

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

To exercise a right yourself which you deny to me is simply the act of a tyrant. Where did you get your right to express your honest thoughts? When, and where, and how did I lose mine?—INGERSOLL.

The Ingersolls in London.

RATHER more than eleven years ago, I had the privilege of spending a day with the Ingersoll family. I call it a privilege because there are not many such families in this imperfect world. Ingersoll himself was living then, and there are few men of his stamp in one nation, or one century, or one millennium. I was lucky to visit America when I did. I wanted to see several things over there, but I wanted to see Ingersoll most of all. He was infinitely more attractive and important to me than Niagara itself; for vast cliffs of rock, and wild tumbling waters, grand as they were in unison, were comparatively insignificant beside nature's later wonder in the course of evolution,—the brain and personality of a thinker, an orator, and a poet,—one whose lofty character matched his splendid intelligence. Profoundly was I impressed by the Falls of Niagara; I was agitated long afterwards by the memory of that sublime spectacle; but it becomes ever mistier and mistier in my recollection under the obliterating hand of time, while the thought of Ingersoll stands out even clearer and firmer in my mind as the years roll from the unsearchable future to the oblivious past. I see him "in my mind's eye" as he was on that delightful day at Dobbs' Ferry, overlooking the grand and romantic Hudson. The idol of so many of my dreams—and all fulfilled by the reality! It was my good fortune to meet him just then. Had my visit to America been delayed a few years I should have been too late. And at that moment his physical powers were not perceptibly impaired. His mental powers were never affected. For he did not die of a wasting disease; when death called it gave no announcement—it took him suddenly, with the loving smile that his wife must have known so well still left upon the face that had looked up, and answered her accost, for the last time.

A few months subsequently I said farewell to Ingersoll at his New York residence. He was then confined to his room by the illness which was the precursor of his death some two years and a half later. I could see that he had been badly hit by the "stroke" which arrested him on a lecturing tour. He was patient and cheerful, and the old humor stayed with him still, as it did to the end; but although I took care to say nothing, either in public or in private, I could not help recognising symptoms of the heart trouble which finally killed him. He complained of feeling too emotional, and the complaint made me shudder inwardly, for an older experience of my life had made me understand what that meant. Perhaps he detected the shadow of anxiety passing over my face. He looked at me with that slow, steady gaze—which also was partly symptomatic—and said, with such a sweet, kind smile lighting up his countenance for a moment, "I think you enjoy equable health; don't you?" I told him I did. (My first breakdown in health occurred

five years later.) And then the smile became more sweet and tender even than before, as though saying, without words, "Well, that's all right, anyhow." I said good-bye to him, hoping against hope that I should see him again. He recovered to some extent, and resumed his lecturing; he consented to coming over to England and lecturing for us in our principal towns; but it was not to be,—he had done his work,—death had at least left him time for that.

Ingersoll would have been the greatest figure almost anywhere. There was something in him that clever men, popular men, prosperous politicians, did not possess. He belonged to no party; he was an institution in himself. Yet the Ingersoll family was very striking too. I wrote about them all at the time, in one of my Letters from America. Mrs. Ingersoll was a fine lady, not in the fashionable, but in the best sense of the words; distinguished in presence and in manners, yet with a reassuring homeliness,—obviously wrapt up in her husband, yet possessing a strong intelligence of her own. Like himself, she was the soul of hospitality; she made one feel so perfectly at home; and when I said good-bye to her at New York I felt a deep sadness in my heart of hearts, for I said to myself, "How soon may this noble wife be a widow!"

Ingersoll's daughters were both beautiful and accomplished. The married one lived with her husband and two young children in the same house with her father; not for economy's sake, as they were well-to-do, but for love's sake; and the household also included Mrs. Ingersoll's sister and that lady's husband and daughter. And as they all reside together in one house at New York to this day, one can understand what truth there is in the old orthodox cry that Ingersoll's teachings tend to the disruption of family life.

I hardly thought I should meet the Ingersoll family again. I saw little prospect of revisiting America, and little prospect of their revisiting England. But the unexpected often happens, and this is a case in point. I was delighted to hear from the Ingersolls recently, informing me that they were in London, and honoring me by saying that they should regard it as "a true pleasure" to meet me. I had the great enjoyment of spending an evening with them shortly afterwards. They had left the Farrell portion of the household at New York, but all the Ingersoll portion were there; all of them that I had met in America—except the "chief" who had gone to his long rest. Mrs. Ingersoll, Miss Maud Ingersoll, Mrs. Eva Ingersoll Brown, Mr. Brown, and their children, now growing up, of course, and destined, I trust, to do credit to the blood and traditions of their house. Stay, I did not see the boy, although he was in the place. He had imbibed so much keen spring English air in the afternoon, driving about Windsor, that he was overcome by what Charles Lamb would have called "a lethargy" and gone to bed without his dinner. I was glad to assure his mother, however, that this was rather a good symptom than otherwise, and that he would probably feel the benefit the next day. I did not see the boy, then; but I hope to yet, when he returns from the Continent,—for I am interested in every member of that family.

I was glad to be welcomed first by Mr. Brown, who is just the same unaffected, thoughtful gentleman

I met at Dobbs' Ferry and afterwards at New York. I think I should have been a little unmanned if I had suddenly been greeted by the ladies. Mrs. Ingersoll's coming into the room sent a quick thrill through my whole being. When I saw her last she had that noble husband by her side, and their love for each other was so touchingly transparent. And now her widowhood had lasted nearly nine years. How had she borne it? The first glance at her face showed me that she had suffered, in spite of all the consolations of domestic love with which she is surrounded. But I found that she spoke of him in a perfectly natural manner, without the slightest touch of morbidity. He was with her still—with them *all* still. He lived on in their daily memories. They were still under the constant influence of his great personality. It was the only immortality he understood and believed in, and I dare say desired; and most desired where it was most fully realised.

Mrs. Brown filled me with longing to see an Ingersoll memorial book which lies, in manuscript, at their New York residence. Distinguished men and women from all parts of the English-speaking world, and farther, sent autograph inscriptions for that volume—all praising the great dead Freethinker; two of our greatest in this country, both poets, expressing the deepest admiration and affection, one of them even saying that his principal desire, if he visited America, would be to call on Ingersoll and make his personal acquaintance.

Eleven years make a difference to all of us, but it has made no difference in the geniality and charm of that exceptional family. We talked for hours; the conversation never flagged; and we might have talked for further hours if had had not been awaiting them and the midnight train awaiting me. I make no attempt at reporting what was said. It was a private, not a public, gathering. Nevertheless, I am free to say that the Ingersoll family share *his* sympathy with the Freethought movement in England, and wish it rapid success and final victory. And I think I ought to add that they thanked me again and again for what they were good enough to call my "magnificent vindication" of Ingersoll against the vile slanders of Revivalist Torrey. I wanted no thanks, for it was a plain duty, and also a labor of love; yet the thanks were pleasant to hear, for they came from the heart.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Criticism.

As is well-known, the famous French divine, M. Loisy, has been excommunicated from the membership of the Roman Catholic Church. He is a Modernist, and the distinguishing characteristic of Modernism is that it cannot walk by sheer faith. It is true that as a religious movement it does not attempt to banish faith altogether; but its insistence on the right to employ the ordinary methods of literary criticism in the study of Christian origins is, in itself, a serious menace to the foundations of faith. In her determination to break with Modernism, in all its forms, the Catholic Church is clearly pursuing a perfectly logical policy. She unmistakably discerns in Modernism a mortal foe, and realises that her only safety lies in expelling it from her borders and in preventing it from ever re-entering. This is a wise as well as logical policy—at least, for the present. The time is undoubtedly coming, however, when the Church of Rome and Modernism, Science, or Freethought, shall confront each other, in battle array, for the final combat, and it requires no extraordinary gift to foresee which side will be victorious; but, meanwhile, the Church shows her sagacity by flatly refusing to harbor her worst enemy in the guise of a loyal friend.

That Modernism is nascent Freethought, and, as such, anti-Christian, is really beyond dispute. The first and last word of Christianity is faith. Criticism

is a word not found between the covers of her vocabulary. In the Church, everything hangs on belief; and criticism, of necessity, implies the absence of perfect faith. Faith, according to the latest definition of it by the Pope, is bound to be utterly blind. To ask one question is to betray incipient unbelief. Believers must rely absolutely on some definite authority, whether it be the Church or the Bible, or both combined, as in Catholicism. The Church of Rome, being herself infallible, certifies the infallibility, though not the sufficiency, of the Scriptures. The Bible must be accepted as true, but not as containing all the truth. In its final form, Christianity is a creation, or, more accurately, a product or growth of the Church; but all the ingredients, or germs, are to be found in the New Testament. So far as it goes, therefore, the New Testament is the inspired and infallible Word of God, and is not open to criticism. Hence, "there is no kind of Christian who does not know that Christianity depends upon Christ," the Christ of the Gospels and the Epistles.

"If it could be proved that this attitude of the Christian Church to Jesus was one which there ^{was} nothing in the history of Jesus to justify, then the only real basis for Christianity would be withdrawn.....In the only form in which it has been known to history, Christianity, we might say, should never have been, and it should cease to be."

In that declaration we fully concur, and hold that the Modernists are decidedly out of place in any orthodox Church, Catholic or Protestant.

Now, most Protestant sects pretend to welcome criticism as an invaluable ally. This is a position to which they have been irresistibly driven by force of circumstances. At first they denounced criticism as ungodly and wicked. Then they tolerated it as a sort of necessary evil. Finally, perceiving that it had come to stay and was rapidly gaining ground, they hailed it as the newest and best defender of the faith. The only stipulation they now make is, that it must be *reverent*, as if honest criticism *could* be reverent. "You may criticise the Bible as much as you like," they say to the scholars, "as long as you do not attack the cardinal truths of the Christian religion." But criticism cannot be cabined, cribbed, and confined; it must be as free as the air, and unconditioned except by its own canons. To bid it be reverent is to ask it to stultify itself, to violate its vital principles. The other day, a well-known scholar was recommended as a reliable guide because he is a *believing* critic; but a genuine critic is a free lance, hampered by no prepossessions, subject to no prejudices, terrorised by no ecclesiastical tyranny or theological dogmatism.

