

# The Index.

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TOLEDO, O., AND NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 8, 1873.

WHOLE No. 163.

## ORGANIZE!

LIBERALS OF AMERICA!

The hour for action has arrived. The cause of freedom calls upon us to combine our strength, our zeal, our efforts. These are

THE DEMANDS OF LIBERALISM.

1. We demand that churches and other ecclesiastical property shall no longer be exempt from just taxation.
2. We demand that the employment of chaplains in Congress, in State Legislatures, in the navy and militia, and in prisons, asylums, and all other institutions supported by public money, shall be discontinued.
3. We demand that all public appropriations for sectarian educational and charitable institutions shall cease.
4. We demand that all religious services now sustained by the government shall be abolished; and especially that the use of the Bible in the public schools, whether ostensibly as a text-book or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall be prohibited.
5. We demand that the appointment, by the President of the United States or by the Governors of the various States, of all religious festivals and fasts shall wholly cease.
6. We demand that the judicial oath in the courts and in all other departments of the government shall be abolished, and that simple affirmation under the pains and penalties of perjury shall be established in its stead.
7. We demand that all laws directly or indirectly enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath shall be repealed.
8. We demand that all laws looking to the enforcement of "Christian" morality shall be abrogated, and that all laws shall be conformed to the requirements of natural morality, equal rights, and impartial liberty.
9. We demand that not only in the Constitutions of the United States and of the several States, but also in the practical administration of the same, no privilege or advantage shall be conceded to Christianity or any other special religion; that our entire political system shall be founded and administered on a purely secular basis; and that whatever changes shall prove necessary to this end shall be consistently, unflinchingly, and promptly made.

Let us boldly and with high purpose meet the duty of the hour. I submit to you the following

FORM OF LOCAL ORGANIZATION.

Whereas, It is our profound conviction that the safety of republican institutions is imperilled, the advance of civilization impeded, and the most sacred rights of man infringed, by the least interference of the State in matters of religion; and

Whereas, Certain grave inconsistencies with the general spirit of the United States Constitution still mark the practical administration of our political system, threatening the perpetuity of religious liberty, the existence of free public schools, and the peace and prosperity of the entire land;

THEREFORE, We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together under the following

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT.

ART. 1.—The name of this Association shall be THE LIBERAL LEAGUE OF ———.

ART. 2.—The object of the Liberal League shall be to secure practical compliance with the "Demands of Liberalism" throughout the country, and especially in ———.

Also, as soon as five hundred such Liberal Leagues shall have been formed in different places, to send two delegates to a National Convention of Liberal Leagues, to be hereafter called, in order to co-operate with all the liberals of the country in securing the needed reforms.

ART. 3.—The means employed in working for these objects shall be regular local meetings, free discussions, lectures, addresses, conventions, the platform and the press in general, and all such other means as are peaceable, orderly, and right.

ART. 4.—Such measures shall be adopted for raising funds for the League as shall be prescribed in the By-Laws by a two-thirds vote of the members.

ART. 5.—Any person may become a member of the League by subscribing his or her name to these Articles of Agreement.

ART. 6.—The Officers of the League shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of three members; and their duties shall be those commonly pertaining to these offices. The President and Secretary shall be *ex officio* delegates to the National Convention of Liberal Leagues when called together.

ART. 7.—These Articles of Agreement may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the members present at any regular meeting, provided due notice of the proposed amendments shall have been sent to every member at least two weeks previous to such meeting.

Liberals! I pledge to you my undivided sympathies and most vigorous co-operation, both in THE INDEX and out of it, in this work of local and national organization. Let us begin at once to lay the foundations of a great national party of freedom, which shall demand the entire secularization of our municipal, state, and national government. Send to me promptly the list of officers of every Liberal League that may be formed, and a standing list of all such Leagues shall be kept in THE INDEX. Rouse, then, to the great work of freeing America from the usurpations of the Church! Make this continent from ocean to ocean sacred to human liberty! Prove that you are worthy descendants of those whose wisdom and patriotism gave us a Constitution untainted with superstition! Shake of your slumbers, and break the chains to which you have too long tamely submitted!

Toledo, O., Jan. 1, 1873.

FRANCIS E. ABBOT.

## THE BOSTON SUNDAY AFTERNOON LECTURES

FOR 1873.

THE PROGRESS AND PERILS OF FREE THOUGHT.

BY THOS. WENTWORTH HIGGINSON.

