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*Principle is a passion for truth.*—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

## Mr. Balfour on "Christian Truth."

THE Pan-Anglican Congress is a very free and irresponsible body. Nobody is committed—not even its own members—to anything it says. Its discussions do not lead up to resolutions, and as there is no voting at the finish the participants in the various so-called debates can chatter and sentimentalise to their hearts' content. This they have been doing for a whole week, to the amusement of all who understand the true inwardness of their proceedings. The Congress is really nothing but a business move and a trade advertisement. Only one subject is of any importance to a Christian Congress in the present condition of things—and that is the truth of Christianity. This religion is either true or false. If it be true, it is all right; if it be false, nothing can save it. The question of the future of *all* the Churches lies in a nutshell. But all Church Congresses leave that nutshell severely alone. They are afraid to crack it. They pretty well know what is inside. They know that a good many other people know it too.

The futility of this Pan-Anglican Congress is admitted even in a pious newspaper like the *Daily Express*. "From such a gathering," our contemporary says, "nothing but talk can result." And it sneeringly adds that "the ecclesiastical view on most questions can be prophesied with considerable certainty." In fact, the Congress simply exists "for the airing of strictly limited views and the repetition of crystalised opinions." No doubt our contemporary has been provoked into making this admission by the expression of what it calls "a sentimental form of Socialism" in the discussions on that subject. But the admission is there all the same.

It was quite fitting that the Right Honorable A. J. Balfour, M.P., should take part in the public exhibitions of this Congress. He was the principal speaker at a crowded public meeting in the Albert Hall on Monday evening, held in connection with Section B, which had been dealing with "Christian Truth and other Intellectual Forces." Mr. Balfour had a great reception, and he deserved it at the hands of such an assembly. He is the most skilful (and slippery) dialectician of the age. The late Mr. Gladstone was nothing to him. That gentleman sometimes committed himself, and occasionally said what he meant. Mr. Balfour never commits himself, and if you know what he means it is only as a matter of inference. The only time he talks plainly is when he says nasty things of his opponents. When it comes to theology, Mr. Balfour can beat about the bush in the happiest manner. Mentally speaking, his tongue must be in his cheek all the time; and as he does not appear to possess the rudiment of an intellectual conscience, we daresay he thoroughly enjoys the pastime.

The subject of "Christian Truth" was just the one for Mr. Balfour to deal with. It suited his mental and moral qualities to a nicety. It was made

for him—and he for it. The very title is a subtle absurdity. An adjective before "Truth" is fatal. It is like saying that a man is tolerably honest. Truth is truth—and there is an end of it. You may divide it into departments, of course, such as astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and physiology. But division is not qualification. Dr. Johnson said that the adjective is the natural enemy of the substantive, and this is a striking illustration. "Christian" is the natural enemy of "Truth"—as "Truth" is the natural enemy of "Christian."

Mr. Balfour's task was to put that big meeting in a good temper with themselves, and he performed it skilfully. He began by scattering a little apprehension in order to heighten the confidence which was to follow. "I have in the course of my lifetime," he said, "seen what I conceive to be a great change passing over the thinking portion of mankind on this subject." Trembling amongst the audience! Was he going to give them away? Would he tell them that the thinking portion of mankind laughed at Christianity? Oh dear, no. He speedily reassured them. The change he meant was this. A generation ago religion was thought to be "the last dying phase" of the history of superstition, but that view is not the one which is "now gaining ground either among philosophers or among men of science." Whereupon the audience breathed again. And when the orator declared that this view "is already antiquated," the big fresh breath was used for loud "cheers." They smiled—he smiled—and we smile.

Mr. Balfour went on pursuing the same policy. First, he remarked that Darwinism had settled the old Design Argument. He hesitated to say that this argument was "worthless," but it had "lost much of its old efficacy in the stress of recent biological discoveries." Whereupon the faces of the audience fell again. But the orator had comfort in store for them. There was one phenomenon which supplied an unassailable argument for religion. It was "the existence of reason." Reason itself seems to be against religion, but the *existence* of reason seems to be as much in its favor. And how?

"If reason be really only the product of irrational and mechanical causes going back to some illimitable past, reaching forward to some illimitable future, and accidentally, in the course of that endless chain producing for a brief moment in the history of the Universe a few individuals capable of understanding the world in which they live, what confidence can you place in reason if you use it for any purpose beyond the merely life-preserving or race-preserving qualities for which alone, on this theory, it was brought into existence?"

Now we wish to know in what respect this sort of dialectic is better than thimble-rigging. If there are only a few individuals who understand the world they live in, they *are* only a few, whether their reason originates in Nature or in God. But if human reason is really of divine origin, in the vast majority of cases—even including Mr. Balfour's—what a miserable product it is of infinite intelligence! Nothing but man's vanity could ever have persuaded him that he was made in the image of God. And as for not trusting our reason, will Mr. Balfour kindly tell us what else we can trust to?

G. W. FOOTE.

### Testing the Power of Prayer.

THE belief in the efficacy of prayer has fallen upon evil days. In the language of the street there is a "slump" in this branch of the great spirit business; investors are wary, and vendors are correspondingly depressed. While investors were led to believe in the possibility of a material dividend upon their capital, business continued fairly brisk. It is true the dividend was not forthcoming, but people were told of others who had received splendid returns, and by this means their faith was kept whole. But now that this very old-fashioned "dodge" has lost its power, people are informed that it is wrong—even wicked—to expect any material response to prayer. The responses to prayer are purely spiritual. Their effect is seen in an altered frame of mind; and as everyone is continually experiencing mental change, the vendors of spiritual wares see that it is difficult to prove that the change is not due to the prayers that have been said. In this way, prayer is reduced to a mental tonic or an intellectual anæsthetic. You must believe, in the first place, that praying will do you good, and then when you have prayed you will experience benefit from the performance. Many people, it may be noted, have been cured of imaginary diseases by doses of bread pills or colored water.

At present there is a fairly good opportunity of testing the value of prayer in non-material matters. London is swarming with bishops, clergymen, and delegates from all parts of the globe to the Pan-Anglican Congress; and on June 15 there was a monster gathering of these gentlemen in Westminster Abbey. Such a gathering of bishops had in all probability never before occurred in the whole history of the building. The splendid architecture of the building, combined with the music of Sir Frederick Bridges, must have made the place appear like heaven—only the bishops would have destroyed the illusion. There was a lengthy service and a most elaborate series of prayers—of which more hereafter. At present I wish to emphasise the fact that, under the circumstances, these prayers were out of the ordinary run. Very few of those who prayed were amateurs; nearly all were experts; many of the highest professional quality and standing. If any audience ever knew how to pray, what to pray for, and the value of praying, that audience may be credited with the knowledge. And if there is a chance of any prayer being answered, those prayers may easily be placed first on the list. If God Almighty would think twice before damning a person of the quality of the old French aristocrat, he would certainly pause ere neglecting the petitions of so august an assembly.

The prayer, given out by the Dean and repeated by the congregation, consisted of nine clauses ranging over a wide variety of subjects, significant both on account of what they asked for and for what they omitted. The first petition desired that the belief in God might be strengthened, and that believers might be induced to fearlessly accept all truth which "by his providence" is revealed to them. Although at first sight it seems fitting that the belief in God, as being the obvious basis of all else, should be given first place, on a second glance it seems to suggest an uneasy sense of all not being as it should be. It suggests that the belief in God *needs* strengthening, and that this vast audience of professional spirit merchants realised the outlook to be distinctly unpromising. It would have looked better had the belief in Deity been taken for granted as being so solidly based as to be fearless of assault, and therefore unconscious of any need for strengthening. The petition, too, would have been more gratifying if, instead of the request that they might accept all truth revealed to them, the assembled parsons had prayed that they might be led to reject all the error they at present entertained. If only that could be brought about the next twelve months might witness more startling developments in the Christian Church than has transpired during the whole of its history. The only objection to such a prayer is that it would

sound like "Oh Lord, help us to commit suicide at the earliest opportunity."

Following this, came the prayer for a "fuller understanding of our duty towards our neighbor to-day, that we may help to purify our civilisation and make it truly Christian." That Christians should be led to a better understanding of their duty towards their neighbor may be said to be one of the objects of Freethought propaganda, and so far has our best wishes for its realisation. And it may also be fairly urged that Freethinkers have done not a little to bring this about. Left to itself, there is not any great probability that any of the Christian churches would ever have looked for their neighbor outside the walls of their own Church. As a mere matter of fact, Christianity has always managed to erect divisions between people where none already existed, while its influence in bringing together people of different race or country has been practically *nil*. The steamboat, the train, the press, even trade, has done far more to bring people together and to establish a sense of neighborliness on a basis of common needs and common aspirations.

Whether we ought to desire to make our civilisation Christian is very much a matter of opinion. If "Christian" is used in any honest sense, the comment may well be that the world has seen several attempts in this direction and the results are not likely to induce people, nowadays, to repeat the experiment. When Constantine removed the capital of his empire from Rome to Byzantium, he established a Christian civilisation, and the result was seen in the very word "Byzantism" becoming a synonym for all that was decadent in morals, sociology, and intellectual life. During the long centuries over which, nearly the whole of Europe, Christianity held unquestioned dominion, an attempt was made on a grand scale to make civilisation Christian. And the result of that attempt bears the record of some of the worst pages in European history. In Geneva, John Calvin made another attempt on the same lines; and during the two hundred years that Calvinism maintained its supremacy, Geneva witnessed a strange dearth of scientific workers, although since its downfall the Genevan output has been well up to the level of the rest of Europe. In England, in Scotland, and in America, puritanism tried to make civilisation "truly Christian," and in each case an outraged social sense has sooner or later ended its supreme control. To make our civilisation "truly Christian" would mean to re-introduce the numerous superstitions that the last hundred years of progress has driven out; it would mean to recommence burning witches and imprisoning heretics, to cure disease by prayer, and to trust in God for that which only human effort can accomplish. The Peculiar People try it, in their way, to make our civilisation "truly Christian," and other Christians send them to prison as dangerous criminals.

One can readily believe that the prayer that God would inspire men and women to devote themselves to the Christian ministry would be uttered with peculiar fervor; for there is no question that both in quantity and quality the state of the ministry leaves much to be desired. The complaint is that candidates for the ministry are getting fewer, while the quality leaves much to be desired. And there is this difference between the clerical and other professions. Elsewhere, the demand creates the supply. Here, the supply creates the demand; or, to be more precise, the parson has to create the appetite for the commodity in which he deals. Thus, the greater the number of the clergy the greater the likelihood that people will be induced to think religion necessary to their welfare. The smaller the number of the clergy the greater the probability that people will realise how unnecessary religion is. Thus, a diminution in the number of the clergy, instead of sending up the value of those who remain, bids fair to destroy their value altogether. We may well believe, then, that this prayer was re-echoed with the greatest good will. The public will have a chance of judging in the future how far the prayer is answered.

