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The Freethinker

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BRADLAUGH.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

Charles Bradlaugh: A Record of his Life and Work. By his Daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner. With an Account of his Parliamentary Struggle, Politics, and Teachings, by John M. Robertson. (London: T. Fisher Unwin.) 2 vols.; 21s.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH has been dead nearly four years, and his long-promised Biography is now before the world. There does not seem to be any sufficient reason why it was not published earlier, nor would the work have suffered in consequence. Ample time has afforded an opportunity for over-elaboration. Sometimes a strain is put upon the patience of all but idolators. Charles Bradlaugh, for instance, learnt to write, just like other children who never become distinguished; but who wants to be informed that he wrote better at nine than at seven, or what texts and pictures were on the school-cards that contain his youthful caligraphy? Nor does the biography of Charles Bradlaugh seem the place for Mr. Robertson to argue Atheism, or to refute the views of Mr. Kipling on India. On the other hand, with all this plethora of detail—now most precious, and anon quite superfluous—there is a singular silence about some matters, while others are presented in a mixed light or with some distortion or exaggeration. The fact is, both Mrs. Bonner and Mr. Robertson have written from a special point of view. What they give us is not a complete portrait, but a variety of sketches. Perhaps we should say that they have collected and edited a lot of valuable material; but there is a great deal more floating about in the world, and when it is gathered together the whole mass, including the valuable matter in these bulky volumes, will be used by some artist in biography, who will give the world a truer conception of the mighty personality of Charles Bradlaugh. Years, perhaps *many* years, will elapse before this is done; but one of the greatest Englishmen since the days of Cromwell can afford to wait. There is really no hurry so far as he is concerned.

Having said this at the outset, so as to get rid of it once for all, we now proceed to express our gratitude to Mrs. Bonner for the great pains she has taken to vindicate her father's memory. It has been a labor, though a labor of love. In the grand old Roman sense of the word, her undertaking has been truly *pious*. Mr. Robertson, also, has compiled an extremely able history of Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle. This piece of work is of high merit and permanent value.

We cannot say that we like the binding of these volumes; otherwise they have a neat appearance. The illustrations are generally excellent; the most interesting, perhaps, being a photogravure of Charles Bradlaugh, at the age of twenty, in the regimentals of the Seventh Dragoon Guards. The face is true "Bradlaugh," and the arms are folded over the chest, showing the backs of a pair of large,

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serviceable hands. There is another portrait, dated 1877, in the best-looking period of his life. Mr. Walter Sickert's picture of Bradlaugh at the Bar of the House of Commons is also reproduced, likewise his portrait of Bradlaugh belonging to the National Liberal Club. The latter may have artistic merit, but the reproduction is rather ghastly. Then we have the monument at Brookwood, the unveiling of the Northampton statue, a photograph of Bradlaugh's library, and a really fine portrait of Alice Bradlaugh. No portrait is given of any dead colleague of Charles Bradlaugh, not even of Austin Holyoake; but we have a portrait of Prince Jérome (Plon-Plon), and one of Madame De Brimont in a shockingly low dress, which should excite the indignation of Mrs. Ormiston Chant. It must be admitted, however, that what the lady reveals is shapely enough to disarm masculine resentment.

Mrs. Bonner's portion of these volumes—filling the first and running well into the second—is entirely biographical. She has mainly relied upon the *National Reformer*. Bradlaugh "made a point of destroying his correspondence," and "consequently (says Mrs. Bonner) I have very few letters to help me." Recourse has been had to old newspaper files in the British Museum, and in this respect Mrs. Bonner acknowledges her "great indebtedness to Mrs. Mary Reed," who has also compiled a very full Index to both volumes.

Young Bradlaugh.

Bradlaugh's family seems to have come from Suffolk, where the name is to be found on tombstones. His grandfather, James Bradlaugh, was a gunsmith in London; his father, Charles Bradlaugh, who died in 1852, was confidential clerk to a firm of solicitors. There was nothing remarkable about the family until it produced *our* Bradlaugh, who was born on September 26, 1833, in a small house in Bacchus-walk, Hoxton. He was baptised, as a matter of course; he also went to school, but he left at the age of eleven, and we may reckon him a self-taught scholar as he was a self-made man. The first introduction to politics was Cobbett's "Gridiron," and his first introduction to Freethought the open-air meetings on Bonner's Fields, where the lad joined in the wordy fray on the Christian side. The other side, however, had the best of the argument, and his faith became unsettled. To satisfy his doubts he sought the assistance of the Rev. J. G. Packer, the minister of his chapel; but the reverend gentleman acted like a bigot, and through his instrumentality the lad was driven from his home and his situation, and cast upon the wide world at the age of sixteen. Since Bradlaugh's death it has been repeatedly argued by soft-hearted and soft-headed Christians (we are sure about the soft-headed, anyhow) that if the Rev. J. G. Packer had not been a bigot his victim would never have been an Atheist. Upon this point Mrs. Bonner writes with vigorous good sense:—

> "It is now the fashion to make Mr. Packer into a sort of scapegoat: his harsh reception of his pupil's questions and subsequent ill-advised methods of dealing with him are censured, and he is in a manner made responsible for my father's Atheism. If no other Christian had treated Mr. Bradlaugh harshly; if every other clergyman had dealt with him in kindly fashion; if he had been met with kindness instead of slanders and stones, abuse and ill-usage, then these censors of Mr. Packer might have some just grounds on which to reproach him for misusing his position; as it is, they should ask themselves which among them has the right to cast the first stone. The notion that it was Mr. Packer's treatment of him that drove my father into Atheism is, I am sure, absolutely baseless. Those who entertain this belief forget that Mr. Bradlaugh had already begun to compare and criticise the various narratives in the four Gospels, and that it was on account of this (and therefore after it) that the Rev. J. G. Packer was so injudicious as to denounce him as an Atheist, and to suspend him from his Sunday duties. This harsh and blundering method of dealing with him no doubt hastened his progress towards Atheism, but it assuredly did not induce it. It set his mind in a state of opposition to the Church as represented by Mr. Packer, a state which the rev. gentleman seems blindly to have fostered by every means in his power; and it gave him the opportunity of the Sunday's leisure to hear what Atheism really was, expounded by some of the cleverest speakers in the Freethought movement at that time. But in spite of all this, he was not driven pell-mell into Atheism; he joined in the religious controversy from the orthodox standpoint, and was introduced into the little Warner Palace Hall as an eager champion on behalf of Christianity.
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> "Those persons too who entertain this idea of Mr. Packer's responsibility are ignorant of, or overlook, what manner of man Mr. Bradlaugh was. He could not rest with his mind unsettled or undecided; he worked out and solved for himself every problem which presented itself to him. He moulded his ideas on no man's: he looked at the problem on all sides, studied the pros and cons, and decided the solution for himself. Therefore, having once started on the road to scepticism, kindlier treatment would no doubt have made him longer in reaching the standpoint of pure Rationalism, but in any case the end would have been the same."

Bradlaugh tried all ways to earn a living, but he smelt of brimstone. One customer told him so when he tried to sell coals on commission. He ran into debt, and was often hungry. Yet he lectured with acceptance on Freethought, his first advertised discourse (apparently) being delivered in a little hall in Philpot-street, Commercial-road, on October 10, 1850. Mr. G. J. Holyoake took the chair, and the subject was an extensive one—"The Past, Present, and Future of Theology." The lecturer was just turned seventeen.

The Soldier.

This kind of life could not last. The young reformer was crushed down by an appalling debt of £4 15s. A subscription was mooted, but he disliked the idea, and one day he enlisted as a soldier. The regiment he joined was the Seventh Dragoon Guards. On hearing this news, his father invited him home again to spend the Christmas Day. It was, at least, a semi-reconciliation, and the father appears to have suffered in his way as well as the son. We again quote from Mrs. Bonner:—

> "I have a very strong personal conviction that the whole affair preyed upon the father's mind, and that the harshness he showed his son was really foreign to his general temper. Anyhow, his character underwent a great change after he let himself come under the influence of Mr. Packer. He who before never went inside a church, now never missed a Sunday; he became concentrated and, to a certain extent, morose, and at length, on the 19th August, 1852, some twenty months after his son's enlistment, he was taken suddenly ill at his desk in Cloak-lane. He was brought home in a state of unconsciousness, from which he was only aroused to fall into violent delirium, and so continued without once recovering his senses until the hour of his death, which was reached on Tuesday, the 24th. He was only forty-one years of age, and had always had good health previously, never ailing anything; and I feel quite convinced that the agony of mind, which he must have endured from the time when his son was first denounced to him as an 'Atheist,' was mainly the cause of his early death."

Bradlaugh's regiment was drafted to Ireland. He was the butt of his comrades, on account of his overgrown figure, until they learnt to respect him. They nicknamed him "Leaves," as he was fond of tea and books. He was a fervid teetotaller, and sometimes eloped from barracks to give a temperance lecture. Of course he got into a discussion with the chaplain, who once answered him from the pulpit; but as the man of God's first sentence was impertinent, the three hundred dragoons unhooked their swords and let them crash on the ground.

"Leaves" fought a right-of-way case; also with fifteen picked comrades he fought his way through Donnybrook Fair. Further, he had to assist at evictions, and learnt something of the blessings of English rule in Ireland, and of the supreme blessing of Irish landlordism. One of his experiences gave point to a speech he delivered in 1873 at New York.

> "Those of you who are Irishmen will want no description of that beautiful valley of the Lee which winds between the hills from Cork, and in summer seems like a very Paradise, green grass growing to the water side, and burnished with gold in the morning, and ruddy to very crimson in the evening sunset. I went there on a November day. I was one of a troop to protect the law officers, who had come with the agent from Dublin to make an eviction a few miles from Inniscarra, where the river Bride joins the Lee. It was a miserable day—rain freezing into sleet as it fell—and the men beat down wretched dwelling after wretched dwelling, some thirty or forty perhaps. They did not take much beating down; there was no flooring to take up; the walls were more mud than aught else; and there was but little trouble in the levelling of them to the ground.

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> We had got our work about three parts done, when out of one of them a woman ran, and flung herself on the ground, wet as it was, before the Captain of the troop, and she asked that her house might be spared—not for long, but for a little while. She said her husband had been born in it; he was ill of the fever, but could not live long, and she asked that he might be permitted to die in it in peace. Our Captain had no power; the law agent from Dublin wanted to get back to Dublin; his time was of importance, and he would not wait; and that man was carried out while we were there—in front of us, while the sleet was coming down—carried out on a wretched thing (you could not call it a bed), and he died there while we were there; and three nights afterwards, while I was sentry on the front gate at Ballincollig Barracks, we heard a cry, and when the guard was turned out we found this poor woman there a raving maniac, with one dead babe in one arm, and another in the other clinging to the cold nipple of her lifeless breast."

Bradlaugh left the army in October, 1853, with a first-rate testimonial. His discharge was purchased out of a small sum of money left by his father's great aunt. Mrs. Bonner thinks the three years of army life were of great value to him, setting him up physically, and impressing him with the importance of discipline, which people seldom learn who have not at some time been subjected to it.

James Thomson.

A young man of genius came in Bradlaugh's way in Ireland. He was an army schoolmaster, and his name was James Thomson. The two became acquainted, and the acquaintance ripened into a close friendship, which lasted for twenty years. Thomson himself left the army and came to London, where Bradlaugh often befriended him. He lived with the Bradlaughs for some time, and Mrs. Bonner says the children "simply adored him." But his fits of intemperance, which were due to an hereditary predisposition, prevented him from keeping situations, and he was too independent a writer to earn a living by press work. Mrs. Bonner makes no scruple about speaking of his failing in the plainest language, and indeed there is no use now in concealment. When Bradlaugh and Thomson quarreled she naturally sided with her father. But she need not have made gratuitous revelations. There was really no need for the "silver cup" or the "Colt's revolver" incident, and the exclamation of "poor Thomson" is unjustifiably condescending. Certainly it was not necessary to speak of Thomson's "illness" in Spain with sarcasm. She ought to know, and having known she should remember, that Thomson had a sunstroke there, under which he hovered between life and death. Nor is it right to create the impression that the debt was all on Thomson's side to Bradlaugh. The strong man's generosity is unquestionable, but there was some return in having a man of genius about him. To say nothing of the mental stimulus, there were Thomson's contributions to the *National Reformer*. They might not have increased the circulation by a single copy, but they gave a certain tone to the paper, and they were done simply for the love of the work. After a period of estrangement, Bradlaugh and Thomson quarreled and parted. Mrs. Bonner says that "Mr. Thomson for some reason felt injured." But why allege "*some* reason"? Thomson assigned a *definite* reason. What it was we know, for he showed us a copy of the letter he sent Bradlaugh. He was then on the regular staff of the *National Reformer*, writing a weekly article and two columns of "Jottings." His weekly stipend was not large, but it sufficed for his very modest wants. What he resented was the "forcing" of Mrs. Besant, then a recent recruit, who was paid twice as much as himself, while the books of living interest were all handed to her for review. We do not justify Thomson's resentment. Bradlaugh had a right to pay the staff, and to direct their labor, as he pleased. Nevertheless, it is only fair to state that Thomson not only had, but assigned, a definite "reason" for feeling "injured." Both men are dead. We may leave them at peace in the grave. But if the reason of their quarrel *must* be pursued, we say that the explanation in this case, as in so many others, is afforded by the proverbial expression of *cherchez la femme*. Men have always quarreled over women, and they will to the end of the chapter.

Mrs. Bradlaugh.

Bradlaugh married Susannah Lamb Hooper in 1853 The marriage, of course, took place in a church—St. Philip's, Stepney. Mrs. Bradlaugh's father was a sturdy Radical and Freethinker. He was deeply attached to his "Charles," and only survived him a few months. He was a fine-looking old man when we last saw him in 1890. Mrs. Bradlaugh herself was a fine, matronly woman. Up to 1869 she was occasionally to be seen at her husband's meetings. We remember seeing her at the Hall of Science in that year. But whispers were then abroad of domestic unhappiness, which Mrs. Bonner now unveils out of regard for her father's reputation. Mrs. Bradlaugh fell into habits of intemperance. She was not, apparently, an intellectual woman, and probably she found it dull at home while her husband was away on his lecturing tours. The home had to be broken up in 1870, and in 1877 Mrs. Bradlaugh died suddenly of heart disease "engendered by alcoholism." She loved her husband and children to the last. All who knew her, so far as we are aware, pronounced her a loving, generous woman; and we can understand the pain which Mrs. Bonner experiences in unlocking the door of this skeleton-cupboard. Some will doubt whether it should have been done, but Mrs. Bonner felt obliged to perform the "unhappy duty."

Bradlaugh's Brother.

Mrs. Bonner also feels it necessary to make some painful disclosures concerning Bradlaugh's brother. Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh is generally thought to have been "converted from infidelity," but he was brought up as a Christian, and never professed to be anything else. He is very strong on "virtue." As we write a circular of his lies before us, asking for money to defend a certain libel action. He declares that he is engaged in "an honest endeavor to drag into the light of day the obscene, filthy, immoral, and revolting character of the teachings and literature of Secularism." Such a boastful crusader should at least have a clean record. We do not find it, however, in Mrs. Bonner's pages. If her statements are true, Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh is a wretched hypocrite; if they are false, he should at once proceed against her as an infamous libeller.

Mrs. Bonner is indignant at his "public protestations of love" for her father, who "so well knew the worth of these phrases." She depicts him as the black sheep of the family. Bradlaugh found situations for him which he did not keep. He took to excessive drinking, and completely neglected his mother during the long illness which preceded her death. Early in 1872 he was sentenced at the Middlesex Sessions to six months' imprisonment for "embezzling various small sums from his employer." During these troubles his wife was assisted by the elder brother, and for some time afterwards Bradlaugh sent him money through his sister, Mrs. Norman. In 1874, while still receiving money from Bradlaugh, he attended some of Moody and Sankey's meetings, professed "conversion," and got "another berth" in connection with the *Christian Herald*. "From that day until my father's death," writes Mrs. Bonner, "his brother never ceased to try and annoy him—always, of course, under the cloak of religion and love." It would give her the "deepest pain and regret" to bring any injury upon her father's brother, but "he chose to pursue a course of conduct which has obliged me to tell the truth concerning their estrangement."

What will this "beautiful brother"—as Bradlaugh called him—do now? He has only the choice of two alternatives, if he has a spark of honesty; either to repudiate these charges as publicly as they are made, or to drop his Pharisaic airs, cease playing the censor, and "walk humbly with his God."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

It seems to me that the bane of our country is a profession of faith either with no basis of real belief, or with no proper examination of the grounds on which the creed is supposed to rest.—*James Russell Lowell.*

Cain and Abel have been dead between five and six thousand years. According to the never-dying-soul dogma, Cain has been suffering the pangs and pains of hell-fire from death till now. Abel has been enjoying the bliss of heaven from death till now. At the day of judgment their "immortal souls" will be reunited to their "resurrected bodies," to be judged, then sentenced. One back to his everlasting burnings, the other to his abode of bliss. Does any sane person believe it?—*Anglo-Angelus.*

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HYPOCRISY.

A FREETHINKER'S protest against the prevailing creeds is directed, not only at their untruth, but also at the hypocrisy which they engender. What we have very often to meet is not the conscientious opposition of genuine believers, whose faith is, as it were, the very life of their lives, and who actually live by it, and are ready to die for it—a belief which, however noxious, commands some respect by its sincerity; but the antagonism of interested professors who find their account in assuming a belief they no longer possess, of persons who think that religion is useful, and of those who merely believe that they believe, or play at pretending to believe.

We call this a Christian country, but, as a matter of fact, the mass of the inhabitants reject all that is distinctive of Christianity. They profess it with their lips, but their hearts and minds are far away. No one thinks of regulating his daily life and business by it. The good Christian takes anxious thought for the morrow, relies on doctors more than on prayer, and, like the Archbishop of Canterbury when robbed of holly, does not give his mistletoe also, but prosecutes the thieves. Christianity has little more than a Sunday existence. Few think ever of professing its precepts on other days, much less of practising them. Even on Sunday Rationalism is preached from the pulpit and disguised in Christian phraseology. On the subject of religion the age is honeycombed with hypocrisy. Unable to believe, it plays at pretending to believe, and is laboriously employed in decanting the new wine of modern thought into the old theological bottles.

Genuine belief, as Froude remarked, ended with persecution. When people really held that the soul's welfare depended on the suppression of heresy, they were prepared to suppress it at all costs. When they felt that to punish a man for maintaining an independent opinion was shocking and unjust, it was because a doubt had entered whether the faith was unquestionably true. Persecution logically follows belief in an infallible revelation from Jesus Christ, and that there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved. If Governments have it in their power to save men from everlasting perdition, they are warranted in doing so by the dictates of mercy as well as commanded thereto by the Bible. Indeed, says "George Eliot," "wherever the tremendous alternative of everlasting torments is believed in—believed in so that it becomes a motive determining the life—not only persecution, but every other form of severity and gloom, are the legitimate consequences."

Real belief in hell and in the damnation of unbaptised infants is becoming extinct, and we can hardly realise the gloom such doctrines were calculated to produce. Cross-examine a Christian on any article of Christian dogma, and you will usually elicit an expression of unconscious unbelief. Is he asked concerning eternal torments, he will probably make it evident he has never realised that as a possibility, at any rate, for himself. He may express a hope that even an Atheist may be saved, though he will not deny that "narrow is the way to eternal life, and few there be that find it." Satan is shelved, but the departure of the devil must not be supposed to herald the retirement of his celestial antagonist. Even the doctrine of evolution may be allowed, but one must not draw the inference that the story of creation is false. As a matter of fact, the dogmas now discarded were the very life of the old creed. Take, for instance, the Fall of Man. That doctrine lies at the very base of Christianity. If the Fall is a fable, then is the Redemption but a fiction. But who will now assert that the story of the Fall represents real facts?

The shifty wriggling and compromise, in the endeavor to reconcile contradictory notions, and to avoid a plain issue, is bound to be detrimental to character. In conforming to the faith that is no longer a faith in realities, but only a faith in names and in shams, men have lost the religion of self-respect. The hypocrites encourage the rogues even when they are not of their number, as they too usually are. And here I am reminded of a little fable, told by Horace Smith, in illustration of the hypocrisy of those who pretend, from pious motives, to retire from the world. "My dear children," said an old rat to his young ones, "the infirmities of age are pressing so heavily upon me that I have determined to dedicate the short remainder of my life to mortification and penance, in a narrow and lonely hole which I have lately discovered; but let me not interfere with your enjoyments; youth is the season for pleasure; be happy, therefore, and only obey my last injunction—never to come near me in my retreat; God bless you all." Deeply affected, snivelling audibly, and wiping his paternal eyes with his tail, the old rat withdrew, and was seen no more for several days, when his youngest daughter, moved rather by filial affection than by that curiosity which has been attributed to the sex, stole to his cell of mortification, which turned out to be a hole, made by his own teeth, in an enormous Cheshire cheese!

To see the value the Archbishop of Canterbury attaches to religion, one must observe him among the ladies at a garden party.

Hypocrisy is always detestable, because the first condition of all improvement is to face the actual facts. Sincerity alone brings intellectual tranquility. Nothing is at last sacred, says Emerson, but the integrity of your own mind. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. One of the best satisfactions in life is that of independent self-reliance. Let us, then, have done with all shams and pretences, think freely, and say out plainly what we think.

> This, above all, to thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE dawn of a new year is an appropriate time to consider the value of Christianity as a remedial force. Such a study has a special interest just at this period, when, from the various churches, sermons are being preached extolling Christianity as the harbinger of peace and goodwill, and exalting Christ as the great reformer who was to redeem the world from the cruelties, wrongs, and degradation to which for centuries the people had been subjected. The expounders of the Galilean faith appear to ignore the fact that the many defects which, although their religion has been existing nearly eighteen hundred years, still deface society, are proofs of the impotency of their system to regenerate the human race. Take as an illustration the poverty that abounds upon every side. What has Christianity done to remove this appalling evil? Jesus is reported to have said: "Ye have the poor with you always." The question, however, may fairly be urged: If Christ possessed "god-like" power, why were the poor always to be with them? It is a demonstrated fact that poverty is not only a curse to mankind, but the parent of other innumerable evils. It is a fertile source of crime; it robs the human mind of the vigor and independence which are so necessary to its proper action; it mars the harmony of domestic associations; and, further, it blights the noblest aspirations of our nature, and prevents many earnest toilers from realising the objects of their laudable ambitions. Surely this was a wrong which the "Reformer of Judea" should have striven to destroy; but he did nothing of the kind; on the contrary, he made poverty a mark of perfection, and pronounced the erroneous statement, "Blessed be ye poor." It is a significant comment upon the lack of wisdom in the "Master's" statement that those who profess to be his most ardent followers do their level best to avoid sharing in such "blessedness."

For centuries past, at the close of each year, the Church has been loud in its expressions of sympathy towards the suffering community; but what has the Church done to give practical effect to this sympathy? Why, comparatively nothing. The same fatal and degrading teaching to the poor has gone on. They are told to submit themselves to their "pastors and masters," to "honor the king" (or queen), to "be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1 Peter ii. 17, 18). The language of the New Testament is: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (1 Cor. vii. 20). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). So far as we can judge from the Four Gospels, the principal object of Christ was to teach his followers how to die, rather than

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to instruct them how to live. He regarded man as an alien in this world. Anything like a triumph of moral good over evil by human means, anything like an escape from the pangs of poverty, anything like a successful insurrection of right which should produce the dethronement of might, appear not to have crossed the horizon of his mental vision."

The annual expression, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year," no doubt sounds very pleasant; but in the present social condition of society it is a mere conventional phrase. At Christmas time, for instance, the expressions of goodwill among the wealthy classes are profuse indeed; but, as the *Dispatch* of December 23 last observed: "Taken at its highest, what is their ideal and practice of Christmas goodwill? For many of them it is the only occasion when the needs of their poorer neighbors have the slightest claim upon them, and they dole out a little from their plenty in order that one day in the year may bring with it a satisfying meal. Especially is it so in our rural districts. . . . But, looking beyond motives to results, we know that in hundreds of our rural villages the doles that will be given away from hall and vicarage will, however kindly the intention, act as a further means of degrading the laboring population. It is because of the Christmas joint of beef, the frock for the child, or the bag of coals, that much of the power of our rural squirearchy exists, and that for the moment the social iniquities for which landlordism is responsible are hidden. The anticipation and the memory of the customary Christmas gifts turn many a man into little better than a serf, buy his vote for his landlord, and foster in him that paralysing feeling of class dependence so ruinous to true manhood. . . . If we are to have the reign of peace on earth and goodwill to all men, it will not be ushered in by spasmodic outbursts of benevolence at fixed periods, but by striving towards that divine principle of ever-present justice which will make charity unnecessary. We do not desire to say one word that would lessen the generous impulses that prompt those who have much, to scatter with a liberal hand, some measure of comfort amongst those who have little; but we would put it in all seriousness to such: How much better would it be if they refrained from injustice in the first instance? We do not merely ask that class should draw near to class, but rather that all classes should be merged in the general brotherhood of the whole community."

