

# THE Freethinker

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*There are no aliens anywhere, not even in hell, to the being who is as big morally as he ought to be—only brothers. The universal heart goes out in tenderness beyond all boundaries of form and color and architecture and accident of birth—into every place where quivers a living soul. The Great Law is for the healing and consolation of all. Moral obligation is as extensive as the power to feel.—J. HOWARD MOORE.*

## Christmas in Holloway Gaol.\*

THE dullest Christmas I ever spent was in his Majesty's hotel in North London. The place was spacious, but not commodious; it was magnificent in the mass, but very petty in detail; it was designed with extreme care for the safety of its many guests, but with a complete disregard of their comfort; and it soon palled upon the taste, despite the unremitting attention of a host of liveried servants. How I longed for a change of scene, if what I constantly gazed upon may be so described; but I was like a knight in some enchanted castle, surrounded with attendants, yet not at liberty to walk out. The hospitality of my residence, however, was by no means sumptuous. The table did not groan beneath a weight of viands, or gleam with glowing wines. Its poverty was such that a red-herring would have been a glorious treat, and a dose of physic an agreeable variety. Why, then, you may ask, did I not quit this inhospitable hotel, and put up at another establishment? Because I was invited by her Majesty, Queen Victoria, and her Majesty's invitations were commands.

Speaking by the card, Christmas-day in Holloway was treated as a Sunday. There was no work and no play then, the dinner was the poorest and worst cooked in the whole week, and the only diversion was a morning or afternoon visit to chapel, where we had the satisfaction of learning that heaven was an eternal Sunday.

The fibre put into my cell to be picked by my industrious fingers had all been removed the previous evening, lest I should desecrate the sacred day by pursuing my ordinary avocation. My apartment was therefore clean and tidy, and by the aid of a bit of dubbin I managed to give an air of newness to my well-worn shoes. The attendants had, however, omitted to provide me with a Sunday suit, so I was obliged to don my working clothes, in which graceless costume I had to perform my religious devotions

in the house of God, where an ill-dressed person is always regarded as an exceptionally bad sinner, and expected to show an extraordinary amount of humility and contrition. Linen was never a burning question in Holloway Hotel, and cuffs and collars were unknown, except when a short guest wore a long shirt. My toilet was therefore easily completed; and with a good wash, and the energetic use of a three-inch comb, I was soon ready for the festivities of the season.

At eight o'clock I received the first instalment of my Christmas fare, in the shape of three-quarters of a pint of tea and eight ounces of dry bread. Whether the price of groceries was affected by the Christmas demand, or whether the kitchen was demoralised by the holiday, I am unable to decide; but I noticed that the decoction was more innocuous than usual, although I had thought its customary strength could not be weakened without a miracle. My breakfast being devised on the plainest vegetarian principles, there was no occasion for grace before meat, so I sipped the tea and munched the bread (eight ounces straight off requires a great deal of mastication) without breathing a word of thanks to the giver of all good things.

After a remarkably short hour's tramp round the exercise ring in a thieves' procession, doing the rogue's march without the music, I returned to my cell, and sitting down on my little three-legged stool, I was soon lost in thought. I wondered what my wife was doing—how she was spending the auspicious day. What a "merry Christmas" for a woman with her husband eating his heart out in gaol! But "that way madness lies," and I had fought down the demon too long to give way then. Springing to my feet, I sped up and down my cell like a caged animal; and after many maledictions on "the accursed creed," I succeeded in stilling the tumult of my emotions. A great calm followed this storm, and resuming my seat and leaning my back against the plank-bed, I took a scornful retrospect of my prosecution and trial. How insignificant looked the Tylers, Giffards, Norths, and Harcourts! How noble the friends and the party who had stood by me in the dark hour of defeat! A few short weeks, and I should be free again to join their ranks and strike hard in the thickest of the battle, under the grand old flag of Freethought.

The chapel-bell roused me from phantasy. The other half of the prison disgorged its inmates, and I could hear the sound of their tramping to the sanctuary. While they were engaged there I read a chapter of Gibbon; after which I heard the "miserable sinners" return from the chapel to their cells.

At twelve o'clock came my second instalment of Christmas fare: six ounces of potatoes, eight ounces of bread, and a mutton chop. Being on hospital diet, I had this trinity for my dinner every day for nine months, and words cannot describe the nauseous

\* I was imprisoned there for "blasphemy" from February 1883 to February 1884, by sentence of a Roman Catholic judge, Mr. Justice North. The present article was written for the *Freethinker* some twenty years ago, and I am told it would be interesting to the new generation of Freethinkers who have arisen since then. A few slight alterations have been made.

monotony of the *menu*. The other prisoners had the regular Sunday's diet: bread, potatoes, and suet-pudding. After dinner I went for another short hour's tramp in the yard. The officers seemed to relax their usual rigor, and many of the prisoners exchanged greetings. "How did yer like the figgy duff?" "Did the beef stick in yer stomach?" Such were the flowers of conversation that afternoon. From the talk around me, I gathered that under the old management, before the Government took over the prison, all the inmates had a "blow out" on Christmas Day, consisting of beef, vegetables, plum-pudding, and a pint of beer. Some of the "old hands" bitterly bewailed the decadence in prison hospitality. Their lamentations were worthy of a Conservative orator at a rural meeting. The present was a poor thing compared with the past, and they sighed for "the tender grace of a day that is dead."

After exercise I went to chapel. The school-master, who was a very pleasant gentleman, had drilled the singing-class into a fair state of efficiency, and they sang one or two Christmas hymns in pretty good style; but the effect of their efforts was considerably marred by the rest of the congregation, whose unmusical voices, bad sense of time, and ignorance of the tune, more than once nearly brought the performance to an untimely end. The chaplain followed with a seasonable sermon, which would have been more heartily relished on a fuller stomach. He told us what a blessed time Christmas was, and how people did well to be joyous on the anniversary of their Savior's birth; after which, I presume, he returned to the bosom of his family, and celebrated the birth of Christ with liberal doses of turkey, goose, beef, pudding, and communion wine. Before dismissing us with his blessing to our "little rooms," which was his habitual euphemism for our cells, he said that he could not wish us a happy Christmas in our unhappy condition, but would wish us a peaceful Christmas; and he ventured to promise us that boon if, after leaving chapel, we fell on our knees and besought pardon for our sins. Most of the prisoners received this advice with a grin, for their cell-floors were black-leaded, and practising genuflections in their "little rooms" gave too much knee-cap to their trousers.

At six o'clock I had my third instalment of Christmas fare, consisting of another eight ounces of bread and three-quarters of a pint of tea. The last mouthfuls were consumed to the accompaniment of church bells. The neighboring gospel-shops were announcing their evening performance, and the sound penetrated into my cell through the open ventilator. The true believers were wending their way to God's house, and the heretic, who had dared to deride their creed and denounce their hypocrisy, was regaling himself on dry bread and warm water in one of their prison cells. And the bells rang out against each other from the many steeples with a wild glee as I paced up and down my narrow dungeon. They seemed mad with the intoxication of victory; they mocked me with their bacchanalian frenzy of triumph. But I smiled grimly, for their clamor was no more than the ancient fool's-shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Great Christ has had his day since, but he in turn is dead; dead in man's intellect, dead in man's heart, dead in man's life; a mere phantom, flitting about the aisles of churches where priestly mummers go through the rites of a phantom creed.

I took my Bible and read the story of Christ's birth in Matthew and Luke. What an incongruous jumble of absurdities! A poor fairy-tale of the world's childhood, utterly insignificant beside the stupendous wonders which science has revealed to its manhood. From the fanciful little story of the Magi following a star, to Shelley's "Worlds on worlds are rolling ever," what an advance! As I retired to sleep upon my plank-bed, my mind was full of these reflections. And when the gas was turned out, and I was left alone in darkness and silence, I felt serene and almost happy.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Our Excellent Bishop.

THE famous epitaph on Charles the Second declared that he never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one. In the case of the present Bishop of London one might paraphrase the description, and say that, while the question of whether he ever did a useful thing is matter for debate, the fact of his never having said a wise one is beyond dispute. In all his published sermons the flow of foolish common-places is simply staggering in its uniform monotony. Even when it seems almost inevitable that a sensible remark must come, the Bishop triumphantly achieves the impossible. The mental atmosphere in which he lives and moves and has his being is that of the Church, and he betrays neither the desire nor the capacity to get beyond it. His predecessor in the office possessed both learning and ability; the present incumbent can lay claim to neither. He is simply a Bishop, with £10,000 a year and a couple of palaces.

The other day his lordship delivered a discourse on "Is Christianity a Failure?" That the answer would be "No" was a foregone conclusion. It would be a bad policy to cry "stinking fish"; and at least in his own case he might have pointed out that it had been anything but a failure. Even while he was devoting himself to the poor in the East-end—a period of self-sacrifice of which he is constantly reminding his hearers—he was in receipt of £1,000 a year from a sinecure in connection with St. Paul's Cathedral. And Christianity certainly placed him where he is. Whoever else may have found Christianity to be a failure, Bishop Winnington Ingram is fully justified in declaring it to have been a triumphant success.

His lordship is gracious enough to admit that many causes lead people to believe that Christianity is a failure—all of them, however, superficial and unsatisfactory. He cites the case of the Labor members of Parliament who are pledged to Secular Education, of the dearth of candidates for ordination, the lack of interest in religion, the existence of drunkenness, of wars, and of the bitterness existing between Christian sects. And he has heard Secularists say at open-air meetings: "When you Christians have agreed as to what you believe, then we will join your number." Now, this is a variety of Secularist one would really like to meet. Of course, a Secularist would be quite safe in promising to become a Christian when Christians agree among themselves on matters of belief, for he would certainly never be called upon to redeem his promise. And if anyone ever used such an expression to the Bishop, he must have been exercising a humor his lordship seems quite unable to appreciate. But really Secularists have far different reasons from this for rejecting Christianity. They are Freethinkers, not members of a Y. M. C. A.

Another remarkable experience—or perhaps one ought to say lack of experience—of the Bishop's lies in what he has *not* heard working men say. He does not believe that the working classes are un-Christian and if he means that the majority are not, I suppose he is correct. All that was ever said was that a very fair number of them were not Christians. The Bishop's proof is that he has lived amongst working men for years, and never, except once, heard a word said against Jesus. This may, again, have been due to the fact that those who did not believe in Christianity had the good sense not to commence shouting against Jesus merely because a Bishop or a clergyman passed by them. But one is bound to assume that either the Bishop has a very bad memory or very defective hearing. For I fancy I could recall to his recollection several occasions on which large numbers of working men have either said things against Jesus or endorsed such sayings when spoken from the platform. Or, if he has any desire to enlarge his experience in this direction, I could provide him with numerous examples to the point whenever he cared to devote an hour to the purpose.