There was also a prayer for "wisdom and charity in dealing with the problems of religious education." No fault can be found with the "wisdom" of the Church in this matter, but why "charity"? There is no charity in it; it is pure business, and the Church acts with—from its own point of view—unquestionable wisdom. Churchmen know that if people are to be made Christian the work must be accomplished while they are young. To believe in Christianity one must accept before understanding it. Let people reach maturity without Christianity, and, provided they have been fairly educated, the chance of making Christians of them is very remote. The whole salvation of the churches depends upon capturing the children. Providence cannot endow them with greater wisdom in this matter—unless it makes them wise enough to sacrifice themselves for the rest of the community. If they wish to keep people Christian, any other course than they are pursuing would be downright folly.

It is noteworthy that the prayer had nothing to say about the needs of *children* in connection with education. This aspect seems to strike but few. Something was said of the duty of parents and the sacredness of the home—as though those who will have nothing to do with religious education are lacking in their sense of the value of home life. Really what the Churches understand by the rights of the parent in this matter is the *power* of the parent to force upon children as absolute truths his own speculative opinions. But this no parent is justified in doing; it is a tyrannous exercise of accidental power and position. What Christians ought to pray for is less egotism and a finer sense of justice in relation both to their own and other people's children. And if, in addition, it could be generally recognised that the education question is not so much a parent's question, or a parson's question, as it is a children's question, we might much sooner reach a satisfactory and permanent settlement.

At any rate, the exhaustive prayers of the Pan-Anglican delegates will give the world a chance of seeing what is the real value of prayer. If in the near future definite religious instruction, at the public expense, is firmly established in the schools; if the number of people who believe in God undergo a rapid increase; if there is also a great increase in the number of candidates for the ministry, and a considerable improvement in the quality; if Christians display a more neighborly feeling towards other people; if there is greater wisdom displayed in the way in which the Gospel is presented to non-Christian people; if all these things come to pass in a quite unprecedented measure, then we may conclude that the efforts of the huge crowd of praying experts have had something to do with the change. The result may be awaited with curiosity, if not with confidence.

C. COHEN.

### Paul.

IN Dante's noble poem of the *Divine Comedy*, the dreamer climbs to the top of the hill of Purgatory, and wanders in a park where grass spreads in lawns, and rivers run, and great trees lift their branches; and there he sees a great procession of figures famous in Biblical history. Among them, two walk together—the grave and learned physician, St. Luke, and a man who carries a glittering sword. The sword-bearer is St. Paul, the blade signifying the clear, keen, burning spirit of his teaching and character. This Paul gives his name to more books of the New Testament than any other writer. Thirteen letters or pamphlets are marked with his name. In the earlier half of the Nineteenth Century, scholars began to doubt whether some of them were really the work of Paul. For a period, however, they fairly well agreed that four epistles (Romans, Corinthians I. and II., and Galatians) were genuine letters from the Apostle's own hand. And now, when we open the *Encyclopædia Biblica*—the

last great Bible dictionary published in England—we find Professor van Manen affirming that not a single one of the thirteen was written by Paul. The difficult problem arises whether we can still regard Paul as a historic personage and accept the the Pauline epistles as correct mirrors of his creed.

Let me try to give clearness to the question by an illustration taken from our own time. This is the age of Socialism, in the sense that Socialism is continually discussed and continually influences life and politics. In Socialism, as in so many other important phases of history, the movement is mainly kept going by a little group of thinkers who are surrounded by a larger, and these by a larger, and so on till you take in the Labor Party as a whole. The first group, whose thoughts set all the other people's thoughts at work, are Nineteenth Century minds, such as Robert Owen, Lassalle, Karl Marx, Engels, and such men as Comte and Ruskin who, though not actually Socialists, belonged to the same spirit and gospel. Upon them follow such agitators as Bebel in Germany, Jaurès in France, Hyndman, Keir Hardie, Snowden, and Macdonald in England, and so on. Now, suppose bits of the writings and speeches of these men were put together in a scrap-book, along with the cuttings from such journals as *Justice*, the *Labor Leader*, etc., and suppose this book—this manifesto of a group—were handed down to posterity as the work of one hand. It might perhaps be labelled the book of Karl Marx, because Marx was the chief spokesman of the movement. You might say that the people of the future would be misled as to the real history of Socialism, because Marx never wrote the book as it stands. But would it not also be true that, on the whole, they would get a moderately accurate idea of the thoughts, hopes, and feelings that make up the Socialist revolution?

Even if the Christian "Pauline" pamphlets are not Paul's, or only four of them are (as printed), we may still believe that they picture for us the ideas and aspirations of a group of religious reformers who lived at the end of the first century and in the first half of the second. For my own part, I think that, at the back of the letters in the New Testament, there is a real Paul—a real hero and missionary—whose personality we can catch glimpses of, in spite of obvious legends, and doubtful writings. He was (we must allow a margin of uncertainty all along) a native of Asia Minor, that romantic peninsula which faces Egypt on one side, and the isles of Greece on another. It was a land of intense religiousness, where wild-haired women roamed the hills and glens in search of the lost god Attis, and priests emasculated themselves in honor of the earth-goddess Amma, and the worshipers of Sandan, the sun-god, burned the god in symbolic effigy with solemn funeral rites. In the midst of these enthusiasms, Paul's Hebrew education had taught him rigid observance of Sabbaths and feasts and Mosaic prescriptions as to diet and hygiene. He was earnest, nervous, passionate, idealist. He would give his life for a gospel, just as Joan of Arc would give her life for France, or a Russian democrat give his life for the freedom of Russia. A change took place in his philosophy, though not in his character. A new ideal flamed across the sky, and it was represented by the name of Christ. The thirteen Pauline pamphlets do not identify this Christ with the Gospel Jesus. They do not allude to the shepherds of Bethlehem, the wise men from the East, the raising of Lazarus, the feeding of the five thousand, the riding into Jerusalem on an ass, and many other myths. Paul went his own individual way. He did not follow other Christians. He always said his revelation came direct from God. What, then, did the Christ ideal mean to him?

Practically two things. One was charity; the other was spiritual freedom. The superb hymn to Charity closes with the musical declaration, "Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love"; and this is well matched by the significant counsel, "Owe no man anything, save to

love one another; love works no ill to his neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." Then remark the other doctrine—that of spiritual freedom—as expressed in the following verses (which I have put into modern English):—

"If any man is united to Christ, he becomes a new being; the old things are passed away; behold, they have become new.....Where the spirit of the Lord is, there liberty is.....I have died to the Mosaic law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, yet I am alive, not as my old self, but Christ lives in me.....If righteousness can be attained by practising the Torah [law of Moses], then Christ's death was useless" (Galatians ii.).

In other words, if once men devoted themselves to Christ, they could dispense with law-books, priestly codes and orthodoxies. The spirit of Christ would make them free, and teach them in each emergency how to act, and how to show their love towards all men—Jew, Gentile, bondmen, freemen—Christ being all in all. Mr. J. M. Robertson has suggested that Paul may have belonged to a society of Christ-men or Christians, who signified their dedication to the new pioneer faith by actually slashing their bodies with knives. In the Galatian pamphlet Paul says,—“O foolish Galatians, who has led you from the truth, you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was obviously set forth crucified?” It is possible that Paul is reminding them of some dramatic ritual in which his own hands and feet had been cut in token of service of Christ. In any case, that was the temper and zeal in which he preached, worked and died. No hardships stayed him; no danger barred. He labored as Mazzini labored for the unity of Italy, or Gambetta for France, or Lloyd-Garrison for negro-emancipation. Here is the graphic recital of his wanderings:—

"In stripes uncounted, in deadly situations oft. From the Jews five times I received 39 stripes. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once stoned; thrice I was shipwrecked: a night and a day have I floated on the sea; in frequent journeyings, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the desert, in perils among traitors; in labor and toil, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. And besides these physical trials, there presses upon me a daily anxiety for all the churches."

What were these churches? They were little companies of the proletariat, meeting in caves, in back chambers, in obscure recesses, much as the I. L. P. Branches or Social Democrats or Secularists of a later age,—working-folk groups who encouraged one another in their unsectarian religion of love, and spiritual freedom from ecclesiastical canons. Many were ill-educated. Some were fanatical shouters, disturbing their own friends with unmeaning "tongues," and claiming sacred authority for their hubbub, just as clamant cranks worry progressive societies in the present day. Paul's Corinthian pamphlet portrays the difficulties he had to encounter in the local "church." At times he speaks to these people as Cromwell spoke to a troublesome House of Commons. But whatever he said or did, they loved him. He exercised a magnetic personal influence. Unreliable as the book of *Acts* is, it contains a charming passage depicting Paul taking leave of the plebeian crowd of Christ-men at Miletus by the Grecian Sea. He says he has coveted nobody's belongings; he has worked for his living; he has tried to illustrate the duty of helping the weak, just as the Master had himself had taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive. At the end of the fraternal address, he and the Christ-folk kneel on the sand. Then they accompany him to the ship. They watch it recede to the horizon, "sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken that they should see his face no more." None knows the manner of his death. Perhaps the sword which he carries on Dante's hill of Purgatory is the sword of a Roman executioner.

The incident at Miletus breathes the very spirit of the social missionary. Take away a few theological or political expressions, and prophets and pioneers in all ages are one family in feature and

message,—Christian, Jew, Buddhist, French Revolutionary, Polish patriot, Irish Home-ruler, Socialist propagandist in market-places, Freethought agitator in shabby halls. They are eternal testimonies to the fact that the real bonds that bind the souls of men are not the cash bonds, not the economic bonds, not the Preferential Tariff bonds, but the bonds of a Cause, a Gospel, a Movement, a Social Passion, a new Religious Method. Money appeals to the stomach and the bowels. But the Cross, the Crescent, the Red Flag, the image of Humanity,—these appeal to the heart, and flash life into the very fibres of the soul.

The Jesus of the Four Gospels is narrow, Jewish, legendary; he never stirs beyond the region of Palestine. His Sermon on the Mount is a loose set of maxims, unconnected by definite philosophy. Paul has a doctrine (or if you will, say the Pauline school), a system, a theology. His creed is organic, and is therefore capable of being planted in a church here, a church there, and so evolving into a corporate life. That life was the Catholic Church,—an organisation that kings had to reckon with; a power that established its citadels in all quarters of the world, St. Peter's in the south of Europe, St. Paul's in the north, typifying its dominion; one of the most remarkable achievements of human constructive genius.

Its glory must decline. The material empire of Rome had to yield to new needs. The spiritual empire of Rome must also yield to new needs. The future lies with the sociocratic Religion of Humanity. The cathedral of the future will not, as does St. Paul's, show a cross of pain and tragedy to the world, but the mother whose protecting arms will enfold her children, and smile away the sorrows of the past. Humanity will make a new church for itself, on the walls of which will be hung the ragged banners,—never to be carried again,—of old militarisms and class-wars. But the new church will ever cherish grateful remembrance of the heroes of the old. It will revere the name of Paul, the propagandist who said to the people, "We are members one of another."

