

# THE Freethinker

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*The great difficulty always is to open people's eyes: to touch their feelings, and break their hearts, is easy; the difficult thing is to break their heads.*—JOHN RUSKIN.

## Bernard Shaw in the Pulpit.—II.

### VIII.

MR. SHAW arrived at a perfectly pessimistic conclusion; with this difference, however, that while things were pretty nearly as bad as they could be in the past, there was still a gleam of hope for the future. Here are his own words:—

"Judge us by the admitted and respected practice of our most reputable circles; and, if you know the facts and are strong enough to look them in the face, you must admit that unless we are replaced by a more highly evolved animal—in short, by the Superman—the world must remain a den of dangerous animals among whom our few accidental supermen, our Shakespeares, Goethes, Shelleys, and their like, must live as precariously as lion-tamers do, taking the humor of their situation, and the dignity of their superiority, as a set-off to the horror of the one and the loneliness of the other."

Without mincing matters in the slightest degree, Mr. Shaw poured scorn upon all the utopias of the modern world, with the single exception of his own, which at least promised something definite, if it were only feasible:—

"And so we arrive at the end of the Socialist's dream of 'the socialisation of the means of production and exchange,' of the Positivist's dream of moralising the capitalist, and of the ethical professor's, legislator's, educator's dream of putting commandments and codes and lessons and examination marks on a man as a harness is put on a horse, ermine on a judge, pipeclay on a soldier, or a wig on an actor, and pretending that his nature has been changed. The only fundamental and possible Socialism is the socialisation of the selective breeding of Man: in other terms of human evolution. We must eliminate the Yahoo, or his vote will wreck the commonwealth."

"If," Mr. Shaw said, "the Superman is to come, he must be born of Woman by Man's intentional and well-considered contrivance."

Now all this comes to the simple theory that progress is a question of breeding; which, by the way, is not a novelty, for it has been propounded by the present writer, and by other persons of much greater distinction. If we had the right sort of people, we should have the right sort of world; and we shall never have the right sort of world until we have the right sort of people. Which is not arguing in a circle, but presenting both the obverse and reverse of a great truth.

Whether this theory be true or false, it was Mr. Shaw's theory in 1903; and, of course, it was based upon the very Darwinism which he now flouts and derides. For if giraffes' necks could lengthen by a persistent effort of will, the brains of men and women could improve in the same way. There would be no need, in that case, for the "selective breeding of Man," which was the north-west passage to Mr. Shaw's millennium. Selective breeding involves the truth of the theory of natural selection, which was Darwin's great contribution to the science

of biology, and through it to the general science of evolution.

It is clear, then, that Mr. Shaw was a Darwinian in 1903. At present he is an anti-Darwinian. What will he be to-morrow?

The change in Mr. Shaw is immense. He has not only turned against Darwinism, he has turned against his own Gospel of Progress which was based upon Darwinism, and could not possibly be based upon anything else. We hear nothing now about the "selective breeding of Man." Mr. Shaw's new gospel is something totally different. He tells us that we shall find our real welfare and happiness in fulfilling the will of God. Which, again, is far from being a novelty; having found its final expression, six hundred years ago, in the immortal line of Dante—"In la sua voluntade è nostra pace."

### IX.

We have not disposed of the Darwin matter yet. It remains for us to prove that Mr. Shaw talks amazing nonsense about the Newton of biology—who was a much greater revolutionist than Mr. Shaw, for he revolutionised the thought of the whole civilised world—so that to say "before Darwin" is like saying "before the Flood."

In his City Temple discourse, Mr. Shaw took the cheek out of Darwin in this fashion:—

"Then came a process, which we call evolution. I do not mean natural selection as popularised by Charles Darwin. He did not discover or even popularise evolution; on the contrary, he drove evolution out of men's minds for half a century, and we have only just got it back again."

Could anything be more inept? To speak of Darwin as the "populariser" of natural selection is an absurdity of the first magnitude. Darwin's books were addressed to the scientific world. Had it not been for Huxley and others on the one side, and the fanatical clergy on the other, the populace would hardly have known that Darwin existed. Mr. Shaw does not know what he is talking about.

In the Kensington lecture, Mr. Shaw repeated the ridiculous statement that "Darwin was really the man who completely turned the attention of mankind from the doctrine of evolution." It would have been all right if the matter had been left in the hands of Samuel Butler, satirist; or if George Bernard Shaw, writer of plays, had been there to manage it. But the great Samuel Butler was not equal to the job, and the great Bernard Shaw was born too late; and so the scientific world went astray for fifty years; until at length the true biology is coming into its own again—thanks to the authors of *Erewhon* and *You Never Can Tell*.

Happily, there is a large fund of good nature in Mr. Shaw. He knocks Darwin off his pedestal, and tramples upon him. But he stops there. He protests against subjecting him to grosser indignities. Let us be just, he says, even to Darwin:—

"I am convinced that the accusations made against Darwin of having deliberately suppressed the debt that civilisation owed to his grandfather for the discovery of evolution were entirely unjust, because I don't believe that Charles Darwin knew anything about evolution."

In any other man than Mr. Shaw this would be sheer insolence; in Mr. Shaw himself it is an exercise in his favorite pastime of paradox—in which,



however, he is not as skilful as the late Mr. Oscar Wilde. For, after all, Mr. Shaw has principles; however much he may deny the Philistine impeachment.

Nobody who considers his time of any importance is going to discuss with Mr. Shaw whether Darwin knew anything about evolution. But on a matter of fact it is as incumbent upon Mr. Shaw, as upon other people, to be accurate. It is not enough to take all that Samuel Butler chose to say about Darwin as gospel. Mr. Shaw should really extend his lines of investigation. He could easily have ascertained that Darwin actually wrote a long biographical account of his grandfather, which was prefixed to the book on *Erasmus Darwin* by Ernst Krause. That was in 1879; and Mr. Shaw, who is a clever man, and an Irishman too, may argue—for what will he not argue if you corner him?—that so late a tribute to the grandfather can only be regarded as a tardy act of repentance on the grandson's part. Well, there is the early *Origin of Species*. In the "Historical Sketch," after paying a handsome tribute to Lamarck (Mr. Shaw's biological idol), Darwin goes on to say how curious it was that his grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, had "largely anticipated" the views of Lamarck in his *Zoonomia*, published in 1794; and just a little further on he says:—

"It is rather a singular instance of the manner in which similar views arise at about the same time, that Goethe in Germany, Dr. Darwin in England, and Geoffroy Saint Hilaire in France, came to the same conclusion on the origin of species, in the years 1794-5."

Thus there was no necessity to cover Darwin's crime with the cloak of ignorance. The crime is imaginary—and Mr. Shaw's good-nature was entirely wasted.

#### X.

We shall see in a minute why Mr. Shaw "went for" Darwin in the way he did. Darwin is a great obstacle to the advancement of Mr. Shaw's "New Theology," and the religious method of getting rid of an adversary is to malign and denounce him. Mr. Shaw extended his reprobation to the whole nineteenth century, which he said was "perhaps the wickedest in all human history." Darwin himself was enough to ruin the character of any century. He opened to the world an "unspeakable and frightful prospect":—

"He abolished adaptation and design, and, as Samuel Butler said, banished mind from the universe, which was a great relief to many Englishmen who greatly dislike anything in the shape of reflection. Considering that there are and necessarily must be a large number of consciously religious men always living, and that every one of us has a considerable religious element in him and could not exist without it, why was it that the naked horror of Darwin's conception did not strike them?"

Here again Mr. Shaw refers to his guide, philosopher, and friend, Samuel Butler. It is curious, but it is true, that wherever the master goes the disciple follows him with the most touching devotion. This holds good even with respect to the doctrine of a future life. Samuel Butler believed only in subjective immortality—survival in the memories and lives of others—and Mr. Shaw, as he said at the City Temple, cannot "respect a religion which postulates the ordinary conception of a personal immortality."

With all proper respect to the disciple in this case, we are obliged to say that he is much inferior to the master. Samuel Butler was not foolish enough to say that Darwin "abolished adaptation and design." This is the language of his recent and hasty pupil. Adaptation is a natural fact—nobody disputes it. The quarrel is over its explanation. Darwinism explains adaptation as a result without introducing design as a cause. Samuel Butler saw this clearly enough, and that is why he hated Darwinism. He accepted evolution (so does Shaw), but he put design, instead of natural selection, behind it (as Shaw does); for this gave him the God he wanted, as it supplies

Shaw with the same article. Butler said:—

"The older view [Lamarckism, instead of Darwinism] gives us our design, and gives us our evolution too. If it refuses to see a quasi-anthropomorphic God modelling each species from without as a potter models clay, it gives us God as vivifying and indwelling in all His creatures—He in them, and they in Him. If it refuses to see God outside the universe, it equally refuses to see any part of the universe as outside God. If it makes the universe the body of God, it also makes God the soul of the universe."

Samuel Butler complained, as Mr. Shaw does, that Darwinism banished mind—that is, design—from the universe. But he really understood, at least theoretically, what he was writing about. He saw that natural selection is a mechanical process. He also saw that the only way to circumvent it is to prove that the effects of use and disuse are inherited, and to make this theory cover the whole process of evolution. But, unfortunately, the course of biological inquiry has decided against him on that point. This is frankly admitted by Dr. Wallace, who is as much in love with a supermundane interference with earthly affairs as Samuel Butler was. The truth is that the opponents of the purely natural theory of the world are at absolute cross-purposes among themselves; and, instead of destroying it, they destroy each other. Wallace denies the very essence of Butler's argument against Darwinism, and Butler placed Wallace beside Darwin as an enemy of the true principle of "design." And now Mr. Shaw follows Butler, and carries his anti-Darwinism to the very point of absurdity.

#### XI.

We think we have demonstrated that Mr. Shaw was a Darwinian in 1903, that he is an anti-Darwinian now, that he was converted during the interval by Samuel Butler, and that it is "G. B. S." himself, rather than Darwin, who "does not know anything about evolution."

Sir Oliver Lodge and the Rev. R. J. Campbell are both superior to Mr. Shaw in this respect. They accept Darwinism. They do not seek to establish their "New Theology" on the ruins of that triumphant philosophy. They are wiser than Mr. Shaw, who is like an Arab horseman riding at full tilt against the Great Pyramid.

But that, after all, is not our principal point. What we wish to emphasize is the fact that, four years ago, Mr. Shaw offered the world the only possible gospel, which was founded on Darwinism; and that he now offers to the world another only possible gospel, which is founded on Anti-Darwinism. Mr. Shaw was cocksure then—and he is cocksure now; and we daresay he will be cocksure to the end of the chapter. We can conceive that he regards himself as entirely consistent; but it would be easy to prove from his various writings that he has very nearly boxed the compass. Even in the field of ethics he has shifted from point to point. When he wrote the *Quintessence of Ibsenism* (for instance) the great thing man, and especially woman, had to do was to repudiate duty. The close of the "Revolutionist's Handbook" in *Man and Superman* contained a very different (and nobler) teaching. And now, in the "New Theology," the whole duty of man is to find and carry out the will of his Creator.