Then as to the dearth of clergymen and the lack of interest in religion. On a recent Sunday, he tells his audience, he preached at Oxford. There were 15,000 undergraduates in the church! (One wonders whether the attendance was compulsory or not?) There was not a sound during the sermon—not a single snore broke the religious silence. On the Monday evening he preached again, and this time there were 500 undergraduates present. Gallant Bishop! What other man could have so effectually laid out one thousand undergraduates in the first round. Fifteen hundred came to hear him on the first occasion; and they were so interested in the subject, and so affected by the address, that two-thirds of them stayed away on the next! Could there be a clearer proof of the interest these men took in the Bishop and his subject? If more proof is needed it is supplied. It was, says the Bishop, just the same at Yale College, America. "There were 2,000 students to hear me in the morning, and 500 at a voluntary service in the evening." Why, this is even more decisive than the experiment in England. In that case only two-thirds stayed away; in America it was three-fourths. Samson laying out the Philistines isn't in it—and both victories achieved with the same weapon.

In the same illuminating style Bishop Ingram deals with the question of Christianity and war. With a perfectly paralysing candor he admits that there are wars, and that war is a stain on Christianity. But stay, there is the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Germany, King Edward, and President Roosevelt—all of these, he is sure, are devoted to peace. And, "if that is the case, it is owing to Christianity." Wonderful! Only what on earth, and where on earth do all the wars come from? There are very few people who are un-Christian, because in nine years the Bishop only heard one man speaking against Jesus; the most powerful rulers of the world are deeply Christian; who, then, brings about the wars? It must be the odd Freethinker here and there, one of whom the Bishop met in the course of his nine years in East London. What tremendous power this handful of non-Christians must wield!

But there would not, we are told, be a chance of people longing for peace had not Christianity been preached for the last eighteen hundred years. The proof is plain. In any unconverted part of Africa, tribes are constantly at war, and yet "we are asked to leave the tribes in their primitive condition, un-reached by the Gospel." Shame! For, once the Gospel does reach these tribes, with a little assistance from Maxim-guns and gun-boats, etc., this inter-tribal warfare is stopped, they are trained to labor in mines and elsewhere, and so bring profit to their Christian employers. They are even permitted to become inoculated with their master's diseases, and share in all his vices. And yet there are some who say let the natives alone. Could Atheistic villainy go further than this?

I suppose it would be useless to suggest to the Bishop that unconverted African tribes do not, as a matter of fact, fight more among themselves than do converted races, or that they certainly trust each other quite as much as civilised Christian nations do. Nor would it be of any use to point out that the period during which the world enjoyed the greatest freedom from war belonged to a time prior to that when Christianity ruled, or that there have been more wars, and worse wars, brought about by Christian feeling than by any other single cause known to man. The man who can lay out 1,500 undergraduates in the course of a single sermon would be quite unaffected by such contemptible considerations.

The Bishop tells what he calls "a heart-rending" story of a recent experience of his. At Oxford he met a missionary from Central Africa, who told him that, because he was left with so few workers, room had been left for the erection of a Mohammedan mosque close by his little chapel. Truly a harrowing tale. The chapel profaned by the presence of a

mosque! A rival firm competing for business, and apparently getting it. No wonder he calls the story heart-rending. No wonder he begs his hearers to volunteer for mission service abroad. For the home demand is going down. The only chance is to build up a good export trade; and here, in Central Africa, "the Crescent is supplanting the Cross." True it is that the tribes converted to Mohammedanism are cleaner, more industrious, more sober and honest than those converted to Christianity, but these things are trifles so long as they are not clients of the Bishop and his Church.

Still, he is convinced that "Christianity is the one success in the world." Not merely successful, but the only success. Proofs are offered, for our Bishop is nothing without his evidences. He quotes a lady, who told him that wherever she found a country that was not Christian she found hopelessness and disorder. And this lady had been to Japan! In America, again, he met with nothing but the friendliest greeting. Certainly a thing to be pleased with, although a successful pugilist, a music-hall celebrity, or a man with two heads, might have brought back precisely the same report. He conversed with Russian Consuls, Japanese Consuls, and leading men in the United States, and their hope was to make the world more Christian. Why, certainly. What other result could he expect when he conversed with Christians? I do not expect it would have been difficult to have found in the United States plenty of intelligent people who had no such hope and no such desire. But our sapient Bishop visits church after church, talks with Christian after Christian, and marvels at finding they want to Christianise the world, and finally returns and relates the experience as overpowering in the strangeness of its character.

Here ends the Bishop's proofs that Christianity is not a failure. Long may he live to continue his demonstrations. As a Freethinker, one could hardly desire a more serviceable Church dignitary. Religious people there are, and religious people there will remain, so long as the type persists. A mere change of doctrine is of small importance; it is the type that is everything. And while we have the type, men like Bishop Winnington Ingram act as a kind of selective force, attracting his kind and repulsing the more intelligent, even as the undergraduates at Oxford and at Yale were weeded out. Again, therefore, I say, long life to A. F. Winnington Ingram, Bishop of London, master of £10,000 a year, two palaces, and a seat in the House of Lords!

C. COHEN.

### Unorganised Christianity.

IN certain circles it is the fashion of the day to declare, in the most dogmatical style, that the Christian religion as hitherto understood and embodied cannot be pronounced a conspicuous success. Some progressive divines go to the length of positively affirming that it has proved a lamentable failure. In an interesting address, delivered a few evenings ago, Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, M.P., said that no thoughtful and honest person can deny that "organised" Christianity has signally failed to solve the vexed problems of human life. Mr. Masterman is a scholar of distinction, who had a brilliant career, winning a double first at Oxford, and who often writes and talks good sense on current topics; but in the lecture just mentioned he omitted to supply us with his definition of the Christianity that is *not* organised, in which he seems to believe, and from which he expects so much. Of organised Christianity there are well-nigh innumerable different and conflicting brands, and these are still multiplying; but where is *unorganised* Christianity to be found? If we are referred to the New Testament, we shall be obliged to point out that each of the organised forms claims to be the only fair deduction from the teaching contained in that document. Mr. Masterman maintained

that no one in his senses would dream of calling Great Britain a Christian country; but he did not inform us what would legitimise the use of that adjective. On this point, however, this lay representative and "rising hope" of the High Church Party, is flatly contradicted by that high-paid official advocate of it, the Bishop of London, who assured a congregation of men in Islington the other Sunday afternoon that Christianity is "the one success in the world." Of course, the Bishop recognises only organised Christianity, which has shown its appreciation of his championship by creating him a lord; and in this he is undoubtedly right, although his claim for Christianity is the falsest that could be made.

But the alleged success or admitted failure of organised Christianity is not the point under discussion in this article. What we aver is that there is no such thing as unorganised Christianity. When this religion first dawned in history it was already in the process of organisation; and the New Testament is only one of the many products of its organised life. The Papacy is another product, and Protestantism another still. The advent of every school of theology marks a distinct stage in the course of its evolution. One can understand the cry "Back to Christ," or "Back to the first century"; but to return from an organised to an unorganised Christianity is ridiculously impossible. Even Jesus and his disciples, as portrayed in the Gospels, were an organised society. This society had its theology and its rules of procedure. It was a nascent kingdom, with Jesus as king and the disciples as subjects. It was the Church in its babyhood, but by no means unorganised. It was also a Jewish society, kingdom, or church, and originally not intended to become anything else. It was a new party within the Jewish Church, fired by the hope of winning the whole nation. But the Jews, as a people, would have none of it. Paul, realising that as a Jewish movement it was doomed to extinction, transplanted it into a Gentile soil, in which it soon began to flourish, and in consequence its organisation was considerably modified, and tended to greater and greater complexity. In Paul's Epistles we find a highly-organised Christianity, on its doctrinal side, while in the Gospels we see not only organised theology and Christology, but also a wonderful development of the legendary bases of the latter. And so the organisation went on age after age, ever changing and ever growing in complexity until we have the Catholicism and the Protestantism of the present day.

The history of this organising process is both interesting and instructive. Paulinism, for example, triumphed after a terrific struggle. Echoes of the battle are still audible in the Epistles, especially in that to the Galatians. It was evidently a fight fought with drawn sword, and no mercy was shown on either side. "Let him be anathema" was the form of the curse Paul hurled at every opponent. At last, the Jewish type of Christianity died out, and the Gentile type survived. By-and-bye the Gentile specimen split up into hostile factions which were continually at bloody strife with one another. Anti-Nicene Christianity was never free from internecine quarrels and horrible tumults. Now, let us take a peep at the Council of Nicæa in the year 325. The Arians, though in the minority, have a hope of victory, and it is this confidence that presages their ruin. Their songs are being read aloud, in which occur such sentences as these: "God was not always Father; once he was not Father; afterwards he became Father." On hearing them the Athanasians become wild with indignation. They raise their hands in horror, keep their ears fast closed, and their eyes fast shut; and in a terrible outbreak of fury Nicolas, Bishop of Myra, rises to his feet and "deals a blow with all his force at Arius's jaw." At this point is produced the first draft of a Creed signed by the eighteen extreme Arian partisans; but it is received with tumultuous execration; the document is torn to pieces, and the subscribers, all except two,

give up Arius on the spot, and he is forcibly expelled from the assembly. Thus we find that at this Nicene Council one form of organised Christianity was at fierce war with the other, and that Trinitarianism won largely by brute force and wholly by accident. Arius was driven into exile, and his books were burned.

Such was the First General Council of Nicæa, over the sittings of which the first Christian Emperor presided. But Constantine was an extremely fickle theologian. At the Council he was a zealous partisan of Athanasius, and it was mainly through him that Arius was exiled, that the Arian books were destroyed, and the Arian bishops deposed. But five years afterwards he pretended to be an ultra-Arian, and, in consequence, Arius was recalled, all the Arian bishops were reinstated, while the victorious Athanasius was in turn banished to Gaul, and his followers were subjected to cruel persecution. And for a thousand years after this history kept repeating itself with wonderful exactitude. We are told that the expansion of Christianity during the Middle Ages was perfectly miraculous; but surely those who make that statement must be ignorant of the methods which were employed. Converts were made at the point of the sword. The alternative presented to people was Christianity or death, baptism or execution. Confession of faith was generally the fruit of coercion. How did Boniface accomplish the conversion of Germany? With an armed force at his back. No wonder he could boast of having baptised a hundred thousand natives in one year. Under Charlemagne, rejection of the Gospel was punished by death. The war against the free Saxons lasted upwards of thirty years, and the survivors of it were offered the restoration of their local rights and released from tribute to the King on condition of their becoming Christians. Often and often has it been asserted, especially on missionary platforms, that Christianity made its great historic conquests by the simple preaching of the forgiving love of God, while Mohammedanism secured hers by force of arms; but on consulting the pages of history, we learn that both religions adopted substantially identical methods.

