no charge at Mr. Lloyd's lectures to-day (March 25), and we hope to hear that this has resulted in crowding the hall. Liverpool "saints" will please note that "free admission" will obtain at Mr. Cohen's three Sunday courses of lectures in April. In these circumstances it will doubtless be easier to induce outsiders to come to the meetings in stronger force.

Liverpool Freethinkers who know of the Holiday School Society will note that it will have its annual social gathering next Tuesday (March 27) in the Farnworth Hall. Proceedings open at 7 p.m. Contributions from those who wish to promote the children's enjoyment should be sent to Miss Rose Parsons, 10 Groy-rock-street, West Derby-road.

Mr. B. Prico, honorary secretary of the South African Secular Society, writes us from Johannesburg, under date of February 26, giving a glowing account of the progress of the movement there. "You will be pleased," he says, "to know we are going strong: crowded meetings Saturday and Sunday evenings, Christians in despair, auctioneers stopping business to listen to the gospel of Secularism, and the



general public delighted at what is to them a new order of things." Our correspondent encloses a press cutting which reports the first public meeting in the Trades Hall, and an "open-air meeting in the Market-square at 7.30 p.m., when a number of short addresses were given to an audience of about 500." We wish the South African Secular Society all success. Its objects are those of the National Secular Society.

M. Clémenceau, the most important man in the new French Cabinet, and who now takes a portfolio for the first time, although he has been a great force in French politics for more than thirty years, is of course a Freethinker; and we are glad to see that he acted like a man by going down to the mining district where the recent terrible disaster occurred, and addressing the colliers face to face in the name of the Government.

Georges Benjamin Clémenceau was born in 1841. His father was a doctor, like all his forefathers for six generations. Dr. Clémenceau, himself a materialist and a Republican, brought up his son in "the true faith." Under the Empire he was arrested and conveyed in a prison-van to Marseilles, with a view to his being transported to Algeria; but after an absence of ten days he was deposited again at his own door—and no questions were to be asked. Young Clémenceau saw his father handcuffed and dragged away like a felon, and the spectacle planted in his heart a deathless hatred of tyranny. After completing his education at the College of Nantes, he went to Paris in 1860 in order to study medicine and take his doctor's degree. There he made the acquaintance of Gambetta and other young Republican spirits, and there he got a taste of prison for himself, being lodged for two months at Mazas. In 1864 he became house-surgeon in a great hospital, and in 1865 took his degree as Doctor of Medicine. In the following year he went to London and then crossed the Atlantic, making a long sojourn in the United States, and acquiring a perfect command of the English language. He contributed articles from America to the *Temps* on politics, literature, science, philosophy, and political economy, besides translating John Stuart Mill's book on Auguste Comte and Positivism.

While in America the young Frenchman fell in love with a charming orphan girl, Miss Mary Plummer, who was afraid to be married outside a church. Clémenceau, on the other hand, would not be married inside one. Eventually he conquered her scruples, and their married life has been one of ideal felicity.

Clémenceau left his young wife with his mother at Nantes, and took part in organising the national defence in 1870. In 1871 Bordeaux sent him to the National Assembly with 96,000 votes. The reactionaries injured him by means of a forged note, and this may have helped to inspire his splendid defence of Captain Dreyfus. In 1874 he was sent to the Paris Council, where he passed through stage after stage to the presidency. In 1876 he returned to the Chamber of Deputies as the representative of Montmartre. He was then able to work with Gambetta in saving the very life of the Republic against the reactionist plotters. When that battle was over Clémenceau wanted to go on at once with the separation of Church and State. The time was not ripe, but he has lived to see separation a practically accomplished fact.

Since then Clémenceau has been a brilliant political writer and a maker and unmaker of Cabinets. Now he is in the Cabinet himself, and we shall see what we shall see. But it must be admitted that he has made a fine beginning. He is a splendid swordsman, a teetotaler, a great smoker, a charming companion, and a husband and father of the finest type. And he despises priests, and laughs at the pretensions of religion.

Rev. Dr. J. A. Paterson, Professor of Hebrew in the New College, Edinburgh, as a candidate in the School Board election, said that "he would let every church undertake the teaching of its own children, and let secular education alone be taught in national schools." According to the local *Evening Dispatch* this declaration was greeted with applause.

