

# THE Freethinker

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*Few, indeed, there are who do what is just and right from a love of justice and rectitude; fewer still who do good from actual charity. Their motives and conditions of action are fear of the law, fear for life, fear of loss of gain, of loss of reputation and character.*

—SWEDENBORG.

## More "Tolstoy."

THE *Tribune* had, or thought it had, good copy in Tolstoy's new article, "Thou Shalt Kill No One," which was "forbidden" in Russia. But many of Tolstoy's writings are "forbidden" in that holy land, and the great Russian author has produced a heavy weight of literature like this one. Tolstoy as an artist is interesting and inspiring, but we must confess to finding Tolstoy the moralist a little tiresome. He is so diffuse and so solemn. He says the same thing over and over again, without taking the slightest notice of the objections that are urged against it. One begins by feeling his power; one ends in weariness of his sombre monotony. It would be so great an improvement if a smile could break now and then over that melancholy face. For there is a bright as well as a dark side of things, and perpetual dwelling in the shadow tends to moral misery and mental distortion.

We feel like saying that the only really valuable passages in Tolstoy's new article are those in which he casually condemns other people's Christianity; that is, the Christianity of history, and the Christianity of ninety-nine-hundredths of the Christian world. It is refreshing to hear him speak of "all the nonsense about Trinities, processions of the Holy Ghost, salvation by faith, heaven, hell, etc." But it seems to us equal nonsense to pretend that these things are not Christianity. Tolstoy appeals to the Western nations to "free themselves from belief in perverted Christianity." He refers later on to "our civilised, perverted world." It does not occur to him that if, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, the Christian nations are "perverted" and their Christianity is "perverted" too, the Christian religion itself is a practical failure, and the Western world had better try something else. Tolstoy's recipe is "Back to Christ." He pins his faith on "Christ's teaching." But when you look into the matter you find that he makes this up for himself. He selects a certain number of Gospel texts that suit him and dismisses all the rest. From this point of view, his commentary on the Four Gospels is quite an amusing production.

We are told in this letter that "the aim and wish of humanity" is "the Kingdom of Heaven on earth"—that "Christ brought that kingdom near to us"—but that "men did not understand him, and set up the kingdom of priests." Thus said Kant, and thus says Tolstoy after him. But if men did not understand Christ, whose fault was that? And what is the use of a religion that cannot be understood? Is it not clear, too, that the Kingdom of Heaven—in other words, supernaturalism—is the very breeding-ground of priests? Every sect of Christianity has its priests, although they are called by different

names. Priests, parsons, ministers, pastors—call them what you will—are all in the same business. They come between man and his gods—and make a first-rate living out of him in this world by pretending to look after his interests in the world to come. Religion breeds priests as naturally as an old cheese breeds maggots.

Tolstoy's object in this article is to preach his favorite doctrine of non-resistance. It is a great doctrine, in its way; and great work might be done with it; but no doctrine can cover the whole of life. Herbert Spencer's definition of life well calls it "an adjustment." Life is governed, not by one principle, but by many principles; and wisdom consists in adjusting their claims at the points of real or apparent conflict. Tolstoy rides the principle of non-resistance to death. He runs it to an absurdity. If man has no moral right to resist man, how can he have any moral right to resist a lower animal? If man must not resist a tyrant, how should he resist a tiger?

Apart from the abstract question, Tolstoy may be quite right in saying (virtually) to the murdering Reactionists and assassinating Revolutionists, "A plague on both your houses!" Had the Russian reformers been able to organise the general strike, they might have made far more headway. Killing is a crude method, especially when you can only kill a few of your enemies, and cannot terrify the rest. All this may be granted, and we may still differ from Tolstoyism. Moreover, the principle of non-resistance, as far as it is wise, does not belong to Christ. It was taught hundreds of years before him by the Atheist, Buddha. And it was taught far better by the Atheist, Shelley. That great and splendid poet had a more practical mind than the dullards and pedants of the political world whose so-called wisdom is but the denial of all principle. We much prefer the *Masque of Anarchy* to Tolstoy's article in the *Tribune*; and the noble *Ode to the Assertors of Liberty* is, in our judgment, worth far more than all Tolstoy's writings on this particular subject.

Tolstoy is a man of genius, but we think he has been greatly overpraised. He is more outside than inside the stream of modern thought. He is not an evolutionist—and that really says all. If he is not in the theological stage, he is certainly in the metaphysical stage. He wants to regulate the whole of human life by one moral dogma. He really belongs to the men of systems, who are all more or less "touched." He has their common lack of humor. Some people fancy that Shelley had no humor either. But this is a foolish mistake. Certainly he had not the gall which is necessary to a great satirist. He could not have been a Juvenal or a Byron. But the satire on Wordsworth as the timid lover of Nature, in *Peter Bell the Third*, is superb, without being sanguinary; and the translation of Homer's "Hymn to Mercury" is the most sustained piece of delicate and delicious humor in the English language. How advantageous it would be if Tolstoy had something of Shelley's gift in this direction, and something of his many-sided power of moral imagination. As it is, the great Russian writer is apt to sink to the sad level of the regular exhorter; and preaching is one of the worst of occupations.

G. W. FOOTE.

## China and the Missionaries.

AN "influential committee" met some time ago to consider the best means of arousing the people in England to the importance of "the civil and religious movements" now taking place in China. The committee was formed of Churchmen and Nonconformists, and it was decided that the best way to commence would be to send out "independent inquirers" and await their report. Professor Macalister and Mr. W. Fox were asked to go "as Nonconformists," and the Rev. Lord William Gascoyne Cecil "as a Churchman." So much for the independent inquirers. Two Nonconformists and one Churchman, representing a committee made up of both parties—each of them pledged to support missionary work—were to report on whether missionary work was desirable or otherwise. This is what a Christian understands by independent inquiry! So long as two rival Christian bodies agree, the rest of the world may go hang. It reminds one of Dr. Clifford and his parrot-like repetition of "Citizens," when all that he means is "Nonconformists."

I am not aware what the two Nonconformists have reported, or whether they have reported at all, but the Rev. Lord Cecil (it is too much to keep on writing the name in full) gives the result of his visit in a couple of special articles in the *Times* for September 7 and 14. As might have been expected, it is a missionary report pure and simple. To him, China is simply a field for missionary enterprise, and his whole interest is in the extent to which the work of conversion may be successfully carried on. He does not say so in as many words, but it runs right through his articles. In fact, if we eliminate this factor from his articles, the committee might just as well have sent their representatives to America to consider how best to bring the Americans into line with the English ideals.

It may also be assumed that Lord Cecil's inquiries were practically confined to missionaries. There is a mention in the articles of one Chinaman, who is reported as saying that "though the moral tone of Englishmen was infinitely higher than that of the Chinese when they first came out, yet after a residence of two years, they were reduced to the level of their surroundings," and he added, "in China no one is good." Even Lord Cecil thinks this "a gross exaggeration," although, he says, it "is none the less instructive." With that, one can agree; for it throws a strong light on the scope and character of the inquirers.

The missionaries interviewed by Lord Cecil, were unanimous in the opinion that the Chinese people were most anxious to hear the "Gospel"—a statement always made, and the value of which the readiness of the Chinese to attack the missionaries, whenever occasion offer, is the best proof. The proof is the more decisive as the Chinese are the most tolerant of people in the matter of religion. That the Chinese are ready to avail themselves of all they can get in the shape of instruction in English or trained medical attendance, there seems no reason to doubt. But between this and "hungering for the Gospel," there is a wide difference. Incidentally, Lord Cecil shows this. The primitive method of a missionary learning Chinese, and preaching in the vernacular, he obviously thinks little of. The more encouraging method is to open a school and teach English—encouraging, that is, from the point of view of attendance. This method—

"Attracts to the school boys of energy and vigor, who see that the knowledge of a foreign language is necessary to understand Western culture, and that the fact that boys with a good knowledge of English always command a good salary."

But as this "prevents any youths from subsequently offering themselves as theological students, unless they have a real vocation," it is difficult to see how it aids the work of evangelisation. But this, together with the alleged popularity of the "Medical Missions," is enough to show that in

China, as elsewhere, there are people who will go anywhere for what they can get, and that the missionaries buy their attendance as they buy the attendance of poor people at Church and Chapel at home. This is further borne out by the last report of the Church Missionary Society, which, while giving the number of people attended by its medical missionaries at over 170,000, records 1,240 adult baptisms as the year's work of 966 agents. And even this is not clear profit. Seven years ago, the C. M. S. claimed, in China, 24,807 native adherents. It has been steadily reporting converts every year since. Yet its last report places the native adherents at 18,663, or an actual decrease, after seven years, of 5,144. Yet there is still the same talk of the coming rapid conversion of China. The truth is, that if the teaching of English and gratuitous medical service were dropped, the whole thing would be such a farce that even the British public would decline to give it further support.

It is only to be expected that Lord Cecil's view of the Chinese should be permeated with that assumption of superiority tolerably common with all imperfectly developed minds, and highly characteristic of the Christian variety. That we are unquestionably superior to the Chinese, both in knowledge and in morals, is a position that this clerical nobleman regards as quite beyond dispute. That a people of another race, another country, and with other customs will present marked differences to ourselves, is obvious; but it is a sorry blunder to assume, therefore, that they must be worse than ourselves. Many Chinese reason in the same way of English people, and with about equal justification. At any rate, Chinese visiting England are not impressed with our superior morality—rather the reverse. They return home apparently genuinely shocked at many of our—to them—frightful practices; and if they had the impertinence of professional Christians, with the prospect of commercial profit in the background, would probably form a society for civilising and moralising the barbarians of the West. What the Chinese do admit is the superiority of the West in certain branches of applied knowledge, not in either theoretical or practical morality.

But, says Lord Cecil, the West, through both *missionaries* and *statesmen*, should give to China the message that "Western knowledge without Western ethics will only shoe the heel of tyranny with iron, and that these ethics are, as a matter of history, intimately connected with, and founded on, the teachings of Christianity." The first part of this statement involves a line of action that would be most dangerous for the West to adopt, as its partial practice has hitherto been responsible for nearly all our trouble in China. And the concluding portion is simply false. For the first, I deny altogether that there is any sort of a duty incumbent upon us, as a nation, to force either our knowledge or our morals upon the Chinese. The Chinese will avail themselves of either or both when they desire it, so long as they are let alone. And, so long as there are opportunities for peaceful intercourse, people so different as the Chinese and the Europeans, are best left to work out their own material and moral salvation in their own manner. One need not dwell at any length upon the disgusting hypocrisy of the pretence that European interest in China is based upon a desire for the material and moral improvement of the Chinese people. For, putting on one side a mere handful whose interest is created by a narrow and impertinent religious zeal, our interest in China is entirely a commercial one. We are there for what we can get, but without the redeeming quality of being honest, even to ourselves, over this pitiful purpose.