#### XII.

We are now in a position to estimate the value of Mr. Shaw's new gospel without being overawed, much less overwhelmed, by the weight of his authority. He is a fallible man, like the rest of us; he is perhaps more clever than profound, and more critical than sagacious; he is probably not able to see further than other men into "the mystery of things"; he can hardly produce his credentials as one of "God's spies"; he does not satisfy us that he is capable of lightening "the weary weight of all this unintelligible world"; and when he mounts the pulpit he can scarcely claim to speak with the voice of inspiration. What if it turns out, after all, that he is just like other preachers of theology—beating an empty drum?

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)



## Freedom—Real and Imaginary.

To the *Baptist Times* for June 7, Dr. Clifford contributes one of his familiar shrieks on the Education question. As is customary, the article is full of declamation against the priest in politics—as though there were any real difference between Nonconformist and other priests in this particular, and of complaints that the Government should not give what is asked to “men who made enormous sacrifices to return the Liberals to power”—as though politics ought to be a question of paying back the people who vote in the majority whether they ask for what is just or not. And there is, of course, the call for the complete laicisation of the State—which Dr. Clifford neither works for nor wants. What he does desire is the suppression of his ecclesiastical rivals, as they desire his; but no one would complain more than Dr. Clifford if the State were completely secularised. His hypocritical attitude on secular education and his protest against his chapel being rated are conclusive proofs of this.

A portion of the article in question is devoted to proving that, as a people, we are still ruled by the priest—which is not true as Dr. Clifford states it, although it is true in a wider sense than he imagines. And it is worth noting that while Dr. Clifford, as the Nonconformist priest, practically “bossed” the old London School Board, the rule of that priest was beneficial. It is only when the *other* priest gets a hand that the phenomenon is pregnant with evil. And, as the other priest has been getting more his way of late, Dr. Clifford decides that “the citizens of England are not free men”; which statement, again, contains a deeper truth than is imagined by our “Modern Cromwell.” We are free more in theory than in fact—or, at least, free only in relation to what has been, not in relation to what ought to be or to what might be. At all events, the statement is sufficiently true to be worth a little consideration.

What are the conditions of genuine freedom in a modern community? The essential conditions are two—free speech and a free press. Free speech because, in its absence, one can never get that flow and exchange of opinion that is the real moulding force of all political and social institutions; and a free press because, owing to the altered conditions of life, the press is the indispensable means of communication. Given these two conditions, and the remoulding and perfecting of social and political institutions is assured. Withhold them, and no increase in political machinery, no extension of the franchise, no change of government from autocracy to democracy, can be any guarantee of genuine individual freedom. All that occurs is a change of tyrants. It is tyranny in the name of many instead of in the name of one—a pleasant change to those who feed on mere shibboleths, but with nothing to commend it to such as take a saner view of things.

How far do we in England possess this freedom? Let us see. Legally we have a practically free press and free speech. Actually we have neither the one nor the other. Our press is not controlled by a censorship like that of Russia, but it is controlled by another species of censorship that is, in its way, far more effective. What chance, for instance, does an unpopular opinion stand with the British press as a whole? An opinion that is held by one or by a few is not always boycotted by the press, but to escape this it must be harmless and picturesquely fantastic. If a man dresses in some fantastic costume, feeds in an unusual manner, and publishes a gospel that no one outside a lunatic asylum is likely to believe in, our free press will not hesitate to give him a full and fair show. But let it be a gospel accepted by a handful of intelligent men and women, and one that, if successful, means a radical change in social life, and this same press is as dumb as an oyster. This is true of all opinions, more or less; it is true of all of matters of religion. Anti-religious opinions and work are boycotted as rigorously by the British press as by any press in the world—more rigorously

than by the papers of some European countries. Charles Bradlaugh, at the height of his fame, gained no publicity for his Freethought speeches, and many of his political ones were excluded because of their author. Columns of unintelligent twaddle is published as “News of the Churches,” the opinions of scores of pulpit-filling nonentities are solemnly chronicled, the doings of a convicted liar and libeller like Dr. Torrey are recorded daily with professed admiration; but to the free press of England the anti-Christian work of the country is non-existent.

But let us be fair, even to the press. If newspaper writers could say what they really believe the case might be different. But they cannot. Their first duty is to make a paper pay. To pay means a certain circulation, which paves the way for the advertiser, the real supporter of our “free press.” And circulation in this country means playing to prejudice, refraining from offence, above all from offending religious prejudice. “Free” Christian citizens would at once discontinue subscribing to a paper that gave non-Christian opinions fair and equal treatment. Proprietors know this; editors know this, and act accordingly. They know that their continued existence depends upon satisfying the advertiser and catering to religious prejudice. And thus we have a “free press” run by the large advertiser with its policy controlled by the more prejudiced portion of public opinion.

But we have free speech, I may be told. In England a man may say anything he pleases, short of actual libel or inciting to outrage, without punishment. Well, it is true that one may say pretty well what one pleases without incurring any serious legal consequences. But there are other forces more powerful than statutes, and more inquisitorial than policeman or soldier. Public opinion is fundamentally more powerful than law, and public opinion in this country is far from encouraging freedom of thought or speech. A man may not be imprisoned for his non-religious or his anti-religious opinions—which is a penalty that a comparatively large number would face—but he is boycotted in a hundred different ways, and *that* is a penalty that very few will stand up to. In society, he is made to feel that it is not “good form,” in business he suffers in his trade, in social life he is looked down upon. He is made to feel that, in Christian England, all sins shall be forgiven to man save that of absolute honesty of speech and independence of character. One here and there is strong enough to stand against this insistent pressure, but the majority submit and sink into a state of hypocrisy that is sanctified by custom and made moral by religious approval.

Dr. Clifford wishes that our statesmen had the same pluck and courage as French statesmen. This is, of course, because the French government has disestablished a Church with which he does not agree. But why have not our statesmen the same courage? There is pretty nearly as much Freethought among them. Why is it that their opinions on religion are kept discreetly in the background? It is because they have to deal with a different public opinion; because there would be a revolt among their constituents if they exhibited real moral courage and independence, and Dr. Clifford and his class would be the first to head the revolt. It is with politicians as with the press. People do not demand real honesty of thought and speech, and so it is not given them. Politicians in other countries doubtless say things they do not believe, and do not say all they believe on other things; but Christian England is perhaps the only country where, as in the case of education, prominent statesmen would say, one after another, that they believed secular education to be the only wise and just thing, but that they would, nevertheless, support a measure for the establishment of religious teaching in the schools. And the public, including Dr. Clifford, accepts this confession of dishonesty as a matter of course.

Real freedom, then, depends upon freedom of opinion; and what has Dr. Clifford, what has



religious dissent, what has Christianity itself ever done to secure this? Nonconformists have shrieked loudly enough for freedom, but for whom? For themselves. They have been fighting for their own hand, and their success meant an exercise of the same abuses, to the degree of their opportunities, that they railed against in their opponents. Individual exceptions there have, of course, been; but, as a general movement, Nonconformists have been no more in favor of genuine freedom than any other religious body. They apply the boycott as rigorously as others when the chance offers, the portion of the press dominated by them differs in no respect from other portions in its treatment of opponents, they are amongst the loudest who cry out for the State to enforce the religious observance of Sunday, they raise no protest against the laws and customs that hamper the free expression of opinion on religion; when they have the power, Freethinkers are refused the use of public halls; they take State aid in the shape of relief from taxation, and complain of injustice when other taxpayers are not compelled to pay the portion that should come from them, and they are at present engaged in trying to get a form of religion, that suits them, taught at the expense of the State. At its inception, religious dissent was a straightforward attempt to replace one State-supported creed by another. To-day, it is a dishonest endeavor to achieve the same end.

In its general effect on liberty of opinion Nonconformity has been quite in line with the general trend of Christianity. Christianity has taught much in its lengthy history, but it has never by any chance taught the value of independent thought and speech, or the duty of careful investigation. It did more than not teach these things—it branded them as the greatest of crimes. It forgave men all crimes but the crime of unbelief; it overlooked all faults save the fault of independence. For many hundreds of years the Churches worked hard with stake and dungeon to weed out the men who were brave enough to act honestly, and to encourage those with whom credulity and docility were innate. The actual tax paid by humanity in the shape of those who died was heavy enough; the tax paid by those who lived was heavier still. When honest speech is met with a penalty, hypocrisy soon becomes the rule. When free thought is banned, cowardice becomes a habit. And if our statemen have not the moral courage they should have, if the Englishman is so frequently a hypocrite, Dr. Clifford need only consult the history of his own religion to discover the cause.

C. COHEN.

### Reason and Worship.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* for June 5, there is a remarkable discourse on the above subject from the pen of the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A. Mr. Horne's object, in this curious utterance, is to show that Christianity is in perfect tune with the intellect. He speaks contemptuously of those who maintain that the doctrines of the Faith are contrary to reason. To refute this silly accusation, the sermon is headed by a formidable array of four texts, which, it is alleged, "effectually rebut the accusation." Let us look at these texts for a moment: "To love him with all the understanding" (Mark xii. 33); "I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. xiv. 15); "I would rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (1 Cor. xiv. 19); "Brethren, be not children in understanding; in understanding be men" (1 Cor. xiv. 20). Now, even the most cursory examination of those passages proves conclusively that they have no bearing whatever on the preacher's thesis. The first text is simply an inculcation of the religious duty to give all to God: it has absolutely nothing to do with the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the said duty. According to the Bible, God demands the subjection

of the whole man to himself; but the Bible never raises the question whether such a demand is intellectually justifiable or not. The other texts are equally valueless in rebuttal of the accusation referred to by Mr. Horne. All they teach is, that it is far better to speak five words intelligibly, than ten thousand words in an unintelligible tongue; that prayer and praise, to be edifying, must be understood by all who either take part in, or merely listen to them. Indeed, it is safe to say, that the only thing that Paul had in his mind was the peril involved in the use of the gift of tongues in the services of the Church. As Professor Harnack puts it, Paul was aware that "instead of recommending Christianity, speaking with tongues might, on the contrary, discredit it among Pagans" (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 254). That Harnack's statement is true is beyond dispute, as the following passage clearly shows: "If, therefore, the whole church be assembled together, and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad?" (1 Cor. xiv. 23).