F. J. GOULD.

### True, but Fatal, Arguments.

WHATEVER the New Theology is, or is not, it cannot be regarded, nor does it even pretend to regard itself, as identical with the Christianity either of Jesus or of Paul; and, so far is it from being synonymous with the Christianity of the historic Church, that it does not hesitate to condemn it in the strongest terms at its command. For the last two years Mr. Campbell has been attacking orthodoxy without mercy; and, from a Freethinker's point of view, the attack is just and fair. We are in complete agreement with the New Theologians in their denunciation of ecclesiastical Christianity, and our own denunciation of it has never been more violent than theirs is. But are they really aware of the true significance of what they are doing? Do they know that the arguments by which they seek to discredit the Old Theology are equally applicable against the New? Let us consider a few test cases.

Mr. Campbell, for example, speaks of the "glorified Christ who, without ceasing to be Jesus, contains something immeasurably vaster than any earthly personality can ever express." Then, in answer to someone who asks him whether he thinks of Jesus "as an influence and an ideal, or as a continuous personal force operating in the world of human thought and action," he says:—

"It seems to be incredible that a personality so transcendently great as that of Jesus should ever cease to act in human society. The same may apply to other personalities of lesser power and range, but I cannot feel that Christian devotion has been mistaken in assuming the presence of Jesus as a living force in the guidance of every movement that has ever arisen for the emancipation and uplifting of mankind. In the

days of his flesh, he was limited and circumscribed; that cannot be so now. All the spiritual quality, all the moral vision, which governed his mission then, must be operating now, but in a far higher degree."

Had Mr. Campbell been a logician, he would have seen how utterly self-destroying his Christology is. He asserts that Jesus was all that Christian devotion has believed him to be, and that the "glorified Christ, without ceasing to be Jesus," is infinitely more. He also affirms that both Jesus and the glorified Christ signify "a continuous personal force operating in the world of human thought and action," and guiding every good movement. Very well; but if there is an atom of truth in that teaching, how has it come to pass that a movement initiated by the earthly Jesus, and guided in all its developments by the glorified Christ, now deserves nothing but the contempt and scorn of all thinking people? If orthodox or ecclesiastical Christianity is false, and doing incalculable harm in the world, as Mr. Campbell and other Freethinkers believe, what becomes of the glorified Christ? On the assumption that he exists, the history of Christianity is an insoluble riddle; and on the assumption that the Old Theology is a tissue of lies, his existence is unthinkable. Thus, in endeavoring to cut the ground from under the Old Theology, Mr. Campbell is, at the same time, undermining the foundations of the New. His arguments against the Old are true, but they are equally fatal to the New.

Had historic Christianity been true, it would have been an unqualified success from the beginning. Its failure proves its falseness, and its falseness demonstrates the non-existence of the trinity of supernatural persons said to be in charge of its destiny. When the New Theologians first appeared on the scene, their self-confidence was immense. They blustered and swaggered in the most amusing fashion. To the Secularists they said: "Before our arrival you were doing a really useful work. The Old Theology dogmas deserved all they got from you; but now we have come, your occupation is gone. Orthodoxy is already slain, and you cannot touch us." On hearing this, instead of feeling alarmed and slinking silently out of the field like beaten dogs, the Secularists retorted thus: "Beautiful New Theologians, we rejoice to see you; up to a point you are engaged in the same iconoclastic mission as ourselves; but we wish politely to point out to you that, in slaying the Old Theology, you are also destroying your own, because both claim to derive life from the same source." This argument is absolutely inescapable. What discredits one theology discredits all. What flings the Old Theology overboard pitilessly hurls the New after it. What befalls the one befalls the other likewise.

All who disagree with Mr. Campbell are hopelessly in the wrong. Only he and his friends can be right. The reader is familiar with his bitter attacks on the orthodox camp; but he is equally severe in his onslaughts on the non-theological and non-religious class, as the following extract shows:—

"One of the strangest features of the great spiritual and social awakening which is going on is the fact that some of the most morally earnest leaders of it, especially on the Continent, are avowed Materialists, and believe that the triumph of their ideal means the overthrow of Christianity. They know not what they say. It means the overthrow of ecclesiasticism, but the triumph of Christ."

Nothing is easier than sneering at opponents by oracularly declaring that they know not what they say. Mr. Campbell forgets, however, that they might retort in the same worthless coin, "Neither do you." There is another thing that Mr. Campbell ignores; namely, that the ecclesiasticism which he hates and wishes to see overthrown is the creation of the very Christ whom he so ardently eulogises. That is to say, if his Christ exists, it is he, and he alone, who is responsible for the existence of ecclesiasticism. The one fact that is patent to the so-called Materialists is, that there is no Christianity apart from ecclesiasticism, whether it be the ecclesiasticism of

the City Temple, London, or that of St. Peter's, Rome. Of the Christianity of Jesus, as embodied in his reputed teaching, nobody, not even Mr. Campbell, takes the slightest notice. Therefore, the overthrow of ecclesiasticism means the overthrow of Christ; and even the assertion that ecclesiasticism ought to be overthrown is a virtual admission that Christ is nothing but a dream, a myth, an empty name in an emptier philosophy.

Let us look at this from another point of view. Mr. Campbell says:—

"If I read the signs of the times aright, that glorified Christ is impacting himself on the world of to-day in movements the true significance of which most of us only half understand, and to which the majority of us are almost entirely blind. One of them is the worldwide, spontaneous uprising of the toiling masses—a movement coterminous with civilisation itself—towards political and economic freedom. The nations are in travail; and no man knows what may be born of their agony."

Now, this movement, known as Socialism, originated, as every intelligent person knows, outside all Churches, and was for a long time vehemently denounced and vigorously opposed by the representatives of Christianity. It was only after it had gained great strength and had alienated the toiling masses from the cold, unsympathetic Churches, that the men of God began to regard it first with toleration, then with semi-approval, and latterly with longing affection. Had they been able, they would have nipped it in the bud. Having tried and failed to do that, and realising their own impotence, some of them resolved to make friends with it in order that it might serve them in their day of need. Then they waxed bold and said, "This movement is ours; it was initiated by the glorified Christ, and means the beginning of his reign on earth." We have seen how grossly Mr. Campbell misrepresents what he calls Materialism, but he misrepresents Socialism quite as badly in the following passage:—

"They [Christian Socialists] know that man cannot live by bread alone; that being what he is, the son of God, he can rest in nothing less than the full consciousness of his own divinity, and this means that he will have to cease thinking in terms of material gain. Emerging from the darkness of ignorance and brutality, his face is towards the eternal light."

That is supernatural religion, not Socialism at all. Socialism knows nothing of man as "the son of God"; it treats him exclusively as a member of society, as a citizen of this world; and it concerns itself alone with economic and social conditions. But what we are anxious to make emphatic is the undoubted fact that had the earthly Jesus been the first preacher of Socialism, and had the glorified Christ been "a continuous personal force operating in the world of human thought and action," we would have had Socialism in full action everywhere for the last eighteen hundred years. Whether Socialism be the true remedy for all our social evils or not, it is incontrovertible that no glorified Christ, clothed with omnipotent love, has had anything whatever to do with it. It is a purely human movement, subject to the same vicissitudes as all other human movements.

It is thus borne in upon us, more irresistibly than ever, that the arguments which demolish one form of theology are equally efficient in smashing all the others. It is supernaturalism, as such, that is irrational, unbelievable, and absurd. Mr. Campbell maintains that the New Theology is not a theological movement, but an entirely moral one. Why, the reverend gentleman never opens his mouth without talking about God, the eternal Christ, man's divinity, and immortality. He is saturated through and through with supernaturalism, the very supernaturalism which his own reasoning makes intellectually impossible and morally ridiculous.

J. T. LLOYD.

Nature is neither kernel nor shell, but is both at the same time.—Goethe.

## Acid Drops.

The British Channel Fleet was warmly welcomed at Christiana. "The most energetic of all the organising societies for the reception of the visitors," according to the special correspondent of the *Express*, "were the missionary federations and the Salvation Army." Pious followers of the dear Prince of Peace!

What a comical thing it is to see members of the Pan-Anglican Congress discussing the truth, beauty, and superiority of their religion—with each other. Section B "discussed" a paper read by the Bishop of Southwark on the "Christian Claim to Supremacy." He made out a good case to his own satisfaction, and the satisfaction of everybody else present. Of course!

The Bishop of Southwark was thus reported in the *Daily News* :—

"Let them take the case of Mohammedanism. That religion was held by races not equipped by the knowledge with which God had enriched Europe. In the presence of that knowledge there was no competitor, and there could be no competitor with the Christian faith. That was in itself a most wonderful thing."

But the most wonderful thing is the cheek of the speaker and the silly applause of his listeners. Hundreds of years ago, Christianity was held by people who were living in the darkness of ignorance while the Mohammedans, especially in the South of Spain, were living in the full blaze of science, literature, and civilisation. Besides, there is nothing in Mohammedanism to clash with "knowledge." It teaches the existence of God, but it has no miracles, while the Christian Scriptures are stuffed with these ridiculous yarns. Had the Bishop of Southwark been honest he would have impeached Christianity instead of Mohammedanism. He would also have confessed that Islam is a serious competitor with Christianity. It is so in India, where a hundred million Mohammedans defy the proselytising power of all the Christian missionaries. It is so in Africa, where the Mohammedan missionaries make ten converts to every one made by the Christian missionaries—and do them more good too; keeping them sober, at any rate, and chaste within their marriage institutions.

Another section of the Pan-Anglican Congress "discussed" what was called Christian marriage, and then got on the question of polygamy amongst the "heathen" on whom the missionaries operate, and whom they hope (so sanguine they are!) to bring within the fold of Christ. Some of the clergy talked so "upish" that a negro clergyman from Sierra Leone felt obliged to tell them that "the marriage question among heathen people could not be settled by a debate in a Church Congress." This was followed by something which showed how he had been deceived by his Christian teachers. "You Western people are monogamists," he said, "because you are the products of Christian growth. As Christian ideas work themselves out in the minds of the heathen, polygamy will cease to be." This is history upside down. There is not a word in the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, against polygamy. Christianity did not invent monogamy; it borrowed monogamy from the Pagan civilisation of the Roman Empire. Greece and Rome were before the Jews in this matter—and consequently before the Christians, who sprang from the Jews, if we are to believe the New Testament.

When we hear, or read, the gross perversions of history that are perpetrated by Christian teachers it is difficult to believe that they are anything else than a gang of bamboozlers and exploiters. Is it possible, indeed, for them to be anything else? Their religion was founded on lies, and by lies it must ever be supported. The breath of truth crumbles it to dust. And they know it.