SECOND LECTURE IN THE COURSE OF SIX "SUNDAY AFTERNOON LECTURES," GIVEN IN HORTICULTURAL HALL, BOSTON, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION, JANUARY 12, 1873.

It was said by one of the ablest religious writers of the last century—Rev. Richard Cecil—that if a single, serious, and moral man were to reject Christianity and to avow his reasons for doing so, it would be a trial far more dangerous to the faith of England than all the sneers of Voltaire or the sentimentality of Rousseau. The danger which good Mr. Cecil thought impossible has now come to pass. The men who impeach Christianity or renounce the name are not now the dissolute and reckless, but men of character and culture. This we know, not through their own assertions, but by the admission of those who defend the faith. Mr. Ruskin says that so utter is the infidelity of Europe, no statesman would dare, in defending a measure before Parliament or the *Corps Legislatif*, to quote from the Bible in support of his position. At the last annual meeting of the "Christian Evidence Society" in London, Lord Salisbury, the chairman, said that "the intense importance of the prevalent unbelief pressed itself on the minds of thoughtful Christians, and acquired new weight every day. . . . They were standing in one of the most awful crises through which the intellect of Christendom had ever passed. They could point to many distinguished intellects from which all that belief had gone, in which until now the highest minds coincided." Lord Shaftesbury, following him, said that "bishops, deans, men of science, the greatest minds in literature, all avowed infidel principles. It was difficult, in fact, to find a man under the age of forty who would confess to a belief in anything at all." This refers to the cultivated classes in England. Of the uncultivated, the same Lord Shaftesbury said lately that, "of the whole mass of the working population of London, not two in a hundred go to any place of public worship."

Turning to America, we find an eminent Christian layman, Dr. J. G. Holland, calling the attention of his fellow Christians to the fact that the highest culture and the most lovable character are now more often to be sought outside the Church. We find the most influential newspaper in the world, perhaps, the *New York Independent*, met Mr. Abbot's "Demands of Liberalism," not with hostility, but with the assertions that the demands were superfluous, and the *Independent* had urged them all before. And Rev. Dr. Newman of Washington, lately keeper of the conscience of the national Senate, and now of President Grant's, made lately the following prediction, according to a Washington newspaper:—

"Within the next decade, ay, within the next five years, Christianity will be tried as it has never been tried before. There are men in England and America to-day who will bring to the assault a ripeness of scholarship, a power of intellect, and a breadth of view unequalled by the past. These assaults will continue, and there are men and women before me to-night who are destined to have their faith terribly shaken."

It is a strange thing to note, that this progress has not been made by help of favorable circumstances. Radicalism, now as always, is poor. Why should a rich man be a radical, and how can a free-thinker expect to be rich? There is in the Church no lack of riches. Her tract societies are so wealthy that the only difficulty is how to spend the money given by dying sinners for the spread of their theological opinions. Being no want of wealth, there is no lack of what wealth can always buy—the preaching of the Gospel, any gospel. In a certain sense, sincerity

is to be purchased. There are numbers of young men in the Society of Jesuits and in all societies who have been trained by the pressure of a costly organization to preach doctrines which, if left to themselves, their souls would have abhorred. We are living in a period like that described in the story of St. Thomas Aquinas. A great prelate once showed him several great basins full of ducats, and said to him: "Look here, Master Thomas, now can the Church no more say, as St. Peter said, 'Silver and gold have I not.'" "That is true," replied the saint. "Neither can she say what immediately follows, 'In the name of Jesus Christ, stand up and walk!'"

And as it is not for want of wealth that the Church loses hold, so it certainly is not for the want of preaching. The more sermons heard, it would seem, the greater the recoil from the preacher. They say in England that Bishop Blomfield, revisiting the University Chapel at Cambridge after long absence, found the same old verger whom he remembered in college days. "You have much to be grateful for," said the bishop to the old man. "I have indeed, my lord," was the answer. "I have heard every sermon that has been preached in the chapel for fifty years, and, I bless the Lord, I am a Christian still!"