Let us watch the real critic at work upon the Synoptical Gospels. M. Loisy is not yet emancipated from the trammels of theology. He still claims to be, not only a true Christian, but a loyal Catholic. To us, such a claim is simply preposterous. In his great work of close upon two thousand pages on the Synoptic Problem, he has arrived at conclusions which ruthlessly knock the ground from under every form of Christian theology. In remarkably good taste, one orthodox divine assures us that "he does not go so far as those delirious sceptics (God pity them!) who try to prove that Jesus never lived"; but he *does* maintain that the only thing we do know about Jesus beyond the possibility of doubt is that "He was condemned to death as 'King of the Jews,' *i.e.*, as Messiah, on his own confession." Jesus dreamed about the near advent of the Kingdom of God, and the glory in which God would then invest him as Messianic King; but this dream M. Loisy characterises as "frail and narrow," which "seems to us absurd, as our most cherished ideas will seem to our posterity." Well, no Freethinker who believes that Jesus ever lived at all, would venture much farther than that. To call Jesus a frail, narrow, and absurd dreamer, is certainly to deny him any right to be regarded as a Divine Being, parading in the garb of a man, or as in any intelligible sense, the Savior of the world.

According to M. Loisy, the Gospels are works of fiction woven upon the slenderest historical facts. There doubtless was a man named Jesus, but what he was like and what he did, it is impossible to discover. All the predictions of his death and resurrection attributed to him, must be dismissed as unhistorical, as well as all the passages in which his death is described as possessing any redemptive virtue or purpose. Of course, if it be granted that Jesus ever existed at all, it cannot be denied that he died. In this connection, the following extract from M. Loisy's book is profoundly significant as well as interesting:—

"If the last word of all things is not *le néant*, and it cannot be *le néant*, the Gospel was only in appearance a chimera, Jesus incarnated in man the wisdom of God, and his death could be nothing but a transition to immortality."

That is the only clear article of belief in the whole work, and here the critic gives place to the dogmatist. But while M. Loisy thus believes in immortality, he does not believe that Jesus rose from the tomb. On all points save this as to a future life, he is a pure naturalist, a thoroughgoing Freethinker; and yet he calls himself a true Christian and a loyal Catholic. Reviewing the book, Professor Denny, of Glasgow, says:—

"What is the problem of historical criticism for a man who confronts in this attitude a narrative shot through in every direction with the supernatural? It is to disintegrate the narrative, to resolve it into its elements, and to trace them, not to historical testimony, which is ruled out of court to start with, but to the motives which have inspired the writers. These motives may be infinitely various—apologetic, dogmatic, edifying, æsthetic, and no doubt also individual, whimsical, undiscoverable; but motives is the name of them, not reasons or evidences. Subjected to this disintegrating treatment, the very foundations of the Gospel, as St. Paul and the Twelve alike regarded them, crumble away. Everything the Evangelists tell us about the burial and resurrection of Jesus—it is hardly an exaggeration to add, and nearly everything they tell us about his death—is untrue."

Our only agreement with M. Loisy is in his general conclusion that the Gospels are almost wholly unhistorical; but we go further than he does, and assert that whatever historical elements the Gospels may contain it is now quite impossible to detach them from the confused mass of myths, legends, and fairy tales with which they are mixed up. The history, if history there be, is buried out of sight forever. The Jesus who lived, and toiled, and suffered, and died a violent death, if such there was, is absolutely irrecoverable.

Now, when the critic, working on the Gospels, has got rid of the historical Jesus, how on earth can he still subscribe to the scheme of salvation through faith in the atoning death of Christ, as formulated by Paul and a succession of theologians in the Church? The foundations gone, the superstructure must surely collapse. If Jesus did not rise from the tomb, Paul and Peter were false witnesses. Granting that those men of old had visions of a risen Christ, how can we escape from the inevitable conclusion that such visions were pure hallucinations? We can understand a Christian to whom the Gospels are veritable biographies and the Epistles messages direct from heaven. We may respect his sincerity. But a Christian who, while rejecting the Gospels, accepts the Epistles, is an intolerable anachronism. As Professor Denny truly says, if Jesus "were no more than M. Loisy allows him to be, it is inconceivable how anyone should ever have called him Lord: it is absurd that anyone should call him Lord now." We are in substantial agreement with M. Loisy's criticism of the Gospels, and we entirely accept the inference which Dr. Denny draws from it.

Good Friday and Easter Sunday are once more things of the past. That M. Loisy's criticism is correct, and his faith groundless, is proved by the fact that these alleged anniversaries are gradually

losing, for the generality of people, their religious significance, and becoming like ordinary holidays, devoted to recreation and amusement. How many are there to whom the Christ depicted by Principal Forsyth, or even by Mr. Campbell, is a living reality, affecting their lives at every point? So far as the majority of professing Christians are concerned, to say nothing of the ever-multiplying sceptics, he has ceased to count, and is as mythical as King Arthur and his Table Round, with no power whatever on the world at large.

J. T. LLOYD.

Notes on Theism and Atheism.—I.

MANY of my readers will probably be acquainted with the names of the Rev. F. Ballard and the Rev. W. H. Fitchett. The former is the person who was selected by the Methodist Conference to carry on a peripatetic mission against unbelief, because of his "unique" qualification for the task; the latter is also a Wesleyan preacher, who has published several volumes on "deeds of derring-do" and religion, thus combining an appeal to the pugilistic and pietistic instincts. Each of these gentlemen have recently published a book dealing with Theism and Atheism, which I have read without any perceptible benefit in the shape of either entertainment or enlightenment. Mr. Ballard calls his book *The True God*, so that the question ought to be set at rest by the time the last page is reached. Mr. Fitchett writes on *The Beliefs of Unbelief*, which might have been instructive if the author had been better informed as to what these beliefs are. Both works are equally bombastic, although Mr. Ballard's bombast is disguised under a more elaborate and pretentious terminology; and, taken together, one would have to search long to find two small volumes containing so many false analogies, so much loose reasoning, and exhibiting, withal, such an air of finality.

Yet, even to a Freethinker, such books may serve a useful purpose. For they have an audience or they would not be published. And, being published, they enable one to perform the somewhat difficult task of putting oneself in "the other fellow's place"—a task specially difficult when, as in my own case, one has grown out of Theism at such an early age that the mental condition of a convinced believer is, at best, but a faint memory. Messrs. Fitchett and Ballard help us, therefore, to realise what the mind of the ordinary believer is like, what it regards as conclusive proofs of Theism, and what it takes to be fatal flaws in the Freethought position. Apart from this, there would be no reason whatever for noticing two such writers. They are serviceable as representatives of a type, and for no other reason.

Mr. Fitchett opens his volume with a kind of complaint of the quality of the unbelief now existing. He says it is "vague, loitering, evasive, and strangely contented." It may be that this is no more than a specimen of Mr. Fitchett's evident habit of stringing epithets together, apparently for the sake of sound, or it may be that he can only look with approval upon that unbelief which he says "is an anguish, and which is much nearer faith than it knows." Probably the kind of unbeliever he desires is the one who professes to be most miserable over his mental condition, and who is always regretting his inability to accept Christianity. Personally, I have never met this kind of unbeliever, and very much doubt his existence outside the pages of books of this description. The unbelief I am acquainted with is not at all vague—it is very definite in its attitude towards the essential items of Mr. Fitchett's creed. It is not loitering, since it connotes a quality of mind as resolute as it is definite. It is not evasive, or there would be no need of all the writings that are published with a view to its destruction. It may be, to Mr. Fitchett and his kind, "strangely contented," because these poor men cannot understand how people can be happy without the belief in a God, or decently

behaved without an almighty policeman always on guard. Evidently Mr. Fitchett thinks that a contented unbeliever is a more serious offender than a discontented one; just as a decent Atheist is, to the religionist, more objectionable than an indecent one. For the latter is what the Christian thinks all Atheists should be; the former is a standing proof of the unnecessary character of religious beliefs.

Both Mr. Fitchett and Mr. Ballard pretend to sneer at the small number of Atheists in the world. Mr. Ballard says: "It may safely be affirmed that the number of intelligent and convinced Atheists is so small as to be unworthy of regard." His brother Wesleyan is more vulgarly abusive. He says: "It seems, perhaps, to the sober mind, incredible that, outside a lunatic asylum, Atheism can exist. To waste ink or argument upon it is slaying the dead." But it is admitted that Atheism is, "unhappily, a real creed for many," and is, in spite of the previous assurance that it is "vague, loitering, evasive," "proclaimed in almost arrogant accents."

Mr. Fitchett also notes that—

"In the last French census, nearly 5,000,000 people wrote themselves down 'Atheist.' On the Continent there are many writers who would repeat Feuerbach's words: 'It is clear as the sun, and evident as the day, that there is no God; and still more that there can be no God.'"

In spite, too, of this, we are assured, two pages further on, that Atheism "is in deep and eternal quarrel with the very structure of the human mind." How on earth a belief, which is in such deep-seated hostility to the "very structure" of the human mind, comes to have so many supporters, is a question on which the reader gets no enlightenment whatever. Probably all that Mr. Fitchett has at the back of what he is pleased to call his understanding is that Atheism is in conflict with the "very structure" of his mind; and that may be an unconscious compliment to Atheism.

Of the two writers one may fairly say that Mr. Ballard's comment is stupid, while that of Mr. Fitchett's is insolent. In the first place, the value of an opinion is never to be tested by the number of its supporters. Every opinion necessarily commences with a few, and whether it be a long or a short while gaining supporters depends upon a number of circumstances, not one of which has anything to do with its accuracy. The state of the public intelligence, the nature of the opinion in question—whether it be easy or difficult to grasp—the force of social circumstances, with the nature of the opposition offered, are all important circumstances determining whether an opinion is to gain ground slowly or rapidly. In the case of Atheism, we have every possible difficulty in the way of its growth accentuated. Atheism has to make headway against the force of a belief, once universal, and with all the weight of centuries behind it. It has to fight large and well-organised priest-hoods which are vitally interested in its suppression. At the back of these priest-hoods are enormously powerful secular interests that dread the growth of Atheism as inimical to their welfare. Social opinion vetoes Atheism as bad form. Atheism, moreover, appeals almost entirely to man's love of truth and to his reason. And when we add all these things together, the fact that Atheism should make any progress at all is strong presumptive proof in its favor. One person who becomes an Atheist is more value as evidence than ten thousand who continue Theists. For the latter merely continue in the direction impelled by all the conservative forces of life; the former is at least evidence of a strong force in the opposite direction, and which, as society is constituted, quite unalloyed with selfish or unworthy motives. One "intelligent and convinced Atheist" is clearly worth more, as evidence, than ten thousand Fitchetts or Ballards.