The long leaded article in the last issue of the *British Weekly* on "Roman Catholicism and Liberty" was a very one-sided thing as coming from a Protestant pen, but it ended with a significant warning to Nonconformists in the present Education struggle. "They delude themselves utterly," it said, "who believe that it will be possible to maintain a State system of Protestant Bible teaching and refuse public funds to Roman Catholics. The Americans have had the problem full in view and they have made their choice."

Later on, in another editorial article on the National Free Church Council Conference, the *British Weekly* sounded another note of warning. "We might remind Nonconformists," it said "of the vast mass of electors who are neither Churchmen nor Nonconformists. We might ask them what they will think of Nonconformity if Nonconformity acts as the Church acted in the day of its power. We might ask them how the outsiders will take it if Nonconformists set themselves to 'instruct the consciences' of others. This 'instruction of conscience' is a very fine name for persecution."

Mr. John Burns, who is a reader of good books, and has an excellent library of his own, gathered during many years, gave a very interesting talk to a *Book Monthly* interviewer. Mr. Burns is a great reader and admirer of Shakespeare, but he regrets that the Master was not a democrat. This may be true, but it all depends on how "democrat" is defined. Shakespeare's attitude towards the common people was not quite correct, according to Mr. Burns. We suppose it wouldn't have "caught on" in Battersea. So much Mr. Burns might have said, and then let the subject drop. But he must needs go on to give reasons, and in giving them he gave himself away. Look at Milton, he said, in whom there is "warmth for the lowly," and that "fine passage in *Comus* on the distribution of wealth":—

"If every just man that now pines with want  
Had but a moderate and besecming share  
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury  
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,  
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispensed  
In unsuperfluous, even proportion,  
And she, no whit encumbered with her store."

So you like that, Mr. Burns, do you? But how is it you, who read and admire Shakespeare, failed to recollect that this Milton passage is a faint echo of the trumpet blast in *King Lear*. When the old, feeble, daughter-mocked, anguish-torn king is exposed by night to the fury of the storm, with only his poor fool to keep him company, Shakespeare makes him cry:—

"Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en  
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just."

This is the language of the gods—and William Shakespeare was their prophet. The passage Mr. Burns quoted from Milton is tame and insipid in comparison. For while Milton was a great poet, Shakespeare was—what the world has been three hundred years finding out, and has not yet fully discovered.

Just as Shakespeare put bitter jests at religion into the mouths of clowns and fools, so he took advantage of the tempest in Lear's mind to throw up all sorts of heresies from the bottom of his experience and reflection. The conversation between Lear and Gloster out in "the country near Dover" is full of them. All the world, fit to know such things, may call to mind the great passage ending:—

"Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;  
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,  
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;  
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it."

We could say far more, but this must suffice. We have cleared Shakespeare of a particular misunderstanding, and that is all we intended.

The Quaker chapel in Thetford became a Salvation Army barracks a few years ago. It is now pulled down for the public safety. The one important fact in its two hundred years' history is that Thomas Paine worshiped there in his childhood. Paine came of a Quaker family, and always held the Quakers in respect, yet they refused his bones a resting-place in their burial-ground near the spot where he died.

In last week's "Sugar Plums" we stated that we met the late Charles Moore, editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, at Chicago in November, 1906. This was a misprint for November, 1896.

Our shop manager (Mr. W. A. Vaughan) will be pleased to receive fresh names of persons who might become regular subscribers to the *Freethinker* if it were only introduced to them. We are willing to send a copy of the *Freethinker*, gratuitously and post free, to every such address for six consecutive weeks. At the end of that time the recipient would know whether he wishes to read it regularly. We have gained many new subscribers in this way.



## Wordsworth—II.

## HIS TREATMENT OF NATURE—ETHICS—THEOLOGY.

*(Continued from p. 172.)*

"WORDSWORTH feels with extraordinary power the joy offered to us in nature"; and "with extraordinary power he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it."

"We see with his eyes, and are glad."

One must forbear instances. It would be like pointing out signs of sunlight on midsummer-day. But I would draw attention, in this connection, to one supreme gift of Wordsworth's. He was able to touch aspects of nature with light and color of the imaginative reason. Take, in the sonnet written on the road between Namur and Liege, that stroke:—

"The Morn,  
Spreading her peaceful ensigns."

How it recurs when, in Spring, you see clouds of delicate pink, shaped like banners, extending through all one side of the heavens!