I might go further and question our fitness for the task, even though it were a necessary one to be undertaken. Is it quite evident that China would be immensely improved if it were converted into a copy of England? Would things that are of admitted value amongst ourselves be of the same moral value

when transplanted to China? To me it seems highly questionable. It is true that certain vices which now flourish might dwindle, but it would be at the expense of developing new ones after a European pattern. Chinese visitors have been genuinely shocked at many of the evils they have witnessed in this country, just as we have been shocked at the evils in theirs. And really the philosophy of the subject would seem to be that nations develop variously both their virtues and their vices, without their being very much difference in the sum total of each. A little genuine humility of spirit might induce English people to realise that, with our drunkenness, prostitution, sweating, gambling, misery, and vice, it is really not incumbent upon us to thank heaven for our superiority over other people, and set forth, unasked, upon the task of developing a people who will develop themselves far more profitably if left to themselves.

The statement that Western ethics are founded upon Christianity is, as I have said, not true; and it is one that no educated Chinaman is likely to credit. Lord Cecil may believe it, but then he is a clergyman; and clergymen, in virtue of their training, have developed the capacity of believing, or pretending to believe, many strange and wonderful things. Western moral teaching, like moral teaching in general, is founded upon the recorded experience of mankind, both ante-dating and post-dating Christianity. Of course, Christians have put their label on morals as they have on many other things, but it is a fraudulent trade-mark for all that. While so far as peculiarly Christian teaching is concerned, educated Chinese—who apparently know far more of Lord Cecil's creed than he knows of theirs—have not hesitated in condemning it as far inferior to the teaching of their own native sages. All that is really good in Western moral teaching the Chinese already have in their own literature, expressed in their own way, and suited to their own lives. The teachings of justice, duty, truthfulness, honesty, chastity, are as common with them as with us—even though they may be violated with as great frequency. And if the Chinese want proof that the power of Western nations is quite distinct from its morals, and that a nation may borrow the knowledge which gives that power without troubling about the other, they may find it in the case of the Japanese. For Japan gives the lie direct to Lord Cecil's whole position. Japan owes nothing to the moral teaching of the West; it has simply followed in the steps of its scientific development. What Japan has done China may do; and when it does, when the Chinese have become strong enough to exert enough brute force—the only argument Christian nations properly appreciate—to defend itself against aggression, impertinent pietists of the type of the Rev. Lord William Gascoyne Cecil may be brought to toe the line more rapidly than they will appreciate.

C. COHEN.

### What is the Church Built Upon?

THE very existence of the Church is a conclusive proof that it rests on something, although among present-day theologians there is no agreement as to what that something is. A writer in the *Expository Times* for the current month, declares that "the Church is built on an empty tomb." The Rev. Dr. Warschauer calls that assertion "a dogmatic repetition of a dogmatic utterance," and points out that the expedient of an empty tomb originated at a late period. He makes much of the apparent fact that in Paul's Epistles no mention is made of the tomb. But is it a certainty that Paul does not refer to the tomb, even by implication? Dr. Warschauer says: "No man believed more fervently in the resurrection of Christ than Paul; yet you may search his Epistles from end to end without coming upon a single reference to the tomb. If he knew of the story, is it conceivable that he would never have alluded to it? If the story was current in his time, could he have

helped knowing it?" Dr. Warschauer ignores two significant and important facts. He does not seem to be aware that some New Theologians are strongly of opinion that all the Pauline Epistles are forgeries, and were not in existence until the second century. Of this, the Rev. Dr. Anderson, of Dundee, is as deeply convinced as that Moses never wrote the Pentateuch. Then, apparently, Dr. Warschauer does not realise the only possible signification of the phrases, *resurrection of the dead, raised from the dead, and hath been raised on the third day.* Take the last phrase with its context: "Christ died for our sins, and was buried, and hath been raised on the third day." Now, if his death and burial were genuine physical facts, does it not follow that his resurrection was, likewise, a genuine physical fact? Surely, the writer was not such a fool as to use the terms *died* and *buried* in a literal sense, and the word *raised* in quite another. But if Christ, having first died and been buried, rose from the dead, there must have been an empty tomb. Here is another passage: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). Is it not clear that, though Paul never formally refers to the tomb, he of necessity implies it? Are we not, therefore, justified in concluding that, in Paul's mind, Christianity was built on an empty tomb? Of course, Dr. Warschauer maintains that the resurrection of Christ is to be interpreted *spiritually*, and that the body committed to the grave never rose at all; but is the reverend gentleman prepared to affirm that the death and burial of Jesus are also to be understood *spiritually*? It appears to us as if the learned divine were guilty of quibbling in order to surmount a very real difficulty. Why not rather say that both Paul and the Evangelists were mistaken?

The Pauline Epistles are crowded with references to the resurrection of the dead, but what exact meaning they attach to the phrase no one can tell. The only rational inference that can be drawn is that the dead shall rise *with bodies of some sort.* Even Paul is most emphatic in the statement that *Jesus was dead, actually lay lifeless in the tomb, and became alive again on the third day.* Paul states this quite as firmly as the Evangelists. In whatever sense Jesus died, in that same sense he returned to life after a certain interval. Was it his body, or his spirit, or both, that died? If Dr. Warschauer believes in the immortality of the soul, he has no escape from the conclusion that Jesus could have died only in the body. But if he died only in the body, how could he have returned to life only in the spirit, which never died? The doctrine of a spiritual resurrection is, therefore, a laughable contradiction in terms.

We have no more belief in the empty tomb than Dr. Warschauer himself has; but we cannot get away from the fact that the New Testament always implies it, even when it makes no direct mention of it. Jesus rose again: that put him in a category by himself. Nobody else had ever risen from the dead; and his doing so "declared him to be the Son of God with power." His rising was the promise and potency of the general resurrection of the dead at the last day. "Each in his own order," says Paul: "Christ the first fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). Such is the undoubted teaching of the New Testament, and we utterly fail to see what Dr. Warschauer gains by refusing to admit it.

But there is a vast difference between claiming that the resurrection of the body of Jesus is always either positively taught or clearly implied in the New Testament and admitting that "the Church is built on an empty tomb." Dr. Warschauer must be fully aware that the "empty tomb" is a legend common to most religions. All Savior-Gods are reported to have died and risen again. Persephone, Attis, Adonis, and Osiris were all buried and came to life again. We learn this even from Tertullian.

Christianity is only one of many religions which nominally rest on Virgin Births and Resurrections. That Virgin Births and Resurrections never happen is taken for granted by Christians as regards all religions except their own. What Freethinkers allege is, that what is mythical in other cults is equally mythical in that of Jesus. That on which the Church is built is not an empty tomb, but the belief in an empty tomb. Everybody knows that to believe *anything* is to make it real—to the believers. Luther believed in the Devil, and had numerous unforgettable interviews with him. Who believes in the Devil now? He troubles nobody because nobody has faith in him. Why have the people, for so long a time, held priests in such high reverence and dread? Simply because they have been taught to regard them as standing in peculiarly intimate and influential relations with the Supreme Being. In proportion as that belief dies down the priests sink to the level of ordinary mortals. It is only during the reign of superstition that priestcraft or clericalism is possible. The power of the cloth vanishes with the belief in it. As Jesus could perform no mighty works in the absence of faith, so the clergy's influence in the unseen world ceases as the people lose confidence in them. It is the same with the risen Redeemer of the world. Though he is said to possess all power in heaven and on earth, though he is conceived of as filling and transcending the Universe with his personal presence, and though he is declared to love all mankind with infinite and omnipotent affection, he can do absolutely nothing except where there is distinct faith in him. Therefore, we hold that it is not he, but the belief in him, that does the work attributed to him, while to those who lack the faith, he gives not the slightest hint that he even exists.

Had the Church been built on an empty tomb she would have conquered the whole world without the least delay or difficulty. Had she rested on such a foundation, her winsomeness would have been literally irresistible, and all mankind would have found within her an ideally happy home. Instead of that, her own history, through all the ages, and particularly her present quickly deepening experience of unpreventable decadence, are a sufficient demonstration, to all impartial judges, of the utter groundlessness of her belief. Her empty tomb has turned out to be an emptier dream; and now, even the dream is passing away.

The *Expository Times* is clearly behind the age, nourishing its theological soul on vain delusions, and supporting itself on mere shadows. In reality, the Church is built on the credulity of its membership, on spectacular displays, on the artistic effect of gorgeous vestments worn by the celebrants of voluptuous ritual, on the never-failing attractiveness of good music. The Churches which eschew elaborate rites and ceremonies have now to depend for success on secular accessories, which a century ago would have been condemned as inventions of Satan; and yet, in spite of all these carefully selected and fumigated accessories, any church whose minister lacks eloquence and whose music is inferior, is left high and dry on the beach of failure. The risen Lord alone cannot keep the pews and the exchequer full. The mere doctrine of the empty tomb possesses very little drawing-power to-day.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Fire-Burial of a Veteran Freethinker.

*An address delivered at the cremation of William Henry Holyoak, born Jan. 27, 1818, died Sept. 9, 1907.*

WHILE grief bows low, and while patience bends in silent obedience to the unalterable law of death, love looks beyond the gloom of the moment, and sees the grand oneness of Humanity; on the one side of this life, the noble figures of the past; on the other, the children of the coming ages for whom we shall help to prepare the earth. We are brethren of the dead, and comrades of the souls that yet shall

live. We will console our hearts with the thought of this glorious company into which we are born, and in which our best work and influence will ever remain.

On this bright, calm morning, we bring to the purifying embrace of the funeral fire, the remains of one of the worthiest sons of Humanity. Born within a few miles of Leicester in January, 1818, William Henry Holyoak saw the Nineteenth Century through, and was still active in the first years of the Twentieth. Only a few weeks before his death, this "Happy Warrior," in his ninetieth year, murmured to a friend these words: "I maintain as strongly as ever the Freethought principles that I have advocated through a long life, being confident that the memory of an honest and upright life is a man's greatest consolation on his death-bed." The early recollections which he loved to impart to interested listeners, give us glimpses of a brave and energetic and shrewd-witted lad—proud when, with his own hands, he displayed a natural gift for tailoring by making garments for himself; eagerly following theological discussions; picking up stray information from the *Penny Magazine*, and reading the *Arabian Nights* to a young companion. His genial temper and dogged resolution were illustrated in the tramp which, as a youth of about twenty, he took from Leicester to London in search of work. Having got wet through at Market Harborough and dry again at Northampton, he sat down by Queen Eleanor's Cross, and, to use his own manly and hearty expressions, "I reviewed my position: I felt a spirit of independence; all was bright; the discomfort I had met with had not damaged my ardor in the least." In the workshop, he was known by his comrades as Happy Harry. This buoyant disposition was accompanied by intense and serious interest in the problems of religion and politics. Inspired by old George Bown, the Jacobin and Radical, and assisted by warm discussions at the Social Institution in the Market-place, he trod the way to heresy and freedom; read Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, drank in the doctrines of Robert Owen's *New Moral World*; and associated with staunch friends, Josiah Gimson, Michael Wright, William Perry, James Plant, and others, whose names he repeated with delight more than half a century afterwards.