Had Mr. Horne paid the least heed to the exegesis of his texts, he would never have used them to prove that Christianity is intellectually defensible, or calls for vigorous thinking on the part of its professors. They were never intended to do anything of the kind. But is the sermon, though so insecurely based, calculated to accomplish such a mighty feat? Mr. Horne quotes Dr. Thomas Arnold in strong disapproval of Pusey's ideal of a humble man—"a man who did not inquire, but believed." But what does Mr. Horne make of the risen Christ's reproof to Thomas because he refused to believe in the absence of positive evidence? In the work of fiction called the Gospel according to John, Jesus is represented as saying to Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John xx. 29). Reference is also made to the leader of the French Protestants, Auguste Sabatier, who is quoted as declaring that, as a Protestant, he is able to "consecrate to Jesus Christ and his service the full activities of his intellectual powers." The Frenchman's declaration may be sincere enough; but its sincerity is no proof that the Christian religion is intellectually credible.

At this point, the preacher breaks forth into an incoherent panegyric on the art of thinking. "It is better not to live," he exclaims, "than to live and not to think." And yet it is as a dogmatic declaimer that he excels, certainly not as a thinker. Nothing is easier than to say that Christ's supreme question to every man is, "What thinkest thou?" And yet nothing is more incontrovertible than that the Gospel Jesus is anything but an intellectualist. He is depicted simply as an oriental religious emotionalist, as an unreasoning, sentimental mystic, or as a sublime visionary. He stands before us as the declarer, or revealer, of the Father. Not once does he appeal to the reason of his disciples on any theological or supernatural point. He merely proclaims, declares, gives information; and their first duty is, not to think, not to reason, not to argue, but to believe what he tells them, and to believe on his sole authority. The same thing is true of the apostles. According to them also, it is the believer, not the thinker, who finds salvation. What Paul always delivers, is the mind and word of the Lord. The Gospel he preaches is not a carefully-thought-out system, but a revelation direct from heaven. "I deliver unto you," he tells his readers, "that which I received of the Lord"; and the readers are called upon, not to think, not to consider, not to reflect, but to believe, and then to think in harmony with their beliefs. We have only to read the history of the Church to discover that her aim has always been to keep the reason in a state of bondage. Indeed, the one thing the Church has never allowed is freedom of thought. Independent thinking she punishes as a crime. She never asks, "What thinkest thou?" but invariably, "What believest thou?"

Surely, Mr. Horne must be fully aware that the history of Christianity is dead against him. It may



be contended that, though it may be true that the Catholic Church discourages the free exercise of the reason, Protestantism has been, and is, a firm bulwark of intellectual liberty. The fact, however, is that the only liberty permitted in the Protestant Church is the liberty to denounce Catholicism. Why was Servetus burnt at the stake? Because he dared to differ in belief from Calvin. Why was Thomas Lynch, the author of the *Rivulet*, treated as an ecclesiastical outcast throughout his public career? Because he denied some of the doctrines held by the majority of Congregationalists. Why did the vicar of the Parish Church of Burslem put an advertisement in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* emphatically protesting against the visit to his parish of the author of the *New Theology*, and characterising the teaching of the minister of the City Temple as "anti-Christian and heretical"? Because he regards his own creed as infallible, and would, if he could, forcibly forbid a single word in criticism of it. No, there is no greater liberty of thought under Protestantism than under Catholicism. Here is a striking example from Mr. Horne's own sermon: "Our contention is, not that scientific investigation should not be thorough, but that it should be reverent." In that sentence, the preacher utterly surrenders his own case for intellectual freedom. Think of his marvellous magnanimity! He declares that Science is at liberty to investigate with the utmost thoroughness as long as its discoveries do not clash with his creed! Whatever happens, Science must be *reverent*, and reverence, of course, carries with it a whole body of divinity. Science is free to investigate, if it conducts the work in a religious, worshipful spirit. We are called upon to think, but we are, at the same time, warned that unless we think in harmony with the prevailing creed, we shall be anathematised.

Such is the thinking permitted and recommended by Mr. Horne. Science must accept as facts all his religious experiences. Here comes a passage worth transcribing:—

"We cannot quarrel with facts and continue to exist as rational beings. When we come to the interpretation of facts—materialistic or spiritual—then comes the time when, in our defence of the deepest experiences we know, the facts verified in our spiritual consciousness, we affirm with no bated breath or whispered humbleness, 'This one thing I know.' We add our facts to the sum of knowledge; we demand that theories that profess to account for the Universe shall not treat our facts as if they had no substance."

Well, the science of psychology *does* recognise such experiences as veritable facts of consciousness; but is psychology to be condemned simply because its *explanation* of them is radically different from the one propounded by Mr. Horne? Will he not frankly admit that his interpretation may be erroneous, and that the interpretation offered by Science may be nearer the truth? It is clear that Mr. Horne looks upon these experiences as irrefutable proofs of the existence of God and the supernatural world. But are they? What Free-thought maintains is, that there is a thoroughly reasonable and scientific interpretation of them, quite independently of the question whether the teachings of religion are objectively true or not. It is a fact, patent to all, that religious experiences spring from religious beliefs, and that the intensity of the former corresponds to the strength of the latter. Is it not undeniable, then, that what the facts of the religious consciousness establish is the existence, in a corresponding degree of power, of the religious beliefs? Whether the beliefs are true or not is another question altogether. What we hold is, that of their truth there is not a shred of evidence.

It seems that Mr. Horne is too busy a man to indulge in clear thinking. He is always quoting, and some of his quotations are very unfortunate. He half quotes a second time from Sabatier, and this quotation is itself a semi-quotation from Littré:—

"Sabatier recalls in a famous passage the example of Littré, and a great passage in the works of the great

*savant*, in which, after running through the *terra firma* of positive knowledge, he reaches its utmost limit, and, seating himself on the extremest promontory, sees himself surrounded by the mystery of the unknowable, as by an infinite ocean. He has neither barque, nor sails, nor compass wherewith to explore the boundless sea; nevertheless, he stands there gazing into it; he contemplates it; he meditates in presence of this vast unknown, and finally abandons himself to a movement of adoration and of confidence, which renews his mental vigor and fills his heart with peace."

Mr. Horne calls that meditation "this exercise of the understanding towards God"; but does he not know that Littré was not a Christian, and was not even a believer in the God Christians profess to know so well? When, in the year 1863, he was proposed for the French Academy, he was rejected owing to the fiery opposition of Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, who denounced him as the chief of the French materialists; and when, in 1871, he was elected, the Bishop resigned his seat rather than receive him. Littré was a consistent Atheist, and openly advocated Atheism. He was a great thinker, but his thinking did not lead him to religion. It is true that, when he lay on his dying-bed, his wife and daughter, who were zealous Catholics, did their utmost to convert him, and that, when on the point of death, they had him baptised, and after his death they destroyed his papers. But the fact remains that this strenuous thinker had his heart filled with peace without belief in, or reverence for, a Supreme Being.

In the worship of a personal God, the reason takes no part. Worship is an emotional exercise. As soon as one begins to think, to face the facts of the world as they truly are, the foundations of one's beliefs tremble, and threaten to fall. A Christian said the other day, "I know that if I once allowed myself to think my faith would go." Why is the army of unbelievers so enormously large to-day? Because the eyes of men's understanding are being increasingly opened. Why is the number of devout worshippers so very small? Because the voice of reason is being listened to with dauntless courage, and the yoke of superstition is being vigorously thrown off. Why are the Churches all over the country undergoing such a drastic process of secularisation? Because the Christian Gospel, in its ancient meaning, has lost its power. When men think independently, untrammelled by the tyranny of the priest, they generally think themselves out of religion, and become sedulous Secularists. The chief difference between Secularists and Christians is, that the latter enlist their intellect in the service of their emotions, while the former train their emotions to do the bidding of their quickened intelligence.

J. T. LLOYD.

In a Gnostic legend, Solomon was summoned from his tomb and asked, "Who first named the name of God?" "The Devil," was his answer.

Did reason permit belief in a personal Devil, one might recognise the supreme diabolical artifice in this sheltering under a holy name of all the desolating cruelties of men, all the wars that have degraded mankind into egotistic aggressors, or nations, glorying in their onsigns of inhumanity.

The popular belief in "progress" as something going on in the world under a divine order, sanctions all scourges as the scourges of God, and insures social deterioration. When an evil is pointed out, the answer is, "Yes; but things will improve." It is like saying of a habitual debauchee that the longer his bad habits continue the more likely he is to break them. But in big things like nations, deity is supposed to be concerned, and rules of individual experience set aside. "Providence, in its own good time," will do thus and so. We shall have a new race of great artists, orators, authors, artists! Enough deterioration lurks in that infatuation to interpret the Gnostic-legend of a devil-invented deity.

—Dr. M. D. Conway, "Autobiography," vol. ii., p. 410.

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can. —Wordsworth.



## Acid Drops.

Father Vincent Naish, S. J. (that is, of the Society of Jesus—a Jesuit), wrote a remarkable letter to the *Manchester Guardian* on the Ferrer case. It was an excellent specimen of the Jesuitical method of confusing the reader's mind in favor of an illegitimate conclusion. Father Naish argued that assassination is an awful thing, that anarchism is shocking wickedness, that Ferrer is an anarchist, that an anarchist tried to blow up the King and Queen of Spain, and that Ferrer has, therefore, been justly held in prison for a year without trial, his schools closed, and his property sequestered. Put in this naked way, Father Naish's argument is obviously ridiculous. Of course, he did not put it in this naked way, but this is an accurate summary of his letter. The three most important points—(1) whether Ferrer is an anarchist, (2) whether he is guilty of complicity with the assassin Morral, (3) whether there is any such "terror" in Spain as would justify his long detention without trial—are all overlooked, and they are the only points which were really in dispute.

Father Naish's way of proving that Ferrer is an anarchist is instructive. He declares that "Ferrer's program of 'freeing the minds of children from the lies' of religion, patriotism, and so forth, is, in the judgment of all sensible Spaniards, religious or irreligious, simply destructive of national life and progress." Now this is absurd on the face of it, merely as a statement. To begin with, *irreligious* Spaniards could not possibly regard the freeing of children's minds from the lies of religion as destructive of anything that ought to be preserved. It would be more honest of Father Naish were he to say plainly that all earnest opponents of Christianity should be deprived of every right of citizenship. That is what he means; he only lacks the courage to say so. Then, as to the lies of patriotism. A man need not be an anarchist to look upon most of what passes for "patriotism" with contempt, and even with loathing. Patriotism, in the old, the primary, the true sense of the word, is a sublime virtue. It means the subordinate of the personal interest of the individual to the general interest of the nation. But that is the last idea that ever enters the head of your modern patriot. He is generally on the make—at the nation's expense. What *he* means by patriotism is bragging about his own country, insulting other countries, and trampling upon the rights of all weak countries that stand in the way of his own country's aggrandisement. This is the new patriotism. And it was from *such* patriotism that Ferrer sought to free the minds of children. That he has paid the penalty of trying to liberate young minds from orthodox lies is, after all, only natural. What else could be expected in a country where the Catholic Church rules the roost, and where Father Naish's are as common as bed-fleas?