But while Mr. Ballard finds the number of Atheists very small, Mr. Fitchett finds five million declared Atheists in France alone, while many writers on the Continent are not afraid to profess Atheism as

descriptive of their mental attitude. Five millions in one country is a fairly respectable number, considering the whole population of France. And, whether the thinking of this five million be profound or superficial, each one of the number has had to think out his or her position. Theism may be, and usually is, accepted by people without any mental effort worth talking about. And if we add to the number of people who openly profess Atheism the larger number who are restrained from making any profession because of the terrorism still exercised by the religious world, and then to these the people who practically place the belief in God on one side in their everyday lives, the number would be great enough to command the respect of even such profound thinkers as the two writers under review. For the benefit of Mr. Fitchett I may also point out that it is only *outside* a lunatic asylum that Atheism does exist. The belief of the unfortunate inmates of these institutions is invariably Theistic. The arguments of Messrs. Ballard and Fitchett may be most powerful against Atheism, but at least they are not invincible; some stand out against them. But if only their writings induced insanity, and every Atheist could be forced to read them, then, indeed, might Atheism be utterly destroyed. For there is not such a phenomenon known as a lunatic who professes Atheistic opinions. They are all believers in Deity. I hope this brace of Wesleyan preachers may find much consolation in the circumstance.

Mr. Ballard falls into line with Mr. Fitchett by declaring that throughout the history of man "there ever develops the need of a God worthy of him as well as helpful to him"—a statement which shows that his appreciation of the tendency of human evolution is on all fours with the character of his thinking. If human history shows anything at all, it is the clear fact that man is all the time learning to do without God. In its earliest phases human nature does not move a step without reference to some god or other. Every one of the sciences begins with vitalism and ends with mechanism. Each of the phenomena that are now looked upon as the inevitable expression of unconscious forces was once looked upon as the result of the action of deities who were to be more or less influenced by human petition. Thousands of preachers and writers are constantly striving their hardest to keep the belief in Deity alive. There are more non-believers in Deity now than at any other period of human history, and their number is on the increase. No one is able to say definitely and decisively in what way the belief in God is of the slightest use in any direction whatsoever. And yet there "ever develops the need of a God" in human affairs. Both Mr. Ballard and Mr. Fitchett believe that the man who is without the belief in God is a fool, and both are evidently determined that the fool shall not be oppressed by any sense of loneliness.

(To be continued.)

C. COHEN.

The Sayings of Jesus.—IV.

(Continued from p. 251.)

It is time, now, to come to the subject proper of these papers—the "sayings" ascribed to the Jesus of the Gospels. It should, however, be premised that these Gospel sayings, if we take into consideration their character and source, fall into two classes—those recorded in the three Synoptical Gospels, and those which appear in the Fourth Gospel. The sayings in the first of these divisions were derived from the literature of the Nazarenes; those in the second division were concocted by the pious second-century writer of the Fourth Gospel himself.

It will be convenient to commence with the Fourth Gospel, and having examined a sufficient number of its manufactured sayings, to dismiss them from further notice. It is the sayings of the first class

which are of chief importance; these should therefore receive more attention.

Let us see, then, to begin with, what the Gospel Jesus has to say respecting the source of his teaching. Well, according to the Fourth Gospel, all the words and "things" which he addressed to his disciples he had previously heard spoken by "the Father" in heaven. He says, for instance:—

John xv. 15: "But I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you."

John xvii. 8: "Now O Father.....Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee; for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them."

Where, it may be asked, can we find a record of the "words" and "things" which Jesus had heard in heaven, and afterwards communicated to his disciples? Words which had emanated from "the Father" ought surely to transcend anything ever written by mortal man. Where are these divine "words" and "things" to be found? To get light upon this important subject we need only turn to further alleged utterances of Jesus, recorded by the same veracious evangelist. Such are the following:—

John vii. 16: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me."

John viii. 26, 38, 40: "He that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world.....I speak the things which I have seen with my Father.....Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God." (See also John xii. 49, 50; xiv. 24.)

These passages dispel all doubt, if any were possible. The precious words of divine wisdom, which Jesus says he had heard spoken by "the Father," are those which he is represented as uttering in the Fourth Gospel. In this Gospel, then, we have a comprehensive sample of the conceptions and methods of reasoning, not only of Jesus, but of the Being he calls "the Father"—the great El Shaddai himself. We must therefore be very careful how we criticise any of those "words of God."

Before attempting any such proceeding, however, a slight difficulty arises as to the personality of Jesus and "the Father." In one place, for instance (John xiv. 28), Jesus tells his disciples that "the Father is greater than I"; in another place (John x. 30) he is represented as saying: "I and the Father are one." How any person could be, at the same time, identical with, and greater than, some other person, is not easy to see. One cannot be wrong in pronouncing this to be an impossibility. Some commentators explain the latter statement to mean that Jesus was one in substance, power, and eternity, or, in other words, equal to, but not identical with "the Father." Such a contention is, however, inconsistent with another important statement (John xiv. 7) in which Jesus is represented as saying to his disciples:—

"If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him."

If these words have any meaning they convey the idea, not of equality, but of personal identity—that Jesus was himself the person whom he styled "the Father." In other words, Jesus said to his disciples: "Look at me: I am the Being whom I call 'the Father'; when you see me, you see 'the Father'; we are one and the same person." Notwithstanding this plain statement, the apostle Philip was somewhat sceptical, and persisted in thinking that the God of heaven was a distinct person from Jesus. He said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Such obstinacy was naturally provoking. Small wonder, then, that Jesus sharply rebuked him, and said, in effect: "Why, what does the man mean? Have you not seen me often enough to know me, Philip? Have I not said plainly that whoever has seen me has seen 'the Father'? What, then, do you mean by saying 'Shew us the Father'? I am the Father." After which, Jesus asked the sceptical one: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (John xiv. 7-10).

How Jesus could be in "the Father" and "the Father" in him, at one and the same time, we need not stop to inquire. It was doubtless as true as the statement: "Jonah is in the whale, and the whale is in Jonah." It is a satisfaction to know that we are only asked to believe the sayings which Jesus "heard from God," not to understand them. Again, in another passage (John xii. 44-45) Jesus is reported to have said:—

"He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me."

This Savior also says of the Jews who did not believe in him (John xv. 24):—

"but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

It thus appears, as before, that Jesus was himself "the Father"—a personage who will probably some day turn out to be as mythical as Sairey Gamp's "Mrs. Harris."

But the reiterated statements of Jesus that he was himself "the Father"—or that whoever saw him beheld "the Father"—are in direct conflict with many other statements attributed to him in the Fourth Gospel. Thus in one place (John xx. 17) Jesus is represented as saying to Mary Magdalene:—

"I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."

In another place (John viii. 17-18) the same Savior says to the unbelieving Jews:—

"In your law it is written that the witness of two men is true. I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

Here we have a specimen of the kind of reasoning that was considered convincing in heaven. According to this luminous sample, Jesus had the testimony of two witnesses to the truth of his divine mission—the first witness being himself, and the second witness being "the Father" who never allowed himself to be seen by any human being, but spoke through Jesus. The unsupported utterances of the latter thus became the corroborative testimony of two independent witnesses.

Another remarkable example of the non-identity of Jesus with the Father is the following:—

John v. 19-20: "The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father doing. The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth."

Clearly, then, Jesus was not himself "the Father," notwithstanding his previous statements to the contrary. Moreover, we see from this passage the arrant nonsense he is made to utter respecting his alleged miracle-working. Now, since Jesus could only do what he had seen "the Father" doing, it follows that all kinds of works of healing must have been performed in heaven. Jesus must have seen "the Father" giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, etc., and must also have watched his respected parent healing various kinds of diseases and restoring the dead to life. His heavenly "Father" permitted him to witness the working of these miracles because he loved him, and he learnt how to perform them himself by looking on. Hence, according to the Gospel statement, there must have been plenty of healing going on in heaven, and consequently much sickness amongst its unfortunate inmates. From this conclusion there is no escape, unless we impeach the veracity of Jesus—or that of the writer of the Fourth Gospel.

It is, of course, the last-named evangelist, and not his fictitious Jesus, who must be held responsible for all the silly and false statements in the Fourth Gospel. This veracious writer even goes so far as to make his Lord and Savior promise to bestow the power to heal diseases and to work miracles on all Christians who believe on him. Thus Jesus is represented as saying:—

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (John xiv. 12).

There can be no misunderstanding such very plain language; neither can there be the shadow of a

doubt as to the mendacity of the statement. It is needless to ask whether believers in Jesus are able to perform miracles of healing? Everyone knows that not a Christian in the world is in possession of such power, and the presumption is that there never was. We gather, indeed, from Christian writers of the second and third centuries that the early church claimed the power to work miracles; but such claims, wherever they can be tested, are found to be based upon falsehood, fraud, or hearsay. These alleged divine gifts of healing appear to have been merely spoken of amongst the early Christians as possessed by some members of the sect; but no one appears to have actually witnessed the wonderful cures. None of the early Christian writers or "Fathers" claims the possession of such powers, nor does any of them (save St. Augustine, whose stories are not believed by Protestants) say that he had ever witnessed such miraculous cures himself.

Returning to our text, Christian commentators tell us that Jesus, when he uttered the words quoted, was speaking to his apostles, and consequently referred only to them; and that the latter really received the miraculous powers promised, as may be seen in the record of their doings in the Acts of the Apostles.

With regard to this apologetic plea it need only be said that all the so-called sayings of Jesus—with the exception of special promises made to the disciples, such as sitting on thrones in heaven—are understood by Christians as applying to all believers throughout all time. Thus the words "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life" (John iii. 36) are said to have reference to all Christian believers in every age. In the same way must be understood the promise "He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also." In each case the promise is given to the same class of Christian—"He that believeth on Jesus."

As regards the stories of marvels represented as wrought by apostles in the canonical book of "the Acts," it is only necessary to say that those stories are from beginning to end pure fiction. We have no evidence that one of the apostles possessed the power to work miracles.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued)

Acid Drops.