"The Morn,  
Spreading her peaceful ensigns!"

This faculty is so rare; the effect in art so pure, so sustaining, one may be allowed space for a further instance. The following is from "The Wishing Gate."

"The Sage, who feels how blind, how weak  
Is man, though loth such aid to seek,  
Yet, passing, here might pause,  
And yearn for insight, to allay  
Misgiving, while the crimson day  
In quietness withdraws."

There you have it; with the departing wreal splendor, a premonition of our own day passing.

Yet, even in Wordsworth's treatment of nature, we have to distinguish ere we take. In some of his work, in the lines written above Tintern Abbey, for instance, Wordsworth attempts a fusion of Pantheism and Judaism; God in nature, plus God outside nature. But this only muddles two readings of the riddle of the universe, and brings us no nearer to understanding it.

Bound up with this there is with Wordsworth, at times, a self-investment of awe in approaching nature, a feeling resembling what one may suppose a savage to feel when approaching his wooden god. Shelley, in "Peter Bell III," gives Wordsworth a well-deserved rub for this. Says Shelley:—

"He touched the hem of Nature's shift,  
Felt faint—and never dared uplift  
The closest, all-concealing tunic."

Also allied with this reading of nature, direct outcome of it, indeed, is Wordsworth's attribution of conscious joy to unconscious nature. He says:—

"It is my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes."

All one can say is, flowers do not possess organs of consciousness; and one does not see the ground of Wordsworth's "faith."

In this connection, too, one must notice that Wordsworth stands sponsor to the "pathetic fallacy," that nature grieves when certain individuals die. Here is Wordsworth's declaration as sponsor, in "The Excursion."

"The Poets, in their elegies and songs  
Lamenting their departed, call the groves,  
They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,  
And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak,  
In these their invocations, with a voice  
Obedient to the strong creative power  
Of human passion."

There are other passages in adoption of the "pathetic fallacy" in "The Excursion," and a later one in the sonnet on Scott's departure from Abbotsford for Naples. But not even Wordsworth's adoption should reconcile us to the fallacy, which attaches to certain operations in nature an idle meaning. Even could the fallacy be canonised in poetics, what would it avail? As if enough useless tears are not shed over the final leave-taking, to which all of us come in our turn, without calling on nature to shed more!

I turn to the ethical side of Wordsworth's work. Here again, there is much of supreme value. Frugal and severe, Wordsworth commends to us plain living, high thinking. He despised whatever was luxurious or sensational; despised "fashionable society," its vacuity, its extravagance, its greed. Even in the conveniences of civilisation he saw danger; the danger of coming to look upon these conveniences not merely as the conditions of energetic and purposeful life, but as the end itself.

"Then may we ask, though pleased that thought  
Should range  
Among the conquests of civility,  
Survives imagination—to the change  
Superior? Help to virtue does she give?  
If not, O Mortals, better cease to live!"

That we may be strong individually, and strong as a nation, we must be "virtuous and wise." Thereto, our methods must be clear. The judgment in "Dion" is for all.

"Him only honor leads, and peace attends,  
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,  
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

The Jesuitical excuse that "the end justifies the means" finds here no sanction.

In "Laodamia," the lesson is one of self-repression. The most lawful desires, the dearest hopes, must at times give place to the common good, or be let go in stoical submission to the march of unalterable fate. With every Englishwoman of chastened purpose and of reading, I judge that "Laodamia" and "The Founding of Bolton Priory" hold high place.

It is in directing the imagination to this end, to kindle a high sense of conduct and duty, that Wordsworth puts forth the strength of a giant. His prime aim, he tells us, was to be a teacher; and therein so successful was he that many of his poems are a part of permanent ethics. Here and elsewhere in Wordsworth, one allows for an occasional infusion of theological sentiment. This in his best work is but small, or entirely non-present.

But when Wordsworth strays from the verdant province of ethics into the desert of theology, the virtue goes out of him. Wordsworth saw (we all see) so much that makes life look, for many a man, a bare and thankless struggle, that to rally the despairing he holds aloft the banner of hope. But that banner is sometimes emblazoned with symbols that have lost their significance and value. Sometimes the case is even worse. Wordsworth forgets his part as poet, borrows a leaf from the parson's book, attaches it to the apex of his theological umbrella, and carries it round with solemn face and heavy tread. Here is a sample from "The Excursion":—

"One adequate support  
For the calamities of mortal life  
Exists, one only;—an assured belief  
That the procession of our fate, how'er  
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being  
Of infinite benevolence and power;  
Whose everlasting purposes embrace  
All accidents, converting them to good."

