

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVI.—NO 39

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1906

PRICE TWOPENCE

*Ideas always generate enthusiasm.*—EMERSON.

## Those Wicked Freethinkers.

CHRISTIANS are a curious lot of people. On one side they are peculiarly sensitive; on the other side they are amazingly callous. The slightest criticism of their faith, especially on the ethical side, makes of them twist and squirm and use warm language. But their own criticism of their intellectual opponents is perfectly reckless. Take a man like Torrey, for instance. Instead of answering Ingersoll, he declares that the great American Freethinker was paid to promote the circulation of obscene literature. Instead of answering Thomas Paine, he declares that the great English Freethinker ran away with another man's wife. And when he is asked for proof of these extraordinary statements, he stands upon his "dignity," and refuses to reply to "infidel attacks." But just look at the other side of the picture. What tenderness these scurrilous controversialists display towards their own reputations! Take the case of Torrey's partner, Mr. Alexander. He is almost weeping on public platforms because cruel people—*not* infidels, but Christians; yes, *Christians*—have circulated the report that when he married Miss Cadbury, the rich Birmingham heiress, he had a wife and children hidden away somewhere in America. It seems to him an awful thing that people should circulate such slanders. He does not worry, however, when the slanders concern the character of others. We happen to know that he was asked by a distinguished Christian journalist to assist in bringing Torrey to a decent frame of mind with respect to his libel on Thomas Paine. Mr. Alexander was shown how false the statement was that Thomas Paine ran away with another man's wife. But did he help to make amends to that great Freethinker's memory? Did he lend a hand to secure justice towards an "infidel"? Nothing of the sort. He did not even deign to answer the distinguished Christian journalist's letter. What did it matter if Torrey libelled a thousand Thomas Paines? But when slander touches Mr. Alexander himself, he cries out "Oh, my God," and drops self-sympathetic tears in public, and wonders why the Almighty suffers slanderers to live.

One way Christians have of getting even with Freethinkers is putting one of them (a fancy portrait, of course) into a book, and contrasting his awful wickedness with the sweet and gracious piety of a copy-book believer. Nothing could be sillier than such an artifice, one would think; yet there are silly people who can actually be imposed upon by it. The late Mr. Wilson Barrett's audiences were of this description. All the wicked people in his play, the *Sign of the Cross*, were Pagans, and all the good people were Christians. Stay, there was one exception. Marcus Superbus was a Pagan; but he was a good man who had gone wrong; and he became a Christian before the drop curtain descended. And thus was wisdom (*Christian* wisdom) justified of her children.

Flaubert, in one of his letters, laughs at this facile trick of the novel with a purpose. It is not art, he says, but dialectic; and the characters are not living

beings, but stage puppets. Even if a writer of some power pens a novel to prove a certain theme, it is only an absurdity; for another writer of equal power may come along and prove the opposite theme, and where are you then? Of course a Christian may be a good man, and an Atheist may be a bad man—and *vice versa*; but a Christian good as a Christian, and an Atheist bad as an Atheist, is mere imbecility.

One of these infantile performances seems to have been achieved by the Rev. Dr. W. H. Fitchett. This gentleman sprang into literary fame (of a sort) during the Boer war. He came over from Australia and brought with him a loud Jingo banjo, which he twanged lustily, and caught a fairly big crowd of listeners. He sang of "Deeds that Won the Empire" and "How England Saved Europe," and the professional apostle of the Prince of Peace outdid the regular fireaters of Fleet-street in the death's-head and bloody-bones business. We believe he has since written a Life of John Wesley, though we have not been tempted to look into it; and we see by a *Tribune* review that he has quite recently presented the world with a novel called *Ithuriel's Spear*—which we are not likely to read either. Judging from the title, which is reminiscent of *Paradise Lost*, the clerical author is bent on showing "infidels" in their proper shape. Readers of Milton will remember that he represents Satan as squatting like a toad "close at the ear of Eve," trying to taint her thoughts during her sleep; until he is touched lightly with Ithuriel's spear, when he starts up as "the grisly king." And so, we presume, the most plausible "infidel" will start up the monster that he really is when touched by the pen of Dr. Fitchett.

According to the *Tribune* review, Dr. Fitchett's novel is "curiously old-fashioned in its style and construction," and "might have been welcomed in mid-Victorian days, when the works of George Eliot were regarded by pious people as terribly daring, and when Carlyle's philosophy and Darwin's science were both thought very 'dangerous.'" The review continues:—

"The novel is a very honest and sincere attempt to prove by fiction the fundamental truths of Christianity and the inherent evil of Agnosticism. But we fear that at this time of day the moral tale in which the good young man who believes in his Bible prospers over all difficulties and marries the beautiful heroine, and in which the bad young man, who indulges in religious doubt, immediately robs his master's till, and goes down the slippery slope to perdition, will not be convincing even to young minds. After all, the 'freethinker' does not necessarily become a thief or a drunkard, or take to wife beating as a relaxation."

We should think not, indeed. There are too many Freethinkers about in the present age to permit of such an idea being possible except in the most ignorant and bigoted circles. The mental residuum, of course, will believe anything; and Dr. Fitchett may find appreciative readers amongst them; but people who observe and think will shrug their shoulders, smile, and pass him by as an antediluvian.

We gather from the review that a man called Giffard, in this primitive novel—a Freethought orator, refined, sincere, educated, and idealistic— attracts the black sheep to his audience, and perverts a Young Men's Christian Association into paths of wickedness. This, and apparently worse, results from the establishment of a Freethought Association

in a manufacturing town. Mr. Fitchett appears to think, or to believe his readers will think, that manufacturing towns are abodes of immaculate virtue until Freethought gets amongst them. How true this is to nature the man in the street is able to judge for himself. But we will go further. Since the question has been raised, we may remind Dr. Fitchett, or inform him if he has never heard of it, that the professed Christian population is responsible for most of the vice and crime in this country. Ninety-five per cent. of the inmates of prisons have been Sunday-school scholars. Nearly all of them put themselves down as belonging to some Christian denomination. Unbelieving prisoners are only a miserable handful. And it is not true that "infidels" drink all the whisky, as Torrey suggested; they are not numerous enough to do it without a lot of Christian assistance. Neither do they keep Piccadilly going. Somehow or other, though they ought to practice all the vice and commit all the crime, they are shamefully worsted in the competition by their orthodox fellow citizens.

Newspaper policy is generally based upon the facts. If a Freethinker gets into trouble, they would very likely head their report with "A Secularist in the dock," or something like that. But they would never think of printing such a headline as "A Christian in the dock." Such a thing is too common to attract attention. And a fact like this is more pregnant than a thousand arguments.

We would observe, in conclusion, that the late Mr. Gladstone felt obliged to admit the falsity of the idea that "the elevation of moral character in individuals varied with, and according to, the amount of their dogmatic belief." Such a view, he said, was "untrue, offensive, and even absurd." "Had I ever been inclined to such a conception," he added, "the experience of my life would long ago have undeceived me." But there are people who cannot be undeceived; and Dr. Fitchett, if he is sincere, appears to be one of them..

G. W. FOOTE.

### Roman Civilisation.

OF the books published in England of late years, dealing with ancient Rome, the two works of Professor Samuel Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Days of the Western Empire* (1898) and *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (1905), must occupy a high, if not the highest, place. Combining great scholarship with an easy literary style, Professor Dill puts before his readers a rapid, but adequate, survey of the last centuries of the Empire in all its varied aspects. The result is that for the average reader Pagan society lives again; while to Christian readers, those brought up in the orthodox belief that the Roman Empire was a mass of corruption sinking beneath the weight of its own vices, with Christianity operating on it as a pure life-giving force, to such these volumes will come as a rude shock. And bearing in mind the nature of Christian prejudice, the shock will probably be as unwelcome as it is violent. But this is no fault, nor do we believe it will be any concern, of the author's. The fault must rest with those Christian teachers who have systematically distorted history and slandered a civilisation, the better features of which their religion was neither morally strong enough to absorb nor intellectually able to appreciate.

One striking fact brought out in Professor Dill's pages is that to the last, until the remnants of ancient civilisation became lost in the long night of the Dark Ages, the truest and best culture remained with the Pagans. This superiority on the Pagan side holds good not only of culture in general, but also in the presentation of religious beliefs. The chapters in which Professor Dill deals with the belief in God, Immortality, and with his description of the various religious schools that began to flourish in Rome during the first and second centuries, very clearly proves that even on the religious side much may be

said against Christianity being considered a step forward. The significant thing is that this rank growth of religious beliefs covers the period when the moral fibre of Rome began to weaken, and when the devotion to civic and national ideals began to lose its force. The relation between the decay of certain of the better aspects of Roman life and the growth of Christianity is so constant that one can scarcely fail to relate the two in terms of causation. "Christianity," in the words of Renan, "sucked ancient society like a vampire, drawing out all its forces and creating that general enervation against which the patriotic empire vainly struggled." And dealing with a yet later period—the fifth century—Professor Dill points out that while the Barbarian invasion was not more formidable than earlier ones had been, the dying out of municipal government, the growth of an Oriental system of government, and the diversion of attention from the old to new channels, prepared the way for the Barbarian conquest. Not only did Christianity fail to arrest the decay of civic and intellectual life—it hastened it; and evils that admitted of cure under other conditions became incurable with Christianity in the ascendant.

A Christian reader will look in vain through Professor Dill's books for evidences of the refining or civilising power of his religion. Commonly Christians claim that the destruction of the gladiatorial games was due to the influence of Christianity. Professor Dill supplies ample evidence that the Christian objection was the same as Macaulay said was the Puritan objection to bear-baiting—not that it hurt the bear, but that it pleased the people. So the early Christian objection to the arena and the theatre was that it kept people from church. St. Augustine complained that the African churches were often emptied by the attraction of the spectacles. It is also worth noting that the first official protest against Sunday performances was based on the grounds that they kept people from divine service. But with all the protests of the Church, the theatre and the games continued, until, finally, not the morality of Christians, but the growing poverty of the municipalities, rendered their continuance impossible.

In the same way Professor Dill sweeps away the common misrepresentations on the question of slavery. It has, he says, "been the custom to speak of that [Roman] society as depending for the supply of its wants entirely on slave labor." This he shows to be a pure delusion. Slaves were, of course, numerous; but in all probability Roman society did not depend upon slave labor to anything like the extent to which the Christian Southern States of America did some sixteen centuries later. Professor Dill points out that one of the most striking social phenomena of the early Empire was "the immense development of the free proletariat." These associations of free labor were organised into guilds and existed in all parts of the Empire. Many of the members of these guilds had originally been slaves, but their organisation "cultivated social feeling, heightened their self-respect, and guarded their collective interests." The organisation of industry through these guilds or colleges "attained an immense development in the Antonine age, and still more in the third century after the definite sanction and encouragement given to these societies by Alexander Severus." The fact is that the occasions of release from slavery were so numerous that the freed slaves must of necessity have formed a numerous class, and the records of the Empire contain numerous instances of some of the highest positions in the State being held by these freedmen.