According to the *Daily News* there was "a marked development" in the attendance at places of worship on Good Friday in London. But on looking down the column of reports one sees that the real meaning of this sanguine statement is that a few special preachers attracted specially large congregations. Now there is no substantial progress in this—and the Rev. R. J. Campbell has the honesty and courage to admit it. He states the fact quite plainly that "The religious public is such a limited one that the success of one church means the weakening of another; and it becomes requisite that the minister should be a man who is able to 'draw'—that is, draw from other churches—the congregation required to make the business a financial success." Half-a-dozen popular preachers, drawing as many large congregations on a Good Friday in so vast a city as London, do not constitute a triumph for Christianity. The very idea is ridiculous when you think of the thousands of worshippers and the millions of population.

The Bishop of London held the place of honor in the *Daily News* report of the Good Friday services. That farcical prelate held forth on Christ's "Seven Words from the Cross." What he meant was the seven words put into the dying Christ's mouth by the writer of the fourth Gospel. Seeing his mother and John standing by, Christ said to her, "Woman, behold thy son" and to him "Behold thy mother"—meaning that John was to take Mary to his own home and be a son to her. But those were not the last words of Christ from the cross, even according to that very Gospel. We are told that he afterwards cried "I thirst," and after that, "It is finished." So the "seven" words from the cross should be "twelve."

According to the third Gospel, Christ spoke quite other words on the cross. First, he said to the penitent thief on

the cross "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Secondly, he cried with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And then he died.

It will thus be seen what a beautiful harmony there is in the narratives of the sayings of Christ on the cross in the third and fourth Gospels. And the beauty of the harmony increases when we turn to the first and second Gospels, which agree with each other, but differ from the other two, who differ so entirely from each other. The only words of Christ on the cross reported by "Matthew" and "Mark" are, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It appears to us that the writers of the four Gospels might very well have uttered the same exclamation. For if God inspired them, as we are asked to believe, he certainly betrayed them in the "cross" part of the story; playing them off against one another in the most painfully distracting manner.

Father Bernard Vaughan preached on the same "Seven Words from the Cross." Protestant and Catholic are a fair match for each other at this sort of blarney.

St. Paul's Cathedral had a highly successful Easter service, the preacher being the Bishop of London—who is sure to talk folly. The great point of his sermon, as reported in the newspapers, was that the malefactor's cross on which Jesus died has become the symbol of glory. His lordship rejoiced over the golden cross of St. Paul's; it showed what a change had been wrought in the world. Had he been wise, however, he would have reflected that some of his hearers knew that more rascality went on within sight of St. Paul's cross than in any heathen city in the whole wide world.

Rev. R. J. Campbell's sermon on Easter morning was also rich in its way. He said that some people believed that the body of Christ issued from the rock-hewn tomb in which it had been laid; and that other people believed nothing of the kind; but what did it matter? Whatever they believed, they were all good Christians, as long as they held that Christ was no failure. "He had risen," the preacher said, "whether in the flesh or out of it, to a more abundant life—risen to sweeter thoughts and nobler deeds." Such is the sentimental twaddle that goes down with a big Christian congregation in a famous London church! When he is in the vein—and he is too often so—Mr. Campbell is just on the level of the common-garden exhorter, far below the limit of intellectual seriousness.

A minister of religion, a good many years ago, expressed a desire to debate with Mr. Foote the question, "If Jesus did not rise from the dead, what happened?" Mr. Foote replied that "if Jesus did not rise from the dead, it doesn't matter a damn what happened." The answer was short and sweet, but all the truth was in it.

Christians are getting very shaky now about that same Resurrection. It is quite amusing to read what a champion of the New Theology, like the Rev. R. J. Campbell, says about this wonderful occurrence. What the reverend gentleman sets forth is a sort of intellectual thimble-rigging. While admitting that "the Gospel accounts of the physical resurrection of Jesus are mutually inconsistent, and that no amount of ingenuity can reconcile them," he appears to argue that there must have been some kind of a resurrection—for "the earliest Christians were convinced that the body of Jesus after the resurrection was the body of Jesus as they had known it before, although apparently it possessed some new and mysterious attributes." Then he retreats from a false and foolish position—neither one thing nor the other—under cover of a lot of gibberish about the "fourth dimension." After some pages of this mysterious jargon, he coolly says: "This seems to me a not unreasonable explanation of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus." Explanation! It reminds us of Byron's—"I wish he would explain his explanation."

Having dealt with the Resurrection in that splendid manner in the *New Theology*, Mr. Campbell tried to improve upon it in *Christianity and the Social Order*. "Something supernatural," he says, "must have taken place." And what was the "something"? Mr. Campbell suggests that it was not a "physical resurrection" at all, but the resurrection of Jesus in the form of a continued self-consciousness. But if this means that the "soul" or "spirit" of Jesus was still about in the world, it is not a case of resurrection at all. For resurrection does not, and cannot possibly, mean that the body was laid in the grave while the

"soul" or "spirit" went about as a ghost. Resurrection means that what was laid in the grave came out again. That is what the early Christians believed; that is what the Church has always taught; and it is at least honest on the part of the Church to still teach "the resurrection of the body" according to the Apostles' Creed.

Several thousand eggs were displayed in the Circus-street Congregational Church, Nottingham, on Easter Sunday. In front of the rostrum were the words, "He ever liveth," picked out with eggs laid upon moss. Was it a compliment to the rooster who assisted in their production?

Easter eggs are relics of ancient Nature-Worship. Men and all other animals spring from an *ovum*. Eggs, therefore, symbolise the fecundity of nature, which is so apparent in the spring of the year. Even the most ignorant Christian, if he thought for a moment, would wonder what on earth eggs (hard or soft) could possibly have to do with his Savior.

The average editor, however pious, has a limited acquaintance with Christian Evidences. The *Liverpool Daily Post*, a high-class paper, actually fell a victim to a correspondent called Thomas Pritchard, who had just discovered "a copied manuscript" which proved the historicity of Christ, and was suitable for publication during Easter week as an antidote to scepticism. And the *Post* printed it! Yet it was only the old fabulous letter of Publius Lentulus, the supposed predecessor of Pontius Pilate, to the Roman Senate. There is not a scholar in the world who does not know this precious document to be a forgery of comparatively recent date. It is distressing to find a journal like our *Liverpool contemporary* taken in so easily.

"Morality," says the Rev. John Wakeford, of Liverpool, "is the fruit of religion." Judging from the state of the city he speaks in, it would have been much better if religion had been the fruit of morality. As the case stands, on Mr. Wakeford's theory, Liverpool abounds in religion of the "barren fig tree" order.

Mr. Wakeford uttered that stuff to a meeting of "men only." Perhaps he knew it wouldn't do for the women.

"Not for some years," says the Milan correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, "have the prisons in Italy, in the north, south, and centre, been so thickly tenanted with priests and monks, the majority of whom are detained on the gravest criminal charges known to the penal code."

The Bishop of Stepney has been presented with a motor-car. He is also promised the cost of its maintenance. The only ride this gentleman's Master ever had was on a jackass.

What people these Christians are—especially the preachers. They cultivate imagination, of a sort, but when it comes to logic their brains are for the most part as pappy as an infant's. We have been favored with a copy of the *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette* containing a report, apparently verbatim, of a sermon on "What is Truth?" by the Rev. Minos Devine at the Abney Congregational Church, Stoke Newington. In the course of this sermon there is a fearful and wonderful reference to "George Eliot," the great novelist, who was a Freethinker with inclinations towards Positivism. Towards the close of her life, the preacher said, she remarked that "Everything is perfect in Christianity, but it just lacks evidence." This is probably a new version of the old story about George Eliot having slyly said, "I have only one objection to Christianity; it isn't true." Be that as it may, what a funny state of mind this gentleman must be in to regard this utterance as a tribute to his faith. If he spoke out clearly what he appears to think it would read something like this:—"We Christians have a splendid creed; George Eliot herself said so; its only defect is that there isn't a word of truth in it; but it's splendid all the same."

Mr. Devine went on in a sillier fashion still—if that were possible. This is what he said:—

"But when she died, the *Imitation of Christ* was found under her pillow. That was faith—the true organ of spiritual discernment discovering the truth which the intellect could not reason out."

This is, in the first place, an illustration of Pope's line that "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Mr. Devine fancies that George Eliot contracted a taste for the *Imitation* in her last days, but the truth is that it was one of her closest companions throughout her life. She paid it

a noble tribute in one of her early novels, *The Mill on the Floss*. What she read it for was not its theology, which she did not accept, but its ethical idealism. Mr. Devine evidently does not understand these things. Why, even Comte, the great founder of the Religion of Humanity, who proposed to reorganise society without kings and without God, placed the *Imitation* amongst the highest devotional literature of his godless system. A much humbler Freethinker, the editor of this journal, knows his *Imitation* quite well, and has a little pocket copy liberally marked. And if he happened to have it in his pocket when travelling, and got smashed in a railway accident, persons of Mr. Devine's stamp would say, "Ah, he was a Christian, after all."

The fact is that Christian narrowness cannot understand Freethought catholicity. Genius is the gold of literature, not the accidental religious opinions of the writer. Great and beautiful thoughts belong to no creed—even if the man who utters them believes that they do. They belong to humanity. And whether the utterer of great and beautiful thoughts is a Christian, a Jew, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, a Brahman, or an Atheist, is a matter of indifference to the true Freethinker, who reads Job and Omar Khayyam, Lucretius and Milton, Thomas à Kempis and Spinoza, Crashaw and Shelley, Browning and Swinburne, Newman and Clifford, and ever so many other antitheses, and gets food for his "soul" from them all.

Dr. Gertrude Petzold, the Leicester lady preacher, has just been causing excitement in Germany. She preached on Sunday, April 12, in a church at Bremen, and it appears that this was the first time that petticoats, instead of trousers, officiated in a German house of God. This "newest sensation" is loudly denounced by the local orthodox organ as "painful to the feelings of sound German Churchmen." But the leaders of the Woman's Movement reply that their sex means to go ahead; moreover, that an up-to-date sermon by a lady is better than an old-fashioned sermon by a man. They say that women preachers are going to increase. And why not? If we must have preachers, they may as well be women as men—in spite of old St. Paul.

The *Daily Chronicle* remarks on "the unedifying freedom with which 'D.V.' phrases were formerly used." It tells the old story of the Duke of Norfolk who said, "Next Monday, wind and weather permitting, by the grace of God, I propose to be drunk." Other stock stories are added. But our contemporary overlooks the Cockney printer's-devil's interpretation of "D.V." as "Devil villin."