Those were stirring times in the history of English Freethought, when every year seemed to bring a fresh call to battle; heretics were imprisoned and had to be subscribed for and encouraged; George Jacob Holyoake, released from Gloucester Gaol, was welcomed to Leicester by our friend and his comrades; copies of the *Reasoner* were circulated round the town. Wherever he dwelt—in Bond-street, in Belgrave-gate, in Humberstone-gate—there he must act the missionary, and sell Rationalistic books and kindle men's minds with questions and new courageous views. In 1852, when the term "Secularism" was startling the orthodox world, Mr. Holyoak and kindred spirits founded the Leicester Secular Society. None more cordially and whole-heartedly than our friend endorsed the conviction on which the Society was based, namely, that the natural principles of love, industry, and progress will act more powerfully for the welfare of humanity than the creeds which directed man's faith to supernatural spheres and beings.

Reading papers at Secular meetings, joining in debates, working for the establishment of Sunday bands and the Sunday opening of museums, rejoicing at the inauguration of the Secular Hall in 1881, spreading the literature of social and mental liberty through the Secular Bookstore for a score of years, he was a vital factor in the broadening and liberalising of public opinion in this town. He did his pioneer work with cool judgment and common sense, plying his trade with diligence, acting the good companion to wife and children and grandchildren, and doing, with infinite conscientiousness, whatever bit of writing, account-keeping, or business arrangements fell to his lot. His humorous songs made a company gay, and many a passer-by at the bookshop took

pleasure in a chat with the silver-haired old man, who always had some generous and judicious thought to express in sincerity and unaffectedness. He ever played the cheerful philosopher, jotting his ideas down in amusing and free-and-easy verses in his log-books, copying scraps of literature, and moralising, on the last night of the old year, on the events of the twelvemonth past. A lover of nature he always called himself. And none of us can have witnessed a more profound enjoyment than his in woodland wanderings and the occupations of the garden. His heart could never forbear leaping at the sight of a daffodil, just as his brain was set in a natural and spontaneous glow when he first read the magical verse of Omar Khayyam. Yet he was a thorough citizen of the world. The daily paper was at his side as long as his eyes availed, and one of his last excursions into the outer world was to vote at the general election. And when, in the long year of weakness that confined him to the room where he rounded off his honorable career, he recalled the events and persons he had been associated with, there was a pride—a simple heroic pride—in his retrospect. At one moment he would gently refer to some happy ramble in the forest, and presently, with a ring in his voice, he would tell of nineteenth-century struggles for free speech, free printing, the opening of intellectual prison-gates, and the valiant march out of the region of the gods into a nobler republic of science and human brotherhood. Natures like his, and characters with genuine feeling and strong purpose such as his, constitute the truest glory of a city or a nation, and supply the power of progress in Humanity at large.

On the memorial-stone of the man whom he admired in his youth—George Bown—are inscribed lines which he loved to recite, and which we may apply to our dear friend himself:—

“So live  
That, when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan that moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night  
Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

And now our dead shall pass from sight; and fire, like a mighty spirit, shall receive his body, and presently leave but a few ashes as a relic of the form we loved. And within our hearts, serene and immovable, abides the recollection of his life.

*At this point, the remains glided from view behind the folding-doors of the furnace.*

We commit our beloved to the flame which, with potent and kindly alchemy, will dissolve the body to its elements.

In his latter days, his face lit with a smile, he would say from memory to friendly visitors the rustic but joyous lines of his own composing; and they were so characteristic of his temper and habit that we will repeat them in this farewell moment, though they were written before he had decided that fire-burial was a cleaner mode than earth-burial:—

“Now the hedge rows are white with the blossoming  
And cowslips abound in the vale, [thorn,  
Now the lark sings his song in the freshness of morn,  
And the wood pigeon is heard in the dale.  
I will wander away from the town,  
And leave behind me all care for the day,  
Neath some wide-spreading oak I will lay myself  
And inhale the sweet perfume of May. [down,  
I will gaze on the blue sky above,  
And the silvery clouds as they pass,  
I will dream of the dear ones I love,  
As I lie on the velvety grass.  
And when my sweet dreaming is over,  
And my sun has sunk down in the west,  
Some kind friend with green turf shall cover,  
The grave where my body does rest.”

He was a brave and gentle soul, and the memory of his work and personality is one of our noblest possessions.

F. J. GOULD.

### Acid Drops.

Two or three years ago, we saw an announcement of the publication of a new book on *Religious Persecution: A Study in Political Psychology*, and made a note of it as a book to be referred to at some time or other. Only a few days ago, a sixpenny edition of it was placed in our hands by a friend, who asked our opinion of it, which we were not then able to give. The author's name is E. S. P. Haynes, and this cheap edition is issued by the Rationalist Press Association.

We have a habit of turning over the pages of a book before reading it, and sometimes find it is not worth reading. Within the first half-dozen pages of Mr. Haynes' book, our eye caught the name of Shakespeare. There is always magic for us in that name, and we paused to look at the context. We found a quotation from *Pericles*, Act V., Scene 1—wrongly referred to as Scene 2—and, still worse, wrongly printed. This is how Mr. Haynes reproduced one of Shakespeare's great passages:—

“Truth was never yet confirmed enough,  
Though doubts did ever sleep.”

Now the master poet of the world never wrote like that. He had ears—not appendages. What he wrote was this:—

“For truth can never be confirm'd enough  
Though doubts did ever sleep.”

Which is a different thing altogether, both in sense and sound. We do not know if Mr. Haynes can recognise the difference; but that is rather his affair than ours. We are only concerned to say that, while everybody is free to quote Shakespeare, nobody should be free to quote him incorrectly; and the slovenly quotation of a supreme classic is a gross misdemeanor.

A little further on, in the same page, we noticed the following observation:—

“Our own country is probably now one of the most tolerant in the world—especially in regard to those aspects of religion in which Continental countries are most intolerant.”

The sentence is rather cryptic. We have no means of deciding what “aspects” the writer intends. But in a general way the sentence is absurd. Religious toleration is absolute in France; if there is any danger of persecution at present in that country, it is not the persecution of Free-thinkers, but the persecution of Catholics. Even in Italy, in spite of the Pope, the greatest freedom of propagating unbelief prevails, and a sometimes “awfully” illustrated paper like the *Asino* is said to have a million readers. Christian intolerance is far stronger in England. Prosecutions and imprisonments are avoided, but the social and political boycott is applied remorselessly, and the conspiracy of the ordinary press against popular Freethought is peculiar to this hypocritical nation. There is nothing resembling it, that we are aware of, in any Continental country, from Russia to Spain.

We do not say, and we do not mean that Mr. Haynes' book is worthless. It has a certain merit as a young man's essay, but it is vitiated by his want of knowledge in some directions, and his want of accuracy in others. He puts Confucius, for instance, into the list of great religious teachers, with Buddha, Christ, St. Francis of Assisi, George Fox, and Tolstoi; Confucius, the great Secularist of Asia, whose teaching is so purely practical; Confucius, who warned men against the fantastic speculations of “religion.” Again, in his review of the nineteenth century, Mr. Haynes mentions Holyoake and Bradlaugh, but does not betray the least knowledge of the *Freethinker* prosecution, which occasioned the famous judgment of Lord Coleridge on “blasphemy”—an epoch-marking deliverance, and a charter of new freedom.

It is barely possible, of course, that Mr. Haynes' silence is not the result of ignorance. He may shrink—as if an historian should ever shrink!—from writing the name of such an “aggressive” journal as the *Freethinker*. But it was always the “aggressive” people who got into the mesh of the Blasphemy Laws. Holyoake was aggressive when he was imprisoned for six months; he became as mild as milk long afterwards. Bradlaugh was aggressive. So, in the older days, were Woolston, Annet, Eaton, Carlile, Hetherington, Southwell, Taylor, and other brave men who tasted the sweets of Christian charity in prison. And all these aggressive men were naturally men of the people; a fact which is more important than anything in Mr. Haynes' essay. It leads us to the heart of the matter. Freethought in expensive books for the classes has never been interfered with in England; it has always been Freethought in cheap “aggres-

sive" publications for the masses that were the cause of trouble. The general principle of intolerance was intensified by the professional fears of the clergy of all denominations, and by the social and political fears of the upper classes, who felt that "aggressive infidelity" was the worst menace to their privileges. Mr. Haynes gets a glimpse of this truth (p. 63), but he does not recognise its vast importance.

We must protest against the mamby-pamby whitewashing of George Jacob Holyoake which goes on in certain "Rationalist" circles. People who have some other fluid than blood in their veins try to hide the fact that there was ever any virile "blasphemy" in the heroic age of Free-thought propaganda. Mr. Haynes has the "face," as Cobbett would have called it, to say that "Mr. G. J. Holyoake was imprisoned for six months for Atheism—the only ground of accusation being a statement made by him at a public meeting that there were better uses for money than building churches." Now, in the first place, Holyoake was not imprisoned for Atheism. That is an utter fiction. He was imprisoned for "blasphemy." And he did not say what Mr. Haynes puts into his mouth. Is it really thought that any reader of this book is ignorant or silly enough to believe that a man in England, in the nineteenth century, was prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned for simply saying that there were better uses for money than building churches? England may contain "forty millions of people—mostly fools," but they are not quite foolish enough for that. Holyoake had a sharp tongue in those fighting days, and he had the "wickedness"—that is, the courage—to say that he would put the Deity on half-pay. His true friends should be prouder of that brave utterance than of anything else he ever wrote or spoke. For the mind of England could have got on tolerably well without Holyoake, but the conspicuously bold utterance for which he suffered was one of those impulsive acts of heroism which belong to a nation's highest heritage. The world has never been short of "thinkers." It is courage that is the rarest virtue. And men always know it to be so in their heart of hearts.

The Baptist Church boasts of no less than 2,134 ministers, with 5,748 local preachers—7,882 in all. Last year 9 of the circuits showed an increased membership of 695, less than would be accounted for by the normal increase of population. But as 5 other circuits showed a decrease of 794, the net result was a loss of 99 members, in spite of the efforts of the nearly 6,000 preachers. And yet these men talk of man's inextinguishable craving for religion! One wonders how much religion would be left alive if the parsons were all muzzled for a couple of generations.