Professor Dill gives readers a much needed warning not to place entire reliance upon pictures of Roman Society when drawn by satirists like Juvenal, or by severe moralists like Ammianus. Naturally, such writers dwell upon the darker aspects of contemporary life. Pliny and Juvenal were contemporaries, but the corruption depicted by the latter is conspicuously absent from the pages of the former. In Pliny's letters there is a portrait gallery of youths and maidens

"whose innocence was guarded by good women as pure and strong as those matrons who nursed the stern, unbending soldiers of the Samnite and Punic wars." It is also pointed out that the inscriptions on tombs and monuments, as well as the pages of various writers, reveal quite another world to that unveiled by the satirists. And the corruption at its worst appears to have been nearly confined to the capital. Even there the picture given by Ammianus is "hardly worse than might be drawn of English Society in the reigns of George II. and George III." Says Professor Dill:—

"On countless tombs we have the record of a family life of sober, honest industry, and pure affection. In the calm of rural retreats in Lombardy or Tuscany, while the capital was frenzied with vicious indulgence.....there were many families living in almost puritan quietude, where the moral standard was in many respects as high as among ourselves.....In the darkest days, the violence of the bad princes spent itself on their nobles, on those whom they feared, or whom they wished to plunder..... Just and upright governors were the rule, and not the exception.....Municipal freedom and self-government were probably at their height at the very time when life and liberty in the capital were in hourly peril. The great stoic doctrine of the brotherhood and equality of men, as members of a world-wide commonwealth, which was destined to inspire legislation in the Antonine age, was openly preached in the reign of Caligula and Nero."

In a most admirable manner Professor Dill brings before his readers the richness of the municipal life and public spirit of the Empire. Education was provided for in a most lavish manner. Schools were established in all parts of the Empire, and bursaries founded for poor scholars. Antoninus Pius began the regular organisation of public medical attendance, and required towns to have a certain number of physicians among their salaried officers. From Vespasian to Marcus Aurelius constant provision was made for the higher studies. Nerva, Trajan, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius established orphanages for destitute children and charitable institutions for the education and maintenance of poor ones. The almost countless inscriptions that have been deciphered of late years bear constant witness, not only to the wonderful development of civic life, but also to "a vast mass of lavish generosity" on the part of the wealthier classes. The forms taken are as varied as the needs of the community—baths, free to all, theatres, bridges, new roads, endowments of various charities, annual feasts. Professor Dill remarks that this "splendid public spirit.....all seems a spontaneous growth of the social system," and adds, "There has probably seldom been a time when wealth was more generally regarded as a trust, a possession in which the community at large has a right to share. There never was an age in which the wealthy more frankly, and even recklessly, recognised this imperious claim."

One question is constantly forced on the attention of readers of Professor Dill's two books. What had the world to gain by the substitution of Christian for Pagan rule? Nay, what *did* the world gain by such an exchange? Better still, might it be asked, what did the world lose; for the history of Christendom for centuries is the record of the disappearance of that learning, civic life, public spirit, and capacity for rule that stands out so plainly in the works with which I have been dealing. Or one might put a yet further question and ask, what the world might have been by now had Christianity never reached a position of control? To answer this one would have to imagine the Pagan civilisation continuing unbroken from the second century to our own. One must eliminate the long night of the Dark Ages, with the constant struggle of the Churches against freedom of thought, speech, and action, and put in their stead the Pagan traditions of personal freedom, civic and national ideals, the power and importance of a systematic cultivation of the human intellect. And if the problem is properly worked, the answer will give some conception of how much the world lost by the triumph of the Cross.

C. COHEN.

## The Essential Immorality of the Christian Scheme of Salvation.

WHAT the Christian Scheme of Salvation really is, it is impossible to determine. If we are told that it is contained in the New Testament, the problem is by no means solved, because the New Testament has always been differently interpreted by different schools of theology. Everybody is aware that the "isms" of Christianity are innumerable; but each one of them claims to be firmly based on New Testament teaching. At one time it was taught that almost immediately after the creation of the world a terrible war took place between God and the Devil for the possession of mankind, in which God was completely defeated. In consequence of this the Devil became the owner and sovereign of the human race. After about four thousand years God entered into negotiations with his Satanic Majesty with reference to the recovery of his lost kingdom. At length Satan agreed, on certain conditions, to restore mankind to their original proprietor, the conditions being that the second person in the Holy Trinity should himself become man, and pay a heavy ransom by dying a voluntary death on the Cross of shame. The conditions were fulfilled on God's part; but the Devil was loath to honor his side of the bargain. Indeed, it was not quite certain what the contract was—whether all, or a certain number of, the captives were to be released on payment of the ransom. However that may be, it was the opinion of the early Fathers that the death of Christ on the accursed tree was a ransom payed to the Devil for the release of all, or a certain proportion of his human captives. And there are many verses in the New Testament which favor such a doctrine.

As theology developed that dogma slipped out of it, and divines began to speak of the Atonement as a ransom paid to God. According to this view man, since the Fall, is hopelessly in God's debt. God's law had been broken, and before the breakers of it could be restored to the Lawgiver's favor, the broken law must be fully honored. This was done by the self-sacrifice on Calvary of the God-man, Jesus Christ. On that awful Cross, Christ endured the hiding of his Father's face, drank the cup of Divine wrath to the dregs, paid all man's debts in full, satisfied *all* the claims of Eternal Justice, and said, "Father, it is done; I have stood in man's law-place, and made complete amends on his behalf; and now Father take him back to thy bosom, and let all his past be sunk, for my sake." Such has been the scheme of salvation according to the orthodox Church ever since Anselm's days. Salvation was impossible without atonement, and the necessity for atonement arose from the justice of God.

In our day this doctrine has lost much of its ancient majesty; but it still remains, in one form or another, the doctrine in all so-called Evangelical Churches. It is still maintained that Christ did for man what man could never have done for himself. It is still held that the forgiveness of sins is a free gift from Jesus Christ, which he purchased for us through the shedding of his blood. Converts still sing out, "Jesus paid it all," "Nothing, either great or small, remains for me to do," "We were sinners doomed to die, Jesus paid the penalty." This is the doctrine still preached at all mission and revival services; and it is the only doctrine that appeals to the ignorant masses.

But is it a moral doctrine? Is it the teaching on which to bring up a nation of strong and valiant people? A few of the more thoughtful divines of the present day recognise that, presented in its orthodox nakedness, it is a doctrine that honest people cannot uphold. So they weave a garment of ambiguous words for it, and thus clothed they imagine that its native ugliness cannot be discerned. Christ did not pay our debts for us, they say; he merely disclosed the fact that our Heavenly Father is willing to remit them if we only ask him. Christ

was not punished in our stead, he was not punished at all, his one mission being to reveal the Father. That is what they call the Moral View of the Atonement. But is it a moral view? Is a moral view of the Atonement possible? Are not all views of it profoundly immoral? Let us see.

Whatever view of the Atonement be adopted, it is generally conceded that the terms by which the New Testament describe it, such as *ransom*, *purchase*, *redemption*, *propitiation*, must stand. Forgiveness is God's free gift to us *purchased* for us by the precious blood of Christ. The whole thing smacks of the market and the law-court. Salvation is a transaction, a thing achieved by contract. It is *unmoral* at the start, and it ends by being positively *immoral*.

A Sunday or two ago the Rev. H. T. Potten preached a sermon in Whiteabbey Congregational Church, which is published in the *British Congregationalist* for September 20, under the title of "The Nature and Proof of Divine Love." This sermon treats of man as a fallen creature whom God desires to raise up through Christ. God loves man even in his sin. "There is a grand impartiality in the love of God," Mr. Potten tells us. "He loves all, saint and sinner, but he loves because he seeks to win all his children's affection." What proof is there that such love exists? "The grand proof of Divine Love is seen in the mission of God's Son." Well, what was the mission of God's Son? Man's sin, we are told, has separated between him and God; it "has effected a breach in the relationship that the human family sustains to God as its Father." This "strained relationship" was allowed to continue for four thousand years before any step was taken towards ending it. After the lapse of so long a period, "Divine love sent forth the Son of the Father to effect, by his sacrificial and atoning death, a restoration of the strained relationship." In this sentence there is evidently a slip of the pen. Clearly instead of *of*, we should read *from*, or substitute *removal*, or *deliverance* for *restoration*, otherwise the sentence is perfectly meaningless. Now what is forgiveness? It is "the removal of the strained relationship—the removal of the feeling which all sin creates in the presence of goodness—the removal of alienation." Now, mark, "the removal of the strained relationship" is to be effected by "the sacrificial and atoning death" of the Father's Son.

Now the mockery, the cruelty, the immorality of this plan of salvation is in full view. The heartlessness of the God it contemplates is perfectly revolting. God in Nature and God in Redemption are in complete harmony. The Typhoon at Hong Kong last week killed over ten thousand Chinese—was that horror a manifestation of Divine love? Was it our loving Heavenly Father who caused such a fearful catastrophe? Nature teems with deeds of that blood-curdling character. "You are as dear to God as the apple of his eye," the preacher says. And yet he drowns and boils and burns and in a million other ways destroys us without a moment's compunction. Such is the God of Nature; and the God of Redemption is in the same image and after the same likeness. Here also he seems to delight in making sport of the children of his heart. While pretending to love them all with deathless affection he yet allows the bulk of them to slide down into the place of endless torments, there to burn for ever unconsumed in the fire of his wrath. When will the divines perceive that their picture of God is a horrible caricature? They say that we cannot save ourselves, but that the Father is both willing and anxious to save us all through his Eternal Son; and yet though able and willing to do it he mocks us and claps us into the prison-house of his Universe, "there to dwell in adamant chains and penal fire" for ever and forever. Well, we will pay such a God the compliment of not believing in him.

Surely, Mr. Potten cannot have faced the facts of human life in their grim reality, or he would have seen that they give the lie direct to all his teaching in this sermon. It would not be fair to charge him with conscious insincerity; but he is undoubtedly

guilty of the graver charge of looking at history through colored spectacles. The teaching is that Christ has done for man what man could never have done for himself. By his sacrificial and atoning death he has made possible for God to forgive sin and deliver mankind from its love and power. Such is the gracious revelation contained in the glorious gospel of the blessed Savior of the world. But for fully four thousand years, according to the Biblical chronology, God withheld this redemptive revelation from the world. When he did give it, it was in an out-of-the-way corner, and to a few illiterate, ignorant peasants; and now, after two thousand years, it is known to but a small minority of the world's population, while even to the majority in this small minority, it is as if it had never been granted. How does Mr. Potten explain these awkward facts? Do they not flatly contradict the statement that God is love, and that his love is free from partiality? Do they not show conclusively that the God of Christians is far and away the most immoral of all beings? The kindest, most considerate thing we can do to such a God is to refuse to acknowledge him—to ignore him.

Furthermore, belief in such a scheme of salvation prevents ignorant and thoughtless people from working out their own salvation. They wait, doing nothing, or doing evil, until God sees fit to convert them. There are thousands of young people up and down the world who are morally asleep simply because as yet they have not got religion. They believe in God, in Christ, in heaven, and in hell in a languid sort of way; but not being as yet saved they sow their wild oats and have their fling, confident that by and bye they will get converted and turn over a new leaf. One day they will attend some revival service, and the great change will come. Thus they wait for God, and do not care. Everything is to be done for them, and so they are prevented from developing self-reliance, self-help, courage, and pluck, without which nobility and strength of character are unattainable. Is it not a fact beyond dispute that the people who get the most from life are those who make the biggest demands upon it, who exert themselves to the utmost in the hope of winning the best prizes? What we all need is correspondence with our environments, and this comes, not by faith in an unseen and unverified God of love, but as the reward of heroic, persistent struggle. According to Mr. Potten, salvation means the removal of the strained relationship between man and God, and the establishment of a relationship of perfect confidence and love; and this can be brought about only through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. But according to Science, salvation means the gaining of self-mastery and self-harmony, and the developing of active sympathy and fellowship with our fellow-beings.