The Easter review of the Volunteers is now a thing of the past. For nearly fifty years they celebrated the death-day and the resurrection-day of the Prince of Peace in the bosom of their families, or elsewhere; and the very next day they started their annual practice in the gunpowder-and-g glory business.

It is said that the Board of Trade is to be re-christened. Mr. Churchill is to be Minister of Commerce, or something like that. It appears that the Board of Trade is a dummy affair. One of its members is the Archbishop of Canterbury, but as the Board never meets it doesn't matter. Not that in our opinion the Archbishop is so very much out of place there. He is the titular head of one the biggest businesses in England,—and a fine paying business it is, in spite of the "poor clergy" and the "starving curates."

Rev. Forbes Phillips, the well known vicar of Gorleston, was contemplating a day off when he wrote to a local paper recently on the licensing controversy. A supporter of Mr. Asquith's Bill had referred to drunkenness at Norwich, and said he was prepared to show it in twenty public-houses there to any honest inquirer. "I want to see it," Mr. Phillips wrote, "and I asked him to name the day. I am sure his impudent assertion is a libel on the good old town of Norwich. However, I mean to come to Norwich next week, and I shall visit twenty or more public-houses." If the reverend gentleman intended to have a drink in each he had what some men would call "a good thing" ahead. We hope he got through the experiment with credit and success.

Disorderly scenes took place at Birmingham on Good Friday. High Churchmen and Keesitites fell foul of each other in the streets. How shocking! But it affords a certain consolation to the Freethinker. There is a chance for him while the Christians "love one another" in this fashion.

The *Methodist Recorder* publishes figures showing a "dressing" decline in the membership of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The big decrease from last year is as follows:—

Full members	...	...	...	4,392
Trial members	...	...	...	1,179
Junior members	...	...	...	2,435

There is no falling off in funds; what is lacking is the power to attract and retain new members. "We are convinced," the *Recorder* says, "from many signs, that the crisis is a grave one, graver than many people know." And this is the Church that raised a Twentieth Century Fund of £1,000,000! The money helps it to cut a finer appearance, but it cannot stop the dry rot inside.

Horace Rayner, having once more tried to commit suicide in Parkhurst Prison, is being punished with a fortnight's solitary confinement. Surely all respectable citizens will protest against this deplorable lenity. The authorities should have ordered him a few hundred lashes with the cat. That might have convinced him of the great value of his life, and the reprehensible character of any attempt to destroy it. Mercy ought always to be tempered with justice in such cases.

"Providence" was beautifully impartial (or indifferent) at the big Boston fire. Amongst the buildings destroyed were seven banks, three hotels, two public libraries, two hospitals, five schools, one post-office, one town hall—and thirteen churches. "For one thing befalleth them"—when blazes are about.

Socialists at Southampton, as well as elsewhere, go in for Sunday-Schools, and they like to hold them in the town schoolrooms, which are well-known, suitable, and inexpensive. But the bulldog of bigotry stands in their way. When the local branch of the Social Democratic Federation applied for the use of one of these classrooms at the Central District School, the School Management Sub-Committee resolved: "That the Education Committee be recommended not to let any school in the jurisdiction of this Authority for any other purpose on Sunday other than for religious instruction." After a good deal of discussion, this recommendation was adopted, only two members voting to the contrary. It was a straightforward act of bigotry; just what might be expected from religious people in general, and Christians in particular, when they have the opportunity. Public buildings, paid for by all sections of the community, are to be used for purely sectional purposes. The Christians have their religion taught in the schools on weekdays and again on Sunday. All their rivals are rigidly excluded. It is positively delightful. And the most delightful part of it is that the Christians call it the height of fair play. To agree with them, and to do as they do, is perfect freedom.

Nearly all the speakers against the Socialist Sunday-school expressed the view that it would be frankly Atheistic. We commend this fact to the attention of the Rev. R. J. Campbell.

More poor Jesusites! Rev. Oswald Pattison Serjeant, of Oxford Lodge, Hulse-road, Southampton, formerly vicar of Chesterton, Bicester, left £34,132. Rev. William Cotton Risley, of Deddington, Oxon, left £35,976. "Blessed be ye poor." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." And all the rest of the Gospel blague.

The Rev. Canon John Gabriel Cromwell, M.A., aged eighty-four, of Upton Park, Slough, Bucks, for over fifty years Hon. Canon of Durham, for many years principal of the Durham Training College, and Rector of St. Mary, South Bailey, Durham, afterwards principal of St. Mark's College, Chelsea, and Rural Dean of Chelsea, and late Rector of Stisted, Essex, and Rural Dean of Braintree, left £20,711.

Rev. Edward Denny, vicar of St. Peter's, Upper Kennington, differs from Jesus Christ. The Prophet of Nazareth taught that if a thief stole your coat you should offer him your cloak too. The Vicar of St. Peter's collared a burglar and handed him over to the police. Perhaps the difference between the Master and the Disciple is due to the fact that the former had nothing to lose, while the latter is more favorably situated.

Charles William Woodward, a Deptford youth, employed at a butcher's, hung himself on a tree at Borstall Heath. His uncle stated that he had read a good deal of Socialist literature, but as a Bible was found in one of his pockets, his Socialism, if he had any, was probably of the Christian variety.

According to the *North China Herald* the missionary business is not likely to go on unchecked. The Emperor is being urged to form a Government Department to deal with missionary affairs. The secretary of the China Inland Mission admitted to a Reuter representative that "converts are rather given to using their connection with foreigners to obtain unfair advantages in the law courts." This is an old grievance, and that it may possibly be dealt with is a sign that China is raising her head from the dust of absolute submission to the Christian Powers. It appears, also, that "the question of the sale of land to missionary societies" is likely to be dealt with. The consequence is that the Christian missionaries, who have shamefully abused their privileges hitherto, are now beginning to protest that they desire "to interfere as little as possible with civil or political matters." Fear brings about a decency of attitude which religion never produced.

A well-known firm of publishers announces a new series of small volumes under the general title of "The World's Story Tellers." Many familiar names are in the list—but we miss Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

A Yarmouth paper introduces to its readers a new work on *Prehistoric Archaeology and the Old Testament* by the Rev. Dr. Astley, vicar of the Rudhams. This writer states the familiar conclusions of the Higher Criticism. He accepts Darwinism, discards the old theory of Bible inspiration, maintains that Christianity has really nothing to do with the scientific and other blunders of the ancient Jews in the Old Testament, and speaks of the original Yahweh (Jehovah) as "often cruel, vindictive, and jealous." The reviewer thinks that such a book is "likely to stem any incipient scepticism." But is not this a great mistake? The Higher Criticism promotes, instead of stemming, scepticism; for people whose eyes are once open will never stop where the Higher Critics want them to. The reviewer, as well as the author, may take this as a dead certainty.

Rev. Dr. Thompson, pastor of the most fashionable Presbyterian church in New Jersey, U.S.A., was engaged to be married to a rich widow of his congregation, but another lady suddenly turned up as his old sweetheart whom he was pledged to marry. The man of God settled his awkward problem with a revolver,—wisely using it upon himself.

General Booth says he is a Socialist. He told Mr. Stead so. But he added "a Salvationist Socialist." Canny old Showman!

Will the human race ever become sane? Christian Scientists have built a church in West London at a cost of £80,000. Twenty-six years after the death of Darwin!

The famous old garrison church at Berlin has been burnt out, and nearly all the war-flags hanging in the nave are destroyed. "He doeth all things well"—some times.

The Stormy Petrel, which appears to be a religious publication, has an article entitled "Sunday in London" in its issue of April 18. The writer refers to Hyde Park and its various propagandists. Here is what he says about a Free-thought speaker:—

"At that very moment a speaker belonging to the National Secular Society was earnestly addressing a Hyde Park audience, and trying to traverse the truths of the Christian religion. Being a clever dialectician, he found plenty of controversial material, and Christians with less nimble wits than he were easily worsted in argument."

Yes, the Atheist is only "a fool" when you are not tackling him.

We have received a new circular from Mr. Mark H. Judge, the honorary secretary of the Sunday Society, in which there is a reference to a recent letter (criticised in our columns last week) by Mr. Charles Hill, the secretary of the Lord's Day Rest Association. Mr. Hill denounced the Government for employing so much Sunday labor in keeping the national museums and galleries open for a handful of visitors in London. Mr. Judge points out that the National Gallery, for instance, had 49,856 Sunday visitors in 1906, and the labor-bill of keeping it open was only £217. "I challenge Mr. Hill," he says, "to point us to any other public service where so large a number of people are attended to at so small a cost." Mr. Hill does not respond. He is wise—in his way.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 26, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W. : at 7.30, "A Freethinker's View of the Shakespeare Memorial."

May 3, Liverpool ; 10, Aberdare.

To Correspondents.

R. IRVING.—We are obliged, but the Rev. Stanley Parker, late of Woolwich, now of Brighton, and soon we hope (for his own sake) of Heaven, is really not worth our frequent attention. He is naturally foolish, malicious, and mendacious ; and people who could be influenced by a person of his mental and moral calibre are hardly worth addressing in the interest of Freethought.

P. BOWEN.—Arrived on Tuesday morning ; obliged to abbreviate.

R. J. HENDERSON.—It will be useful. Thanks.

G. ROLEFFS.—Thanks for cuttings.

GORDON RANGLES.—Pleased to hear that, after reading the *Freethinker* for two years, you regard it as "the only twopenny-worth of really good reading" that you have yet met with.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

R. AXELLEY.—See "Acid Drops."

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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.

In spite of the horrid wintry weather and the holiday, which takes out of town so many people who can afford to pay for seats, there was a good audience at the Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The True Meaning of Easter." A feature of the meeting was the presence of a lady (Miss Keogh) in the chair.

Mr. Foote's last lecture of the present course at Queen's Hall will be delivered to-night (April 26). The subject is one of considerable present interest—"A Freethinker's View of the Shakespeare Memorial." Most of our readers are aware of the proposals now before the public for doing something in honor of the three-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death, in 1916. Mr. Foote will have something to say about these proposals, but the major part of his lecture will be devoted to exhibiting aspects of Shakespeare's genius which are generally, and too often deliberately, overlooked or ignored. Passages from the dramas will be read in illustration of the lecturer's argument. There ought to be a large attendance on this occasion.