One thinks instinctively of Doctor Pangloss, and his pet reflection that "this is the best of all possible worlds, and that all that happens is for the best." Looking back, one wonders what consolation his pet reflection brought the Doctor in his manifold misfortunes. And one can only place it to the solemn persistency of the theologian, that Wordsworth with "Candide" in his pocket, could thus expand poor Pangloss.

"But Wordsworth's eyes avert their ken  
From half of human fate."

For the rest, Wordsworth shakes his head reprovingly at "the laughing Sage of France"; calls him "a fond, a vain old man." Wordsworth himself lived to be old; and for vanity and foolishness had his weak moments. "Candide" remains; not only an immortal masterpiece in literature,—one of the things that reconcile us to this "best of all possible worlds," and to those "everlasting purposes," but perhaps the one work best framed to lead on to philosophic atheism. "The Excursion" also remains a comfort for "the faithful."

H. BARBER.

*(To be continued.)*



## Imbecile Anti-Semitism.

BY A RUSSIAN REFUGEE.

THE Jews are to blame! Always the Jews! Those are Jews! This is the everlasting refrain heard on every side in Russia—in the houses, in the streets, in the marketplace, in the police-courts. This is the inexhaustible subject of conversation of those credulous Russians whom the Czar's Government has held for long centuries, and still holds, in a state of servitude and ignorance. They say this with a smile of disdain on their lips, with contempt, with that tone of voice quite peculiar to the race. It is thus in ordinary times—that is to say when all goes well, or very nearly well, in Holy Russia. But in calamitous times—as, for example, in the days of famine, from which Russia for years has been hardly ever free; in periods of the cholera and pest; when war comes to ruin the country; in troubles and riots—then they speak of the Jews in anger and mortal hatred. They throw the blame of all on that accursed people.

If the troops have reverses in Manchuria, and retreat before the enemy, the Jews are the cause. If the Japanese have sent the Russian fleet to the bottom of the ocean, the Jews are to blame. If foreign Powers refuse fresh loans, again the Jews are responsible. Are Russian bonds depreciated in value, interior troubles, revolution, revolts and strikes, and many other miseries which ravage Holy Russia—all is cast on the Jews, the abettors of all the disturbances that spread through Russia.

The Government, besides, calls everybody Jews who do not think as it does, or any who speak in their defence. It becomes truly ridiculous. Thus all the Liberal Press in Russia, according to the Government, are Jews. The foreign press which ventures to defend the Jews are directed by Jews. Labori was a Jew. Zola and the President of the American Republic are Jews, though the latter raised his voice in their defence. The priest Gapon is also a Jew. All who do not speak the same language or practice the same religion as the Russians must be Jews, and, as such, merit persecution and annihilation.

Finally, all these calumnies thrown on the Jews give rise to new anti-Semitic persecutions and new restrictions on their rights, and to horrible massacres.....The following significant fact will give an idea of how the rights of the Jews are disregarded. On a certain morning a lawyer related to us how a young girl presented herself at his house in St. Petersburg very early in the morning. "I was much astonished at the untimeliness of the visit. I said to my servant: 'Do you not know at what hour I receive clients?' 'Perfectly, sir; but the lady insists. She will not go away without seeing you.'

Much astonished and puzzled, I resolved to rise and see the strange client. 'Very well,' I said to my domestic; 'show the lady into my study and say I will be down presently.' Hastily dressing, I descended, and found myself in the presence of a pretty young girl of a strongly-marked Jewish type. 'Good day, sir,' she said; 'my name is X. I came here from my native town to enter the Conservatoire of Petersburg and study music. As a Jewess I have no right to remain here a single day. Now, I know you are a great lawyer—your renown has reached even to our little province; and having an irresistible desire to learn music, cost what it may, I set out for Petersburg, and as soon as I descended from the train I came directly to you. Now, dear sir, I come to ask your advice how to procure the authorisation to enter my name in the Conservatoire.' I said, 'Have you the permit of domicile authorising you to remain in the capital? What would you have me do? I am helpless; I am not the master of the police.'

'But, sir, you can always counsel me how to manage it—you who know the law so well.'