Professor W. E. B. Du Bois, the distinguished American negro, says that in the city of Atlanta, where he resides, he would not be allowed to go into the public library to read one of his own books. This is the way in which Christianity practices the brotherhood of man: Meanwhile, American Christians are showing renewed interest in extending the foreign missionary movement.

The Rev. Samuel Chadwick asks the following question: "Why did God permit the Armenians to be massacred, and the people of the Congo to be despoiled?" Having asked the question, he answers it—after a fashion. "The just must live by faith. History in fragments might make God a liar, but in broad sweeps it established his fidelity." Well, we repeat the question, "Why does God permit massacre and spoliation?" It is no answer to say all will come right in the end. No one but a clergyman can see how the probability of things coming right a thousand years hence, can put right the people who are robbed and murdered to-day.

"Christianity is a religion founded by a carpenter—a working builder. Jesus knew toil early. Like most Jewish lads, he was instructed in a trade; and after the fashion of the majority of such lads, he took up the trade that was nearest to him—the one in his father's house—and there male yokes and ploughs for the peasantry in and around Nazareth." So says the incorrigible Dr. Clifford, and says it as though there could be no question as to its truth. Yet every single statement in the above quotation is more than open to question. Taking the Gospels as they stand, there is no evidence whatever that Jesus was a working builder, that he knew toil early, or that he made yokes and ploughs for the peasantry. The early toil and the articles made are figments of Dr. Clifford's imagination—like so much of what he has persuaded himself is the truth. There is in one of the Apocryphal Gospels a story of Jesus working at a trade as a carpenter; and this describes how, when a piece of wood was not long enough, Jesus took one end and Joseph

the other, and stretched it to the required size. But the canonical New Testament is silent as to whether Jesus worked or when he worked. Dr. Clifford simply discovers he was a working carpenter because it suited the text of his sermon

Another sentence in the same sermon well illustrates Dr. Clifford's style of controversy. Jesus, he says, was a toiler, and learned his lessons of life as he used the saw and the hammer. "He was independent of all the Rabbis." Now on this we have only one thing to say, and that is, to challenge Dr. Clifford to point to a single one of the recorded teachings of Jesus that were not derived either from the Old Testament or from the Rabbinical teachings. Such statements do well enough for a Christian congregation—which does not know either the Bible or the Rabbinical teachings—but they will not pass elsewhere. As a matter of fact, every one of the alleged sayings of Jesus was common property among the people with whom he is said to have lived. We should be surprised to find that Dr. Clifford is not as well aware of the truth of this as we are ourselves.

Rev. R. J. Campbell, lecturing for the Independent Labor Party at Wrexham, sang the praises of Socialism amidst great applause. With that subject, however, we have no concern. What we wish to notice is the reverend gentleman's declaration that Socialism, from the religious and specifically Christian point of view, meant the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth. This declaration was greeted with loud cheers. But it was vague enough to mean anything—or nothing; and we are reminded of "Dod Grilo's" definition of applause as "the echo of a platitude."

No doubt Mr. Campbell looks upon the coming Kingdom of God as a state of things in which pious and eloquent persons like himself will occupy distinguished and profitable places. We know what the Kingdom of God has always been hitherto, and we can guess what it will always be in the future. For our own part, we do not desire to participate in its blessings. We feel like Henry Martin, the profane wit of the Parliament that fought, conquered, and executed Charles I. When the Puritan bigots got the upper hand, he said that the reign of the saints had begun, but he preferred to take his share of it when he reached heaven. We are just as ready to wait for our share of Mr. Campbell's "Kingdom of God."

If there is a God, and if he really listens to Mr. R. J. Campbell's prayers, he must be heartily sick of being told of that gentleman's shortcomings. Week after week he informs the Lord in the prayers that preface his sermons of how much he deplors having fallen short of what he might have been, and in what he might have been. Such prayers are *cant* pure and simple, and are only tolerable because they are customary. And the practice is far from being a healthy one. Straight-minded men and women are not always bemoaning their deficiencies, and crooked ones do not believe in their existence. It is, moreover, a moot point as to what extent these more or less hypocritical professions of imperfection prevent the growth of a real improvement that might otherwise occur. Personally, we have a profound distrust of the men who are so profuse in voicing lofty moral aspirations, or who indulge in long-winded moral exhortations. They are apt to exhaust themselves in this direction, and ignore practice.

Mr. W. T. Stead, in the September *Review of Reviews*, relates what he heard at the Hague from a Chinaman who was present at the relief of the Legations at Peking. Everybody looted, in spite of the Hague Convention rule against pillage. Nor was the slightest respect shown to the rule about not compelling the natives of an invaded country to help their invaders. One of the princes of the Imperial House was "done to death by being compelled to work in the stables of the Italians." But all this is nothing to the treatment of women. "After the expeditionary force entered Peking," Mr. Stead's informant said, "I helped to bury the dead who lay in the streets. We buried 5,000—3,500 of whom were women." They were "women who had been violated after the fighting by the soldiers, and who were afterwards killed or who killed themselves. More than half had committed suicide after assault. They could not live for shame of their fate.....Many were ladies. The soldiers made no difference." How the Chinese must love the Christian Powers!

A new divorce law has been elaborated by a Special Commission of the Holy Synod of Russia, under which "leaving the Orthodox Church" will be a sufficient ground for divorce. This is Christianity all over. All the "sacredness of marriage" is to go for nothing if a blow can be struck at "heretics."

Clergymen seem to delight in making wild, irresponsible, and positively false statements; and the people seldom challenge them. The Rev. J. Ossian Davies, dealing with Ruth in the *British Congregationalist* for September 12, says that she "found Jehovah to be a far better pay-master than Chemosh." Now, in the story of Ruth, as given in the Old Testament, we are not told that Jehovah did anything for her. Furthermore, the religion of Moab, at the time implied, was almost identical with that of Israel. And yet the reverend gentleman devotes a long paragraph to a narration of what Ruth gained by changing her religion, not a word of which is founded on fact, or even on the book.

Georgia, U. S. A., has a prohibition law coming into force next new year's day, under which it will be unlawful to administer wine in the celebration of the Holy Communion; and every minister or deacon who takes part in such administration will be liable to indictment. This has aroused many protests, and grand juries all over the State have petitioned the Legislature to amend the law. Christian communicants must drink their "Blood of Christ" in the proper liquor. A teetotal thimblefull wouldn't bite enough.

A correspondent sends us the following clipping from a theatrical program:—

"Next Week:—

GUY THORNE'S GREAT WORK,  
'WHEN IT WAS DARK.'

*This Theatre is Disinfected by Jeyes' Fluid.*"

We hope the disinfecting fluid was efficacious.

"The Great Lying Church" loves to get hold of the money, and often takes a woman with it. The newspapers report that Miss Margareta Drexel, the American belle and heiress, who is said to be worth five or six millions, is bent on entering the convent of the Sacred Heart at Torresdale. Her parents have persuaded her to see a little more of the world before taking so serious a step, but her friends feel sure that she will eventually wear the nun's veil. When she does so, we know what will become of her fortune. So does the Church.

A Birmingham paper prints a letter from Annie E. Taylor, stating that she was run down while cycling to business on August 2. A rushing motor-car, behind her, frightened a horse attached to a four-wheeled van, also behind her. The motor-car knocked her off her machine as she way trying to get off to avoid collision, and threw her right in the way of the runaway horse, so that two wheels of the van passed over her, and it was wonderful that she was not killed outright. The owners of the horse "acted in a most straightforward and generous manner," but the owner of the motor-car never troubled to inquire whether she was alive or dead; and on being written to he "wrote back a sarcastic and unkind letter," practically telling her to get out of the way of motor-cars. *He is a wealthy Church of England clergyman.*

The late Charles A. Gosnell, of the Park, Feltham, interested in John Gosnell and Co. (Limited), perfumery and soap manufacturers, of Blackfriars-road, London, S.E., left estate valued at £38,871. He directed that his remains should be cremated, that there should be no religious ceremony at his funeral, and that none of his relatives should wear mourning on account of his decease. Such a sensible man ought to have left a substantial legacy to the Secular Society, Limited.

According to a paragraph in the *People*, the head of the Church Army, the Rev. Prebendary Carlile, takes a peculiar way of getting poor people into his church. He says that pride keeps them away if they cannot give to the collection; so he makes a street distribution of buttons before church-time, and these are redeemed by a friend of the Church Army at so much a dozen. Such a mountebank proceeding is worthy of this pious practitioner. Still, nobody can say that his congregation is "a button short."

It appears that the young woman who went into the Louvre, and ruined one of Ingres' masterpieces there, has been a Salvationist both in London and in Paris. She has a rooted objection to work, and expects to live without it in prison. In any rational society such a person would be quietly asphyxiated.

Mr. Charles Alexander, the American singing revivalist, went down into the gold mines in Australia, where he sang the Glory Song. One big Cornishman sang alto for all he was worth; but, on being asked, he admitted he was not a Christian. The problem now was how to persuade the Holy

Ghost to save this fine specimen of humanity. Mr. Harkness prayed, Mrs. Alexander prayed, but it was only after the great Mr. Alexander had added his persuasive eloquence to that of his wife and of his friend that the Holy Ghost took the man in hand and soundly converted him. How nice it must be to be able to exert such an influence over a member of the Holy Trinity! It would turn some people's heads.

Rev. A. M. Mitchell, vicar of Burton-wood, Warrington, denounces meat-eaters in his parish magazine, and declares that "fruitarians, or food reformers, are the only consistent worshippers." Without taking sides on the dietetic question; we must observe that the reverend gentleman is not orthodox. The God of the Bible is carnivorous. He accepted Abel's roast lamb, and turned up his nose at Cain's green peas and asparagus.

Rev. F. B. Meyer is now on the rampage. Addressing a company of ministers at Govan, the other day, he informed the men of God that "the working-men of to-day were taking the Sermon on the Mount as their charter." We should like to ascertain where those unique working-men are to be found. We have never come across them, either inside or outside the churches; and we are strongly of opinion that even the Archbishop of Nonconformity has never seen them either, which is only another way of saying his "Grace" was just fibbing.

But Mr. Meyer told his Brethren-in-the-Lord one indisputable truth. "With great emphasis (speaking, of course, *ex-cathedra*) he maintained that the one fatal thing the churches could do to-day would be to allow the working-classes to work out their own emancipation for themselves, and so declare their impotence to help." This is *entirely* true. The loss of the labor-classes is already proving fatal to the churches; but this loss is due to the fact, not only that the churches are impotent to help, but also that in all past ages they have used all the influence and power they possessed to keep the working-people in a state of degrading bondage. Their general attitude is well defined in the following verse of a well-known hymn:—

"The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
God made them high or lowly,  
And ordered their estate!"