Once more, the Christian scheme of salvation concerns itself supremely with God and eternity and our relation thereto, and assigns to life on earth a secondary and merely relative position. Therefore, the more intimate a man becomes with God, the more interest he takes in eternity and its things, the less intimate he is with his fellow-man, and the less interest he takes in earthly affairs. It cannot be otherwise. No one can concentrate on more than one world at a time, nor live two lives simultaneously. Our capacities are limited, and we must not over-tax them. Mr. Potten's gospel says: "Fix your thoughts on God, and give him your supreme affection; lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, and let your hearts follow them; prepare for eternity, and look with scorn on time and space and sense; let your conversation or citizenship be in heaven all the time." The gospel of Science says: "Time escapes, live now, or never; concentrate on the present life, because it is the only life of which you are sure; get into right relations with society; and in self-service blossoming into glorious altruism find your truest joy." The facts do not confirm Mr. Potten's gospel, for it deals chiefly with things concerning which there are no facts, but the gospel of Science is based upon facts, and it is with facts alone that it deals. God, the Eternal Christ, and the unseen world are not facts,

but hypotheses, and our relations with them are at best but imaginary, while man and earth and society are realities from which there is absolutely no escape while life continues. It will take all our time and all our energy to deal efficiently with these facts, to understand and use them to the best advantage, and to get into working harmony with them. If we are to do justice to them God and eternity must wait till we have finished with them. The wisest policy is to take one world and one life at a time, and not trouble about anything beyond.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Acid Drops.

The Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops of France, have addressed a pastoral letter to the clergy, in which they declare their filial adherence to the Pope's encyclical. The Separation Law in its present form, they say, deprives France not only of its name as a Catholic nation, but of the true liberty of professing Catholicism. After expressing the hope that France will be spared a religious war, the letter goes on to say that if the Separation of Church and State is to be carried out at all costs Catholics ought, at least, to be allowed the use of the Church properties which belong to them, and to enjoy common liberty as in really free countries. If an attempt is made, contrary to the wishes of the Head of the Church, to establish associations which can only be Catholic in name, none of the faithful will join such organisations. The priests will submit to spoliation and poverty rather than betray their trust, and all Catholics are therefore bound to contribute, according to their means, to the support of the Church and the clergy.

We are not concerned, of course, to discuss this letter of the Catholic Hierarchy in France, except as far as it relates to the faulty side of the Separation Law. We quite agree with the Hierarchy that the Catholics ought to be allowed the use of the Church properties, and to enjoy common liberty as in really free countries. We said as much in our recent leading article on the subject. And we venture to add that the attempt of the Republic to dictate to or control the Catholic Church in any way is utterly inconsistent with the essential principles of disestablishment.

The Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*—which is a Nonconformist paper, and therefore hates the Catholic Church worse than the Devil is said to hate holy water—after quoting from the letter of the Catholic Hierarchy in France to the parish priests, and through them to the faithful, winds up in this fashion:—

“So here, at last, is the formal challenge of the French Episcopate in ‘absolute obedience’ to a ‘foreign prince’—as the rulers of the lay State are defining him: the challenge of the sacerdotal mind to the lay mind, of mediævalism, of a supernatural hierarchy, to Democracy—to all which we understand by spiritual and intellectual freedom, by, in a word, the modern spirit.”

Evidently the *Daily News* has as much respect for the rights of Catholics in France as it has for the rights of Freethinkers in England. But it needn't talk *blague* to the point of sheer silliness. What on earth has “the modern spirit” got to do with the matter? And what has the “foreign prince” got to do with the matter either? People who can be deceived by *vorbiage* like this are intellectually hopeless. But we daresay the *Daily News* understands its own readers. After all, the only points at issue are whether the Catholic Church in France shall be left to manage her own affairs in her own way, and whether the places of worship shall be placed at her service without perpetual State intervention. This is the whole substance of the quarrel. All the rest is dust thrown into the eyes of the spectators.

Rev. Forbes A. Phillips, vicar of Gorleston, has done a thing which he would find it hard to reconcile with the Sermon on the Mount. His church having been broken into lately, Mr. Phillips laid in wait one night armed with a revolver, to see if he could catch the thieves. Presently two men came forth from among the graves and began to operate upon the church door. Thereupon the warlike man of God called upon them to hold up their hands; and as they turned and fled he fired, wounding one man who shrieked and fell. Hurrying off for medical assistance, Mr. Phillips returned only to find that the birds had flown. A large sheet of paper, smeared with blood, was left behind, and upon this clue the police started investigating. Our business, however, is not with them or with the burglars, but with the vicar of Gorleston. We believe he violated the laws of England, as

well as the Sermon on the Mount, in firing at those men. He might have killed one of them on the spot, and capital punishment is not the legal penalty for attempted burglary. But it may be that the vicar of Gorleston thinks shooting too mild a punishment for men who would steal from a church—especially from *his* church.

Rev. G. E. Thorn, pastor of the Clifton Congregational Church, Peckham, is described by the *London Star*, which appears to be an authority on such matters, as being “full of healthy, breezy, live Christianity.” Well, the only *breezy* Christianity we ever heard of is the Christianity that fanned the fire of the stake when heretics and infidels were burnt to death for the greater glory of God. Perhaps it is more true, as the *Star* says, that Mr. Thorn is a real “hustler from Hustlerville.” He is a great believer in sensational advertisements, and doesn't mind doing a little clown business to help along the glorious cause of the Gospel. He was announced to appear on the stage of the Crown Theatre, Peckham, last Sunday evening, in full armor. The various pieces—helmet, surcoat, hauberk, greaves, armored gauntlets, sword and shield—were to be put on, one by one, in the presence of his audience. “We must have a big crowd, and a new crowd, if possible,” he said to the *Star* interviewer, “and this is an attraction.” A photogravure of the clerical artist in full armor accompanied the report of the interview, and it was easy to see that he fancied himself in that get-up. He evidently believed in his drawing-power as a gallant knight—*minus* an enemy. He would probably draw still better if he stood on his head. But perhaps it is too soft to bear his weight.

“Kissing the Book” ought to be abolished altogether, for the “sanitary” oath seems to be impossible. Objection is being taken to the white-covered “washable” Gospels which have just been provided in the magistrates' courts in the county of Middlesex. It is said that the risk of infection from dirty-mouthed and diseased book-kissers is as bad as ever, if not worse; as the polished white covers retain the finger-prints and lip-prints left by witnesses, which are thus quite easily transferred to the lips of the next deponent. Apparently the “sanitary” oath will involve clearing the Bible out of courts entirely—which will be an excellent thing.

These new “washable” Gospels don't end with the last chapter of John. The last page contains part of the first chapter of Acts; the last line being the beginning of the ninth verse: “And when he had spoken these —.” There the volume ends abruptly. And if it were in use as a reading book that abrupt ending would suggest a good many doubts. Some readers would say to themselves—when the statement was emphasised in this extraordinary way—“I wonder if he *did* speak all these.” Which might set them thinking and lead to their rescue from the Christian superstition.

The question that puzzles the Churches of Wales at present is, “What will become of Evan Roberts?” He is a white elephant on their hands, and they don't know how to dispose of him. The best plan would be to leave him alone. He would soon find his own level; he is gradually finding it, as it is. The gilt is off the ginger-bread already.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* for September 19, “A. L. N.” calls conscience a “mystery,” and he is quite right if his definition of conscience is a true one. As it happens, it is an entirely erroneous definition. “Without physical or mental compulsion,” he observes, “we are compelled by conscience to do what we do not like to do.” That sentence contains two palpable fallacies. The first is that there can be anything in man which is neither physical nor mental. Of course, conscience is a faculty of the mind. The other fallacy is that we ever do what we do not like. As a matter of fact we never do what we do not like. Every action is an expression of the strongest motive. Jonathan Edwards settled this long ago.

“A. L. N.” makes another assertion equally silly. “Conscience gives no reasons for its commands, and cannot be reasoned with.” That is a totally erroneous account of the activities of the conscience. In a healthy person conscience is both intelligent and intelligible, and all its commands are reasonable. All the “mystery” attaching to it is a theological invention; and the sooner we get rid of it the better it will be for the cause of true morality.

The Rev. Stanley Rogers, of Liverpool, preaching the other Sunday on “Rationalism and Hooliganism,” declared that they are twins, and that therefore you cannot have the former without the latter. But Mr. Rogers spoke without

his book. Great Britain is the most Christian country under heaven; and yet in this God-dwelt and Spirit-filled land, particularly "in Glasgow, Liverpool, and other cities, they were face to face with a spirit of lawlessness that threatened to disturb the peace and security of city life." What a compliment this is to the moralising and humanising power of Christianity! What an eloquent witness to the colossal impotence of the Churches! Hooligans are not Rationalists—they are the moral scum for the existence of which the Churches are directly responsible.

Mr. Rogers was tremendously severe on what he called "atheistic socialism." "Its fruits are evil," he cried, "and lawlessness is one of them." If Mr. Rogers would only use his reason, and for once consult the facts, he would realise what arrant nonsense he talked. He would find that hooligans are neither Atheists nor Socialists, but simply the dregs of Christian society, or the products of that system of education which the Churches have always favored and still seek to continue.

Clergymen are usually inaccurate, and the Rev. S. Turnbull, of Dundee, is no exception. In the course of a sermon in the St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, on August 19, he delivered himself as follows:—

"The terrible hooliganism which was rampant in the streets of London a few years ago was successfully and speedily stamped out by a free and fearless use of the lash. The magistrates there were not afraid to order it, and I am convinced that if such measures were resorted to in Glasgow hooliganism would soon be a thing of the past."

Mr. Joseph Collinson, of the Humanitarian League—who is a very good Freethinker, by the way—wrote to Mr. Turnbull, pointing out that there was no act which authorised English magistrates to flog for street ruffianism or hooliganism; and asking him to be so good as to give his authority for the statement that such offences had been suppressed in London or elsewhere by a "free and fearless use of the lash." But the man of God did not deign to reply. Like the rest of his tribe, when they are found out, he took refuge in "dignified silence." Mr. Collinson, however, has ventilated the matter in a communication to the *Glasgow Daily Record*.

Some correspondent, signing himself "Tenor Singer," took Mr. Collinson to task. His letter is so exquisitely pious that we quote it *in extenso*:—

"I was very glad to see that the Rev. S. Turnbull, of Lochee, had preached a sermon lately on hooliganism, and recommended the lash as the best remedy. Mr. Turnbull has got Holy Scripture to back him up in his ideas, and no man's opinion or Humanitarian League is equal to God's Word, which is sharper than any two-edged sword. God gave ten commandments to Moses, His servant, and He also gave him a command to flog, but the stripes were not to exceed forty. As the ten commandments are as appropriate to the Christian as they were to the Jew, so also is flogging, which the Lord has never rescinded. If flogging is not a cure, it is certainly a deterrent, and our Lord Himself advocated flogging, as it is written in St. Luke's Gospel, 'And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' Let us not be led away by the ideas which emanate from the Humanitarian League."