The Rev. Egerton Ryerson, speaking at the Pan-Anglican Congress, stated that the day of the Buddhas in Japan is coming to a close; and he was honest enough to add that it is not the Christian religion, but Western civilisation, that is doing away with them—the same civilisation as is doing away with Christianity itself in the West.

The Bishop of London told an Albert Hall meeting, in connection with the Pan-Anglican Congress, that to be ordained was the happiest and most glorious thing in the world. Was he alluding to lady admirers and presentation slippers? Perhaps not—for he went on to say that ordination was "one way of getting rid of the greatest curse a man has, and that was himself." But there must be some

mistake about this. We cannot see that Dr. Winnington-Ingram has got rid of himself. He seems to us the same shallow, foolish person that he always was. If he was really worse before he was ordained, he must have been a positive wonder.

Ordination was a happy and glorious thing in one way to this reverend gentleman. It gave him a chance of becoming the Bishop of London—with £10,000 a year.

At the Banquet of Welcome, given by the Pilgrims to the Archbishops and Bishops attending the Pan-Anglican Congress, Mr. Asquith was one of the principal speakers. Mr. Asquith in his speech not only welcomed the Church, he praised the Church—which will ill-please some of his Non-conformist followers. The Church, he said, had been an emancipating and unifying power. "She destroyed slavery, she re-created the family, she proclaimed to principalities and powers that property, privilege, the favors of fortune, are but a trust—a trust for which a strict account will be exacted."

Now we do not know there is an actual necessity that a Prime Minister should be well acquainted with the historical influence of the Christian churches on the world's welfare, but, on the other hand, it is not needful that he should deliver opinions on the subject. If he does so, he ought at least to take the precaution of stating things with at least an approximation to the truth. As it is, the panegyric reads as though, in anticipation of the gathering, Mr. Asquith had hastily gobbled up a Christian Evidence tract, and then eased himself of the meal in a quite undigested state. The last clause of the sentence quoted is so vague as hardly to admit of decisive discussion; but if it means that the Church always taught that wealth and power were held in trust for the benefit of the people, it may be fitly met by the retort that the force of the message is seen in the fact that principalities and powers do not fully recognise it yet. And its recognition would not be due to Christianity. The statements concerning slavery and the family are distinctly untrue. Actually, slavery increased with the establishment of Christianity, while some of the harsher slave laws of old Rome were revived. The old slavery did die out—from economic causes—and then the modern black slave-trade was created by Christians, and with the full approval of the Church. The struggle for the abolition of slavery is proof of the extent to which Christians clung to the traffic—so long as it was profitable. Finally, Mr. Asquith may find food for reflection in the fact that Thomas Paine was the first who publicly wrote in America in favor of the abolition of slavery, while the official completion of the work was done by Abraham Lincoln, a man who said he would rather die upon the platform than say he was a Christian.

That Christianity re-created the family is not only untrue—it is stupidly untrue. The idea that the family, as the family, could ever be destroyed is one that could never enter the mind of one who grasped the real nature of social institutions. Short of the *races* disappearing, the destruction of the family is an impossibility. The family, as such, is a biological fact, and its existence is in no wise dependent upon social theories or the state of society at any given period. What social life determines, or has a share in determining, is the form that the family shall assume; and although the precise form of the family varies with time and place, it exists just as much in one case as in another. To assume that because the family existed or exists at other places or times in a different form to what it exists with us, therefore the family does not exist at all, is a piece of sociology quite worthy of a Dissenting local preacher. Moreover, to talk of Christianity as re-creating the family is piling absurdity on absurdity. The New Testament has little or nothing to say about it, the early Christian writers generally ignore it, the Christian teaching and practice of celibacy struck most heavily at the dignified position given it by the ancient Romans, while the official marriage ceremony of the dignitaries Mr. Asquith was addressing places the whole question upon about as low a level as is possible. Of course, Mr. Asquith may have been speaking with his tongue in his cheek, although we hardly think so; or he may have thought it best to give the clergy back the kind of talk they had given him. In either case such statements reflect little credit upon those who speak or upon those who listen.

One of the series of addresses at the Pan-Anglican Congress was headed, "The Church's Call to Women." We notice they are called to all the work for which there is no particular pay attached. The pulpits are barred. When the churches cease to give lectures to "Men Only" or to "Women Only"—as though, in the one case, there was said

something unfit for women to hear, and, in the other, that a preacher was going to say to women something men ought not to hear—and when the meetings are held without sexual reference, but addressed to men and women as human beings, we shall begin to believe the Church has a message that may be worth listening to.

The Catholic "scapular" was referred to in our recent article on "Ora Pro Nobis." Pigott, the forger of the Parnell letters, had one under his shirt when he committed suicide. "This was supposed," we said, "to guard the wearer from all harm. We have heard of Catholic soldiers fancying it would stop bullets! There is more sense in the Protestant idea of bullets being stopped by the Bible—which is a good protection if it happens to be right in the way; though we believe a pack of cards would serve the same useful purpose." We did not think at the moment that we were going to meet with an illustrious instance of this great truth. A South African sends us the following newspaper cutting:—

"SAVED BY THE BIBLE."

GENERAL BEYERS'S NARROW ESCAPE.

Johannesburg, May 20.—(Our Own Correspondent.)—Speaking at a meeting of the Bible Society, General Beyers, Speaker of the Transvaal House of Assembly, said it was the influence of the Bible which gave victory to the Boers over the natives in the early days. He told a story of how his life had been saved by a Bible which he was carrying when he was struck by two bullets in an engagement in the late war.

This is really A1.

If the Bible gave victory to the Boers over the natives in the early days, why did it not give them the victory over the British in the later days? Kruger told them that God was with them and they could not possibly lose. He said it with his Dutch Bible open before him. But he was wrong. The Boers did lose. And why? Because the odds were against them. The Bible had nothing to do with the matter at all. In the early days the odds were against the natives. They had the numbers, but the Boers had the guns, and could shoot.

It is quite possible that General Beyers did once have a Bible on his person, and that the Bible stopped two bullets. But any other book that was thick enough would have done ditto. Even the *Age of Reason* would have done it. Or a bundle of love letters. Let us pray!

The Rev. Dr. Horton says that "Christ alone can gather the nations into one, and make the race a single family." If that is true, it follows that Christ, who is said to have all power in heaven and on earth at his command, is the most wicked person in the universe. For two thousand years he has callously left undone the glorious work which he alone can do. To advance such a claim on behalf of the Nazarene is to call the world's attention to his colossal impotence.

That Dr. Horton himself does not really believe what he says is evident from the fact that he immediately proceeds to show that "we, even we in England, can, if we would, if only we were convinced, give the Gospel to the whole world." If we would, "we" can do it in one generation. Of course, the man of God safeguards himself by introducing that wonderfully accommodating "if." But there is another "if" not quite so accommodating—if the world would only believingly receive!

Dr. R. F. Horton says that as the income of the United Kingdom is 1,700 millions a year, if the country only acted up to its bare duty in the matter it would subscribe 170 million pounds, given to missionary enterprise, annually. Modest Dr. Horton! Doesn't he wish he may get it?

When it suits them, the Nonconformists wrap their vaunted Puritanism in a napkin and bury it out of sight. Formerly, they were opposed to theatrical performances on principle; but now they have two performances daily at their "Orient in London," and their ministers preach and write in high praise of their wholesome spiritual influence. Indeed, one of these holy men, in a letter to the *Daily News*, claims the drama as by right the Church's property, and thanks heaven that for once it has been rescued from the theatre. Well, when the old Gospel has failed to attract, things that do draw the people, whatever their character, must be procured at any cost. The cause of Christ must prosper, even at the expense of robbing the Devil. Such is Christianity, and such its history.

Objection has been raised to the missionary "Pageant" on two grounds. The first is that it is in the nature

of a theatrical exhibition, the second that a number of "short-skirted misses" appear as representatives of the people who have been—or who are to be—converted. Properly, the objection should be that the short skirts are too long, and so misrepresent the African ladies who, not being Christianised, can contemplate a pair of legs or a naked bosom without having indecent thoughts suggested thereby. The actual objection is that the skirts are *too short*; so presumably these discontented critics wish the African to appear in high-necked dresses with long skirts. This would doubtless add to the humor of the exhibition, and would be as true to life as a great deal else of the performance. On the other hand, some reverend spectators write that everything should be overlooked, as the Pageant is intended to show the triumph of the Cross over its opponents. We see no reason to doubt that this will be well illustrated; with what amount of truth those who are acquainted with the imaginative statistics of missionary reports will readily recognise.

The *Daily Chronicle* must be hard up for poetry to print a sonnet written by a suffragette (Miss Irene Miller) while in prison—as though that fact gave it some mysterious merit. In the introductory sentence the young lady stated that she wrote the verses to "while away the hours" of her imprisonment. She meant "wile away." In her last two lines she rhymed "discover" with "mother." "Liberal" papers will publish this sort of thing cheerfully—and burke the best-written letter of a Freethought tendency.

Connected with the Methodist Church in this country there is a "Deaconess Institute." A Methodist contemporary is pleased to find that this Institute is developing along "scriptural lines." We are not familiar with the interior economy of this institution, but if it develops along scriptural lines we presume that the women are taught to keep silence, to obey their male guardians with all submission, to recognise that they were made for men and not men for them, and if they are married to regard their husbands as being as much superior to themselves as Christ is to the Church. This, at any rate, would be true "scriptural lines" on which to train women. It is just possible, however, that some modification in the scriptural regimen has been effected.

At one of the meetings of the Pan-Anglican Congress, the question of a Secular System of Education was considered. Of all the speakers, Dr. Canfield, Librarian of Columbia University, New York, was the only one who advocated the system. As a sample of the arguments against it, we take that advanced by the Rev. W. G. Edwards Rees, of Pendleton. This Father-in-God maintained that in all the countries which have adopted the secular system, crime is alarmingly on the increase. "He found in France, illustrative of the purely secular system, a moral declension beyond all question, crime having trebled in the half-century from 1846." Fancy reckoning from the year 1846, when every school-boy knows that the secular scheme was not really adopted until 1886, and that to the end of the century Catholic schools were numerous. The purely secular influence in France is of very recent origin. And yet, while it is quite true that between 1846 and 1886 crime was steadily growing, we rejoice to learn that between 1889 and 1901 the number of convictions substantially fell. In 1896 the gaols of France held 8,771 men and 1,088 women, but in 1901 they had only 6,097 men and 708 women. In 1896 there were 5,023 boys in reformatories; in 1901 only 3,568. We could easily multiply instances taken from official statistics, but the above will suffice to show that Mr. Edwards Rees deliberately lied about France. He lied with equal effrontery about Victoria and the United States. Indeed, the Bishop of Central Pennsylvania, though an opponent of secular education, was yet man enough to admit that "the boys and girls in the United States compare favorably with those of England"; and even Mr. Edwards Rees cannot deny the fact that in England crime has diminished by 12 per cent. since 1870. It seems as if parsons were incapable of telling the truth about anything it is to their interest to oppose.