The Rev. Dr. James M. Campbell flatly contradicts the Gospels. Jesus is reported to have prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane that, if possible, the cup might pass from him; but Dr. Campbell, in his new book, *The Atonement* (p. 143), says: "His cry in the garden was not a cry for the removal of a burden, but a cry for strength to carry it to the end." How very characteristic of the theological treatment of all subjects. No one would ever dream of interpreting the words of Plato or of Shakespeare in that dishonest fashion.

That wild, irresponsible jingo, the Rev. Dr. Fitchett, of Melbourne, says that God has appointed the British race "the trustee and schoolmaster of the colored races of the world." That statement is quite worthy even of Dr. Fitchett; and most faithfully have the British people discharged their duties in both capacities. This explains why the Aborigines of Australia are dying out so rapidly, the census of 1901 showing their entire number to be less than 22,000. In 1840, the Maoris numbered 100,000, and in 1901, barely 43,000. The truth is that in Australia and New Zealand the colored races are being effectively trusted and schooled out of existence.

The same process is going on in South Africa. The Bushmen and the Koranas are hastening to extinction through vice and liquor. The Zulus, the Pondoos, the Kaffirs, and the Fingoes are systematically kept in servile subjection. They may not rise above manual labor. The professions are closed against them. They may not serve even as clerks and book-keepers. Their trustees and schoolmasters, under God, see to it that they are regarded and treated as the very scum of the earth. According to Christian teaching, they are on an equality with the highest in the land, but Christian practice places them in a state of perpetual inferiority. Is Dr. Fitchett really proud of the work done by God's appointed trustees and schoolmasters?

"Is the human race a credit to the perfect Creator?" a minister was recently asked by a thoughtful young man. Heaven's oracle was flabbergasted. He kept beating about the bush, quoting irrelevant Bible texts, even sheltering for a moment behind the exploded theory of the Fall, which sad fall, he said, spoilt everything for this world. "Yes," he

wailed out, "man is a bit of a failure on earth; but, you know, this life is not all. It is only the beginning. There is the great Eternity for God to work out his purposes in, and for us to attain the end of his own existence." What cowardly evasion, what culpable quibbling, what wicked trifling with a serious question! But such has the theological method always been, and, we suppose, always will be.

Ministers of religion are terribly down on the natural man, and reasonably so from their point of view, for he is a standing menace to their profession. The Rev. Mr. Russell Scott, of Montrose, says of him that "his natural life is complete and perfect, and is his all." This is a palpable falsehood, to begin with, as every tyro in science well knows. No man's life is complete and perfect and lacking nothing. Of course, what Mr. Scott means to say is, that the natural man needs not the services of the sky-pilot. Religion is at once *unnatural* and *anti-natural*, and would speedily die out were it not for the indefatigable activities of the "men of God." If all religious institutions, and all their official and unofficial manipulators were to disappear to-morrow, and if natural knowledge were allowed to remain and to "grow from more to more," in a hundred years there would not be a single vestige of supernatural religion left.

Canon Scott Holland is sensible enough to admit that non-believers may have high moral ideals and strenuously endeavor to realise them, but he talks unmixed nonsense when he asserts that their striving after the highest standard will inevitably lead them to Christ. "All that is good in us is His," he exclaims; "He is the one true man in us all." If that is the "Catholic Faith," all we can say is that the "Catholic Faith" is infinite twaddle. No person in the Universe has a monopoly of goodness, goodness being a mental quality acquired by individual effort.

Now we know exactly where we stand. We have been repeatedly assured, of late, by orthodox believers, that Harnack, "the greatest critic of the age," has at last, in obedience to the law of truth, given his strong support to the truth of the traditional position. "Read his *Luke the Physician*," they advise us, "and see for yourselves." Well, we have done so, and found not a ghost of a confirmation of the traditional views. "But you are prejudiced and judge falsely," they rudely retort. Well, perhaps we are; but the *Church Times* is not, and this is what that orthodox organ says on the point: "It is evident that Harnack stands as remote as ever from Christian orthodoxy." They are "fools and slight," and know nothing about criticism, who imagine that the authorship and date of a document either prove or disprove the truth of its contents.

Dr. Clifford seems to be utterly incapable of making an accurate statement. In matters of history, as well as in those of education, he is hopelessly astray. A few days ago, preaching on Christian Socialism, he asserted that the primitive Church was thoroughly democratic, the home of Divine liberty, brotherhood, and equality; which, in the face of the Pauline Epistles is, to say the least, a very risky claim to make. But Dr. Clifford's recklessness led him to observe, further, that great corruptions crept "into the Church by the false standards of thought and social living which came from the heathenism of the first, second, and subsequent centuries." Will Dr. Clifford be good enough to state *which* corruptions came from heathenism, and the process by which they entered? Will he also name one accredited Pagan philosopher who in any way taught or encouraged "contempt for men"?

Has Dr. Clifford never read Seneca's wonderful essay on "Anger," and compared it with expressions to be found in the writings of the Church Fathers? As one author says, "If you want to find the true spirit of the Founder of Christianity, you will find more of it in the fragmentary literature of Paganism than in all the works of the Fathers put together; and more, not merely of its spirit, but of its actual expression, in Seneca, Plato, Aurelius, or Plutarch, than in Augustine, Jerome, and all their tribe, the difference between the respective histories of the Church and of Philosophy being only too amply reflected in their literature."

"The question of miracles," says the Rev. J. Warschauer, "is a question of evidence." Well, all we have to observe is, that to those who approach the subject in a proper scientific spirit it is not a question of evidence, but of stages of mental development. The belief in the miraculous is but one aspect of non-appreciation of the principle of causation. Where a

knowledge of the nature of natural happenings is weak the belief in the miraculous arises inevitably, and flourishes. With the growth of a more scientific conception it weakens and disappears. All the reasoning in the world will not drive a sense of the miraculous from an ignorant mind, and all the special pleading possible will not re-establish it in a mind that has had an adequate scientific training. People did not begin to believe in the miraculous because evidence was forthcoming; and, in the main, they do not give up believing because they test the evidence and find it wanting. They grow into it, and they grow out of it; and that is substantially the whole of the matter.

The Rev. Dr. Warschauer scornfully casts many hoary-headed theological idols to the moles and to the bats. The orthodox doctrine of Providence is an abomination unto him, and he will have none of it. He also waxes exceedingly merry over the old-fashioned idea of prayer. But, of course, a minister of the Gospel *must* retain a few sublime incredibilities, and hug them with a show of sincere attachment, just to keep in countenance with his people. So Dr. Warschauer, having thrown overboard one foolish notion about prayer, picks up another even sillier still. By prayer he now means, "not the repetition of formulas, nor even anguished appeals, but something that is the outcome of a whole spiritual discipline." How delightfully vague! What on earth is that "something"? Listen: "Such a discipline may be capable of conferring upon the individuals who have undergone it to an exceptional extent correspondingly exceptional powers over Nature." Can any sane person discern the slightest trace of prayer in that chaotic collection of words? Dr. Warschauer would find it extremely difficult to prove that so-called "praying people" exert any greater influence over Nature than the non-praying do.

The *Tribune* is a very good newspaper—as English newspapers go; solid and respectable, and not likely to suffer from any attack of eccentricity—and sincere enough in its way. But it ought not to give a vulgar, illiterate, contemptible journal like the *Freethinker* an opportunity of correcting its literary quotations. The other day, the *Tribune* had a nice British article on "Literary Manners," and wound up with a cut at "the prevalent mode of 'flattering with a girlish face of praise.'" What the writer had in mind, we suppose, but couldn't get it out, was Pope's "wonder with a foolish face of praise." "A girlish face of praise" is an absurd expression—besides being a gratuitous gibe at the fairer half of the human species, and much the more interesting half at that particular age.

King Edward will have to mind his P's and Q's. The Rev. Jacob Primmer, the great Scottish tinker—we mean reformer—has warned His Majesty against intercourse with Catholics. When the King dined at Marionbad in honor of the Emperor of Austria's birthday, he had a "Popish Abbot" as a guest. This is shocking conduct on the part of a Protestant monarch, and the Rev. Joseph Primmer begs him not to repeat it.

The Dean of Manchester says it is an erroneous popular impression that deans have little to do. There was even a proposal that they should be abolished. Dreadful thought! He has our sympathy.

Scepticism is natural in young minds if it isn't checked and suppressed; and scepticism, according to etymology, simply means reflectiveness, a sceptic being no more or less than a person who *considers*—that is, *keeps his eyes open*. A correspondent tells us of the little son (aged six) of a friend of his, who goes to a Church-school and receives the usual religious doses. He gets "Scripture" every day, and our correspondent casually asked him what they had told him *that day*. The little fellow looked shy, and said he had forgotten. But when he was being put to bed he told his mother that he didn't like to answer the question that had been put to him. "Why," he asked her, "did Adam and Eve go into the garden naked?" "Oh," his mother said, "that only a fairy-tale, dear; it isn't true." "Ah," he said, "I thought it wasn't."

Rev. Philip Edward George, of St. Winifrid's, Zion Hill, Bath, left £30,909. He couldn't take the money with him. If he had it would have melted.

Mark Twain went down to the wharf at New York and went over the grand new Cunard liner. He was very much impressed. On leaving the ship he said, "I shall have to tell Noah of this when I meet him."



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

September 29, The Town Hall, Stratford, 7.30, "The Paradise of Fools."  
 October 6, Glasgow; 13, Manchester; 20, South Shields; 27, Leicester.  
 November 3, Stanley Hall, London; 10, Liverpool; 17, Birmingham; 24, Stanley Hall, London.  
 December 1, 8, 15, Queen's Hall.

**To Correspondents.**

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—September 29, m., Woolwich; e., Parliament Hill. October 6, West Ham; 13, Aberdare; 27, Glasgow. November 3, West Ham; 10, Stanley Hall, London. December 1, Birmingham.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON, honorary treasurer to the Touzeau Parris Fund Committee, acknowledges the following further subscriptions sent to him direct:—J. L. Spiers, 10s.; T. Hayes £1; H. H. Spears, 5s.; H. Macdonald, 10s.; C. S. Paxton, 10s.; H. Halliday Sparling, £1; Dr. Alfred Cox, 10s. 6d.; Noah Briggs, 10s.; W. Palmer, 1s.; Walter Langley, 10s.; Col. C. T. Bingham, 10s.; R. Newstead, 5s.; C. Butcher, 2s.; T. Gauter, £2 2s.; George Meredith, £1 1s.—Total, £9 6s. 6d.

THE TOUZEAU PARRIS FUND.—Eighth *Freethinker* List:—Jacob Ross, 2s.; John Moore, 1s.; R. T. Linford, 10s. 6d.; S. B. D., 1s.