"Curates will soon be as extinct as the dodo." So says the Rev. H. F. Tracey, vicar of St. Savior's Church, Dartmouth. "Possibly," he adds, "some may be stuffed and exhibited in glass cases, but there will be no live ones." The reason of this rapidly increasing scarcity is that "the prospects of earning a living in the ministry of the Church of England after you have ceased to be young are very remote." But if this is the reason why curates are scarce, there is no occasion to be apprehensive about the supply of parsons for better-paid posts. Jobs from £500 to £15,000 a year will always be in demand.

The Manchester Young Men's Christian Association wants bigger and handsomer premises, so a Re-Building Fund has been started, and Mr. J. W. Crossley, M.P., and Sir W. H. Houldsworth, Bart., head the list with £5,000 each. But a tremendous lot of money appears to be wanted for the housing of these disciples of the poor Prophet of Nazareth. Some £20,000 has been promised. But what is that? Mr. J. W. Crossley, M.P., has issued a fresh begging circular, in which he states that the result of the first appeal "has been disappointing." We are glad to hear it. Christian bodies are afflicted just now with a mania for fine buildings. Their real object is to take the shine out of each other. It is very interesting, of course, to find men like Mr. Crossley and Sir W. H. Houldsworth talking about "the culture of high character" and "raising the standard of life amongst our young men." But they might easily help the young men of Manchester without building a huge structure for the care of their "spiritual interests." We advise them to buy the six-penny edition of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* and read how it may be done.

The Archbishop of Canterbury doesn't look it, but he really must be a bit of a joker. He told the Canterbury

Diocesan Conference that—"In England it was to genuine, definite faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that we looked for our security as to the formation and growth of the character which was needed for useful citizenship in a Christian State." Now, in the first place, England is *not* a Christian State. She ceased to be so when Jews were admitted to Parliament. To call a State *Christian* when its laws may be made by *Jews* is an absurdity. Moreover, thanks to the magnificent battle of Charles Bradlaugh, open and avowed Atheists may sit in Parliament. At least two Atheists (or Agnostics, if you prefer the term—it means the same thing) are members of the present Liberal Government—namely, John Morley and John Burns. So much for the "Christian State." And now for the second point. England looks for "genuine, definite faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." What does that mean? Surely it must mean, at least, belief in, and obedience to, his teaching. But does the Archbishop of Canterbury himself believe and obey? Jesus Christ said, "Blessed be ye poor." The Archbishop of Canterbury keeps as far off the poverty (and the blessing) as possible. Jesus Christ said, "Woe unto you rich." The Archbishop of Canterbury takes £15,000 a year—and the risks. Evidently, then, we must look elsewhere for "genuine, definite faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." And where shall we find it? Amongst the Peculiar People—to begin with; after that there will be some in workhouses, some in prisons, and many in lunatic asylums. Yes, we repeat what we said at the outset. The Archbishop of Canterbury *must* be an old joker.

Later on, in a discussion on "The Higher Criticism in its Practical Bearings," the Archbishop prophesied (a cheap mental exercise!) that belief in the Bible would strengthen and not weaken; but he was careful to add that it was coming to be understood better. Quite so. Generally speaking, if you take the Bible to mean what it says, it is incredible; but when you understand it better, and perceive that it means almost anything except what it says, it is quite believable. Your hold upon it strengthens—especially if you hold on to a good clerical job at the same time. It is then a case of "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Dr. Cohen, of the American Mission in Persia, is a sanguine gentleman—but missionaries are generally persons of that temperament. He has just been telling an Exeter Hall audience that—"Thousands of people in Persia are waiting for religious liberty to declare themselves Christians." This is simply a hopeful way of saying that missionary prospects will improve in Persia as soon as converts stand to gain rather than lose. Understood in that sense, Dr. Cohen's statement may be allowed to pass as probably accurate.

"The great battle between Christianity and Islam," Dr. Cohen said, "would be fought in Persia, for there the Mohammedans were more liberal-minded and simple." We like that same *simple*. There is something very naive about it. But are the Mohammedans simple enough, after all, to be taken in by Christianity? We doubt it.

Fifty men of God, representing thirty-seven religious organisations and societies for the improvement of public morals, formed a deputation to the Theatres and Music Halls Committees of the London County Council; their object being to "protest against the continuance of exhibitions of living statuary." The Bishop of London, Bishop Johnson (Roman Catholic), Rabbi Morris Joseph (Jew), the Rev. Silvester Horne, and the Rev. Scott Lidgett, were amongst the speakers. They took the view, apparently, that all the churches, chapels, clergy, and preachers in London would be utterly unable to look after the morals of the people in face of the opposition of living statuary. We quite believe them. We will even go further—and profess our conviction that the morals of the people of London would not suffer if the men of God disappeared altogether.

The Bishop of London subsequently addressed a "Rescue" meeting at Church House, and declared that "Religious London was saying that the exhibition of practically nude men and women was a disgrace to London, which must be rolled away." None of these men and women, however, are as nude as the Man of Sorrows nailed upon his Cross. All he has on, generally, is a sort of pocket-handkerchief instead of a fig-leaf. We advise the Bishop of London to get rid, first of all, of his "crucified Savior." This is a nudity, and a disgusting nudity. There is nothing disgusting about La Milo, for instance. The clergy seem to find her too attractive. They can't stop talking about the show.

There were 120 women delegates at the annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation. By a large majority, it



was decided that women should be excluded from the Executive Committee. Professor Massie, who moved this, is a Passive Resister and a good Christian. He appears to be a dutiful follower of an ancient gentleman called Paul. Ladies, please note!

The inquest at the City Coroner's Court concerning the death of Harry George Burrell, 59, a brass finisher, who dropped dead in Whitecross-street, revealed a dreadful state of things. Medical evidence showed that the deceased was extremely ill-nourished, and, in addition to tubercular trouble, had valvular disease of the heart. Shocking evidence was given by Robert Lloyd, who described himself as a "tramp." Deceased had been unable to find regular employment for the past five years. Lloyd had known him since January. During the last fifteen days they had had little to eat and nowhere to sleep. They had been sodden with rain and nearly frozen with cold under the sky, which was there only covering. *Nowhere could they obtain shelter if they were a farthing short of the full amount.* Surely the public should reflect on the words we have italicised. Subscribers to the Salvation Army and the Church Army should ask themselves whether they are supporting business or philanthropy. The really destitute, the really helpless, the very worst sufferers, seem to be left to their misery. Even charity must pay.

General Booth, in an introduction to "More War Dispatches," has been telling how he was helped when he started the "Christian Mission," which became the "Salvation Army," by that great and good man, the late Samuel Morley. He sent for Booth, had a talk with him, and handed him a "generous" cheque; and "that night," Booth says, "my dear wife and I rejoiced together." Very likely. Generous cheques are calculated to produce that effect. Booth found Samuel Morely a generous friend. Bradlaugh found him a bitter bigot. His narrow heart wasn't wide enough to admit men who did not belong to his faith—so he sent a message down to Northampton begging the Nonconformists not to vote for the Atheist Bradlaugh. Later on, we are glad to say, Samuel Morley had to pay the penalty of that wicked act. He lost his own seat in parliament—not in open fight, for he could not face it, but by a prudent retirement from the battlefield.

According to Major-General Sir Henry Colvile, the author of a new book on England and Japan, called *The Allies*, General Nogi gave a splendid piece of advice to his men at the siege of Port Arthur: "Try to make your bodies savage and your minds civilised." This is the higher civilisation in a nutshell. Christian England acts on other principles. Sir Henry Colvile expresses our system of training in a sentence: "Eat, drink, smoke, coddle your body as much as you like, but for God's sake never forget you are a British sportsman." Talk about missions to the heathen! It is high time that we had some Japanese missionaries over in England. We want them badly.

A boy in a London police-court, being asked whether he was a Catholic or a Protestant, replied, "Please, sir, I'm a costermonger." He had never heard of the other professions. But he told the truth, anyhow.

Mr. H. N. Brailsford (and in the *Daily News*, too!) lets the cat out of the bag with regard to Macedonia. The common impression in England is that the "unspeakable Turk" is the cause of all the trouble. This is not true. The Greek and Servian bands are ravaging the country, and the Turk does not put down these marauders as he should—and as he probably would if the Christian Powers had not practically taken his affairs out of his hands. Listen to Mr. Brailsford:—

"The Greeks, and latterly the Servians, who are both engaged, not in a war of liberation, but solely in a campaign of extermination against the Bulgarians, are the real offenders.....The Greeks know that the *status quo* in Macedonia cannot last, and their aim is to conquer territory by destroying the Bulgarian churches, 'converting' the peasants by force, and exterminating the Bulgarian notables, in view of some future settlement."

This is cold-blooded villainy. These Greek and Servian bands burn, destroy, rape, and murder. That is their regular occupation. They are terrorising and depopulating the country, with a view to possessing it themselves eventually. And they hate the people they torture and ruin with a double hatred, because they belong to a different Church. But they are all Christians! The murderers and their victims alike kneel at the same Cross. How they love one another—in the name of Christ!

Catholics have no monopoly of convents, even in England. Protestants have some, and one of these is the Convent of

St. Mary of Nazareth, Edgware—which has recently been figuring in the Law Courts. The rules of this establishment are very strict; in fact, the sisters are little better than slaves; and it was on this ground that the will of one of them, Florence Fanny Toogood, has been contested. One rule is that the sisters must render absolute obedience to the Mother Superior; another is, that they must use none of their own money. According to the evidence given in court, the Mother Superior told them it was "the voice of God" that they should leave their property to the sisterhood, and a draft will was supplied for the purpose. When sister Toogood's will was made, it was placed upon the altar, while she lay in a penitential and ignominious position on the floor. The property in the will was worth about £7,000. On the whole, the sisterhood business seems to be a paying one—for those who run it.

The Socialist Sunday-schools, held in London County Council schoolrooms, are apparently to be closed, after all, without any inquiry whatever. This is the official policy of the Moderate party who are now in power; and, of course, it is mere partisanship and tyranny. Perhaps the Socialists will now show a little more active sympathy with Secularists when they are persecuted by local authorities, as they are flagrantly at Birmingham. "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

Judging by Secularist experience in London, Birmingham, Newcastle, and other places, there is not going to be much respect for the rights of intellectual minorities under municipal government. Things were to be all right when the people had votes; but they are not all right, and are not likely to be all right; for the majority always was a tyrannous beast, and it does not show much prospect of altering. And when *everything* is municipalised, as many hope, there will be precious little free room for those who not only talk about freedom of thought, but actually practise it. To think against the mob (of all classes) is a crime which is never pardoned—at least, until you are dead. You may be canonised then, but you must expect brickbats while you live.