We thank this gentleman for explaining his and Mr. Turnbull's creed.

The National Bible Society of Scotland is in trouble. Last year its income was £27,000, but its expenditure exceeded that amount by £5,032. It is complained, however, that a much larger sum is required to enable the Society "to carry on its work as efficiently and extensively as the Board deem necessary." The income of the British and Foreign Bible Society is somewhere about £250,000 per annum, and that of the American Bible Society about £45,000. The Bible is proudly declared to be the most popular book in the world; and yet it requires an annual sum of £323,000 to circulate it. And it must be borne in mind, further, that all clergymen and ministers and Christian workers and all who in any way support the Churches in all Christendom are agents for the circulation of the Scriptures! One would naturally infer from these facts that, left to itself, like other books, the Bible would be a dead loss to its publishers.

The Rev. Dr. Hutton, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland, appears to be on terms of special intimacy with the Almighty. It is amazing what a vast amount of information concerning the Supreme Being he managed to convey to the United Free Church saints of Scotstown the other Friday evening. It is evident that this eminent divine, if he chose, could write a full Biography of the Supreme Being. From all eternity, he said, God has been seeking a resting-place. He created the

Universe that he might rest in it; but he was not satisfied with it. Then he made man; and man woefully disappointed him. "There was One in his bosom on whom he could ever rest"; but he craved for a resting-place on earth. Then, by means of the Atonement on Calvary, he brought the Church into existence. "Yes, he will have a Church; he will retain and regenerate to himself a multitude no man can number, out of every kindred and people and tongue"; and with the Church, his masterpiece, he is entirely satisfied, and he has made it his "resting-place on earth."

Dr. Hutton ought to know whereof he speaks, for is he not God's man? Has not God appointed him to his high office, and is not the stamp of divinity on all his utterances? "As a society," he says, "there is no more excellent society than the Church. There is no society, no body politic, no institution, no assembly of human beings like it, and the glory of its constitution, administration, and function, and gracious origin and enterprise, are its power. All others are but human though lawful institutions, subordinate in the order of Providence to this great institution of piety, the great institution of God." Now, take this "institution of God," this resting-place of Deity, and hold it up in front of the mirror of history, and see what it is really like. The vision will be such as to force from you the exclamation: "If God is satisfied with and can rest in the Church, then I am not satisfied with God, and cannot rest in him. Away with him and his resting-place!"

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, is going to settle all questions and set London people right by holding Sunday afternoon conferences, the first of which has just taken place. At this first conference the question under discussion was whether or not people who make fortunes can be Christians. Mr. Phillips' forte is not reasoning. He began the discussion by begging the whole question. "As a matter of fact," he is reported to have said, "some men have made fortunes who are Christians." But that is the very point in dispute, and such an assertion only complicates the problem, and shows the speaker's incapacity to deal with it.

"A Christian," said Mr. Phillips, "is a follower of Christ, and the will of Christ is the aim of his life." Mr. Phillips is an orthodox man, to whom the Bible is the Word of God. Well, this Word of God forbids men to have fortunes on earth; that is the will, the command, of Christ. When a rich man went to Jesus inquiring about the way of life Jesus ordered him to part with his riches. Therefore, it stands to reason that a man whose aim in life is to please Christ by doing his will, cannot entertain even the least desire to become rich.

After taking for granted the very thing that required to be reasoned out, Mr. Phillips talked insufferable twaddle about the "supreme purpose of life," "the grace of God," and making Christ "King and Captain of our lives." Such talk is nauseous, and no wonder sensible people turn away from it with disgust. This is the sickly Evangelicalism, the mawkish pietism, in the atmosphere of which Infidels and Atheists are so plentifully bred.

Here is yet another Christian book against the Supernatural, entitled *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, by George Burman Foster, Professor of the Philosophy of Religion in the University of Chicago. In this strange volume, Professor Foster demonstrates the failure of supernaturalism. "Supernaturalism," he observes, "counts right feeling and right willing a donation." Again, "To the scientific understanding of the world and to the intellectual habitude superinduced by science, a miracle cannot be admitted." With miracles, of course, departs the sinlessness of Jesus. "The sinlessness of Jesus," he adds, "is no result of historical study." Of course not.

There are many views upheld in this unique work with which we are in complete disagreement. Indeed, with its aim—to prove "the finality of the Christian religion"—we are entirely out of sympathy. But it is a significant sign of the times to find in a theological production such an expression as this: "We have at length learned that to have faith does not mean to hold a set of opinions; does not even mean to think what Jesus thought." What it does precisely mean we are not informed.

Reviewing the above book in the *British Weekly*, the famous United Free Church Professor, Dr. Marcus Dods, says: "The Jesus that remains after Professor Foster's analysis would never have accomplished the world's redemption." Quite so; and as the world's redemption has not been accomplished by the Christ of theology, Dr. Dods

need not fear the more natural and sensible and human Jesus of Professor Foster. However, Dr. Dods is not excessively dogmatic: *he is not quite sure that his brother of Chicago is wrong.* All he says is this: "While admiring the great ability and candor with which the discussion is conducted, one feels disposed to question whether, even judged from an apologetic point of view, Professor Foster does not surrender too much." That is a very mild criticism, and it lacks the enthusiasm of deep-seated conviction.

Dr. Dods himself has surrendered much, and his present criticism implies that further surrenders must be made. Indeed, if Christianity is to survive at all it must part with or radically modify most of its dogmas. This is what the theologians have been doing for the last fifty years—*whittling Christianity away with the knife of modern knowledge.* Good luck to their iconoclastic enterprise. It is a grand thing to be on the right road, and facing the right destination, however slow the pace.

Heathen Japan has a parliament, Heathen China is going to have one, Heathen Persia is just having one. And it has all happened peacefully. Holy Russia cannot get a parliament without a tremendous national convulsion—an agony and bloody sweat. Such is the superiority of Christian over Heathen nations.

The world has not improved all round. In some respects it has degenerated. Fifty years ago the massacre of Jews (not to mention others) in Russia would have aroused a fierce storm of indignation throughout the liberal-minded population of Western Europe. To-day it hardly ruffles the surface of public serenity. Why is this? Has Christianity finally sapped the manhood of the "civilised" nations? Or has the "glorious free press," which perpetually thrives upon bad news, done the trick? Have we supped so full of horrors through press enterprise that we have grown callous? Will somebody explain?

The outrages perpetrated on Jewish and Revolutionary women in Russia prove what a noble influence a thousand years of Christianity has had upon Russian nature. This side of the question is generally lost sight of. Moreover, as Russia is a Christian country, and the Czar is pious, and the Church supports him, the Christian pulpits of this country have very little to say about the infamies of the Russian government, which are positively the worst of modern times. But what a noise the pulpits always make when the Turk kills a few Christians!

General Booth sent a telegram to the Spurgeon Jubilee meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The last words of the message were—"Pray for the Salvation Army." Has it come to that?

The London *Star* should keep up its Bible reading. The other day it referred to the book of Revelations, and, of course, there is no such book in the Christian Scriptures. A little later it referred to the proposal to set up a new Four Hundred in New York, to consist entirely of persons of irreproachable character, and asked the proposer to recollect "what happened when Abraham tried to find candidates for such a select circle." Of course Abraham tried to do nothing of the kind. The *Star* misremembers the story in the eighteenth of Genesis.

It used to be said that the only man in the House of Commons who quoted from or alluded to the Bible accurately was Mr. Henry Labouchere, whose worst enemies never accused him of believing it.

The "own correspondent" of the *Daily Mail* at New York reports the case of a Chicago pastor, the Rev. E. B. Chase, who has been dismissed from his church as too old at sixty. With tears in his eyes he bade farewell to his congregation. "I grasp the staff and go forth," he said, "believing that God will find employment for grey hairs." Evidently the trustee of the church thinks the reverend gentleman will have to find employment for his grey hairs in heaven. "A man of sixty," he said, "is of no use in this world. God has got no use for him. There are plenty of preachers; they are a drug on the market. What an up to date church needs is not a preacher, but a 'busky' hustling promoter who knows how to get money, and who can get his picture in the newspapers once in a while. We want one who can start a sensation occasionally and let the world know that the Church is still kicking, not one who simply preaches a lot of outworn righteousness, and then says, 'Brethren, let us pray!'" This gentleman's Christianity is worthy of Chicago. Fancy the Lord Jesus Christ getting crucified to produce this sort of thing nearly two thousand years after!

The Rev. Dr. Alexander Whyte, of United Free St. George's, Edinburgh, has the reputation of being Scotland's greatest preacher; and of his genius and eloquence there can be no doubt. Now, this shining light of orthodox theology frankly admits that *all* God's ways with men cannot be justified in this world. The Psalmist says, "God setteth the solitary in families" (Ps. lxxviii. 6); but Dr. Whyte says that the statement is not wholly true: "There are multitudes of solitary men and solitary women among us who have not been set in families, and who never will be so set. What about them? I cannot answer that. God alone can answer that." Quite true. There are myriads of perplexing questions which God alone can answer; but then, as God never *does* answer them in this world, what right has Dr. Whyte to assert that he *will* answer them and make all things plain in the next, or that there *is* a God to explain them in any world? He makes his ignorance a justification of his dogmatism.

The leader-writer of the *Church Times* must have an amazingly superficial acquaintance with the intellectual activities of a large proportion of our population. "We seem to have escaped," he says, "from that peril (Atheism), the belief in God being now no longer spoken of as irreconcilable with the discoveries of Science." He who can write such stuff is living in a fool's paradise. Is he not aware that the country is full of Atheistic societies, that hundreds, if not thousands, of Atheistic lectures are delivered every year, that Atheistic journals—weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual—are as numerous as blackberries, and that the bulk of our greatest Scientists are unbelievers? If not, let him look abroad, and ascertain the true state of things for himself.

But the *Church Times*, though blind to the existence and spread of Atheism, is fully alive to the rapid decay of reverence. "The heinousness of sin, the seriousness of life, the destiny of man, God's claim of obedience and worship," it admits, "are all treated with a flippancy which argues a very weak hold upon religion, and makes the Christian teacher's task one of increasing difficulty. Contemporary literature is permeated with this levity." But is it at all likely that people who really believed in God and his claims would treat either with levity? Why, the decay of reverence and the growth of levity are but signs that modern society is being steadily permeated with Atheism.

The *Church Times* deplors the fact that "perhaps the most significant of recent developments is the spread of irreverence among women." Secular Societies have made the same discovery, for never before had they so many lady members. The *Church Times* is only accurate when it states that "it has been, in the past, largely due to women that reverence has been maintained." Until now, women have always been more easily duped and gulled by the priests than men. At last women are being emancipated, their eyes are being opened, their understandings quickened, and they are beginning to see that "the sanctity of sacred things" is a pure invention of the priesthood, with no foundation in fact.