This is common sense, and a true statement of the case. While every effort should be made to relieve existing distress, we should constantly aim to permanently establish that order of things where justice shall preclude the necessity of charity, which is too often humiliating to the recipient. In a land where there is enough for all, charity is an indication that there is a radical defect in societarian arrangements; and the really happy new year will be the one wherein commences an era of a fundamental improvement.

The boast that the power of Christ has established peace and goodwill is an utterly groundless one. If the words ascribed to him are to be relied upon, such was not his mission. For we read: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew x. 34–36). "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather division" (Luke xii. 51). "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26).

The power of Christianity has been manifested in the realisation of the conditions here foretold. Its influence, according to the New Testament, did not prevent "contentions," "strife," and "indignation" among Paul and his contemporaries. And from that time down to the present hatred, slander, cruelty, persecution, and oppression have marked the history of the Christian propaganda. This is a fact that even some Christians have been candid enough to admit. For instance, the Rev. T. Finch observes: "With few exceptions, religious sects manifest an ample portion of a savage spirit, and endeavor to vilify and destroy one another." Dr. Campbell exclaims: "Nothing can equal the dogmatism and arrogance with which one sect pronounces sentence against another, except, perhaps, the dogmatism with which the other retaliates upon them." Dr. Scott says of the Christian sects: "It is five hundred to one but that everyone is damned, because everyone damns all but itself, and itself is damned by four hundred and ninety-nine." Bennett writes: "Jealousy, detraction, and persecution are the sure attendants of a revival of religion." Chandler bursts forth: "What ruins and desolations—what rapines and murders—have been introduced into the world under the pretended authority of Christ!" Wyvil records: "The barbarities which professed Christians have committed against unbelievers, and against their own brethren of the same faith, exceed in horror whatever acts of cruelty have been perpetrated by tyrants."

It was this same Christian spirit that caused the rapine, desolation, and murders of the Holy Wars; that flooded the streets of Paris in the sixteenth century with human blood; that made the valleys of Piedmont a scene of most inhuman butchery; that instigated the sacrifice of more than three millions of lives by the conductors of the Inquisition; that prompted the enactments of the horrors of the Star Chamber; that produced the St. Bartholomew massacre; that prosecuted and imprisoned Freethinkers; and that to-day keeps "Christian nations" armed to the very teeth in consequence of their dread of each other. These *facts* show the hollowness of the contention that peace and goodwill have followed the alleged advent of Jesus.

Equally fallacious is the assertion that Christianity has been powerful in aiding national progress. J. A. Farrer, in his recently-published work, *Paganism and Christianity*, states: "Christianity, in the form it came to assume, did not improve in any essential respects the general state of the world. . . . . No one can read the works of the fathers without at once perceiving that he has passed, not merely from an altogether different, but to an altogether lower, intellectual atmosphere. Painful to the last degree is the change from Cicero or Seneca to Tertullian or Augustine. It is like the change from Italian sunlight to an English fog. . . . There is a moral no less than an intellectual abyss; that is to say, that a man may derive more mental and spiritual profit, higher aspirations for virtue, toleration, and humanity from Seneca or Marcus Aurelius than from writers like Augustine or Tertullian. The moral teaching of the Pagans is on a purer and higher level than that of the fathers."

Similar truths are recorded by Lecky in vol. ii. of his "European Morals." On page 18 he shows that our civilisation is due to other than Christian sources. After pointing out that modern progress is attributable to purely secular causes, he observes that for centuries theology "numbed and paralysed the whole intellect of Christian Europe. . . . In medicine, physical science, commercial interests, politics, and even ethics, the reformer has been confronted with theological affirmations, which barred the way, which were all defended as of vital importance, and were all in turn compelled to yield before the secularising influence of civilisation."

It will thus be seen that the power of Christianity has not by any means always been exercised for good; and, although at the present time it is less powerful for evil than it was in former days, it is because of the secular forces with which it has to cope. A careful and impartial study of history reveals the fact that Christians have always been necessitated to modify their conduct in the presence of a high-toned morality. Hence the truth appears that it is morality that has purified religion, not religion that has purified morality. CHARLES WATTS.

Christianity and Islam.

Ah! how true it is that Christianity has not, as you say, Christianised the world. There is something curious in the spectacle of the embarrassment of every sect of Christians in accounting for this fact. To me, the wonder would be if it had Christianised the world. Its unfitness for saving the race, for an universal reception by mankind, seems to be shown clearly enough by the rise of Mohammedanism, and by the spread of that faith so far beyond the extent that Christianity ever attained as to include, in our day, a fifth part of the whole human race. That religion, imperfect as we see it to be, met needs and guided faculties, among certain races of men, which Christianity wholly neglected.—*Harriet Martineau.*

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SCRIPTURE MATERIALISM.

When Thomas Cooper, the doctor, not the Chartist orator, was accused of Materialism, he retorted that this was the Scripture doctrine, since the Bible says nothing of the immortality of the soul, but of the resurrection of the dead. He argued that, on the modern theory of an immaterial soul that survives the body and never dies, the resurrection of the dead would be a useless absurdity and a falsehood. When Jesus Christ talks of the resurrection of the dead, it must be the resurrection of that which is liable to death. It cannot mean the resurrection of that which is not liable to death, but, being immortal, never dies. Even when Christ is resurrected he never speaks of his soul, but says, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is myself"; and he levitates to heaven with fish and honeycomb inside him. The Christadelphians, who, for the most part, are a plain people, very studious of the words of the book, take a similar position, and, on textual grounds, they really have a very strong case. They point out that the word translated soul has a number of physical meanings, and is sometimes even synonymous with "stomach." They notice that the curse of disobedience was death, and adduce the many passages in the Old Testament in which death is declared to be the end of all human beings.

Job, for instance, says explicitly, "He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more"; prophets and psalmists declare that the wicked perish, while the preacher asserts "that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity."

Christadelphians believe that we are all to be raised up from the dead, judged in the valley of Jehosophat, the wicked sent dead again to their second death, while the righteous—that is, themselves—will have the gift of immortality, wearing crowns of glory, and judging the nations upon the earth. It is a cheeky faith, but what else can be expected from "Brethren of Christ"!

Lucianus.

IF CHRIST CAME TO LONDON.

If Christ came to London, and walked through the town,
His brow would be furrowed with many a frown;
A scourge he would make, not with "small cords," but big,
To teach pious Christians a punitive jig;
The churches and chapels, so costly and grand,
All built with the bread of the poor of the land,
He'd enter, and wrathfully listen and gaze
A moment or two, then his scourge he would raise,
And yell—not a doubt of it—
"Humbugs! come out of it!
Wasting your money and time with these buildings,
Ethical essays, and carvings, and gildings!
Think you that Art and Philosophy please me?
Think you that praises and pew-rents appease me?
Hypocrites, liars, and thieves, ev'ry one of you!
Out of it, hussies! and each mother's son of you!
Christ's come to London!"

If Christ came to London at our time of day,
And entered a hospital, what would he say?
He'd say, midst the proofs of the skill and the care
Of Doctors of Science, the rivals of Pray'r:
"Is *this* the result of my death and my tears,
Of preaching my precepts for hundreds of years?
This temple of Science, the Atheist's friend,
Of Science the foe of my methods and end—
Come out of it! out of it!
Humbugs! come out of it!
Godless and prayerless hot-bed of Science,
Atheist's providence, trust, and reliance!
Where are the 'signs' that should follow believers,
Promised by me to confound the deceivers?
Genuine Christians—so diff'rent from 'Spurgeons'—
Pray, and repudiate doctors and surgeons;
Always they're safe from disease and disaster,
Curing themselves through belief in their master.
Hypocrites, liars, and thieves, ev'ry one of you!
Out of it, hussies! and each mother's son of you!
Christ's come to London!"

If Christ came to London and read through a lease,
Inspected the Law Courts, and saw the Police,
Or entered an Orphanage, Warehouse, and Bank,
His scourge would be lashing out many a spank!
"What! Landlords, Policemen, and Lawyers, forsooth!
Pretend to be Christians with 'tooth for a tooth'!
No Christians, when damaged, redress ever seek;
They yield 'good for evil,' and 'turn the left cheek';
No Christians have 'savings' in banks nor elsewhere;
'Gainst 'thought for the morrow' my precepts declare.
The sceptics provide for the morrow, and try
To better the earth, where their *only* hopes lie;
But Christians, whose hopes are all centred above,
Obey all my precepts and trust in my love.
What! homes for the orphan, whose costs are defrayed
By usury, secular science, and trade!
Does no one believe what I oft did declare,
That God feeds the sparrows, and hearkens to pray'r?
Come out of them! out of them!
Humbugs! come out of them!
Think of it! After these hundreds of years,
London I search, but no Christian appears.
Nothing but godless and sceptical creatures,
Hospitals, banks, and such secular features.
Fool that I was to attempt your salvation!
Ass that I was to endure degradation,
Pain, and discomfort, in all of their phases,
Death on the cross, and descent into blazes!
Hypocrites, liars, and thieves, ev'ry one of you!
Go to the devil, for *I* will have none of you—
Humbugs of London!"

G. L. Mackenzie.

ACID DROPS.

Fluent, genial, shallow "Tay Pay" concluded his New Year's article in the *Sun* by quoting Browning's

> God's in his heaven,
> All's right with the world.

We don't know whether God's in his heaven or not. "Tay Pay" seems to be better informed on this point than we are. But we are quite sure that all is not right with the world. "Tay Pay" himself is always trying to mend it. The fine income he makes at the business may have something to do with his optimism and his "unshaken faith."

In the late hurricane God rode upon the storm with a vengeance, causing much destruction of life and property both by land and sea. In the Midlands and North many were killed by falling chimney-stacks and buildings, and all round the coasts there have been shipping disasters.

Sir Herbert Maxwell, in a recent number of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, draws attention to the awful havoc among birds, and even among denizens of the sea, in great gales. "It is," he says, "as if for a few hours the heavens and the earth had been given over to the power of some maleficent demon." How is this to be "reconciled with the scheme of a beneficent Creator"? Sir Herbert Maxwell does not try to answer the question. It is evidently too much for him. Those who talk about "the anger of the Almighty," he says, seem to regard him as "an angry old man in a blue coat," like a certain friend of Horace Walpole's.

The Liverpool *Daily Post* devoted about three columns to a review, with copious extracts, of Mrs. Bonner's *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*. The reviewer offers, as a palliative of the unjust treatment Mr. Bradlaugh received, that he wore himself out in trying to prove the non-existence of deity. It is an ancient device to misrepresent a man in order to justify rancorous hostility to him; but men of education should be above such tactics.

The Rev. R. A. Armstrong has written protesting against Mrs. Bonner's statement that Unitarians distinguished themselves by their hostility to Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Armstrong and several other prominent Unitarians are free from any charge of illiberality, but he need not go outside his own congregation to find pronounced instances of the contrary feeling. Prominent Unitarians voted in the City Council against letting the Picton Lecture Hall for the N.S.S. Conference in May last. Some Unitarians are very tolerant to their own wretched narrowness. Mrs. Bonner's strictures are generally justified.

The death of Miss Christina Rossetti reminds us of two incidents. The first is, that the most beautiful review of her beautiful poems was written by James Thomson in the *Secularist* in 1876. She was a fervid Christian, and he was a confirmed Atheist. The second is this. A dear friend of

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Miss Rossetti's, who was also a dear friend of ours, wanted to introduce us to her. She declined, however, but not with ill-feeling. In a beautiful letter—beautiful in expression and written in a beautiful hand—she said that, while on intellectual grounds she might be proud of such an acquaintance, she could not see how honest Christians and honest Atheists could mix with each other; it was better, she thought, without judging each other, to keep apart. Such was the effect of religion on one of the tenderest women that ever breathed.

The Church Army service at St. Mary-at-Hill, Monument, advertises a discourse on Belial's Bullies, two solos by Miss Julie Glover, with orchestral accompaniments, and Darby and Joan given as a cornet solo by Mr. Frank Loker. The address is to be illustrated by dissolving views. Evidently the Rev. W. Carlile could have given some useful hints to the apostles.

Magic-lantern Sunday evening services are becoming popular with the Church Army. This is all very well for a beginning, but to thoroughly outrival Booth's big drums it may be necessary to get up a series of living pictures, and provide the congregation with spittoons.

Mrs. Josephine Butler is, we believe, the wife of a Canon of the Church, yet in the *Humanitarian* she speaks pretty strongly about the Bible being a *man's* book as opposed to *woman's*.

The *Oban Times* reports a meeting of the Glasgow University Ossianic Society, at which a paper was read by the Rev. Dr. Russell on the Druids. This gentleman wound up by saying that if any of his hearers intended to give up Christianity (horrid thought!) he hoped they would return to the old religion of the Druids rather than adopt "the short-seeing doctrines of modern Secularism." Dr. Russell did not say whether they should also return to the primitive costume of the Druidic age, which sometimes consisted of plenty of paint and a few feathers.

The superintendent minister of the Lambeth Wesleyan Chapel sends to a vice-president of the N.S.S., among others, a curious begging circular, which illustrates how a faith, with omnipotence at its back, yet seeks aid from Mammon. The circular states that Lambeth Chapel, "once filled with Methodist families," has its congregations small and its sources very limited. "Despite the earnest ministry of a succession of able, devoted men, the cause has been going down, *down* continuously." But, says Mr. Pawlyn, "God is omnipotent, our few people are prayerful." Does he rely on prayer and omnipotence? Not a bit. He follows this by the declaration, "Meanwhile, our pressing want is *money*."

In the *Kirchenfreund* (Orthodox Church Friend), Professor Orelli writes on "The Secularisation of the Church," which he finds pervaded by worldly anti-Christian spirit. He says the open opposition of the social democrats is as nothing beside the treachery of conservatives who, while maintaining the forms of Christianity, wholly depart from its spirit.

He remarks that people praise the Bible and say it was never so well understood as now, while all their efforts tend to show it can no longer be considered the word of God. They praise Christ as a man, but will not admit him a god or follow his teachings.

Professor Orelli adds that in England and America, as well as on the Continent, "one denomination after another has been ravaged in this way. Communities which were built up entirely on the ground of personal faith, and had no other justification for their existence, have given up the principles of their faith, and yet live on."

A story is going the rounds about the new Czar. It is said that when, as a lad, he heard the story of the unfortunate end of the prophet of Nazareth, he much lamented his hard fate. His tutor drily remarked that, if J. C. were to venture to preach his doctrines in St. Petersburg, General Gresser, then Chief of Police, would have him arrested and committed to prison quite as unceremoniously as in ancient Judea.

That Scottish pulpit mountebank, the Rev. John Robertson, of Glasgow, says that "the theatres are mere houses of assignation, where rich and bloated men meet their mistresses and harlots." How about the gods in the gallery? Johnnie, like Mrs. Chant, has an eye for only one part of the house.

Johnnie is particularly wroth with the Moderates of the Church of Scotland and other ministers who have been seen in a theatre. "It's enough," he says, "to make the Covenanters turn in their graves." Yes, with anxiety to fill a seat at the performance.

Free Church Principles is the title of a printed address by the Rev. A. Holden Byles, of Hanley. The reverend gentleman does not believe in State Churches, but he believes in a Church, to which he of course belongs. This Church is inspired, and some of its inspiration has fallen on Mr. Byles. He is a dissenter from the Church of England, but no one must dissent from *his* Church. All dissent, he says, which does not arise from ignorance is a sin. Such are the principles of the *Free* Church! Was there ever a more facetious title?

Professor Newman once observed—and we have often made the observation ourselves—that the religion of barbarians is often decided by their chieftains. A curious illustration of this tendency may be found in Mr. R. G. Wilberforce's new book on the Indian Mutiny, the most conspicuous figure in which is John Nicholson, whom Colonel Malleson called "the greatest soldier and the most perfect master of men in India." He was adored by the Pathans and Afghans who followed him from the North, and a Nicholson cult arose among the Sikhs, who made pilgrimages to see him. After his death a whole tribe of them said, "Let us learn to worship Nickelseyn's god." They went to Peshawur, and were baptised to a man. "It may be doubted," says the *Westminster Gazette*, "whether, in India at least, any priest of peace ever had such a triumph."

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie having, in the *Echo*, drawn attention to the insincerity of Christians who preach peace and forget the texts where Christ says, "I came not to send peace, but a sword," and "he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one," Mr. H. J. W. Morden writes to say that the word sword "means, in the local idiom, separation." What a pity the divine revelation does not say what it means.

At the examination of the Wick School Board, according to the *Northern Ensign*, the children were asked: Where was the Catechism written? Answer—On Mount Sinai. Who wrote the Catechism? Answer—Moses.

In the same district the Dunnet School Board opens with prayer by the chairman, the Rev. D. Mowat, Free Church minister. Soon after the Established Church minister, the Rev. W. J. S. Falconer, said: "I am not to be bullied by you;" to which the chairman replied: "You are the bully." And the parish minister abruptly left the meeting in a passion.

Satolli, the Pope's vice-regent in America, has promulgated an edict from his holiness, placing under the ban of the Church as secret societies the Oddfellows, the Knights of Pythias, and the Sons of Temperance. The real reason is doubtless that the Pope fears these Orders may draw the faithful from their allegiance to the priests. The Jesuits are far more closely a secret society than any of these, but never were they more in favor with the Papacy than at present.

The Rev. Richard Watson, one of the lights of the Methodist Church, says of the ghost raised by the witch of Endor: "The real Samuel appeared, and the message uttered is so much in character, and so manifestly breathes the spirit of the divine commission, that, containing, as it does, an explicit prediction which was exactly accomplished, we must conclude (let loose and sceptical commentators conjecture what they please) that there was no deception here. The account not only shows that the Jews believed in the doctrine of apparitions, but that, in fact, such an appearance on this occasion did actually occur, which answers all the objections which were ever raised, or can be raised, from the philosophy of the case, against the possibility of the appearance of departed spirits."

Wesley is still more explicit, and says, in so many words, that "the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible" (*Journal*, May 25, 1768). Dr. Adam Clarke, in his commentary on the passage, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xxii. 18), observes: "If there had been no witches, such a law as this had never been made."

Not the Anti-Gambling League, but the Chief Constable of Peterborough, determined to try if, having put down all lotteries, religious ones could be carried on with impunity. The Rev. Canon Moser was accordingly summoned for selling lottery tickets on behalf of a proposed Roman Catholic church. One witness stated that he had addressed 10,000 envelopes for the circulars announcing the lottery. On Canon Moser giving an undertaking that the lottery should not be proceeded with and the money returned, the magistrates adjourned the case to enable the promise to be fulfilled, stating that in the event of this being done there would not be a conviction.

The pious people who delight in suppressing other people's enjoyments draw attention to the profanity which

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prevails at some music halls. A popular song, for instance, imported from America, has for chorus:—

He's up with the angels now,
With a bright crown upon his brow;
A pain came in his "tum,"
Then he went to Kingdom Come,
And he's up with the angels now.

No doubt it's awfully shocking, but the question as to whose taste should regulate popular amusements is not so easily settled as some people think.

The *Cape Argus* gives an account of the Dutch settlers in the country districts. It makes them out to be very pious, very ignorant, and immoral. It accuses the rich, smooth elders of the Church of having "bywoners" on their farms for purposes of immorality, and says: "Many of the children of those 'bywoners' are his children. Could it be otherwise? Nothing to read but the Bible; and surely the Old Testament is, according to my light, rather a dangerous book to put in the hands of such people." The writer goes on to say that they pay their ministers well and have numerous wealthy churches, but do nothing for education.

It appears, from a letter in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, that the ex-Mayor of Portsmouth was fully justified in referring to the sectarian character of the Royal Seamen's and Marines' Orphan School and Female Home, at its annual meeting, there being no other opportunity for subscribers to express their opinion of the management. It seems that the late Alderman Emanuel, the father of the ex-Mayor, was one of the original founders of the Home, which is now so perverted that it is only open to children of Church of England members, who are only 75 per cent. of the seamen and marines, while the subscriptions are drawn from all classes. Jack, if of the Church of England, is not such a churl as to desire that the children of a chum, who is not exactly of the same faith as himself, shall be debarred from privileges open to his own if anything happens to himself; and this matter should not be allowed to drop until either the Home is made unsectarian, or every collecting-box, card, and circular states on it the fact that the Home is for Church of England children only.

The general statistics of the Roman Church in the United States are as follows:—Archbishops, 14; Bishops, 75; clergy, 9,388; churches, 8,477; chapels, 1,763; stations, 3,485; colleges, 127; academies, 636; schools, 3,587; Roman Catholic population, 8,806,095. Monsignor Satolli has virtually transferred the Roman Catholic centre of operations from Baltimore to Washington, where the wire-pullers are ever ready to bring pressure on the Government.

During the past eight years, including 1893, the Catholic schools for Indians in the United States have received from Congress $2,366,416, while fifteen of the other leading religious bodies have received but $1,400,000. The publication of the facts will add to the movement for stopping all grants to religious bodies. The Catholics vote like sheep, with the object of dipping as deeply as possible into the public purse on every available occasion.

The close alliance of the Roman Church with the corrupt Tammany political organisation of New York has been strikingly manifested lately. Father Ducey was asked to assist the Commission of Investigation of New York Politicians with facts. He did so, and immediately received a peremptory mandate from Archbishop Corrigan not to appear before the Commission again.

M. Félix Lecaze, a Paris journalist, who is also a Catholic, has been lecturing at Frankfort on the Lourdes "miracles." He examined case after case, and found that the result was due to suggestion and hypnosis. No person has been cured who was blind or lame from birth. M. Lecaze denounces the "expropriation of the superstitious tendency" which is carried on by the Catholic dignitaries, who reap a rich harvest for the Church by this policy.

The secular press sometimes make some queer errors in dealing with things of the Church. A northern paper recently had a heading, "Churching of the Mayor," that individual being a male, unlike some of the mayors in New Zealand. This was almost as ridiculous as the paper which wrote of "suspended thurifers," the thurifer being the person who wafts the incense from the thurible.

Another attempt to get out of the difficulty occasioned to the orthodox by the fact that the Sinai MS. states that Joseph begat Jesus is made by "A Parish Priest" in the *Church Times*, who suggests that "begat" may only mean "was succeeded as his heir by." Apart from the fact that Jesus is not said to have inherited anything from his mother's husband, "A Parish Priest," moreover, omits to notice that verse 25 goes on to say, "She bore to him a son."

An article on Christmas in the *Vegetarian*, by J. S. Herron, makes some surprising statements. He says: "The rules the Apostles laid down, instructed by their Lord, were—No flesh, no fermented wine. The wine drank in Palestine was not fermented; there was the vintage season when all the grapes were ripe, and everyone drank the juice of the grape, and had a great festival, though a harmless one."

Where did Mr. Herron find the instructions against flesh or wine? Christ and his disciples partook of the Passover Lamb, and Peter saw heaven opened and a sheet let down, "wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat." Thus, one of the apostles was instructed in slaughter as well as in flesh-eating.

Then as to the unfermented wine. What nonsense to suppose that the wine which is always spoken of in connection with drunkenness, which upset Noah and Lot, and made Paul complain that some of those who celebrated the Lord's Supper were drunken, was quite a harmless beverage. The attempts of Christian cranks to make the old book endorse their fads bring credit neither to the book nor to themselves.

The *Vegetarian* writer goes on to say: "The manner of celebrating the Christian festival now is taken from the pagan feast of Bacchus, a feast greatly delighted in by the Romans, where everyone got drunk and behaved in a most obscene and disorderly manner." He concludes by observing: "Unless the Christian Church is reformed throughout all its branches as to its purity, it will fall and never rise again."

The Rochford (Essex) School Board, under clerical domination, decided to introduce the Apostles' Creed into the schools. Three Dissenting members have appealed to the Education Department on the ground that the creed is a formulary such as is interdicted by the fourteenth clause of the Education Act. Should the Department decide that the creed is admissible, this forgery will, doubtless, be introduced in most of the schools where the clericals are in power; and it will be the duty of Freethinkers to everywhere expose the fictions of that creed and the facts concerning its concoction.

Nellie Laws, 13, and Maggie Winter, 14, were charged at the North London Police-Court with stealing a cash-box and £4 5s. belonging to Mrs. Morris. The prisoner Laws had been connected with the Salvation Army, and met Mrs. Morris at the Clapton Congress Hall. Afterwards she called at Mrs. Morris's and abstracted the cash-box, inducing her servant, Winter, to leave at the same time. The Salvation Army girl said Winter took the box, but admitted helping to spend the money; and she added, "God knows I have done everything I could for that girl, and prayed for her." In the dock each girl accused the other, and Laws declared that what she had done was out of "Christ-like love" for Winter.

Colonel Ingersoll called Shakespeare the greatest genius of this world, and Mr. Gladstone asked him how he knew that. Mr. Gladstone afterwards called Aristotle the greatest thinker of antiquity, and Colonel Ingersoll asked him how he knew that. Mr. Gladstone did not answer. He thought it best to lie low.