This last Queen's Hall lecture will commence at 7.30—as usual. Those who intend to hear it should note the fact ; the previous lecture, for special reasons, having been timed for 7.15.

Some anonymous friend inserted in the *Daily Telegraph* a well-displayed advertisement of Mr. Foote's last two lectures at Queen's Hall. We tender him (or her) our thanks.

Liverpool "saints" will please note that Mr. Foote's lectures next Sunday (May 3) will be delivered, afternoon and evening, in the big Picton Hall. The place takes a lot

of filling, and we hope they will do their utmost to advertise the meetings amongst their more orthodox friends and acquaintances. The ordinary advertising, of course, will be done by the N. S. S. Branch, under whose auspices the meetings will be held. Admission to all seats is free, with a collection towards the necessary expenses, which are considerable. The Secular Society, Limited, in the special circumstances of the case, is undertaking the whole pecuniary responsibility.

The National Clarion Cycling Club gathered at Shrewsbury on Easter Sunday—the company including Mr. Blatchford—and placed a wreath on the statue of Charles Darwin "in appreciation of his great work on behalf of humanity." The authorities wished no demonstration to be held, but, in response to a call, a few words of warm eulogy of Darwin were pronounced by Mr. Harry Lowerison.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place on Whit-Sunday, as usual. The place of meeting this year is the Secular Hall, Manchester. We hope there will be a strong rally of representatives, and also individual members, from the Midlands and the North of England, and even from the South of Scotland. Notices of motion for the Conference Agenda should be sent in without delay to the general secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.

The West Ham Branch holds another "social" at the Workman's Hall on Wednesday next, April 29. Dancing and music, vocal and instrumental, will proceed from 7 to 11 p.m. The tickets are only sixpence each, and all the profit realised will go towards propaganda.

Nobody read Shelley, the mad Atheist, when he was pouring forth his masterpieces. At a recent book-auction in a London saleroom a first edition of *Adonais* fetched £165. What a change in less than a hundred years!

Mr. T. Fisher Unwin has included the *Life of Bradlaugh* in his "Half-Crown Library." There is nothing to be said by way of review at this time of day. The book is a reprint, but at such a low price it should find a large new public. For many reasons we trust that the publisher's enterprise will be rewarded. We should add, perhaps, that an Appendix, containing some correspondence between Bradlaugh and the late Lord Dufferin on Indian matters, shows that his lordship had a high opinion of the great agitator, whom he considered "a prudent, wise, and responsible person." So different was the Bradlaugh of those who understood him to the Bradlaugh of bigoted imaginations.

A lady has just died at Brighton at the great age of ninety-eight. She was the widow of the once well-known Mr. Peter Alfred Taylor, who was for nearly twenty years the Radical member of parliament for Leicester. Mr. Taylor was a Republican in politics, and the *Star* says a Unitarian in religion. Nominally he was a Unitarian, we believe, but actually he was probably a good deal more. He was a resolute and generous friend of civil and religious liberty. He assisted it in foreign countries, and he never deserted it in his own. He helped Bradlaugh in his great parliamentary struggle. When the imprisonment of the editor of the *Freethinker* took place for "blasphemy," and a memorial in favor of his release was signed by the leading "intellectuals" in England (including Herbert Spencer, Dr. E. B. Tylor, Professor Bain, and Professor Tyndall), the Home Secretary took no more notice of the document than if it had been a piece of waste-paper. But he was not allowed to get off quite easily. Mr. Peter Taylor rose in the House of Commons and asked Sir William Harcourt what reply he was going to make to such an important memorial. Sir William Harcourt, being a Liberal—just like the present Home Secretary, who sanctioned the recent "blasphemy" prosecution—gave an answer full of lies and slander—an answer he dared not give in any place where he was not protected by "privilege." It is not the Liberal Home Secretary, however, but his Radical interrogator, that we have most in mind at present. We desire to express, once more, our appreciation of Peter Taylor's courage and consistency. He was always for freedom—everyman's freedom—and not merely his own.

"Mr. Bernard Shaw" was the "Character Study" in a recent number of the *Daily News*. Naturally the writer of the two columns of small type had no room to mention the fact that "G. B. S." was once a declared Atheist, and is still a disbeliever in a personal God, a future life, the inspiration of the Bible, and the supernatural or super-normal personality of Christ.

Christianity and Blasphemy.—II.

A Lecture to the South-Place Ethical Society on Sunday morning, March 15, 1908.

BY HERBERT BURROWS.

(Concluded from p. 253.)

Now that is exactly on all fours with everything that I put to you when I was describing the evolution of the law on the subject. Boulter was prosecuted for his attack on Christianity, as for the same thing men in the past were imprisoned, tortured, put to death as felons, burned alive. I suppose he would hardly describe himself as a Freethought martyr in the old sense, but the fact remains that he was really indicted and prosecuted on the same grounds that Mr. Foote was prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned twenty-five years ago, and as many men and women have been convicted in the past against whom the Christian Church intolerantly set itself in motion. Of course the usual thing was done during this trial by the counsel for the prosecution. The terms of the indictment were left in the background, the real issue was never put to the jury that it was a prosecution for anti-Christianity, and every prejudice was raised by the continual reference to the true spirit and style of the words used by the defendant. I have in my time read a good many legal speeches of all kinds on all sorts of subjects, but I am bound to say I never read a more illogical speech than the one by the counsel for the prosecution in this case.

[Mr. Burrows here read passages from Mr. Bodkin's speech for the prosecution, which has already been printed in full in our columns.]

Now see what that means. First, no word must be said which may possibly offend in any way a hasty or ill-tempered man, for fear he may commit a breach of the peace. I was always under the impression that it is the duty of the police to prevent hasty men from committing breaches of the peace. I am almost afraid to attempt to reckon how many times my own open-air political speeches would have been stopped on those grounds, for I generally manage to offend someone. Next—and this is the most extraordinary thing—I, or anyone else, can advertise a meeting in a hall on any subject, people can deliberately come, pay to come if they choose, not knowing how I am going to treat my subject, and I can use language as shocking as ever human mind imagined (to use the counsel's own words), and nobody will interfere in the smallest degree; but if I do the same thing at the corner of a street, or in an open space where people may casually pass, who need not stop unless they choose, and who are probably too far away to hear what I say, I may be run in for blasphemy. The thing is more than ridiculous—it is grotesque. The fact was that, as in other cases, the counsel did not dare to face the main fact by sticking to the terms of the indictment, so he obscured the minds of the jury, and, in concert with the judge, obtained a verdict from them on what was really a false issue. For be it observed, for the offence, as he tried to make it out in his speech, the police have ample powers under their ordinary police acts. There is, of course, no legal right of street-meeting at all, to begin with. The law of obstruction can at once be brought in. Then for any case of bad or foul language, indecency, ordinary profanity, obscenity, or provoking to a breach of the peace, the ordinary police law covers every offence that can possibly be committed. The fact has to be faced, and it must be faced till, by agitation, that fact is a thing of the past, that the Christian religion is behind all this and like instances; that religion has been selected by the State, it receives State sanction, and to attack it is an offence against the law. Opinion has now advanced too far for every attack on it to be prosecuted, so the bigots who are behind the prosecutions which do take place ride away—as in this case they rode away—on side issues which they think will appeal to the ordinary unthinking

persons who do not see the enormous danger to civil and religious liberty which every one of these cases, even if they are but rare, discloses. Seize hold on this fact, and do not let it go, that it is opinion, and the expression of opinion, which is attacked in every one of them, and there can be no greater danger to the State or to the individual than the repression of free opinion on any subject under the sun. The free expression of such opinion without let or hindrance is the only true safeguard for human liberty, and without human liberty no progress is possible. Once allow the State to prohibit, under any guise whatever, the expression of opinion, even if that expression is given in the most blundering way by the poorest, most unlearned person in the realm, and the real citizenship of every member of the realm is immediately in danger. John Milton saw that when, 250 years ago, he wrote his *Areopagitica*, the greatest defence of free speech the English language contains. Coleridge saw it when, in the last century, he wrote: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all." And I say that he who attempts to repress the free expression of thought is in exactly the same position as they who, centuries ago, burned the body of the heretic because they could not argue with him. Better to face every danger, if danger there be, which may arise from free expression—face it by our own wisdom, our own thought, our own mental training—than allow the stifling of one honest word, even if it be spoken by the humblest, the most ignorant of the race. Yesterday I received a letter from the most eminent Nonconformist minister in England, in which he says:—

"Blasphemy laws are utterly out of date. They ought to have been abolished long ago. I trust your exposure of the false principle on which they are based will hasten the entire disappearance of this benighted and foolish policy. Truth and humanity do not require any such mistaken aids. They suffer from them. To urge their application in the name of Christianity is to repeat the crime which put the founder of the Christian religion to death."

That is a brave word, and for it I heartily thank my friend.

But this whole subject has two other aspects to which I wish briefly to refer. I ask this question, which seems to me a pertinent one: Why should Harry Boulter, or any man like him, be prosecuted for blasphemy, and the Rev. R. J. Campbell go scot free?

A few days ago was published this manifesto to Congregational Churches:—

[Mr. Burrows here read the Manifesto signed by Congregationalist leaders against the New Theology.]

What do these men think of the following passages in a sermon of Mr. Campbell's, delivered only a few weeks since?—

[Mr. Burrows here read extracts from Rev. R. J. Campbell's famous sermon on "Poor God," as a wretched wanking or an abominable criminal.]

Well might the daily paper in which it was reported call it a startling sermon! The counsel for the prosecution in the Boulter case declared that men's minds must not be shocked. We can imagine the shock which Mr. Campbell's words would give to the signers of the manifesto I have just read, and to many who attend his church to whom such words are sheer blasphemy; yet Mr. Campbell is honored of men, while the Freethinker stands in the dock. You may prosecute a man at Highbury Corner, but you must not touch his fellow-blasphemer when he stands in the pulpit of the City Temple.

