

energies of God's people were directed into channels which would have been unnecessary had not Free Thought existed. The heathens were dying for want of light, but the Church could give them none. She was too busy opposing Free Thought. Thus the Christian civilization of many countries was delayed a generation or two. Again, there was no advance in this conflict, as the same objections advanced by Free Thinkers to-day have been urged by them during the last fifteen hundred years.

Free Thought has produced crises which have had untold influences for evil upon the Church. Many of the ancient persecutions were due to its influence. The Church has been misrepresented on every hand. These misrepresentations are believed by the ignorant, and thus the church is injured. Col. Ingersoll may think or not. It makes no difference. People think he thinks; and thus his influence is not beneficial to the Church. Every opposing tendency, which has risen against the Church, has been due to the desire to be free from the authority of God's Word. The gentlemen of the affirmative will have to pass down the centuries and show that all the influences hostile to the Church have contributed to the furtherance of the Gospel. It will be necessary for them to do this because these are only different phases of what is dignified by the name Free Thought.

III. The desire of the Church is to save men, and thus enable them to live for the glory God. Free Thought combats the Church in this work, and as a result we find among the unthinking masses of the people the most pernicious effects of its work. Natural selfishness, materialism, scepticism, atheism, annihilationism, communism, nihilism, socialism, agnosticism and many other "*isms*" are due to Free Thought. The social and religious condition of France to-day shows the logical and natural effects of this movement upon the masses of the people. Reverence for all the institutions held sacred by the Church is destroyed.

Has Free Thought helped to save men? Certainly not. Has it soothed the child of sorrow? When this world seemed gloomy, and friends have forsaken him, and a consciousness of sin weighed heavily upon him, has it assisted him to bear the load? Has it taught the infant mind truth, and goodness, and piety? Has it comforted the widow and the orphan in their affliction, and has it helped to keep men unspotted from the world? Has it sustained and strengthened man in the darkest hour of his need? Has it comforted the dying with a glorious hope, or has it impelled the living to deeds of kindness, and benevolence? Till the gentlemen of the affirmative show us that it has done these things I am inclined to favor the opinion that Free Thought has not benefited the church in regard to the practical life of her people. On the contrary it has ruined