Englishmen no doubt often say silly things about America. It is equally true that Americans sometimes utter brow-lifters about England. We see that Mr. Curtis Brown, an American journalist in London, has been informing his countrymen that during the Rev. R. J. Campbell's pastorate at Brighton, Marie Corelli, Mr. Lecky, Lord Rosebery, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and "cabinet ministers, great scientists, and literary lights of all denominations" used to "flock" to hear him. Whereupon the *Christian World* remarks, that some critics of the New Theology might profitably turn their attention to the New Journalism.

Canon Mackintosh, of Glasgow, describes Mr. Campbell as a "silly blasphemer." Mr. Campbell would probably reciprocate the adjective.

Rev. Dr. Fitchett, of Jingo fame, told the recent Australian Methodist Conference that "the great battle of the Church in the present century was against the New Theology," which he designated "a bubble." Dr. Fitchett may be fit to fight a bubble. He is hardly fit to fight anything else.

Father Vaughan asked a newly-married couple to which church they went. "Oh," they answered, "we go nowhere; we both find church much too dull, while the sermons are too weird for words." Father Vaughan ought not to cry stinking fish in this way.

It is estimated that only one out of ten adult persons in Greater New York attends church or chapel on Sunday. So many as that? Who would have thought it?

We don't suppose the clergy will popularise the following illustration of the efficacy of prayer. Mrs. Bertha Blessing, of Philadelphia, went to the cemetery to decorate her brother's grave. While she knelt in prayer the headstone collapsed upon her—and she was killed immediately. "He heareth the prayer of the righteous."

Here is another answer to prayer. At Hautoville, near Geneva, a young tradesman of weak intellect suddenly went mad, and chased a pretty little girl of twelve down the street. Nearly exhausted, she darted into a wayside church, and fell sobbing upon her knees before a statue of the Madonna, to whom she prayed piteously for protection. The madman seized a chair and killed her on the spot.



This is how "Providence" protects its favorites. Fifty girls, wearing white veils, were carrying lighted candles in a religious procession at Ceglie, in Italy, when one of them accidentally set fire to her veil; and, running in terror along the double rank of her companions, set fire to their veils also. Twelve of the girls were terribly burnt, and bad burns were received by some of the men who came to their rescue.

At a Liverpool missionary meeting in the Central Hall, with the local right reverend father in God in the chair, Mr. J. Campbell White (whoever he is) said that "the world had been redeemed, but the serious fact was that it did not know it. Two-thirds of the race had been emancipated, but had not been told of their emancipation." This sounds rather cryptic; indeed, it might pass for a conundrum. We suppose the speaker meant that Jesus Christ had died for mankind nearly two thousand years ago, and that it still remained for Mr. White and his friends to apprise them of the fact. Which is certainly very odd. But whichever way you look at Christianity it appears ridiculous.

William Henry Smart, a Cirencester local preacher, has been committed for trial on the charge of fraudulent misappropriation of £1,264, belonging to the wife and daughters of a dead friend, under whose will he was a trustee. There is nothing uncommon in the case. It would have been uncommon if the defendant had been an "infidel."

Nonconformists met in strong force at the Memorial Hall after the Premier's statement as to the course of business in the House of Commons. Dr. Clifford, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Silas K. Hocking, Rev. Silvester Horne, Mr. A. E. Hutton, M.P., Mr. H. R. Mansfield, M.P., and other distinguished Dissenters were present. After two hours' talk they passed two resolutions. The first expressed "profound regret" at the dropping of the Passive Resisters' Relief Bill. The second ran as follows:—

"At the same time the committee expresses its satisfaction at the explicit pledge of the Prime Minister that next Session a comprehensive Education Bill will be introduced, and at the assurances which they have received that the Bill will be drawn on lines of sound principle, such as will command the support of all friends of civil and religious liberty, and also that it will be pressed forward with the utmost determination. In view of this, the committee expresses its hope that all Free Church Councils will take measures to press upon the constituencies, during the autumn, the principles that must govern a final educational settlement."

Of course, this is all bunkum. These people don't want—they don't understand—civil and religious liberty. They are fighting for special advantages for their own (*Free!*) Churches at the public expense. And they know it. At one time we thought they were only in a muddle. Now we see that they are in a base conspiracy to bamboozle and defraud the nation.

Immediately after that Memorial Hall meeting, another was held in the same building, under the chairmanship of Dr. Clifford. This was a gathering of the National Passive Resistance Committee. It was decided to organise Passive Resistance on a bigger scale. Meetings were also to be organised "for appeals to Free Churchmen and other citizens." Just as though "other citizens" (Jews and Free-thinkers, perhaps) should prefer being robbed by Nonconformists rather than by other Christians! Then came a rousing reference to "the grasping and intolerant clericalism of the Roman and Anglican Churches." There is nothing intolerant, of course, about Nonconformists—and they were never known to be grasping. When they wanted the Passive Resisters Relief Bill passed—by which Nonconformist religious teaching in the schools was to be paid for by the State, while Anglicans and Catholics were to be charged for their religious teaching—they were only animated by the most beautiful principles of justice. Everybody knows that. There is no flaw in the Nonconformist Conscience.

"Commissioner" Railton—a gushing creature—wonders how much "General" Booth's tour "will have helped to bring all Japan to his Master's feet." He says that time will tell. It will.

Mr. M'Kenna, Minister of Education, in succession to the great (and unfortunate) Mr. Birrell, has been telling a Newcastle audience that "it would be a calamity to drive the Bible from the schools." A calamity to whom? Why to the Nonconformist bigots he was addressing—and nobody else.

At the Oxford commemoration on June 26, they are going to make William Booth a D.C.L. He is described in the official list as "General and Commander-in-Chief of the

Salvation Army." There is no lack of "respectability" about him now. He has "arrived."

"A Well Wisher" writes to the *Yarmouth Independent* deploring the fact that local tradesmen allow an "attractive display of goods in their windows to be seen on seven days instead of six." And "A Sunday Observer" writes to the *Eastern Daily Press* bewailing "the scenes on the Market Hill every Sunday," where ice cream is actually sold to children. Newspapers must be short of copy to print such stuff.

Gipsy Smith is home in old England again. He appears to have done good business in America. The family caravan is a thing of the dim and distant past. He keeps a motor-car now. Which is a great improvement on "the Master's" moke.

There was some plain speaking the other day at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church. One of the platform orators, the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, thought it necessary to utter a solemn warning. Perhaps he didn't think he would be reported; but the following account of what he said appeared in the *Christian World*:—

"He prognosticated that in the near future the churches would have to fight for fundamentals, not for the accidentals which now divide them. We are going to be involved, he said, in a great struggle to hold anything at all. It will not be a matter between Methodist and Baptist, but between Christianity and unbelief; not whether there were two Isaiahs, but whether there is a credible Bible at all; not whether God answers prayer, but whether there is a God at all beyond a blind will hidden in the Universe. Mr. Shakespeare hinted that it might be hard to hold anything sacred against the advancing tide of secularism and materialism." Truth gets spoken occasionally even in churches. Mr. Shakespeare (how funny that sounds!) is a true prophet. Perhaps we ought to say, a prophet of truth; for most true prophets, we fear, have been thorough-paced liars.

Sir Henry Burdett, in the Hospital-Sunday number of *The Hospital*, frankly states that the record of Egypt's temple-hospitals goes back at least five thousand years, and that hospitals existed at a very early date in Persia and India. There were also famous Mohammedan hospitals in Arabia and Egypt a thousand years ago. That is before hospitals existed in Christian countries. We hope the boastful Christians will take note of these facts.

The Bishop of Madras, in the June number of the *Nineteenth Century*, admits that Christianity is making no headway amongst the higher and educated classes in India. "So far as I can judge," he says, "they are no nearer to the Christian Church to-day than they were twenty-five years ago; indeed, in some respects, I think that they are further off." We are glad to hear it.

#### WHAT THE "NEW THEOLOGY" COMES TO.

Have not men of science devoted themselves to Psychological Research? Do they not tell us there are things in Telepathy that their bottles cannot hold, nor their microscopes detect? Is there not Thought-reading, Crystal-gazing, Chiromancy? Do not learned men admit that they cannot fathom it? The soul "comes trailing clouds of glory." It is not to be cross-examined by your mechanical science or your priggish philosophy. Religion, morality, worship, belong to the world of the Higher Truth. So says Mrs. Eddie, Dr. Dowie, the Archdeacon, Mrs. Besant. So says every humbug who trades in spiritualism. So says every roguish who to himself or to the world justifies his crimes by the Divine Immanence of his own "subliminal self." That is the gulf which is yawning to receive the "New Theology." In its defiance of reasoned demonstration, in its reliance on its own subconscious (and so irrational) dreams, it is only "Christian Science" under another name.—*Frederic Harrison*, "*Positivist Review*."

#### HARRIET MARTINEAU.

Hail to the steadfast soul,  
Which, unflinching and keen,  
Wrought to erase from its depth  
Mist, and illusion, and fear!  
Hail to the spirit which dar'd  
Trust its own thoughts, before yet  
Echoed her back by the crowd!  
Hail to the courage which gave  
Voice to its creed, ere the crowd  
Won consecration from Time!  
—*Matthew Arnold*, "*Haworth Churchyard*."



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Suspended during June, July, and August).