Mr. Swinburne is of the same opinion as Colonel Ingersoll. He calls Shakespeare "the mightiest genius that ever dwelt among men"—which the orthodox will think rough on Jesus Christ. Mr. Swinburne also refers to the spring of 1616, in which Shakespeare died (and for that reason), as "the darkest that ever dawned upon England or the world." Evidently, in Mr. Swinburne's opinion, Jesus Christ is not in the running.

Mr. A. J. Balfour, the Tory leader in the House of Commons, sowed his intellectual wild oats in *The Defence of Philosophic Doubt*. He will soon publish the fruits of repentance in a new work entitled *The Foundations of Belief*. We shall be happy to investigate Mr. Balfour's "foundations."

Archdeacon Farrar is one of the gassiest preachers in England. He makes a lot of money by writing about the poor Carpenter of Nazareth. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that he is also a flunkey. For four months he fills the post of Deputy Clerk of the Closet in waiting on the Queen. We are unable to state the precise functions of this office, and perhaps they are better left to imagination.

Lord Erskine, hearing that a man had died worth a million, said: "Well, that's a good sum to begin the next world with."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 6, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C.: 11.15, "Social Equality: Will it Ever be Realised?" 7, "The Freethought Outlook in 1895."

Wednesday, January 9, Hall of Science: 8.30, "A Night with George Meredith."

January 13, Hall of Science, London; 27, Liverpool.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 6, Chesterfield; 13, Leicester; 20, Nottingham; 27, Hall of Science, London. February 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Camberwell. March 3, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

PETER DICKSON.—Hardly worth the price, we should say.

W. BOOTH.—Thanks for good wishes. See "Acid Drops."

MR. AND MRS. J. KENNEDY.—We heartily reciprocate your "best wishes" for the new year. The sight of your pretty country house on the card makes us feel sicker than ever of London's "long unlovely streets," and its dirt and din.

IMPARTIALIST.—The man acted generously, but it seems a little Pharisaic to put the occurrence in print. Besides, it would be no news to our readers that a Freethinker can be a tender-hearted man.

R. F. (Beswick, Hull).—Mr. Naewiger, 22 Osborne-street, Hull, will supply you with our literature.

G. MANCO.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

G. LUCAS.—We will look into the matter. What is your fresh sub. intended for? Josephus does not mention the massacre of the innocents by Herod. He would have done so if he had heard of it.

G. R.—Shall appear. No room this week.

G. W. B.—Under consideration.

RESEAR.—Mr. Forder sees to your order. Glad to know you are so pleased with the *Freethinker*.

E. TIMEWELL.—There have been several articles on Spiritism in back numbers of the *Freethinker*, the dates of which we may supply next week. In our issue for August 12, 1894, there are several "Acid Drops" on the subject. *The Confessions of a Medium* (published by Griffith & Farren), Truesdell's *Bottom Facts Concerning Spiritualism* (Boston), and a work by Mr. Maskelyne may supply what you require.

G. GRAHAM.—There is no law to prevent a Freethinker from receiving a legacy. The law disables Freethought Societies.

G. F. WENBORN.—Glad to have your support.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Will deal with it next week. Thanks.

MR. FOOTE'S FIGHTING FUND.—Mr. and Mrs. Durant (St. Thomas, West Indies), 7s.; W. A. Argall, 1s.

J. G. FISHER.—Handed to Mr. Forder. Kindly send in future direct to him.

J. NICHOLSON.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. SIMONS sends us the annual report of the Ball's Pond Secular Sick and Tontine Society, which is as healthy as the members appear to be.

J. NEATE.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. S. PARNALL.—Obliged for the cuttings. We note your hope that our New Year's number will be "as terse and classic as the *Almanack*."

A. J. NEWTON.—Thanks for the reference. Stevenson's intellect was too keen not to pierce through the Christian superstition.

H.—Please send future orders for literature direct to Mr. Forder. Mrs. Besant is not a Freethinker of "our class." We regard her present beliefs as a worse superstition than Christianity, though perhaps less malignant, being two thousand years more recent.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Mr. Foote wrote you on the subject. His letter must have crossed your second one in the post. He will gladly visit Chatham again either for lecture or debate.

W. J. HEATH.—(1) Glad to have your thanks for what you consider the spirit we have infused into the question of Secular Education. By the way, that spirit is likely to cost us something. There is still a deficit of over £10 in connection with Mr. Watts's candidature in Finsbury, for which we hold ourself personally responsible. It seems hardly fair to let us bear the burden of cost, as well as a heavy burden of work. (2) We will try to furnish precise references to our Freethought Gleanings, which would certainly be more useful with them.

E. H.—(1) We have recommended Greg's *Creed of Christendom* dozens of times. (2) The libellous Life of Bradlaugh may be the same as the one you refer to. We do not know. (3) We are unable to direct you to any cheap history of the Slave Trade. The literature of the subject is large and rather expensive. (4) Ratepayers have no control over the so-called Voluntary Schools, which are supported out of imperial taxation, though not out of the rates. They are now clamoring for a share of the rates too, and if they succeed it will be their destruction.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Mrs. Hancock, 5s.; Ch. Girtanner, 5s. 9d.; Westminster Branch, 17s.; F. Rogers, 5s.; Daniel Baker, £2 2s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.

T. E. M.—Your re-copy to hand. Shall appear at an early date. It is in the compositor's hands.

R. MORROW.—Thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Dundee Advertiser—Cape Argus—Echo—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Freidenker—Reynolds's Newspaper—Boston Investigator—Independent Pulpit—Crescent—Islamic World—Weekly Times and Echo—New York Sun—Chat—Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Twentieth Century—Liberty—Progressive Thinker—Liberator—Open Court—Torquay Times—Lucifer—Northern Ensign.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures at the London Hall of Science on the first two Sundays in the new year. His morning subject to-day (Jan. 6) is "Social Equality: Will it ever be Realised?" In the evening he will lecture on "The Freethought Outlook in 1895." On the following Wednesday (Jan. 9) Mr. Foote delivers the first of two new literary lectures, the subject then being "A Night with George Meredith."

We hope to see a large and genial gathering at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday evening (January 7). It is the occasion of the seventh Annual Dinner of the London Secular Federation. Mr. Foote will preside, and be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and other well-known Freethinkers. There is sure to be a good "spread," and the Dinner Committee has arranged an excellent musical program to be alternated with the toast-list. Let us gather together for one evening and fleet the time merrily as they did in the golden age. After the merriment we shall all fight the better for "the good old cause."

Mr. Charles Watts lectured the last two Sunday evenings at the Hall of Science, London. Considering the holiday season, the audiences were very good. Mr. Watts lectures three times to-day, Sunday, January 6, in the Assembly Room, Market Hall, Chesterfield. We have no doubt that our Derbyshire friends will muster in good force.

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's article on "Who was the Father of Jesus?" stands over till next week, in consequence of the pressure upon our space by the Bradlaugh article. The cartoon also stands over till then for the same reason. Our readers must be satisfied this week with the fine portrait of Charles Bradlaugh.

Dr. Stanton Coit lectured for the Liverpool Branch last Sunday. The weather was generally dry, but bitterly cold, and to this must be attributed the fact that the audiences were not so large as the merits of the lectures deserved. Those who attended, however, were delighted with the powerful addresses given. The evening lecture was especially fine; Mr. George Wise opposed, and the proceedings were prolonged much beyond the usual time. Dr. Coit's replies to his opponent were crushing; but God's people have the privilege of singing hymns of victory even after defeat.

The Liverpool and Bootle Secular Tontine Society has concluded a very successful year. Two-thirds of the subscriptions were returned to the members in the divide, and the New Year opens with a good substantial reserve fund. New members are invited; all information being obtainable at the lectures on Sunday evenings.

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Mr. C. Cohen has concluded the first half of his six months' mission at South Shields, and has just been enjoying a well-deserved holiday. He has made many friends in the district, and his services are highly appreciated by one and all.

The Camberwell Branch holds its general meeting of members this afternoon (Jan. 6) at 4. Tea and soirée (tickets 1s.) will begin at 6. South Londoners are earnestly invited to attend.

The Finsbury Branch holds its annual meeting in the Minor Hall of Science to-day (January 6) at 12 o'clock (noon). Officers have to be elected, and other important business determined.

Last week's *Athenæum* gave the place of honor to a review of Mrs. Bonner's biography of Charles Bradlaugh. Reservations are made, but on the whole the article is laudatory. The following paragraph is perhaps worth quoting: "The main facts of Bradlaugh's public life are too well known to need recapitulation, though, perhaps, the time has not yet come for such thorough understanding of them, or rather of him, as only dispassionate examination can secure. Throughout many years he provoked much opposition which was excusable, if not quite reasonable, and which was evidently not unwelcome to him, though he bitterly complained of it, by his persistent attacks upon opinions regarding secular as well as religious affairs held by most of his countrymen. On many occasions 'Iconoclast,' as he styled himself, went out of his way both to give offence and to take offence; but even in his stormiest days, as well as in the later and more statesmanlike stage of his career, he often showed a regard for justice and a spirit of generosity surpassed by few. In fact, he was a born fighter, the conditions of whose life inclined him to modes of warfare and placed him in battle-fields which involved much waste of energy and lack of dignity. But before going into the fray he always satisfied himself that his cause was a good one and worth struggling for; and it is notable that during the few years in which he was allowed to sit in Parliament he won the sullen admiration of even enemies by his peculiar dignity and sustained energy."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* says the two volumes are written with tedious minuteness, and uses hard words in speaking of Mr. Robertson's share of the composition. On the other hand, it admits, rather patronisingly, that Bradlaugh was "a really remarkable man," and "one of the greatest speakers of his day." This is qualified, however, by the statement that he had a "strictly mechanical, machine-like mind." Perhaps the *Pall Mall* reviewer will explain the difference between "mechanical" and "machine-like," and inform us how the possessor of such a mind could ever be a great orator. We pause for a reply.

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for January is a good pennyworth, the principal feature being a review of the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*. There is a valuable gratis supplement by Mr. F. J. Gould on "Who Wrote Genesis?"

A letter in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, signed "Pro Bono Publico," ably advocates the utilisation of the Board schools for Sunday evening lectures. Hundreds, it appears, were turned away who were eager to hear Dickens's *Christmas Carol* read at the Bristol-street Board school.

The *Ironclad Age* (Dec. 15) opens with a curious piece of verse from that erratic genius but stout Freethinker, George Francis Train, who, as usual, indulges wildly in capital letters.

The largest theatre in Boston was packed to hear Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture on the Bible. The *Boston Investigator* says: "The audience, intelligent, alert, appreciative, hung upon his utterances swayed, by his magnetism, fired by his eloquence into irresistible and continuous applause. What a victory for Freethought, what a triumph for genius! Voltaire, in the days of his greatest popularity, could never have received a heartier reception from the warm-hearted French people than was accorded the distinguished Freethinker, gentleman, and scholar on the occasion of his last visit to this city." Similar ovations have greeted him in the other towns where he has lectured.

Reynolds's Newspaper, in noticing the *Secular Almanack*, gave a good extract from Mr. Foote's article on "The Progress of Freethought," and the *Weekly Times and Echo* says of the *Almanack*: "It is full of good matter, which, for the most part, no one need to be a Secularist to enjoy; and the calendar is a refreshing contrast to the usual stereotyped list of dates of kings and battles in which no one now-a-days takes much interest or cares to be reminded of."

On Christmas Day, December 25, 1894, the scholars' annual tea party was held at the Failsworth Secular Sunday School, Failsworth. This party has now been held for over twenty years, and was, as usual, a decided success. Over two hundred sat down to an excellent tea. After tea, for which no charge is made to the scholars, a good program of songs and recitations was rendered by the younger children. Forty-nine volumes in all were distributed as prizes by Mr. Taylor. Refreshments and games followed, and the party spent a most enjoyable evening. The New Year's party will be held on January 5, 1895. After the tea the drama, "Leah the Forsaken," will be played.

The critical school of Dutch theology has made the Church in that country rationalistic, though it rests on our good friends of *De Dageraad* to uphold the banner of absolute Freethought. A writer in the *Church Times* was horrified to find that at the Amsterdam Free Evangelical Church they were having a course of lectures on "George Eliot." He says, moreover, that the congregations of the churches are very thin, the worshippers being mainly women.

Mr. Victor Roger, one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, has been re-elected on the Lambeth Vestry. He has a Freethinking colleague in Mr. G. Coombes, and another in a member whose name we withhold. Mr. Roger had the *odium theologicum* raised against him. One prominent chapelite would not stand with Mr. Roger on any account. That is what he said, but he had to stand in the Progressive list with Mr. Roger, and now has to sit with him on the Vestry. It only remains to add that Mr. Roger was vigorously denounced by Christians at open-air meetings as a disgrace to the Vestry. The disgrace consisted in his vile, pestilent habit of thinking for himself.

In Bethnal Green three well-known militant Atheists have been elected on the Vestry—Messrs. Sumpter, Smither, and Neate, the last being the secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch. Mr. Smither has also a seat on the Board of Guardians, together with Miss Sumpter, who is a member of the East London Branch.

In Hackney we have Messrs. W. Vining and B. Dent, both of whom have lectured at the Freethought station in Victoria Park. Mr. Gay, a member of the N.S.S., has also been elected on the Hackney Board of Guardians.

In Poplar we have Mrs. Wilson and Messrs. Lansbury and Goult (all Secularists) elected as Guardians. Mrs. Grout has been returned as Guardian for Hoxton, and Mrs. Barralet for Homerton. Mr. E. Smith (Battersea Branch) polled over five hundred votes, but wanted ten more to win. At South Lynn Mr. Robert Green was elected as Guardian.

Annual Children's Party.

C. M. Jacob, 6s.; George Anderson, £2 2s.; Mrs. Donaldson, 6s.; "Not Bad," 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Bussie, 5s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.—ROBERT FORDER, *Treasurer*.

A Brace of Saints.

St. Viar, a Spanish saint, has, it is said, been "evolved" from a curious error in reading an ancient stone (similar to the one discovered by Mr. Pickwick), which bore the letters S. VIAR. Spanish piety at once recognised a saint. Profane antiquaries, however, read the inscription otherwise. The letters are old Roman characters, and, if complete, would have read PrefectuS VIARum (overseer of roads). The stone was in honour of some Roman official connected with the highways.

On Soracte, a mountain in Italy, celebrated by Horace and Virgil, there is now a monastery of St. Oreste—*i.e.*, the old name divided and softened into a saint. "These be thy gods, O Israel."—*James A. Richardson.*

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

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NOTABLE BOOKS OF THE YEAR.

ONE way of taking stock of the progress of a period is by noting the number of books which it has produced that are likely to live. And the past twelvemonth has furnished its quota. Of fiction—of which, indeed, there is no dearth—we shall not deal at length. There have been several notable novels, though not perhaps any masterpiece, sent forth during the past year. There is George Meredith's *Lord Ormont and His Aminta*, which certainly is worthy of the author of *Richard Feverel*. But George Meredith, of course, will never be read by the multitude. *Lord Ormont and His Aminta* contains many examples of that twisted language and exuberance of writing, as it may be called, which is one of the distinguishing literary mannerisms of George Meredith, and which is, perhaps, seen most markedly in *One of Our Conquerors*. Yet, for all that, George Meredith is perhaps the most scientific and cultured writer of fiction in England to-day.

Amongst the other notable novels which may only be named are Hall Caine's *Manxman*, Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Marcella*, dealing in the Wardian fashion with Socialism, Stanley J. Weyman's *Under the Red Robe* and *My Lady Rotha*, and Blackmore's *Perlycross*.

What we wish to deal with principally, however, are those books issued during the past year which appeal particularly to the attention of Freethinkers. In this class we may place the much-boomed and certainly striking work called *Social Evolution*, by Mr. Benjamin Kidd. It would, of course, be impossible in an article such as this to give anything like an adequate idea of Mr. Kidd's work. For, be it said, it is decidedly ingenious. But one can appreciate its value briefly.

Now, the thesis of the book is that there is "no rational sanction for progress." Mr. Kidd maintains that the interests of the social organism are opposed to the interests of the individual, and that "reason" would eliminate or take no account of the social interests; hence the necessity of "religion" to supply those sanctions for conduct which "reason" cannot supply. In other words, Mr. Kidd argues that religion is the sociological ballast which keeps the ship of humanity from toppling over. And by "religion" Mr. Kidd distinctly means unreason. He is prepared to give the title "religion," apparently, to any form of supernaturalism, from Buddhism down to the fetishism of savage tribes; thus Mormonism, according to him, is a religion, whilst Positivism is not (p. 115). So that really—if it be not disrespectful to put it so—it would appear that any kind of humbug or emotional tomfoolery possesses, in Mr. Kidd's eyes, a sociological value which a reasonable, sane system of ethics does not possess.

We hope we have conveyed as accurate an impression of Mr. Kidd's position as is possible in this brief survey. Of course the book contains much that is valuable and interesting. But many of the religious organs have hailed Mr. Kidd's book as an admirable apologetic, and have exalted its author to a position in the scientific world which it is probable he never aspired to. To these, therefore, we would address a word. And it is this: The first, the last, the only question for us to ask or discuss about religions and religious sanctions is: Are they *true?* All these "safe-side" arguments, these "hell-police-force" ideas, all this elaborate argument as to the sociological value of religion—all this is beside the question. *Are the religious sanctions true?* If they are, then we do not require your treatises as to their sociological value. If the religious sanctions be false, are we going to discuss the sociological value of a lie?

Mr. Kidd himself does not explicitly state that he accepts the religious motives as true. Possibly he does, more probably he does not. He is simply looking at their effect when believed by the masses. And he thinks that such belief is an essential condition of progress. Now, we would suggest, as our humble opinion, that Mr. Kidd is on the wrong tack altogether. We would gather that, as man has progressed so far against the forces of unreason, he would have progressed still more if he had not had to expend so much energy in fighting the forces of religion—using the word in the sense Mr. Kidd does. True, these forces of unreason were also set going by humanity—we will grant that. Humanity must be taken whole, so to say, with its weakness and its strength. But Mr. Kidd's error, it seems at least to us, is to put to the credit of the weakness what is really the outcome of the strength. The race has progressed—we both grant that. Mr. Kidd says because of religion or unreason. Nay, we say, in spite of religion, because reason has been too strong for unreason. And we claim that history is on our side and against Mr. Kidd. For, if Mr. Kidd's thesis be true, we ought to find that the greatest progress was made in the ages when religion was strongest. Do we find such to be the case? Why, it is a commonplace of even the most un-Macaulayan schoolboy that the ages of greatest "faith" were the ages of greatest ignorance and greatest degradation; that, as religion waxed stronger, civilisation grew weaker; that with the natural revival of learning came the decline of religion, thus demonstrating that reason is a stronger force than unreason; and that, given time, no matter how strong the irrational force, humanity will inevitably recover itself. And if we are better to-day than ever before, it is, we claim, because religion was never weaker than it is to-day. Much even of the knowledge on which Mr. Kidd relies in his book was acquired and spread by men who were fought bitterly by the very institution which Mr. Kidd is justifying. Of course Mr. Kidd does not write by any means as a religious hack, making out a case for his religion at the expense of sanity and truth. Primarily he is a student of the social organism, and his appreciation of the value of the religious force was probably the result of his investigations and reflections, such as they were; yet the net outcome of his book is that religion is the steadying element in society. But he has made a mistake. It may be necessary to re-examine our sociology; to test it and see if it has no weak places; but we cannot start to rebuild it on a false foundation. Truth is the keynote of all science—of all life, in fact; truth, in the long run, is the only safeguard against error and retrogression. And one might answer Mr. Kidd's proposition as to the value of unreason by adapting some eloquent and memorable words of the late Professor Clifford: "It can never be necessary for your race and for mine that, in order to progress, we must needs believe a lie: by trust in reason and in truth we have progressed so far hitherto; by trust in reason and in truth we shall never more fall back."

Perhaps we have devoted more space to *Social Evolution* than we should under the circumstances. For there is another book which has reached fame during the year—we mean Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man*, that possesses considerable interest for Freethinkers. And here, remembering Mr. Kidd's book, we may emphasise a remark made some time ago in these columns, that really it is not necessary to go to sceptics for answers to the theologians; the theologians confute one another so brilliantly that it is superfluous for an Atheist to join in the task. It cannot be said, perhaps, with fairness, that either Mr. Kidd or Professor Drummond is a theologian; but they are both certainly on the theological side—they are both religious, they are both seeking to justify the ways of God. And as one would expect, they fall out. Really at bottom Professor Drummond's book is, to a large extent, a confutation of Mr. Kidd's whole thesis. Of that we shall presently deal. But even specifically Mr. Drummond devotes several pages to slating Mr. Kidd. He says of Mr. Kidd's work (p. 70) that "as an apologetic it only accentuates a weakness which scientific theology never felt more keenly than at the present hour." Theology can only retain its vitality, it seems, by being brought "into harmony with Nature and into line with the rest of our knowledge." Oh, that "harmony"! For ages they have been at it, and creating untold discord in the process.

But Professor Drummond goes bravely to his task, and seeks to show that the whole end of things was the Evolution of "love." There is a chapter on the "Evolution of a Mother," and another on the "Evolution of a Father," and so on, through pages of very pretty, semi-ecstatic talk. But it is not science. Indeed, when we meet early in the book (p. 47) a chapter headed "Why was Evolution the Method [of Creation] Chosen?" we know what to expect. But as Mr. Drummond answers Mr. Kidd by quoting a passage from Spencer, in which it is pointed out, in a word, that the social instinct is in reality a part, and an essential part, of the individual instinct, so we can answer Mr. Drummond by Mr. Kidd. Says Professor Drummond, referring to his question above: "The answer of modern natural theology has been that the evolutionary method is the infinitely nobler scheme." Now turn we to Mr. Kidd

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and see how the "infinitely nobler scheme" works out, remarking, parenthetically, that "modern natural theology" never perceived the "infinite nobility" until science had discovered Evolution and compelled the theologians to accept it. Mr. Kidd writes: "We admire the wonderful adaptation of many of the ruminants to their mode of life, the keen scent by which they distinguish an enemy at a distance which seems remarkable to us, their wonderful power of vision, their exceeding fleetness of foot, and their graceful and beautiful forms. But the evolutionist has always before him the cost at which these qualities have been obtained. He has in mind the countless host of individuals which have fallen a prey to their enemies, or failed in other ways in the rivalry of life in the immense period during which natural selection was at work, slowly accumulating the small successful variations out of which those qualities have been evolved. It is the same with other forms of life; progress everywhere is evident, but the way is strewn with the unsuccessfuls which have fallen in the advance" (*Social Evolution*, p. 61). Thus we have produced the flower of love, in one little corner, and amongst a small portion of one race, at the cost of hatred, suffering, and death. Truly an "infinitely noble scheme."

However, like Mr. Kidd's book, Mr. Drummond's is well worth reading. And, taking its argument merely to mean that ethical conduct, love, self-sacrifice, the "struggle for the life of others," or what possibly Mr. Kidd means by social conduct, that this is as much the result of evolution as the physical structure of man, that there is nothing supernatural or irrational about it—taking Professor Drummond's argument at bottom to be this, it is justifiable, and it is an answer to Mr. Kidd. Of course, if the book be taken merely as another specimen of modern Paleyism, the-beautiful-world-in-which-everything-goes-well-and-everybody-is-in-love idea, then the thing is worthless.

We have, we fear, spent too long over these books. And we have not touched on the essentially Freethought books of the year. There is, of course, the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh* by Mrs. Bonner, just published; Mr. Putnam's *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*; Colonel Ingersoll's lecture, *About the Holy Bible*; Messrs. Wheeler and Foote's little book on *Voltaire*; *The Bottomless Pit*, by W. Stewart Ross, and many others. One can only name a few. Certainly Freethinkers have no reason to feel other than gratified at a review of the year's books. For, even outside and apart from positive avowedly Freethought books, there is the permeation of general literature by Freethought ideas, which is always going on. It is to this general widening of thought, this loosening of dogmatic bonds, this gradual rusting away of the fetters—it is to this we look with pleasure, and it is in this we see the promise of a new and freer future. FREDERICK RYAN.

Christianity and Reason.

When a man goes to a Christian church, he generally leaves his reason behind the door with his umbrella. "Were I to reason on religion as I do on science," says Faraday, "I could never be a Christian." Reason calls for knowledge, Christianity demands faith. Reason demands miracles now, if they were ever performed—Christianity demands acceptance of the wonderful past, that can never be repeated, on pain of eternal damnation. Christianity shocks our reason at every step, and the more reasonable men become the faster they outgrow it.—*William Denton.*

An Atheist on Agnosticism.