When we come to the interior life of the Church, the state of things does not improve. The Papacy was nourished and grew on intrigue, fraud, and forgery. Orthodox theology was perpetually at strife with heresy, and straightway the heretic was clapped into the dungeon or the tomb. Then, at length, we enter the modern world, with its Protestant Reformation; but we soon discover that the Reformed Church differs from the Catholic only in form, not in spirit, being the same Christianity slightly modified in organisation. Luther had many noble human qualities; but religiously he was narrow, bigoted, and intolerant. While admiring his natural courage we deplore his theological dogmatism and denunciatory disposition. Protestantism did not bring a new religious spirit into the world. It merely gave the old organised Christianity a new sub-name. It simply perpetuated the mediæval doctrinal bondage in a show of fatuous liberty.

Now where, during all these centuries, was the unorganised Christianity about which we hear so much just now? Where was the place of its concealment? Why did it never show itself and put an end to the hateful tyrannies of its organised namesake? For eighteen hundred years it most successfully hid itself somewhere; but now at last there are men who proudly claim to have captured it, and to be able, by means of it, to transform the face and heart of society almost at once. But what is it, and where was it found? Is it the New Theology? But the New Theology is nearly as fully organised as the Old. Is it the spirit of Christ? The spirit of Christ is nothing but the spirit of the man who undertakes to preach him, throwing the responsibility for his utterances on unseen and inaccessible shoulders. Is it the Sermon on the Mount? But nobody takes that literally, and scarcely any two agree as to what

it means. What, then, is unorganised Christianity? As baseless a fabric as that of the emptiest dream. Mr. Masterman, or his chairman, Mr. R. Mudie-Smith, said that those who reject the spiritual interpretation of life cannot possibly escape the danger of falling under mean and ignoble influences; but who are the sweaters, the rack-renters, the swindlers, and the grinders of the faces of the poor? Who crowd our gaols and penitentiaries? Are they not believers in the spiritual interpretation of life? Are they not professors of Christianity under one or another of its numerous denominations? Mr. Masterman spoke the truth when he said that organised Christianity is an enormous failure; and we are convinced that what is called unorganised, or spiritual, Christianity will prove quite as futile. What is wanted to set the world right is perfect health of body and mind, which can be secured only as the result of a thorough knowledge of, and complete obedience to, all the laws of our being.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Position of Christ.

HIS COMMANDS AS TO RICHES; THE WAY IN WHICH THEY ARE FULFILLED TO-DAY.

ONE of the points which struck me most, when I first took in the *Freethinker* regularly, was the number of clergymen who die leaving "great possessions." Of course, it is a well known fact that the clergymen of to-day are not given half the honor and respect to which they were subject a hundred years ago, but even now one comes across people who think it little less than blasphemy to say anything to the detriment of the clergy.

Over two thousand years ago, so we are told, there lived on this earth a great teacher, who called himself the Son of God, having taken human form that he might personally bring the people to a knowledge of his Father's love for them, and thus prepare their minds for the great sacrifice he was about to make in order to reconcile the world and God. That, I believe, is the gist of the Christian religion. Let us look for one moment at the position this teacher occupied in Palestine. He was the son of a carpenter's wife, we are given to understand, and he lived in a cottage most meagrely furnished in Nazareth, then a tiny village, of evil repute. Here he lived for thirty years, sharing his Father's work, until the time was ripe to start his ministry. From the foregoing we see that he was one of the poorest people; in reality, in a very much worse position than the carpenter would be to-day.

On several occasions he made mention of the rich, always in a derogatory sense. On meeting with a young lawyer, who was inquiring the way to the Kingdom of Heaven, he plainly said: "He that is rich cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.....Sell all that thou hast and follow me." We are told that the young man turned away exceeding sorrowful, for he had "great possessions." There is a picture illustrating this scene, somewhat well-known, called "The Great Refusal," but even this does not awaken people to the fact that the present expositors of Christ's teaching are exactly in the position of the young lawyer.

In one of his sermons he taught that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. And again, "Woe unto you rich!" These few quotations are sufficient, I think, to show the attitude of Christ towards the rich.

At this point the question faces us, "What about the clergymen who die rich?" The bishop who takes £10,000 a year and two palaces, how can he preach the teachings of his so-called master if he is not following out this teaching in the most fundamental points.

When arguing on these lines, a few days ago, I was told that I took the Bible far too literally—"all Athoists did." It was not meant that we should. In this case I want to know what we may take literally and what allegorically. But it appears to me impossible to take these texts otherwise than literally. They are so definite. "Woe unto you rich!" What could anyone want plainer? "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." Christ did not say "Sell part of what thou hast"; he said "Sell ALL." How many clergymen to-day would be willing to sell all that they had and give the proceeds to the poor? No! they would prefer to tell you that it was impossible; even if they sold their possessions they could not be distributed indiscriminately, it would do no good. And how were they going to live themselves? I would tell them to trust God for their food,

their clothing, their home. But though they are very glib in the pulpit at telling their more unfortunate brethren to trust God when they could not get enough food to eat, it is a different matter when they themselves are hungry. They say that the people to-day are not religious enough to give to them, to keep them from want. Then, I ask, what progress has Christianity made in two thousand years? If that is really the case, and this faith all the Christians talk so much about, in which we are asked to stake our soul's salvation, where does it come in? Though they can trust God for eternal happiness after death, they cannot trust him to keep them from want before.

They seem entirely to overlook the fact that, if they cannot trust for the latter, from their own teaching they are forbidden to hope for the former.

N. F.

### Right-Reverend Fathers.

AN enthusiastic demonstration in Queen's Hall, on November 26, had for its chief object a strong indictment of the Archbishops and the Bishops, against whom a long and heavy list of foolish practices was launched, and at the close of the meeting a strong resolution was carried by acclamation condemning the Right-Reverend Fathers.

"The festivals of Fools and Asses kept,  
Obey'd Boy-Bishops, and to Crosses crept,  
They made the mumming Church the people's rod,  
And held the grinning Bauble for a God."

This piece of poetry sums up their religion, which is practised as a trade by the clergy, who, from a fanatical policy, pursued by spurious plans, endeavor to force rites and dreams of a most superstitious character upon the nation. And for delirious bigotry, fantastic sentiments, and an unenlightened enthusiasm, the Right-Reverend Fathers' system out-Christianises that of their Gospels.

They bind heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and lay them on men. Isaiah might help their reverences to understand what is inferred by "unrighteous decrees," made by men to enslave others. Their religious articles and creeds are all "unrighteous," for they first usurp men's minds and then poison them. This is a flagrant fraud upon the magna charter of Liberty. But Truth is great, and will ultimately prevail.

Is it not bunkum when they utter warnings of so dreadful an aspect as that of the rich man who had all good things in this life, and in the next he lifted up his eyes in hell?

Ah, my Lords, in the words of your Church Service, you are "miserable sinners"; and may your heavenly self-suplications for "illumination with true knowledge and understanding" be speedily granted. You sadly need it. But what is the use of all your pious zeal when it answers no good purpose?

There is no authority in the Bible or out of it for making rules of faith for others, yet religion is persistently imposed with pain and displeasure. Where is there a Lord Spiritual or a Right-Reverend Father in any part of the Blessed Book? Their Savior expressly forbade such officious designations. But in the Church there are more than twenty Lords and two faiths, while the Bible declares only "one Lord and one faith." Hence, to swear as they do by their Gospel implies fluency of falsehood to every "oily man of God in the Castle of Indolence."

Can these haughty Right-Reverend Fathers believe in a judgment-day, when their *great* Shepherd is said to require an explanation of riding in state, living sumptuously in palaces, and receiving huge salaries? This is "lying unto God." But ten or fifteen thousand pounds a year must always have a powerful effect upon a divine conscience.

Honest men are deeply concerned in these questions; and, until the men of God show less concern for mammon and preferment, there will always be the odium of charlatany about ecclesiastical business.

The damnation of their creed is *constitutional*. *Miserere!* But it has one saving grace—for those outside. It evokes laughter to hear the clergy curse so heartily, and all the congregation say "Amen."

ICHABOD.

We must look to the development of human reason and faculties for the only key to social order, the only secret of the legislator. Only those who wish to deceive the people and rule them for their own personal advantage would desire to keep them in ignorance; for the more they are enlightened the more will they feel convinced of the utility of laws, and of the necessity of defending them; and the more steady, happy, and prosperous will society become.—*Napoleon*.

## Acid Drops.

The New Theologians (God bless them!) are romping through the New Testament. They have kicked the Virgin Birth all to bits, and now they are dealing with Christ's own miracles in the same fashion. Mr. Campbell has just been knocking the miracle of the loaves and fishes to pieces. He says it never really happened; and his followers regard the statement as novel, though it has been made by Freethinkers for some two hundred years; the truth being that Mr. Campbell's fireworks are filled with our gunpowder. Dr. Warschauer now has a go at Ananias and Sapphira. "I see no reason whatever," he says, "for regarding this narrative as historical, and many for taking the contrary view." The fable might have grown up in this way. First, it was reported that Ananias "looked as though he could have sunk through the floor"—then that he "looked like a dead man"—then that he "fell down in a dead faint"—and finally, that "he died on the spot." Subsequently, another picturesque detail was added—"And so did his wife." It was an effort of dramatic imagination. Quite so. We have said the same thing a thousand times. Dr. Warschauer would be logical if he said, as we do, that the whole life of Christ in the New Testament is an effort of dramatic imagination. Whether there was any Jesus (or Ananias) at all, is an unimportant point; all the great facts and outlines of the biography are ideal—not historical. To this complexion Dr. Warschauer (or his successors) must come at last.

These New Theologians are a bit "fly." Dr. Warschauer commends the spirit of a correspondent who wants to read *the facts* for himself. What books should he read? Dr. Warschauer gives him a list of books by eminent Christians—all pretty much of his own way of thinking. There is not a really orthodox writer in the list; neither is there a really sceptical one. "Read what I tell you," Dr. Warschauer seems to say, "and I'm sure you will agree with me." Very likely!

We can quite understand Mr. Campbell's attractiveness to those who agree with him, but would he be persuasive to those who differed? We doubt it. To begin with, he mistakes assertion for argument. For instance, in a recent sermon of his on "The Crystal Sea" he admitted that "external evidence" would not lead us to a belief in God and a future life; in that way "the universe must remain as great a mystery as ever. "But," he said, "there is one kind of evidence concerning which the highest witness never changes. It is that the way to blessedness is the path of self-renunciation. Let a man determine so to live that his life is one long denial of the lower, one long affirmation of the higher, and in the end he comes to know that there is neither death nor separation and no life but the knowledge of God." Now the first part of this passage has a certain truth, though it is very unphilosophically expressed, as we could easily show, if that were our present business. All he can possibly mean at bottom is what was finely expressed in Landor's aphorism, that the price of the higher pleasures is abstinence from the lower; a truth, by the way, which is at least as old as Epicurus. When we come to Mr. Campbell's conclusion, however, we see that he is pleasantly dogmatizing and blandly begging the question. What he really asserts—for you really assert all that you imply—is that no Atheist ever lived the higher life. Stated in this naked form the assumption is monstrous. Atheists have lived, and do live, the higher life as much as any Christians. Bradlaugh and Holyoake were both Atheists, and in what way has Mr. Campbell lived the higher life more than they did? Take the case of Shelley. If ever a man lived the higher life he did. Byron said that he never knew any other man who was not a beast in comparison with him. James Thomson well called him, not only "poet of poets" but "purest of men." Yet he was an Atheist. These instances are enough to show that Mr. Campbell was talking nonsense.

