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**TOMB.**

— A DISCUSSION —

**Of Free Thought  
and Free Love**

By ORFORD NORTHCOTE.

PRICE, 10 CENTS.

PUBLISHED AT 1254 CONGRESS ST., CHICAGO, BY M. HARMAN. 25 CENTS A YEAR.



# The Light-Bearer Library

VOL. I., No. 2.

CHICAGO, ILL., JANUARY, 1898,

25 Cents a Year

## Ruled by the Tomb.

### A DISCUSSION OF FREE THOUGHT AND FREE LOVE.

BY ORFORD NORTHCOTE.

“The world for the most part is ruled by the tomb, and the living are tyrannized over by the dead. Old ideas, long after the conditions under which they were produced have passed away, often persist in surviving. Many are disposed to worship the ancient,—to follow the old paths, without inquiring where they lead, and without knowing exactly where they wish to go themselves.”—“*Marriage and Divorce*,” R. G. Ingersoll, p. 5.

From the dawn of civilization there have been present in the world two antagonistic forces. The names in various ages have differed, their essence has remained unaltered. One of these forces is conservatism; the other is the spirit of innovation. The one seeks to uphold all established institutions and to resist all change. The other, the vivifying element of things, desires to throw off the material yoke that cramps the spirit, in order to aid man in his evolution towards higher ideals, higher modes of thought, higher planes of existence. In



physics, one is inert matter, the other is living force.\* In politics, one is the red tape of officialism, the other the efforts of libertarianism. In religion the one is represented by the Church, the other by the new religious teacher who breaks from the ossified dogmas of his creed. In science, the one is represented by the University Chairs, by the Royal Associations; the other by the new generalizer who defies orthodox views.

All institutions are *finally* conservative. The Church, the State, the University, the learned Associations, however they may have originated in opposition to orthodoxy, eventually crystallize into barriers to human advance. The Protestants made an attack on conservative Rome, but as soon as they established themselves, they resisted further innovation and have ever since been conservative to the core. The same is true of all heterodoxies which, as time goes on, become orthodoxies.

How do we explain this? All human progression is initiated by a few advanced spirits. The reformer when he first propounds his new thesis finds himself isolated. He persists in his advocacy and gathers round him a small band of earnest adherents. In the course of a few generations, these supporters having largely increased in numbers become banded together into a society. But by this time arises a new reformer, who has discovered new truths. In his position of innovator he is as much ahead of the followers of the reformer he has succeeded, as that reformer was ahead of his own contemporaries. And so he finds opposition from the society which has crystallized round the memory of the thinker who called it into existence. The same fate awaits the next of the line of prophets, and the next and the next, *ad infinitum*.

Perhaps the most potent of conservative institutions are those built round religion. The superhuman authority claimed

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\* The last word of philosophy and science may be that force and matter are one; but the distinction as ordinarily understood will serve as an illustration.



for the creed and the threats of divine vengeance on unbelievers, exert a deadening influence of an unparalleled character upon the mind of man. The conservatism which appertains to religion is as it were doubly weighted. To the inertia which is characteristic of all long established institutions, is added that which is due to the fear of the unknown; to the respect which is paid so the commands of a society of individuals, is added the reverence which the supposed Divine origin of those commands creates.

Established religion, therefore, being bound with a double hide of conservatism, it cannot be denied that Freethinkers, in attacking its various strongholds, are doing a valuable and highly important work. But however important and valuable that work may be, it is equally certain that in their organized capacity, *they*, Freethinkers, are of necessity opposed to other lines of human progression. Especially is this the case when they (the Freethinkers), have passed the early stages of conflict and have become "respectable." Considering their own propaganda as the most important work of any, their aim is to include all men in the secular fold. But they clearly see that this can only be accomplished, if at all, by rigidly excluding all ideas which have not the sanctity of respectability. For otherwise Secularism will fall into bad odor and *respectable* people will not join the ranks, even though they disbelieve in God and the Church. Thus it may happen with regard to any other set of ideas which is battling for acceptance, that, although the most advanced men of the Freethought movement are in accord with them, they must in nowise be given countenance, or the respectability of the Freethought movement will be endangered.\*