The Agnostic, while contending that it is unreasonable to deny a God, admits that it is likewise unreasonable to affirm a God, because, if consistent with reason, he, of course, would not be an Agnostic, but accept or retain the Theistic faith. He insists no evidence exists to establish such an hypothesis upon a basis of science and reason; that we have no knowledge, and can have no conception, of such a being; and, *a la* Ingersoll, successfully refutes all arguments advanced in favor of the mystic faith. Yet he says, "There may be such a being; I don't know." Is this reasonable? Just? If all the sciences fail to corroborate, no! repudiate the theory; if it mocks reason and sense, eludes the highest understanding, and baffles its own votaries, is it, can it be then, unreasonable to repudiate and deny completely such an unreasonable proposition? And if reasonable to deny it, is it not our duty to deny and proclaim the denial to all the world?—*Otto Wettstein.*

TRANSMIGRATIONS UP TO DATE.

(With Apologies to the "Vicar of Bray.")

In youth and beauty's halcyon days,
When Pusey was the fashion,
A zealous High Church maid was I—
Religion was my passion.
I went to church three times each day,
My faith no mere profession;
The comfort of my soul was then
Auricular confession.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain,
Until the day I die, sir,
That whatsoever fad may reign,
I always mean to try, sir.

But soon a change came o'er the scene—
I made a new alliance,
And criticised my former views
With all the lights of science.
The creeds of Christendom I held
Were so much foolish chatter,
And could explain the universe
In terms of force and matter.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

Malthusian doctrines once I taught,
And checks to population,
Believing them the recipe
For national salvation.
I oft debated on the theme
With eloquence seductive,
And proved by figures easy seen
The race was too productive.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

To Socialism next I turned,
With faith almost fanatic;
My views progressed until they were
Quite ultra-democratic.
Capitalists I loud denounced,
The bourgeois sleek I rated;
Carl Marx my prophet was just then,
And him I venerated.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

Next to Theosophy I went,
By H. P. B. attracted;
For Eastern thought I bravely fought
When by its foes detracted.
A chela skilled I soon became,
And caused such great sensations,
When, by white magic, I produced
Materialisations.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

In India I a Hindoo was—
For so the press reported;
While some allege, while in the States,
I was by Mormons courted.
Australia now I find my field,
And this is the result, sir—
Convinced by Antipodean priest,
I've joined the Maori cult, sir.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

If time permits, I mean to try
The faith of every nation,
And, by my varied changes, prove
The truth of transmigration.
Now, will the cloister close my life,
Or shall I still meander,
Until at last I advocate
Anarchic propaganda?

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

S. SODDY.

Boggs says the French want to get back to Egypt, because they always hope for another plague of frogs.

Dying Planter—"Ah, Sambo, I fear I'm going, and I've a long journey before me." Sambo—"Nebber mind, massa; it am all down hill."

Superintendent—"Children, this is the Rev. Dr. McSnorter, from Gowanus, who will address you a few brief remarks. Children, he has come all the way to try and save your souls from hell. You are not paying attention. Now, can any little boy or girl tell me where this gentleman is from?" Chorus of children—"From Hell."

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THE SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT.

THE *English Mechanic* for January opens with an article entitled "A New Branch of Science," in which it deals with what is called psycho-physiology. The purport of the article is to show that mental forces are as measurable as physical ones, and that all phenomena, from the highest to the lowest, are to be interpreted in terms of matter and motion. We quote the following passage as significant of the scientific standpoint of the writer:—

"To the evolutionist, as has been so frequently said, matter and motion are eternal. There is no creation or destruction, but only transformation of both. Holding this belief, which, despite the Marquis of Salisbury in his recent address to the British Association at Oxford, and despite the half-timorous jubilation with which that address was received by a good many journals, is an exceedingly well-founded one, the evolutionist is logically driven to the further belief that all phenomena are ultimately reducible to this—some form or forms of matter undergoing some form of motion. To him there appears to be no other rational explanation of things as they are. But '*all* phenomena' include mental phenomena, include the so-called psychical phenomena. Hence we are led to believe that, with advancing human knowledge, mental phenomena, the phenomena of sensation, of the so-called will, of intellect—memory, reason, judgment, abstraction, imagination—in a word, the phenomena of the whole of our consciousness, objective and subjective alike, will be shown to be connected with the matter and the modes of motion of our nervous system—of our brains, with their infinite divisions and complexities, our spinal cords, our nerves."

Further on it says: "Let us once again remind the reader that a law of nature means simply an accurate scientific generalisation, a statement of some large principle induced from observation and experiment, and connecting and explaining a certain series of facts. It does not imply—nay, indeed, it rigidly excludes—the anthropomorphic conception of a lawgiver."

Christianity and Atheism.

In my arguments with Christians I always find that they do not understand Atheism; they seem to look upon it as something inferior to Christianity. I think I am right in saying that most, if not, all Atheists have been Christians, and have given up their creed for something higher and nobler. Most people, when they arrive at Christianity, prefer to stay there. They find a kind of rest for their minds, and do not trouble to rise any higher. Atheism is like all great things, it must be earned. The power of thought, and of reason, must be cultivated, till at last the Christian, having learned to live a fairly good life through being a true Christian, finds himself fitted for a higher natural life, free from the chains of superstition, and can look back upon Christianity, as upon all other religions, and feel that he has passed through that stage when he thought he knew that which he now knows he did not, and finds himself face to face with nature, and does his best to read her, instead of taking other people's imagination for his knowledge. Atheists are not born, they are made. It is easy for an unthinking man to become a Christian, but it is not so easy to be an Atheist. The intellectual, thinking Christian is moving onward towards Atheism.—*W. G. T.*

Priests.

I can find no evidence that seriously militates against the rule that the priest is at all times, and in all places, the enemy of all men—*Sacerdos semper, ubique, et omnibus inimicus.* I do not deny that the priest is very often a most earnest and conscientious man, doing the very best that he knows of as well as he can do it. Lord Amberley is quite right in saying that the blame rests more with the laity than with the priesthood; that it has insisted on magic and mysteries, and has forced the priesthood to produce them. But, then, how dreadful is the system that puts good men to such uses! . . . . If there is one lesson which history forces upon us in every page, it is this: keep your children away from the priest, or he will make them the enemies of mankind.—*W. K. Clifford.*

Our fathers did not quite love God, nor quite hate the Devil; but they were afraid of both. They really wished to enjoy themselves with God in the next world, and with the Devil in this. They believed that the course of Nature was affected by their conduct; that floods and storms, diseases, earthquakes, and tempests, were sent as punishments, and that all good phenomena were rewards.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

A GOD OF LOVE?

O CHRISTIAN, say, is *he* a God of Love,
Whose Bible reeks with war and blood,
Who drowned his children in the flood,
Who hurled down furious fire from heaven above?
A meek, mild God, the essence of sweet love.

Some men once ventured near his awful ark,
Then fiendishly he made them die
A fearful death of misery;
Behold, their bodies lying slain and stark!
I hear wild cries for mercy still; oh, hark!

That Satire throned in heaven, that peaceful dove,
Your dear God, slew in vengeance, then,
Full *fifty thousand* other men.
I think, dear Christian souls, if this is love,
God's love must sure make Hell of Heaven above.

And yet to-day each Christian praises him,
Whose bloody deeds are wide extolled
In Lunacy's wide Christian fold.
All honest eyes with sorrow's tears are dim;
Your God of Love is but a murderer grim.

J. J. BARRETT.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THEOSOPHY AND CREDULITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue for December 23 you quote from the *Weekly Times and Echo* a paragraph which says that the recent "exposure" of Theosophy shows the limits to which human credulity can be carried. I wish to point out that the human credulity of the British public seems to have been carried to the extent of enabling it to swallow anything, however unsupported, so long as it is a calumnious attack on some prominent person. Many of us know this from our own bitter experience. The *Westminster Gazette* writer knew that what the public wanted was abuse—not truth. Theosophists will hold all parties concerned to be innocent until they are proved guilty.—Yours, etc.,

H. T. EDGE.

[This is a characteristic epistle. The *Westminster Gazette* writer made detailed charges. To call such charges "abuse" is an abuse of the English language. Let the Theosophists answer if they can. If they cannot, they will not impose on sensible people by assuming virtuous airs.—EDITOR.]

PROFANE JOKES.

"Where do the wicked finally go?" was asked at a Sunday school. An observant youth replied: "They practise law, and then become judges or members of Parliament."

Pruyn—"Then you do not approve of the Universalist doctrine?" Mrs. De Piscopal—"Oh, I have nothing to say of their orthodoxy, but I'm sure they're not sufficiently exclusive!"

Visiting Clergyman—"And did your faith bring you to this?" Salvation Army Bill (serving his third term for disorderly conduct and drunkenness)—"No, not my faith, but my convictions!"

M. High (to St. Peter)—"I see they are drawing the lines pretty tight on the earth just now. You will please revise the conditions of admission accordingly, and cast out all who do not come up to the new requirements." St. P.—"It shall be so." (Thirty years later.) St. P.—"Who comes?" (A voice.)—"Bob Ingersoll." St. P.—"Come right in. You always meant well enough." (A few minutes later.) St. P.—"What! going so soon?" R. G. I.—"Yes; too lonesome. Nobody here but God and Dr. Talmage."

The Rev. J. Colquhoun, of Leight, was a man of extreme solemnity of demeanor. On one sacrament Sunday morning his wife, being desirous to have him nicely out for the occasion, had his coat rigged, well brushed, his shirt white as snow, and his bands hanging handsomely on his breast; and when she surveyed her gude man she was so delighted with his comely appearance that she suddenly took him around the neck and kissed him. Thereupon the Rev. John was so offended by this carnal proceeding that he debarred his wife from the sacrament that day.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, G. W. Foote, "Social Equality: Will it Ever be Realised?" (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, "The Freethought Outlook in 1895." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "A Night with George Meredith."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7, members' quarterly meeting—important business. Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 4, members' meeting; 6, tea; 7, soirée. (Tickets 1s.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, J. H. Hobson, "The Waste of Labor Power."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam will lecture (weather permitting).

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, St. John will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BATH (Corridor Rooms): 11, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible"; 3, "Christianity and Social Life"; 7, "The Church and Science."

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BLACKBURN (Secretary's house): 3, members' meeting.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 3, business meeting.

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, discussion class; 12, elocution class; 12.30, choir practice; 1, shorthand class; 2.30, R. Cameron, "Our Father in Heaven"; 6.30, secular concert. Friday, Jan. 4, at 7.30, annual festival.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): Saturday, Jan. 5, New Year's Party—tea, followed by drama, "Loah the Forsaken."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class—D. Lindsay, "Public Affairs"; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Natural History of Christianity."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, members' annual meeting.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 3, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "Kant"; 7, Ernest Newman, "Christianity a Failure."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rosholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, R. Law, F.G.S., "The Earth as it was Eight Million Years Ago." (Free.)

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East): 7, R. Weightman, "Christianity and Secularism—a Moral Contrast."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 6.45, Mr. Chubb, "Is there a God?"—affirmative.

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 11, discussion class; 2.30, Sunday-school; 3, Sam Standring "Jesus the Wine-Maker"; 6.30, "What do we Mean by A.D. 1895?" 8.30, Branch meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, limelight exhibition—see Saturday's local papers.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 7, "Freethought and Morals."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite Echo office): 7, Robert Weightman will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Jan. 6, Bath; 13, Plymouth; 20, Chatham. Feb. 3, Edinburgh; 10, Dundee.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Jan. 6, Leicester. Feb. 3, New Brompton.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRECEPT AND PRACTICE.

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth."

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.—II.

Charles Bradlaugh: A Record of his Life and Work. By his Daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner. With an Account of his Parliamentary Struggle, Politics, and Teachings, by John M. Robertson. (London: T. Fisher Unwin.) 2 vols.: 21s.

BRADLAUGH AT HOME.

MRS. BONNER gives a very pleasant picture of her father's home-life, his considerateness for his wife, his tenderness to his children, his hospitality to his friends. Many refugees from France sought his counsel and assistance, and some of them taught his daughters French. Mrs. Bonner writes as follows of his treatment of herself and her sister:—

> "Never during the whole of our childhood did my father once raise his hand against us, never once did he speak a harsh word. We *were* whipped, for my mother held the old-fashioned, mistaken notion that to 'spare the rod' was to 'spoil the child;' but when scolding or whipping failed to bring obedience, the culprit was taken to that little study; there a grave look and a grave word brought instant submission. But it seldom went beyond the threat of being taken there, for we loved him so that we could not bear him even to know when we were naughty.'

TWO DEAD ONES.

Bradlaugh's elder daughter, Alice, whose portrait is given in this book, was a robust figure in the days of her young maidenhood. In later years her health seemed to fail, perhaps through over-study. An attack of typhoid fever carried her off, early in December, 1888. Her body, as she wished, would have been cremated, but the Woking Crematorium happened to be closed at the time, and she was buried at Brookwood. The sudden and fatal termination of her illness, Mrs. Bonner says, was "a great shock" to Bradlaugh. He went down to the House of Commons to attend to his duties, but he could not bear the condolences of his colleagues. Alice Bradlaugh, as Mr. Robertson says, was "her father's daughter in her high spirit, in her generosity, in her energy, and in the thoroughness of her work." All who knew her will echo this encomium.

Bradlaugh's only son died at the early age of eleven. We recollect seeing him at the London Hall of Science. His father was obviously proud of him, as well he might be, for the lad was remarkably bright and intelligent. Mrs. Bonner relates the circumstances of his untimely death, and gives a terribly pathetic picture of the stricken father's mastery of his grief:—

> "In June my brother was taken ill with a mild attack of scarlatina, of which we knew nothing until he came

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home to us for his holidays on the 20th of the month. Due precautions had been neglected, and almost immediately after he reached us kidney disease began to manifest itself. From this he died on July 15, and he was buried exactly a month from the day on which he came home. The shock of his death was terrible to all of us, and not least so to my father. Although barely eleven years old at his death, Charlie was a lad full of promise, quick to learn and to comprehend, amiable, honorable, and generous; and of these traits I can recall many little instances. I have a photograph of him taken at the age of seven or eight, and as I look at it I see his eyes gaze out from under his square brow with a wonderfully clear and fearless look.

"He was buried on July 20 in Cocking Churchyard, my grandfather's cottage at Cocking Causeway (Midhurst) being in the parish of Cocking. Of course, we had to submit to the Church of England service, for it was before the Burials Act was passed; but the Rev. Drummond Ash was a kindly, courteous gentleman, and he made things as easy as the circumstances would allow. The burial would have taken place at the Brookwood Necropolis had my father been able to afford the expense. As he was not, Charlie was laid perforce in consecrated ground at the foot of the South Down Hills with Christian rites and ceremonies."

"The telegram bearing the totally unexpected summons to my father to hasten to see his son for the last time was handed to him on the platform at Bury just as he was about to deliver a lecture. I have been told that when he read the words he turned deathly pale; but, with that self-control which never failed him in adversity, he rose, and, with the least perceptible hesitation, commenced and went through with his lecture. On Tuesday night he received his summons; on Wednesday he was with us, though only to leave again by the early train on Thursday morning. On Friday the boy died, and on that same day and the next my father had to be in the law-courts as witness in a case relating to the Naples Color Company. His grief for the loss of his son was intense, but he shut it up in his heart, and rarely afterwards mentioned the name of his boy, of whom he had been so proud."

Bradlaugh's paternal feelings were stronger than most men's, but he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve. How many who knew him only after this first bereavement, as they looked at his stalwart figure and saw the splendid life in his face, ever imagined that the strong man's heart had a mausolean chamber, only unlocked, perhaps, in darkness and solitude, when—

> midnight makes
> Her giant heart of memory and tears
> Drink the pale drug of silence.

French Friends.

Bradlaugh had many French friends, and he frequently visited Paris. He met Gambetta, but there seemed to be a coldness between them, for what reason we could never discover. Madame de Brimont introduced herself to Bradlaugh during the war in 1870, her object being to solicit his aid in stirring up English feeling in favor of France. She brought funds for the agitation here. Of course Bradlaugh did not need much solicitation, as his sympathies were with France, and he hailed with delight the proclamation of the French Republic. Mrs. Bonner writes as follows about the Countess:—

> "The acquaintance between Madame de Brimont and Mr. Bradlaugh, commencing in her visit to his lodgings on September 17, 1870, ripened into a friendship which lasted for the rest of my father's life. From that September day these two never ceased to be friends; through good report and ill report Madame de Brimont stood by him. While my father lay upon what proved to be his deathbed I received a letter from her in which, writing in French, she sent him a message from *sa meilleure amie*, 'and that,' she said, 'I think I may claim to be, for during the twenty years I have known him I have never once swerved in my friendship for him—no, not for a single moment.' My father, very weak and ill, was deeply moved when I read the letter to him. 'It is true,' he said brokenly, 'it is true.'"

Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Bonner devotes a whole chapter to Mrs. Besant. Soon after the death of Austin Holyoake, to whom Bradlaugh's daughter pays a just tribute of praise, Mrs. Besant made her advent in the Freethought party. "Having enrolled herself a member of the National Secular Society, in August, 1874," Mrs. Bonner writes, "Mrs. Besant sought Mr. Bradlaugh's acquaintance. They were mutually attracted; and a friendship sprang up between them of so close a nature that had both been free it would undoubtedly have ended in marriage." Mrs. Bradlaugh was still living, and Mrs. Besant was only separated (not divorced) from her husband. Mrs. Bonner speaks in the highest terms of Mrs. Besant's eloquence and industry. "Though not an original thinker," it is added, "she had a really wonderful power of absorbing the thoughts of others, of blending them, and of transmuting them into glowing language." This is substantially what Mr. W. P. Ball incurred so much odium for saying when he reviewed Mrs. Besant's earliest writings on Socialism. Using a very forcible, and as Mrs. Besant thought a very impolite expression, he declared that her mind was like a milk-jug; what was poured out of it was first poured into it. Mrs. Besant herself admits that, for some time before his death, Bradlaugh had lost all confidence in her judgment. The only wonder is that he ever had any. She drifted away from him as she had drifted towards him; and, despite all their old closeness of association, Bradlaugh "first learnt of Mrs. Besant's adhesion to the Theosophical Society through an article written by her in a weekly paper, and not from her own lips." He had counted upon her constant alliance, and he was bitterly disappointed. Mr. Robertson confesses that "the new and deep division of opinion undoubtedly pained and depressed him. He was to find, as so many have found, that when success comes something is sure to go which leaves success a different thing from what was dreamt of." Mrs. Besant's defection was clearly one of the burdens that weighed Bradlaugh down to the grave. Yet it was all so natural that it should not have caused surprise. Mrs. Besant is a born disciple, and when Bradlaugh became more and more absorbed in his parliamentary duties she fell under other influences, and the "thought" of thirteen years rapidly changed amidst a new personal environment.

Bradlaugh's Activity.

Mrs. Bonner's superabundance of detail has at least one advantage; it affords a clear idea of Bradlaugh's wonderful activity. Our difficulty is to know where to select an illustration. Here is one at a venture. Bradlaugh, who was then (1866) lecturing as "Iconoclast," rushed over to Bedlington to oppose David King, the champion "infidel-slayer" of that time; and this is what followed the encounter:—

> "After the discussion came the return drive of twelve or fourteen miles in the cold and the rain to Newcastle, which was reached at two in the morning. While my father snatched a couple of hours' sleep, some of his friends sat and watched in order to rouse him for the Scotch express, which passed through Newcastle about five o'clock. Arrived at Edinburgh, my father found he had twenty minutes to wait, so he thought he would get some breakfast, but 'alas!' said he, 'it was Sunday morning, and starvation takes precedence of damnation in the *wee guid* city. Instead of drinking hot coffee, I had to shiver in the cold, admiring the backs of the tumble-down-looking houses in the high "toon" for want of better occupation. I arrived in Glasgow just one hour before the time fixed for the morning lecture—dirty, weary, hungry, thirsty, and sleepy.'
>
> "After the evening lecture Mr. Bradlaugh had to hurry from the platform of the Eclectic Hall to catch the train which steamed out of Glasgow at twenty minutes to nine, so that he might be in time for Monday morning's business in the city, having spent two nights out of bed, travelled about 900 miles, and spoken at Bedlington and three times in Glasgow in less than forty-eight hours."

No wonder that when Bradlaugh was near death he told the doctors that he had lived the lives of three men, having burnt the candle at both ends and also in the middle—though that, by the way, is an un-Bradlaugh-like Hibernicism.

Father Ignatius.

Freethinkers of the younger generation will probably be astonished to learn that Bradlaugh once debated at the London Hall of Science with Father Ignatius. This monk of the Church of England is honest according to his lights. He denounces the "Higher Critics" as sceptics who eat the Church's bread. On the other hand, he has no ill words for the sceptics who honestly avow their unbelief and occupy their proper position. Father Ignatius debated with Bradlaugh, and always respected his integrity:—

> "In the summer of 1872 Father Ignatius wrote to Mr. Bradlaugh, asking that an opportunity might be given

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him to address an audience of London Freethinkers. This request was readily acceded to; but, in consequence of other work and ill-health, Father Ignatius was obliged to delay the delivery of this address until the end of November. The Hall of Science, which was put at his disposal, was crowded right out to the street, and it was estimated that at least two thousand persons were unable to gain admittance. Mr. Austin Holyoake presided over what was really an informal debate. Father Ignatius elected to speak on 'Jesus Christ, the Central Point of Human History,' and when he had finished Mr. Bradlaugh spoke for an equal time in reply. The audience, densely crowded as it was, listened intently and earnestly, and the perfect stillness maintained during both speeches was broken only by applause. Not a sound of dissent was heard; each speaker was listened to with respect and attention. At the conclusion Father Ignatius was thanked by the Freethinkers for the fearlessness and the courtesy with which he had spoken, and the audience were thanked by the Rev. Father for the fairness with which they had listened to him. He said 'he would be happy if his Protestant fellow-Christians would receive him with equal fairness.'"

"As he desired to reply to Mr. Bradlaugh's speech, Father Ignatius fixed to go again to the Hall of Science on December 12; but when the day arrived there was some doubt whether he could get there, as he had been subpœnaed to Worcester as a witness. In consequence of this the attendance was not quite so overwhelming as before. When Father Ignatius entered the Hall he was welcomed with much cheering, which was cordially renewed when he rose to speak. Before entering upon his subject, he said that he had received permission from Mr. Bradlaugh and the Chairman (Mr. Austin Holyoake) to ask God to aid him that night; but even with that permission he would not do so, for he had no wish to hurt anyone's susceptibilities, unless the meeting also gave its sanction. Those present having signified their assent by a show of hands, Father Ignatius, 'in an impassioned prayer, sought the assistance of God to render his address effectual.' Then proceeding to the business of the evening, he deftly—if not very convincingly—explained away the objections which had been urged by Mr. Bradlaugh to certain Biblical passages. As before, he was followed by Mr. Bradlaugh, and both apparently spoke with great force. In the spring of 1873 there was held a third of these informal controversies. On every occasion a charge was made for admission, and the proceeds given, by Father Ignatius' desire, to the Hall of Science building fund. His frankness, fearlessness, and courtesy made an indelible impression upon the minds of the frequenters of the Hall. To Mr. Bradlaugh he always wrote in terms of the greatest cordiality, and, although the differences between them were of the widest possible kind, I am quite sure that my father was sensible of this kindly feeling and reciprocated it."

The National Secular Society.

A special chapter is devoted to the National Secular Society, which Bradlaugh founded, and the presidency of which he held, except for one slight interval, till within twelve months of his death. With regard to his resignation of this office, Mrs. Bonner writes:—

> "To be a real President of the National Secular Society involved the performance of a vast amount of labor, the greater part of which was unrecognised and unseen. This he felt had become beyond his powers; it was not in him to bear the name and let others do the work; in giving up the duties of his position he must also give up the honors. Only those who knew the pride he always felt in holding this office of President of the associated Freethinkers of the nation knew the pain it cost him to lay that office down."

The present writer knows the truth of the first sentence, and he is profoundly convinced of the truth of the second part of the paragraph. Mrs. Bonner relates how her father first intimated his determination to resign the presidency. He was lying in his bed in his study, and, after being very quiet for some time, he startled her by suddenly saying that he would send in his resignation. She tried to argue the matter with him, but his mind was made up; however, he promised to make a statement that should leave no one in doubt as to his opinions. Those who heard that statement when he did resign, on his return from India, will remember it while life endures.

Mrs. Bonner's Last Chapter.

Mrs. Bonner's last chapter of her father's biography is inexpressibly touching. It is written with beautiful simplicity; a daughter's deathless love shines purely through every page. Some parts are too sacred for criticism; one feels in reading them that he is viewing the veiled things of life. The only proper attitude before them is silent reverence.

How well do we recollect that foggy November night when Bradlaugh delivered his last lecture. We took the chair on that occasion. Bradlaugh was obviously ill, and should have been in bed; but he would lecture, as the proceeds were to go to the testimonial which was being raised for Mr. Robert Forder, the secretary of the National Secular Society. He criticised "The Evidence for the Gospels," with special reference to Dr. Watkins's Bampton Lectures. His platform career began and ended with the advocacy of Freethought.