Mrs. Besant (according to the *Chicago Daily Socialist*) declares that John D. Rockefeller "in his next reincarnation will return with all his good qualities"—but some people think it won't be a heavy outfit. Rockefeller, the lady says, has "developed an enormous mind"—and so, she continues, when his mind "comes back reincarnated it will be with all of the good and with none of the evil of his past incarnation." J. D. R. ought to subscribe at least ten thousand dollars to the Theosophical Society after that.

Seven Chinamen were baptised the other day at Liverpool—not off the landing stage. They were all in the laundry business, and *London Opinion* thinks they had reckoned on "plenty Clistian wash" in the immediate future.

The Pentecostal revivalists continue to bring what they call the Holy Ghost down at Merrington-green, Shrewsbury. Those on whom he, she, or it descends talk strange tongues. One old woman, under the Paraclete's influence, cried, "Rappa rappa tappa rappa." We don't know what language this is, but we fancy it is spoken in Bedlam.

The *Catholic Times* denounces Mr. McKenna's new Education Bill in advance. Of course it knows—as we do—the sort of Education Bill he must bring in to please the Government's Nonconformist clients. "If it does not satisfy the denominationalists," our contemporary says, "it is doomed to death, and will welcome death as an escape from the fierce resistance that will await it when it is brought before the people. This Government have justified Passive Resistance. Their principle will be acted up to, and on a scale that will hurl them to ruin." Capital! We like to hear the rival Churches talking in this way. It hastens the day of Secular Education.

Canon Walpole starts a new idea in Christian Science. Addressing the Southwark Diocesan Conference, he said that—"It was a question to him whether, at the outset of illness, before the doctor had begun, a clergyman should start with him, so that before the remedies were used they should be solemnly blessed, and that the clergyman should tell the patient that, wonderful as they were, the remedies were useless, but that by prayer they might be most effective. He thought remarkable results would follow that way of healing." So do we. And they would be worth seeing. Doctors would take parsons round with them in their broughams or motor-cars to visit the patients. The men of God would bless the doctors' medicines, including black draughts and blue pills, which would be sure to operate efficiently then. They would (of course) even bless the elements and apparatus of a clyster. The case of patent medicines would not be so simple. The clerical blessing would have to be affixed to Beecham's boxes and Carter's bottles of pills—"None genuine without the benediction." Counterfeits would then be useless—or worse; for the unblessed aperient would probably bring on constipation, and the unblessed diarrhoea mixture would probably bring on dysentery. Yes, the reverend Canon Walpole has hit upon a splendid idea. And we trust he will make a good beginning in reducing it to practice. We hope to see his name outside Mother Siegel's Soothing Syrup.

Rev. Robert William Essington, Newquay, Cornwall, formerly vicar of Shenstone, Staffordshire, left £11,042. There are no cold fogs round his present residence.

Rev. Frederick French, of Framlington, Suffolk, left £4,404. After keeping out clerical millionaires, Peter may have yawned as this poor disciple came along, and let him in.

Mr. J. F. Fraser, in the *Sunday Chronicle*, writes thus of the fervid Welsh:—

"And they are religious. When they 'get religion,' as they say in America, they get it hot and strong. They get so inoculated with it that they see visions. The chapels are full every night, and they bray vigorously in their native Welsh. The public-house trade then gets amongst the 'ruined industries.' Whole districts are swayed with hysterical demonstrations of religion. That state of affairs always impresses me. But then when I read the South Wales evening papers I find myself asking the question: 'How is it that there are more charges for foul outrages upon women than in any other part of the country, and why should there be such a procession of bastardy orders in the local police-courts?' Is it that conversion and carnalism go together? Or is it that the Welsh newspapers give more prominence to religion and to rape than the journals in other parts?"

We wonder.

The statistics of the Glamorgan County Lunatic Asylum show that, following the Welsh revival, the proportion of patients admitted suffering from alcoholic insanity fell from 16 to 12 per cent. On the other hand, the patients suffering from religious mania increased from 1 to 6 per cent. In other words, four persons were saved from going madder in one way, and five persons driven mad in another. Such are the blessings of the religious way of salvation!

About two thousand English people are said to have become Mohammedans during the last twenty years. As this statement occurs in a Christian journal, it is likely to be true. And, if it is true, we can be fairly certain that these converts have not been gained from the lower classes in this country. Bearing in mind, too, the immense difficulty Christian missionaries have in gaining converts from

the higher classes of Mohammedans, we feel fairly confident that this is a better record of captures than Christian missions can produce, in spite of their extravagant expenditure.

The general trend of Socialism, says the *Methodist Times*, is "hostile to the Christian Churches, and often, we are afraid, to Christianity itself." Whether Socialism be good or bad, at least this is the truth concerning it, so far as its relation to religious belief is concerned. The general tendency of Socialism is decidedly anti-religious; and if all the Socialists who are unbelievers in Christianity were to say so, Christian Socialists would be seen to be in a very small minority. As it is, many of these Freethinking Socialists keep their heretical opinions to themselves, under the delusion that they are helping their movement to gain strength. One day, we imagine, they will discover what a mistake they have made.

We are always meeting with remarkable Atheists—in Christian sermons. The latest is one described in the *Christian World* by Dr. J. B. Hellier—a clergyman, we presume. A lady friend of his invited a working-man to join the Church. He declined on the ground of his being an Atheist. "Don't you believe in God?" he was asked. "Oh, yes," came the reply. "Then don't you believe in Jesus Christ?" "Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ." "Then why are you an Atheist?" was the final question. "Well, ma'am," came the explanation, "because I don't believe that Balaam's ass spoke." Now we would give a trifle to know the name of that Atheist. He would be worth knowing. We would not care to suggest that Dr. Hellier, or his lady friend, was lying; that would be discourteous. Still, an Atheist who believes in God and the divinity of Jesus is a bit of a rarity. And certainly his belief in the non-vocable power of asses would have been shaken had he attended the meeting addressed by Dr. Hellier.

Rev. Chilvers Coton, of Warwickshire, is appealing to admirers of George Eliot for funds in order to provide a new bell for his church. The church is described in *Scenes from Clerical Life*. Considering that George Eliot was not a Christian, the appeal for money in her name is decidedly amusing. Whatever metal the belfry may be deficient in, there will be no lack of brass in the pulpit.

Dr. R. F. Horton suggests that, as a means of purifying the press, Christians should unite in prayer for its betterment. But he also demands the passing of laws that will prohibit the publication of all objectionable matter. God and a policeman—these are the reverend gentleman's two hopes. But why not stick to either one or the other? Suppose Dr. Horton were to suspend his sermons for six months, and, without saying anything to outsiders, simply prayed. We should then be able to judge what effect his prayers have had. And as God once helped him to find a lady's slipper in response to prayer, there is nothing unreasonable in the suggestion. But when prayers and legislation are mixed up together, one cannot be sure to which the result is due. And if Dr. Horton had to choose between praying and no legislation, or legislation and no prayer, we wonder which he would choose?

A recent number of the *Times* contained a long article on the racial trouble on the Pacific coast from its special correspondent. Some portions of the article are well worthy of note. According to the writer, the most prominent and the most dangerous man in this anti-Asiatic agitation is a clergyman. He was for some time a missionary in China, and is at present pastor of a Presbyterian church in Vancouver. "Instead of sermons on Sunday evenings he preaches anti-Oriental lectures." The writer also points out that, after the Boxer outbreak in China, the Buddhist priests of Japan addressed a letter to the Christian Churches, begging them not to demand an indemnity for damage done to the missions, as such a demand was not in harmony with the spirit of religion. The writer says he could not help contrasting the conduct of the heathen with that of the Christian.

It is also made plain that Chinese and Japanese are dreaded less on account of their vices than on account of their virtues. Japanese and Chinese, he says, are far more cleanly than white laborers. They may also be depended upon to meet their monetary and other obligations. On the occasion of the late riots in Vancouver the Orientals displayed their efficiency in another direction. In a few days after the riots commenced the Japanese had converted their quarter into an armed camp that might have defended itself against an army. There were armed guards everywhere, pickets stationed; and everything carried out according to up-to-date military matters. The very efficiency of the

defence increased the feeling of unrest; for the writer concludes by saying: "While we are about it we might as well be perfectly honest. At the bottom of the feeling against Japan is the belief—though not one man in a thousand would be willing to admit it—that the whites are in the presence of a civilisation more efficient than their own."

Fifty years ago, says the *Christian World*, Dr. Livingstone said, at Oxford: "I go back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry on the work which I have begun." Well, they do; and in much the same order of importance. And because he went out to open a path for commerce and Christianity, his name is kept well before the rising generation as an African explorer. Meanwhile, other men like Sir Richard Burton and Winwood Reade, whose work in Africa was of first-rate importance, are systematically neglected. Their discoveries are largely ignored—so much so that in many works on Africa their names are not even mentioned. Both these men were Freethinkers, and Christian malignity avenges itself by the only method that is open to it.

What extraordinary airs some people give themselves! There is that immensely over-rated author, Mr. H. G. Wells. He writes in a pompous, pretentious manner, and imposes himself upon the poor British public as a profound philosopher. He does not appear to have any religious beliefs himself, but he makes no definite statement on the subject; and behind this shield of vagueness he says pleasant things about all sorts of more or less distinguished Christians, and ill-conditioned things about Freethinkers who are a great deal more honest—and probably not less wise—than himself. Well, this gentleman has lately been saying that the age of great literature is past, and that people must henceforth read useful literature—something like his own, we presume; literature written for the day, and useless to-morrow. He sneered at the city clerk who bought a cheap reprint of Ben Jonson or the *Faerie Queen*, while having "no capacity to deal with these subjects"—just as though a man's occupation, or social position, determined his taste for poetry. The city clerk is "self-educated." What of that? The only education that ever was, or ever will be, in the world is self-education. All the rest is merely an opportunity. A man with a university training may be an ignoramus and a dolt; while an "uneducated" man with a dozen classics in his house may really have a liberal education.

"Presently," Mr. Wells said, "when the working classes come to us to know what they shall read, we shall tell them.....!" Never mind what "we" shall tell them. The attitude is the point. It is a "swelled head" attitude. Yes, the great Mr. Wells is taking himself too seriously. We don't believe for a moment that the working classes will ask "us," including *him*, what they shall read. They will find out for themselves.

A correspondent has sent us a copy of a pamphlet called *Bible Testimony Against Flesh Eating*, by William Harrison, treasurer and vice-president of the Vegetarian Society, Manchester. We have looked through it, and it seems to us a very foolish production. If vegetarianism has such a deleterious effect upon the brain, we advise the author to go in for chops and steaks with a view to recovering his senses.