Very pathetic is the lament of the *Church Times* over this sad fall of women. "Since it became a woman's ambition to be in all possible respects like a man, she has lost in no small degree that delicate sense of the sacredness of sacred things which was one of her charms, and which inspired in the other sex reverence for herself." Of course, to the priest, a woman's chief charm is her allegiance to the altar, her devotion to the Lord, and, consequently, her dependence upon, and reverence for, himself. When she loses *this* charm—that is, when she gives up religion and priest-worship, she becomes like a mere man, and goes—to the Devil! Her great crime, however, is that she is learning to think for herself, instead of being a simple echo of the priest and the Church. But the *Church Times* is radically wrong. A woman's supreme charm is her womanliness, expressed in motherhood and sisterhood—in the capacity for loving and inspiring love—and of this charm Atheism does not, and cannot, rob her; it rather tends to intensify it.

According to the *Methodist Recorder*, the Rev. Stanley Parker is a most successful soldier of Christ at Woolwich. "On the previous Sunday," he is reported as saying, "a sceptic had come to the Brotherhood meeting to attack him, but was converted, and had handed over to him a pile of infidel literature which he had on the platform." One never sees the name and address of these converted sceptics. Every enterprising soul-saver seems to have one on hand—not in the shop, but in the back parlor.

The Rev. Canon Hensley Henson does not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and his views on Inspiration are

characterised as "advanced"; but he still clings to the fallacy that "Christendom possesses what the Far East, in spite of all its splendid heritage of brooding wisdom and social discipline, does not possess, a perfect individual morality expressed recognisably in an historic person." But what is the use of such a proud possession, even if real? The Canon himself is willing to "grant that at this stage—taking all the tests of social strength together—there exists in the Far East a more efficient society than any in Christendom." In that case, the Christian's possession of "a perfect individual morality expressed recognisably in an historic person" has not borne good fruit in practice. Indeed, though much boasted of, it has been a perfectly useless possession, because a higher social morality has already been developed by a nation devoid of it.

But there never was a more glaring fallacy than this concerning "a perfect individual morality expressed recognisably in an historic person." The sinless Christ nominally worshiped in the Churches is *not* "an historic person." Even on the assumption that the Gospels are historically reliable, which every scholar knows they are not, Jesus was not morally perfect. The sinlessness of Jesus is a pure dream of subsequent ages, an unembodied idea, and nothing more.

In this sermon preached in Westminster Abbey on Sunday afternoon September 2, Canon Henson is nothing if not sophistical. He readily admits that neither the Old Testament nor the New condemns slavery, and that there are "precedents of Apostolic practice" which are "unhappily misleading." But he asserts that the "Christian principles" enunciated in the New Testament "prohibit the fundamental hypothesis of all slave-systems known to history." Now, granting that this assertion is true, it proves absolutely nothing, because precisely the same assertion can be made regarding the principles laid down by the Stoic philosophers. In his reference to the Stoic philosophers, Canon Henson is both unjust and inaccurate. He says: "The spirit of Christian charity was, indeed, a more powerful regenerating force than the half contemptuous, half sceptical philosophising of aristocratic thinkers, who found no difficulty in associating with their humane speculations a personal share in the worst activities of their cruel and debased society."

That is hitting below the belt with a vengeance; and the Canon ought to be really ashamed of himself. It is essentially cowardly to exalt Christianity at the expense of reviling the Stoic philosophers; and the reproach cast upon the latter is utterly undeserved. Let Canon Hensley lay to heart the following quotation from Uhlhorn, which is endorsed by Harnack:—

"In the Roman Empire there had already appeared a universalism foreign to the ancient world. Nationalities had been effaced. The idea of universal humanity had disengaged itself from that of nationality. The Stoics had passed the word that all men were equal, and had spoken of brotherhood as well as of the duties of man towards man. Hitherto despised, the lower classes had asserted their position. The treatment of the slaves became milder. If Cato had compared them to cattle, Pliny sees in them his 'serving friends.' The position of the artisan improved, and freedmen worked their way up, for the guilds provided them not simply with a centre of social life, but also with the means of bettering their social position. Women, hitherto without any legal rights, received such in increasing numbers. Children were looked after."

This constant talk from the pulpit about "Christian principles," "the ideas of the Gospel," and "the spirit of Christ" being infinitely superior to all other principles, ideas, and spirit, is perfectly criminal. Canon Henson must know that Christianity contains not one principle, not one moral idea of any value, nor breathes a spirit, that had not been in the world, in definite expression, for many centuries prior to its birth. This is now a truism among scholars. And yet Christian ministers persist in repeating, parrot-like, what all thinking people know to be gigantic lies.

At the annual conference of the Welsh Presbyterian Church, at Shrewsbury, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., declared that "the churches had got to expand their ideals and broaden their conceptions. They had got to do something more than use Jesus Christ as a mere insurance policy, and unless they played their part, the people would have no use for them." This was very plain speaking, and the Presbyterian Church in that part of the world must be in low water to stand being talked to in such a manner. Whether it can expand its ideals and broaden its conceptions remains to be seen. Certainly there was not much expanding and broadening in the advice given afterwards by the Rev. J. H. Jowett, of Birmingham. "He had come to the conclusion," he said, "that one great weakness of the modern Christian

Church was that their God was too effeminate. The social evils of our time could not be faced and overwhelmed by an effeminate God. They must recover from the Old Testament the sense of a strong God, who could make strong men." Are we to suppose that Mr. Jowett wants to see the land swarming with Joshuas and Samsons—sanguinary ruffians and impossible athletes? Those were the sort of "strong men" turned out by Jehovah.

A newspaper report of the Grantham railway disaster refers to "the guard's van from which Knighton so providentially escaped." Well, the doctrine of Providence applies all round—or not at all. In that case, if Knighton was providentially saved, all the victims were providentially lost. The same Providence that preserved one butchered the others.

Whites and blacks have been having a rare old row at Atlanta in Georgia. There is a considerable list of killed and wounded—and troops had to take possession of the city. Both sides are Christians.

The Belfast Recorder gave judgment against James Carr, fruiterer and confectioner, who brought an action against the Rev. J. T. Stanley for libel. Plaintiff alleged that his business had been ruined by the defendant, who got a hundred residents to sign a paper declaring that the plaintiff's keeping open his shop on the Sabbath was "a public and daring infringement of the law, a gross insult to our common Christianity, and a disgrace to the neighborhood." Reading between the lines, it appears that the plaintiff's real offence was (1) that he was a Catholic, and (2) that he broke the Sabbath in a street under the defendant's very nose. For the rest, nobody expects a Catholic to get justice in Belfast; and Carr was ill-advised to start an action against a Protestant clergyman.

*Liverpool Opinion* prints a number of clerical answers to the question, "Is Atheism gaining ground in Liverpool?" Most of the men of God say "No," but Father Day, of the Society of Jesus, says "Yes." "My answer," he writes, "must be in the affirmative." He consoles the Liverpool Christians, however, by remarking that the case is still worse "in London and other large centres of life in the south and midlands of England." What a miserable comforter!

Canon Horsley, in the *Daily News*, finds that the sporting tipsters in the Paris journals are just as false prophets as the gentlemen in the same line of business in London. We understand the Canon's interest in this subject. He belongs to the tipster fraternity himself, only he deals with kingdom-come instead of the race-course. And he is probably as accurate as those he exposes.

This same Dean of Manchester says that the greatest disservice to the community is indiscriminate almsgiving. Jesus Christ said: "Give to every one that asketh."

Much amusement was caused at a Blackburn temperance meeting when the secretary announced luncheon at a local hotel "to meet the Rev. Scott Lidgett and the Rev. Dr. Townsend."

Rev. W. Carlile, boss of the Church Army, appeals for further funds to export English working people to Canada. What he wants more money for we fail to understand. He says that "in every case a bond is signed pledging the return by instalments of the sum advanced for emigration purposes." Funds ought to be coming in, therefore, from this source to keep up the stream of emigration. On the whole, the Church Army looks very much like a glorified loan society, rather than a philanthropic organisation.

"In India," the Dean of Manchester says, "ancient beliefs are breaking down." In England they are broken down. Why send the missionaries to India when there is a bigger job for them at home?

#### ONLY PARTIALLY IDENTIFIED.

Down in New Iberia, La., where Joseph Jefferson had one of his numerous houses, the actor and ex-President Cleveland were going over the plantation together and stopped before an old antebellum cabin. A smiling mammy invited them to enter. On the wall of the bare, dark room hung a lithograph picture of Cleveland. "Mammy," said Jefferson, "whose picture is that?" "I doan' know fo sho," was the reply, "but I think it's John de Baptis'."—*Literary Digest*.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

October 7, Glasgow; 14, Manchester; 28, Leicester.  
November 18, Birmingham.

**To Correspondents.**

**C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.**—September 30, a., Victoria Park; e., Stratford Town Hall. October 7, Stratford Town Hall; 14, a., Brockwell Park; e., Camberwell; 21, Tyneside Lecture Society, Newcastle; 22, Hetton-le-Hole. November 4, Birmingham. December 2, Forest Gate; 9, Glasgow; 16, Belfast.

**J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.**—October 21, Glasgow. December 2, Liverpool.

**MR. SYMES'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.**—October 14, Glasgow; 28, Manchester. November 4, Nelson; 11, Liverpool. December 2, Birmingham; 9, Leicester; 16, Newcastle.

**W. C. INGLIS.**—There is no offence. We respect your motive in writing to us on the subject. But we have always refrained from airing our personal views on Government and Socialism, and similar matters in the *Freethinker*. As a matter of fact, we do not wear the label you refer to, nor any other. We have views of our own, but we do not expect to find them fashionable. We may express them at length some day, but the deliberately elected work of our life is the battle against religious superstition. And if we help to free men's minds, and assist in enabling them to think effectively, why should you, or any man, complain that we do not devote ourselves to something else? Whatever truths other men have to offer, they will find seed-ground amongst those we have done something to liberate. What more do they want? Thanks, in conclusion, for all your good wishes.

**G. ATTENDURY.**—We answered you by post, as your need was pressing, but we have often answered it in the *Freethinker*. Every person can claim to affirm under the Oaths Act by declaring that he has no religious belief or that the taking of an oath is against his religious belief. No other declaration is necessary, and no other questions should be answered. Glad to hear that you pass this journal along, and that your shop-mates enquire regularly about "Acid Drops."

**E. NEVILLE.**—No doubt the N. S. S. Executive will take the matter in hand presently. It is not a thing to be rushed.

**E. J. JONES.**—Your letter ought to be inserted in Mr. Keir Hardie's organ. He ought not to be allowed to indulge in such "chatter about Christ" without challenge.

**R. AIRY.**—We hope we have got your name right, but your signature had to be guessed at. See paragraph on the cutting in "Acid Drops."

**W. HILL.**—Useful cuttings are always welcome. Thanks.

**GERALD GREY.**—Shall appear as early as possible. Glad to hear you say, "I cannot tell you how much I value your recent leading articles." It is pleasant to have the approbation of good judges. Whoever says otherwise is only pretending.

**W. P. BALL.**—Many thanks for your batches of cuttings.

**E. R. WOODWARD.**—See "Sugar Plums." The effort has our best wishes, anyhow.

**G. HULL.**—See paragraph.

**J. BROUGH.**—The "howler" is an old one, and was more forcible in its original Scotch. Thanks for cuttings and good wishes.