It is to be noticed, too, that this progress of free thought brings no falling off of moral power or philanthropic zeal. The great reforms of the world were never stronger, and most of them sprang, to say the least, from the secular side and not from the technical Church. The temperance movement dates back, so far as I know, to a pamphlet written in 1818, by Judge Thomas Hertell, an avowed infidel; and Miss Catharine Beecher has recently stated that the sixty thousand Jews in New York stand higher in this regard than any other class of citizens. The anti-slavery reform sprang not from the Church, but from a solitary young man in Boston, now the most renowned citizen in Massachusetts, who began by appealing in vain to the Church, which afterward repudiated him in turn. Slavery was systematically defended as a Scriptural institution, which indeed it was, and its opponents have come again and again from the anti-Christian side. The first nation in Europe that abolished slavery in the colonies (France, in 1793) did in the same session abolish Christianity—and when Christianity was restored, slavery came back also. The cause of woman's rights, next on the docket for labor and trial and triumph, by the special charge of its enemies was cradled in infidelity. Many as have been the noble men in the Church who have given the cause their heartiest support, its history proves the strength of a moral reform to be in human nature itself, and not inside any catechism or ritual. If you insist on giving the name of Christianity to the whole progress of modern civilization, you may claim these reforms as Christian, but in no mere technical sense. And the reason is plain. It is not that there were worse men inside the Church, but they were pre-occupied with saving the souls of men by some doctrine or ritual, and so left it to unbelievers and secular men to look after the bodies.

The world is thus entering, with no perceptible injury, on a period of greater religious freedom. It is not to be expected that those who still honestly believe in the Christian tradition can thus slip away from it, without an effort, even if that effort is called persecution. Persecution may not make a man more lovable, but if he is a sincere Christian believer, persecution shows him to be more logical. Mr. Fox, the English statesman, said to the poet Rogers, "the only foundation for toleration is a degree of scepticism, and without it there can be none. For if a man believes in the saving of souls, he must soon think about the means, and if by cutting off one generation he can save many future ones from hell-fire, it is his duty to do it."

Accordingly, in some parts of the English-speaking world, free thought is accompanied by perils as well as progress. In Sydney, Australia, there is still imprisoned (I suppose) a man of unimpeached personal character—Mr. William L. Jones—a member of the Royal Academy of Arts, who was convicted of the crime of blasphemy, for asserting that much of the Old Testament was false and inaccurate. It was proved for the defence that Mr. Jones spoke of God

"with great reverence," and declared Jesus Christ to be "the highest and purest character known in history." Evidence as to his good moral character was ruled out; and he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment at hard labor, and to a fine of £200. I take the facts from the *Dubuque (Iowa) Times*, as reprinted in the *Boston Investigator*.

Such a reaction in favor of superstition might here be impossible. But when we open our newspaper and find a citizen of Brookline arrested for playing croquet on Sunday, in his own grounds, behind a hedge too high for any one but an "evangelical" detective to look through; or when, in another newspaper, we find a man shot with three bullets by a policeman, when refusing to be arrested for fishing in a brook on Sunday,—we see the germ of the same tyranny that ordered the massacre of St. Bartholomew. No doubt every man who goes into a religious meeting has a right to the protection of the police on Sunday, and so has every man innocently employed outside. It will one day seem as absurd to prohibit any one from innocent sport on Sunday, as it does now to keep a public library closed on that day. It is as easy to have a harmonious difference of opinion everywhere else as it is in Westerly, R. I.—a manufacturing town of 7,000 inhabitants, where about half the people are Seventh-Day Baptists. Go there on Saturday and you find one-half the churches, one-half the shops, and one-half the mills open and in full operation. Stay there over Sunday and you find everything open that was closed the day before, and everything that was closed, open. Nobody tries to coerce his neighbor's conscience, and the result is harmony and peace.

Another peril of free thought is in the temptations that come to many a man, in business, or in a profession, to conceal his opinion for the sake of his bread. The pathway to indifference or conformity is easier to the radical than the conservative, for no man believes that his soul's salvation is endangered by going to church; whereas many believe that they risk eternal torment by staying away from it. Baptism, and the "Lord's Supper," and saying Mass, are matters of life and death to those who believe in them, while to those who have outgrown them they are only matters of indifference. And when young men come to me, as they sometimes do, and say, "Shall I give up my situation, or shall I hold my tongue?" although I always advise them to give up their situation, I am not surprised to hear of them afterwards as deacons or vestrymen.

Yet these, after all, are trivial things. The only really serious danger of free thought is in the proposed religious amendment to the Constitution; and I am not one of those who believe that this can ever be carried. We have had a hundred years of substantial religious liberty, under a Constitution which provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion," and I am not afraid that we are going to be, as a nation, false to this. We owe our religious liberties to the fact that the great founders of our government—Washington, Jefferson, Adams—were heretics, and knew what they were doing. The Constitution declares treaties to be "the supreme law of the land;" and the most precious autograph of Washington, for those who prize religious freedom, is his signature to the treaty with Tripoli, Nov. 4, 1796: "As the government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has, in itself, no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Mussulmans, and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation—it is declared by the parties that no pretext, arising from religious opinions, shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between these two countries." In this we have the policy of Washington. On the other side we have that of the Rev. Mr. McAllister, who maintained in this very city, in behalf of the proposed "religious amendment," that "the State must have its own religion, and teach it, and, if wise, will both proclaim and support it." As between these two authorities I confess I feel safer by the side of Washington.