N. B. (as Artemus Ward would say) this is writ sarcastic. We know some brainy people who are vegetarians. There is the sound and solid and wide-awake Mr. H. S. Salt, honorary secretary of the Humanitarian League; and the ever-coruscating Mr. G. Bernard Shaw; both of whom, by the way, are pronounced Freethinkers. So it mustn't be supposed, after all, that we identify vegetarianism with Mr. William Harrison.

Mr. Harrison fills his pamphlet with extracts from the Bible about meat and bread, and eating and drinking, interspersed with little bits of his own intended to bring out the hidden vegetarianism of the sacred text; his object being to "support the claim made by vegetarians that theirs is the original Edenic diet described in Genesis," and that "the vegetarian diet is the divinely appointed food." His way of going to work is very familiar to the freethinking student of Bible interpretation. Mr. Harrison himself says that "If we read the Bible with preconceived ideas we can get support from it for almost any theory." What he does not see is that his own practice is a very good illustration of this truth. He simply tortures the Bible into teaching his own theory. Which is just what all the modern Bibliolators do. When one game is played out they start another. The Bible used to be in favor of polygamy, slavery, and monarchy; now it is in favor of monogamy, freedom, and

democracy; and it will always be in favor of anything that is requisite; for the Bible is like an old wax nose, which points any way you please; when one direction is no longer useful, you must warm it a bit, and give it a fresh twist—and there you are!

Here is a sample of Mr. Harrison's innocent simplicity—or of the innocent simplicity he expects to find in his readers. He refers to the commandment "thou shalt not kill"—as if this was meant to apply to the lower animals, or indeed, to anybody outside the Chosen People. He also refers to the texts against "eating the blood," and naively asks, "How is it possible to eat any flesh without eating the blood?" He doesn't see that "the blood is the life," and therefore (like all life) belonged to God; but, being drained of the blood, according to the Jewish method of butchering, the flesh became permitted food for the children of Israel. The fact is, that Mr. Harrison has not an elementary knowledge of Bible ethnology.

After quoting the texts relating Jehovah's acceptance of Abel's "fretlings of his flock and the fat thereof," and rejection of Cain's "fruit of the ground," Mr. Harrison quotes an explanatory sentence from the "Rev. Dr. Hunter"—as if that gentleman had a divine commission to elucidate the Holy Scripture. "God," he says, "saw the moral character of Abel as superior to that of Cain; for this reason he was accepted of God." Of course, it is very good of the Rev. Dr. Hunter to tell us this; he means well, no doubt; but what he says is rubbish—and ignorant rubbish too.

We have dealt with this matter thoroughly in our *Bible Romances*. Briefly, Cain's offering was rejected because it was not bloody; for blood was necessary in the rite of sacrifice, and without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin. Moreover, Cain was an agriculturalist, while Abel was a shepherd; and all the heroes of Israel came from the pastoral life. Even kings kept flocks and herds, and David, the national hero, the man after God's own heart, had been a shepherd. The old nomadic strain was still in the blood of the Jews, as the old feudal strain is still in the blood of the English; and thus the acceptance of Abel's meat and rejection of Cain's vegetables was a natural reflection of national faith and prejudice.

It would be a waste of time to deal with Mr. Harrison's pamphlet any further. There is really not one clear vegetarian text in the whole of the Bible. Not that it would much matter if there were. Vegetarianism, like other "isms" nowadays, must not rest upon texts, but upon reasons. "Thus saith the Lord" is dead and done for with intelligent people.

The Swazi chiefs saw King Edward, but that was not enough; they could not leave England without seeing "General" Booth. The old man told them to keep off drink and keep right with the Lord. He did not remind them that it was professed Christians who introduced "drink" to the Swazis, and would sell it to them still if they could. How many an African chief has seen his people demoralised by the Christians' "fire water" and tried in vain to keep it out of his territory! Missionaries tried to make his people fit for heaven, and the missionaries' "pals" tried to send them there.

According to the *Daily News* there is a Yogi, from India, now doing splendid business in Paris; his "miracles" promising to throw the Blavatsky wonders into the shade. He turns pebbles into precious stones, and grows flowers from seeds in no time. He is making converts and gathering disciples, especially amongst fashionable people. Whereupon one pious contemporary reflecteth in the following manner:—

"Well, considering the inexhaustible supply of human credulity there is nothing surprising in that. The most glaringly gross, crude imposture of the day made converts by myriads. Dowie's wings did not shock them. Anybody can start any superstition, and if he have patience and impudence make converts by the ten thousand."

Exactly so. But "twas ever thus," as Shakespeare sings. Many other superstitions besides the Yogi's depend upon the inexhaustible supply of human credulity, and are mightily promoted by patience and impudence. Christianity, for instance. Our pious contemporary overlooked that.

John Ruskin never hesitated to denounce wrong and wrongdoers, if he saw them to be such; and one of his most creditable performances in this line was his denunciation in *Love's Meinie* of "the various personages, civil and military, who have conducted the Caffre war to its last successes, of blowing women and children to death with dynamite, and

harrying the lands of entirely innocent peasantry because they would not betray their defeated king." Of course, these various personages, civil and military, were Christians. We don't suppose there was an "infidel" amongst them.

Thirty years, or so, have rolled by since Ruskin wrote that noble passage. We may guess what he would think now of the fresh crusade against the Zulus. That proud and fine race has been greatly sinned against by the Christians. One honest Christian tried to convert them to the religion of the Bible, and his name was Colenso; but they converted *him* by asking him whether it was really true that God commanded the atrocities of the Old Testament. The fact is, that the Zulus have been libelled as well as robbed and oppressed; for when your good Christians mean to steal a man's possessions they invariably work up a passion of indignation, and represent him as far too wicked a person to be allowed to live. But the boot, as the proverb says, should be on the other foot. Just hear what Mr. Ralph Tatham, the Natal ex-Labor leader, has lately been saying. "The Zulus," he declares, "before becoming demoralised by us, are gentlemen in their conduct, in their deportment, in language, and in everything. It is the European who makes them otherwise."

Dr. Agar Beet, the well-known Wesleyan professor, addressed a meeting for "men only" at Saltash. One of our readers, being present, sent up a written question, when the time came for such things. "What is a soul?" he asked. Dr. Beet replied, "No one can tell; we don't know what a soul is." These gentlemen tell the truth occasionally.

The Bishop of Manchester is going to co-operate with the Free Churches in a scheme for holding open-air religious meetings in the Manchester parks on Sunday afternoons. We are glad to hear it. We shall also be glad to hear that the Manchester Secularists will organise a counter propaganda.

Rev. J. O. West, of St. Philip's Church, Bristol, offered opposition after Mr. Foote's recent lecture in that city on "Is Christianity True?" On Sunday evening, December 8, the reverend gentleman preached on that question himself, "with special reference to Mr. Foote's recent lecture." There was to be discussion in the School-room afterwards "for men only," as the place only held two hundred. We hear that two or three Secularists turned up and gave him a "sultry" time.

"Take no thought for the morrow—Labor not for the ment which perisheth—Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." So said Jesus. The Young Men's Christian Association Chamber of Commerce, Newcastle-on-Tyne, is of a different opinion. It holds that "righteous money-making may be, and ought to be, the aim of every business man who bears the sacred name of Christian." Evidently the Lord Jesus Christ is much behind date. His followers on the Tyneside are able to instruct him.

Old Z. B. Woffendale is still singing his own praises as an infidel-slayer, and the *St. Pancras Guardian* reports his reminiscences. He defeated everybody he ever met in debate. There is no doubt about it. He says so himself—and he ought to know. He defeated Mr. Foote in 1879, and he converted "Mr. Foote's reporter." Mr. Foote never had a "reporter." But that doesn't matter. It would be a pity to spoil the reverend gentleman's story with such a miserable punctilio as that. And we wish him a merry Christmas all the same—for he has given us many a merry moment in his time, though his humor is not exactly deliberate.

Ruzzoli, the ex-policeman, the head of the Camorra who made a business of assassination and blackmail at Naples, is still "wanted." Amongst the things found at his house was a large number of obscene letters. These prove to have been written by the well-known Franciscan friar, Padre Tommano, who has confessed and given himself up to justice. The scandals amongst the Italian priesthood of late have been startling.

Mr. W. T. Stead, in the *Contemporary Review*, writing on his experiences in connection with the Hague Peace Congress, says that there was a common ethical conception among the 200 delegates. "I could discern no perceptible difference," he continues, "between Heathen, Moslem, Christian or Agnostic. Not more than 20 darkened the doors of any place of worship. In none of the debates was there even the most distant allusion to the existence of a Superior Being."



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 15, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W.; at 7.30, "Two Birthplaces: Bethlehem and Stratford-on-Avon."

### To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 15 and 16, Edinburgh.—Address: 241 High-road, Leyton.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 15, South Shields; 22, Holloway.
- J. COBBLEDICK.—See "Acid Drops." It is gratifying to learn that you have read the *Freethinker* for eleven years, and read it still with pleasure.
- E. A. KING.—If your friend in the Navy tells his captain that he belongs to the Secularists, whose headquarters are at 2 New-castle-street, London, E.C., and offers to obtain a letter, if necessary, from the President at that address, we have no doubt that he will be exempted from attendance at "divine service."
- J. THACKRAY.—"Captain" Monks did not assert that Bradlaugh committed suicide and wrote that rubbish; he suggested it—and thus added cowardice to lying. There is nothing to refute; otherwise we would have printed your letter. What was necessary was the exposure of a trick—and that we have done.
- HOLDEN.—Why not? But how amusing to find "The Real Christ" advertised as an antidote to the New Theology!
- J. J. LICKFOLD.—We have no present intention of publishing a collection in book form of the best of Mr. Lloyd's "invaluable articles" in the *Freethinker*, but we may entertain the idea later on. A certain interval has always to elapse in such cases, in view of the necessity of securing a market—which is a commercialism quite independent of the intrinsic value of the articles themselves.
- G. CHRISTIAN.—Josephus wrote in Greek. You will find the famous "Christ" passage dealt with in our *Crimes of Christianity*, in the chapter on "Pious Forgeries."
- A. D. CORRICK.—Sorry we cannot answer such questions by post. Your Christian friend does not represent our positions in the lecture on "The Growth of God" accurately; and we cannot set him right in a few sentences in this column. We did say that all the theology is a development of primitive ghostology, but we did not say that arguments for the existence of God were not to be considered on their merits. On the other point, man's responsibility to human society does not destroy Determinism; it is really only intelligible on a Determinist basis. Praise and blame are aspects of the pressure of public opinion on the individual; they influence him through his motives; there is nothing mysterious about them. We are going to deal with that subject at length early in the new year.
- QUIZ.—See 2 Kings i. 17 and 2 Kings viii. 16. Our *Bible Handbook* gives all such things, and every *Freethinker* should have a copy always at hand.
- E. G. TAYLOR.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.
- T. HOPKINS.—We regard the Rev. Mr. Woffendale as an old joker. He is always boasting of his ancient feats and never attempts to renew them. Of course he "vanquished" us. Every Christian who ever stood up against us says that he laid us low. We say nothing, but leave others to judge for themselves. It is odd, as you say, that the district of London which enjoys the presence of this powerful man of God should "take the cake for squalor, filth, and immorality."
- M. ROSE.—We cannot hunt through the *Freethinker* file for it this week; will try to oblige next week, or as soon as possible.
- W. J. PORRITT.—We wish you better luck. We see no hope for society while the "impossible creed" holds sway; when it is well-meaning it is silly, and when it is not well-meaning it deceives and oppresses and exploits.
- LIBERTAS.—The *Life of Charles Bradlaugh* by his daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, in two volumes, published by Fisher Unwin.
- B. DAWSON.—As editor of the *Freethinker*, which has a province of its own, we neither admit nor dispute "Marx's scientific and irrefutable theory." It is no good trying to draw us off our beat. Mr. W. T. Stead's articles on Dr. Torrey's slanders against Paine and Ingersoll appeared in the *Review of Reviews* for July and August, 1905.
- INQUIRER (Manchester).—The controversy referred to by Mr. Cohen was based upon 1 Corinthians ix. 5.
- R. CHAPMAN.—Tuesday morning is late for obituaries and paragraphs. We have strained a point this time.
- COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—"Manchester," 2s.
- W. SMITH.—Pleased to see your letter in the *Southend Standard*. *Freethinkers* should utilise their local press more than they do.
- T. MATHER.—Thanks for cuttings. See paragraphs.
- W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.
- E. S. ALBERTON.—Our reference was to the law. It still exists, but was not observed in that particular case. Glad you are looking forward with pleasure to the Annual Dinner.
- G. ROLEFFS.—Thanks for cuttings.
- C. W. STYRING.—Pleased to see Thomas Greenwood's reference to "the almost maddened fury which pursued Charles Brad-