**W. J. RAMSEY.**—Sorry to hear of "Jack" Brock's death. He was as good a fellow as ever breathed. Many old memories waken at the sound of his name.

**T. ROBERTSON.**—We print the subjects selected for Mr. Foote's lectures at Glasgow next Sunday, for the sake of those who may not see the poster in time:—"A Searchlight on the Bible" and "Shelley and Robert Burns: a Study in Poetry and Progress." Pleased to note you are "looking forward to crowded meetings."

**E. FORD.**—Already noticed; still, thanks.

**S. & F. DEANE.**—Glad you so "thoroughly enjoyed" our Stratford Town Hall lecture. The announcement you refer to was a little "previous." No doubt the matter will take a practical form presently.

**HETTON-LE-HOLE.**—Miss Vance has handed it to us. Thanks.

**W. LONDON "SAINT."**—Mr. Foote is arranging to deliver some lectures in London early in the winter, and you will see an announcement shortly.

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

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

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.

**Sugar Plums.**

Stratford Town Hall was crowded to the very doors on Sunday evening, all the standing-room being occupied, and the platform being well-filled likewise. Amongst those present on the platform was Mr. Joseph Symes, who was recognised and warmly cheered. Mr. Marshall, of the West

Ham Branch, made a capital chairman, not only acting the part well, but looking it well too. Mr. Foote's lecture on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" was followed with the most gratifying attention; the great audience catching every point quickly, and laughing or applauding as the speaker appealed to their sense of humor, their critical intelligence, or their human feelings. When the enthusiastic applause had subsided on Mr. Foote's resuming his seat, the collection was taken up, and it proved to be considerably the largest ever realised at these meetings. Several questions were then asked and answered, and one gentleman offered opposition. Mr. Foote's reply and the chairman's benediction closed a gathering which, from every point of view, was intensely gratifying.

The third and last of this course of Stratford Town Hall lectures will be delivered this evening (Sept. 30) by Mr. C. Cohen. We hope to hear of another bumper audience.

Scottish "saints" in the South-West will please note that Mr. Foote opens the new lecture season for the Glasgow Branch next Sunday (Oct. 7). He will speak at 12 and 6.30 in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street. If the weather is decent there are likely to be big meetings. There will be the usual musical program before the evening lecture, provided by Mr. Turnbull and his capable colleagues.

The Freethought Demonstration organised by the new North London Branch at Parliament Hill Fields on Sunday afternoon was a great success. Messrs. Cohen, Davies, and Heaford were the speakers, and had the big meeting in command from beginning to end. It was Mr. Heaford's first appearance on the N. S. S. platform for some time, and he must have been pleased with his reception. Mr. E. Wilson's kindness in providing a pair-horse brake for the speakers must not pass without acknowledgment.

Mr. Joseph Symes delivered an open-air lecture in Victoria Park on Sunday afternoon to a large audience, and received an ovation on mounting and on leaving the platform. Mr. Neate tells us it was "quite a field day for Freethought" there. Mr. Symes will lecture at the Ridley-road outdoor station this morning (Sep. 30.).

The first edition of Mr. F. Bonte's *From Fiction to Fact* is sold out and a new edition is in the press. It will be hurried on as rapidly as possible. Intending purchasers will please note.

After a period of inactivity the Camberwell Branch will re-open the Secular Hall next Sunday (Oct. 7) with a conversazione, when all friends will be cordially welcomed. On the 14th Mr. C. Cohen will occupy the platform, and on the 21st Mr. Joseph Symes has promised to lecture. Admission will be free, and reserved seats sixpence. These lectures are being well advertised, and the Branch is making strenuous endeavours to institute a real live propaganda in South London.

We were glad to see two excellent letters in the *Darwen News* on the Freethought side of a local controversy. "Onlooker's" was brief but forcible. A much longer one by "H. B. D." reduces an orthodox "Sky Pilot" to powder. It is a pity that Freethinkers throughout the country do not make more use of the local press in this fashion.

The South Place Ethical Society is arranging for a series of Public Conferences on Wednesday evenings during the winter at South Place Institute, the chair to be taken at 7.30. Mr. Cecil Chesterton, on October 3, will open a discussion on "The Objects of the Anti-Puritan League." We understand that the Discussion Committee intends to have all questions of public interest introduced for discussion by acknowledged representatives. No doubt Freethinkers will attend and take part in these debates. Prospectuses can be obtained of the honorary secretary, Mr. W. C. Wade, 107 Englefield-road, London, N.

Eugène Hins, editor of *La Pensée*, the organ of the Federation of Belgian Freethought Societies, translated the major part of our recent article on the Herbert Spencer Memorial for the readers of that journal—and translated it beautifully. "We can only," M. Hins adds, "endorse the reflections of the English journalist. It is doubly absurd to demand religious honors for an unbeliever and to call it intolerance if such honors are refused. To demand them, on the part of sceptics, is to deny their convictions; to consent to them, on the part of believers, would not be tolerance but indifferentism. Let everyone obey his convictions; it is the want of sincerity which prevents truth from triumphing over error." We in our turn, endorse the sentiments of our Belgian confrère.

## My Twenty Years' Fight in Australia.—II.

(Continued from p. 603.)

AS I said in my former instalment, the government resolved upon prosecuting me as a criminal for charging money for admission to my lectures, and the clergy were in ecstasies, and God was thanked and beslobbered beyond measure. Now the Atheistic party would be put down, and for ever disposed of! For the popular excitement against them was intense, and politicians, and even the judges, were bent on pouring vengeance upon them. Most people in Melbourne lost their heads over the affair, and many of my more timid friends trembled for the consequences. Several of them entreated me to fee a barrister to defend me, but I made it clear to them that to employ a barrister meant failure and imprisonment for me. There were able men at the Bar, and men who had some sympathy with me and with our movement; but in the then state of public opinion the bravest barrister in the city, though true as steel, must have quailed before the odds arrayed against me, and especially the strong and bitter prejudice so visibly shown by several of the judges. Besides, no barrister or solicitor knew my case half as well as I knew it, and no amount of mere study, without my experience, could have given any man a real grip of the case. The judges themselves had everything to learn respecting it, for they had no experience of anything at all like it, and this had been sprung upon them all of a sudden. So I resolved to conduct my own case.

I arrived in Melbourne from Sydney on the Saturday. The first thing I did was to get a lease of our hall in my own name, for fear the government might pounce upon our trustees, who would have been quite incapable of defending themselves in court. I also resolved to be my own chairman, and to be the only person to sell tickets for admission, for I feared they might sue some weakling. On Sunday night a large crowd gathered in front of our hall, which was no great distance from the Parliament Buildings. Before opening the doors I explained to them what I intended to do, and what the government and police were bent upon. They had announced that, according to the provisions of the "Sunday Act," I was to be charged with keeping "a disorderly house," merely because I honestly charged money on Sundays for honest and instructive lectures! What do you think of that, ladies and gentlemen? exclaimed I to the crowd. A disorderly house, indeed! If I did keep such a house, no doubt members of the government would be amongst my best customers! This is not the disorderly house, ladies and gentlemen, that is it, up the road there (pointing to the Parliament Buildings).

The crowd received my short speech with enthusiasm; and then I opened the doors, sold tickets, and lectured to a crammed audience as full of enthusiasm and fire as anyone could wish. I did my very best to scarify the government and the clergy, and left no doubt in any mind that I had now entered upon a fight to the death.

During the week I began to make preparations for continuing our work, in case I should be landed in prison—as I more than half expected to be. The forces against me were overwhelming, the excitement was awful, and the most serious question of all was, Is it possible to get a jury with courage sufficient to do me justice?

For three Sundays successively the police attended my lectures, and then issued the summons on information. Just then a low fever, called the Cape fever, was attacking a good many people. Its chief characteristic was that it prostrated its victim, and left him with no energy, mental or physical. Three days before I was due to attend the police-court this fever attacked me. I called in a doctor, who bandaged my chest, gave me some strong medicine and sent me to bed, there to remain for at least a fortnight.

"I have to be in court the day after to-morrow," said I, "and to-morrow I must visit the Public

Library to examine law books in preparation for the trial."

"What!" exclaimed the doctor, "it is as much as your life is worth to go out of doors in your present state!"

"And it's as much as my character is worth to stay in," said I.

"What's the use of your character, man, when your life is gone?" demanded he.

"What's the use of my life when my character is gone?" replied I. "Say what you may, let the risks and consequences be what they may, I shall go to the library to-morrow and to the court the day after."

I felt that for me to fail to appear, no matter what the cause, would necessarily encourage and strengthen my foes, and correspondingly dishearten and weaken my friends. To risk one's life in such a case was a clear duty that admitted of no parley. I went through the rain next day, and sat for hours in my damp clothes in the library. The day of the hearing came; I attended court, and nearly fainted as I sat at the table. I begged a young friend to run for some medicine, as per the doctor's prescription. A dose of this I swallowed at once in face of the court, and felt a bit revived. Then I fought the barrister (now a judge) who opposed me, and was committed for trial, no recognisances but my own in £200 being required. The police-magistrate gave me full justice. He afterwards came and heard my defence from the Supreme Court dock, and declared it was the best defence he had ever heard.

I must here stray from the straight path for a moment to notice a Victorian aristocrat. Let it be understood that there are as good people, and in every particular as respectable people, in Melbourne as in any other part of the world; but there are villains and Christians there also. Mr. McDermott, a barrister, had been my opponent in court at the hearing of the civil cases I have previously described, and he indulged in the most outrageous defamation of me and my people. I rose and told the judge that I should claim the right to reply to those slanders. The judge said, "Certainly. I am astonished at the course Mr. McDermott is pursuing."

The pious barrister still continued in the same strain, and again I complained to the judge, who said, very severely, "I wish to tell Mr. McDermott that I am paying not the slightest attention to what he says." This put a stop to his religious performance, but when I was leaving the court he poured on me a volley of abuse, for which I slated him, to the manifest enjoyment of several barristers who heard me.

Well when my case came before the police-court, and was about half heard, this saint, presuming upon the fact that he was an *ex-officio* Justice of the Peace, had the impudence to come and seat himself beside the police-magistrate! I rose and said, "Your worship, there is a gentleman just this moment come upon the bench; and, if he is to adjudicate in this case, I must ask that it be re-heard from the beginning. I refer to Mr. McDermott."

The police-magistrate turned round in perfect astonishment, and whispered something energetically in the ear of the intruder, and that pious cur was compelled to walk down into the body of the court. When, however, I was in the dock of the Supreme Court, he came and literally grinned at me through the bars, and then went away and told someone he should dearly like to put the halter round my neck.

This gentleman, besides being a saint of the most high, had been Attorney-General of the colony at one time. He still lives, I believe, and the newspapers and a parson or two will certainly beslobber his memory when he dies. Such are the fellows whom the newspaper press delight to honor—especially when bribed to do so.

My trial in the Supreme Court was remarkable. Acting Chief Justice George Higinbotham was the judge. In most respects Higinbotham was a good man, and very popular; but in this case he lost both his head and his temper, and disgraced the Bench he

occupied. He was one of the most advanced *Free-thinkers* in Melbourne, and yet I had no more bitter or unreasoning foe there. My own explanation of his conduct is this: He was notoriously a sceptic; Symes was a sceptic too. He was in all men's good graces, and regarded as about the best man in the colony; I was generally hated and abused. He was popular; I was notorious. And he said to himself, if I am not stern and severe with this Symes, people will be sure to say I am in league with him. I must take especial care that there shall be no excuse for that.