H. SILVERSTEIN.—We know nothing of Mr. Boulter personally, and, as he is not associated in any way with the N. S. S., we do not care to publish opinions as to his methods of advocacy. We never heard him speak, but he seems to attract some, if he repels others; and we do not aim at setting up a censorship over all Freethought lecturers. If we thought a N. S. S. lecturer was doing injury to himself and the cause by indiscreet speech, we should have a friendly talk with him; but we have no call or right to address outside speakers. We say this without prejudice to Mr. Boulter, and also with a feeling that methods of advocacy are the subject of endless differences of opinion. It is time, and time only, that settles all these things.

P. C. STEWART.—Thanks for cuttings and good wishes.

A. G. EASLEY, who became a subscriber to the *Freethinker* in consequence of "some unknown benefactor" (as he puts it) arranging for six consecutive weekly copies to be posted to his address, rejoices to notice that Mr. Foote is paying another visit to Liverpool shortly. "I had the very great pleasure," he says, "of hearing his afternoon lecture on May 5, and my wife was looking forward to an intellectual treat in the evening, but was disappointed owing to the sudden indisposition of our youngest child." We publish this just to show the great value of what we call the Underground Propaganda. This correspondent has become interested in Freethought through one of the "saints" having taken the trouble to get him brought into contact with it. Other "saints" should act on the motto—"Go thou, and do likewise."

T. GIBB.—Our shop manager has written to the firm you mention. It is absurd for them to "profess to be unable" to supply our publications. The "inability" is entirely subjective.

C. W. SRYRING.—Thanks for a sight of Mr. Edward Clodd's letter in the *Yorkshire Post*. We are sorry to see he thinks it necessary to tell the Christians that he also has a "mystery." It is really nothing to be proud of. It only means something to wonder at; and, as Dr. Johnson said, all wonder is founded on ignorance. Of course, it is good to confess one's ignorance, but not to be proud of it.

F. NEWINGTON.—Certainly people have (sometimes) to pay to hear Messrs. Foote, Cohen, and Lloyd. The reverend gentleman forgets that the pew-renters in his church pay to hear him. He also forgets the "free admission" to all seats at the Stratford Town Hall lectures—and the Birmingham Town Hall lectures. For the other matter, see "Sugar Plums."

SOUTH DEVON.—Your letter is written under a misapprehension. In defending Atheism as against Theism we are not asking any party to label itself "Atheist." The only Freethought organisations we are connected with are Secular, and their members are not required to profess Atheism. Moreover, the name of this journal is not the *Atheist*, but the *Freethinker*. Of course, you have a right to seek an inoffensive name for offensive opinions; when you have found it, kindly let us know; meanwhile, we must go on with our propaganda.

ENQUIRER.—(1.) Glad the lady admired our article on "Mr. John Davidson's Position," and pleased she is likely to become a regular reader. We cannot get up much enthusiasm about regular voting, and all the other "swarmery" of the day; but we have always ardently desired that women might become thoughtful—in the higher sense of the word; and we say thoughtfully, that if they did become thus thoughtful, three-fourths of all the worst evils of human society would speedily die a natural death, and the problem of how to deal with the other fourth would become immensely easier. (2.) Yes, there was another James Thomson, an eighteenth century poet, who wrote the *Seasons*—rather turgid, with occasional good descriptions—and the finer *Castle of Indolence*, which he was well-qualified to inhabit, for a friend found him one day, with his hands in his pockets, eating the sunny side of a growing peach.

E. WOODWARD.—We note that the Camberwell Branch will not reopen its Hall this winter, on account of the position having

become so unfavorable, but is trying to engage a more suitable hall, in a better position, for a special course of lectures.

ARTHUR WILKINSON.—Shall be sent as requested. Pleased to hear you have been reading the *Freethinker* for eighteen months, and regard it as the best paper you ever read.

M. MONTAIGNE.—It is not the custom of our publishing office to send out books on approval, and without remittance.

F. G. P.—Thanks for best wishes for this "capital and sensible paper," as you are good enough to call it. You don't give the name of the paper your cutting is from, so we cannot give it either.

THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—S. Wacket, 1s. 6d.

We must repeat that we cannot notice the letters of anonymous correspondents.

J. BLUNDELL.—It seems rather a domestic question for the Churches.

R. T. LINFORD.—As you say, it pays better to be a Christian; but what a comment that is on Christian sincerity!

G. JACOB.—We have been trying to compile such a list.

W. SMITH.—Glad to see your anti-Sabbatarian letter in the *South-East Essex Gazette*. Freethinkers do much good by writing good letters to the local press.

We deeply regret to say that Miss E. M. Vance has been very ill for some days; although her condition has a good deal improved, she will have to take great care of herself for a while, and we shall see that she gets a proper rest.

G. ROLEFFS.—Thanks.

F. W. WALSHE suggests that readers of this journal should send it to a friend at the end of the week, and keep on doing so until his list of friends is exhausted. This correspondent expresses his "gratitude" for the *Freethinker*.

J. CHAMBERS.—Thanks for cuttings, but Tuesday morning is generally too late for us to deal with them in the coming issue.

F. HOLDEN, 17 Caledonian-road, King's-cross, informs our shop manager that he was quite sold out of the *Freethinker* by Monday, and must have a larger supply in future. He is also stocking our pamphlets.

J. MORTON.—It seems rather a matter for the Labor party to deal with.

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.

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

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

**Sugar Plums.**

Mr. Foote begins his new winter season with a lecture at the Stratford Town Hall this evening (Sept. 29). This big hall needs some filling, and especially so in view of the counter attraction of the Sunday League concert at the theatre. But a little special effort at advertising on the part of the local "saints" ought to secure a crowded audience. Mr. Foote's subject is a novel one—"The Paradise of Fools." No doubt he will have some hearers from other parts of Greater London. The chair will be taken at 7.30, and Mr. Foote will be in no hurry to get away, as he sleeps in town that night.

It is twelve months since Mr. Foote previously lectured at the Stratford Town Hall. He had a splendid audience, which quite warmed the heart of Joseph Symes, who turned up unexpectedly and occupied a seat on the platform. He had not heard Mr. Foote lecture for a quarter of a century, and he was perhaps the most alert and appreciative listener in the meeting. He was all aglow with enthusiasm. His heart was in his eyes and hand. And only three months after it was still for over! That meeting will always be one of Mr. Foote's bitter-sweet memories.

Glasgow "saints" will note that Mr. Foote is to visit their city next Sunday. They will probably be very glad to hear him again after such a long absence. He was unable to visit Glasgow in the early part of the present year, having been a bit upset by two untoward events—the remarkably rigorous winter, and the tragic death of his old comrade in arms. Mr. Foote hopes to be in the best of trims this time.

Mr. Cohen delivered the second of the new course of Freethought lectures at the Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evening. There was an excellent audience, Mr. Cohen was in good form, and his lecture was much applauded.

Mr. Wishart, who is at present "missioning" for the N. S. S. Executive, has delivered some successful open-air

lectures at Aberdare, and started a Branch there. A good deal of correspondence has been raised in the local press by his visit. Mr. Wishart addressed capital meetings on Sunday, and then travelled to Leeds, where the President had arranged for him to spend a week or so. He spoke to a good audience there on Monday evening, and meetings have been arranged for every night during the week.

An effort is being made to arrange for Mr. Wishart's visiting Portsmouth, and Southampton ought to be included. Are there any "saints" at Southampton who will undertake to assist? We should be very glad to hear from them.

The Camberwell Branch, having purchased the library of a deceased Freethinker, will offer about two hundred volumes for sale at very low prices on Saturday and Sunday (Sept. 28, 29). Those desirous of adding to their collections should look in at the Secular Hall, New Church-road, on one of these evenings.

The Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Limited, has voted a grant of £5 to the Leicester Secular Society, in connection with its Bazaar for the purpose of raising funds for the work at the Secular Hall in Humberstone-gate.

The National Secular Society's Executive has voted £5 towards the Touzeau Parris Fund, in special recognition of the services rendered by Mr. Parris to the Freethought movement at the time of Charles Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle.

The Committee of the Touzeau Parris Fund are anxious to close it at the end of September. Will all *Freethinker* readers who intend to subscribe please do so at once? There are still a few days left in September from the date of our going to press, and even after the present number of this journal is in the hands of its readers. We hope to have a good closing list of acknowledgments in our next issue.

Mansfield Town Council has had a "Sabbatarian" discussion. The General Purposes Committee wanted the police to prosecute all Sunday traders, including chemists and ice-cream vendors. This was opposed at the Council meeting, and defeated by nine votes to eight. Dr. Tarachand, one of the nine, caused some of the eight to cry "order, order!" by denouncing the "whims and avarice of a certain class of bigots and sanctimonious humbugs."

It is curious that "Christian Evidences" generally find a man a blackguard or leave him so. For some time Miss Vance, the N. S. S. general secretary, has been trying to bring the Christian Evidence Society to book. She has been in correspondence with the Society's secretary, and we may have to print the letters in full, letting them speak for themselves. Miss Vance informed him that the C. E. S. lecturers all quoted some verses in praise of whisky-drinking, which they alleged was to be found in a Secularist Hymn-Book. She politely asked him to look into the matter, and tell her, if possible, where the verses could be found. She had to worry a reply out of him. At last he referred her to the old Secularist Manual of Songs and Ceremonies issued by Austin Holyoake nearly forty years ago. Happening to have a copy of it, she wrote the C. E. S. secretary again, politely asking him for a more precise reference. On what page could she find the "whisky" verses? To that question she has received no reply, although she has asked for it more than once. Such is the veracity, and such are the manners, of these people.

A correspondent informs us that the Rev. A. J. Waldron was speaking in Hyde Park on Thursday evening, September 19, and treating his audience to a denunciation of the Secularists on account of that "hymn" of theirs in praise of whisky-drinking. Now we invite this person to produce the Secularist publication in which that "hymn" occurs. If he does so, and we find that he is right, we will publicly admit it. If he does not, we shall brand him as a cowardly and contemptible liar.

There is not the least necessity in trying to prevent people from thinking. They are quite ready enough to be stupid or indifferent without any external inducements. The huge dead weight of established prejudices is amply sufficient. We may say that free thinking is not only a right, but a duty. A man, that is, is bound to be as reasonable as he can.—*Sir Leslie Stephen.*

## Ingersoll and His Times.—III.

BY DR. JOHN EMERSON ROBERTS,  
*Minister of the Church of This World, in Kansas City.*

(Concluded from p. 604.)

It was not for one moment supposed that superstition would die without a struggle. The Church had always been able to silence her assailants. With serene confidence she expected to dispose of this latest one.

In those earlier years when first this "lustrous western star" appeared, the Church resorted to the old weapons of slander. It had long taught that any man who denied the inspiration of the Bible and the divinity of Christ must be an immoral man. By this logic the Church triumphantly proved Mr. Ingersoll's depravity.