But there is another side. Two days ago I was again in the House of Commons listening to the Unemployed Debate. I heard echoes—passionate echoes—of a movement which ere long will become not only troublesome, but possibly dangerous, to the ruling classes of this country. And, when that time comes, the principle which underlies the blasphemy laws—the repression of free opinion—will be tried in

another way. I can see opinion slowly crystallising in the most determined and violent opposition to men, for instance, like myself. And, personally, I object even now to the way in which my own views and ideas are characterised and described. Why should a poor man be prosecuted for blasphemy while a man like Lord Rosebery is allowed to say to a public meeting that the Socialism which I profess, in which I believe, which is as dear to me as a religion of humanity as the Christianity of the Archbishop of Canterbury is to him, that my Socialism is the death-blow to faith, freedom, liberty, property. If the Christians' feelings were hurt by Mr. Boulter, my feelings are hurt by Lord Rosebery—or they would be if I paid the smallest attention to him. But I can easily understand some hasty Socialist wanting to do to Lord Rosebery what the prosecuting counsel in the Boulter case imagined some hasty Christian might want to do to Boulter. I don't see why Lord Rosebery should be allowed to hurt people's feelings while another man is prosecuted for doing no more.

Take another instance on the same lines. I have here a recent book by Mr. Arnold Forster, M.P., an ex-Cabinet Minister, on *English Socialism of To-Day*, and here is how he sums up its supposed tendencies:—

[Here a strong passage was read attacking Socialism and Socialists in unsparing language.]

That is what he says you may expect from me and my school of thought, so I warn you to be careful of me. But why should he be allowed to hurt the feelings of the poor Socialist while the Christian is protected?

But of course the whole thing is ridiculous. Let Lord Rosebery and Mr. Arnold Forster go on. We laugh at them, and need not read them unless we like. Let us apply the same doctrine all round, and give to every man, whether Christian or anti-Christian, Socialist or anti-Socialist, Ethicist or anti-Ethicist, Freethinker or anti-Freethinker, believer or non-believer, the most perfect freedom to say what is in his heart, confident that in the long run truth is mighty, and will prevail.

I have just one more small instance which I cut out of the paper yesterday. I am, as you know, a fanatical teetotaler. How do you think I like this:—

"I verily believe that had the Devil himself put up at the last election, and been returned, the present Government would have made him Prime Minister or Chancellor of the Exchequer.....The rabid teetotaler is as bloodthirsty and brutal as the voriest savage; he will destroy your homes, rob you of your property, mutilate your character as law-abiding citizens, drive your women and children out into the streets, and will not rest content until he has destroyed you root and branch. He is, in fact, the only genuine and original Bogey Man."

True, Mr. Groves proceeded to redeem himself!

"Mr. Groves proceeded to caution his hearers as to the manner in which they conducted their campaign. There was, he said, a danger of them going too far. It was the moderate-minded man they wished to win over, and he could only be won over by quiet reasoning and sound argument."

But even if he had not thus jumped down his own throat I should not shut him up in jail. Let him wear himself out. And when he has done that I shall still be here.

In the course of this address I have mentioned the real blasphemy Act—the 9 and 10 Wm. III, ch. 32—which is supposed to be obsolete. I agree in one thing, and one thing only, with Justice Phillimore, who tried the Boulter case, when he said that he did not know what an obsolete Act of Parliament is. So long as it is on the Statute Book it can be used if necessary. This Act is stringent enough, and this morning I am going to bring myself under its provisions. It reads as follows:—

[Here the Act was cited, with which our readers are more or less familiar.]

Now this morning I formally and deliberately place myself in opposition to that Act, and challenge prosecution, and I have given notice to the daily press of what I intend to do. I was baptised in the Church of England, learned the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue as the Prayer Book has it, and was confirmed by the late Bishop of Norwich. I was educated in a church-school, and brought up in the Christian religion, and have made profession of it within this realm. By "advised speaking" this morning I deny not only that any of the persons in the Holy Trinity are God, but I deny the Trinity itself. I deny the orthodox Christian religion to be true, and I deny that the Holy Scriptures are of divine origin. If it should happen that I am prosecuted and convicted under this Act, I shall immediately proceed to deny again. Then I shall be convicted again, shall get three years' imprisonment, and be for ever incapable of holding any civil office within this realm. That will mean that the ambition—I believe the legitimate ambition—which I have had from boyhood, to be able to plead in the House of Commons the cause of the people among whom I was born, among whom I have lived, and among whom I shall die, will never be gratified. But if it should so happen that one day I take my place in that House, I pledge myself, as one of the founders of the old National Association for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, to introduce the Bill drafted by the late Justice Stephen, which should have been introduced and fought long ago.

I hope to live to see the day when that or a similar Bill shall be passed into law, and when the last vestiges of religious bigotry and intolerance shall be swept from the Statute Book of England.

"Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.
While sways the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophet's feet the nations sit."

And Lowell is right. The real Bible of Humanity can never be closed, for that Bible is the heart and the mind of man. And one day, when the true prophets of humanity shall have penetrated that heart to its inmost depths, the minds of men, forgetting the intolerance of the past, shall gaze eagle-eyed into the more glorious future, and shall know with absolute certainty that the Truth shall make them free, Liberty make wise.

Locke on Toleration.—II.

(Concluded from p. 245.)

LOCKE notices that the greatest zealots for persecution are quiet enough when the magistrate is not on their side. "Where they have not the power to carry on persecution," he says, "there they desire to live upon fair terms, and preach up Toleration." This is the attitude of all sects, and yet how absurd as well as wicked!

"In private domestic affairs, in the management of estates, in the conservation of bodily health, every man may consider what suits his own conveniency, and follow what course he likes best. No man complains of the ill management of his neighbors' affairs. No man is angry with another for an error committed in sowing his land, or in marrying his daughter. Nobody corrects a spendthrift for consuming his substance in taverns. Let any man pull down, or build, or make whatsoever expenses he pleases, nobody controls him; he has his liberty. But if any man do not frequent the church, if he do not there conform his behavior exactly to the accustomed ceremonies, or if he brings not his children to be initiated in the sacred mysteries of this or that other congregation; this immediately causes an uproar, and the neighborhood is filled with noise and clamor. Everyone is ready to be the avenger of so great a crime. And the zealots hardly have patience to refrain from violence and rapine, so long till the cause be heard, and the poor man be, according to form, condemned to the loss of liberty, goods, or life."

True, says Locke, a man may neglect the care of his soul, but so he may neglect his health or his estate; and how is either any business of mine?

Without explicitly saying so, Locke evidently saw, with Milton and Taylor, that the assumption of infallibility lies at the bottom of all persecution. If the magistrate coerce me on his own account, or on behalf of the Church, he is in either case imposing his own judgment on me; for "What difference is there, whether he lead me himself, or deliver me over to be led by others?" And why is his judgment better than mine on a matter in which I am deeply concerned and he not at all? Judging from history, princes have turned religion this way and that as it suited them. Even in England, "how easily and smoothly the clergy changed their decrees" under Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth. Now if the prince, says Locke, orders me to follow any particular avocation I will do so, for if I fail he can compensate me. But how can he compensate me in the life to come? If I take the wrong course thither, and I am once undone, "it is not in the magistrate's power to repair my loss, to ease my suffering, or to restore me in any measure, much less entirely, to a good estate. What security can be given for the kingdom of heaven?" Even if he happens to be right in the particular instance, his coercion will not save me. "I may grow rich by an art that I take not delight in; I may be cured of some disease by remedies that I have not faith in; but I cannot be saved by a religion that I distrust, and by a worship that I abhor."

With respect to public worship, Locke is ahead of Cromwell, who would not tolerate the Mass, and even ahead of Milton, who appears to have shared the Lord Protector's sentiment. Locke's rule is simple and incontrovertible. What is lawful outside a church is lawful inside, and what is unlawful inside is unlawful outside. He goes so far as to say "if any people, congregated upon account of religion, should be desirous to sacrifice a calf, I deny that they ought to be prohibited by a law. Melibœus, whose calf it is, may lawfully kill his calf at home, and burn any part of it that he thinks fit. For no injury is thereby done to anyone, no prejudice to another man's goods. And for the same reason he may kill his calf also at a religious meeting." But if it became necessary to stop the slaughter of beasts for some time, such sacrifices would have to cease, not on religious, but on political grounds.

If the religious worship of any church be idolatrous, the magistrate has still no right to interfere, for idolatry is a matter only of opinion among men, and whatsoever sin is in it is for God alone to judge. With his usual practical good sense, Locke takes an extreme illustration, so as to "trace this matter to the bottom."

"An inconsiderable and weak number of Christians, destitute of everything, arrive in a pagan country; these foreigners beseech the inhabitants, by the bowels of humanity, that they would succor them with the necessaries of life; those necessaries are given them, habitations are granted, and they all join together and grow up into one body of people. The Christian religion by this means takes root in that country, and spreads itself; but does not suddenly grow the strongest. While things are in this condition, peace, friendship, faith, and equal justice are preserved amongst them. At length the magistrate becomes a Christian, and by that means their party becomes the most powerful. Then immediately all compacts are to be broken, all civil rights to be violated, that idolatry may be extirpated: and unless these innocent pagans, strict observers of the rule of equity and the law of nature, and no ways offending against the laws of the society, I say, unless they will forsake their ancient religion, and embrace a new and strange one, they are to be turned out of the lands and possessions of their forefathers, and perhaps deprived of life itself. Then at last it appears what zeal for the Church, joined with the desire of dominion, is capable to produce; and how easily the pretence of religion, and the care of souls, serves for a cloak to covetousness, rapine, and ambition."

As to the tenets that may be publicly taught, Locke urges a wide tolerance. He expressly mentions

Roman Catholics, who were under legal disabilities, and Jews, who had not long been permitted to reside in England after centuries of banishment.

"The magistrate ought not to forbid the preaching or professing of any speculative opinions in any church, because they have no manner of relation to the civil rights of the subjects. If a Roman Catholic believe that to be really the body of Christ, which another man calls bread, he does no injury thereby to his neighbor. If a Jew does not believe the New Testament to be the Word of God, he does not thereby alter anything in men's civil rights. If a heathen doubt of both Testaments, he is not therefore to be punished as a pernicious citizen. The power of the magistrate, and the estates of the people, may be equally secure, whether any man believe these things or no."