Bradlaugh's Atheism.

Many quotations are given by Mrs. Bonner from early and late speeches of her father, showing the consistency of his attitude as an Atheist. Over and over again he said that he would be a fool to make the unqualified assertion, "There is no god"—which involves the pretension of infinite knowledge. He asked for a definition of "god" before he would discuss; on hearing which he would not hesitate to say "Yes" or "No" as to the existence of such a being. Bradlaugh declared, to begin with, that he knew of no definition of God which was not self-contradictory. He called himself an Atheist and objected to "Agnostic," for reasons which Mr. Robertson sets forth with power and precision. And it was a distinction that Bradlaugh was honest to his fellow-men as he was to his own intelligence. Mr. Robertson does not (he could not) praise too highly the "energy and persistence with which he sought to bring his philosophy home to the popular mind." Mr. Robertson bravely vindicates Bradlaugh's followers from the charges of "vulgarity and illiteracy," and remarks that most of those who prefer this charge are not Atheists "for economical reasons." "Bradlaugh's artisan followers," he maintains, "have for the most part been the pick of their class for intelligence and energy." A further service to Bradlaugh's memory is done by Mr. Robertson in giving excellent passages from his writings and debates, showing that while his blows were heavy they were always delivered according to the exactest rules of combat. Bradlaugh always tried to answer what his opponent had really said, though the fairness was not often reciprocated. But then he understood his opponents, who were often incapable of understanding him.

Social Heresy.

Forcibly enough, though with prolixity, does Mr. Robertson defend Bradlaugh from the absurd charge of "Free Love." His Christian enemies dishonestly tried to make out that he endorsed all the opinions of the *Elements of Social Science*, although he had written that "it contains some points of ethics from which I expressly and strongly dissent." Mr. Robertson points out that "his own sad experience never made him decry marriage." The sexual freedom he wished to see was the freedom of legal divorce. No one, indeed, was less likely than Bradlaugh to subscribe to the doctrine that men and women should come together and part with the "freedom" of animals. He was too chivalrous to women, and too tender to children, to feel anything but horror at the thought of plunging them back into the old slough of degradation and misery. It may be that he never read Milton. We do not know. But we are sure that he was of a nature to feel the force of that terrible phrase, "Lust hard by Hate."

Bradlaugh was a convinced and earnest Malthusian, and Mr. Cotter Morison thought the fact a great distinction. "Mr. Bradlaugh," he wrote, in the Preface to *The Service of Man*, "with a courage which will no doubt be acknowledged after his death and when the fight is won, has borne the penalty of appearing as a champion of common sense and human well-being." Mr. John Morley may feel the same thing, but he has never spoken so bravely. It was not Bradlaugh's way to shirk danger or to hide the truth. He labored for his convictions, though he had to bear a tremendous penalty. There can be little doubt that his Malthusianism, perhaps more than his Atheism, brought upon him that long struggle with the House of Commons, from which he emerged victorious, but so broken in body that all that was left him was to die amidst a chorus of plaudits, including the voices of his murderers.

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The Great Struggle.

Mr. Robertson's long history of "The Parliamentary Struggle," as we have already said, is a very valuable piece of work. Step by step he follows Bradlaugh in this great contest, and shows that he was the one man in the turmoil who knew his own mind and acted with unswerving consistency. There is a good description of the ejectment of Bradlaugh from the House of Commons, though some dramatic points are missed. That was the acme of the excitement, but it seems to us that the psychological climax was when Bradlaugh made his third speech at the Bar of the House. "If I am not fit for my constituents," he ended, "they shall dismiss me, but you never shall. The grave alone shall make me yield." The language was characteristic of the man. Words so simple, direct, and pregnant had not been used in politics since the days of the great Rebellion. They remind us of Cromwell's "Cease your fooling, sir, and come down," and "Take away that bauble."

It was a difficult task to follow Bradlaugh through all the litigation of this struggle, but Mr. Robertson has achieved it with eminent success. Here and there a point is missed, which is natural on the part of one who was not an eyewitness of the proceedings. Mr. Robertson does not notice an important fact which we drew attention to in our account of the "blasphemy" prosecution. Bradlaugh could not induce Justices Field and Stephen to quash his indictment, but they agreed to strike out two counts, which covered numbers of the *Freethinker* that were to him the most serious, and for which he could not be proceeded against again in consequence of the six months' limitation. We might also take exception to stray sentences about the *Freethinker*, but it is hardly worth while, as "taste" is proverbially a barren theme for discussion.

Mr. Robertson compares Bradlaugh with Wilkes, to the advantage of the former. Both fought for English freedom, but Bradlaugh was stainless and Wilkes was corrupt, though he had, as Mr. Robertson says, the "merit of geniality."

"Closing years" is the title of Mr. Robertson's final chapter, giving a succinct account of Bradlaugh's parliamentary work and various debates, especially on Socialism. The "Conclusion" is an eloquent panegyric. Mr. Robertson remarks that, beside the common run of reformers, Bradlaugh "stands out as one of larger mould and greater fibre, a battling and conquering Titan, sure of the sympathetic retrospect of happier days." "His sagacity never ceased to be heroic, and his commanding powers rested on a character more commanding still." "The bronze bust on his tomb," he concludes, "recalling as it does the high front and the unflinching eye which his friends loved to associate with him, and seeming as it does to face fate with an immovable strength and firmness, will for many a year say to passers-by what has been sought to be told in these pages, 'This was a man.'"

G. W. FOOTE.

BRUTAL ATHEISTS.

"Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist.

"And, were I not a Christian, and that only in the sense in which I am a Christian, I should be an Atheist with Spinoza; rejecting all in which I found insuperable difficulties, and resting my only hope in the gradual, and certain because gradual, progression of the species."—*Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge," by Thomas Allsop, p. 47.*

We all know the ideal Atheist of fiction. He is usually a low-browed, ugly wretch, devoid of sense, sensibility, conscience, or compunction, a sort of Iago and Caliban rolled into one. Gillespie said the Atheist was a monster created by nature in a moment of madness. The good and pious Dr. Hall declared Atheism a "base, bloody, and ferocious system"; and even the genial Professor Stuart Blackie calls it "an abnormal disease." To Atheists themselves such descriptions seem supremely ridiculous. It is not surprising that misconceptions of Atheists and of Atheism abound. In the past, religion was so bound up with the social order that anyone who questioned it was felt as an alien, possibly a dangerous traitor to the interests of the commonweal. Ancient gods being tribal chiefs, their acceptance was a condition of tribal unity, their rejection a sign of antagonism to the tribe. Every Jew was bound to kill "the wife of thy bosom or thy friend which is as thy own soul," if they enticed to the worship of other gods (Dent. xiii.). Though, as Bacon notices, "Atheism did never perturb States," the denial of the gods of one's country was, in former times, considered equivalent to treason.

An interested class maintain the notion when without any shadow of justification. The enemies of their order and their beliefs, they easily persuade themselves, are enemies of God, and, of course, enemies of man. Nothing is too vile to say of an Atheist. Even those destitute of faith, but afraid of scepticism, draw the line at Atheism. You may safely call yourself Agnostic or Positivist; but, if you say you are an Atheist, you have made it clear you reject the core of supernaturalism upon which all superstitions depend, and you have thus committed the mysterious sin that hath never forgiveness, neither in this world nor in that which is to come. "Admit a God—all other mysteries cease," said the poet Young; and if you refuse to admit this primal mystery, you may well be considered hopeless for the reception of any other.

I have made it my business to study the lives of some Atheists, and I have never been able to discover the brutal Atheists of whom I have read in fictions and sermons. Courage and tenderness, I should say, were their prominent characteristics. Shelley, whose voice was ever raised against the privileged and in favor of the oppressed; who, when the British code of law was written in blood, protested against capital punishment, and who lived on bread and raisins that he might be no party to the butchering of animals, was a brutal Atheist. Bentham, the soul of benevolence, whose life-long efforts were directed to the amelioration of the law, and the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, was another. Clifford, whose every pulse throbbed with the enthusiasm of humanity, and who was beloved by the whole circle of his friends and pupils, another. Harriet Martineau, who, deprived of hearing, smell, and taste, used all her faculties in the pursuit of truth, and spent her life in enlightening and elevating her fellows, acting as a pioneer of woman's emancipation, became another. And even before she herself embraced Atheism, she gave this testimony that the best state of mind was to be found, however it might be accounted for, in those who were called philosophical Atheists. "I know several of that class," she wrote, "some avowed, and some not; and I had for several years felt that they were among my most honored acquaintances and friends; and now that I know them more deeply and thoroughly, I must say that, for conscientiousness, sincerity, integrity, seriousness, effective intellect, and the true religious spirit, I knew nothing like them."

Very similar was the testimony of the late Professor Tyndall, while himself disclaiming the appellation of Atheist. In the *Fortnightly Review* of November, 1877, he wrote:—

"If I wished to find men who are scrupulous in their adherence to engagements, whose words are their bond, and to whom moral shiftiness of any kind is subjectively unknown; if I wanted a loving father, a faithful husband, an honorable neighbor and a just citizen, I would seek him among the band of Atheists to which I refer. I have known some of the most pronounced amongst them, not only in life, but in death—seen them approaching with open eyes the inexorable goal, with no dread of a 'hangman's whip,' with no hope of a heavenly crown, and still as mindful of their duties, and as faithful in the discharge of them, as if their eternal future depended upon their latest deeds."

I have personally met Mr. H. G. Atkinson, who had so much influence over Miss Martineau, and I found him in the best sense of the term "a perfect gentleman"—a phrase always recalling another dead Atheist friend, the late Mr. W. J. Birch, author of *The Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*, who was saint-like in generosity and in gentleness.

It has been my good fortune to know a great many Atheists of several nationalities, a few famous ones, others well known, and many unknown outside their narrow circle. I have met Atheists of all kinds—the jolly Atheist, the pessimistic Atheist, the impulsive Atheist, the cool, calculating Atheist, the genial Atheist, the cynical Atheist;

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but the brutal Atheist I have never met. Mr. Bradlaugh, who, finding every man's hand against him, was "ever a fighter," taking keen delight in the blows he gave his adversaries, was considered so by those who felt his lash. Yet he was as sensitive as a child, and melted in a moment at any story of suffering or wrong. He could so powerfully raise feeling because he deeply felt.

Another Atheist I had the honor of knowing, intimately in her later years, was the brave opponent to slavery, Ernestine Louise Rose. She was as large-hearted and as tender as she was brave, delighting in relieving want, and, above all, in ministering to the happiness of children. It was in no spirit of boast, but in absolute truth she said, in her *Defence of Atheism:* "Though I cannot believe in your God, whom you have failed to demonstrate, I believe in man. If I have no faith in your religion, I have faith, unbounded, unshaken faith, in the principles of right, of justice, and humanity. Whatever good you are willing to do for the sake of your God, I am full as willing to do for the sake of man."

I have known Atheists to whom their Atheism has been as the mainspring of their humanity. When they have given up the vain service of a God who cannot need their worship, they have first fully realised the need of serving man. The conviction that there was no supernatural eye to pity, no superhuman arm to save, has intensified their desire to be somewhat of a human providence to those around them. When they resigned the vain hope of personal immortality, they have the more clearly seen that what of good there is to be done must be done here and now; they have more strongly felt the call to work while it is day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.

So generally have I found Atheists large-hearted, as well as clear-headed, that whenever I find a man or a woman bold enough to say "I am an Atheist" I feel pretty confident there is a character as tender as courageous. Such is my testimony. Let it be taken for what it is worth. If, at any time, an omnipotent deity were pleased to illumine me with a demonstration of his, her, or its existence, I should wish it to stand. Indeed, were I a Theist, I should be constrained to change the tactic of polemic against Atheism. I should then, perhaps, suggest that the Atheist, instead of being callous, rather suffered from over-sensitiveness, and that it was his too tender feeling which prevented him from seeing that God, acting by general laws, now using fire to warm the frozen and anon to burn the helpless, was nevertheless acting for the best. If creed be any test of callousness, surely the hard-hearted must be those who hold that in a world such as this, where misery abounds, where the welfare of the few is based on the destitution of the many, and where accident, sickness, and death may at any moment cast a blight on love, all is under the personal rule and supervision of an omnipotent Creator.

J. M. WHEELER.

WAS CHRIST A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORMER?

ALTHOUGH Thomas Carlyle has said that "in these days it is professed that hero-worship has gone out and finally ceased," thousands of the professed followers of Christ idolise his memory to such an extent that they appear to be entirely oblivious of any defect either in his character or in his teachings. They regard their hero as having been the very embodiment of truth, virtue, and perfection; and those persons who are compelled to doubt the correctness of these assumptions are regarded by orthodox believers as most unreasonable and perverse members of society. Probably the principal cause why such erroneous and extravagant notions are entertained of one who, according to the New Testament, was very little, if at all, superior to other religious heroes can be accounted for by the fact that the worshippers of Christ were taught in their childhood to reverence him as an absolutely perfect character, and as being beyond criticism. Thus youthful impressions resulted in fancied creations which, in matured life, have been accepted as realities. The Rev. James Cranbrook recognised this truth, for in the preface to his work, *The Founders of Christianity* (page 5), he observes: "Our own idealisations have invested him (Jesus) with a halo of spiritual glory, that by the intensity of its brightness conceals from us the real figure presented in the Gospels. We see him, not as he is described, but as the ideally perfect man our own fancies have conceived. But let any one sit down and critically analyse the sayings and doings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels—let him divest his mind of the superstitious fear of irreverence, and then ask himself whether all those sayings and doings are in harmony with the highest wisdom speaking for all ages and races of mankind, and with the conceptions of an absolutely perfect human nature, and I am mistaken if he will not find a very great deal he will be forced to condemn."

Even the sons of Labor, the apostles of Democracy, and the advocates of Socialism appear disposed to adopt Jesus as their Patron Saint. Conjectures are being constantly made by professed modern reformers as to what the Carpenter of Nazareth would say upon the many political and social questions that agitate the public mind in this the latter half of the nineteenth century. These hero-worshippers seem to overlook the apathy of Jesus in respect to the evils of his own time. Of course, it is not difficult for an impartial observer to learn why the name of Christ is invoked to support the various schemes that are now put forward to aid the regeneration of society.

However little Christianity is practised among us, it is extensively professed, and it is thought by many a virtue to assume a belief, whether there are sufficient grounds for doing so or not. This slavish adherence to fashion is an undignified prostration of mental freedom and independence, and it is also a fruitful source of the perpetuation of error. My purpose in examining the claims set up for Jesus as a political and social reformer is to ascertain if the records of his life, doings, and teachings justify such claims. If Jesus were judged as an ordinary man, living nearly two thousand years ago, my present task would be unnecessary. If we assume that such a man once lived, and that what he said and did is accurately reported, he should, in my opinion, be considered as a youth possessing but limited education, surrounded by unfavorable influences for intellectual acquirements, belonging to a race not very remarkable for literary culture, retaining many of the failings of his progenitors, and having but little regard for the world or the things of the world. Viewed under these circumstances, I could, while excusing many of his errors, recognise and admire something that is praiseworthy in the life of "Jesus of Nazareth." But when he is raised upon a pinnacle of greatness, as an exemplar of virtue and wisdom, surpassing the production of any age or country, he is then exalted to a position which he does not merit, and which, to my mind, deprives him of that credit which otherwise he would, perhaps, be entitled to.

The contentions which it is my purpose to dispute are: that Jesus was a political and social reformer, and that his alleged teachings contain the remedies for the wrongs of modern society. Before directly dealing with these points it may be necessary to glance at the various aspects of reform that have, at different times in our national history, been presented to the community; also to briefly consider the nature of the required reforms, and some of the principal methods that have been adopted to secure them.

In quite primitive ages important struggles took place to establish greater equality in the conditions of life. In the time of Moses, according to the Bible, the land, for instance, was not merely the subject of "tracts for the times," but the laws and regulations relating to it were practically dealt with. It did not, however, cease to be *property*, and its *inheritance* was recognised as a rightful thing. The stock-in-trade of many modern reformers is the denunciation of those who "add house to house, field to field, and grind the faces of the poor." If this condemnation is one of the many features of Socialism, then Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel may, in this particular, be fairly termed Socialists—a name foreign to their language and to the ideas of their day.

The contention with some is, that Christ was a successor to all these prophets, that he took the same kind of objection as they did to the then existing state of things, and that he used the same form of speech in denouncing them. The general reply to this is, that Christ was, if anything, only a prophetic reformer, not a real one. In proof of this many facts in his alleged history may be cited. For instance, he did not rescue the land from the control of the Romans, who held it from the people very much in the same way as landholders do now; he did not

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attempt to render any aid to the laborers of Rome, who in his day were resisting the injustice of the capitalists; he did not deliver his brethren of "the royal house" from their foreign rulers; he did not redeem the Jews from their social evils, or restore justice to their nation. In a word, he entirely failed to do the reforming work that was expected of him. About the year 1825 the "Christian Socialists of London" called special attention to the question of land as regulated by Moses, and the living in common by the early Christians; but no practical issue arose out of the discussion. From that period down to the present the same subject has been more or less agitated, and still the matter is very far from being settled. Now, if it is alleged that Christ sought to bring about a just settlement of the land problem, then the existence of the present oppressive land laws proves that he failed, and that his most devout followers have been equally unfortunate. If Christ had been a practical reformer, we should not have in our midst the deplorable injustice, the wrongs, and the inequalities that now afflict society. These evils and drawbacks—the growth of centuries during which Christianity was in power—will doubtless be lessened, if not altogether destroyed; but the work will be achieved by a moral revolution, inaugurated and conducted by men who will possess ability and experience that it is evident Jesus never had.

It must be borne in mind that there are two kinds of revolution—one that is gradual and intellectual, and therefore useful; the other that is sudden, born of passion, and therefore often useless as an important factor in securing permanent reforms. We know that every change of thought, or condition of things, involves a revolution which, if controlled by reason and regulated by the lessons of experience, must aid rational progress, and tend to build up a State, and secure its permanence. But there is another kind of revolution, which is sought to be produced by Nihilism and Anarchism, both of which aim at the destruction of the State. I am not in favor of either of these "isms," believing, as I do, that in our present condition of society some form of government is necessary. Law and order, based upon the national will, and the principle of justice, appear to me to be essential in any scheme that is accepted for the purpose of furthering the political and social progress of the world. Then we have Socialism, which concerns itself with economic, ethical, political, and industrial questions. The principal subject, however, dealt with by Socialists is the accumulation and distribution of wealth. State Socialism dates from time of the eminent French writer, Claude, H. Count de St. Simon, whose works were published in 1830. He tried to secure the amelioration of the condition of the poor, and aimed at the organisation of labor and the distribution of the fruits of industry, upon the principle of every man being rewarded according to his works. Socialism is, in fact, an attempt (whether it is the best that could be made is with some persons a debateable point) to regulate the social relations, making them more equal than they are at present, either by individual combination, by municipal or co-operative action, by a philanthropic policy of the Church, or by the control of the State. This last phase of the Socialistic scheme means the complete regulation by law of the equality of individuals, the State being the owner of the land, and of all the instruments of industry that are at present possessed by individuals, public companies, etc., who now regulate, in their own interest, production and distribution.

Having thus briefly stated the general conceptions and aims of political and social reformers, the next step is to inquire in what relation Jesus stands to any or all of them. Of course there is only one source of information upon the subject at our command—that of the four Gospels. From these it will not be difficult to demonstrate that Jesus was no mundane reformer. Although he was surrounded by poverty, slavery, oppression, and mental degradation, he made no effort to rid society of these curses to humanity. As John Stuart Mill observes, in his work upon *Liberty* (pp. 28, 29), in referring to Christian morality: "I do not scruple to say of it that it is, in many important points, incomplete and one-sided, and that, unless ideas and feelings, not sanctioned by it, had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse condition than they now are."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

THE WORLD AND THE WORLD.

If all the world must see the world
As the world the world hath seen,
Then it were better for the world
That the world had never been.

Yet if the world could see the world
As the world the world might see,
Then a happier world than this old world
Perhaps could never be.

Oh, world that lives upon the world!
You travel far too slow!
Oh, world! green grave of the worlds,
How wondrous swift you go.

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND.

ACID DROPS.

PREBENDARY EYTON says that the most intellectually alive of all forms of Socialistic thought is Christian Socialism—which is a very poor compliment to the Fabians and Social Democrats. Christian Socialism, it appears, is drawing together the heart and intellect of the day, and the glory of the Lord is being revealed. But we have heard of all that before. The glory of the Lord is always being revealed, and many gentlemen like Prebendary Eyton earn a good income by revealing it. The only solid thing in the business is the income.

"Nil Desperandum" writes to the *Weekly Times*, complaining of a North Wilts parson, who has an income of £900 a year, and is eloquent in his exhortations to the poor to be charitable. When the squire gave some books to the Reading Room, the parson collared the lot for himself, on the ground that they were too good for the villagers. Evidently they were not sermons.

James Bishop, of New Swindon, couldn't stand the Salvation Army band. Financial worries had made him sleepless, and he wanted rest and quiet; so he went out and asked the band to stop. Stop! Perish the thought! They were playing for the good of his immortal soul. Which was all very well, but James Bishop's mortal body could stand the row no longer. He therefore cut his throat with a penknife. Where he is now is a matter of conjecture. It is to be hoped, however, that the poor fellow is not in heaven; for the Salvation band plays there for ever and ever, and you can't escape it by means of penknives or prussic acid.

Dr. Danford Thomas, the Islington coroner, held an inquest on the body of Francis Eleanor Ottignon, who committed suicide by taking laudanum. In a letter to a friend she wrote, "I hope God will forgive me," and ended with the ejaculation, "May God help me." He didn't.

Just as service was being commenced last Sunday, the parish Church of St. Columb, Cornwall, was struck by lightning. The congregation had little faith in God's preservation of his own house, and rushed panic stricken from the church, the service being brought abruptly to a close.

In the *Expositor* for January, Archdeacon Farrar has a very unsatisfactory paper on "The Sinai Palimpsest of the Syriac Gospels." He admits this exhibits "the oldest Syriac text hitherto known," but tries to argue for the orthodoxy of the statement that Joseph begat Jesus, because it says he was "the husband of the Virgin Mary." Now, we want to know, if the word "virgin" was part of the primitive text how it got left out of all the Greek copies? To our mind, this suggests forcibly that the word "virgin" is a later insertion, for the virginity of Mary was no more known to Paul than recognised by the Ebionites.

The *Tablet* (January 5) has a more scholarly article on the same Gospels. It considers it certain that "the hypotheses of an heretical corruption must be excluded," but points to the fact that Philo believed, "wrongly, of course," that Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Sepporah conceived by divine operation, without the intervention of a man; though declared in Scripture to have born children, not to God, but to their husbands. Altogether, the Syriac vindication of the honor of Mary and the paternity of Joseph is causing a pretty fluttering in the theological dovecots.

The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on the Voluntary Schools suggests that it will be better

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policy to apply for aid to the imperial than to the local expenditure. This is, of course, to obviate the possibility of local control. With the immense amount already given to voluntary schools from imperial taxation, there ought to be increased public control. The Committee fail to observe that the trend of modern legislation is towards decentralisation and the investing of municipalities and other local authorities with increased powers of dealing with their own affairs.

It appears that the Education Department has already, in some cases, held that the teaching of the Apostles' Creed in Board schools is not an infraction of Section 14, directed against distinctive catechisms and formularies. The question is, however, more distinctly raised than before by the appeal of the Rochford School Board, and an authoritative judgment will have to be given.

Our jovial exchange, the *Western Figaro*, is responsible for the following: "At the morning service in the prison chapel, on a recent Sunday, the first hymn given out was the one beginning:—

> This is the house of prayer
> Where we, Thy servants, meet,
> And Thou, O Lord, are here,
> Thy *chosen band* to greet.

The congregation consisted of a particularly fine and large collection of thieves, burglars, and scoundrels of every description."

This reminds us of a text chosen by the chaplain of Colney Hatch Asylum, on the Sunday when the female inmates first appeared in the splendor of new bonnets with pink ribbons and Rob Roy tartan shawls. The words he chose were: "Even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

A. A. Isaacs, a perverted Hebrew, writes in the *English Churchman* against the gratuitous circulation—except in special cases—of the New Testament Scriptures in Hebrew. He mentions that an Israelite in New York confessed that he had been in the habit of collecting the Hebrew New Testaments of Salkinson, gratuitously circulated, and committing them to the flames.

A person calling himself Father Benedict Elliott, O.S.B., and representing himself as a son of Lord Minto, has been sent to prison at Rome for frauds on ecclesiastics.

A coroner's inquest was held on the body of Anne Knight, who died in the Salvation Army shelter at Spitalfields. She paid twopence for a bunk, but no covering was provided, and her own rags were not enough to keep her from freezing. One of the jurymen said it was "a disgrace." Such shelters ought not to be allowed, in his opinion; what was the use of a bunk without a covering? And echo answers, "What?"