This good effect at least may follow from the new efforts of this reactionary party. It may lead to the withdrawal of those inconsistencies which linger in our national practice; as, the exemption of churches from taxation, and the enforced reading of the Bible in schools. These are but subordinate inconsistencies, under the Constitution, and easily repealed. Once get the proposed "religious amendment" fastened upon us, and we step back two centuries. I do not think it possible that this should happen; but I cannot forget that most people regarded the late civil war as equally impossible—and yet it came!

But after all, the chief dangers to free thought are always from within, not from without. With our best efforts we can extract but little persecution out of the present age, for either thinking freely or speaking our thought. So much the more dangerous, often. Persecution helps truth. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. But

many a man who would have made a first-class martyr makes a very poor citizen. Arrogance, obstinacy, self-conceit, often looked sublime when they went up to heaven in a funeral pyre, whereas if you had let them alone, the world would soon have grown tired of them. He who died a saint might have lived to be a bore. The worst thing that could be done with the early Christians was to condemn them "to the lions." Now the heretic may be doomed to become a lion—which is worse.

We must remember that the free-thinker who cannot talk, who cannot write, who has only power to think and to be brave and good, may be doing more for free thought than one who is logical and eloquent and base. What honest people fear in free thought is that it will end in levity and vice. They are right to dread that. We hurt our cause more by frivolousness than by bad logic. We hurt it by pettishness—growing angry at little attacks, where we ought not even to feel the arrow. We hurt it inexpressibly by conceit. There is many a brave man who is now offensive to everybody, but who, if he could only assume for five minutes a look of humility, would charm the whole human race.

Above all, the spirit of love is more important, in the long run, than any argument. "An ounce of mother," says the Spanish proverb, "is worth a pound of clergy;" and an ounce of love like a mother's is worth all the sarcasms of Voltaire's seventy volumes. Life speaks the loudest and argues the most convincingly. In a village church of New York State, the other day, they put in a new painted window, representing the first scene after the death of Jesus; and from the lips of an angel at the sepulchre come the words, "The Lord is not here." So there stands a clergyman officiating in full canonicals every Sunday, and behind him the ominous criticism (before the eyes of the whole congregation): "The Lord is not here." Let those of us who are aiming at free thought take care lest, while we are shaping assiduously our arguments or our rhetoric, some angel of our own painting should say over our shoulders, "Beware! the truth is not here."

#### DARWIN ON BELIEF IN GOD.

"There is no evidence that man was aboriginally endowed with the ennobling belief in the existence of an omnipotent God. On the contrary, there is ample evidence, derived not from hasty travellers, but from men who have long resided with savages, that numerous races have existed, and still exist, who have no idea of one or more gods, and who have no words in their language to express such an idea. The question is, of course, wholly distinct from the higher one, whether there exists a Creator and Ruler of the universe; and this has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects that have ever lived." [*Descent of Man*, vol. I., pp. 62—63.]

"The belief in God has often been advanced as not only the greatest, but the most complete of all the distinctions between man and the lower animals. It is, however, impossible to maintain that this belief is innate or instinctive in man. On the other hand, a belief in all-pervading spiritual agencies seems to be universal; and apparently follows from a considerable advance in the reasoning powers of man, and from a still greater advance in his faculties of imagination, curiosity, and wonder. I am aware that the assumed instinctive belief in God has been used by many persons as an argument for his existence. But this is a rash argument, as we should thus be compelled to believe in the existence of many cruel and malignant spirits, possessing only a little more power than man; for the belief in them is far more general than of a beneficent Deity. The idea of a universal and beneficent Creator of the universe does not seem to arise in the mind of man until he has been elevated by long-continued culture." [*Descent of Man*, vol. II., p. 377.]