'I don't see how I can be of service to you in the affair, for the law in this case is most strict; there is no exception possible, no more for you than for so many others who have become victims to it already.'

In telling my young visitor there was no exception I exaggerated—there is only one exception: Jewesses are permitted to dwell in the town when they are bad characters. ....But could I tell her that? Certainly not. I said: 'It is not possible, mademoiselle; I counsel you to return immediately to your native town if you would not be arrested and sent back by stages.'

'But let us see, dear sir. Surely you see some way for me to succeed. Try and understand that to learn music has become the sole object of my life, my one desire. In our small town there is no master, no school of music, and music is the passion of my soul. I would throw myself in the Neva rather than return to our town, where I would die literally of ennui.' She looked at me with her sad eyes. 'Give me some hope, I beseech you.' I hesitated, I reflected,

absolutely unable to speak to a chaste and innocent young girl of ignoble things. The girl recommenced: 'You hesitate, sir. I see truly you can find a way, but you don't wish to tell me.'

Then I decided. 'Well, because you desire it, I will tell you; but you ought not to wish to know. Know, then, according to the Russian law it is only certain kind of Jewesses who are permitted to remain in the capital; they are those who occupy themselves in.....in.....Oh! I cannot tell you—in fine, those of bad conduct.' Not understanding, the young girl looked at me with her great eyes, naïve and candid.

'You have not caught it?' I asked, yet I expressed myself clearly enough. 'Only Jewesses who are registered by the police as women of immoral conduct can remain in the capital.'

This time she understood. I saw it without her saying a word; her face became crimson. Dropping her eyes and seizing her valise, she pushed open the door and fled precipitately, articulating a feeble 'Thank you.'

"A year passed since that which I have related occurred," continued the lawyer. "I had completely forgotten the young girl, persuaded that she had returned to her native town. Hazard brought us together again, this time in very sad and tragic circumstances. I saw in the newspapers that one named X., a Jewess, was imprisoned at the police office, and would be cast out of the capital for illegal sojourn there. I recalled the name of the young person, and, much alarmed, I hurried to the police for information. I asked for the 'Pristaff' (head constable). I was told he had not risen. 'He sleeps so late!' I cried, drawing my watch: it was 2 p.m. In Holy Russia the commissioners of police lead a lordly life—carouse all night and sleep during the day, until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Those fellows have more means than they have gained honestly, to lead a life of idleness and debauch. Ordinarily a commissioner of police in the capital gains—he calls it earns—by the open pillage of the townspeople from 20,000 to 25,000 roubles a year, besides being well paid by the Government, which to them is generous. They find means to triple their allowances from the pockets of the inhabitants of their districts. It is an army with one object—to spy upon the inhabitants, passers-by, travellers, and above all hunt the Jews. Having at their orders an army of subordinates in various trades, they have absolutely nothing to do but carouse and drink through the night and sleep all day. Therefore I was compelled to wait several hours until the Pristaff awoke. As in Russia you must not protest at the police office, I made up my mind to await the commissioner. I cast my eyes around. All at once I perceived in the distance, behind an iron grille, a woman whom I recognised as my young Israelite; but in what a state! She was pale as death; her eyes, deep in their sockets, were inflamed. I rushed to the grille. A policeman stepped up to me and said it was forbidden to speak to the prisoners. At the sight of a silver coin the guardian smiled and turned away to allow me to approach the prisoner. The young girl burst into tears and told me that, being unable to resist her desire to enter the Conservatoire, she had had herself inscribed by the police as a woman of ill conduct, and had obtained her authorisation to remain in Petersburg. Then she entered the Conservatoire and gave herself entirely to her musical studies. She lived happily there for nearly a year, making great progress in music. One fine day, when she least expected it, the doorkeeper came to her room and bade her report herself immediately to the police. 'Surprised and frightened at the prospect of going at that late hour to the police (it was close on midnight), I besought the keeper to allow me to remain until morning. I proposed, if he feared that I should escape, to lock myself in my chamber. All supplication was useless. I was obliged to follow him to the police office in the gloomy night, through the deserted streets. Unhappily, or perhaps happily, the chief was not there. They placed me provisionally in a great cell in the hall, with many other prisoners. What a collection! They were nothing but thieves and depraved women. What a night have I not passed! I have paid dearly for the year's studies in music. Not only was I obliged to sleep on a long bank of wood, side by side with women of the basest conduct, whose conversation and manner were a sickening stain, but I had to defend myself from the outrages of a little police clerk, who overwhelmed me with his attentions, in the midst of the howling of all those miserable women. It is unnecessary to say that I have not slept during the night. When dawn was breaking the jailor, with much clatter, opened the door of our cell, having in his hands a large receptacle full of blackish liquid, recalling the color of the dirty rivulets in the streets after a storm of rain, a few wooden spoons covered with a thick layer of dirt, and a few slices of rye bread. Placing these on the flags, he cried out for us to rise. This was the pittance for the prisoners' breakfast. I did not touch it. The women ate it greedily,