Principals Forsyth and Garvie are great men who have just immortalised themselves by writing out the "unwritten creed" of Congregationalism. They have made wonderful discoveries. One is that "God cannot visit Nature, nor invade it." Another, that "the Son of God is God the Son." This latter will take rank among the world's greatest discoveries. There are other priceless gems in the document. These doctors of divinity speak with the authority of absolute knowledge. The New Theology must now go the way of all the earth. Yea, God himself has spoken; let all the world keep silence!

"Women then began to attack each other, pulling each other's hair." This is part of the report of a rare old shindy in High-street, Teddington, between Kensitite Protestants and Roman Catholics. The scrap lasted for half an hour, and there were several casualties before the police were able to separate the combatants. Finally, the police escorted the Kensitites to the railway station singing "Stand up, stand up, for Jesus." Good old Jesus! What a lot of fights he has been in! His followers call him the Prince of Peace. But that must be ironical. He himself said that he came not to send peace, but a sword.

Christian Science was discussed at a Pan-Anglican meeting, which, the *Daily News* says, was "largely a gathering of moneyed women, with a sprinkling of clergymen." This was the opposite of "men only." Certainly the women were not men, neither were the clergy; for did not the Rev. Sydney Smith say that there were three sexes—men, women, and clergymen?

The *Daily News* winds up every morning with a witticism. The other morning it gave this:—

"Inquisitive youngster to his mother, who had just said good-bye to papa on leaving for the city: 'Who is Sally Forth?' 'I don't know,' replied the mother. 'But papa knows her,' proceeded the little one, 'for every morning he says, Now to Sally Forth.'"

Such is Nonconformist jocularly! We read that Jesus wept, but never that he smiled. His melancholy spirit still lingers in Christian circles.

Mr. Herbert Trench, one of the finest and most promising of our younger poets, is (of course!) a Freethinker—whether he calls himself so or not. In some verses to Tolstoy he writes thus:—

"The Man upraised on the Judæan crag,  
Captains for us the war with death no more.  
His kingdom hangs, as hangs the tattered flag  
Over the tomb of a great knight of yore."

Mr. Trench also dismisses the dream of immortality. Which prompts a *Christian Commonwealth* scribe to drivel a prophecy that the poet will yet find Christ. The cheek of these people! Always lecturing their betters.

Here is more of the same sauce. Rev. Dr. Warschauer, in the same journal, declares that "to be without God is also to be without hope in the world." Shelley had no hope in the world! Ingersoll had no hope in the world! Bradlaugh had no hope in the world! It is really *too* silly.

Dr. Warschauer is not without God in the world, but he is without Christ in the world. He doesn't leave Jesus one rag of divinity about him. In other words, he has discarded the central, distinctive doctrine of Christianity, without which it merely becomes a form of Deism. It amuses us to see all our old arguments—which have earned us the name of "blasphemer"—trotted out by these New Theologians. We have repeatedly said, during the past thirty years, that the Gospels, which were cleverly edited by the Church, but not not cleverly enough, contain passages that are like fossils in geological strata. One of these is the remark of Mary to the boy Jesus when his parents lost him and eventually found him with the Rabbis in the Temple. Mary said to him, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." All the three persons concerned were in the presence of each other, and the woman told the boy that the man was his father. That settles it. Her word is good enough for us—for there is not a particle of evidence to the contrary. And now the Rev. Dr. Warschauer, who has probably seen the *Freethinker*, comes out with the very same argument—and he still calls himself a Christian!—and still calls us an infidel! This is what he says:—

"Mary addresses her child in reproachful terms: 'Thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.' Is it likely that Mary would have spoken to Jesus in such terms, had she known that He must have known all the time that Joseph was in no wise related to Him? Can anyone credit Jesus Himself with lending Himself to what was an acted untruth?"

Were we not right in saying that the New Theology is a diluted extract of the Old Freethought?

Dr. Clifford is irrepressible. His latest pronouncement is that we cannot settle the educational strife until churches, priests, and ministers are left out of account and "the child is regarded simply in its relation to the State." We have no quarrel whatever with this sentiment—as a sentiment—it is indeed praiseworthy in every way. Only, as Dr. Clifford stands for the use of the Bible in the schools as a privileged text-book, and for the teaching of that form of sectarianism known as "Undenominational Christianity,"

we are compelled to put the expression down as a piece of pure bunkum. In its relations to the State the education of the child has no reference whatever to any religious instruction, undenominational or other. Religious instruction has reference only to the professional interest of the parson, and the mistaken zeal of those parents whose view of parental duty leads them to force upon children as absolute truths, teachings which they will admit to adults are far from being certainly true.

The cat was let out of the bag by Dean Welldon in a recent letter to the *Times*. He said it was right that every facility should be provided for giving children religious instruction in schools, because "the State is the sole authority by which the mass of children can be brought under the influence of religious teaching." Which being interpreted means that parents are not sufficiently interested in religious instruction to send their children, and the clergy are not sufficiently industrious to collect them. And so the coercive power of the State must be used to bring the children together, and the teacher—paid by all—is to be used to teach the special religious opinions of some, and thus prepare clients for the clergy in after years. Of course, the situation is disguised by the use of an elaborate phraseology, but in its essentials it is as stated.

The Archbishop of Canterbury says that a great many people give far less brain work to the things that concern their faith than they give to any other concern in their daily life. Of course; but if people did bring the same amount of common sense to bear on their religion that they focussed on their daily affairs there would soon be very few Christians left in their country. Only suppose what would happen if all Christians faced the question of inspiration, of miracles, of prayer, the Virgin birth, or the resurrection, in the same temper that they deal with out-of-the-way stories heard in the course of the day's work, or in the same way they face the narratives of religions other than their own. It is only by cultivating a distinct habit of mind in relation to Christian doctrines that Christianity survives. The necessity for this is more or less disguised under such phrases as "cultivating a spiritual frame of mind" or "developing a spiritual temper," but in practice it means refraining from applying the same rules of reasoning to one's own religion that one applies to the religious beliefs of other people. Some few people, of whom Faraday was one, recognise this; and when they do they usually arrive at his conclusion—that if they were to reason about their religious beliefs they would cease to believe them.

Walton Powell, under the name of Mortimer again, was brought up from prison and tried once more at Exeter for fraud. Curiously enough, he came before Mr. Justice Phillimore, who tried the late "blasphemy" case in London. Being found guilty on abundant evidence, the Anti-Infidel champion was sentenced to four years' penal servitude. No doubt he will turn up hereafter in a new criminal avatar. Perhaps he will yet end his days in the pulpit.

Rev. Archibald John Campbell Connell (we must stop to take breath), of Royal-crescent, Whitby, Yorks, rector from 1878 to 1900 of Monks Eleigh, Suffolk, left £55,717. He had better have transferred it to us. We would cheerfully have taken the risk. As it is, he is now cooking in the Devil's kitchen—if the New Testament be true.

Rev. R. J. Campbell paid a visit to Belfast. The first night he addressed an I. L. P. meeting in the Ulster Hall on "Labor and Socialism"—and the hall was crowded. The next day he preached at All Souls' Church—and the church was crowded. The same evening he addressed another meeting in the Ulster Hall on "What is Socialism?" and the hall was *not* crowded. The Campbellite weekly explains the falling off as "doubtless" owing to "some regrettable competition between the two meetings." We daresay the plain truth is that Mr. Campbell had been thoroughly sampled, and the demand had fallen off.

The Rev. E. J. Padfield is an ignorant dogmatist. In a published sermon he declares that it is not possible to "cite an instance in which a man once soundly converted to God, and blessed for a season with this spiritual intercourse with Christ, went over to infidelity." Such instances can be cited by the score. There are thousands of avowed Atheists in Great Britain alone who were once as soundly converted to God, and enjoyed as enrapturing fellowship with Christ, as the preacher himself. We could furnish the reverend gentleman with the names and addresses of many such.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended during the summer.)

## To Correspondents.

**THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND:** Previously acknowledged. —Donations, £165: Annual Subscriptions, £189 15s. 6d. Received since.—West Stanley N. S. S. Branch, £1.

**HARRY PHILLIPS.**—Your letter is interesting and encouraging. Better than all the applause in the world is the assurance that we help and stimulate the minds of our readers. In answer to your question, the late Samuel Laing's works, which can now be bought for a trifle, would probably serve you better than Haeckel's *Riddle*, which you find "too stiff"—as it must be to the generality of readers.

**T. AINSBITT.**—We do not know of the book you mention—Mr. Washburn's Funeral Addresses. A letter would find Mr. Washburn himself, if addressed to him at the Paine Memorial Hall, Boston, U.S.A. Pleased to hear you "have read the *Freethinker* for four years, and look forward to receiving it every week with pleasure."

**SEDNEY A. GIMSON.**—Thanks for good wishes. We are much better than we were three or four years ago, and expect the summer's partial rest to put us in excellent trim for the heavy winter's work. Glad your delay in subscribing to the Gerald Massey Fund was due to your being busy. You are usually one of the promptest in these matters. We wish every *Freethinker* came up as readily and cheerfully with his offering.

**EDWARD THOMAS.**—The "educated sceptic" must defend his own statements. Our business is to defend our own.

**T. DEARDEN.**—Pleased to learn that Mr. Wishart has been having such good outdoor meetings in the Market-square, Wigan, and that his lectures and replies to opponents have "given general satisfaction." Miss Vance has handed us your letter, but you know (don't you?) that Mr. Foote will not be lecturing again in the provinces before September.

**E. JACKSON.**—It was Moses himself, not his son, that the Jew-God "sought to kill" at that "inn" which the Revised Version calls a "lodging-house." The firstborn in verse 23 means the firstborn of Pharaoh. Verse 24 begins a new paragraph, as you may see by the sign before the first word.

**R. J. HENDERSON** writes: "Your Fund is making mighty slow progress. We ought to do much better. But that legacy was good news."

**DONALD McLEAN.**—We agree with you, of course, that "the *Freethinker* is not nearly as much read as it ought to be," but we do not quite see that what you suggest would promote its circulation. Thanks, all the same, for your kind consideration.

**W. WINDSOR.**—Pleased to learn that you walked sixteen miles to hear a lecture at Aberdare, and that you felt fully recompensed for the journey. Thanks for the cutting.

**F. W. KINODON.**—Gerald Massey's great works are not on Spiritualism, but on the mythological and legendary origin of Christianity. His belief in a future life—without reference to a Deity—does not concern us in this connection.

**W. P. BALL.**—Always glad to have your cuttings.

**J. H. GARTRELL.**—Not the slightest objection; only too glad to be useful against superstition and hypocrisy.

**G. ROLEFFS.**—Glad the Liverpool Branch is doing good work at its open-air Sunday meetings, and is going to start week-night lectures also.