Now, however important the work of Freethinkers may be, in engaging in war with religious superstition, it must not be

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\* As an instance the lamented Mr. Putnam who held advanced views on sex morality distinctly deprecated their advocacy on the grounds here given.



overlooked that the abolition of priestcraft is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Priestcraft is deadly, not so much because it formulates erroneous ideas, but because those erroneous ideas hinder men and women from getting the greatest possible good out of life. And if Freethinkers, while engaged in combatting one form of superstition which militates against human happiness, hinder the work of other reformers who are combatting other superstitions productive of misery, to that extent do they nullify the good they achieve in their crusade against the errors of priestcraft.

Religion has two main forces at its disposal, whereby it attains to its ends. On the one hand it commands belief in certain dogmas, and on the other it commands obedience to certain moral laws. These are complementary, the one of the other. For example, Christianity declares that a certain day in the week is rendered sacred by the alleged facts that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh; and that Jesus Christ, the incarnated expression of God, rose to life from death after having been crucified. Allied with this belief in the holiness of one special day in seven, is the command to keep that day holy. We all know what practical results have accrued from this combination. All work and all pleasure being interdicted, the priests have contrived to turn this moral prohibition to the advantage of their cult, by securing at their churches on that day the attendance of a large proportion of their believers; which unanimous gathering together has resulted both in pecuniary gain and in that power which is derived from solidarity.

The Romish church promulgates the doctrine that souls reside for a period in Purgatory. They turn that to their pecuniary advantage by insisting that it is the duty of relatives to endeavor to shorten that period of suffering; the afflicted mourners of the departed, being simultaneously taught that masses said for souls in purgatory will work to this end. The



two dogmas of belief, and the moral command based upon them, are thus instrumental in adding largely to the coffers of the Church which imposes them.

Again, participation in the pleasures attending sex relations, being found antagonistic to the cultivation of the religious spirit, and the repression of sexual activity corresponding being discovered to develop mental conditions conducive to religious feeling, Christianity has consistently opposed sexuality. In mediæval times complete repression of the sexual desires was urged upon all. But average sexuality being stronger than spiritual belief it was found necessary to provide an escape for that insistent sexuality, which otherwise would override all restraining Christian precepts. Accordingly Christian marriage was constituted; that is to say, monogamic relations were made permissible under certain conditions. These conditions were that the union should be lifelong and not incestuous; and that it should be consecrated by a religious ceremony, not the least important feature of which consisted of the transference of money from the pockets of the contracting parties to the coffers of the Church.

Christian marriage once firmly established, the astute Churchmen readily discerned that they had hit upon one of the most effectual methods of retaining their power. Not only were they thus enabled to keep a close hold on one of the most important functions of life, but through that function and its attendants they were enabled to heavily load mankind with chains.

Digressing for a moment it is plain that the sexual evolution of mankind has been from monogamy to varietism.\* Biologists are now almost unanimously of the opinion that variations come through the male line, and so it is not surpris-

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\* The currently accepted theory is exactly the reverse of this, but the view that man originally lived in a state of sexual promiscuity is entirely fallacious I have elsewhere shown. See "University Magazine," December, 1897.



ing to find that variations from monogamic instinct have been due mainly to the masculine sex. With the rare exceptions of polyandric customs, the early deviations from primitive monogamy have been polygamic. That is to say that while women have in the main been monogamic, men have increasingly cultivated polygamic relationships.

Sexual morality, prior to Christian influence, insisted on the faithfulness of a wife to her husband, but allowed to the husband promiscuity. This promiscuity has been provided for either by plurality of wives, concubinage, or prostitution; the departure from the feminine code of morality in the latter case, being visited with loss of caste and various other punishments. It is obvious that this sexual regime meant slavery to the woman. While the man's sexual nature belonged to himself, he being free to use it how he pleased, the woman's sexual nature belonged to her lord and master. She was a sexual slave. Her sexual capabilities belonged to him, and he could sell them or lend them at will.