unwashed and uncombed. Soon after we were conducted from behind the grille for interrogation. What crime have I committed that they should make me undergo such tortures? Only that of having studied music and of breathing the air of the capital forbidden to Jews.' The young girl was interrupted. The police made me a sign to leave the grille, announcing that the Pristaff was coming into his bureau.

The young Israelite was the first prisoner placed before him. Without waiting longer, I prayed the jailor to pass my card to the commissioner, and to say that I wished to see him immediately. I don't know if it was my card, on which was inscribed my profession, or some other motive, but I was introduced at once into his cabinet.

'I came before you,' I said, 'to beg of you that this young girl be set at liberty. She has done no harm but that of studying music at the Conservatoire of St. Petersburg, which is forbidden to the Jews of Russia.' 'Is it you who say that?' interrupted the Pristaff, severely. 'We will see.' And, drawing from his portfolio a paper, he continued:—

'She is prosecuted for dwelling illegally in the capital and for deceiving administrative authorities; but let me interrogate the prisoner.' Addressing the young girl, he said: 'What is your name?'

'I am named X.' 'And your profession?' 'I study music at the Conservatoire.' 'You are a Jewess. Did you not know that Jews have no right to live in the capital? You must pay a fine of some hundreds of roubles and be expelled from Petersburg within twenty-four hours.'

'But, Monsieur the Pristaff, I have had permission of the police to dwell in this town. I inscribed myself as .....

'Ah! yes. I well know that you caused yourself to be registered as a woman of ill repute; but we have now the proof that you were not occupied in that manner, but with music.' I held my peace, for the laws are strict on that point. It was the young girl who ventured to say: 'It is true, sir. I have deceived the police; but is it a crime to remain an honest woman and attend to my music? Would it have been better to have lived an evil life? Where is the good sense of that? Perhaps there is neither good sense or logic in the Russian laws.'

'You are again arguing,' grumbled the Pristaff. Then I intervened. 'I admit, Monsieur the Pristaff, that the young girl has acted illegally, and that according to the laws she should be banished the capital; but I beseech you, for the sake of humanity, not to be too hard on her, and to leave her here until her studies are finished. I tell you she has paid dearly enough for the right.'

The commissioner was inflexible; and that same day she was expelled, without being fined. 'Have I not acted humanely,' said the Pristaff to me, 'in remitting the fine?' I was silent. The man, in fact, had acted in accordance with the Russian law. The unhappy girl might have been condemned in addition to a fine and imprisonment."

—*La Raison.* Translated by (Miss) E. HOLLAND.

**Obituary.**

It is with sincere regret that we record the death of Leslie Spiers at the age of seventy-two—Glasgow's oldest Secularist. The son of a Freethinker who was a follower of Robert Owen. Mr. Spiers' recollections of Freethought work carried him back to a time when, as a child, he listened to Owen, and on through a propaganda that in Glasgow has been continuous for over two generations. All visitors to the Secular Hall will have been familiar with his quiet and unobtrusive figure, but only those who know him intimately could be cognisant of his devotion to Freethought and his unwearied efforts to extend its influence. Other men in the northern city worked well for the cause, but none held a higher ideal of its use and purpose, and none were ever readier to stand forward in its defence. During the Bradlaugh struggle he formed one of the band of Scotsmen who attended the memorable meeting in Trafalgar-square after the still more memorable expulsion of Bradlaugh from the House of Commons.