## To Correspondents.

- F. E. CRASHAW.—The paper alluded to in the cutting you send us may be the *Freethinker*; also, it may not be. This journal could not have been bought at a railway bookstall. We wish it could.
- J. BATES.—Cuttings received with thanks.
- J. JONES.—Thanks, but we don't notice the rag.
- T.—The legality of referring to a man's past crimes, for which he has been imprisoned, depends entirely upon circumstances; that is to say, in the last resort, upon what a magistrate or a judge and jury will think of the matter. When a man has committed a crime, and paid the penalty, charity as well as justice would draw over it the veil of oblivion. But if the man himself challenges the lifting of the veil by gross personalities, and slanderous statements about other people—and does this while setting himself up as a public teacher and censor—he cannot rightly plead for silence as to his own offences. It is despicable to demand consideration and show none. So much for charity and justice. Legality is another matter. That depends upon the conditions already stated; and you must expect prejudice, in courts of law, in favor of Christians and against Freethinkers.
- J. LUCAS.—Always glad to receive cuttings.
- J. DE B.—Cuttings received with thanks.
- C. W. STYRING.—See paragraph. Thanks. Bishop Moule's sneaking off without answering any challenges is just what might be expected.
- A. RIVETT.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.
- ELIZABETH LECHMERE.—Pleased to see "S. M.'s" letter on the Mill case in the *Hereford Times*. Freethinkers should write to the newspapers everywhere on the subject—making use of the facts we have printed.
- J. H. BOUCH writes: "Your specimen copies of the *Freethinker* have been extraordinarily interesting reading, and great food for thought, and I have ordered future copies from my news-agent. Allow me to be grateful." This should encourage friends to send us further names and addresses.
- JAMES WILSON.—You will doubtless hear Mr. Foote at Glasgow in the autumn. Cutting too late for this week.
- N. LEVEY.—Pleased to learn that the Edinburgh meetings are now quiet and successful.
- M. WOODGETT.—You should read a good book on the subject. An answer cannot be given in a few lines.
- W. P. BALL.—Your batches of cuttings are always very welcome.
- G. ROLEFFS.—Sorry to hear of your illness, and wish you a speedy recovery.
- F. NUTTALL.—Thanks for cuttings. With regard to the other matter, we are afraid it is not a question of names, but a question of human nature.
- G. BAILEY.—We use cuttings as we can. What is not useful to-day, may be so to-morrow. Glad you like the *Freethinker* the more you read it. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.
- HENRY PORTER.—Have passed it on to Mr. Snell. Yes, Free-thinkers should support the Secular Education League.
- GEORGE PAYNE.—Best thanks for the Ferrer cuttings. We hope to hear of his acquittal.
- JOSEPH BRYCE.—Always pleased to hear from you, but is the Rev. A. T. Guttery worth all your trouble? Glad to know of your "ever-increasing regard for the *Freethinker*."
- BESSIE BROUGH.—Thanks for last week's cuttings.
- H. COWELL.—We had not seen the *Morning Leader* cutting. It looks very much as you suggest. The other cuttings will also be useful. Thanks.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS: Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

## Sugar Plums.

Sir Oliver Lodge has sent us a courteous and interesting letter on "Religious Education," partly in reply to some of our recent criticisms. It arrives just too late for this week's *Freethinker*, the paper being practically made up, as we go to press early in the week. We shall publish Sir Oliver Lodge's letter next week—after supplying him with a proof for correction; and we shall publish with it whatever may seem necessary in rejoinder.

Mr. Cohen delivers his annual lectures on the Town Moor, Newcastle-on-Tyne, next Sunday (June 23). Particulars in our next issue. Tyueside "saints" will please note.

After some hesitation, we have decided to print another 20,000 copies of Mr. Cohen's "Salvation Army" Tract. This is over-running the constable, and we must ask for further subscriptions towards the cost of production.

Just as we are going to press we are delighted to hear that the Coventry Town Council has at last, by 18 votes to 16, decided not to confirm the bigoted policy of the Baths and Parks Committee. The Baths Assembly Hall is to be available for Sunday lectures, and the N. S. S. will have some dates as well as other organisations.

The Leicester Secular Society is going to hold its third Bazaar in October, and we hope the effort will be a great success. No doubt there are friends in other parts of the country who will be ready to render some assistance to such a deserving Society. Gifts of money, or carriage-paid parcels of toys, pictures, old books, new books, clothing, crockery, fancy articles, portable furniture, etc., can be sent in at once or at any date up to October 10. We shall certainly try to send something ourselves, and we hope to hear that many others have done likewise. Whatever is sent should be addressed to Mr. F. J. Gould, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester.

Mr. J. W. de Caux's circular letter, which has been sent out by post to "saints" whose addresses are known, is printed also in this week's *Freethinker*, where it will meet the eyes of other possible subscribers. We print it this once only. One insertion must suffice—and should suffice to all who are really interested in the matter.

One sentence in Mr. de Caux's circular may be thought by some persons enough to stagger credulity. It is nevertheless perfectly true. The books of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, show that the Editor of the *Freethinker* has not received salary during the past twelve months. Of course he would be glad to get paid if he could, but money was never his object in editing the *Freethinker*, and the want of money will never make him stop editing it. "Editorial expenses" have appeared in the Company's balance-sheets, but on the opposite side of the account a continuous indebtedness to the Editor has been included under "Sundry Creditors." This statement is made once for all. We don't want to repeat it—under any circumstances.

Mr. Foote will have something to say, presently, to the whole Freethought party on financial matters. It may be possible to reorganise, with some assistance, so that the Editor's salary (it isn't a princely figure) may be forthcoming. But in the meanwhile the facts remain as stated.

Some subscribers have said pleasant things in their letters. We will quote a few of them, just to show that if a fighting Freethinker, like Mr. Foote, has enemies—as is inevitable—he has also warm friends and admirers, who doubtless, in some cases, let their enthusiasm color their judgment; but a little fervency now and then on the right side may well be set off against the zeal of detraction on the other side.

R. J. Henderson (Bristol) writes to Mr. de Caux:—

"I often bewail my poor financial ability to help the cause of Freethought as I would like to. I never saw Mr. Foote, and only discovered the *Freethinker* about eighteen months ago—but he ranks with Ingersoll. I love a 'whole hogger,' a man who goes down to bed-rock, and who calls a Bishop a liar in plain English when he finds him wilfully perverting the truth. I wanted to go to the Dinner last January, in order to see Mr. Foote, but couldn't manage it. Better luck next time. I want to shake hands with that man. He is a grand character. If I had lots of money I would build him a hall in London with the greatest pleasure."

There, now! How's that for high?



A Cambridge subscriber, forwarding cheque, says:—

"I hope you will accept it as a small token of respect for the brilliant work you have done for Freethought. I hope you will be able to continue this good work for many years yet."

G. F. Finn is short and sharp. "I enclose one guinea," he says, "and wish it was ten. He deserves it." W. H. Morrish, the Bristol veteran, and an old friend, says in his merry way:—

"I see you are spreading your wings for your annual flight. Yes, by all means take a holiday. I hope you will enjoy it, and return with renewed vigor, so that your physical arrangements will be on a par with the mental. I trust your admirers will not forget you."

A Malvern subscriber—and a generous one—says:—

"I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you. You are doing a grand work, and I hope your health will be preserved to you for many long years. The books and tracts of the Pioneer Press and Ingersoll's and your works are doing an immense amount of real good, in quite out-of-the-way places."

J. Chick, an old North-Londoner, sends his cheque—

"As a small payment for a debt which I and every Freethinker owe you for your able leadership of the party, and the pleasure and instruction we receive from your writings and lectures."

T. Thelwall says:—

"Mr. Foote has fought long and bravely, and at great sacrifice, as few could have been found to do, and has been a worthy and determined successor of the great Charles Bradlaugh. Considering the long and trying fight he has had against bigotry and priestcraft—and false friends—it is astonishing that he has held out so long."

S. Holmes wishes Mr. Foote long life and the very best of health, and adds: "Please convey to him my warmest admiration." Richard Johnson, of Manchester, whose years sit so lightly upon him, wishes Mr. Foote "health and strength for a good winter's work for the cause," and adds:—

"I am sorry this appeal has to be made. Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to place you out of the necessity for such appeals, and I shall always be willing to do my best to further any scheme that may accomplish such an object."

A Southport "saint" says:—

"Mr. Foote is a man whom I much admire. He is honest and 'thorough,' belongs to the Church Militant and is no Passive Resister."

H. Jessop tells Mr. de Caux—"Your noble appeal cannot be in vain. One cannot forsake such a leader."

A well-known literary man, Mr. Hume Nisbet, sends cheque to Mr. de Caux, and says:—

"I regard the Editor of the *Freethinker* as the most honest, most self-sacrificing, and most fearless of scarce Freemen in Great Britain. I respect him for his manly pluck, and I admire him for his long and lone battle against tyranny and ignorant injustice. He is A MAN."

A Welsh doctor says:—

"I sincerely hope you will long be spared to fight the good fight for truth and humanity. The longer I live the more I feel convinced of the truth of the principles I imbibed at the old Hall of Science, in my student days long ago. I often heard you and the late Mr. Bradlaugh there, and I well remember the grand meeting there, on your release from Holloway Gaol. I shall be up in London in the autumn and look forward to the pleasure of hearing you again, and hope to have the honor of shaking your hand."

George Payne (Manchester) says: "With reference to Mr. de Caux's letter, I perhaps need only say that I entirely endorse his views." An old Jarrow friend, William Hopper, says:—

"I trust the amount you may receive will be sufficient to enable you to take a rest, which I am sure you deserve, and to relieve you of any financial strain, and also be an encouragement for you to continue your splendid advocacy of Freethought. I cannot tell you how much I enjoy the brilliant articles and other matter from your pen which appears in the *Freethinker*; and have been more than gratified with the way in which you flattened out the pious trickster at the head of the see of Durham."

Major G. O. Warren writes:—

"I have much pleasure in sending you what I can afford towards enabling you to enjoy a well-earned rest from your most efficient and unflagging work for the advance of freedom of thought. As a wholesome exhibition of sound and fearless reasoning, the *Freethinker*, under your most able editorship, is a welcome relief from the halting logic and slipshod verbiage of the rest of the press. Your recent bold stand against the persecution of the priests by the French radicals is a striking example of your unwavering devotion to the principles of Freethought, as well as an evidence of your political foresight in predicting that such persecution must

produce only reactionary results. It is gratifying to hear that the circulation of the *Freethinker* is steadily increasing, for I know from sad experience how thankless and depressing is the task of trying to get men simply to use their brains."

The Annual Conference of the National Secular Society of England was announced for "Whit-Sunday," May 19. No report of the Conference has arrived, but it is safe to assume that the delegates had the good judgment to re-elect G. W. Foote President, to adopt his policies, and entrust him largely, as executive, with the conduct of the Society's affairs.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Mr. Herbert Gladstone, speaking at West Leeds, said that if the great denominations of the country could not agree on some basis of settling the question of religious education, only one course remained, and that was to settle it by the system of secular education.

## To Freethinkers.

92 ST. PETER'S ROAD,  
GREAT YARMOUTH,

June 1, 1907.

DEAR FRIENDS.—I am making my annual appeal on behalf of our leader, Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society, and Editor of the *Freethinker*.

It must be evident to you that the mental strain upon him is very great, and that, year by year, it becomes more than ever absolutely necessary that he should enjoy at least a partial rest from his severe labors. I say "partial rest" because, even when taking a holiday he must, perforce, attend to the weekly issue of the *Freethinker*. His rest simply means abstention from platform work during the summer. And this rest we are bound to enable him to take, if only it be to assist him to recuperate his energies for the coming winter.

Unfortunately, his small income almost entirely ceases in these circumstances. It is an open secret that he is still unable to draw any salary for his constant labors on the *Freethinker*. He has taken care that all others are paid, and has gone without remuneration himself, conceiving it to be "the General's" duty so to act. This being the case, is it not *our duty* to share with him this heavy burden? I think it is, and I hope you will take the same view. We all know what a salary he might have commanded if he had taken his great abilities to another market. He does not, I am sure, regret the devotion of his life to our cause, but this is a very strong reason why we should prevent his suffering too great a loss.