But Christianity introduced a new feature. Henceforth, property in sexual organs was to be reciprocal. The husband was to own the wife's body as before, but she in turn was to own the body of her husband. Henceforward, man, who had been breaking away from the monogamic type, was to revert to monogamy; no matter how urgent were his needs for variety. Woman, heretofore, had been the slave of man; Christianity decreed that also man was to be the slave of woman. This Christian decree has had two results. It has by its undeniable power, made many men monogamous in fact. It has made the remainder of married men hypocrites. For in spite of the potency of the decree, it has not been able to entirely stifle the growing demand for variety. This, so far as the man is concerned. But, with the woman, it has acted differently. It has revolutionized her sphere of power. The truth of the saying "The foot that rocks the cradle rules the world" is



dependent upon the power Christian marriage has given to wifedom.

Now woman is by nature a conservative agent. The anabolic processes which go to make up her sex are conservative. In conception, it is the female elements which preserve the stability of the type; while the male elements introduce variations. Mentality is colored by sex, and women's mental processes are likewise conservative.

There is another point. Women are more religious than men. Religion and hysteria are in many ways identical, and woman is the hysterical sex.\* More than that, women, by nature, worship authority, and are more amenable than men to the dictates of a powerful church.

We have now reached the point where we see the power which Christian marriage has placed in the hands of the priests. Christian marriage has elevated the woman to an undue position of influence in the household. Instead of her and her offspring being ruled in every matter by the husband as formerly, the positions have largely been reversed. Recapitulating, we have pointed out that women are more amenable to religious discipline than men; we have also seen that Christianity has elevated woman to a position of power in the household she never possessed before.†

THE PRIEST HAS RULED THE HOUSEHOLD THROUGH THE WOMAN.

"Marriage," says Colonel Ingersoll, the undisputed chief of American Freethought, "is the holiest institution among men. Without the fireside there is no human advancement; without the family relations there is no life worth living. Every good government is made up of good families. The unit of good government is the family, and anything that tends to destroy

\* I have no wish to disparage the sex. But truth must stand before ornament, here as elsewhere.

†To guard against misapprehension, let me distinctly state that I am in favor of giving greater liberty to woman than she now possesses; what I object to, is not giving her liberty, but giving her power to oppress.



the family is perfectly devilish and infamous. I believe in marriage, and *I hold in utter contempt the opinions of men and women who denounce the institution.*" (Italics mine.)

Marriage, on the contrary, is the seat of the power of the priest. Through marriage the priest rules the children and the husband. Through marriage the priest rules the world.

We now see the fatuity of freethinkers opposing the dogmas of Christianity and supporting its code of morals, without examining the morality on its own merits. If Christianity had done nothing more than impose a false cosmological belief upon mankind, the work of Freethinkers in exposing it would still have been important, but not nearly so important as from the fact that the Christian code of morality is subversive of human progress. Freethinkers give half their case away in praising Christian ethics. If Christian morality is so praiseworthy, why make so much pother about the beliefs on which it is based?

I have said that the Freethought party, as a party, is, like other institutions, open to the accusation of conservatism, in all matters outside its particular province. How far is this true with regard to the free love movement; and how is it motivated?

In England there are a considerable number of secularists who are also (theoretical) free lovers. But the movement for sexual emancipation finds little encouragement from their present leaders.

This is all the more remarkable, since the free love movement in England largely owes the security of its present position to Charles Bradlaugh, the founder, and during his lifetime, president of the National Secular Society. Charles Bradlaugh, the most heroic, not to say Titanic, figure in the battle for liberty of this century, was no advocate of free love. But he was something even greater than that. He was the indomitable champion of free utterance of opinion. His greatness



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ay in demanding freedom for those from whom he differed, as well as for those who thought with him. His was no narrow sectarian mind. Though he did not see eye to eye with the apostles of free love, he held that they had a right to express their opinions; and because that freedom was threatened, he planted their banner and defied the world.