**F. R. THEAKSTONE.**—The Camberwell Branch platform should be well supported by the local "saints." You shall have help from other quarters if necessary.

**E. A. STANDISH.**—We have your hooligan letter. You are—a Christian.

**Quiz.**—Ranke's *History of the Popes* is accounted trustworthy. It may be true that God (if he exist) can do anything, but whether he has done, or is doing, any particular thing, is purely a question of evidence. Your friend might say, "God can make a planet of green cheese," but this does not prove that there is a planet made of green cheese.

**JOSEPH BRYCE** writes: "Apropos of the appreciative letters you occasionally publish, I would like to express my own indebtedness to the *Freethinker*. The inspiration of its robust thought has enabled me to grow in wisdom and in mental stature and in fearlessness of God and man."

**RONALD DUNCAN.**—Your verses have merit, but you will do better in point of technique with more practice. Pleased to hear that "Friday is a red-letter day" with you now, and that "there is nothing you look forward to more than the next number of the *Freethinker*."

**T. H. ELSTOB.**—See paragraph. We hope indoor meetings will be possible at Newcastle during the winter. Is there any good ball in view?

**E. R. WOODWARD.**—See "Sugar Plums." Camberwell may rely on our utmost support. Stand firm yourselves, and others will stand by you.

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

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

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

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

**PERSONS** remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.

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## Sugar Plums.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a special "Personal" address to the Secular party by Mr. Foote—also a long and careful article from his pen on a very important lecture on "The Scope of Social Anthropology" by Dr. J. G. Frazer, the author of that remarkable book, *The Golden Bough*. The lecture includes a good deal of matter that will be particularly interesting to *Freethinkers*. We may announce, likewise, that our old column of book-notices will be revived in our next number, which begins a new half-year. Many of our readers have been desiring this for a long while.

We forwarded our cheque for £9 15s. to Mr. James Robertson, honorary treasurer of the Gerald Massey Fund, at Glasgow, and duly received his acknowledgment of the same. We thought that had closed the matter as far as we are concerned, but we have received further subscriptions since, and these may lead to more. Gerald Massey gave his life, and his slender means, to writing great Freethought works, and the appeal is on behalf of his widow, who is between seventy and eighty, and his four daughters, two of whom are virtually invalids. The further subscriptions we have to acknowledge are:—Sydney A. Gimson, £1 1s.; Frank Smith, 10s.

Our veteran friend, Mr. J. W. de Caux, of Yarmouth, is a good deal like President Fallières. As his name indicates, he is of French extraction; and his stubbornness in matters of principle is partly explained by the fact that he has Huguenot blood in his veins. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, many Huguenots, in spite of the King's interdict, fled from France; and amongst those who got across to England were John and Thomas de Caux, of Dieppe. This was in March, 1686. Of course, they had to leave all their property behind them and begin the world afresh. Their voyage to England was a highly exciting adventure. It was touch and go from beginning to end, with death threatening them on one side by the elements, and on the other side by the French King's dragoons, who were let loose upon the Huguenot population. A very interesting account of the flight of the de Caux brothers has just appeared in the *Eastern Daily Press*, compiled from the *Historie de la Ville de Dieppe*, by Alexandre Bouteiller.

Concerted efforts are being made to break up Freethought meetings in London. A furious attack was made on the N. S. S. Branch platform in Brockwell Park on Sunday evening, the Christian mob, numbering nearly a thousand, evidently acting under leadership. Mr. Schaller, the lecturer, and Mr. Theakstone, the chairman, were roughly handled, though not seriously hurt. Local *Freethinkers* should rally in force round the Branch platform and defeat the tactics of these holy hooligans.

Mr. T. H. Elstob, secretary of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch, reports that Mr. H. S. Wishart had good meetings on the Town Moor on Sunday, and made a very good impression on both occasions. The collections and sale of literature were also gratifying.

The next International Freethought Congress will be held at Brussels in September, 1910. M. Furnémont, the Federation secretary, hopes there will be 500 English delegates on that occasion. We doubt it, but there will probably be a good representation. M. Furnémont is going this year on a three months' lecturing tour in Brazil; next year he will make like tours in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and (he says) England; all in the interest of the Brussels Congress.

The South African correspondent who sent us the newspaper cutting referred to in "Acid Drops" sent a letter with it. "Rome," he said in conclusion, "was not built in a day. With patience, with *suaviter in modo*, you will still make thousands subscribe to your views. Victory can only be won by the pen. Write! Write!! Write!!! in letters of fire, those beautiful truths more sacred than the Bible will ever convey."

The To-Morrow Press, Hyde Park, Chicago, sends us a postcard stating that 10 per cent. can be saved by giving it printing orders. We are glad to hear it, though distance forbids our patronage. On the back of the postcard is printed the following, which shows how Freethought is spreading in America: "TO-MORROW MORALITY AND HABITS.—With no fear of God, no reliance on immortality and no hope from prayer, our TO-MORROW WORKERS have cut out wrong living and thinking merely to prevent evil effects to their own bodies and minds." We are glad to hear this too.

### "Lying for the Glory of God."

THE *Liverpool Daily Post* has published recently the old forged letter from "Publius Lentulus" to the Roman Senate about Christ. Since then the *Daily Chronicle* (London) has favored its readers with the ancient fabricated letter from Christ to Prince Abgarus. Both these forgeries have long been abandoned by scholars; but for centuries they served their turn in deceiving ignorant Christians. The men who composed these fictitious documents were forgers. And, similarly, the men who wrote the lying legends attributed to "Matthew," "Mark," "Luke," and "John" were absolutely dishonest. The detailed and fabricated genealogies in the "gospels" were not the work of simple unconscious generators of myth, but the work of scoundrelly contrivers of religious fiction. Their inventions, though fortunate enough to be made canonical, are of precisely the same character as the numerous gospels and epistles which circulated extensively in the second century and were at length condemned as apocryphal. The primitive believers in Christ and him crucified, who palmed these apocryphal gospels and epistles on the world for the furtherance of their cause, were generally conscious deceivers. They were eager to gain converts, and, if honest persuasion did not suffice to bring unbelievers into the Christian fold, thought they were justified in having recourse to trickery. The Sibyllene verses and other forgeries concocted by Christian writers in the third and fourth centuries were only the natural consequence of the earlier pious frauds in which their faith originated. Letters were forged purporting to have been written by Pilate to Tiberius apparently confirming the "gospel" lies concerning the crucifixion. A passage was interpolated in Josephus's *Antiquities* which made this Jewish historian not only testify of the life of Christ, but even acknowledge his divinity. In short, the religion of Christ Jesus originated in a hotbed of ecclesiastical trickery.

### INGERSOLL'S CREED.

My creed is this:—

- (1) Happiness is the only good.
- (2) The way to be happy, is to make others happy. Other things being equal, that man is the happiest who is nearest just—who is truthful, merciful, and intelligent—in other words, the one who lives in accordance with the conditions of life.
- (3) The time to be happy is now, and the place to be happy is here.
- (4) Reason is the lamp of the mind—the only torch of progress; and instead of blowing that out and depending upon darkness and dogma, it is far better to increase that sacred light.
- (5) Every man should be intellectually proprietor of himself, and intellectually hospitable; and upon every brain reason should be enthroned asking.
- (6) Every man must bear the consequences, at least of his own actions. If he puts his hands in the fire, his hands must smart, and not the hands of another. In other words, each man must eat the fruit of the tree he plants.

Did we find in any other book pretending to give a system of religion, the falsehoods, falsifications, contradictions and absurdities, which are to be met with in almost every page of the Old and New Testament, all the priests of the present day, who supposed themselves capable, would triumphantly show their skill in criticism, and cry it down as a most glaring imposition. But since the books in question belong to their own trade and profession, they, or at least many of them, seek to stifle every inquiry into them, and abuse those who have the honesty and the courage to do it.—*Thomas Paine*.

## Freethought in Many Lands.

### SOUTH AMERICA.

SOUTH AMERICA, conquered, colonised, and "Christianised" by the "Conquistadores," with its Aborigines slaughtered by millions by the ruthless soldiers of the Cross, and its settlers terrorised for centuries by an implacable priesthood in league with an unscrupulous succession of viceroys—such a country, cursed by the *damnosa hereditas* of religion unchecked by any of the restraints which, in Europe, gradually drew the fangs of the theological tiger, would seem the most hopeless ground in the world on which to cast the seeds of Freethought. For long centuries it seemed that the splendid territories grabbed by the pious Spaniards who followed in the wake of Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro, were doomed to remain in perpetuity the spiritual fiefs of the Church. But the wave of Revolution which, from 1789 and onwards, swept over the face of Europe and destroyed so many venerable landmarks in Church and State, passed over the Atlantic, submerged the Spanish Colonies, and shipwrecked the Ark of Christ's Church. A deep sediment of Republican and Freethought principles was left behind, the development of which bids fair to render these favored southern lands—so vast in natural fertility, and populated by a number of complex nationalities merging in the dominant Spanish type—one of the most prolific centres of Freethought activity.

Four outstanding facts in reference to Freethought in South America deserve special mention. The first relates to the attitude of organised Freemasonry in regard to Freethought. In England, Freemasonry is religious, "respectable," and reactionary; in South America its sympathies are distinctly rationalistic.

### I.—FREEMASONRY AND FREETHOUGHT.

On this matter the attitude of the Grand Orient of the Argentine Republic is crucial and representative. I have on my desk before me the official Bulletin of the Argentine Freemasonry, containing the inaugural address delivered by the Grand Master, Dr. Pablo Barrenechea on July 24, 1904 (E. V.—i.5., of the "vulgar era"), wherein the distinctly Freethought principles of the Grand Orient are openly proclaimed, and, in particular, the names are glorified of "those two champions of Freethought," our eminent brother Domingo Faustino Parmiento and "the grandiose figure of the first of our civic worthies, Bernardina Rivadavia," who labored to render the civil legislation of the republic "free from all religious influence." Finally, the Grand Master set out, *in extenso*, the program of the then approaching Freethought Congress at Rome, and recommended that the Grand Orient should be represented at that great gathering. When it is remembered that there are at least eighty-nine Lodges in the obedience of this Order, that the proceedings of the above assembly were specially ordered to be read at all these Lodges, that the high officials of the Order are known and active Freethinkers, and that the Grand Orient itself was actually represented by its delegates not only at the Congress at Rome in 1904, but at Paris 1905, at Buenos Ayres 1906, and Prague 1907, it will, I think, be conceded that Freethought in South America is something nobler than a private conviction hidden away in some dark corner. Nor is this attitude of Argentine Freemasonry peculiar to the Grand Mastership of one particular individual. It is the radical and fundamental basis of the Order's vitality. A brilliant instance of this is furnished in the case of Dr. Augustin Alvarez, who in 1905 succeeded Dr. Barrenechea as Grand Master. Dr. Alvarez is a pronounced Freethinker, gifted with marvellous eloquence adorned with singular learning. One of the most brilliant expositions of Freethought I have ever read is his address on "The Evolution of the

Human Mind," delivered at Buenos Ayres on Sunday, December 3, 1905, at the Grand Temple of the Order. It was an official address, delivered at the headquarters of the Argentine Freemasonry, and special significance is to be attached to it from the fact that it was delivered at the request of the "Association for the Promotion of Secular Education," whose lady members—another significant fact—were entrusted with the cards of invitation. The splendor of the occasion was only equalled by the magnificence of the survey of man's age-long struggle against religion with which Dr. Alvarez—the Ingersoll of South America—delighted his large and distinguished audience. Some idea of the advance of non-religious principles in South America may be formed from the fact, stated in the foregoing address (p. 28), that two-thirds of the marriages in Buenos Ayres, the populous and prosperous capital of South America, are legalisees without the intervention of the priest. London itself can as yet not make so proud a boast.