From that logic the Church has for generations distilled the poisonous lies with which to destroy men for the glory of God. Such a belief is an invitation to the assassin. It puts the dagger in the hand of fanaticism. It puts a penalty on truth and a reward on falsehood. The Church was in travail. Falsehoods were brought forth. The mother of lies blessed her children and bade them god-speed. We do not know that the pulpit originated slanders, but we do know that its logic made slanders inevitable, and that the pulpit listened to them with eager and believing ears.

But the method of defence failed. Let it be gratefully recorded that the time had come when the chosen weapon of the Church was broken in her hand. Defamation of character reacted upon the defamers. Epithets were no longer regarded as arguments. Vituperation did not convince. There were not robes enough on all the priests nor piety enough in all the pulpits nor holy water enough in all baptismal fonts, to give credibility to a lie about Mr. Ingersoll.

The Church had an awakening. For the first time in all its history it found out that it had to play fair. So it called the slanderers off the field. It told the liars they need not lie any more, but not to be discouraged—the Lord would provide some other means of defence. He would care for his own.

Then the ministers began to get ships in the game—thousands of underlings and preacherettes talked back—and got themselves reported as "answering Ingersoll." But the answers were like the whirlwind the prophet saw when he was looking for the Lord—quite a blow, but nothing in it. I once answered Mr. Ingersoll myself. I was then in a Baptist pulpit seeing that the Lord ran this world properly.

Something had to be done. Superstition—that is to say, the Church—was losing ground as never before. While infidelity—that is to say, reason and common sense—as never before, was making progress.

There were but two things left for the Church to do—one was to appeal to the emotions, the other was to appeal to argument. A celebrated pulpit acrobat of Brooklyn took up the first. He was a master of declamation. With a cyclone of words he sought to paralyse the intelligence and stampede the emotions. He carried pulpit hysteria to an exact science. He knew the art of vehement assertion. He was florid, voluble, and frantic. He was an ecclesiastical Fourth of July. Unhappily for him and for his cause, his zeal carried him away; the reins of control slipped from his hands. He ran away with himself. He resorted to epithet, insult, and vituperation. Unwittingly he weakened the position he was trying to defend, and betrayed the cause of which he had appointed himself the advocate. When that series of sermons was ended the judicious in the Church were grieved—the best and wisest were in despair.

Mr. Ingersoll's interviews, analysing and commenting upon these sermons, put the Brooklyn preacher absolutely out of the reckoning.

There remained but one thing more to do. The appeal to argument. The Christian system must be defended and the Bible vindicated. Surely somewhere among the erudite and mighty in Israel could be found a man equal to the task of confounding this audacious genius. The Church selected its representatives. Its choice was not limited. It took from any profession or from any land. Jurists, supposed to know the value of evidence. Publicists, familiar with modern life. Scholars, acquainted with Hebrew, Greek, and ancient lore. Statesmen, who were students of history and human tendencies. Churchmen, who knew the rise and growth of devotions. Prelates, eminent and honored in the counsels of the Church. All men of prestige and power in their respective callings, and some of them renowned throughout the earth. Then began the most gigantic duel this world has ever seen. On one side the champions of the Church, chosen from different sects, chosen from two continents—a picked company of defenders—the best and ablest that Christendom could produce. On the other side one man. The public press was the arena, and nations were the spectators of that Titanic struggle.

One by one the defenders of the faith came on the field, "strong in the Lord and the power of his might." One by one they went down in the humiliation of defeat. One by one they were carried from the arena, thrust with the spear of reason, pierced with the arrows of logic, or impaled upon the glittering shafts of wit and ridicule. Like poor old Priam and Hecuba who, watching from the walls of ancient Troy, saw Achilles destroy the Trojan chief, so the old Church watched and saw her proud Hectors slain.

From that immortal combat Mr. Ingersoll bore away the laurels of deathless renown. It was more than the triumph of a man. Here, again, he was the instrument by which humanity broke the chains that bound it to the past, compelled tradition to yield the sceptre to reason, drove superstition from the brain, made fact more sacred than faith, and consecrated truth for ever to the service of progress.

It cannot be denied that Mr. Ingersoll was an iconoclast. Probably no man ever lived who destroyed so much as he. But what was it that he destroyed? Let me tell you. The walls and barricades which ignorance had built across the path of progress! The jungles in which lurk and leer the devils of fear, where crawl and hiss the snakes of superstition, and where disease and poison brew and breed. Toll-gates upon the highway of reason, where avarice and hypocrisy enrich themselves at the expense of mental travellers. The altar, from behind which "the ignorant past bullies the enlightened present." The pirates upon the intellectual sea that prey upon the commerce of honest thoughts. The dogmas of insanity and fear that foul the fountains of joy and rob life of its one meaning and its only good! The doctrines that made God a being, in whose presence pity turned to stone, must laugh at pain, and love forget its own.

To these infamies he was the bosom of destruction, a consuming fire, a divine devastation, a day of doom, a final judgment, an inexorable Judge, who said to them one and all, "Depart, ye cursed."

And yet they see but the smaller part of Mr. Ingersoll's work who see only its destructive side. "Felling forests is not the end of agriculture. Driving pirates from the sea is not all there is of commerce." He neither destroyed, nor attempted to destroy, any good, any truth, any beauty, or any hope. He knew that facts were sacred. He knew that they did not lie nor cheat, and that faith might do both. He knew that inspiration was not necessary to truth, and that it was utterly unable to help a falsehood.

If he demolished the citadel of superstition, he cleared away the ruins and laid broad and deep the foundation of the temple of reason—the temple in which no slave lifts shackled hands in useless

prayer, no pallid face of fear imploringly turns to brutal priests or heartless gods.

By the sacredness of fact, and the sovereignty of law, he made the miraculous a synonym for the absurd. He held the Bible up to nature, turned upon it the light of reason, put it on the witness-stand in its own defence, examined and cross-examined it, and brought its real character to light. Mr. Ingersoll revealed revelation. He did not destroy the Bible. He was honest enough to take it as it read. He assumed that if God wrote it he must have been intelligent enough to say what he meant, and honest enough to have meant what he said.

He was not enough of a theologian to know that God says one thing and means another. Being honest himself, incapable of evasion or double meaning, he supposed God was, and commentators ought to be. In this spirit he took up the Bible. He showed it exactly as it is. He did not add or invent one absurdity. He did not interpolate one atrocity. He did not augment its errors by the addition of one mistake. He simply introduced a practically unknown book to the reading public. The book itself shocked the morals, offended the reason, and excited the derision of the intelligent. Mr. Ingersoll did not destroy the Bible. He destroyed the unreasoning belief that it was written by infinite wisdom to reveal infinite love and justice.

To attack that belief was to defend God. He rescued the character of the Infinite from the ancient libel called the Holy Scriptures. He saved God from the calumnies recorded in sacred writ. He removed God from the criminal class.

Mr. Ingersoll was never sure what God is, nor entirely persuaded that he is. But one thing he did assert, of one thing he never had the slightest doubt; it was this: If God is, he is not what they say he is. If God was God, he had to act like one. He could not act like the Devil and still be God.

Thousands of the less intelligent thought that Mr. Ingersoll destroyed the moral sanction, weakened virtue, and robbed wrong-doing of its terrors. They are the people who regard God as the chief of police, preachers as patrolmen, creeds as clubs, churches as hold-overs, every man as a "suspect," hell as the penitentiary, and heaven as the quarters of the warden and guards.

Men may still be found who say they agree with Mr. Ingersoll, but do not consider his teachings safe. Can it be possible this world has swept so far from sanity that virtue depends on superstition, honesty is sustained by dishonesty, honor encouraged by hypocrisy, morality inspired by deceit, goodness nursed by ignorance, fidelity buttressed by falsehood, truth sceptred by lies? Can it be that belief in a barbaric Bible is the source of civilisation? Must there be an infamous God in the heavens in order that there may be gentleness and justice on the earth?

These fallacies, devised by the Church to perpetrate its power, Mr. Ingersoll swept aside with magnificent scorn. He knew that men could not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. He knew that worshipers were never better than the divinities to which they bowed. He knew that the doctrine of an angry God had filled the world with hatred. He knew that the belief that God would torture in another world made men burn and kill their fellow-men in this. He saw that civilisation could not prevail unless common sense prevailed; that reason was the eternal safeguard of morality. Upon intelligence and truth he based virtue. He said science was the Savior of mankind; reason the only guide. He despised the religion of bribes and threats. He counted repentance without restitution the refuge of the coward. He counted a heaven unearned, purchased by the righteousness of someone else, as an eternal almshouse where infinite injustice gave harps and crowns to moral bankrupts in order that they might praise him for having damned the noblest and best. He did not believe the prospect of such a heaven could make anyone really generous and good.

The most that Mr. Ingersoll said was waiting to be said.

Science had digged the golden treasures from the mine of knowledge. Light had fallen upon the conscience of men. The moral sense had outgrown its childhood. Reason was rejoicing like a strong man to run a race. But no one dared. Thousands of men feared that if they told God what they really thought about him he would strike them dead. So they worshiped him with their lips and abhorred him in their hearts. Thousands had already become too generous, too noble, too pure to believe the Bible, but they dared not say so out loud. They knew too well the character of its author. Then came Ingersoll, the soul, the incarnation of courage, who feared nor flattered neither gods nor men. Millions at once took heart. Men stood up and brushed the dust from their knees. Women went out from the bondage of the priest. Slaves defied their masters, sanity soothed the frenzied, light filled the sky. The day was come.

The Church will probably endure, but it will change. It will be remodelled and renovated. It has already changed. It is not what it was when Mr. Ingersoll first introduced it to the God it was worshiping. It has lost its command. The stream of progress has lifted it at last, and is bearing it along. The older people are frantically throwing ropes to the shore and imploring someone to haul in the line and help them tie up. The younger ones are saying, "Let it drift. The river is God's, and so is the sea."

It used to be necessary to belong to a church in order to have standing in a community. The pew was the door to respectability. It is now quite as often the hiding-place of hypocrisy. If an intelligent man now belongs to a real orthodox church he doesn't, as a rule, say much about it in public. He would rather you wouldn't talk to him about it in the presence of his associates. He is like the man who was asked what part of the Union he was born in. Reaching his hand towards his pistol-pocket, he replied, "Arkansas, but don't you laugh, damn you."

Every dogma is on the defensive. Creeds are trying to become fit for decent people to associate with. A company of divines, duly appointed for the fervent task, has recently conducted an exploration of the Presbyterian hell. They returned, and assured the mothers that there were no infants in hell.