Mr. Charles Watts, a well known figure in the English Freethought Party, owned a publishing business. In the late seventies, he purchased the plates of Dr. Knowlton's book on preventive checks. Copies were struck off and the book was put on the market. A public prosecution was commenced, and Mr. Watts was committed for trial. Thinking discretion the better part of valor, he pleaded guilty, and offered to withdraw the book from circulation and destroy the plates. At this point, Bradlaugh interfered, and resetting the type, issued the book in conjunction with Annie Besant, the volume bearing the imprint of the Freethought Publishing Company.\* Bradlaugh having taken his stand, the book was largely advertised, and copies were sent to the Public Prosecutor by Bradlaugh himself. The Corporation of the city of London commenced a prosecution. Bradlaugh defended in person, and by a masterly stroke of forensic skill, got the verdict quashed on a point of law, and thus escaped imprisonment. The notoriety of the trial caused the book to sell by thousands, and neo-malthusianism became a vital question.

Charles Watts at that time owned and edited the "Secular Review."† Its pages were made the medium of a violent attack on Charles Bradlaugh and his colleague Annie Besant, and Saladin's vituperative pen was allowed, issue after issue, to smirch their fair names.

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\* The Freethought Publishing Company was the sole property of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant.

† Saladin afterwards purchased the "Secular Review" from Watts, and subsequently altered the title to the "Agnostic Journal" which title it still bears.



The split in the Secular ranks, however, did not begin in connection with the Knowlton pamphlet, but with the publication some years earlier by Mr. E. Truelove, of "The Elements of Social Science." That now world famous book, besides being a plea for neo-malthusianism, plainly advocated free love doctrines. The "National Reformer" was then jointly edited by Mr. Barker and Mr. Bradlaugh; each gentleman editing one half of the paper. Mr. Bradlaugh's half of the "Reformer" favorably noticed "The Elements," and regularly advertised its sale. Mr. Barker, in his half of the paper, not only refused the advertisements, but attacked Bradlaugh for so doing. This was the beginning of the storm which culminated in the publication by Bradlaugh of the "Fruits of Philosophy."\*

Although not agreeing with the free love sentiments of "The Elements," Bradlaugh was thus instrumental in making it known throughout the country. This epoch making work was, because of the dispute, freely sold from the bookstalls of the National Secular Society. Its sale had a further impetus. The Christian opponents of Bradlaugh reiterated all over the country the charge that Bradlaugh was a free lover. They based their accusation on the grounds of his advertising and selling "The Elements," and in consequence secured for the book a popularity, which, but for their malicious efforts, it had never achieved. For once, the Christians over-reached themselves. They tried to destroy Bradlaugh's influence by accusing him of accepting the hated doctrine of free love, and not only failed in that direction, but gained an enormous audience for a book which has perhaps done more to advance the cause of sexual freedom than any book ever written.

Let us now pass from the fight Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant made round the banner of free speech, to their own and their colleagues' views of free love. Mrs. Besant was always an outspoken champion of monogamy. In her reply to

\* Knowlton's pamphlet.



the Bishop of Manchester\* she entirely repudiated his assertion that Secularists taught free love.

On the contrary she declared that

"Monogamy appears to me to be the result of civilization, of personal dignity, of cultured feeling; loyalty of one man to one woman is the highest sexual ideal. The fleeting connections supposed by free love theorists are steps backward, and not forward."

Mrs. Besant could say this in spite of her marital experience being an unhappy one. She has doubtless deceived herself. But to show that prejudice against free love ran much stronger in the Freethought party than the very moderate expressions used by this grand woman, may be instanced the fact that charges had been leveled against her, *inside* the Freethought party, which enabled her to say in her farewell address to the Secularists, "I HAVE BEEN CALLED PROSTITUTE." Considering that this term had been applied to her on the sole grounds of her supposed intimate relations with Charles Bradlaugh, a supposition which had no other basis than the malignity which invented it, we can see that the temper of the English Freethought party was in no way favorable to departures from strict monogamic morality.