So he did his best to browbeat me, much to the astonishment of all who knew him, and showed his prejudice against me all through the trial; ten times more than even the prosecuting barrister did.

I resolved upon being quits with the cowardly judge, and the opportunity came. In the first place, I brought up about thirty most respectable witnesses in my favor, many of whom were personally known to the judge. His Honor was impressed and agitated too by their testimony. He was more so by the testimony of the police, who told the unvarnished truth about my meetings, lectures, etc., and so damned the prosecution and favored me. Understand, I pray, the police were absolutely impartial; they neither suppressed anything nor added to what they had witnessed. This astounded the judge, and disgusted and infuriated the Chief of Police, who had resolved upon my destruction, as had the judge himself.

It was amusing to hear the prosecuting barrister explain to the jury that, in this case, they must dismiss from their minds all notions and ideas of "a disorderly house," as that phrase was generally understood; that this was a disorderly house constructively, etc., etc., etc. As I reminded the jury in my address that the prosecution was really a joke, for they were asked by the prosecuting counsel to find me guilty of keeping an orderly disorderly house!

To make clear what follows I must explain that the Act under which I was prosecuted was an old Act of George III's, and I felt it necessary to enlighten the jury on the nature, provisions, and especially the history, of this godly and wicked law. I had previously challenged the prosecution and the judge to show that the Act really existed in the colony, which I denied. And now I gave the jury the history of it as far as the colony was concerned.

"This is not the first time this Act has been heard of here, but it is the first time it has been used," said I. "Ten years ago a popular actor was permitted by the mayor of that time to read dramatically certain portions of the Bible in the Town Hall on Sunday afternoons. This infuriated the clergy, of course, and they consulted the leading barristers to discover whether this Act could be utilised to put a stop to those dramatic Bible readings. His Honor, who is presiding in this court to-day, was then a leading barrister, and he, on being consulted, gave it as his opinion that the Act was not in force in the Colonies, as it was a religious Act. I must beg you, gentlemen of the jury, to remember that fact. In his capacity as judge of this Supreme Court, His Honor, in company with two other judges, on the 1st September ult., decided that this Act was in force here, as a religious Act. And I must beg of you to remember that. Now, only last night you heard him say, and say emphatically, that it was not a religious Act!" After a long pause, I added: "Gentlemen of the jury, let me ask you never to consent to execute this Act until the judges have come to some rational, and some definite opinion respecting it!"

When Judge Higinbotham addressed the jury, he was about the most angry man I have ever seen, and I sat in the dock and enjoyed the exhibition.

This trial took place in October, 1885. The jury disagreed, and I was ordered to come up for a new trial in November. The jury again disagreed, and I was ordered to appear again in December. By that time the government were sick of their pious and utterly dirty work, and entered a *nolle prosequi*. The

clergy and the pious papers were furious; rational and honest people were jubilant. The advertisement the government had given us was duly honored and fully utilised. But the bigots and their tools in high places determined to try another throw with me. The account of that must stand over for the next issue.

(To be continued.)

JOS. SYMES.

## Recollections of Ingersoll.

THE PREMIER FREETHINKER AS KNOWN TO A PEORIA EDITOR. A CITIZEN of Peoria, Ill., the old home of Robert G. Ingersoll, recently received the appended letter from a *Truthseeker* reader and correspondent in Nebraska:—

"H. W. ULRICH, Peoria, Ill.

DEAR SIR,—We are having revival meetings here, conducted by I. E. Honeywell. To day he made a sermon in which he heaped abuse upon your old fellow-townsmen, Robert G. Ingersoll, and told us to enquire of any prominent citizen of your town to see whether or not he was correct about it. I would like to know the truth of the things, and so ask you to write me what you know of the sincerity of Ingersoll. Our revivalist tells us that Ingersoll simply lectured for the \$1,500 per night; that he was the greatest and most heartless grafter that ever lived. What about it? He also said that once upon a time Ingersoll was riding in a car and used such vile language and smutty expressions that the people who sat in the vicinity near him had to leave the car. What about his being like that? Our evangelist threatens to tell us more in the near future. He said there never had been an infidel but what was too rotten to be in a community. Excitement runs high, and I wish you would tell me what you know about this man Ingersoll, so that we may know when he is being vilely slandered, and when the preacher is telling the truth about him. The papers will give an account of those remarks, and I wish Ingersoll's friends would send me a letter which can be printed beside the slanders. What do you know about your former fellow-townsmen Ingersoll? An early reply will greatly oblige.

Yours truly,

F. SWANCARA."

The recipient of the letter, Mr. Ulrich, submitted it to Mr. Eugene Baldwin, editor of the *Peoria Star*, who printed it, together with the following comment and reply:—

These charges are made at stated intervals, and we have answered probably one hundred letters bearing on this point. The facts are known of all men who choose to investigate. In his youth, Ingersoll was addicted to convivial habits, but after his marriage he was a purist in thought and speech. No one ever had to blush for any utterance which Ingersoll might make, either on the stage or in private conversation. The intimation, therefore, that he was a loose blackguard, is entirely erroneous and utterly false.

Instead of this, his home life was a model. He was the most affectionate of fathers, the most loyal of husbands. His family worshiped him, and he repaid their devotion by a life of intense affection. When he travelled, he took them with him. There were no secrets in the Ingersoll family, no skeleton in the closet. Parker Pillsbury once said: "The spirit of love extends from the head down to the family horse." Frederick Douglas once told us, "I came to Peoria a stranger, and expected to have to walk the streets all night because no hotel would entertain a colored man. Someone told me to call upon Colonel Ingersoll, and, when I did so, Ingersoll grasped me by the hand, welcomed me as a friend, took me into his house, gave me the best room in it, and entertained me as if I were a prince. I never met but two men in the world with whom I could converse without being reminded that I was a colored man and an inferior—one of them was Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, the other was Abraham Lincoln."

This careful consideration for the rights of others was manifest in all he did. He protested against the practice of law because he said it departed from the eternal principle of justice, and had become a quibble and chicane. His sense of the liberty of the individual was ever present with him. He brought criticism upon himself because he defended some men whom Anthony Comstock prosecuted for sending obscene literature through the mails—that is to say, the literature was not so obscene as it was irreligious, and Comstock's efforts were directed towards preventing the dissemination of everything that did not square with his ideas of what constituted propriety.

Ingersoll fought Comstock, holding that it was a despotic exercise of power to allow one man to say what should, and what should not, be considered proper; and that to allow Comstock to continue his career unchecked would very soon lead to grave abuses, interfering with the right of free speech and free press. We have seen that Ingersoll's prophecy was

correct. It is only a short time ago since the Socialistic paper published at Girard, Kan., called *The Appeal to Reason*, was excluded from the mails on the ruling of some small clerk in the post-office department at Washington, and it took hard work to get the ban lifted.

Ingersoll knew enough to know that what is tolerated to-day becomes rule and precedent to-morrow, and he lifted up his voice and showed the American people that they were drifting towards a very illiberal, bigoted, and senseless censorship of the press; that under the guise of protecting morals they were doing what bigotry has done in all ages—seeking to control the public conscience.

Ingersoll was the apostle of the home. He made it respectable for a man to manifest affection for his children and love for his household. He crushed the old gloom out of the Church, he drove the burden of superstition from the minds of the American people. He was a perpetual minister of sweetness and light and generosity and charity.

He had been away from town for some years. On coming back, he walked into David S. Brown's music-store. He was followed by a number of our best citizens, all anxious to shake him by the hand. As he entered the store, his way was momentarily blocked by an old scrub-woman, who was down on her hands and knees rubbing away at the floor. As he walked round her, he looked down at her face, and said: "Why, if that isn't Mary, who used to sweep out my office! Mary, you're not obliged to scrub still, are you?" She looked up, and said: "What is a poor body to do, Mr. Ingersoll?" He drew his hand out of his pocket, and extended his palm to her, but she said, "Indade, Mr. Ingersoll, I'd not like to shake hands wid you, mine is all soap and water." "It is an honest hand, Mary," he said, "give it here"; and, when she withdrew it, he said: "Now, Mary, don't scrub any more to-day. Take a vacation to-day, and think of me." He had left a \$10 gold piece in her hand.

And this was done as an aside, not as a grand-stand play to the gallery. Nobody did that less than Bob Ingersoll. He cared little for money, except for the pleasure it gave him to minister to others.

This was shown the last time almost that he came to Peoria. He went out to Elmwood to a soldiers' reception. When he came to return home, he found that he had dropped a roll of money out of his pocket, or someone had relieved him of it to the amount of \$85. Public announcement was made of the fact, and the finder was asked to return it. No one responded, and, when Ingersoll came to leave the little town, he was told that all efforts to discover the missing money had resulted in failure; whereupon he laughed, and said: "Well, probably the poor devil who got it needs it more than I do," and that was all the care he paid to it.

Towards the latter portion of his life, he failed visibly. While lecturing in Chicago he suffered a slight stroke of apoplexy, and he never was the same man afterwards. That brilliant intellect began to fail; that wonderful imagination sometimes hesitated; that glowing wit, that irradiated all of his utterances and enabled him to hold audiences spell-bound for hours and as long as he chose to talk, lost something of its polish, but the great heart never faltered in its devotion to what he believed to be right. He was the one man who expressed his honest thought, and with it was a nobleness of soul that lifted him above all affectation, all pretence, all meanness. He commanded large sums, both as a lawyer and as an orator. His income was from \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year, and he spent it all. He took advantage of no one.

Once, deceived by pretended friends, he induced a number of people in Washington City to invest in a mine in the south-west. When he found that he had been deceived, he paid back to the people who had bought the stock on his representation every dollar that they had paid him. He asked no questions, he consulted no one. Everyone who had taken his word in the matter was reimbursed and the fact was not known until long afterwards. He never blazoned his charities nor advertised his benevolences.

He was, too, a believer and this in its highest and best sense. He shrank from the old Calvinistic idea of a God, bitter, revengeful, vacillating and cruel. It was a conception that had come down to us from the ages. It has generally been rejected now by the churches themselves. There is a constant effort to bring the belief of the pews up to the requirements of science. The Westminster Catechism is being rewritten and reinterpreted. Bob was brought up under the old rigid rule.

His father was a Presbyterian clergyman. He died in Peoria and was buried there. John Grier, the father of Robert and Thomas Grier, was with him in his last hours. Rev. Ingersoll was a stern and rigid believer in the old Calvinistic faith. He had preached it all his life. He had something of his son's magnetism and a trace of Robert's fluent and vehement speech. Mr. Grier often described the effect upon Robert and his brother, Clark, when their father passed away. Even then, although they were both young

men, they shrank from the teachings of their father, but they never wholly escaped from the impressions of their childhood. Even over his brother's grave, Robert spoke of hopes of hearing the rustle of a wing, and when he was most ardent, he showed that he believed in a personal God.

Once, after describing the gloomy creed of John Calvin and how incomprehensible and at war it was with nature, we heard him say as he stopped and extended his hand toward heaven, "O God, write against my name in the book of life the fact that I denied these infernal lies for you." This feeling permeated all of his speech, and can be found in all of his writings. There is an intense yearning for immortality. He often said that we should hereafter live is no more incomprehensible than that we live now. A clear admission that in common with all other men, he had hopes of another life.