For over eighteen months Mr. Spiers has been face to face with death, and faced it with a serenity born of a life-long conviction operating on a singularly modest and unselfish nature. During these long months, when increasing weakness prevented him attending the weekly meetings, his first enquiries were ever as to their success, and his conversation reminiscent of his association with the movement. It was characteristic of the man that by his desire no speeches were delivered at his interment on Tuesday last. He would be buried as he had lived—without show or unnecessary ceremony. Nevertheless, those who stood at his graveside must have felt that in bidding good-bye to all that remained of Leslie Spiers they were saying farewell to one who, could

the balance be properly struck, played as great a part in the determination of the world's destiny as many whose careers are cast in a showier mould. Mr. Spiers leaves behind him a wife who will keenly feel the break of a companionship of over half a century; a son and a daughter, the wife of the local secretary. But for both wife and children there is left the contemplation of a life that was honest throughout and the memory of one who never did man or woman an ill turn, but by his example and influence benefited many to whom his name is unknown.

C.

**THE MASTER SPIRIT.**

Give me a spirit that on life's rough sea  
Loves to have his sails fill'd with a lusty wind,  
E'en till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,  
And his rapt ship run on her side so low,  
That she drinks water, and her keel ploughs air.  
There is no danger to a man that knows  
What life and death is: there's not any law  
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful  
That he should stoop to any other law:  
He goes before them, and commands them all  
That to himself is a law rational.

—George Chapman, "Byron's Conspiracy."

**TRUE GREATNESS.**

A man's greatness lies not in wealth and station, as the vulgar believe, nor yet in his intellectual capacity, which is often associated with the meanest moral character, the most abject servility to those in high places and arrogance to the poor and lowly; but a man's true greatness lies in the consciousness of an honest purpose in life, founded on a just estimate of himself and everything else, on frequent self-examination, and a steady obedience to the rule which he knows to be right, without troubling himself about what others may think or say, or whether they do or do not do that which he thinks and says and does.—George Long, "Thoughts of the Emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus," Introduction.

This is philosophy; to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary for the last.—W. S. Landor.

**We Be Three Poor Deities.**

Tune: "We be three poor Mariners" (Old English Song).

We be three poor Deities  
Whom no one cares to please;  
We spend our weary triune lives  
Exploring lands and seas.  
We search for faith around, around, around,  
But find that none is found, is found, is found;  
None cares for us  
"A tinker's cuss,"  
Though pray'r and praise abound, abound, abound.  
The priests pretend to worship Us—  
The Father, Son, and Ghost—  
Although the humbugs serve and love  
A single god, at most. [ground,  
Though churches dot the ground, the ground, the  
And skyward hymns resound, resound, resound,  
Their sovereign Joss  
Disdains the Cross;  
His symbol is a pound, a pound, a pound.  
To-day, we sadly recognise  
That godly faith is dead;  
But artful knaves and artless dupes  
We find, galore, instead;  
And when they laud the Lamb, the Lamb, the Lamb,  
Their praise is but a sham, a sham, a sham;  
With all their fuss,  
They know, for us,  
They do not care a damn, a damn, a damn.  
We be three poor Deities  
The sport of loveless Fate,  
Deserted by the creatures we  
Were fated to create.  
We're failures we admit, admit, admit;  
As Gods, we're quite unfit, unfit, unfit;  
So, now: Farewell  
Heav'n, Earth, and Hell!  
We dree our weird, and quit, and quit, and quit.

G. L. MACKENZIE.



## 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, C. Cohen, "The Other Side of Christianity."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 3.15, F. Vickers, "Miracles."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, J. W. Marshall, "The Myth of God."

### COUNTRY.

COVENTRY BRANCH N. S. S. (Public Baths Assembly Hall, Priory-street): G. W. Foote, 3, "The Fable of Jesus Christ"; 7, "Robert Blatchford and 'The Bottom Dog.'"

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, W. A. Rogerson, "Health or Disease as Affecting Conduct."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon), J. Guild, "Ingersoll"; 6.30, a Lecture.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Monday, March 26, at 8, J. P. Gilmour, "Superstitions of Rationalism and Rationalists."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): John T. Lloyd, 3, "Secularism in the Clouds"; 7, "Secularism on Solid Earth."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. R. Ferry, Miscellaneous Dramatic Recital.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, March 29, at 8, Councillor A. W. Hildreth, "Shelley—Poet and Pioneer."

PORTRH BRANCH N. S. S. (Room, Town Hall, Porth): 6.30, W. Ablett, "Municipal Duties."

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

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (I. L. P. Institute, Front-street): 3.30, Alex. White, "Was Jesus Christ a Socialist?"

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