Charles Bradlaugh was even more vigorous in his denunciation of Free Love than his brilliant colleague. He constantly repudiated the charge of being a free lover, founded on his alleged acceptance of the whole doctrine of the "Elements of Social Science." Both in his address to the National Secular Society's Conference in 1881, and in the pamphlet, "Jesus, Shelley and Malthus," published in 1861 and reprinted in 1883, did he make it absolutely clear that he totally dissented from free love doctrines.

Mr. John H. Robertson succeeded Charles Bradlaugh as editor of the "National Reformer," and although there are

\* "God's Views on Marriage." A pamphlet by Annie Besant.



reasons for believing that his views on marriage are far from being orthodox, he was careful in his conduct of the "Reformer," to steer clear of any imputation of free love. Replying once to a correspondent who had advocated Freedom in the Sexual Relationships he pointed out that the article was admitted in the columns of the "National Reformer," solely on the grounds of giving a hearing to a properly expressed argument, whether the contention were right or wrong. He then argued that under existing economic conditions, woman might be expected to suffer from the lack of protection afforded by a socially ratified union and concluded by saying, "This of course, does not preclude the later recognition of the expediency of freedom, when the social condition of the woman is improved."

I quote these opinions, not so much to show what were Mr. Robertson's own view on the subject, but as indicating his belief that it would be bad policy to allow a free love declaration to stand in his columns, unmodified by editorial protest. For intellectual ability, Mr. Robertson stands easily head and shoulders above any prominent Freethought leader, either in England or America, and it is only due to him to say that with this ability he combines the greatest of all progressive virtues—tolerance.

The organ of the National Secular Society in England, is "The Freethinker"; of which Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the society, is editor. He, too, is a firm believer in monogamy. Replying to George Bedborough in the "Freethinker, he says, "It seems to us that the world wants more *discipline* rather than more *freedom* in sexual relationships." At the same time he vindicated his claim to be called a Freethinker by saying, "We believe in Freedom, and we would try and defend your freedom if it were attacked; but freedom is one thing and moral and intellectual agreement is quite another."

Far different is the attitude of the "Reformer," a Freehought journal owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner.



Not only would that journal give no support to the Legitimation League, (the English Free Love organization) but it point blank refused to accept its advertisements.

The attitude of the "Agnostic Journal" to the Legitimation League was more or less one of sitting on the fence. Replying to Mr. Bedborough, the editor, the brilliant and pungent "Saladin" said, "Our support to your cause must, as heretofore, be incidental. This journal's *special* mission lies in another field." Later, in referring to the "Adult," the editor says,

"The Adult,' the organ of the Legitimation League, and edited by George Bedborough, is certainly the most outspoken and revolutionary serial devoted to the sex question published on this or, preadventure, any other planet."

What Saladin precisely means by saying "Our support to your cause must as heretofore be incidental," it would probably puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to explain. I was not aware that Saladin had given any previous support, incidental or otherwise to the free love movement. On the contrary, Saladin, as we have already stated, violently attacked Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant for publishing "The Fruits of Philosophy," and for promoting the sale of the "Elements of Social Science." At a meeting of Secularists held at Cleveland Hall, presided over by Charles Watts, and ornamented by the presence of Mrs. Harriet Law, George Jacob Holyoake and G. W. Foote, Knowltonism, and its relation to Free Thought, was under discussion. "At that meeting," writes Saladin "in reply to the hiss of opposition, which I cared not to conciliate, even if I had known how, I raised my voice to a shout of defiance. I managed to make myself heard over the hiss and groan of Onanic disapprobation, till I thundered forth the words 'Charles Bradlaugh has dragged the standard of Free-thought through the mire of Hollywell Street.'"