laugh," but would rather have seen it a quarter of a century ago. Everybody is ashamed now of the way in which Bradlaugh was treated.

ELIZABETH LECHEMERE.—Glad to hear that the *Freethinker* has weaned you of last relics of preference for the God idea, and that you now think we are quite right in our "out and out atheistic principles."

OTTO HOFFMANN.—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. We can quite understand the astonishment of people, who never saw the *Freethinker* before, at finding it "such an intellectual paper."

J. BROUGH.—Glad to hear that Mr. Cohen's lectures at Manchester on Sunday were "quite a treat," though the wretched weather affected the meetings. That fact, as you say, should not prevent the proper advertising of future meetings. Pleased to see the *Freethought* passages in the *Socialist Standard*.

J. A. REID.—Of course we "discovered a good man when we found Cohen." If he hadn't been a good man we shouldn't have discovered him. Glad you think last week's *Freethinker* a "strong one"—also that you think we "go on like a steam-engine." The "My Aunt" sketch was not written by the person you mention.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Thanks for good wishes. We cannot discuss Mr. Campbell's *Socialism as Socialism* in this journal. We see, however, that he is rapidly becoming the Messiah of the movement. Mr. Blatchford will have to look to his laurels.

H. D. KERR.—Will think it over.

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

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

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### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had another good audience at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, when he lectured on "Robert Blatchford's Disavowal of Atheism." Many ladies were present and a number of strange faces. One lady came all the way from Canterbury on purpose to hear the lecture and shake hands with the editor of the *Freethinker*. The chair was ably occupied by Mr. Theakstone. Some questions were asked and answered after the lecture, but there was no formal opposition.

Mr. Foote delivers the third and last of this course of Queen's Hall lectures this evening (Dec. 15). His subject will be "Two Birthplaces: Bethlehem and Stratford-on-Avon." In this lecture Mr. Foote wishes to do justice to his subject and himself, and many of his London friends will wish to hear him. The title of the lecture is also likely to arouse curiosity in outsiders, and there ought to be a particularly good attendance at this last lecture.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a special article by Mr. Foote on "Robert Blatchford's Disavowal of Atheism." That number will be a good one to pass round, and some of our friends will probably take extra copies for the purpose.

Mr. Cohen visits Edinburgh to-day (Dec. 15) and lectures afternoon and evening in the Free Gardeners' Institute, Picardy-place. On Monday evening he lectures in the same hall on the Salvation Army. There will be a charge for admission, as the local Branch does not see how the expenses are to be met otherwise. *Freethinkers* won't mind paying, and Christians will get their money's worth. So that's all right. Of course the local "saints" will do their best to crowd the hall.

In spite of a furious tempest of wind and rain Mr. Lloyd had highly encouraging meetings at Aberdare on Sunday. The local Branch has splendid fighting material in it and means business; and its outlook on the future is bright and

inspiring. The local "saints" are now yearning to hear Mr. Foote, who has promised to visit them early in the new year.

Tyneside "saints" are reminded that Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (Dec. 15) afternoon and evening, in the Royal Assembly Hall, South Shields. We hope he will have good weather and good audiences. The "saints" ought to be able to guarantee the latter. We shall be glad to hear they have done so. Those who have not yet heard Mr. Lloyd have a treat awaiting them.

"May I take this opportunity," a correspondent says, "of mentioning that, after being connected with the Churches my whole lifetime, I have abandoned them after two years' earnest study of their claims? And now, at forty-two years of age, I am wondering why I was misled for so long. I regard Thursday as the best day of the week, because it brings me your able and masterly journal." Communications like this should encourage our friends to persist in making this journal better known amongst their friends and acquaintances. Heaps of people might become Freethinkers, who have never had a chance of knowing what Freethought is. This journal often comes to them as a revelation. They never knew of its existence, yet they are glad to meet with it, and it soon becomes very good friend. Please send us, therefore, the names and addresses of persons who might possibly become regular readers after we have posted them (as we shall be very happy to do) six consecutive numbers of the *Freethinker*.

A Lancashire pitman writes us an interesting and encouraging letter. In the course of it he says: "I appreciate the clear thinking and grand expression in your journal. After working the larger part of the day down in the coalpit, I take a great delight in reading your articles, and have received more education from you than I ever thought was possible."

The Huddersfield Branch holds its annual dance in the large hall of the Friendly and Trades Hall Club on Saturday evening, Dec. 14, from 7 to 12 o'clock.

London "saints" are again reminded of the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on the second Tuesday in January. We hope to see a great rally of Freethinkers on that occasion. All who possibly can should make a point of attending. Let us have a splendid assembly to start the new year's work with in a spirit of hope and resolution.

The *Athenaeum*, in reviewing the *Letters of Dr. John Brown*, notices the savage things he said about George Eliot, and how he found something "nasty" in the *Mill on the Floss* and something "nasty and unwholesome" in *Middlemarch*. Our contemporary says that this accusation is "almost unpardonable." "And the accuser," it adds, "is a man certainly accustomed to read the Old Testament and to recommend that reading to the innocent!"

Lord Ribblesdale made a very important declaration at the Conference of the Northern Counties Education League. It was summarised as follows in the *Manchester Guardian*: "He said that, as a Churchman, he accepted the secular solution of the education difficulty. He did not believe in the alleged practical objections to it. The desire to catch votes and not to lose them, to conciliate Nonconformity without alienating the Church, and to keep in with the Church without outraging Nonconformity, involved the disappearance of education in a farrago of compromise and concession, of contracting out, rights of entry, and other ordinances. This travesty of religion and education alike had lasted long enough, and the time had arrived to take the matter away from party organisers."

Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, whom we had the pleasure of meeting at the great Freethought Congress at Rome, is lecturer to the Independent Religious Society, Chicago, the Sunday morning meetings of which are now held in the Orchestra Hall. By the winter syllabus, which has just reached us, we see that Mr. Mangasarian has started a course of lectures on "The Story of the Nations," beginning with China. There is music before and after each lecture. We understand that the audiences are very large.

The Creed of the Independent Religious Society, as printed in the syllabus, is as follows:—"Recognising the right of private judgment, the sacredness of individual conviction, and the moral obligation to be faithful to one's best thoughts, we require no assent to any theological or philosophical doctrine as a basis for fellowship, but cordially welcome all who desire to promote the religion of truth, righteousness, joy, and freedom."

### The Actual Jesus.—III.

(Continued from p. 780.)

PRIMITIVE Christianity seems to me to be represented by the Epistle attributed to James, which might be a moral and religious treatise by a Unitarian, or by an orthodox Jew who merely added the belief that Jesus was the Messiah expected by all devout Jews. It is addressed only to the "twelve tribes" of Israel. It never uses the term "Son of God" even in a figurative sense, and for forgiveness of sins it relies on faith as shown by good works and prayer, and not on belief in the sacrifice of a Son of God. Paul, taking the workings of his own mind for revelations, and receiving his ideas, as he believed, direct from heaven, put new life into the movement. Refusing to be bound by the limited views of the more primitive or conservative Christians, he took the leading part in shaping and in disseminating in a fruitful soil a creed which otherwise would apparently have died unnoticed by the world as one of the many unimportant sects founded in the names of various Christs who appeared at different times among the Jews. He evidently did much to stimulate the process by which a figurative son of God, or of righteousness, was exalted first into an adopted Son of God and then into a more or less literal Son of God, who sacrificed himself for the sins of the world. Paul thus paved the way for the doctrines of the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Trinity, etc. On the practical side he enlarged the hitherto extremely restricted scope of the new religion by relieving it of the Judaic bonds of the Mosaic law, which were still insisted on by the Apostles as devout Jews addressing themselves to the Jews. Paul thus opened the new faith freely to the Gentiles, to whom (since, as the author of *Supernatural Religion* observes, he could not be prevented) he was allowed to preach his Gospel of the Uncircumcision, on condition that he recognised the claims of the mother church by sending contributions of alms for the poorer members at Jerusalem. The "Apostles of the Circumcision" were apparently glad to get rid of the troublesome innovator on such easy terms.\*

The Christianity that Paul taught was never accepted, and is still rejected, by the Jews as a body. They were too strictly monotheistic and too deeply wedded to their own religious laws and natural prejudices. The Judaic Christianity or Messianism developed by the companions of Jesus at Jerusalem died out among the Jews. Paul's doctrine, however, with its universalistic Christ for all nations, found readier acceptance among far wider circles of Gentiles, who were already familiar with belief in incarnations of deities, and had no correct knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures and prophecies and phrases which were misused as means of establishing and confirming their faith in the new creed.

The Jesus of the Gospels was but partially evolved in the time of Paul, whose knowledge of the sayings and doings of Jesus, and even of the incidents of his own life, seems to have been very greatly inferior to that displayed by the compilers or authors of the Gospels and the Acts. The Gospels, written in Greek, were Gentile productions with a Jewish basis. The gradual spread of Christianity created a demand for such narratives among the Gentile converts. Anecdotes and teachings collected from various sources (including Rabbinical sayings and the inventions or fabrications of Christian story-tellers and forgers) were attributed to the supposed Christ, everything deemed suitable or edifying being readily accepted without any critical examination into its genuineness or accuracy, until in the course of a century or so the mythical Jesus of the Gospels was constructed.