L. Nabokoff, a Mohammedan Russian, is conducting a Society for the Study of Islam at New York. He is reported, in the *New York Herald*, as saying that "his reason for embracing Islam was that he could see no reason for a man who keeps his eyes open accepting the religion of Christianity. Its followers are like a lot of sheep who jump over a log which may be in their path, but when the log is removed continue to jump over the place where it had been, simply because it had been their custom to do so, and because they did not use intelligence, if they possessed any. In former days ministers used to jump over dogmas, such as the Immaculate Conception, although such dogmas were kicked out of the way by Mohammed 1,250 years ago. Ministers are still jumping."

M. Nabokoff then referred to the priestcraft in Christianity as the common trick "by which a few unscrupulous men have fastened themselves on you, and are living off your sustenance, doing work only one day in the week."

According to Professor Kapteyn, of Groningen, our sun is but a member of an immense cluster of stars, and outside this cluster, at a much greater distance from us than the stars of the solar cluster, lies a considerably richer ring-shaped cluster, the light of which, reduced to nebulosity by immensity of distance, produces the Milky Way gleam of our midnight skies. Yet we are to suppose that the author of this got born in a corner of Palestine, and put the support of the boy's maintenance on a Jewish carpenter.

Referring to the agitation against atrocities in Armenia, the *Crescent* notices the lynching and other outrages by Christian whites on Christian negroes in the Southern States, and asks why don't the goody-goody Christians get up an agitation over this matter.

The *Crescent* reports that, as has been the custom since 1888, "the Liverpool Muslims celebrated the reputed birthday of the prophet Christ by feeding several hundred of his followers, whom their brother Christians permitted to starve on the day when, according to their superstitious notions, their Man-God was born!" A little fact like this should make Christians ashamed of condemning the followers of Islam, and open their eyes to the truth that the only religion worth having is one which dictates the service of humanity.

In the *Open Court* Aziz-ud-din Ahmad, writing on "The Future of Islam," says: "The future of Islam is ensured by the humanity or kindness of its followers towards one another. Colleges are open to all. No caste; no distinction of race. One god, one people. There is more self-sacrifice and less paper boast with the propagation of Islam than of Christianity."

Mr. Samuel Legier, of Newton Abbot, has had a cheap shillingsworth. Mr. Legier is a son-in-law of a Mrs. Hellier, who is buried in the parish churchyard of Hennock. He has made repeated appeals to the Rev. F. J. L. Gillman, the vicar of Hennock, to permit the grave to be re-turfed and the tombstone replaced. But the man of God refused to allow any graves of Dissenters to be turfed over. Mr. Legier made a last appeal to him on Sunday, and, on being refused, thrashed the vicar with a stick. He was summoned for assault, and fined one shilling and costs.

Nellie Laws, late a preacher of the Salvation Army, is now imprisoned for three months with hard labor. Sergeant Nursey said she lived by religious imposture for years. She pretended to be the daughter of a clergyman.

The Rev. Henry J. Dodwell, who has been confined in Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum for nearly seventeen years for shooting at the then Master of the Rolls, has, through his solicitor, made an appeal to the Home Secretary for the restoration of his liberty. The Home Secretary has sent a reply, stating that he has made inquiries, but regrets that he cannot authorise the patient's discharge from the asylum, as he is still insane, and could not be released without risk.

One of the Episcopal clergy at the Edinburgh English Cathedral has much roused theological ire by declaring that the Presbyterian organisations around are not branches of the Church of Jesus Christ. An angry correspondence ensued, and the Bishop has been asked to reprimand the clergyman, which he has declined to do. They are a happy family.

Mr. Thomas Williams, sub-inspector of schools, sends to the *Spectator* some answers received from a village school in Radnorshire. Asked who was the greatest man of the present time, they answered, "The rector, sir." Asked in what respect they considered the rector greater than Mr. Gladstone, they answered, "Please, sir, the rector is M.A., and Mr. Gladstone is only M.P." Inspector—"But how is an M.A. greater than an M.P.?" Children—"An M.A. is A1, sir." Inspector—"Yes?" Children—"Please, sir, nobody can be higher than A1." Evidently the rector is a little god almighty in his own district.

A story told of the late C. Baring, Bishop of Durham, who lived in great state and died leaving £120,000, comes in *apropos* of our cartoon. It is said that when he was asked for his favorite text he said it was, "Jesus Christ for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich."

About two hundred lives have been lost from the Humber alone during the recent gales. At Heligoland part of the town has been washed away; while in Hungary and Silesia snowfalls have stopped railway communication, and there are reports of persons being caught in the storm and frozen to death. Providence is sleeping, or, peradventure, on a journey.

The cold weather has not eradicated cholera from Russia, for the Odessa correspondent of the *Daily News* says: "According to the latest official weekly cholera bulletin, there were 655 cases and 279 deaths in the twenty governments of European Russia. In the government of Podolia alone there were 473 cases and 173 deaths."

How faith will cling to a shadow is illustrated in a poem by the Rev. Newman Hall, in his just-published *Lyrics of a Long Life*. It is entitled "Prayer Answered in Disappointment":—

> "One jewel more," I cried, "to make me glad:"
> He took the one I had.
> "Come quickly, Lord, and heal this wounded heart:"
> Still more He made it smart.
> "At length from trouble bid my soul repose:"
> Yet thicker came the blows.

He asks, "Why in my portion mix such bitter leaven?" and gives the answer, "To fit thee more for heaven." So we are

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to suppose it is all for the best if a man loses all his beloved ones, "cut off in the midst of their sins" mayhap, so long as he is thereby fitted for heaven. A good deal of selfish vanity seems to underlie this faith and resignation.

The Rev. Walter Walsh writes in the *Contemporary* on the Labor Church, under the title of "The New Secularism." He affects to consider the old Secularism as dead, and says: "Higher Criticism and the New Theology have taken the wind out of the sails of Ingersoll and Foote." If this is, so it is not because we have changed our course, but because they have come upon our tack. Secularism stands where it did, but the Churches are bound to come in its direction under pain of being deserted by the secular spirit of the age. Mr. Walsh himself bears testimony to this when he complains that even the Labor Church "breaks with the past, belittles the future, and casts its vote for the present."

It appears from *Willick's Tithe Commutation Tables* that £100 of tithe rent-charge will be worth in 1895 but £73 13s. 0½d., or a reduction of over 26 per cent. The average value during the fifty-nine years which have elapsed since the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act is £98 17s. 10½d.; so the clergy have not done so badly on the whole, though they are grumbling, as usual.

The late Rev. G. W. Herbert, vicar of St. Peter's, Vauxhall, left personal estate amounting to upwards of £122,000. A nice little sum to begin the next world with; but how hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Rev. C. Garrett states that a rich Wesleyan has offered a good round sum to the Ministers' Retirement Fund, on condition that preachers consent to burn their old sermons. Probably he fancies they are often resurrected, and cremation is the best preventive of resurrection.

The recent American Church Congress was chiefly notable by the attempt to urge a boycott on the Sunday papers. The attempt is manifestly only dictated by trade rivalry, for the Sunday paper is prepared during the week, and only the Monday paper occasions Sunday work. As the Monday issue occasionally reports the ministerial sermons, there is never any mention of boycotting that.

Here is a rustic idyll from East Anglia. A London tripper encountered a venerable individual working among the graves in the churchyard, and, giving him good-day, said, "I suppose you are one of the Church officials?" "Ficials, sir," he answered; "why, lawk, I don't know what I deu be. When Parson Brown came he say I were the sextant. Then Parson Smith, he come and he call me the beetle. Now Mr. Jones be our parson, and he say I be the wargin."

A good story is told of a number of boys who were playing on Saturday in front of a city church. The rector suddenly came out of his parsonage and told the boys to be quiet in front of the Lord's house. "That is all right, mister," said the boys. "The Lord is not here to-day. He is down the street at the Jewish synagogue."

A Chinaman offers tinsel and gold to his god, and burns "mock money," or bits of colored paper, in idolatrous worship. The Chinee is artful. He knows that, if he made his offerings in the real metal, they would never go further than the pockets of the priests. It must be imported Chinamen who put the bad coins into the collection bags and plates about which a parson complains in a contemporary. "The offertory," says this indignant cleric, "has now become a recognised convenience for passing bad money." Alas and alack! The filthy lucre!—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

R. H. Charles argues at length in the *Academy* that the Syriac version of Matthew i. 16, which states that Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, begat Jesus, represents the original text. He says this view is steadily gaining acceptance among English and German critics.

This is the season for chestnuts, and in the Surrey pantomime an old *Freethinker* chestnut is introduced: "Don't you know, my good man, that drink is your worst enemy!" Inebriate—"Yes, mum; but the Bible says we are to love our enemies."

The *Western Mail* attributes to a Brecknockshire vicar the following story: "The incumbent of a seaside parish on the west coast of Pembrokeshire held weekly a Welsh prayer meeting, which was occasionally attended by some coast-guardsmen who understood not one single word of Welsh. For the benefit of these visitors the vicar asked one of the parishioners to pray in English. After not a little persuasion the man was induced to attempt the task, and, though he had never before prayed in English, all were agreeably surprised to find that he could do so with ease and fluency. He had prayed for a considerable time, and it was very evident to all that the poor man's great difficulty was how, and in what manner, to wind up or finish decently. He made two or three attempts, and at last, to the astonishment of all, he made a desperate effort to come to a close, saying, 'O Lord, hear our prayer; forgive us our sins, and believe me yours truly, John Jones.'"

While we are giving stories, we cannot resist offering the following one told by *Truth* of "a well-known Bishop": "The Bishop was one day examining a batch of deacons for priest's orders. After the theoretical part of the examination, he said to them: 'Gentlemen, you have passed a most excellent examination in theory; I should now like to see you do something practical. I shall go into the next room and personate a sick man. You will come in one by one, address me as a sick parishioner, and say something comforting.' When his lordship had retired, the candidates were in some confusion, and nobody cared to begin; but at last a mad Irishman volunteered to be the first. He entered the study, and, approaching the Bishop, who was lying with a woe-begone air on the sofa, he thus addressed him: 'Oh Anthony, Anthony! the dhrink again! Shure it will be the death of ye! Turn from your evil ways before it's too late, and be a man!' This is said to have been the last time that the Bishop held a practical examination."

Protestant open-air preaching is not an easy matter in the city of Cork. The Catholics don't like it, and they express their dislike in a tempestuous manner, by throwing mud and stones at the preachers. Of course, the *Methodist Times* is very angry at this state of things; but the Catholics can reply that they are served in the same way by Protestants in Belfast. Two blacks, it is true, do not make a white; and, in this case, both blacks are to the discredit of Christianity.

"Any nation," the *Methodist Times* says, "which prevents freedom of speech to religious teachers in the open-air is not only anti-Christian, but uncivilised, and must be ranked below the degraded Roman empire itself. Jesus Christ and his apostles were permitted to preach the Gospel in the open air all over the Roman Empire." Precisely so; and this very fact shows how much Christianity has done for freedom in nearly two thousand years.

Newcastle-on-Tyne is a fairly pious city. It hasn't as many public-houses to the square acre as some cities—for instance, Liverpool; but they are splendidly patronised, and 22 per thousand of the inhabitants get convicted every year for drunkenness.

In the early days of the Temperance movement it had no more bitter opponents than the ministers of religion. When it grew powerful they began to patronise it, and they have so nobbled it at last that a religious passport (we believe) is required by every Temperance society in the kingdom. But, somehow or other, the Temperance movement does not progress as it should under the fostering power of the Gospel. Mr. Caine boasts that there are seven million total abstainers in Great Britain and Ireland, and that the forces of Temperance were never so active as at present. Yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who calculated on getting £1,340,000 during the year from the additional tax on beer and spirits, has actually got £1,123,000 during nine months. And it will not do to put the increased consumption down to the "influenza," as was done when Mr. Goschen got such a handsome return from rum.

Miss Lucy Garnett, in the *Nineteenth Century*, has been dispelling some of the prevalent nonsense in Christian countries about the inferiority of the position of women among the Mohammedans. On the whole, their legal rights exceed those of the women in most Christian lands. Even with respect to the slaves, Miss Garnett says their lot is "preferable in many respects to that of the majority of free domestic drudges in the West."

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(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 6, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C.: 11.15, "Bradlaugh's Social and Political Teaching"; 7, "God's in His Heaven."

Wednesday, January 16, Hall of Science: 8.30, "A Night with George Meredith."

January 27, Liverpool.

February 3, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—January 13, Leicester; 20, Nottingham; 27, Hall of Science, London. February 3, Hall of Science; 10, Camberwell; 17, Plymouth. March 3, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

E. Timewell.—You will find articles on Spiritism in the *Freethinker* of March 19 and July 30, 1893.

J. C. Mack (Teneriffe).—Thanks for your good wishes, which we reciprocate.

W. H. Morrish.—See paragraph. Thanks. Always glad to hear from you.

Potteries.—Mr. Foote offered the Hanley Branch a Sunday in January, or a later one if that was inconvenient, but he has received no reply. It is difficult to see what he can do more.

Mr. Foote's Fighting Fund.—R. Seago (S. Africa), £1 1s.; Mr. Horton (Kokstad, S. Africa), per R. Forder, 10s.; J. J. Crabtree, 2s. 6d.; Le Diable, 2s. 6d.

Watts Election Fund.—Mr. G. Ward, treasurer, acknowledges: C. J. Pottage, 10s.; A. Tripp, 5s.

Darius.—Pleased to know that you think our New Year's number "a splendid twopennyworth." Subscription handed to the secretary.

E. H.—The texts are open to public judgment. Mr. Watts gave his opinion of them, and of course you are free to entertain yours. It seems to us that Jesus did teach that poverty was a blessing, and wealth a curse. Lazarus went to heaven simply because he was poor; he had no other virtue; and Dives went to hell simply because he was rich.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—J. Mosenthal (Germany), 5s.; A. F., 2s. 6d.; A. Tripp, 5s.

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. Robinson.—If you send them on to Mr. Forder, he will pay carriage, and they will be used judiciously.

V. Page.—See paragraph. Will you communicate with us about the matter that was left standing over?

J. J. Crabtree.—We return the compliment.

E. G. Billington.—A parcel of our "Atheist Shoemaker" pamphlet shall be sent for distribution at Mr. Hughes's meeting.

T. Stubbs.—Thanks for the paper. The public is getting tired of Mrs. Besant and her Mahatmas.

William Cotsworth.—Professor Harnack, the leading German theologian, holds that the Apostles' Creed was the composition of the Church of Southern Gaul. His article was introduced to English readers by Mrs. Humphry Ward in the *Nineteenth Century*, about eighteen months ago. Other information will be found in the chapter on "Pious Frauds" in *Crimes of Christianity*. Mr. Wheeler will shortly write on the Apostles' Creed.

J. Fitch.—Mrs. Watts would have been with her husband at the Federation Dinner, but she is engaged every evening at a London theatre.

J. Brodie.—Addressed as desired.

A Young One.—Bradlaugh's "Speeches" price 5s. Order of Mr. Forder. The libel case may be tried any time between three and six weeks hence.

We have received for the Watts Election Fund: R. Seago (S. Africa), 10s.; Le Diable, 2s. 6d.

Papers Received.—The Rad—The Post—Twentieth Century—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Western Figaro—Liberty—Isle of Man Times—Truthseeker—Open Court—Middlesex Express—Crescent—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Blue Grass Blade—Liberator—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Rochdale Times—Torquay Times—Brighton Examiner—Daily News—Birmingham Daily Post—New Zealand Graphic—Bristol Evening News—Weekly Bulletin—Western Daily Mercury.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

THE N.S.S. MEETING.

The meeting of members of the N.S.S. at the Hall of Science, on Wednesday evening, January 2, was well attended. Mr. Foote was in the chair, and many of the vice-presidents sat on the platform. Of these there were present, Messrs. Watts, Forder, Parris, Wheeler, Truelove, Heaford, Hartmann, and Samson. Mr. Cohen, who was spending a few days in London, was also present. Mr. Foote stated why the Executive had suspended the N.S.S. affiliation to the Hall of Science Club. The hall had been let for a Boxing Contest, the program of which included professionals; and the advertisement of the performance, which was to have been followed by three others, while not illegal, was of a nature which the Executive felt bound to object to in connection with the Society's headquarters. As the Club committee could not cancel the letting, or give satisfactory assurances against a repetition, the Executive had no alternative but to clear the Society from all moral responsibility. The affiliation had therefore been suspended until a satisfactory arrangement could be arrived at. Mr. Charles Watts spoke strongly in support of the Executive's action, and moved a resolution accordingly; this was seconded by Mr. Heaford; and, after discussion, and explanations by Mr. G. Standring, the Club president, and Mr. J. Anderson, the Club secretary, was carried by an overwhelming majority. No one questioned the motives of the Club committee. It was a difference of judgment, but a difference which necessitated prompt action on the part of the Executive, in order to dissociate itself from what it disapproved. Happily we have good reason to believe that the difference will be amicably adjusted—that is, with respect to the future; and we shall doubtless be able to make a definite announcement in our next issue. We hope, also, to be then in a position to make another announcement that will, to most Freethinkers, be still more gratifying.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The London Secular Federation's seventh Annual Dinner took place on Monday evening at the Holborn Restaurant. There was a large muster of friends, the repast was excellent, and everybody had a good time. Mr. Foote, who presided, made the usual appeal for funds, with a gratifying result. A full list of donations will appear in our next issue. The toast-list included speeches by Messrs. Charles Watts, J. M. Wheeler, Touzeau Parris, H. Snell, A. B. Moss, J. Rowney, W. Heaford, and Robert Forder. All were in good form; indeed, the speeches were first-rate—witty, vivacious, and manly. They were varied with capital songs by Madame Burgwitz and Messrs. Walters and Vine. The final item was not on the program. Mr. Samson got up and proposed the toast of "The President," which "caught on" and elicited much enthusiasm. Mr. Roger seconded in an earnest speech, and the toast was drunk with honors, the whole assembly rising and singing "For he's a jolly good fellow." Mr. Foote, who was affected by this spontaneous compliment, made a suitable response; and the gathering then broke up with "Auld Lang Syne."

Mr. Foote lectured at the London Hall of Science on Sunday, and had good meetings, in spite of the dismal fog. He occupies the platform again to-day (January 13). The morning lecture will be on "Bradlaugh's Social and Political Teaching." The evening subject will be "God's in His Heaven."

Having been obliged to leave town, Mr. Foote could not give his "Night with George Meredith" on Wednesday last. He will deliver the lecture next Wednesday evening (Jan. 16). It should attract a good audience.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures to-day (Sunday, January 13), afternoon and evening, at Leicester, where he is sure to have good audiences.

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Justice, noticing Messrs. Wheeler and Foote's little book on Voltaire, says: "Any one who wishes to obtain a brief but trustworthy account of this remarkable man cannot do better than purchase this book, for it bears every evidence of being a painstaking endeavor to put the great French satirist's career before the reader in as impartial a manner as possible."

The Universities are open to women in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland. Austria, Hungary, Spain, and Russia deny them. "If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home" (1 Cor. xiv. 35).

The *Truthseeker*, in its last issue for the Old Year, gives a cartoon on "The Graveyard of the Gods." Tombstones are erected to Odin, Baal, Ormuzd, Osiris, Thor, Jove, Apollo, etc., and Father Time is digging a grave which a board announces is "reserved for Jehovah, the last and most brutal of all gods"—Christians and Jews the only mourners; Science and Education, undertakers.

In Mrs. Ireland's "Recollections of James Anthony Froude," in the January *Contemporary Review*, there is an anecdote of the first time Froude met Swinburne at a dinner, at which Arnold, Ruskin, and Houghton were present. "After dinner a little figure appeared, a 'boy man,' and, bounding past the guests, stood upon an ottoman so that he could well be seen. 'The lad began spouting some of his most outrageous poems,' said Froude, 'some of his very *worst*.' And the narrator smiled bitterly, continuing: 'We all sat in amazement till he finished, when Ruskin, making his way through the company, hurried up, and took Swinburne fairly in his arms, saying: "How beautiful! how divinely beautiful!"' Swinburne was at this time little more than a boy."

In *Secular Thought* Captain R. C. Adams well remarks, in reply to those who point to progress in the Churches: "The work of enlightenment must go on outside the Church, in order that a little light may get inside. The Church will never be a pioneer in progress, but will continue to adopt reforms, only in tardy response to the demands of its supporters, and only in the small degree that is necessary to save its life."

Secular Thought reprints, with acknowledgments, Mr. Wheeler's recent article on "Voltaire." It says itself of him: "There is no single man who ever lived who has done so much to enlighten and instruct his fellow men as Voltaire. There are none who cleared away so many cobwebs, dissipated so many illusions, or enunciated so many original truths as he. He was the greatest individual civilising force of all time, and he was bitterly persecuted by the Christian Church."

Mr. D. Bedford, a member of the Walthamstow Branch of the N.S.S., was returned at the head of the poll for the Northern Ward, Walthamstow District Council, at the recent election. At Hanworth, Mr. Williamson, a working man and Secularist, was elected chairman of the Parish Council.

The annual Christmas *soirée* and New Year's social, in connection with the South Shields Branch of the National Secular Society, were held in the Baring-street School-room. Both were highly satisfactory in every respect, and a good balance will remain to the credit of the Branch Fund. This successful result is chiefly due to the praiseworthy efforts of Messrs. G. White and D. Bow. The speakers were Messrs. Thos. Thompson and S. M. Peacock (President).

The Hull Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday. Seven new members have been enrolled during the year. The balance-sheet was encouraging. Mr. A. Adams, the present secretary, dates from 83 Spring-street.

Mr. J. Keast, 32 Morgan-street, St. Paul's, has resumed the secretaryship of the Bristol Branch. He will be pleased to hear from Freethinkers who wish to assist. It is intended to have some lectures in St. James's Hall, and some open-air meetings during the summer.

Mr. Ernest Johnson, of the Nelson School Board, lectures to-day (January 13) in the Labor Hall, Railway-street, for the local N.S.S. Branch. His subject at 3 is "Thoreau's *Walden*," and at 7 "The Philosophy of Secularism." Mr. Johnson, though a young man, is well read and an able speaker. We hope he will have good meetings.

James Lick, who was a Freethinker, left several millions of dollars to be expended in various public improvements and institutions. Everybody has heard of the great Observatory, on Mount Hamilton, which bears his name. A hundred thousand dollars was set aside for a California monument to be erected in front of the city hall in San Francisco. This was unveiled on November 29. Speeches were delivered by leading public men, and the children of the public schools sang patriotic songs. We believe it was James Lick who paid the whole cost of building the Paine Memorial Hall at Boston.

We see from New York papers that the "Rev." Citizen George Francis Train is announced to preach every Sunday at No. 8 Union Square Hall, on the subject of "Hell Be Damned."

In Devonport the clericals are making strenuous efforts to get the control of the School Boards in their hands. All Freethinking electors should work and vote for Mr. R. S. Smith, who has contended against the bigots in this matter.

WHO WAS THE MOTHER OF JESUS?

THERE has been no end of bother of late over that unfortunate question, overheard by Mr. Coxhead, as to who was the father of Jesus, and which our editor seems likely to settle in the series of articles now appearing in this journal. But little attention has been given to Jesus's mother. Many great men have attributed to their mothers some of the best traits in their characters; and, if it is true that the education of the child begins with the education of its mother, it may be of some little interest to Freethinkers to know what is said and known of the supposed wife of Joseph, the mother of Jesus.

It goes without saying that by what is "known" I mean what is said of her in the four Gospels; for it is self-evident, from the writings in the New Testament—some of which, according to expositors, were written before those Gospels—no mention whatever is made relating to Mary, except in Acts i., where she is represented as being present in that "upper room" with some of the Apostles and the brothers of Jesus, who, of course, were her sons. It is rather singular that John never mentions her name, and only refers to her as at the marriage feast, where Jesus says, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" and at the crucifixion. This last reference is more than curious: "When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! and from that hour that disciple took her to his own home" (John xix. 20).

Does it not seem somewhat singular that Mary should have been given over to John's care—for this was the disciple that "Jesus loved"—if she had her husband living (and there is no mention of his death), besides the wonder that must be excited when we know that Jesus had brothers, who certainly could not have been ignorant that Jesus was, or pretended to be, God, unless it be, as we are reminded elsewhere, that his brethren did not believe on him!

In the matter of converting his family, Jesus does not appear to have been nearly so successful as Joseph Smith was, the latter's family being soon convinced of his divine mission, and of the inspiration of the Book of Mormon. Singular, too, it is that this John should have written the life of her son, but not have mentioned her miraculous conception, or even the visits of the angel to Joseph or herself to announce it. His gospel is pretended to have been written as late as A.D. 78; but he gives us no account of her latter days or of her death. Therefore, if Christians made a harmony of what is known of Mary in the Bible, it would amount to really nothing at all, and, if it is not a bull to say it, of Joseph even less.