\* Hollywell Street: A street where contraceptives are sold, and at that time baving very unenviable reputation which it had held for 160 years]



In an addendum to a pamphlet called "Sexual Economy" purporting to be written by one Peter Agate, M. D.; Saladin writes as follows:

We have heard a good deal about the heroism involved in the publishing of such works as "The Elements" and the Knowlton pamphlet. There is no heroism in the thing at all; but there is a good deal of cowardice, not without a dash of greed and avarice. A section of the public is prurient, and the publication of "nasty" books like "The Elements" and the "Fruits of Philosophy" is profitable. . . . I must protest too, that the only organized society of "Freethinkers" in England elected for many years President (Charles Bradlaugh) one who has done worse than blasphemed fifty gods—has outraged the highest and purest instincts of human nature. The gentleman (Mr. Bradlaugh) who could sit down with another gentleman's wife (Mrs. Beesant) to edit in conjunction with her a work on sexual commerce, should be painted in pigments the due manipulation of which is beyond my skill as a limner. . . . As long as Christianity insists on sexual purity and restraint, and debars the transgressor from her sacraments, she does the world a service which goes some way to compensate for many crimes and errors of which she has been guilty. . . . He who adopts the teachings of "The Elements" has no high ideal up to which he tries to exalt the measure of his conduct; with him there need be no remorse and no regrets; there is no standard of purity after which to struggle and to strive; there is only the inexpressible Malebolge of unbounded sensuality and shameless lust; no woman you love that it is not proper for another to love tomorrow; no maid such as has heretofore blessed the bridegroom's arms, but only a shameless and deflowered harlot who has responded to the desires of others as she responds to yours; a social convenience, like a drinking fountain or a *chalet*; a creature liable to be called into use anywhere, at any time by anybody, and who constantly carries a syringe in her muff, in the name of Mr. Bradlaugh and "Free-thought."

So wrote Saladin during Bradlaugh's lifetime, and if this is incidental support to the cause which the Legitimation League has at heart, then language has no meaning. When it is remembered that Bradlaugh's sole aim was to educate the working classes in contraceptive science, to the end of reducing poverty and alleviating suffering, we can only characterize Saladin's pamphlet as the rankest piece of obscurantism that any man pretending to be a Freethinker ever uttered.



It is of course, possible, that Saladin has changed his views. We shall be heartily glad to chronicle the fact if this be so. But not till Saladin retracts the infamous things he said of Charles Bradlaugh should we regard any such professed change of opinions as sincere.

There is however one splendid exception, amongst Rationalist publications. I refer to the "University Magazine" which has done magnificent work for the free love movement. Reaching a highly intellectual class of readers, it has, by publishing articles on free love, given the movement in England a tremendous impetus. But this magazine has no official connection with any freethought society whatever, being the private property of a wealthy gentleman of advanced views and high courage.

Summing up the general attitude of the freethought leader in England toward the free love movement we may say that on the whole there is a strong disposition to treat it with tolerance. While no actual encouragement is given the movement is neither totally ignored nor violently opposed.\*

In America the denunciations of free love are not only more forcible, but the attitude of the freethought leaders is less tolerant.

In Vol. XV. of the "Free Thought Magazine," the editor Mr. H. L. Green thus variously expresses himself.

This damnable doctrine of free love. p. 61.

Free love and whiekey, two of the greatest evils, in our opinion in the country. There is but one other of equal magnitude, and that is superstition. The freethinkers ought to eternally war against these gigantic enemies of the human race. p. 59.

\* An exception must be made of the leaders of the Glasgow branch of the Secular Society. The executives of this branch illustrates the attitude of many Freethinkers on the sex question, by their puritanical treatment of a colleague, Mr. D. G. Lindsay, who committed the unpardonable crime of exposing for sale, Emil Ruedebusch's "Old and New Ideal"; which admirable work it was my privilege to first introduce to English readers, through the columns of the "Free Review."