Nothing could be plainer. "The temporal good and outward prosperity of society" is the only object of law, and "no man whatsoever ought to be deprived of his terrestrial enjoyments, upon account of his religion." But unfortunately Locke did not realise the full extent of the great principle which sounds like a refrain through his Letter. If the magistrate has no concern with religion, he has no concern with irreligion. It is not this or that *opinion*, but the *subject* itself, which is withdrawn from his jurisdiction. This is Locke's argument throughout; yet, strangely enough, he fails to see it himself when he comes to an ultimate test. His intolerance of the Romish Church which, by acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope, is really under the dominion of a foreign prince, was arguable on political grounds; but his intolerance of Atheism is nothing but sheer bigotry. Let us take his own words:—

"Those are not to be tolerated who deny the being of a God. Promises, covenants and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all. Besides also, those that by their atheism undermine and destroy all religion, can have no pretence of religion whereupon to challenge the privilege of a Toleration."

Like Cardinal Newman, we have "a high respect both for the character and the ability of Locke, for his manly simplicity of mind and his outspoken candor." We cannot, therefore, believe that he deliberately made a concession to the bigots for the sake of a hearing, or that he threw them the Atheists to glut their hunger in order to keep them from preying on each other. We assume that Locke meant what he said. In that case, it must be allowed that he fell a victim to prejudice in the very midst of his letter on Toleration. He had the testimony of history, and the weighty authority of Bacon, against the statement that Atheism was a source of disorder; and whatever he may have conjectured as to the veracity of Atheists, he must surely have seen sufficient proof of the mendacity of believers. But that is by the way. The real point is that he stultifies himself by giving up his own argument. After contending that religion and the commonwealth are entirely distinct, and that the magistrate has nothing to do with men's opinions, but only with their actions as these affect the public peace, he puts Atheists outside the pale of toleration on the ground that they have no religion at all. Which is exactly as though he had argued that the government had nothing to do with men's headgear, and then called on it to punish those who wore no hats.

Locke did not see—he could not see, for it has only dawned on us since his time—that this very notion, so carefully instilled by the priests, that morality depends on belief in the supernatural, is the mental justification of all bigotry. For if morality depends on belief, it must of course depend on the *right* belief, and the right belief is of course the possession of every church. Each sect, therefore, when it gets the upper hand, can conscientiously persecute all other sects in the interest of civil society. Nor, on the other hand, did Locke see that Toleration is essentially irreligious. No such idea arose in Christendom until scepticism began to spread. The Reformers never harbored the idea of

a truce with heresy. Luther and Calvin persecuted as heartily as the Pope. Toleration springs from doubt and indifference, and religion without bigotry is almost a contradiction in terms. G. W. FOOTE.

Stephen Girard.

ANY man may be a hero when surrounded by the pomp and circumstance of war, when the cheers of contending thousands, the roar of batteries and the crash of steel breeds murder in the blood, but picture an old man pacing the floor of a Philadelphia tenement house among the dead at the midnight hour, crooning a lullaby to some nameless babe breathing out its little life upon his bosom, and you find a hero, who, seeing at the end of life's fitful fever only an ever-dreamless sleep, performed a work greater than to carry a cross, and such a man was Stephen Girard.

Stephen Girard, founder of the famous college that still bears his name, was born at Bordeaux, France, in 1750. At a very early age—in fact, at or about fourteen—he took up a sea-faring life and was made cabin boy. One promotion after another came to him; passing through all the various stages of command, he was finally made master of a ship in 1773. Three years later, he settled in Philadelphia, and opened in business, in a small store on Water-street, which he made his home for upwards of sixty years.

During this period he became the owner of a large fleet of sailing vessels, and his enterprise enabled him to accumulate a vast fortune. He imported and exported goods from all parts of the world, and one of the most notable features connected with these vessels is that he had named them after some prominent Freethinker, some philosopher, or rationalist exponent. His ships bore such names as Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Helvetius, and the like. Being a Freethinker himself, he had no use for evangelical Christianity, and never attended church. Yet he did not object to his employees professing such religious proclivities as they pleased, for his liberalism was such that he had a respectful toleration for the rights of others that, while he wished to enjoy his own religious freedom, he never denied a like freedom to others. And it was such a man, standing in the confux of two eternities, without belief in God or hope of any future life, firm in love and charity, bid defiance to destiny and played the part of a man.

History will know of Stephen Girard as the founder of his college for nameless orphans. But we know of him now as one who, when Philadelphia was plagueswift, and the sanctiloquent preachers had fled, when husbands abandoned their wives and mothers their babes, so frightful was the pestilence, so busy the grim reaper, never faltered, and this man, then the wealthiest in America, with neither kith nor kin to hold him by the heart-strings in that stricken city, refused to seek a place of personal safety, became a common nurse, and through the long, hot days and fever-laden nights toiled from house to house and from room to room, beating back the pestilence, seeking to suffer and to save. "Love thy neighbor as thy self." So reads the Christian law, but Stephen Girard went further and beyond the statute. Thus one Atheistical Girard became of more real human value than all the ministers of the gospel who claimed Philadelphia as a home.

The people of the Quaker City knew Girard only to love him, and they did love him until the day of his death, which occurred in December, 1831, at the age of 81 years. To those people he was of blessed memory. At his death it was found he had disposed of his great wealth by making a number of bequests in which his great liberality of spirit was again made manifest. Among these bequests were, Pennsylvania Hospital, \$30,000; Deaf and Dumb Asylum, \$20,000; Orphan Asylum, \$10,000; Lancaster Public School, \$10,000; Society for Distressed Sea-Captains, \$10,000; City of Philadelphia, \$500,000; For the building of canals in Pennsylvania, \$300,000; For the construction and maintenance of a college for poor orphan boys, \$6,000,000. In his will he made the following provision touching the endowment of the college:—

"I enjoin and require that no ecclesiastic, missionary, or minister of any sect whatever, shall ever hold or exercise any station or duty whatever in the said college; nor shall any such person ever be admitted for any purpose or as a visitor, within the premises appropriated to the purposes of the said college. In making this restriction, I do not mean to cast any reflection upon any sect or persons whatsoever; but as there are such a multitude of sects, and such diversity of opinion among them, I desire to keep the tender minds of the orphans, who are to derive advantage from this bequest, free from the excitement which clashing doctrines and sectarian controversy are so apt to produce. My desire is that all the instructors and teachers in the college shall take

pains to instil into the minds of the scholars the purest principles of morality, so that, on their entrance into active life, they may, from inclination and habit, evince benevolence toward their fellow creatures, and a love of truth, sobriety, and industry, adopting at the same time such religious tenets as their natural reason may enable them to prefer."

In spite of the above testamentary provision the purpose of Girard has been thwarted, the will broken through a superstition-tainted court, and to-day the Church has practical control over the college which the money of this noted infidel founded.

But the glory of Girard can never fade. No amount of superstition can dim its brightness. Like Paine, his deeds stand as his greatest monuments. More than marble column or bronze figure, they speak unto all mankind in certain tones.—*Blue Grass Blade* (Lexington, U.S.A.).

"THERE IS NO GOD."

I found thee not by the starved widow's bed,
Nor in the sick-rooms where my dear ones died;
In cities vast I hearken'd for Thy tread,
And heard a thousand call Thee, wretched-eyed,
Worn out and bitter. But the heavens denied
Their melancholy Maker. From the dead
Assurance came nor answer! Then I fled
Into these wastes, and raised my hands, and cried
"The seasons pass—the sky is as a pall"—
Then wasted hands on withering hearts we press—
There is no God, in vain we plead and call,
In vain with weary eyes we search and guess—
Like children in an empty house sit all,
Castaway children, lorn and fatherless.

—Robert Buchanan.

The infamous Christian dogma of the atonement is based upon the notion of suffering as something good in itself. The suffering must be there, even though it be the just that suffer. It has entered into Catholic asceticism. The scourgings and macerations of the monk were conceived of as, so to say, the filling up of the cup of the atonement by voluntarily increasing the sum of suffering in his own person with the view of being the more acceptable to the Deity. In the last resort asceticism meant of course the doctrine of the inherent evil of matter. Pain was good as tending to destroy matter. Pain was the enemy of the "natural man," and therefore the friend of the "spiritual man."—*E. Belfort Bax*.

An infinite being must be conditionless, and for that reason there is nothing that a finite being can do that can by any possibility affect the well-being of the conditionless. This being so, man can neither owe nor discharge any debt or duty to an infinite being. The infinite cannot want, and man can do nothing for a being who wants nothing. A conditioned being can be made happy, or miserable, by changing conditions, but the conditionless is absolutely independent of cause and effect.—*Ingersoll*.

GOD DID NOT INSPIRE THIS, BUT IT IS JUST AS FUNNY.

I was bathing in that pleasant sea near Marsolles one summer's afternoon, when I discovered a very large fish, with his jaws quite extended, approaching me with the greatest velocity. There was no time to be lost, nor could I possibly avoid him. I immediately reduced myself to as small a size as possible, by closing my feet and placing my hands also near my sides, in which position I passed directly between his jaws, and into his stomach, where I remained some time in total darkness, and comfortably warm. The fish was discovered by the people on board an Italian trader, then sailing by, who harpooned him in a few minutes. As soon as he was brought on board I heard the crew consulting how they should cut him up, so as to preserve the greatest quantity of oil. As I understood Italian, I was in most dreadful apprehensions lest their weapons employed in this business should kill me also; therefore I stood as near the centre as possible. They began by opening the belly. As soon as I perceived a glimmering of light, I called out lustily to be released from a situation in which I was now almost suffocated. It is impossible for me to do justice to the degree and kind of astonishment which sat upon every countenance at hearing a human voice issue from a fish, but more so at seeing a naked man walk upright out of his body.—*The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*.

The Evil One has left, the evil ones are stable.

—Goethe.

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.): 7.15, G. W. Foote, "A Freethinker's View of the Shakespeare Memorial."

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY (Fife Hall, Fife-road): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "What do we Know about Jesus?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Doctrine of Atonement." Selections by the Band before lecture.

OUTDOOR.

CAMDERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Brockwell Park, 3.15, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Rationalists' Club, 12 Hill-square): 3, meets for Discussion.

GLASGOW (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Class—Guillermo Azor, a Lecture; 6.30, a Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, W. A. Rogerson, "James Thomson (B.V.)."

OUTDOOR.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 3.30, a Lecture; The Mound, 7, a Lecture.

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S.: Market Cross, at 8, H. S. Wishart, "Christ's Useless Sacrifice." Thursday, April 23, at 8, "Christism's Oppression of Woman."

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S.: Town Hall Square, Friday, April 24, at 8, H. S. Wishart, "God, Christ, and the Bible 'agin' the Government."

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