When we come to what is "said" of her, we have an embarrassment of riches, an abundance of details. It would require volumes to give a mere outline, not only of her earthly life, but of actions, appearances, discourses, and miracles, since she was taken bodily up to heaven. It will, however, be better to begin with her birth. This is supposed to have taken place on September 8, but in what year will depend on when Jesus was born—and who knows that? In a celebrated Catholic work, *The Glories of Mary*, we have a description of the flight into Egypt, in these words: "Any one can imagine what Mary must have suffered on this journey. To Egypt the distance was great. Most authors agree that it was three hundred miles; so that it was a journey of upwards of thirty days. The road was, according to St. Bona-

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venture's description of it, 'rough, unknown, and little frequented.' It was in the winter season; so that they had to travel in snow, rain, and wind, through rough and dirty roads. Mary was then fifteen years of age; a delicate young woman unaccustomed to such journeys."

In Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* it is assumed that Jesus was born B.C. 4 (before Christ, four—is this not rather funny?); so that Mary was only fourteen when her husband had doubts of her chastity, and meditated obtaining a divorce. When one remembers how long it took the Jews to get from Egypt to Palestine—forty years—Mary's journey of thirty days seems to indicate that their donkey was an excellent specimen of the genus Jerusalem to do his ten miles a day. Unfortunately for the accuracy of the saintly Bonaventure, the road from Egypt to Palestine was neither "unknown" nor "little frequented," but was one of the principal highways of the ancient world, over which had marched and countermarched the vast armies of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon for a thousand years.

We have, on the authority of the Infallible Church, some of Mary's milk preserved to this day in the Church of St. Mark, at Rome, which of itself ought to be sufficient to satisfy the most sceptical person. St. Ildephonsus apostrophises her milk in these words; "Suckle, O Mary, thy Creator; give milk to him who made thee, and made thee such that he could be made of thee" (*Glories*, p. 258). This means, if it means anything at all, that Mary was made of God, and God of Mary, and the father of Jesus was Jesus himself, and the mother was all three rolled into one.

Alban Butler, in writing on Mary's birthday, seems to forget altogether poor Joseph's doubts and perplexities, and approvingly quotes St. Jerome: "That Joseph, knowing her chastity, and admiring what had happened, suppresses, in silence, all which he could not understand." Also another ancient writer, who "rather believed her virtue than her womb" (*Lives of the Saints*, vol. ix.).

ROBERT FORDER.

CIVILISATION AND CHRISTIANITY.

CIVILISATION deals with this world only. It is a condition and a consequence resulting from the development and activity of the mental and physical faculties of men, and their application to the materials of a natural environment. It is the product of human ingenuity directed to material ends. The man who aids in the development of civilisation assists in the improvement of the human habitation, and the worldly comfort and happiness of the race. His thoughts dwell on this world, and he seeks to make it better, and to add to the comforts of the race here and now, not hereafter or in heaven. In doing this he violates the commandment of Christ, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on," "Take therefore no thought for the morrow" (Matthew vi. 25, 34).

If this absurd command were to be obeyed, no Christian could hope to assist in the civilisation of mankind and go to heaven. He would abandon his relatives, give no thought to the world or its improvement, waste no time on education, or art, or music, or thought, or even on food, but roam through the world a naked, starving, ignorant savage—an ideal Christian. There is no escape from this dilemma. The words of Christ are clear and positive, and, as civilisation involves the cultivation of all he condemns, no Christian can consistently be civilised.

Again, Christ taught the doctrine of non-resistance, and commanded, "If a man smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." If this command were obeyed, when the barbarian smote the civilised man, the latter would not resist, and the barbarous races would rule the world. Not by submission to evil, but by resistance stern and long-continued, have the higher races held their own and laid the foundations of freedom.

Many have striven to obey these unnatural and nonsensical commandments. Hermits have retired from the world to live like beasts in caves, and fanatics have humbly surrendered to slavery. If these true Christians controlled the world, would it ever be civilised? No. It is the men who have deliberately disobeyed the commands of Christ and the doctrines of Christianity who have civilised the world, not by deserting it, but by improving it; not by submitting, but by resisting oppression.

Again, if men had obeyed the commands of Christ, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," "Servants, obey your masters," and kindred despotic monarchical maxims, there would be no republic, no liberty, no equality, no democracy.

It may be well to note that not only have great civilisations existed long before Christianity was ever heard of, but they have also existed contemporaneously with it, though beyond its control. Thus, in Mexico and Peru, the Aztecs and the Incas reached a high state of intellectual development at a time when Europe, under the beneficent Christian creed, was plunged into comparative barbarism. The Incas of Peru in particular had reached a higher stage of social development than has been attained, even at the present time by any nation in Europe. These two great civilisations would probably still be flourishing, for the edification and instruction of mankind, had not the emissaries of Christian Spain, Cortez, and Pizzaro found their way to the happy lands, and, having repaid the hospitality of the kindly natives by bloodshed, plunder, and wholesale slaughter, handed them over to the tender mercies of the Catholic priesthood to undergo the experience of conversion to Christianity. In the course of this conversion, which was conducted in the good old Christian way, the majority of the people were rapidly starved, enslaved, tortured, and burned to death, and the races soon became extinct. Thus does Christianity encourage civilisation.

It is not necessary, however, to revert to ancient times or distant lands for illustrations of the opposition of the Church to progressive ideas. It is not very long ago that the clergy of the United States held meetings all over the Union to protest against the abolition of slavery, and to assert the divine right of the slaveowner to chain and whip, and buy and sell, and with bloodhounds hunt and slay his fellow men. This was quite in harmony with Christian doctrine, for Christ, living in the midst of slavery, and daily seeing the tortured captives of the Romans scourged by their masters, said not a single word against it in all his lengthy harangues, and had no more consoling advice for the poor bleeding victims than this: "Servants, obey your masters," or "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Where would civilisation be, and where would democracy be, if men obeyed these fatal and foolish words? Give unto the king your body, and unto the priest your soul. Long and wearily men obeyed these words, and lived in barbarism. Now they obey them no longer, and are crowned with civilisation. "If a man be ignorant, let him be ignorant," says the blessed book which is called the fountain of civilisation; and how much freedom or wisdom would we have to-day if Christianity had been permitted to continue enforcing this sacred maxim by the soft persuasion of flame and sword, of rack and dungeon?

—*Secular Thought.* LUCIFER.

BLASPHEMY IN SWEDEN.

WE learn from Captain Thomson that a Swedish paper, the *Söderköpings Posten*, has been sequestrated by the Minister of Justice for blasphemy in an article on the Public School System in its issue for December 20. The paper, it appears, had the audacity to suggest that children would do better to learn the geography of their own land than that of Palestine, and their own history than the stories of the patriarchs and prophets. It seems that a prosecution ought to follow the sequestration, and this is looked forward to with the liveliest interest by the press, and especially by the Freethinkers in Sweden. The present Government is reactionary, and the repressive policy of the sky-pilots is to the fore; but in thus imitating the methods of Czar and Kaiser the Swedish Minister of Justice will only render himself contemptible in the eyes of Liberal Europe.

Obituary.

DIED, Sunday, Dec. 30, Mr. James Burns, editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*. Mr. Burns was one of the pioneers of modern Spiritism in England, and about twenty years ago debated the question with Mr. Bradlaugh. It is doubtful if his paper will be maintained.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.—Distasteful though to many, criticism must pronounce a fair estimate. Ingenuity may try to lessen the force of the internal evidence against John's authorship, but reason refuses to be satisfied. The gospel is still a theological more than a biographical composition, and reflects an Alexandrian atmosphere foreign to Galilee. It over passes the Ebionism of the synoptists, and mars the human portraiture.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii., p. 417.*

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BOOK CHAT.

The author of *The Oracles Ascribed to Matthew by Papias of Hierapolis* (Longmans) holds the view that the books attributed to Matthew and Mark by Papias, apud Eusebius, were not the gospels which the Church subsequently canonised, but merely the materials out of which the gospels were in part constructed.

* * *

One of the most interesting papers in the January number of the *English Illustrated Magazine* is an interview with Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, the Egyptian Hall conjuror. Mr. Maskelyne expresses his contempt for Spiritism, Theosophy, etc., and takes delight in exposing the fraud and credulity passing under a pretentious appearance. The versatile Mr. Grant Allen continues his "Moorland Idylls."

* * *

In *To-Day's Bible* Dr. Joseph Parker has sought to bring the old book up to date by extracting some of its morality, and putting other aphorisms into scriptural language. Needless to say *To-Day's Bible* omits the legendary and barbarous part, retaining only the fountain head of superstition. A smaller, it is in some respects a better book than the old Bible, but entirely without the interest attaching to that famous undateable collection of old documents.

* * *

The *Truthseeker Annual* for 1895 is full of interest. There is an admirable account of Freethought in the United States; a brief but pithy paper on "The Old and the New," by Colonel Ingersoll; "What the Church has Not Done for Women," by Mrs. Gage; "What are Women Here For?" by Miss Helen Gardener; "A Queer God and His Queer Book," by John Peck; "The Education of Children," by Susan Wixon; "Secular Sunday Schools," by Katie Kelim Smith, and other articles, together with much useful information to American Freethinkers. Nor must we forget the amusing sketch of "The One-Horned Ox" of George E. Macdonald, who has an original fund of bright American humor. Who hope the *Truthseeker Annual* will have a wide circulation, for it should be enjoyed wherever it goes.

* * *

In G. Macdonald's story of "The One-horned Ox," in the *Truthseeker Annual*, there is an instance of cuteness. One Spattle made money out on an Indian settlement, by growing hops. Asked how he thought of hop-raising in that out-of-the-way place, he explained that it was the missionaries. When he saw these signs of civilisation he knew intoxicants would follow.

* * *

Dr. Carolus, Physician (Cardiff: Chapple and Kemp, Neville-street; 1895; 2s. 6d.; 116 pp.; boards), is a novel with a purpose. The author is a Spiritist, and an advocate of Free-love. The story tells of a Dr. Carolus, who is supposed to be a Mahatma. He mysteriously disappears, taking with him a Catholic priest, an Unitarian minister, a journalist, and others. They turn up at a psychic settlement, supposed to be in wild Wales, where they have a religion and a social code of their own. The religion is something of a parody of the Catholic Church without its dogmas, and includes the invocation of spirits, *séances*, and a liturgy, in which the priest says, "Let us remember that life here is short," to which the people respond, "Aye; and that death will soon overtake us." Priest—"May you never forget this." People—"We never can, nor will."

* * *

Among the sculptured heads and busts which adorned the Psychic church, the author says, "I recognised Moses, Homer, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Shakespeare, Comte the Positivist, Allan Kardec the Spiritualist, and a number of other great teachers." Altogether, the psychic settlement seems a curious mixture of the Positivists with the Shakers and the Free-love community at Oneida Creek. They have divorce, but no marriage, and "Dr. Carolus" argues at length against that institution as "selfish and undesirable." We must say his arguments appear to us superficial. The drawbacks to marriage upon which he chiefly dilates are mainly jealousy and the pain of separation by death; but we have yet to learn that jealousy would be eliminated by such a free-love institution as that at Oneida, while the pain of separation from loved ones, whether one or many, can only be minimised by lessening the love—a project which, like the Buddhist and Stoic schemes of eradicating desire, is equivalent to cutting off one's feet for fear of corns. We distrust the love which is all circumference and has no centre. In its plenitude there is a void. The home and the family have been the sources of altruism, and are likely long to remain so. "Dr. Carolus" should know that the mass of the world have not reached monogamy yet. The book is rather an argument than a novel, and we have treated it as such. It certainly shows thought, though not, we think, deep thought, and it is one of the signs how all questions, social and religious, are now being thrown in the crucible, whence, let us hope, the purer gold will emerge.

* * *

Another novel with a purpose is *Six Thousand Tons of Gold*—a good title to ask for at a book shop (A. D. Innes). The owner of this vast treasure, discovered in Patagonia, tries to see what good he can do with it, and, finding he makes everything worse, determines at length to sink it in the sea. The moral, if any, is—demonetise gold.

* * *

In S. R. Crockett's last book there is given a discussion by some Galloway shepherds on the death of the Devil. "The minister was sayin'," remarked one, "that the new moderates threep that there's nae deil at a'. He dee'd some time since?" "They say," said John Scott, pulling meditatively at his cutty, "that the pooer is vested noo in a kind o' comy-tee?" "I dinna haud wi' comy-tees myself," replied Meg; "it's juist haein' mony maisters, ilka yin mair cankersome and thrawn than anither?" "Weel, gin this cegs be true, an' the auld deil's deed at last, there's a heap o' fowk in this parish should be mentioned in his wull," said Jock Gordon, significantly. But the herd was a staunch Marrow man. He was not led away by any human criticism, nor yet by the new theology. "New licht here, new licht there," he said. "I canna' pairt wi' ma deil. Na na, that's ower muckle to expect o' a man o' ma age!"

IN MEMORIAM—1894.

A weary nineteen hundred years
Speeds onward through its last decade;
The woe the brute in man has made
Fills human hearts with anxious fears.

In vain the boasted Christian plan
To lift the race to high ideals,
The nation's groan beneath the heels
Of tyrannising Christian man.

And ranged are seen the priest and purse,
Akin in deadly enmity
To Reason's struggle to be free,
Unstayed by God's imagined curse.

Can one prophetic vision dare
Premise the future's chequered scroll,
And guess a single nation's goal,
Or voice the griefs our land shall bear?

Will man's asserting spirit mould
The circumstance to better things,
Nor dream a power Almighty flings
O'er all predestination cold?

Begone the lie that speaks the thought;
The human brain, in searchings deep
For truth, to woe alone must leap,
And knowledge is with evil fraught.

Our best endeavors now to grasp
The underlying facts of things
Will give our minds far fuller wings
To soar, and higher life to clasp.

May man in future years be found
Evolving out to sweeter light,
And, banished superstition's night,
Let mutual love shed joy around.

The wave of time that now succeeds,
In ties of trust and love to bind,
The creature sink to raise the mind,
And bury harsh, unrighteous creeds.

The thoughts of man unfettered rise,
And all his energies be spent
On schemes to lift his race intent—
United happiness the prize.

If this the great result shall be,
With universal peace and love,
We may our present state above,
Forget the buried century.

G. R.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake supports a petition of the Brighton co-operators, praying for the diminution of public-houses, by a letter to the magistrates, in which he mentions that in many streets in Brighton there is a licensed inn to every six of the inhabited houses. The letter, which shows the veteran's usual pith, is printed in the *Brighton Examiner*.

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JEWISH COATS OF ARMS.

From the description of the symbols of the twelve tribes in the account of Jacob's dying blessing (Gen. xlix.), it has been surmised that the patriarchs had crests and coats of arms. The descriptions have, however, been applied by Kircher, Sir William Drummond, and Henry Melville, to the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Others think that the animals referred to were the totems of the tribes, and that the prohibition of various animals as food was originally part of totemism. In an article on "The Humors of Heraldry," in the *Cornhill Magazine*, the writer refers to the early heraldry ascribed to the Jews. He says: "Although heraldic authorities have made no direct attempt to solve the vexed question,

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?

yet they have assigned to Adam two coats of arms. The first, which was borne in Eden before the Fall—when he needed neither coat for covering nor arms for defence—consisted of a shield gules, upon which the arms of Eve (a shield argent) were quartered as an escutcheon of pretence, she being an heiress. The second coat, borne after the expulsion from the Garden, was '*pally trenchè*, divided every way and tinctured of every color.' The use of furs in blazonry is, it has been solemnly asserted, a relic of the garments of skins worn by our first parents. The second man who lived upon the earth, Abel, was, we are told, a true gentleman—a proof that it does not necessarily take three generations to manufacture the article. Cain was 'no gentleman' by behavior, but he was the first man who desired to have his arms changed, 'so God set his mark upon him.' Nearly all the principal characters in the Old Testament have been accredited with coats of arms. These are, as a rule, highly appropriate, except in the case of Joseph's heraldic coat, which was merely black tinctured with white—'chequy sable and argent'—whereas something after the pattern of Adam's second coat would surely have been more in keeping with the youthful Joseph's favorite attire. Gideon bore arms, sable, a fleece argent, a chief azure *gutté d'eau*; David, a harp, or in a field argent; and Samson, gules, a lion couchant or, within an orle argent, semée of bees sable. Armorial ensigns are supposed to have received divine sanction, for God, when prescribing unto Moses the form of conducting the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, expressly commanded the use of armorial signs, saying, 'The children of Israel shall pitch their tents every man by his own camp, and every man by his own *standard*.'"

Pious Wants.

Here is a curious advertisement, copied by the *Sporting Magazine* from an old English country paper: "Wanted.—For a sober family, a man of light weight, who fears the Lord, and can drive a pair of horses. He must occasionally wait at table, join in household prayer, look after the horses, and read a chapter in the Bible. He must, God willing, rise at 7 in the morning, and obey his master and mistress in all lawful commands; if he can dress hair, sing psalms, and play at cribbage, the more agreeable. N.B.—He must not be familiar with the maid-servants, lest the flesh should rebel against the spirit, and he should be induced to walk in the thorny paths of the wicked. Wages, 15 guineas a year."

And here is another from the *Daily Advertiser* of December 8, 1797: "Wanted.—For a wine merchant's house in the City, as porter, an athletic man, of a serious countenance, a good character, and the Lady Huntington's persuasion. Must attend prayers twice a day, and divine service four times on Sunday; be able to bear confinement; have the fear of God before his eyes; and be able to carry two hundredweight. Wages fourteen shillings a week and find himself. N.B.—A Yorkshireman will not be objected to, but no Irishman will be accepted. Apply to-morrow, at 1 o'clock, to T. F., at No. 14 Philpot-lane."

Scene: A field adjoining the Gas Works. Operations being carried on for a balloon ascent.

A Justice of the Peace, Town Councillor, and Director of the Gas Company contemplating scientific man preparing apparatus for taking observations during voyage.

J. P.—"I would not go up were it ever so."

S. M. (eyeing portly J. P.)—"I don't think *you* ever could."

J. P.—"I would not go up for all B——."

S. M.—"I would a dozen times for half B——, and less than that."

J. P.—"I call it tempting Providence."

S. M.—"That does not affect me at all. I am under the care of the Devil, and he takes care of his own. Providence is not to be depended on." (Exit J. P. with palms up.)

Happiness by the Way.

Those only are happy who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way. The enjoyments of life are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing, when they are taken *en passant*, without being made a principal object. Once make them so, and they are immediately felt to be insufficient. They will not bear a scrutinising examination. Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness, but some end external to it, as the purpose of life.—*J. S. Mill, "Autobiography," p. 142.*

Lies Against Infidels.

Calumny is the homage which dogmatism has ever paid to conscience. Even in the periods when the guilt of heresy was universally believed, the spirit of intolerance was only sustained by the diffusion of countless libels against the misbeliever, and by the systematic concealment of his virtues. How sedulously theologians at that time labored in this task, how unscrupulously they maligned and blackened every leading opponent of their views, how eagerly they fanned the flame of sectarian animosity, how uniformly they prohibited those whom they could influence from studying the writings or frequenting the society of men of different opinions from their own, is well known to all who are acquainted with ecclesiastical history.—*W. E. H. Lecky, "History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe," ed. ii., p. 298.*

Inspiration and Revelation.

The sacred records of the Israelites and the Christians attribute to each of these religions a supernatural origin. They hold it in common with the adherents of many, nay, of most other forms of religion. Zarathustra, Sakya-Muni, and Mohammed pass among their followers for *envoys* of the godhead, and, in the estimation of the Brahmins, the Vedas, and the laws of Manu, are holy, divine books. At the same time, it does not follow from this that the description of these forms of religion must start from that belief. No one expects or requires this for Buddhism or Islam; with what right, then, can it be demanded with respect to Judaism or Christianity? If we look upon those other religions as so many manifestations of the religious spirit of mankind, are we not bound to examine the Israelitish and the Christian religions also from the same point of view?—*Professor Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," p. 6.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Adam fell for an apple. We, his descendants, not unfrequently come to grief on a piece of orange peel.

The serpent left his trail in the Garden of Eden, but the general belief is that Eve's dress-pattern was too scanty to enable her to do likewise.

"Ah, my dear," said a loving wife to her husband, "I believe mine will be the fate of Abel." "How so, my love?" "Abel was killed with a club, and a *club* will kill me if you continue to go out every night."

It is related of a certain clergyman, who was noted for his long sermons with many divisions, that one day, when he was advancing among the teens, he reached at length a kind of resting-place in his discourse, when, pausing to take breath, and asking the question, "And what shall I say more?" a voice from the congregation earnestly responded: "Say Amen."

"Say, deacon, we've bin playing poker, but when we found it was two o'clock on Sunday morning we felt guilty and stopped, and now we're trying to square our conscience by turning it over to the church." "Good boys, good boys; you may have sinned, but you ain't lost. How much is there?" "Fifteen dollars and sixty cents." "Um, um, don't ye think ye'd better play a little longer?"

A Stirlingshire farmer had his household gathered around him one Sunday evening for family worship, and selected for reading Revelation xii. It fell to the turn of Tam, the elder son, to read the third verse, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold, a great red dragoon——" "Hout, tout!" cried the farmer; "Tam, that'll no dae. Wha ever heard o' a dragoon in heaven?" "Ay; but, father," said Tam, "ye maun mind it's ane o' the wonders."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, G. W. Foote. "Bradlaugh's Social and Political Teaching." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, "God's in His Heaven." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "A Night with George Meredith."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, J. McKillop (Fabian), "The Distribution of Wealth." (Free.) Monday, at 8, special entertainment and dance. (Tickets 3d. and 6d.) Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings. Thursday, Jan. 10, at 8, adjourned members' meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. Bernard Shaw, "The Religion of the Twentieth Century." (Preceded by vocal and instrumental music.) Thursday, at 7.30, science classes. (Free.)

EAST LONDON (Swabe's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road): 8, F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Bible."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, Notting-hill-gate): Monday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, W. J. Jupp, "The Love that Saves."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH (Mr. Stace's, 42 Vincent-street): 8, members' meeting—all should attend.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, concert and dramatic entertainment—"Boots at the Swan."

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 1, choir meets; 2.30, J. P. Gilmour, "Man's Place in Nature"; 6.30, "The Races of Mankind" (with lime-light illustrations).

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class—P. Shaughnessy, "The Fallacies of Materialism"; 6.30, W. G. Unkles, "The Beginnings of Language."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Ixley, "Common Sense."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 2.30, Charles Watts, "The French Revolution"; 6.30, "Why Should We Lead Moral Lives?"

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 3, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "Kant"; 7, John Walter, B.A., "Darwin Up to Date."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, E. Marx Aveling, "The Religion of Socialism"; 3, "Political Independence"; 6.30, "The Education of Children." (Admission 3d. and 6d.)

NELSON (Labor Hall, Railway-street): 3, Ernest Johnson, "Thoreau's *Walden*"; 6.30, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall): 11, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible"; 3, "Christianity and Social Life"; 7, "The Church and Science."

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 11, Sam Standring, "Should we Hang Murderers?" 3, "Jesus the Dead-Raiser"; 6.30, "Our English Counties." Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, debate with Mr. Smith (of Milnrow), "Is there a God?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, A. B. Wakefield, "Secularism: Is it a Success?" 7, John Morley: A Study—with special reference to Dr. Charles Berry's recent article respecting him."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Voltaire"; 7, "The Bible and Board Schools."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Jan. 13, Plymouth; 20, Chatham. Feb. 3, Edinburgh; 10, Dundee.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Feb. 3, New Brompton.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Jan. 28, Tyldesley.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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MRS. BESANT CORNERED.

MRS. BESANT's short letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, which is referred to in our paragraphs, promised to deal with the *Westminster Gazette* revelations three months hence. The month she mentioned was April, and of all days in that month the first would have been the most appropriate. On second thoughts, however, she decided to make at least a partial reply at once. It did not require much sagacity to see that such a long delay might prove fatal. Judgment might, in the meantime, go by default, or the public might then be tired of hearing about Theosophy, and utterly indifferent about the fate or the reputation of the Theosophical Society. Mrs. Besant has, therefore, forwarded her exculpation, or explanation, or whatever she likes to call it; and the long, verbose document was published on Tuesday. It occupied three columns and a half, and was printed in large type. Greater prominence could not have been given to it if it had been a manifesto by Mr. Gladstone in the midst of a national crisis. Yet it only concerns the intrigues and squabbles of a comparatively insignificant society. What a testimony to the public interest in quarrels and scandal! What a testimony, also, to the respectability of superstition! Mrs. Besant as a Secularist might have been honored with twenty or thirty lines of small type; Mrs. Besant as a Theosophist is allowed to riot over the principal page of a great daily newspaper. Look on this picture and on this; and then reflect on the boasted intelligence of this fag-end of the nineteenth century.