The religious divisions of the entire population of India are said to be approximately as follows: Native Christians, 1,100,000; Buddhists, 3,000,000; Aborigines, 12,000,000; Hindus, 110,000,000; Mahometans, 25,000,000; Parsees, 170,000; Eurasians, 91,000; Europeans, 156,000; Jews, 10,000; Armenians, 5,000. In Bengal, with its population of 40,000,000, it is said that no more than 500,000 children are receiving any education, though certain classes are anxious to have it. Most of that which is now afforded is given through the 30,000 native schools, which are described as only better than none.

Mr. FROUDE concluded a lecture with this observation:—"But it is said that things of this sort go on in most countries where there are popular governments; that corruption, more or less of it, is a necessary condition for the working of free constitutions. If that be so, then have the destinies pronounced sentence against free constitutions. *Either liberty must cast out corruption, or corruption will destroy liberty.*"

A great man is always willing to be little.—*Emer-*

[Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1873, by F. E. ABBOT, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.]

## PAUL GOWER.

### A RATIONALISTIC STORY OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LIFE.

#### CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

He was in many respects an original, in some a type of a large class of the old school of country clergymen. A gentleman by breeding and profession, of average attainments and mediocre abilities; simple-natured and narrow-minded, in consequence of his seclusion from the world; something of a gossip and, what the villagers denominated, a "jaddle" (meaning one who fusses over trifles); he also entertained such peculiar ideas of his authority over his parishioners, and his duty towards them, high and low, as not unfrequently betrayed him into conduct which it would be difficult to avoid characterizing as other than that of a spy and petty tyrant. Thus he was accustomed to write to the Squire informing him of such misdemeanors on the part of his servants as he became acquainted with through the tattling of his own or village gossip—for instance surreptitious attendance at fairs or wakes, staying out late of nights, or not coming to church—to which they responded by hating him cordially and going to sleep in sermon-time, an offence he particularly resented; moreover he had been known to attempt to abuse his influence in the same quarter to prevent the parents of such children as went to the Methodist school (instead of the orthodox one) from renting an allotment, or chain or two of land, wherein to grow corn or vegetables. The Squire, however, generally laughed at such suggestions, unless they involved some communication about poaching, when he could be more severe than the parson desired. Illiberal from position rather than nature, Mr. Blencowe was, notwithstanding, charitable to the poor (especially when propitiated); he thought the text asserting that they should never cease from out the land a literal expression of the will of Providence. He possessed only a surface knowledge of his parishioners, and was as incapable of comprehending the terrible barbarism which underlies rural life in England as of doing anything towards remedying it. A lover of books and poetry, a bit of an antiquarian, a conscientious and, in the main, good-natured old gentleman, he performed his professional duties in the old, orthodox fashion, preached twice every Sunday (except when he administered the sacrament), and detested Ritualism. That was the only subject on which he was thoroughly in accord with Mr. and Mrs. Gower, unless I should mention a notion of the old lady's, respecting the near advent of the millennium.

When he took charge of Ruth, it was with no more benevolent intentions than of giving the child a home until he should be relieved of her by her father; in default of which he thought of educating her for a governess—perhaps promoting her to the position of village schoolmistress; which would, of course, be a decent independence for a poor relation. But the little girl was very pretty and winning, though rather wilful (in that respect taking after her father), the ladies at the Hall noticed her, and the old bachelor's heart was softened. Probably, too, his conscience put in a special plea for the child, in consideration of her dead and gone great-grandfather's money. He had nobody in the world to care for him, except his housekeeper, who henpecked him almost as much as if she had a legal title to do so. He resolved to adopt the little girl as his own, and to give her all the advantages of such a relationship.

So Ruth was brought up, in all respects, like a young lady—had a governess of her own, instead of the prospect of being one—went to a first-class school at Leamington, and in due time did credit to her training. At the age of ten she was a charming, rosy-faced little creature, full of mirth and good spirits, and possessing such large blue eyes and beautiful fair hair that even her aunts—no bad judges—allowed that she would be a beauty some day—always adding that she took after the Gowers, and that her guardian spoiled her. Indeed her extreme vivacity gave color to the assertion, for she was never so happy as when roaming and frolicking—running about the garden or orchard, surreptitiously climbing trees, or riding the ecclesiastical pony, and generally imperilling her life and limbs, and frightening her elders. But she loved her guardian dearly and soon learned how to coax and wheedle him into condoning all her tricks, and to defy the housekeeper. Perhaps Mr. Blencowe secretly admired her on the latter account, though he always shook his head and inculcated obedience. Gradually, as the girl grew up, she became virtual mistress of the vicarage and almost forgot that she had ever known any other home. Of course, her guardian brought her up in the tenets of the Church of England; indeed, taught