In our opinion any one *who does not fully subscribe* to Col. Ingersoll's views of marriage is out of place in the freethought party. p. 66.

Free thought is the direct road to heaven, and free love the sure road to hell here on earth. p. 117.

We would have the government protect and guard and improve marriage in every possible way by legislation or otherwise.

These are the views of the editor. What are the views of his readers? Here are some of them.

I think free love is simple damnable and downright lust. p. 106.

Free thought means emancipation. Free love, dissipation. p. 107.

We must put marriage and home life *above everything else*. It (*sic!*) is the foundation of law and government. p. 108.

A great stone is rolled from the pathway of intelligent men who want to take a *more advanced stand for liberty of thought*, and who shrink from the very appearance of association with those unclean things—free love and whiskey.

I fear you have done the "Freethought Magazine" an irreparable damage by admitting that free love article by Moses Harman. p. 238.

I must say that my feelings were very much hurt to think that you would allow your pure, lofty and able publication to be marred by the publication of the article written by Moses Harman. I most certainly trust that your columns will not again be polluted with the ranting of any one pretending to be the exponent of "freedom, love and wisdom." p. 240.

And right here permit me to remark that in my opinion, intemperance and free love ought to be denounced by every honest Freethinker. p. 240.

It is probable that the opinions of the "Freethought Magazine" correspondents are the honest expressions of puritanical fanaticism, but there is abundant evidence to prove that the editor's antagonism arises in large measure from cupidity. Mr. Green is afraid that the commercial prosperity of the magazine he edits, and the respectability and social status attaching to free thought will be endangered. Let the following utterances of Mr. Green speak for themselves.

In this city of Chicago, intelligent Freethinkers can be counted by the hundred among the best business men of the city, but so long as the Freethought societies are run by free lovers, these people will have nothing to do with them. Our free thought journals also suffer greatly by this misrepresentation of what free thought really is. The public are getting the idea that free thought means free love and therefore they refuse to subscribe for free



thought journals. These free lovers who are calling themselves freethinkers do not subscribe for free thought journals. —p. 118.

The (freethought) organization should be as perfect as any Christian organization—*should be run on business principles*, and should, by its constitution, be strictly guarded against the bad influences that have wrecked and disgraced the old association. Such an organization would draw to its membership, within one year after its organization, *ten thousand names* at least. p. 118.

The principal object of our writing this article is to open the eyes of the liberal (freethought) public and show them the necessity of ridding our cause of this curse of free love and planting our moral standard so high that it will command the respect of all good people even if they do not agree with us on theology. (Italics mine.) "Free Thought Magazine," Jan. 1897. p. 61.

I have accused Mr. Green of cupidity, but to be quite fair, I will do him the justice of assuming, that it is not his personal aggrandisement, but that of his party that he has at heart. But whether the cupidity have a personal or a party motive there can be no escape from the main charge.

"The public refuse to subscribe for free thought journals. . . . Among them (the free lovers) in this city (Chicago) there are not five who pay for any one of the free thought journals. . . . Hundreds of freethinkers among the best *business men* of the city will have nothing to do with us. . . . The free thought organization should be run *on business principles* . . . (and would then) draw to its membership within one year, *ten thousand names* at least."

What other construction can be put on the above sentences than the one I have suggested? The whole truth of the matter is just this, that Secularism, like Christianity, has been found to have money in it, and *business principles* must stand before intellectual honesty and the search for truth. The worst thing that can happen to a forward intellectual movement is for it to become commercially prosperous. When a free thought lecturer can pack the largest halls in the states, the prices of admission ranging from a dollar upwards; when it will prove