\* For fuller information concerning the dissensions between Paul and the "Apostles of the Circumcision" the reader can refer to *Supernatural Religion*, especially Parts IV. and V.

"Abracadabra's" articles in this journal (March 10 to May 19, 1907) show how large a portion of the Gospel history was obtained by the pious assumption that the prophecies concerning the Messiah must have been fulfilled as facts. His final suggestion, however, that the Jesus who figured as a monomaniac at the siege of Jerusalem was the actual Jesus who was transformed into the Jesus of the Gospels is not convincing; and the date is not early enough to account for the Jesus of Paul's Epistles. Neither is there sufficient reason or necessity for identifying Jesus with Judas of Galilee, who was regarded by his followers as Messiah or Christ (see Mr. J. M. Wheeler's article on "Josephus and the Gospels," *Freethinker* for June 30 and July 7, 1907). This Judas Christ's suppressed theocratic movement might, however, continue or revive in a perhaps modified, disguised, or spiritualised form under the name of an obscure Galilean leader who might thus be the actual Jesus on whose death the Gospel story is based. Some of the phrases and incidents in the Gospels seem to be based on theocratic ideas, and might have been taken over from Judas-Christians.

It has been suggested that the actual or original Jesus might be regarded as almost as composite a being as the mythical or Gospel Jesus certainly is. On this view—somewhat a fantastic one, though with an element of truth in it—the actual Jesus might be made up of the obscure carpenter's son and many other individuals, including Judas the unfortunate founder of the great Galilean sect; Antigonus the crucified King of the Jews, with whom his subjects so deeply sympathised; the crucified sons of Judas of Galilee, and many other pious and patriotic Jews crucified by their Roman conquerors; the false prophet who "came out of Egypt" and led a multitude of four thousand men into the wilderness; and various Jesuses, such as Jesus the Son of Sirach, the author of wise and pious sayings, Jesus the son of Sapphias, the popular innovator and leader of a "seditious tumult of mariners and poor people" in Galilee, who was made a general by the revolted Jews when they made Josephus governor of Galilee, and the monomaniacal Jesus of the siege, so far as denunciations of woe to Jerusalem were concerned and the patient endurance of scourging and maltreatment by that ill-fated rustic of humble parentage. Even the inventors, selectors, and editorial improvers of the Gospel stories, and the amateur authors of miracle plays or tableaux depicting or shaping or inventing Gospel incidents and converting them into a dramatic form, and a number of Old Testament writers and Rabbinical teachers whose words or ideas are borrowed, would be in some degree originating parts of the composite Jesus. It seems to me, however, that the only person entitled to figure as the actual Jesus is the crucified Jesus of Paul and the Gospels.

Concerning the evolution of the mythical Jesus from the actual Jesus much information may be gathered from the concluding portion of Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology*. Mr. Robertson rejects almost every item in the Gospel story as myth. He considers that "When we can set formal or pragmatic limits to the generative power of the mythopoeic faculty, we may pretend to save some shred of historical fact from the Jesus legend as it stands; but not till then" (p. 431). He concedes, however, one very considerable "shred of historical fact" in the shape of an actual Jesus who was executed. He says (p. 394) that "there are obvious reasons for supposing that this [the Crucifixion], a datum in Paul's gospel, stands for some historical fact. A slain Messiah was so unlikely a basis to be invented for a Jewish cult that the historical presumption must be that some teacher of Messianic pretensions had really been put to death, and that his followers had carried on the movement in the faith that he would come again." Paul's "references to a crucified Jesus are constant, and offer no sign of interpolation" (p. 396). But who was this crucified Jesus? As the "only tenable hypothesis" (p. 303), as "the probable Jesus of Paul" (p. 413), or at least

as "dubiously identifiable" (p. 469) with this Pauline Jesus, he suggests (pp. 469, 395) a "remote Jesus Ben Pandira," who, according to the Talmud, was stoned to death and hung on a tree for some forgotten heresy in the reign of Alexander Jannæus (B.C. 106-79). I do not regard this theory as a "tenable hypothesis." If it were not a child of his own brain, I think Mr. Robertson's keen intellect would soon have torn it in pieces. Supposing, for argument's sake, that in the course of time hanging on a tree after death was transformed into crucifixion while alive and that Mr. Robertson has sufficiently explained or nullified the embarrassing fact that this Jesus Ben Pandira is "identified in the Babylonian Gemara with" a Ben Stada (p. 395) who was stoned to death and hung on a tree in the second century "after Christ"—there still remains the general improbability that the remote heretic "of the confused legend in the Talmud" is the original of the crucified Jesus preached by Paul and the Apostles more than a century afterwards.

Paul's Epistles—and I thoroughly agree with Mr. Robertson that it is from these documents that all scientific study of Christian origins must proceed (p. 370)—constantly speak as if Jesus had only recently been crucified. Paul tells of his reported appearances to Apostles whom he himself saw and conversed with. He speaks of the "brethren of the Lord" as still alive, and visits "the Lord's brother" James, who exercises his authority as head of the young Church in compelling or inducing Cephas to renounce Paul's universalism, and is evidently far from being decrepit with age; so that his crucified brother could hardly have died between a hundred and twenty and a hundred and fifty years previously.

Mr. Robertson often refers to the fact that no teaching is attributed to Jesus in Paul's Epistles, and that almost all the Gospel myths were unknown to Paul and were developed *after* his time. So that—if Paul's Jesus were Jesus Ben Pandira—no teaching and only a single myth (that of the resurrection) had formed during the 120 to 150 years prior to Paul. Why should the first century or century and a half be so barren of myths, while the succeeding century was so fertile?

What are we to say of the unknown Church which imperfectly preserved the memory but not the teachings or the heresy or the full name of Jesus Ben Pandira till the time of Paul and the Apostles? The silence of history becomes embarrassing if Christianity passed through this lengthened period of development. Or was it a period of suspended animation? And if so, how shall we account for that cessation of activity and for the sudden revival after a century or more of slumber?

I do not know whether Mr. Robertson would meet such difficulties by suggesting interpolations and by ante-dating Paul's Epistles by a century or more. If so, he would merely encounter a fresh set of difficulties, into which I think I need not enter.

All the difficulties of Mr. Robertson's hypothesis, and of similar hypotheses, are caused by the attempt to identify Paul's Jesus with some Jesus mentioned historically. But why must he have been mentioned historically by others besides Paul? Why may not contemporary history have been silent owing to his obscurity or insignificance? I see no need to identify Jesus with anyone but himself. The Jesus of Paul must have been the Jesus of the Apostles who gave Paul the right hand of fellowship, and the Jesus of Paul and the Apostles must have been the actual Jesus on whose crucifixion the Gospel legends are based. I think this should suffice us, and that the fact that we can find no contemporary or nearly-contemporary mention of Jesus outside Christian records, is of no particular consequence.

Mr. Robertson notes (p. 435), italicising his remark, as indeed its importance deserves, that "Paul's Jesus had given no Messianic teaching. He did but Messianically die." This "silent," "speechless," non-teaching Jesus of Paul is indeed a most remarkable phenomenon. How are we to account for it? Certainly not by Mr. Robertson's theory of a remote

Jesus, around whose century-old memory myths of discourse would have clustered as they did within the next hundred years around the name of the Gospel Jesus. The very fact of the absence of such myths in Paul's time is indeed a sign of the *recentness* of the crucifixion. The following suggestions may help to clear up this problem.

1. Jesus may have gained respect or ascendancy among his companions as a saint or ascetic, or, like his brother "James the Just," by his character, together with strict adherence to the Mosaic Law, and not by any special teaching either original or borrowed. His death might then exalt him into a martyred Messiah or "Son of Man," who would be adopted or appointed by God to return with power and glory to judge and rule the world in accordance with Jewish ideas, such as are expressed in Daniel vii. 13, 14, 27, and the Book of Enoch. The supposition that Jesus was an ascetic will find some support in the fact that the Greek text of the New Testament sometimes calls him "Jesus the Nazarite (*Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 335-342), and also from the fact that he appears to have been a celibate.

2. The "fierce independence" of Paul's character led him to preach his own gospel straight from his own heart, mistaking (as is usual with great religious innovators) his own views for divine inspirations or messages. Paul was a devout Jew, who had apparently acquired the status of a Roman citizen of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia. His mind was evidently broadened in the direction of Universalism by a measure of Gentile education and environment. Better educated, and of greater natural ability and wider sympathies and ambitions than the Apostles who had been companions of Jesus, he must often have felt ashamed of their narrowness and Judaic exclusiveness, as well as fiercely indignant at their interference with his propaganda in Gentile parts. Hence he would not care to be instructed by them, especially as they would probably din into his ears the thoroughly Judaic practices and views of their Jesus—while Paul would feel that such lectures were merely their own petty-minded interpretation of views that in any case were superseded by direct personal revelation from a Jesus now exalted to higher power and diviner wisdom in heaven. He strongly resents the idea of learning from the Apostles (Gal. i. 16, 17). He tells his converts that the gospel which he preached was not after man, for he neither received it of man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. i. 11, 12). He expressed determination not to build on another man's foundation, nor to speak of any of those things which Christ had not wrought by him (Rom. xv. 18-20) are further indications of his self-sufficiency and of his desire to confine his preaching solely to his own gospel as revealed to him. Any one, even an angel from heaven, who taught any other gospel to his converts, was to be accursed (Gal. i. 8, 9). Such a man as Paul would, we may suppose, intentionally omit any information or teachings which he acquired from these illiberal and probably uneducated Apostles of the Circumcision, so that he might feel free from obligation or subserviency towards these "over-much" Apostles whom he would feel to be so much his inferiors. And if, as may well have been the case, there were no teachings of importance, or only such as were inconvenient for Paul's purpose, there would be the more reason for ignoring them. The actual Jesus, indeed, appears to have served only as a peg on which the active mind of Paul hung its own theories and visions.

And now, after all this clearing of the ground, what can we say of the actual Jesus? Very little. By systematically omitting or altering such facts as did not suit their purpose, and then by heaping up a mass of fiction over the mutilated remains of their hero, his biographers have killed and buried the real human Jesus beyond the possibility of a resurrection. Such truth as may be allowed to survive in their Gospels is so inextricably mixed with other matter that nothing short of a miracle could rescue the

original Jesus from the accumulated "mountain of myths" that hide him from view. All that can be done is to pass the searching X-rays of scientific criticism through the mass, so as to obtain a sort of shadow or radiograph of the imbedded reality. The result is, of course, disappointingly indefinite, both in its outline and in its meagre details, but it should at least serve to restrain our speculations within the limits of probable or possible truth.

W. P. BALL.

(To be continued)

## Jesus or Ingersoll.

*Which of Them Lived and Taught the Ideal Life for Human Beings?*

BY BENNETT LARSON.