The rich and powerful Lodges of the Grand Orient of the Argentine may be counted as organised forces fighting definitely for Freethought. On November 1 last, the G. O. commenced the publication of an official "Boletin," issued monthly, addressed to all the Lodges in its obedience. It opens with a leading article stating that its object, as indeed the object of Freemasonry itself, "is to substitute for religious teaching, which stagnates thought and nullifies reason, a purely secular education, which alone can redeem the mind from superstition, and make man a conscious, upright, thinking being."

## II.—URUGUAY.

The second fact is furnished by the many literary and propagandist activities associated with the work of *El Progreso*. This paper, which is published at Chivilcoy, near Buenos Ayres, on the 1st and 15th day of the month, having commenced the 22nd year of its existence on January 1 of this year, proclaims itself, in its sub-title, *periodico ateo*—an atheistical journal. It has a larger circulation than any other Freethought paper in the South American republics. Its present editor, Francisco Gicca, has been eight years at his post, and as a journalist and lecturer is one of the chief ornaments of the movement in the great Latin republics. For the last six months he has been away on a long lecturing tour throughout the vast extent of Uruguay, holding debates with priests, Protestants, and Spiritualists, founding new Freethought groups and arousing much enthusiasm. Gicca, as an Italian long naturalised in the Republic, is admirably fitted for carrying on propagandist work not only amongst the Spanish-speaking majority, but amongst the numerous and prosperous Italian colonists, who are counted by many hundreds of thousands. In touring throughout the country, Gicca's local centres of support are the scattered readers of *El Progreso* and its pamphlets and tracts, the local Lodges of Freemasonry, the Italian clubs, and the Italian and native Freemason Lodges. In many places, too, the Freethought spirit is only waiting to be evoked into activity, having already been awakened, apart from these influences, by the frankly anti-clerical tone and temper of the press. It is this latter phenomenon—for such it is, appearing in such a country—that has always so much surprised me in reference to these South American lands, long considered the happy hunting-grounds of the priest. A list of journals in South America whose columns accord welcome and hospitality to the boldest utterances adverse to Christianity would surprise some of our self-complacent English Protestants, who imagine they have a monopoly of fair-play in controversy. Gicca's missionary work is the direct outcome of the recent reconstruction of the "National Organisation of Freethought" in Uruguay, and indirectly of the Congress of 1906 in Buenos Ayres. The inaugural meeting took place on December 17 last, under the presidency of Dr. Emilio Gouchon, the "Gran Commendator" of the Supreme Council of the Grand Orient. A distinguished Committee was formed, including Admiral

Enrique Howard, Dr. Barrenechea, and others, with Dr. Augustin Alvarez as President. Since its formation, a large number of fresh Societies have been launched throughout the country, and quite an active revival of Freethought energy has manifested itself. The Committee's program includes the Organisation of Provincial Congresses of Freethought, with the view of convening, in 1910, a National Congress. In anticipation of this event, public opinion is being aroused in favor of four specific objects:—

1. Erection of a monument to Rivadavia, as embodying the principal of secular education in the schools.
2. The Divorce Law.
3. Separation of Church and State.
4. The triumph of the secular principle in the administration and work of the schools, and in all institutions of a public character.

It is significant that the work of organisation in Buenos Ayres should have been committed to a lady—Senora Maria Abella de Ramirez de la Plata—and that nine ladies should have been elected on the Executive of the new Organisation. We have no need to ask with Christ, "Where are the nine?" when amongst them figures that distinguished thinker and orator, Belén Sarraga de Ferrero, whom I met at the Congresses at Geneva and Rome, and whose splendid journal, *La Consciencia Libre*, published at Malaga, the only Freethought journal in the world then edited by a woman, gave hospitality to my effusions. Senora Belén Sarraga was invited from Spain by the Freethinkers of South America, and fired with enthusiasm large meetings in every part of the Latin Republics, new Societies springing into being in response to her eloquent addresses. On March 1 of this year she founded a new paper, *El Liberal*, at Montivideo, and we are glad to salute this new recruit into the ranks of Freethought journalism. Prior to December, 1907, the National Organisation was known as the "Anti-clerical Federation of Freethought." It was founded by Ramon Vereá, the first editor of *El Progreso*. His "Freethought Catechism" is one of the classics of popular propagandism in South America. I have before me the third edition, published (in Spanish) at New York in 1894; fresh issues have since been published in Buenos Ayres, and a further edition was published early this year at Montivideo. One of the most valuable pamphlets issued by this Society is Volney's *Ruins of Palmira*, an interesting work that one would like to see on the list of popular publications in every country where Freethought work is carried on. A special feature of popular propaganda in this country is the short Freethought novel. One of these, by Francisco Gicca, entitled *El Celibato de los Curas* (*The Celibacy of the Clergy*), is written with great power and portrays with admirable psychological insight the conflict in the heart of a conscientious priest between the cloistered love of God and the sensuous and human love of a fair woman. It is easy for the English Freethinker, bred amidst an atmosphere of prejudice against Roman Catholicism, to disparage an attack upon Christianity which consists in thundering at the abuses of Rome. But Gicca's work is not a Protestant tract. It is instinct with Freethought in every line, and its perusal must be of great value in detaching the Catholics not only from Mother Church, but from the whole paraphernalia of Christian superstition. Gicca has since issued another Freethought novel, *Las Corrupciones del Misticismo* (*The Corruptions of Mysticism*), published simultaneously in Barcelona and Buenos Ayres. I have not yet obtained a copy, but I learn from a long notice in a South American paper (*Verdad*, of Parana) that Gicca, in this work, has eclipsed his former production and made a successful appeal to a large circle of readers who might at first be repelled from reading a lecture on God or the Plagues of Egypt.

## III.—MONTIVIDEO.

The third fact which calls for notice in connection with Freethought in the Latin Republics in America, is the importance of the movement

centering in Montivideo and ramifying throughout the Argentine Republic. This movement revolves around the *Asociacion de Propaganda Liberal*, founded on the initiative of five individuals on August 11, 1900. On September 20 in the same year the Association issued its first pamphlet, translated from Lechatre, on *The Temporal Power of the Popes*, and has since poured out with unremitting regularity some ninety separate pamphlets. In January, 1901, it commenced the publication of its monthly "Boletin" called *El Libre Pensamiento*, consisting of special original articles, translations from the Free-thought press in other lands, and criticisms and comments on current events affecting the progress of the movement throughout the Republic. On December 10, 1905, it was found necessary to publish the paper twice a month; and after twenty-eight numbers, each consisting of four large quarto pages, had been issued, the paper had again to be enlarged to six pages. *El Libre Pensamiento* was now adorned with some excellent photographs of well-known workers in the Freethought movement. Since February of the present year it is issued thrice a month. It frequently publishes lengthy translations of current *Freethinker* articles by Mr. Foote, Mr. Cohen, or Mr. Lloyd.

In addition to the literary side of its activities the Association has planted Committees and Branches in various parts of the Republic, and of these some fifty or more are in existence. The members do not understand Freethought in any loose or lackadaisical fashion, as may be gathered from the following statement of the "Duties of a good Freethinker" which is printed on the fly-leaf of their numerous-circulated pamphlets. "The Duties of a Freethinker" are:—

"Not to contract a religious marriage.

Not to allow his children to be baptised.

Not, in any capacity, to attend any ceremony of religious marriage, baptism, or confirmation.

Not to confide to the Church, or to any of its sympathisers, the education of his children.

To leave directions for his civil funeral.

Not to attend religious funerals, nor take part therein, nor allow prayers to be offered for the dead.

Never to give money to the Church under any form or pretext, even though, apparently, for beneficent or charitable purposes.

Not to associate nor countenance, directly or indirectly, any religious ceremony.

To protect the family and hearth from the intrusion of the so-called Ministers of the Lord."

I cite the above to show that there is not much weak-kneedness about Freethought in Montivideo. In commencing (on Feb. 7 last) the seventh year of its existence, *El Libre Pensamiento* declares that "its object, now as ever, is to defend Freethought without masking or minimising the facts, and to struggle with dogged determination against every species of hypocrisy, whether of the Catholic, Protestant, Christian, or any other brand." From a financial point of view, the Association has room to rejoice. On the auditing of its accounts at December 31 last, it was certified that it had a balance at the "Banco Britanico" of \$5,796. From a propagandist point of view, its position is even more satisfactory. During the seven and a-half years of its existence the Association (up to May of this year) has published, in all, ninety exceedingly valuable sixteen-paged pamphlets, which have attained a total circulation of 469,000 copies. The paper, *El Libre Pensamiento*, enjoys a circulation of 2,000. These figures, however, do not represent the limit of the Society's operations. It works by the agency of fifty branches or groups throughout the Republic, and the wide circulation of its publications by loan, and the expansion of their influence by frequent notices and comments in the public press, concur to make this one of the most flourishing Freethought Societies in the world.

#### IV.—BUENOS AYRES CONGRESS.

The crowning event in the recent history of South American Freethought was the Great International Freethought Congress at Buenos Ayres on September

20, 21, 22, and 23, 1906. Only those who, like myself, have seen the enormous mass of literature and the abundant proofs of deep and widespread interest aroused throughout the Latin Republics by the Congress can appreciate the awakening influence of this historic assembly. The full weight of the Lodges of Freemasonry was thrown into the scale in order to ensure the success of the Congress. Important delegations attended from Spain, Portugal, Belgium, France, and Italy, including the Grand Master of the Italian Freemasonry, who, indeed, attended in his official capacity. Senor Cabrera, the President of the Republic of Guatemala, wrote a long and sympathetic letter to the Congress, and expressing his personal gratification that the Congress had been called, excused himself from attendance merely on the grounds of his official capacity. The organising Committee included, amongst other notabilities, Senor Soto (Secretary) Member of the Permanent Council of War; several Ex-Grand Masters of the Grand Orient; Dr. Lugones, Inspector of National Schools; Vice-Admiral Howard, Member of the Supreme Council of War and Marine; Dr. D'Amico, late Governor of the Province of Buenos Ayres; and many members of Parliament, medical men, and lawyers. The proceedings took place at the great Argentina Theatre, which was thronged to its utmost capacity. Its discussions were reported in innumerable journals, including *La Prensa*, one of the best newspapers in the world. I cannot pretend at this juncture to indicate more than the foregoing particulars concerning this remarkable focussing of the growing forces of Freethought in South America, but perhaps enough has been said to indicate the seriousness and importance of the movement there, and, in particular, to illustrate the fact that, in the Latin Republics, the cowardly conspiracy of silence which puts "the fear of God" and Mrs. Grundy into the hearts of so many of our English illuminati is not so rampant amongst *color che sanno*, as Dante said, or those who know, you know, as Balfour's "man in the street" would say.