The Church is trying to keep within shouting distance of civilisation. The revisers have the Bible in the laundry trying to cleanse some of the stains from its pages. The preachers are throwing flowers at their congregations instead of chunks of brimstone. The pulpit thunders have sunk to silence, and threats of impending doom disturb no more the sleeper in the pew. Above all others Mr. Ingersoll forced these changes upon the reluctant Church. He made every preacher utter excuses for his Bible and apologies for his God. He made every preacher convict himself either of a lack of honesty or a lack of intelligence. He marked out three roads for the preacher—that of the hypocrite, that of the fool, and that of reason. The preachers are in an agony to know which road to take. If they take the fool road the Church will laugh at them; if they take the hypocrite road they are liable to be found out; if they take the reason road the Church will call another pastor to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. The preachers are having their troubles now. The world is getting even.

Mr. Ingersoll turned every church into a hospital, where nurses, called priests, attend patients called creeds. He kept the coroner busy. He enriched the undertaker. He dedicated the past to the cemetery, the future to life and progress. He wrested the sceptre from the hand of bigotry and ignorance, and passed it to intelligence and reason. He made it respectable and safe to speak your honest thought. For generations it was considered a pious duty to malign Freethinkers. Until this day the name of Voltaire or Paine opens the fountain of falsehood in the Church. Priests have loved to dig open graves and insult the dust of the noble dead.

Priests grow bold when death has silenced those who silenced them.

But when Mr. Ingersoll died—when the mighty had fallen—when the conqueror could do battle no more—when "great Ulysses was dead, and no one left in Ithaca could bend his bow"—when the curtained eyes flashed defiance no longer, nor gleamed with triumphant fire—when death's coronation robes were round the king, the great heart throbbless, the divine lips dumb—safe and secure he slept. Into that chaste presence the obscene prowler dared not come. No pulpit, no priest of the slightest consequence slandered the heroic dead. If Mr. Ingersoll had not civilised the Church, he had at least forced it to assume the virtue of decency, though it had it not. He had frightened the unclean birds from the twilight of death, and driven the robed hyenas from the tomb. Safe and secure he slept.

Mr. Ingersoll regarded this world as his home so long as he was here. He was not a pilgrim, not a traveller. He was a resident. He did not call this world a "vale of tears," or a "desert drear." He did not esteem it necessary to heap abuse upon this world in order to enhance the attractiveness of some other one of which he knew nothing. He loved life. He believed in the sacredness of joy, and he endeavored to make others happy. With matchless skill he pictured the blessedness and content of humble homes filled with the light and music of love. He plead for the equality of the household, the republic of the fireside, the liberty of man, woman, and child. He was interested in every subject that concerned modern life. He touched every theme, and irradiated every theme he touched. His reason was unerring, his logic direct, his candor convincing, and his illustrations rich and varied as sunset skies.

As masters of the art of expression, Ingersoll and Shakespeare constitute a class by themselves. They are the only facts in this world that seem to require for their explanation a theory of supernatural inspiration.

He touched every emotion at will. In the arrangement of oppression, injustice, and crimes against liberty he was the tempest; indignation's lightning flashed, fierce thunders rolled, and every traitor to liberty proclaimed his guilt by pallid fear.

When he spoke of love that makes "kings and queens of common clay," or of the babe "dowered with the wealth of two united hearts," he was vine and flower.

Borne on imagination's wings, he matched the eagle in his flight; or, changed to tenderness, his speech was sweet and cadenced as the nightingale's song.

He knew how to discuss religion without getting mad about it. Being right, he could afford to be good natured. He introduced good manners into religious controversy, and demonstrated the fact that it is better to be a gentleman than to be born again.

He diffused an atmosphere within which chains rust, creeds disintegrate, and superstition's altars turn to dust.

He created an intellectual climate, hospitable to the flower and fruitage of all virtues and every good.

He put the robe of honor upon industry and toil, and made the shop and field more sacred than the cloister.

He exalted the home above the Church, the fireside above the altar, the mother above the nun, and honest labor above idle prayer.

He opened the eyes of men, and turned their faces towards the light.

He civilised the heart, freed the brain, and enriched the language of love and hope.

He felt all passions, knew all joys and griefs that lie "between the morn of laughter and death's sad night."

He was loved and hated, crowned and smitten, scorned and glorified.

He did not swerve. He kept his way. Lustrous as the herald-star, he led forth "the ever-coming morning of the ever-better day."

He turned the furrow in every field of thought, and in the subtle soil cast the mysterious seed. He conspired with the elemental forces, with the omnipotence of nature. He trusted the harvest to the future—to the years that are on the way—to the time that is to be, when science shall save, when reason shall redeem, and when love and liberty shall fill the world with light and joy.

—Here and Now (Kansas).

### Correspondence.

#### ARE ATHEISTS THINKERS?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—After "Haw Menai's" prolix disquisition, which had for its object a generous desire on the part of the author to convert you from the "fallacy of Atheism," one contemplates, with considerable alarm, what would happen were he given to "metaphysicising on metaphysics." The *Freethinker* would have to increase its size, and the word "Correspondence" at the head of this column make room for "Metaphysical Jargonry"—with apologies to pure metaphysicians.

A famous English philosopher said that words are the counters of wise men, but what Hobbes meant was, words conveying ideas; otherwise, the main object of language is defeated.

Even as it stands, however, "Haw Menai's" effusion bristles with contradictions, which may perhaps be cleared up in that further letter he mentions. A few typical examples may be cited:—

1. "As a Theist, I believe I have faith in God," declares your correspondent. But what is *Faith* but the assent of the mind to a proposition for which there is no evidence? And who, indeed, but a "veritable lunatic"—to use the phrase "Haw Menai" applies to Atheists—would attempt to found an argument on such flimsy material? *Evidence* is the criterion of truth; and in the absence of evidence, ratiocination is arrested.
2. "I do not claim *knowledge* of God," says your correspondent; and, in the next breath, he promptly refutes himself by predicating certain mental capabilities of God: "Even God the Absolute does not know that he is God." Now, having admitted that he does not "know" God, how can "Haw Menai" be so reckless as to enter upon a dissertation as to what God does, or does not, know, without out-Absoluting the Absolute?
3. But "Even the Absolute has limitations," continues the Theistic pleader. Has it? The flagrant contradiction involved in this proposition will be patent to all, for how can that which is *limited* be Absolute? To limit is to imply relativity—the antithesis of Absolute.
4. Again, "God cannot make a clock strike less than one," declares "Haw Menai." How does he *know* this? One would imagine that your correspondent were on intimate terms with God, and that the latter occupied the next flat.

Not content with these vain and irrelevant meanderings, designed to show, in some inexplicable manner, that "Atheists are not Thinkers," "Haw Menai" falls headlong into the mire by venturing a definition of God. To define is to explain, and Spinoza declared that to *define* God is to *deny* him; and the veriest tyro in logic knows that definition involves circumscription.

Now, in view of this dogmatic attitude, what opinion are we to form of the other part of your correspondent's remarks, where he urges us to remember that, as a Theist, he merely *believes*, and quotes poetry to prove it. Lost in the labyrinth he has himself woven, let us leave him to meditate on the danger of attempting to bolster up "airy nothings" by a superfluous use of words, words, words.

F. R. THEAKSTONE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—"Haw Menai," referring to Atheists in his letter in last week's *Freethinker*, says:—

"A denial of God is incongruous, because, on their own showing, there must be a God for them to deny; for how could they deny him otherwise?"

But "Haw Menai," in the same letter, says:—

"Two and two will always make four—now and for ever."

The latter dictum is, of course, true; but "Haw Menai" *contradicts himself* in saying it, for it implies a *denial* of the existence of a "two and two" that do *not* "make four"; and, on his "own showing, there must be" such a "two and two" "*for him to deny.*"

Are *Theists* thinkers?

G. L. MACKENZIE.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND COMMON SENSE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A correspondent asks, in a contemporary, in what way Christianity is opposed to common sense. Answer: Because Christianity teaches us that Christ was more than human; that he ascended into heaven weeks after he had been crucified; that this world was created in six days, and that we exist somewhere even after death. These things, I maintain most emphatically, are opposed to common sense.

ALGERNON ASHTON.

#### Aspirations.

BY EDWIN EMERSON, M.A.

Oh! for clear thought to aid all men,  
In things which seem above their ken,  
And show the false and true,  
In such a guise that they may know,  
For evermore the way to go,  
And the straight road pursue.

Oh! for that gift of genial speech,  
By which at once all hearts we reach,  
And make men yearn to rise,  
Where they may see the noblest things,  
And feel the joy rare knowledge brings;  
And thus at length be wise.

Oh! for keen sight to see outspread,  
Through all the earth on which we tread,  
Most precious gifts for man;  
Which banish from his thoughts vain fears,  
And smooth his pathway through the years,  
However long the span.

Oh! for the poet's art to sing:—  
To thought profound, warm feeling bring,  
Expressed with rhythmic grace;  
So that the song, a potent spell,  
Deep in the hearts of men shall dwell,  
And bless the human race.

Oh! for a pen with which to write,  
The winged words just now in flight,  
Lest they be caught no more;  
And fix them to be read by all,  
And have them henceforth at our call,  
To be oft pondered o'er.

Oh! for a life of high emprise,  
Direct, sincere, without disguise,  
Of all men read and known;  
Built firmly on the rock of truth,  
Though waxing old, secure of youth;  
A life—itsself alone.

Oh! for an optimistic mind;  
The good in all things prone to find;  
A stranger to despair;  
It sees, the howling storm to-day  
Shall by to-morrow speed away,  
And leave the prospect fair!

Oh! for contentment's placid state;  
Mid this world's turmoil still sedate;  
All duties promptly done;  
In danger calm, devoid of fear,  
Unblanched if death itself appear:—  
The moral victory won!

Oh! for long life,—when we are dead,—  
In minds and hearts which we have led  
Along the upward way;  
A pleasing vision this,—to see  
The coming race more wise, more free,  
And nobler in its day!

—Open Court (Chicago).

**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.**

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Paradise of Fools."

**OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), 3.15, W. J. Ramsey, "The Jews' March."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N.S.S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture. Brockwell Park, 3.15, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N.S.S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Book of Common Prayer."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture; 6.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, H. B. Samuels, "Performing a Miracle."

**COUNTRY.**

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (I. L. P. Hall, 21 King-square-avenue): 11, Urgent Business Meeting.

**OUTDOOR.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.: Wednesday, Oct. 2, at 8.15, in the Bull Ring, H. Lennard.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S.: Horsefair, 7.30, W. H. Fox, "Whom will ye serve?"

LEEDS: Cross Flatts Park, 11, H. S. Wishart, "Christ's Morality Unsound"; Woodhouse Moor, 3, "The New Theology a Red Herring"; City Square, 7.30, "Morality Without God."

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