This led him to investigate Spiritualism and for a time he thought he had a clue, but when he found that the Spiritualist, Slade, had fooled him to the top of his bent, he became impatient, but he never wholly abandoned his belief that there were some incomprehensible things that had never been explained.

He had a keen wit. Nobody could reply to an opponent with more effect than he, and every knight who entered the lists with him, he unhorsed. When Gladstone in the *North American Review* reproached him with being like a wild horse, careering over the plains without bridle or saddle, Ingersoll responded that he would rather be in that condition than mounted on a dead horse with the reins solemnly grasped in his hands.

Once he was to lecture in Cincinnati, and on the morning of his contemplated discourse, Rev. Dr. Wise, the celebrated Jewish rabbi, wrote an article severely criticising Ingersoll and Ingersollism. Some curiosity was felt as to Bob's reply. When he took the platform, he said: "The shortest man I ever knew was named Long, the largest man I ever saw was named Little, and you have a man in Cincinnati by the name of Wise," and then he went on with his discourse and paid no further attention to his detractor. But Wise never heard the last of it.

We have seen him in company with the ablest men of the nation, with Blaine and Conkling, Seward and Schurz, with Morton and Logan, with statesmen, authors, orators, men renowned in affairs and of tried reputation, and Ingersoll dwarfed them all. And this he did by the mere strength of his intellect, without effort, without posing, by the mere force of a personality that was so great that all men recognised it, and made it manifest.

His memory was remarkable. During the war, Adah Isaacs Menkin acquired some notoriety by a series of singular acts. She was on the stage at the time of the Heenan-Sayers prize-fight. She advertised herself as the wife of Heenan. Finally, she went to Paris and played "Mazepa." Here she made the acquaintance of the English poet Swinburne, and she published a book of poems that were remarkable in their way, and which he probably wrote. It was the first effort in the line of poems of passion which Ella Wheeler Wilcox afterwards exploited. Ingersoll bought a copy one day coming down from Chicago on the train. Breed, the druggist, also had a copy, and that evening Ingersoll dropped into Breed's and a discussion arose in regard to the work.

Ingersoll had read it but once to while away the leisure hours on a train. There were some thirty or forty poems in the book. We secured Breed's copy and getting behind a stove where Ingersoll couldn't see us, we induced Breed to get him to recite some of the poems, for he was remarkable in an elocutionary way. To our surprise, he began at the beginning of the book and recited the whole thing verbatim, without skipping a line, hesitating, or recalling a phrase.

After he had made his first visit to England, he delivered a lecture in Rouse's hall and incidentally, in speaking of Westminster Abbey, he went over the names of the illustrious dead in that wonderful mausoleum, and also of those who ought to be there and are not, and for half an hour he gave a most eloquent list of English authors in every domain of poetry or history or art or literature, covering the whole field of Great Britain's development, without misplacing a name or failing to put in its true chronological order any of the great men whose works he recalled.

As we said before, he experienced a slight stroke of apoplexy while lecturing in Chicago, and for the last four or five years of his life, he suffered continual ill-health. His indigestion annoyed him, and at last he fell under the care of a doctor who induced him to diet himself too rigidly, so that in the course of a month or two, he decreased in flesh sixty pounds. The effect was too great and it undoubtedly caused his death sooner than otherwise would have happened.

Up to the last, however, he impressed everyone with whom he came in contact with the fact that he was a great man. You could not be in his company a moment without recognising this. His method of looking at every subject was

Correspondence.

DARWINISM v. CHRISTIANITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I would like to make one or two comments in regard to Mr. Cohen's article, entitled "A Christian Fallacy," published in last week's issue of the *Freethinker*. He quotes Canon Hensley Henson's remark: "You may never hope to derive individual morality from social; you will assuredly, sooner or later, gather social morality from individual." Mr. Cohen says this statement is so palpably untrue that one might reverse the terms and say that "you may never hope to derive social morality from individual; you will assuredly, sooner or later, gather individual morality from social." Personally, I think there is truth in both statements, though neither is altogether correct. For instance, it is incontrovertible that Darwinism is superseding Christianity, and the credit for this must be given to the founder of Darwinism. I do not think Mr. Cohen is careful to give sufficient credit to the influence that genius and scientific discoverers, eminent and courageous men, exert on the mass of people, which must necessarily affect their thoughts, and consequently their actions. Canon Henson's ideal evidently is Jesus Christ. I do not know whether he retains his belief in the miraculous. Christ is alleged to have done all sorts of fantastic things, such as feeding thousands of people with a few loaves and fishes, turning water into wine, casting out devils and raising the dead, and walking on the sea. Does Canon Henson believe all this, I wonder, or is it the ethical doctrines propagated by Christ which we are asked to admire? What are those doctrines? In what way do the clergy differ from other men? They appear to appreciate the creature comforts. Jesus Christ did not get several thousands a year and a mansion to live in for preaching his doctrines.

Canon Henson must know that the Christian religion stands or falls by its belief in the supernatural. It is that which occasions all the disputes. Freethinkers reject the whole of it absolutely, so that there can be no compromise. We do not think the Christian ethics, based as they are on a system of bribes and threats, constitute the highest ideal. The Christian religion has produced thousands of fanatics who will neither think themselves nor would, if they could help it, allow anybody to suggest that their theories concerning the Universe and man's destiny are not based on facts. We do not believe in the Hell and Heaven theory; the Christian does. That is the fundamental difference. We believe that a nobler ideal can be fashioned on evolutionary principles, and having received the stimulus from our predecessors in this field, we will go on creating an environment in which superstition, stupidity, and charlatany will die a natural death.

J. A. REID.

With the people, and especially with the clergymen, who have him daily upon their tongues, God becomes a phrase, a mere name, which they utter without any accompanying idea.—*Goethe*.

Obituary.

I HAVE to record with deep regret the death of another veteran in the Freethought ranks. Mr. John Brock, of the famous firework firm, died on the 20th inst., after a painful illness borne with the fortitude of a Freethinker. Always a sturdy upholder of the most advanced Freethought, he earned the esteem and respect of all around him, and was one of my most intimate friends for more than thirty years.—W. J. RAMSEY.

I REGRET that, owing to absence from Newcastle, I have been unable to record earlier the death of William George Warner, an outdoor lecturer on Freethought subjects in the town. Mr. Warner was not identified with the local Branch of the National Secular Society, preferring to be a free lance; but there is no doubt, by his incessant propaganda, conducted with effectiveness, and some real platform talent, he influenced a large number of people, and stimulated thought on theological questions to a considerable degree. After a long illness, he died on Sunday, September 9, leaving behind him a widow and children. On Wednesday, September 12, a Secular Service was conducted in Gateshead Cemetery. Mr. W. Wright, of the Newcastle Branch, read the Burial Service, after which Councillor J. W. Johnson, of Newcastle, made a few appropriate remarks. Very large numbers of sympathisers gathered round the graveside.—T. H. ELSTON.

original and overpowering. He fairly stunned you with the brilliancy of his common conversation. It was not that it was witty, although it was always that, but it was great. He never took a small view of anything. He measured men justly.

When the news of Lincoln's assassination reached Peoria, Ingersoll said, "A greater man than George Washington has fallen in Israel this day." Those who listened to him turned away in protest and Enoch Emery said to us, "Why does Bob make these foolish assertions? The idea of comparing Abe Lincoln to George Washington. He weakens himself by these sentimental effusions," and yet the judgment of posterity will show that Ingersoll, and Ingersoll alone, had a just appreciation of the merits of the great emancipator.

Volumes might be written in illustration of these traits of his character. The letter which we have herewith printed showing that a heated revivalist is trying to make out that Ingersoll was a common bar-room loafer, obscene in speech, and probably filthy in habits, is entirely incorrect and far from the truth. Just as Tom Paine would now be taken into most orthodox churches on his assertion, "I believe in one God and no more and I hope for happiness after death," with his other assertion, "The world is my country and to do good, my religion," so Ingersoll in a few years more will be regarded in his true light—as a man filled with the highest of all religions—the divine spirit of humanity, with the love for liberty, preaching the duty of man to his family, to his fellowmen, an earnest protestor against graft, greed, hypocrisy and meanness of every form and shape. His remarks against the present craze for money sets off in a single phrase the foolishness of avarice—"Think of a man who should set out to accumulate an hundred thousand neckties, and yet, this is what a man does who devotes his whole life to building up a great fortune."

All of Ingersoll's labors were in this direction. Little men buzzed around him, tried to sting him, maligned him, slandered him, abused him, but little cared he. When he chose he crushed them. The later years of his life, he was benignant, patient. His fame was secured. He had made his mark upon the age. He was the last of the old-time iconoclasts. A new race sprang up. Modern science recognises the work that the church has done and that these old beliefs came from the efforts to account for the phenomena of nature. They were the best that man could do, and they therefore came about in the evolution of thought, and so, Ingersoll became, as it were, a back number, but in his day and generation, he wrought a good work, did it faithfully, courageously and well, and paved the way for much that has come after? Peace to his ashes.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS.

A useful analysis has been prepared by the National Society of the return presented to an order of the House of Lords in May last, showing the nature of the religious instruction given by the local authorities of England and Wales under part III. of the Education Act of 1902. The return shows that there are 225 authorities who issue a scheme of religious instruction; namely, 41 counties, 68 county boroughs, 76 boroughs, and 40 urban districts. Sixty-eight authorities do not issue any scheme of religious instruction; 21 counties, 2 county boroughs, 36 boroughs, and 9 urban districts.

Eighty-one authorities adopt, with or without modification, the Cowper-Temple formula of the old London School Board, which prohibited any attempt "to attach children to any particular denomination." In the case of seventy-seven authorities definitions or descriptions of the nature of the religious teaching to be given were used, but in each instance there does not seem to be any departure from the simple form of the Board.

Chester, for instance, a county borough where the denominational influence might be expected to be very strong as it has only one provided school, makes this interesting return:—"The religious teaching is, as far as possible, free from dogma or denominationalism, and the aim is to instil right principles of living as set forth in the Bible rather than to insist on a knowledge of a certain number of Biblical facts."

Sixty-seven authorities issue a scheme of religious instruction, but do not indicate the nature of the teaching.

One interesting section of the return shows the number of schools giving no religious teaching. The total is given as 191, of which 176 are Welsh and fifteen English.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,  
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;  
That never air or ocean felt the wind,  
That never passion discomposed the mind.  
But all subsists by elemental strife;  
And passions are the elements of life.

—Pope.

**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.**

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall, Stratford): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion."

**OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Brockwell Park, 3.15, Guy A. Aldred.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, Mr. Symes, "Why the Christ is No Longer Possible."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Genesis i., ii., iii."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, H. Wishart.

**COUNTRY.**

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 6.30, Social Meeting, to open winter session.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Wednesday, Oct. 3, at 8, J. P. Gilmour, "Charles Bradlaugh: An Appreciation." With Personal Recollections.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 7, J. Arnold Sharpley, "The Triumph of the Infidels."

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Room, Town Hall): 6.30, "What is the Use of Religion?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business Meeting.

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