It is my belief, that very few men would have undertaken Mr. Foote's work with Mr. Foote's prospects; and fewer still could have done it even had they been willing to try. The work is a very special one, requiring special knowledge and faculties. I often wonder how he does it year after year. What strikes me most of all, is the fact that he has been, if anything, more active on the *Freethinker* since he has had to go without salary; and I am sure there is no falling off in the quality of his writing.

Let us, then, support such a leader to the full extent of our power. I ask you, therefore, to subscribe this year with the utmost liberality.

Subscriptions may be forwarded to me at the above address, or direct to Mr. Foote, at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C. Every subscription will be personally acknowledged by him.

Yours faithfully and fraternally,

J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.



### The Utility of Prayer.—I.

THERE are many follies associated with religion and linked with the religious temperament, and belief in the efficacy of prayer is one of them. The belief that the orderly course of nature can be affected—or interfered with—by human supplication brought to bear on the Divine Will, is a belief that dies hard, though in the higher theological circles the idea that prayer can avert a pestilence, ward off a famine, bring fine weather or rain, or restore people to health, has been almost entirely demolished. For hundreds of years, however, the Christian Church taught that prayer *could* do these and many other things, and the average Christian is, to-day, pretty much in the same frame of mind regarding prayer, though science *has* led him forward a little. To-day, most of even the fervent believers in the potency of prayer recognise that soap and permanganate of potash are extremely valuable adjuncts to litanies and rosaries and penitential psalms when disease has to be battled with. The truth of the philosophical cynicism that prayer is an excellent thing in time of sickness when taken with the requisite kind and quantity of physic, has penetrated even to the religious type of intellect. As for the rest, nowadays, when some insanitary nuisance is breathing a pestilential atmosphere around, and endangering the health of the community, we do not light candles in front of the Virgin's altar, or pray to St. Roch for its removal, as they used to do in the old days. Or, at least, if some of us still do these things, those who are responsible for the well-being of the inhabitants of the district do not trust to these preventive measures alone. In addition to invoking the saints, they call upon the sanitary inspector and the medical officer of health. And when a man has a fit and falls in the street we do not call a priest to exorcise the Devil out of him—we send for a physician. We *have* progressed somewhat, in spite of the Church.

In mediæval days, St. Roch was a great favorite in time of sickness, and he is yet held in high esteem in Roman Catholic countries for his salubrious qualities. His intercession is still highly valued as a disinfectant or prophylactic. In the olden times, the possession of his dead body was a regular bone of contention. His mortal remains were supposed to purify the air wherever they rested, which seems a curious function for a dead body to perform. The Republic of Venice, which at one period was peculiarly liable to epidemics and plagues on account of its great maritime trade, actually stole the body of St. Roch from its custodians because of its extraordinary reputation as a hygienic asset, and added it to the possessions of the State. We have got a trifle beyond *that* stage in human thought—some of us, at any rate. A recognition of the healthful properties of fresh air and pure drinking-water, the invention of soap (and its application), the devising of a drainage system, and the increase of medical knowledge, have all combined to render it unnecessary that we should trouble the denizens of the better land in their well-earned felicity, as used to be the custom long ago. We can afford to allow the spirits (and the bones) of God's chosen ones to rest in peace. They must have had very little of the latter in the days of faith.

But the old, crude, gross idea of the utility of prayer is still widely held by the masses of the people everywhere. The ordinary humble adherent of Roman Catholicism, for instance, has scarcely yet got beyond the mediæval standpoint in relation to prayer. He has certainly, even yet, a considerable amount of faith in the talismanic virtue of articles of devotion worn about the person. I well remember that, when some sickness or fever was rife in the neighborhood of the school in which I was taught, the good, foolish Sisters provided us all with little flannel images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to be affixed to our underclothing. One of these was considered much more salutary in the warding off of disease than any other measure that could be taken.

Inoculation with serum was not to be reckoned in the same category at all.

In the Roman Catholic newspapers and periodicals scores of requests for prayers are inserted every week that passes. And these are not prayers or requests for spiritual graces and favors—which some people might consider quite admissible—but demands of the most materialistic nature. Petitions are put in for the relief of a cold, for the obtaining of a lodger, for success in business, for the obtaining of a situation, for all sorts of mundane necessities and luxuries. Whatever view the superior people in the Church of Rome may hold as to the real function or power of prayer, they certainly extend no discouragement to the uneducated classes in their grotesque conceptions of its uses. At the same time, it is a mere matter of justice to admit that the Christian Scriptures fully authorise the material conception of the uses of prayer, and that it is just as sensible to ask St. Patrick to cure a bunion as to expect him to eradicate a moral defect.

In considering the utility or non-utility of prayer in its influence on the world of matter, it needs but to express the problem as Professor Tyndall did many years ago. Tyndall, in discussing this very subject, asked point-blank if prayer were a force in nature. Obviously, if prayer can keep off sickness, or avert an earthquake, bring rain or induce a bountiful harvest, prayer *must* be a force in nature. As such, its potentiality, both active and latent, as well as its limitations, should be investigated and determined in order that mankind may utilise it in a methodical, scientific way, as we do—or attempt to do—with all other forces in nature. It is plainly in the interests of the human race to ascertain definitely whether prayer can cure the toothache or can be considered a satisfactory substitute for a poultice in the treatment of a boil; whether it can make potatoes and cabbages grow, or is of any effect as a remedy in cases of consumption, paralysis, or broken legs. Of course, so far as has been shown, prayer never *did* alter the course of nature in the slightest degree; and all the countless millions of agonised, heart-rending appeals that have been addressed heavenwards throughout the long travail of the human race, represent but so much wasted thought and aspiration, and constitute part of that monumental folly for which religion has been largely responsible.

At the same time, as has often been pointed out in these columns, if the utterances ascribed to Christ in the Gospel narratives are regarded as authentic, and if Christ is regarded as divine, then Roman Catholics and others are quite justified in offering up prayers for anything and everything. In this matter, the most ignorant Catholic is really most consistent. Christ is reported to have said, "Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Here Christ made no reservations or limitations whatever. So that the Christian who believes in Christ—there seem to be a good many Christians who don't—is simply adopting the counsel of his master by assailing the throne of God importunately when he is short of money for the rent, or when he wants a pair of boots, or when he has a pain in his great toe he feels he could do without. I distinctly recall when I myself would pray for a fine day when there was a holiday in prospect, and I saw nothing incongruous or absurd in the expectation that God would manipulate the weather conditions for my special benefit. Such expectation was quite in consonance with all my religious teaching.

However, Roman Catholics generally are guilty of a species of disloyalty to Christ and of contempt for his recommendations in regard to prayer, inasmuch as they usually ask the Father for favors in almost everybody's name but that of Christ. This reluctance to go straight to the Godhead is one of the most marked characteristics of the Roman Catholic procedure in connection with prayer. This preference which the Roman Catholic has for presenting his petition in a roundabout fashion through the medium of priests, or saints, or angels, or the



Virgin, rather than by a direct application to the Almighty, is quite in keeping with that lack of frankness and straightforwardness which is so common an outcome of priestly training.

Professor Tyndall has been alluded to above. Tyndall, it will be remembered, was associated with a proposal to test the real value of prayer by fixing upon a certain ward in a London hospital, getting the Churches to pray for the patients in that particular ward, and then observing whether the average of recovery in that ward were any higher than in the other wards. Needless to say, the proposal was not hailed with enthusiasm by the Churches. Your supernaturalists will never agree to submit their pretensions to a hard, practical test, and abide by the conclusion. Christians are clamorous for proofs of scientific theories—though they seldom seem to look at the proofs when they are offered. And they never furnish the slightest proof of *their* dogmas and metaphysical speculations. They dub you blasphemous, atheist, infidel; and other opprobrious epithets are hurled at you if you decline to accept the unsupported testimony of the Churches, and if you presume to ask questions. Clergymen protested "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" when a couple of scientific men desired to afford the Deity a fair and square chance of showing what he could do for those who believed in him. They professed to be concerned for the honor of God, but what they really feared was that their prayers would receive no answer and that the unbeliever would thus obtain another opportunity for scoffing.

Tyndall also raised quite a controversy in the magazines and in the press by objecting to the setting apart by the Church of England of a day of humiliation and prayer on account of a bad harvest, and by his remarks on an article on Prayer and Cholera that appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The only one who seemed unconcerned at all the fuss was God himself. This constitutes the permanent attitude of God. The disputes that rage amongst his devoted worshipers never appear to interest him, though he could settle them all in a moment. At any rate, he could settle the disputants, which would be quite as effectual. But God never seems to excite himself in the smallest degree about what people believe regarding him. Possibly he is too busy laughing at the folly of humanity. Is he not the Aristophanes of the universe?

G. SCOTT.

(To be concluded.)

### "Nature's Insurgent Son."

MR. LLOYD still objects to the idea that man can rebel against Nature's laws or command or control her "relentless mechanism." He says—"Surely a 'relentless mechanism' cannot be controlled." But ordinary machinery is absolutely "relentless"; it would tear a man to pieces with perfect indifference; and yet a child may control it by the mere turning of a handle. Mr. Lloyd continues to use the metaphor which regards us as "obeying" Nature's laws in order to secure our ends, but still fails to appreciate the legitimacy of the equally customary metaphor which regards such attainment of our ends as command or "control" of Nature.

Confusion of ideas, language, logic, etc., results from the too literal acceptance—and still more from the partial acceptance and partial rejection—of such metaphors. We are told to preserve our life by "obeying" Nature; we are told, with equal assurance, that man preserves his life by "rebellious" against Nature. Then Mr. Lloyd tells us emphatically that rebellion is inevitable death. Others, again, will tell us that rebellion is utterly impossible, seeing that Nature's laws are absolutely "unbreakable," and that all we do is in obedience to Nature's promptings. While some will say that obedience is inevitable, others will remind us that, as a literal matter of fact, man can neither obey Nature, nor command her, nor

rebel against her; for Nature, though personified as a female and as the universal Mother, etc., is not really a person who can issue commands or receive orders. The whole personification or conception of Nature as "she who must be obeyed," or who may be commanded or opposed, is purely figurative. If we do not bear this in mind and tolerate each other's phrases and metaphors, we shall be involved in endless muddles of thought and argument. We all mean the same thing, namely, that human courage and intelligence should, and do, set to work to overcome natural evils by suitable means, but we express ourselves differently, and then misunderstand each other's meaning because it is not embodied in the particular metaphor or simile that we ourselves would prefer to employ. Hence complicated explanations and objections and counter-objections almost *ad infinitum*. We should remember that obtaining desired results by *obeying* Nature is precisely the same thing as *commanding* or *controlling* Nature by obeying her. The one metaphor is as justifiable and as much sanctioned by usage as the other, and Bacon was perfectly right in employing both. I thought I had cleared up this matter in my previous letter, but I appear to have failed so far as Mr. Lloyd himself is concerned.