But I must say no more about South America and its fervent labors for Freethought. The theme is an inexhaustible one, for Freethought bids fair to become as broad as the Amazon and as high as the Andes in the intellectual and social life of the South American peoples.

WM. HEAFORD.

#### Ingersoll's Conservative Statement.

FREETHINKERS at a distance from libraries where Freethought or scientific books may be found, or who are too busy to consult them, are often placed at a disadvantage through inability to back up their statements with the proper authorities. The religious disputant has his Bible at hand, and does not admit that its truth can be impeached or that any of its statements need verification. He accepts his religion on faith. His attitude is quite different toward scientific facts, which, when quoted by a layman, he insists must be supported by proof. A great deal of the correspondence conducted by the *Truthseeker* office arises out of orthodox incredulity regarding facts. Sometimes an eminent man is quoted by a Freethinker, whereupon a minister or a churchman will deny that the author ever said it, and call for the name of the book and page. Even when the quotation is from the Bible they will sometimes declare the book contains nothing of the kind, and if the person making it is not prepared to point out chapter and verse he stands discredited. Such a dispute generally gets to this office for settlement, and we give the required information if we have it.

Just now an inquiry comes from the Argentine Republic, in South America, where a reader has found a man who denies a statement contained in Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on the "Mistakes of Moses." Ingersoll, in discussing the story of the creation, observes that "Moses came near forgetting about the stars, and gave only five words [He made the stars also"] to all the hosts of heaven." Then proceeding to remark on the magnitude and distances of the stars, Ingersoll inquired if Moses knew that "some stars are so far away in the infinite abysses that five millions of years are required for their light to reach this globe?" Our South American reader writes: "A very intelligent English friend

insists that Ingersoll had no authority for such a statement," and asks us to tell where Ingersoll got it.

The *Mistakes of Moses* was prepared by Ingersoll about thirty years ago. The author has been dead nine years, and we have no way of finding out what works on astronomy he consulted in preparing the lecture. We can, however, cite some accepted astronomical facts, which make the statement appear as not only warranted, but exceedingly conservative. We have a book entitled *Astronomy*, by J. Rambosson, laureate of the institute of France, published by D. Appleton and Co., New York. M. Rambosson, in speaking of the spots in the Milky Way—spots of light composed of innumerable stars—says: "Some of these spots, of these five thousand and more nebulae, which have been catalogued, are certainly equal in size to the nebula of which we form a part, and the astronomers who have attempted to calculate their distances have arrived at figures which almost inspire a feeling of terror. It has been estimated that light would not traverse the distance between these nebulae and the earth in less than sixty million years, while a cannon-ball would take 37,000 milliards of years!" (A "milliard" is a thousand millions) This shows how moderate was Ingersoll's statement.

Stellar distances are almost inconceivable. It takes six and one-half years for light to reach this earth from the nearest of the stars. We should need to live 144,000,000 years to get there on a fast train.

The extremes of the orbit in which the earth moves are 180,000,000 miles apart. In December we are therefore 180,000,000 miles nearer to the stars in the northern part of the sky than we are in June. And yet, despite the diminished distance, we are not able to see that these stars look any larger in December than in June.

If some of the stars which we can distinguish on a clear night were to be suddenly obliterated, our grandchildren would be the first to know of the catastrophe, for the light emitted by them is three-quarters of a century in reaching the earth. "All the stars," says the astronomer Secchi, "might be annihilated to-day, and nearly all of them would continue to be seen by the inhabitants of the earth, very much as they appear now, for several generations." Light which they emitted when our forefathers were upon earth is just reaching us; that which they emit to-day may be seen by our descendants, or it may find "this old hulk we tread" to be a "wreck, a slag, a cinder, drifting through the sky without its crew of fools."

If God had "made the stars also" at the time assigned to the creation, the light from some of them would not yet have got here.

The number of the stars is as great a difficulty as their distances in the way of accepting the creation story. It is estimated that there are in the Milky Way at least twenty million visible suns, independent of those, doubtless far more numerous, which we are unable to discern. And yet the Milky Way occupies but a small corner of the universe. There are five thousand other nebulae, and some of them contain as many suns as the Milky Way.

Another fact. This solar system, the sun and the earth, are making a rapid progress toward certain stars in the group known as the constellation of Hercules. Our speed in that direction is nearly 300,000,000 miles a year, or 800,000 miles a day. If the creator chanced to be visiting some other system, moving in an opposite direction, or away from ours, which aforesaid he frequented, and should spend as much time there as he has bestowed upon us, think of the speed he would have to make to catch up with the earth again.

The astronomers were the first devotees of science to suffer at the hands of the Church for their discoveries. And no wonder the Church regarded them as dangerous. The idea of a plurality of worlds was alarming, especially if the others were to be viewed as containing inhabitants. A few hundred years ago the Bible was the depository of all science, and there was no knowledge which could not be squared with its teachings by the priests. Astronomy made the first breach between science and religion, and the other sciences followed, until the Church was obliged to follow the example of the religious teachers of Greece, who, when the public faith in their oracles had been destroyed by advancing intelligence, "were content to admit that the marvels formerly believed in were allegories under which the wisdom of the ancients had concealed many sacred and mysterious things."

The odd thing about the situation is that after Christians have given up the Bible as infallible in matters of science, they yet dispute the findings of science, as though they still conflicted with the "spiritual" truths of the Bible. But if it is once conceded that God did not make the stars also in the exact manner set forth by Moses, thus discrediting the account, what difference does it make whether the light of a star is five million years or only five seconds in reaching the earth? Nobody who regards the stars as anything more stupendous than brass-headed tacks stuck in the sky will

believe that they were created by the ridiculous deity who pattered about Eden and discussed domestic affairs with the patriarchs.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

## Correspondence.

### HOLYOAKE AND AGNOSTICISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have just come across an "open letter" of G. J. Holyoake to Dr. Stanton Coit, in a back number of *Ethics* (April 22, 1905), containing a passage which I believe will be of interest to the "Agnostic" friends of the "father of Secularism." Addressing Dr. Coit, Holyoake says: "You express dislike of the term 'Agnostic.' So do I dislike it. Nor am I aware that I ever applied it to myself, or authorised others to apply it to me, though I have defended its meaning from aspersion."

H. GEORGE FARMER.

### Iconoclasts' Cricket Club Third Match

V.

#### Hammersmith Cricket Club.

This match was played on Sunday, 21st inst., and resulted in a severe defeat for the Iconoclasts. Scores:—Hammersmith, 125; Iconoclasts, 36. Our men were all at sea in their fielding, and several easy catches were missed. Our batting broke down badly, and only one man (Masters) scored double figures. As Tom Emmet said, "There is an epidemic (of bad fielding), but it is not 'catching.'"

H. E. VOIGT, *Captain I. C. C.*

### THE PASSING OF SATAN.

The announcement that George R. Sims has introduced the Devil in a series of melodramatic sketches published in a widely-circulated newspaper shows conclusively that the Devil, as a subject for literature, has run his course. In the progress of the centuries His Satanic Majesty has been made to assume many distinctive characters; but he cannot sink lower than this. Milton's "Satan" was a dignified abstraction. Goethe's "Mephistopheles" was the incarnation of intellect. Marlowe's phantom was horrific. Calderon's Devil was but an unfrocked priest. Byron's "Lucifer" talked like a curate, and Robert Burns's "Deil" was the Devil of eighteenth-century Scotland. We had hoped that Marie Correlli's ladylike Satan was the last shadow of a metaphysical abstraction which had obsessed mankind in its days of superstition.

### GOD IN PICCADILLY.

Poisonous paint on us, under the gas  
Smiling like spectres, we gather bereaven,  
Leprosy's taint on us, ghost-like we pass,  
Watched by the eyes of yon pitiless heaven!  
Let the stars stare at us! God, too, may glare at us  
Out of the void where He hideth so well—  
Sisters of midnight, He damned us in making us,  
Cast us like carrion to men, then forsaking us,  
Smiles from His throne on these markets of Hell!

—Robert Buchanan.

### AS WARM AS OUR OWN BIBLE.

Remember that Professor Max Müller, when he published the *Sacred Books of the East* in England, explained that there were whole sections that he dared not publish in English lest he should lay himself open to a criminal prosecution.—*Dr. Fitchett*, "The Beliefs of Unbelief."

### AN ALL-SEEING EYE.

It was the first vaudeville performance the old colored lady had ever seen, and she was particularly excited over the marvellous feats of the magician. But when he covered a newspaper with a heavy flannel cloth and read the print through it, she grew a little nervous. He then doubled the cloth and again read the letters accurately.

This was more than she could stand, and rising in her seat, she said:—

"I'm goin' home. This ain't no place for a lady in a thin calico dress!"

**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.**

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

**LONDON.****OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, Mr. Marshall, "Christian Intolerance."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, W. J. Ramsey.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, 7, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, H. B. Camuels, "Jesus Christ, the Socialist, and the Un-Social."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S.: Beresford-square, 11.30, a Lecture.

**COUNTRY.**

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (above Tram Hotel, Market-place): Annual Meeting—Report and Election of Officers.

**OUTDOOR.**

BURY: Fair Ground, Tuesday, June 30, at 7.30, Mr. McLennan, "The False Prophecies of Christ."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S.: Corner of Shiel-road and Boaler-street, S. Wallen, 3, "Bible and Women"; 7, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

**H. S. WISHART'S LECTURES.**

LEEDS: Friday, June 26, Town Hall Square, at 7.30, "Christ's Mockery of Working Men."

KEIGHLEY: Sunday, June 28, Victoria Park, at 3, "Christ's Mockery of Reform"; at 6.30, "The Necessity for Atheism."

NELSON: Monday, June 29, at 7.30, "The New Theology: a Ridiculous Fraud."

BARNOLDSDWICK: Tuesday, June 30, at 7.30, "Christism, Socialism, Secularism."

WIGAN: Wednesday, July 1, Market Steps, at 7.30, "Better Morality Without God."

ROCHDALE: Thursday, July 2, at 7.30, "God Ignorance and Fear."

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