IN view of the fact that Christians are continually repeating the statement that the teachings of Ingersoll and of Infidelity are immoral and pernicious, a comparison between the apostle of Agnosticism and the founder of Christianity may not be out of place; and if it be true that "out of the wisdom of the heart the mouth speaketh," we may judge whose words have had the greatest enthusiasm for the right and the most intelligent solicitude for the human race.

Christian slanderers have placed false words in the mouth of Colonel Ingersoll, and Ingersoll held that priestcraft had done the same injustice to Jesus. Be this as it may, history does not have much to say about the man supposed to be the Messiah, and we are obliged to take his words from the New Testament, which may or may not be true, and give Jesus the benefit of doubt on certain passages.

As far as the "Sermon on the Mount" is concerned, Ingersoll and Jesus are nearly agreed. Jesus blessed the poor, the weak, the suffering; Ingersoll pitied them. Pity helps to-day; blessings are for to-morrow. Ingersoll opened his heart and his purse to the suffering and hungry. Jesus said, "You shall be filled," "You shall be comforted."

On divorce Jesus said: "But I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." Ingersoll said: "When love is dead, when the husband and wife abhor each other, they are divorced. The decree only records in a judicial way what has already taken place."

They both objected to the oath. Jesus said, "Resist not evil." Ingersoll said, "Take from virtue the right of self-defence and vice becomes the master of the world."

Of prayer, Jesus said: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and shut thy door, and pray, to thy father which is in secret, and thy father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Ingersoll said, "To plough is to pray."

Jesus said, "Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?—But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Ingersoll said, "Man must learn to rely upon himself. Reading Bibles will not protect him from the blasts of winter, but houses, fire, and clothing will. To prevent famine, one plough is worth a million sermons, and even patent medicines will cure more diseases than all the prayers uttered since the beginning of the world."

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword"—a passage that is verified by every Christian nation, and fulfilled wherever the gospel has been preached.

Ingersoll said, "No man has imagination enough to paint the agonies, horrors, and cruelties of war! Think of sending shot and shell crashing through the bodies of men! Think of the widows and orphans! Think of the maimed, the mutilated, the mangled!"

Jesus said of love and home, "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

When his disciples said unto him, "If the case of the man be so with his wife it is not good to marry, he answered, "All men cannot receive this saying, save those to whom it is given." "For there are some eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb, and there be eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

Compare these sayings with those of Ingersoll: "If there is any Heaven in this world, it is in the family. It is where the wife loves the husband and the husband loves the wife,

and where the dimpled arms of children are around the necks of both." And again, "The home where virtue dwells with love is like a lily with a heart of fire, the fairest flower in all the world."

Of the treatment of children Jesus said: "Whoever shall offend one of these, it were better for him that a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea." Ingersoll said, "I could not bear to die in the arms of a child that I had whipped. I could not bear to feel upon my lips, when they were withering 'neath the touch of death, the kiss of one that I had struck."

To the inquiring young man Jesus said, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Ingersoll said, "An honest man, a good, kind, sweet woman, or a happy child, has nothing to fear either in this world, or in the next, if one there be."

Jesus defined blasphemy to be speaking against the Son of Man and the Holy Ghost. Ingersoll said, "Whoever lives upon the unpaid labor of others; whoever slanders or maligns the honor of a fellow man, is a blasphemer."

When Jesus was taken to task for healing on the Sabbath, he said, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath." Ingersoll said, "Freethinkers should make this day a day of joy, a day of music, books, and dreams, a day in which to place fresh flowers above our sleeping dead, a day of love and hope, of peace and rest."

I have heard a good many believers excuse drink by this passage from Jesus, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." Ingersoll's words are more specific on this point; he says: "I believe that, to a certain extent, alcohol demoralises those who make it, those who sell it, and those who drink it. When you think of the poverty, of the suicides, and the insanity it has caused, I do not see how anyone can help being prejudiced against the damned stuff called alcohol."

Jesus is supposed to have said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Ingersoll said: "God cannot afford to damn a man who has made a little heaven in this world." "No man is responsible for his belief. You might as well say all that have red hair shall be damned."

I have only given the essence of what each of these characters said. It is hard to make any extensive comparison of the two, because Jesus said so little in regard to the virtues and to earthly questions, while the philosophy of Ingersoll embraced life in every sphere and possibility. Christians might say that Jesus gave the "Golden Rule" to the world, and that this embraces all the virtues, but Ingersoll preached this and practised it, too, and the "Golden Rule" was no more original with Jesus than Infidelity was with Ingersoll.

Some people who are not orthodox say that they believe in living the "Christ" life, as against the philosophy of Ingersoll. The truth is, that these people set up their ideals, and assume them to be the expression of the "Christ life," without stopping to think what Christ said in regard to the virtues and human relations. As a matter of fact, Jesus said nothing in favor of the home, of industry, of the freedom of the mind, of the sacredness of human ties; he regarded these earthly things as of small importance, when eternity and the judgment was so soon to see all these things pass away. In the shadow of the world's end, seeking the "kingdom of God," was of the first importance. Industry and philosophising for human good was vain. Ingersoll held life and its relations in the highest regard; and, if these people will only stop to think, they will see that Ingersoll's ideals come nearer to their ideals of the "Christ life" than the words of Jesus do. They will see this "plumed knight" of liberty had, in full heaped and rounded measure, all the qualifications that go to make the ideal citizen and the perfect man, and that to cavil at his ideals of life because he was an Infidel only brings their own religion and ideals into fuller question.

—Truthseeker (Now York).

## Correspondence.

### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The letter from Mr. Frederick Dixon, in your issue of December 1, appears to be in response to my article on Mrs. Eddy on October 27.

I understand that Mr. Dixon is Secretary to the Christian Science Publishing Society, yet in his letter none of the questions I asked on the first chapter of Mrs. Eddy's book are replied to. His letter is temperate and gentle, but this is all, and we progress no further.

Mr. Dixon says: "The human mind is inherently dogmatic." Yes, but is there not a greater display of dogmatism on the part of some Christian Scientists than can be found in any writings against their creed, and is not their creed itself practically dogma?

As to the "assaults of the Rationalist on Christianity," surely the article in question made "assaults" on *Christian Science*, which is a very different thing.

Perhaps Mr. Dixon will explain his words—"the Christian Scientist prays, not that his conception of Truth, but the Truth itself, shall prevail." To whom or what does he pray if there is no personal God? And why a capital T for truth?

Where or how Mrs. Eddy lives can have no relation to the contents of the first chapter of her book.

If "Jesus of Nazareth was not only the best man, but the most scientific man that ever trod the globe," we require a new word for "scientific," or a clearer definition of Christian Science. If the "method of healing taught by Jesus lingered on in moribund condition for three centuries," who is to blame if Jesus was "divine"?

It is quite possible that "Christian Science outrages no man's intelligence," for when it is accepted honestly it is accepted with that man's best intelligence. It is a question of degree in intelligence; and doubtless many "intelligences," dissatisfied with the platitudes and broken promises of Christianity, accept Christian Science with avidity, believing that all they then know is all there is to know.

There is certainly much yet to be discovered before we shall justify the suggestion that in psychology, or Christian Science, or hypnosis will be found the possibilities of the elimination of disease and pain. Mr. Dixon's letter serves to strengthen the strictures on Mrs. Eddy's book which I had the honor to submit to your readers.

A. Fagg.

## THE PRESS AND FREETHOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Although my letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, referred to in last week's *Freethinker*, was written in a very temperate spirit, being a plea for fair play seeing that Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Tyndall, only to mention four eminent men, were Freethinkers, that journal did not, as you surmised, publish it. It is really very amusing and at the same time saddening to watch the press in its treatment of Freethought. I really do not know which is worse, the Conservative press or that styled Liberal. Papers calling themselves "Times and Independent" are usually more times than independent. It is worth repeating that a prominent contributor to the *Pall Mall Gazette* is Dr. Saleeby, who is hardly orthodox. I wonder whether the scribe who contributes the Church Notes to the *Pall Mall Gazette* ever reads Dr. Saleeby's scientific notes contributed to the same journal. Some day I may publish a book dealing with the Press and Freethought. The *Freethinker* certainly justifies its existence. I do not know what we would do without it. The press of this country is a sham. The proprietors are mostly party hacks with positions to keep up. The way the "Liberal" press flunkies to Church and Chapel is simply disgusting. This brings in the advertisements.

A minor journal, the *Bedfordshire Standard*—which is, I believe, backed by the Duke of Bedford—recently made various insulting references to Freethinkers. I wrote a letter asking how Christians explained the fact that so many eminent thinkers were Agnostics and Atheists. Was this a form of mental perversity? The editor appended a footnote: "Yes. Certainly." What sublime arrogance! Poor Darwin! Many people think he was a harmless lunatic. I submitted a second letter asking why Christians made such a fetish of the Bible, seeing that it contained so much that had been conclusively shown to be untrue, and a great deal that was not fit for general reading. This was not inserted.

J. A. REID.

## Obituary.

SOUTH SHIELDS.—Mr. Thomas Wigham, an old member and liberal supporter of this Branch, died on Sunday, December 1, after a long and painful illness borne with patience and courage. In accordance with his wish, and by the courtesy of his surviving relatives, the ceremonial portion of the funeral service was left to the local Branch. The respect and esteem in which the deceased was held was shown by the large number of members of the Miners' Union, relatives and friends, and representative of the Secular Society in attendance at the Harton Cemetery on Wednesday, December 4. The service was read at the graveside by Mr. S. M. Peacock, vice-president N. S. S.—R. C.

## 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.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Two Birthplaces: Bethlehem and Stratford-on-Avon."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 3.15, Freethought Parliament—Sydney Herbert, "Mediæval Literature and Modern Art."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, W. Gregory, "Gerald Massey: Poet, Chartist, and Egyptologist." Selections by the Band before Lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales' Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): 7, Selections of Readings and Music.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Free Gardeners' Institute, Picardy-place): C. Cohen, 3, "Socialism, Atheism, and Christianity"; 7, "The New Theology and Freethought." Monday, Dec. 16, at 8, "The Salvation Army: A Study in Religious Credulity and Social Imposture."

FAIRSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, F. H. Rose, "Socialism & Religion."

GLASGOW: Secular Hall, Brunswick street—12 (noon), Discussion Class; 6.30, E. Shinwell, "The Jewish Problem and its Solution."

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Club, 125 Albion-street): Friday, Dec. 13, at 8, A. E. Stillip, "New Theology and Socialism."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): H. S. Wishart, 3, "The Bible *versus* Moral Instruction for Our Children"; 7, "Atheism and Social Progress: II. Father Day's Dark Night of Socialism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam Bey, "Buddhism and Christianity."

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, Dec. 19, at 8, R. Turnbull, "Municipalisation."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Royal Assembly Hall, Stanhope-street, Mile End-road): John T. Lloyd, 3, "Religion and the Joy of Life"; 7, "The Triumph of Freethought."

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (I. L. P. Institute): 3, Business Meeting—Lecture arrangements, etc.

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