Turning to other points of minor importance, I notice that Mr. Lloyd says that fitness "invariably insures survival." I think that, on reflection, he will admit that this is too strong a statement of the case. A vast amount of destruction in Nature is practically fortuitous or indiscriminate. Sometimes it is the fittest that perish. Thus the strongest and swiftest of the South American horses and cattle reached the river first in times of drought and were then pushed into the water by the thirst-maddened herd behind them, and were thus drowned in huge numbers. The fact, of course, is that Fitness, *on the whole* (but not invariably) secures survival.

Mr. Lloyd says that "to charge her [Nature] with moral indifference before she became moral is to be guilty of bearing false witness against her." But surely it is permissible to charge nature with being non-moral when she admittedly was non-moral. The accusation may have been pointless, or irrelevant, or badly expressed, but it scarcely deserves to be stigmatised as falsehood.

W. P. BALL.

### HUXLEY AND THE BIBLE.

He said he had not been bothered in early life about Bible-reading as a duty, and consequently used to enjoy the Bible stories. This may account for Huxley's concession that the Bible might be read in the public schools. His freethinking friends were distressed by this, but when I spoke of it to Leslie Stephen, he said, "What made us freethinkers? Why, reading the Bible." Nevertheless, I consider that the great mistake of Huxley's life, and I have heard that he himself so considered it in later years.—*Dr. M. D. Conway, "Autobiography,"* vol. ii., p. 174.

Alas! I see but one cross remaining on the earth, and it is that of the unrepentant thief. What thousands of the most venomous wasps and hornets swarm about it, and fight for its putrescences! The Blessed one was pulled down long ago, indeed, soon after its erection, in the scuffle of those who would sell the splinters. Great fortunes are daily made by it, and it maintains as many clerks and treasurers as the South Sea. The money-changers in the Temple of old did at least give change: ours bag the money and say *Call tomorrow*.—*Landor's Imaginary Conversation between Romilly and Wilberforce.*

Whatever limits us, we call Fate. If we are brute and barbarous, the fate takes a brute and dreadful shape. As we refine, our checks become finer. If we rise to spiritual culture, the antagonism takes a spiritual form. The limitations refine as the soul purifies, but the ring of necessity is always perched at the top.—*Emerson.*

He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare,  
And he who has one enemy shall find him everywhere.

—*Persian.*



### The Ferrer Case.

M. HENRI ROCHEFORT, the eminent French journalist, contributed a very important article on the Ferrer case to the *Toulouse Dépêche*. The following translation of it appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, and is reproduced in our columns partly in order to its preservation by Freethinkers. M. Rochefort writes:—"The would-be assassin having removed himself beyond the reach of the law, the authorities at Madrid have naturally looked round for someone to fill his place. Now this desperate determination at all costs to find a victim, carries with it the almost inevitable risk of a great miscarriage of justice. And this, I fear, is the fate that is in store for Ferrer, whom I knew in Paris as secretary of my excellent and worthy friend the Republican, Ruiz Zorilla, a former President of the Council and a man who certainly never would have consented to lend an ear to any desperate propaganda, all his political notions being cast in a far different mould. If Ferrer was in any sense a propagandist, it was only in virtue of the Socialist instruction that he gave to his pupils in the free schools that he had founded and for which he had sacrificed all his fortune. It is only too probable that the main object of the prosecution is not so much Ferrer's conviction as the closing of the Republican schools, the growing success of which is a source of uneasiness to those at this moment in power. He had, in perfect innocence, put Morral in charge of the library connected with his schools, solely on the recommendation of the latter's sister, who was a pupil. His ignorance of Morral's murderous intentions was absolute, and Morral took the greatest pains to disguise them from him. If the Spanish Court had not ruled, at the last moment, that no foreign witness could be heard, I would have read to the Court the contents of a letter which I have received, and which, I think, is of capital importance. The letter was one addressed by Morral to a Russian outlaw, whose name I must perforce refrain from disclosing, for it is as compromising to the recipient as to the writer. The following expression occurs in the letter, which I give, word for word, as it is written: 'I have no faith in Ferrer, Tarrida, Lorenzo, and all the simple-minded folk who think that you can do anything with speeches.' Now I can swear to the authenticity of this letter. Placed before a jury, it would more than suffice to secure an acquittal; unhappily, reasons of State have intervened, and, although accused of complicity in an outrage which caused the death of a number of people, and which, therefore, falls under the jurisdiction of the Assize Courts, Ferrer is nevertheless to be tried before a special tribunal consisting simply of three judges.....No one would dream of extenuating the horror of this attempt on the lives of two young people in the first hours of their marriage. But the fact that a universal cry of indignation went up at the news of this frightful abomination, is no justification for pouncing upon men who had absolutely nothing to do with the affair, and who would have opposed it with all the strength at their command had they heard of it."

The *Manchester Guardian* published a notable article on the Ferrer case in its issue for June 4. This article is so important that we venture to reproduce it in full. Many, if not all, of our readers will be pleased to meet with it, if they have not already done so. It runs as follow: "We have the best of reasons for knowing how difficult it will be to secure an authentic report of the trial, which began yesterday at Madrid, in connection with the bomb outrage upon the King and Queen of Spain more than a year ago, but it is of high importance that the proceedings should be studied in England with the closest attention. Special circumstances give English public opinion peculiar weight with the Spanish authorities, and there is grave reason to apprehend a gross miscarriage of justice. It is asserted, with very great plausibility, that the trial has for its object the destruction of obnoxious political persons and political forces rather than the punishment of criminals. Morral, who committed the terrible outrage, has been dead now twelve months, and the present defendants are charged either with assisting him to escape or with complicity before the fact. The most important of these is Senor Ferrer, and the latter charge is made against him. Senor Ferrer is, in the last degree, obnoxious to the Jesuits and Clericals, who hold Spain in the hollow of their hand. He is the founder of the modern rationalist schools of Barcelona, whose aim is, in his own words, 'to make children reflect upon the lies of religion, of government, and of patriotism, of justice, of politics, and of militarism, and to prepare their brains for the social revolution.' These institutions are the only places of education in Spain which are independent of Clericalism, and the Clericals have long sought their destruction. The trial of Senor Ferrer by an exceptional tribunal, without a jury, is said to be the means they have chosen. His connection with the assassin Morral arose out of the fact that Morral was the librarian of the

Barcelona schools. Further, Senor Ferrer is undoubtedly an Anarchist in the sense in which Tolstoy is an Anarchist. That he has no sympathy with 'propaganda by deed' is indicated by the work of spreading his ideas by education, to which he has dedicated his life, and M. Henri Rochefort offers direct confirmation in the shape of a letter by Morral himself, in which the murderer writes, 'I distrust Ferrer, Tarrida, Lorenzo, and all the simpletons who think that you can do anything with speeches.' We have as yet seen no evidence to connect Ferrer with the crime, and only too much to connect the prosecution with an unscrupulous attempt to destroy him. Unless, therefore, the trial is conducted with the fullest and the frankest publicity, and unless during its course testimony of a very much more convincing character is produced, we shall be unable to regard its issue without profound suspicion and distrust—a suspicion and distrust in no way alleviated by the extraordinary measure which has been adopted of entrusting it to an exceptional tribunal in which a jury has no part."

### Correspondence.

#### BROCKWELL PARK MEETINGS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I observe from the Answers to Correspondents that a gentleman, under the initials "M. B.," has addressed you on the subject of the opposition at the lectures of the local Branch in Brockwell Park, and, as I have acted as chairman of the meetings held there in the afternoons, an opportunity is afforded of reporting the success and enthusiasm which has attended these gatherings in what Christians are pleased to call their stronghold.

With special reference to the opponent named, may I say that his appearance on the platform has invariably come about in response to the usual open challenge, and more than once at the direct invitation of the lecturer, through me as chairman; and while on the whole he has confined himself in a general way to the subject under discussion, *when speaking from the platform*, he is not without that unhappy Christian habit of intermingling personal calumny—often parenthetically—with his criticisms. But is not this the rule rather than the exception with Freethought's opponents? It is the sole relic of their armory, and in itself an evidence of weakness. In certain respects it is a two-edged sword, or a double-pointed flint, which may, metaphorically, be hurled at an opponent if perchance he should reside in a glass tenement. Such a critic, therefore, ought to be on his guard lest he unconsciously lays himself open to so dangerous a dialectical weapon, which some Freethought lecturer may at the psychological moment serve up in the form of a *quid pro quo*.

In the meantime, the friends of Freethought will be well advised to rely upon the discretion of their public advocates, and continue to extend to their opponents that liberty of expression which Freethinkers have been mainly instrumental in calling into existence, resting secure in the belief that their cause is the true one, that they hold an unassailable fortress, and that the great principle of strict justice, and even magnanimity, to the enemy which you recently enunciated on the French Clergy question, is the one which should be closely adhered to in all our battles for the "fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech."

F. R. THURKSTONE.

Though a man be in affliction, he should always abide in his own calling,—performing his duty,—evenminded under all conditions. Outward observances are not righteousness.

Those who eat only to live: those who marry only for the sake of offspring: those who speak only to declare the truth: such as these overcome the difficulties of life.

Thou thyself art a river: self-restraint is thy place of sacred pilgrimage: truth is thy water: morality is thy bank: pity is thy waves. Here perform thy rites of purification, O son of Pandu, for the outward washing of water alone shall not purify thy inner self.—*The Hitopadesa*.

### Obituary.

I HAVE, with painful regret, to record the death of one more staunch and true member of the Huddersfield Branch and friend of the Secular movement generally—Mr. Chas. Ed. Hall, at the age of fifty-eight, who died suddenly on Sunday morning. A man of outward stolid demeanor and of very little talk, yet he was one of the most honest and straightforward men that one would wish to know. During this past thirty years I have never known an appeal to be made to him on behalf of anything or anybody in connection with our movement but to which he would respond.—W. H. SPIVEY.



## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on postcard.

### LONDON.

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), F. A. Davies, 3.15, "Freethought in the Bible"; 6.15, "The Religion of Shakespeare."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture. Brockwell Park, 3.15 and 6.15, W. J. Ramsey.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, H. B. Samuels, "Jesus of Nazareth."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, C. Cohen, 3.30, "Immortality"; 6.30, "Secularism."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station (G.E.R.), 7, R. Rosetti, "The Russian Gods."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S.: Beresford-square, 11.30, Andrew Allison, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

### COUNTRY.

#### OUTDOOR.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 3, a Lecture; The Mound, 7, "Our Savior's."

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S.: Market Cross, on Saturday, at 8, George Whitehead, a Lecture.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Annual Meeting—Election of Officers.

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