a paying speculation for a dealer to manufacture and largely advertise for sale silver spoons at two dollars a piece bearing the image of a free thought leader, it can hardly be urged that free thought is a commercial failure. And when commercial prosperity begins to follow in the wake of a heterodoxy, it is high time for the *real freethinkers* to balance accounts, and consider whether there are not other fields of thought waiting to be made *free*, besides the particular field which has become so free, that not the martyr's stake but the comfort attaching to the almighty dollar, and the hero worship as exemplified by the silver spoon, is the reward for successful leadership in that heterodox field of thought. Let it not for a moment be imagined that I begrudge Col. Ingersoll or any other man, the pecuniary profit he may make of his abilities in opposing superstition of any kind. My only reason for referring to this side of the question at all, is to point out that where profit and honor may be gained by the advocacy of heterodox views, the real urgency of that advocacy is past. It is true that much may remain to be done in educating superstitious people out of their superstition; but the real fight occurs when there is no freedom to hold to or act upon the views antagonistic to an orthodoxy. Human progress consists not so much of the increase in numbers of persons holding sane views, as of the increase of freedom to hold those views at all.

The real battle of freethought in the field of religion is over. Absence from church does not involve being put into the stocks; the profession of atheism does not involve the stake.\*

Let it not be supposed, however, that the battle for freedom is over. The venue is merely changed from one field to another. So far as America is concerned, there can be no doubt what-

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\* I here, of course, refer to England and America; and further I in no wise deprecate the work of Freethinkers. For while Freethinkers are in no present danger of persecution, the sleeping dog of Christianity may any day rise and bite. In this respect the more extensive are our freedoms the less chance here is of Christian persecution again becoming rampant.



ever, that the battle for human freedom will rage, in the coming years, round sex. Already the puritans are gathering their forces. Anthony Comstock, with his vile trade of *agent provocateur* is but the bird of carrion that hovers near the field of the coming battle.

The suppression of polygamy in Salt Lake City, the overthrow of complex marriage in Oneida Creek, the raising of the age of consent in some of the states, the attempt to smother malthusian and other advanced sexual literature, are but the preliminary skirmishes. The real battle is to come.

Who will be found on the side of freedom? Hardly shall we see there the Colonel Ingersolls. Certainly not the H. L. Greens, with their pious wishes "to earn the respect of all good people even if they do not agree with us on theology."

Men who put the *respect* of their neighbors in front of truth and freedom are the very cowards who would never strike a blow for liberty. Freedom for them is an empty shibboleth; they are as far from realizing the true inwardness of freedom as the veriest modern protestant prating of the tyranny of Rome.

It is time to differentiate. There are freethinkers and freethinkers. It is useless to appeal to those who agree with Mr. Green in saying "Any one who does not fully subscribe to Col. Ingersoll's views of marriage is out of place in the freethought party." p.56, "Free Thought Magazine." Can the arrogance of his utterance be matched any where outside of Rome? The Pope's views on a subject other than religion could hardly be invested with infallibility with more display of unction than are Col. Ingersoll's views on a matter outside the sphere of atheistic thought. Here is a recrudescence of the very worst features of Popery. If such is to be the attitude of leaders of the freethought party, the sooner that party chooses new leaders the better. For it can hardly be that the whole rank and file of the American Secularists are of such intolerant mould.

Freethinkers of America! I appeal to you from across the



Atlantic to take a stand on this matter before it is too late. Many of you, doubtless, honestly believe that monogamy is good for the race. But there were honest believers in the blessings of Christianity when the Spanish Inquisitors were denuding Spain of its best citizens and of its noblest blood. Thomas Paine, Bradlaugh, Holyoake, Richard Carlile; men like these have secured to you religious freedom. Will you stand by while others, who are endeavoring to capture one more citadel of tyranny, are thrown into prison by the Comstocks of orthodoxy? Will you join in the hue and cry against those pioneers who are trying to lift the yoke of sexual bondage from suffering humanity? Will you join forces with the puritans who would make of life a joyless, withered desert? Or will you give to others in things held important by them the freedom you claim for yourselves in things held important by you? Upon how you act in the coming struggle, largely depends the issue. If you side with the Comstocks and the Greens, America will have little to thank you for when she emerges from her time of trial. The cause of sexual freedom will require all the forces at its command, in the hour of danger. May you not be found wanting when that hour arrives.



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