The *Westminster Gazette* calls Mrs. Besant's long letter "a very pitiful document," and speaks of its "absence of all clear reasoning," its "avoidance of all sharp issues," its "mental wobbling," and its "moral flabbiness." Feebleness and laxity are its chief characteristics. You may search it in vain for any trace of Mrs. Besant's old vivacity. It concludes with a long-winded bid for Christian sympathy. Mrs. Besant will imitate "the holy Initiate"—Jesus Christ to wit—who was accused of consorting with sinners. If her "brother" Judge has "simulated" and "duped" her, she will still work with him. She will ask him to resign, but if he declines to do so she will not "separate" herself from her "brother." Of course not. Brother Judge knows too much. He holds the key of the Mahatma business; and, without Mahatmas, the Theosophical Society is a hook without bait.

We will go through Mrs. Besant's verbiage to the very heart of the matter. More than three years ago, soon after Madame Blavatsky's death, Mrs. Besant went to the Hall of Science and delivered her farewell lecture. "Mr. Foote," she says, "had charged Madame Blavatsky with forging the *Occult World* letters, and I said I believed the various letters I had received in June, July, August to be genuine." We are now favored with a verbatim report of her startling announcement on this point:—

> "You have known me in this hall for sixteen and a half years. You have never known me lie to you. My worst public enemy through the whole of my life never cast a slur upon my integrity. Everything else they have sullied; but my truth never: and I tell you that since Madame Blavatsky left I have had letters in the same writing and from the same person. Unless you think that dead persons write—and I do not think so—this is rather a curious fact against the whole challenge of fraud. I do not ask you to believe me, but I tell you this on the faith of a record which has never been sullied by a conscious lie."

This extraordinary announcement caused a "sensation," as well it might. Mrs. Besant subsequently assured an interviewer that these Mahatma messages came "not through the post," but by "precipitation," and "in a way which some people would call miraculous."

Note the use to which these Mahatma letters were put. They were to vindicate Madame Blavatsky against the most formal and circumstantial charges of forgery; they were to prove the existence of Mahatmas; they were to establish the reality of "precipitation," which, in any honest use of the word, is miraculous; and they were to show, though of course indirectly, that the occult mantle of Madame Blavatsky had fallen upon Mrs. Besant. And all this tremendous edifice was based upon nothing whatever but Mrs. Besant's bare word! She submitted no evidence, she invited no investigation. Nay, the very suggestion of inquiry was met with a theatrical air of injured innocence—"Do you doubt my honor, sir? Am I not a lad; I" And the cream of the joke was, that the lady claimed to be, above all, "scientific."

Mrs. Besant is now compelled to admit—not only to the Theosophic inner circle, but to the world at large—that the letters she announced so oracularly were forgeries. She played the confidence-trick upon the public after it had been played upon herself. She used a forgery to prove that Madame Blavatsky was no forger. And the lady who acted in this ridiculous fashion, the lady who duped others by standing sponsor for a very vulgar deception, pretended to have access to sources of wisdom which are inaccessible to common mortals! She questioned the stars and fell into a pit.

Let there be no misunderstanding. What we state is not an inference, but Mrs. Besant's explicit admission. "On the letters," she says, "I was duped." And she adds, "I willingly take any blame on my gullibility that may be cast upon me."

How generous! How humble! But is it done "willingly"? Nothing of the kind. It is done under irresistible pressure. Mrs. Besant's attitude in the whole of this wretched business is an illustration of the old adage that you cannot touch pitch without being defiled. Behind every mystery there is always a cheat. Dabblers in the "occult" are sure to get more or less corrupted. They wink at trickery for the sake of "the cause"; they are deceived themselves, they deceive others; and when they are undeceived they try to keep silence, rather than have their vanity wounded or suffer a loss of infallibility.

Mrs. Besant was bound in honor to undeceive the very people she had deceived. It was her plain duty to go to the Hall of Science again and unsay what she had said. The ordeal would have been a painful one, but Mrs. Besant is always boasting of her readiness to suffer in the cause of truth.

In the ordinary sense of the word, we do not dispute Mrs. Besant's integrity. But what of her judgment? How can any sensible person place the slightest reliance upon it in future? She has said that Charles Bradlaugh, for some time before his death, had lost all confidence in her judgment; which simply means that he had the sagacity to see what subsequent events have painfully demonstrated.

G. W. FOOTE.

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THE APOSTLES' CREED.

RECENT attempts to introduce "The Apostles' Creed" into Board schools, and to obtain a decision from the Education Department that this is not in opposition to the fourteenth clause of the Elementary Education Act (33 & 34 Vict., 75), which provides that "no religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in the school," render it advisable to give fresh attention to that creed. In *The Crimes of Christianity* some orthodox authorities will be found cited who admit that the Apostles' Creed is one of the many instances of pious forgery imposed on the credulity of the Christian world.

Dean Stanley, in an article on "The Creed of the Early Christians," in the *Nineteenth Century* (August, 1880), wrote: "The creed of the Roman Church came to be called 'The Apostles' Creed' from the legend that the Apostles had each of them contributed a clause. It was successively enlarged by 'The Remission of Sins,' 'The Life Eternal,' then by 'The Resurrection of the Flesh,' then by 'The Descent into Hell' and 'The Communion of the Saints.'"

Principal Tulloch, who writes the article "Creeds" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (vol. vi., p. 561, 9th edition), says: "The growth of this creed is involved in considerable obscurity. The tradition which ascribes it to the apostles themselves, it is needless to say, has no authority, and does not reach beyond the fifth century, if it can be carried back so far. The definite source of the legend is supposed to be two sermons spuriously attributed to St. Augustine, and found in the appendix to his works." So that the ascription of this forgery to the apostles depends itself upon other forgeries, probably the work of the same monkish gang.

Professor Adolf Harnack, in Schaff's *Religious Encyclopædia*, says: "The text, Latin and Greek, first occurs in a manuscript from the eighth or ninth century of the *Psalterium Græcum et Romanum*, erroneously ascribed to Gregory the Great." So the earliest manuscript is bound up with another forgery. The legend is that the apostles made the creed, by each putting a clause. Thus Peter said, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty"; John, "Maker of Heaven and Earth"; James, "And in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord"; Andrew, "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary"; Philip, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried"; Thomas, "He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead"; Bartholomew, "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty"; Matthew, "From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead"; James, the son of Alphæus, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church"; Simon Zelotes, "The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins"; Jude, "The resurrection of the body"; Matthias, "The life everlasting." There are some disagreements in the various reports of the legend as to the authors of the various sections, but all agree, with monkish humor, in making the sceptical Thomas commit himself to the declaration that Jesus rose from the dead. "This legend," says Harnack, "is contemporary with the creed itself." Professor Harnack points out that the earlier forms of the Apostles' Creed omitted some of the most important dogmatic clauses. He says: "It is one of the best established results of history that the clause, born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, does not belong to the earliest gospel preaching."* His conclusion is, that the Apostles' Creed is "the baptismal confession of the Church of Southern Gaul, dating from the middle, or rather from the second half, of the fifth century."

J. Rawson Lumby, B.D., in *The History of the Creeds*, brings it later. He says (p. 171): "The exact words first occur in the Creed given by Pirminius, a bishop who labored in France and Germany about the middle of the eighth century. This date, A.D. 750, may therefore be assigned to the first appearance of the Apostolic Creed in its present form." Again he says (p. 173): "Though the Creed has been found in the precise form we now have it, it would be a mistake to suppose that it was of general acceptance at the date of Pirminius. Even down to the fifteenth century variations of the language are to be found."

M. Michel Nicolas, a learned French Protestant, in his investigations into *Le Symbole des Apôtres*, finds the document "without the least dogmatic authority," and the only use of it is to afford us a list of the successive formations of Christian belief during the ages which witnessed its birth and development (p. 334). He says: "Not only is the Apostles' Creed not the work of those venerable personages to whom legend attributes it, but it is even far from being a faithful scheme of their doctrines. On the one hand, we find in it doctrines which they did not know, and others of which they formed to themselves an entirely different conception; and, on the other hand, there are wanting in it many of those to which they attached an extreme importance [such as the near approach of the end of the world], and which they considered as constituting the very essence of Christianity" (p. 75).

One instance of contradiction will suffice: While the Apostles' Creed affirms the resurrection of the flesh, St. Paul declares flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

* *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1893.

WAS CHRIST A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORMER?

(Continued from page 32.)

PROFESSOR HUXLEY, in the *Nineteenth Century*, No. 144, pp. 178-186, points out that Christians have no right to force their idealistic portraits of Jesus on the unbiassed scientific world, whose business it is to study realities and to separate fiction from fact. The Professor's words are: "In the course of other inquiries, I have had to do with fossil remains, which looked quite plain at a distance, and became more and more indistinct as I tried to define their outline by close inspection. There was something there—something which, if I could win assurance about it, might mark a new epoch in the history of the earth; but, study as long as I might, certainty eluded my grasp. So has it been with me in my efforts to define the grand figure of Jesus as it lies in the primitive strata of Christian literature. Is he the kindly, peaceful Christ depicted in the catacombs? Or is he the stern judge who frowns above the altar of Saints Cosmas and Damianus? Or can he be rightly represented in the bleeding ascetic broken down by physical pain of too many mediæval pictures? Are we to accept the Jesus of the second or the Jesus of the fourth Gospel as the true Jesus? What did he really say and do? and how much that is attributed to him in speech and action is the embroidery of the various parties into which his followers tended to split themselves within twenty years of his death, when even the three-fold tradition was only nascent? . . . . If a man can find a friend, the hypostasis of all his hopes, the mirror of his ethical ideal, in the Jesus of any or all of the Gospels, let him live by faith in that ideal. Who shall, or can, forbid him? But let him not delude himself that his faith is evidence of the objective reality of that in which he trusts. Such evidence is to be obtained only by the use of the methods of science as applied to history and to literature, and it amounts, at present, to very little."

Equally emphatic are the remarks of John Vickers, the author of *The New Koran*, etc., who, in his work, *The Real Jesus*, on pp. 160, 161, writes: "Many popular preachers at the present day are accustomed to hold Jesus up to admiration as the special friend of the poor—that is, as the benefactor of the humble working class, and their representations to this effect are doubtless very generally believed. But a greater delusion respecting him than this can scarcely be imagined; for, however much he may have been disposed to favor those who forsook their industrial calling and led a vagrant life, his preaching and the course which he took were prejudicial to all who honestly earned their bread. He did nothing with his superior wisdom to develop the resources of the country and provide employment for the poor; all his efforts were directed to the unhinging of industry, the diminution of wealth, and the promotion of universal idleness and beggary. It was no part of his endeavor to see the peasant and the artisan

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better remunerated and more comfortably housed, for he despised domestic comforts as much as Diogenes, and believed that their enjoyment would disqualify people for obtaining the everlasting pleasures of Paradise. A provident working man who had managed to save enough for a few months' subsistence he would have classed with the covetous rich, and required him to give away in alms all that he had treasured as the indispensable condition of discipleship. On one occasion he is said to have distributed food liberally to the hungry multitude; but the food was none of his providing, since he was himself dependent on alms. Moreover, the recipients of his bounty were not a band of ill-fed laborers returning from work, not a number of distressed farmers who had suffered heavy losses from murrain or drought, but a loafing crowd who had followed him about from place to place, and spent the day in idleness. Such bestowment of largess would only tend to produce a further relaxation of industrial effort; it would induce credulous peasants to throw down their tools and follow the wonder-working prophet for the chance of a meal; they would see little wisdom in plodding at their tasks from day to day, like the ants and the bees, if people were to be fed by wandering about trustfully for what should turn up, as the idle, improvident ravens (Prov. vi. 6; Luke xii. 24)."

Many eminent Christian writers maintain that Jesus was a social reformer, because he is represented as having been in favor of dispensing with the private ownership of property, and also of people living together, enjoying what is called "a common repast." Professor Graetz, in the second volume of his able *History of the Jews*, devotes a chapter to the social practices which prevailed at the time when Jesus is alleged to have lived. On page 117 he states that Christianity was really an offshoot from the principles held by the Essenes, and that Christ inherited their aversion to Pharisaical laws, while he approved of their practice of putting their all into the common treasury. Further, like them, Jesus highly esteemed self-imposed poverty, and despised riches. In fact, we are told that the "community of goods, which was a peculiar doctrine of the Essenes, was not only approved, but enforced. . . . . The repasts they shared in common formed, as it were, the connecting link which attached the followers of Jesus to one another; and the alms distributed by the rich publicans relieved the poor disciples of the fear of hunger; and this bound them still more strongly to Jesus." But Graetz also adds that Christ thoroughly shared the narrow views held by the Judæans of his time, and that he despised the heathen world. Thus he said: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. vii. 6). If this is "Christian Socialism," it is far from being catholic in its nature. The Socialistic element of having "all things in common" was limited by Christ to one particular community; it lacked that universality necessary to all real social reforms. It was similar to his idea of the brotherhood of man. Those only were his brothers who believed in him. He desired no fellowship with those who did not accept his faith; hence he exclaimed: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John xv. 6); "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given" (John xvii. 9); "But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God" (Luke xii. 9); "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). This may be the teaching of theology, but it is not indicative of a broad humanity, neither would it, if acted upon, tend to promote the social welfare of mankind.

Professor Graham, M.A., of Belfast College, contends, in his work, *Socialism: Old and New*, that Christ taught "Communism" when he preached "Blessed be ye poor," when "he repeatedly denounced" the rich, and when he recommended the wealthy young man to voluntarily surrender his property to the poor. The Professor also says: "In spite of certain passages to the contrary, pointing in a different direction, the Gospels are pervaded with the spirit of Socialism"; but he adds: "It is not quite State Socialism, because the better society was to be brought about by the voluntary union of believers." He admits, however, that "the ideal has hitherto been found impossible; but let not any say that it does not exist in the gospels—that Christ did not contemplate an earthly society." Now this last point is just what could be fairly urged, if the Gospels were trustworthy. There can be no reasonable doubt that the disregard of mundane duties would be the logical sequence of acting up to many of the teachings ascribed to Jesus. For instance, he said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36). "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John xii. 25). "I am not of the world" (John xvii. 9). "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" (Matthew vi. 25, 34). "If any man comes to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26). "Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew xix. 29). Even the disciple who wished to bury his father was advised by Christ to forego that duty of affection, for "Jesus said, Follow me; let the dead bury the dead."

The fact is, Christ was a spiritualiser, and not a social reformer. If he had been to his age what Bacon and Newton were to theirs, and what Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and Tyndall have been to the present generation; if he had written a book teaching men how to avoid the miseries of life; if he had revealed the mysteries of nature, and exhibited the beauties of the arts and sciences, what an advantage he would have conferred upon mankind, and what an important contribution he would have given to the world towards solving the problems of our present social wrongs and inequalities. But the usefulness of Jesus was impaired by the idea which he entertained, that this world was but a state of probation, wherein the human family were to be prepared for another and a better home, where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

We have thus seen the views of the scientist, the historian, and the professor, upon the subject under consideration; it will now be interesting to learn what one of the successors to the apostles has to say in reference to the same question. B. F. Westcott, D.D., the present Bishop of Durham, in his work, *Social Aspects of Christianity*, says: "Of all places in the world, the Abbey, I think, proclaims the social gospel of Christ with the most touching eloquence. . . . If I am a Christian, I must bring within the range of my religion every interest and difficulty of man, 'for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'"

This is not by any means correct, for many other "foundations," which have nothing to do with Christ, have been laid, and upon them systems, some good and some bad, have been built. For instance, there are Individualism, Socialism, material standards of progress, unlimited competition, and the application of science. These are "other foundations" that men have had apart altogether from Christ. But the solution to present social evils, Dr. Westcott considers, is to be found only in the Christian faith. He says: "We need to show the world the reality of spiritual power. We need to gain and exhibit the idea that satisfies the thoughts, the aspirations, the aims of men straining towards the light." He admits that science has increased our power and resources; but, he adds, it "cannot open the heavens and show the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Of course it cannot; for science has nothing to do with the impossible, or with the wild speculations of theology. In the *Social Aspects of Christianity*, as presented by the Bishop, it would be difficult, indeed, to recognise the principles of true Socialism. Moreover, as it is admitted by him that science has increased our "power and resources," it is a proof that Jesus must have been a poor reformer, when we remember that he did nothing whatever to aid this strong element of modern progress.

From the references which I have here made to some of the ablest writers of to-day, it will be seen how Jesus is estimated by them. I now propose to analyse the various statements which, according to the Four Gospels, were uttered by him, that have any bearing upon the political and social questions of our time. It will then be seen whether Christ has any claim to be considered a political and social reformer.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

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THE OLD AND THE NEW.

Our fathers did the best they could. They believed in the supernatural, and they thought that sacrifice and prayer, fasting and weeping, would induce the supernatural to give them sunshine, rain, and harvest—long life in this world, and eternal joy in another. To them, God was an absolute monarch, quick to take offence, sudden in anger, terrible in punishment, jealous, hateful to his enemies, generous to his favorites. They believed also in the existence of an evil God—almost the equal of the other God in strength, and a little superior in cunning. Between these two Gods was the soul of man, like a mouse between two paws.

Both of these Gods inspired fear. Our fathers did not quite love God, nor quite hate the Devil; but they were afraid of both. They really wished to enjoy themselves with God in the next world, and with the Devil in this. They believed that the course of nature was affected by their conduct; that floods and storms, diseases, earthquakes, and tempests were sent as punishments, and that all good phenomena were rewards.

Everything was under the control and direction of supernatural powers. The air, the darkness, were filled with angels and devils; witches and wizards planned and plotted against the pious—against the true believers. Eclipses were produced by the sins of the people, and the unusual was regarded as the miraculous. In the good old times Christendom was an insane-asylum, and insane priests and prelates were the keepers. There was no science. The people did not investigate—did not think. They trembled and believed. Ignorance and superstition ruled the Christian world.

At last a few began to observe, to make records, and to think.

It was found that eclipses came at certain intervals, and that their coming could be foretold. This demonstrated that the actions of men had nothing to do with eclipses. A few began to suspect that earthquakes and storms had natural causes, and happened without the slightest reference to mankind.

Some began to doubt the existence of evil spirits, or the interference of good ones in the affairs of the world. Finding out something about astronomy, the great number, the certain and continuous motions of the planets, and the fact that many of them were vastly larger than the earth—ascertaining something about the earth—the slow development of forms—the growth and distribution of plants, the formation of islands and continents, the parts played by fire, water, and air through countless centuries—the kinship of all life—fixing the earth's place in the constellation of the sun—by experiment and research discovering a few secrets of chemistry—by the invention of printing and the preservation and dissemination of facts, theories, and thoughts, they were enabled to break a few chains of superstition—to free themselves a little from the dominion of the supernatural, and to set their faces towards the light. Slowly the number of investigators and thinkers increased—slowly the real facts were gathered—the sciences began to appear—the old beliefs grew a little absurd—the supernatural retreated, and ceased to interfere in the ordinary affairs of men.

Schools were founded, children were taught, books were printed, and the thinkers increased. Day by day confidence lessened in the supernatural, and day by day men were more and more impressed with the idea that man must be his own protector, his own providence. From the mists and darkness of savagery and superstition emerged the dawn of the natural. A sense of freedom took possession of the mind, and the soul began to dream of its power. On every side were invention and discovery, and bolder thought. The Church began to regard the friends of science as its foes. Theologians resorted to chain and fagot—to mutilation and torture.

The thinkers were denounced as heretics and Atheists—as the minions of Satan and the defamers of Christ. All the prejudice, ignorance, and malice of superstition were aroused, and all united for the destruction of investigation and thought. For centuries this conflict was waged. Every outrage was perpetrated, every crime committed by the believers in the supernatural. But, in spite of all, the disciples of the natural increased, and the power of the Church waned. Now the intelligence of the world is on the side of the natural. Still the conflict goes on—the supernatural constantly losing, and the natural constantly gaining. In a few years the victory of science over superstition will be complete and universal.

So there have been for many centuries two philosophies of life: one in favor of the destruction of the passions—the lessening of wants—and absolute reliance on some higher power; the other, in favor of the reasonable gratification of the passions—the increase of wants, and their supply by industry, ingenuity, and invention, and the reliance of man on his own efforts. Diogenes, Epictetus, Socrates, to some extent Buddha, and Christ, all taught the first philosophy. All despised riches and luxury—all were the enemies of art and music—the despisers of good clothes and good food and good homes. They were the philosophers of poverty and rags—of huts and hovels—of ignorance and faith. They preached the glories of another world, and the miseries of this. They derided the prosperous, the industrious, those who enjoyed life, and reserved heaven for beggars.

This philosophy is losing authority, and now most people are anxious to be happy here in this life. Most people want food, and roof, and raiment—books, and pictures, and luxury, and leisure. They believe in developing the brain—in making servants and slaves of the forces of Nature.

Now the intelligent of the world have cast aside the teachings, the philosophy of the ascetics. They no longer believe in the virtue of fasting and self-torture. They believe that happiness is the only good, and that the time to be happy is now, here, in this world. They no longer believe in the rewards and punishments of the supernatural. They believe in consequences, and that the consequences of bad actions are evil, and the consequences of good actions are good.

They believe that man, by investigation, by reason, should find out the conditions of happiness, and then live and act in accordance with such conditions. They do not believe that earthquakes, or tempests, or volcanoes, or eclipses are caused by the conduct of men. They no longer believe in the supernatural. They do not regard themselves as the serfs, servants, slaves, or favorites of a celestial king. They feel that many evils can be avoided by intelligence, and for that reason they believe in the development of the brain. The school-house is their church, and the university their cathedral. The teacher, the interpreter of Nature, is their preacher, and all the truths that have been demonstrated constitute their creed.

They believe in the gospel of Intelligence, and they wish to save the world from ignorance, superstition, and misery.

The New Religion satisfies the heart and brain.

The Old Religion is cruel, childish, and absurd. The Old Religion was in perfect harmony with a flat world, with a little heaven above it, and a large hell beneath. The Old Religion had a powerful savage, an immense barbarian for a god, and another savage for a devil. Man at his best was a poor slave, whose happiness and misery dwelt in the smiles and frowns of these supernatural monsters.

The New Religion has destroyed these phantoms. The universe is no longer governed by a tyrant, and man at last is free.

The Supernatural has almost gone, but the Natural remains—the Gods have faded, but Man is here.

—*Truth Seeker Annual.* R. G. Ingersoll.

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(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

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(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

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THE DRAMA IN 1894.

THE Freethinker is by nature concerned with all that tends to raise and enliven and beautify life. And the drama is one of the most powerful of the culture-influences of the present day. The stage has become the vehicle for teaching, and often discussion; on it are thrashed out some of the most important problems of our social life. And, much as the problem-play has been decried, much as we have been appealed to to relinquish the strong meats of Ibsen and Pinero and Grundy for the milk-sop of the Adelphi or the semi-music-hall burlesque, yet experience has shown that the "problem-play" has come to stay. It may, therefore, be not out of place to take a brief look round at the stage output of the year that has just closed.

The first thing to remark is that there has been no play produced during 1894 to rank with "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." That work, by common consent, has been adjudged first place. Even when all deductions have been made, when we have agreed that the main cause of Mrs. Tanqueray's wreck was not that which the author evidently intended to be the cause—nay, even when we have perceived that the moral which the play was popularly supposed to teach was vitiated by the author's creation of the happy, self-satisfied Lady Orreys; when all has been said, it still remains that "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" represents alike the high-water mark of Mr. Pinero's genius and of the modern English drama. But if nothing to equal Mr. Pinero's play has been seen, it has had its effect. As a critic in one of the reviews recently remarked, we seem destined as one result to be treated to a series of "women with pasts," personally conducted across the footlights by hands less skilful than Mr. Pinero's. Indeed, it would be safe to say that a play is not now considered complete without a Magdalen somewhere or other in the cast. There does not seem any very obvious reason why this should be the case. But the success of a master will always beget imitators.

Nothing, however, has come from Mr. Pinero's pen during 1894. He is engaged on a new piece to which everyone is looking forward. But if Mr. Pinero has been silent, others have been prolific. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has produced two notable plays, "The Masqueraders" at the St. James's, and "The Case of Rebellious Susan" at the Criterion. "The Masqueraders" gained the popular favor mainly through the melodramatic card scene, in which David Remon, a dreamy astronomer and sincere lover, plays a game for the woman he loves with the husband who maltreats her and whom she hates. There was not very much else of great interest in the play; though the upshot of "The Masqueraders" illustrates, at least to us, a singular hesitancy, which seems constitutional in Mr. Jones, to face the logical issues of his plots—a tendency to hedge at the last moment in deference to Mrs. Grundy. In the reviews and magazines there is no more strong-worded opponent of Mrs. Grundy than Mr. H. A. Jones. Passage after passage we might quote in which he has brilliantly assailed the cast-iron conventions and social shams that hamper art and life. Yet, when he comes to write his plays, his courage seems to ooze out at the pen-point; it is doubtless his temperament, for there is no reason for believing that he writes with his eye on the box-office.

Take, for instance, some of his recent plays. In "The Masqueraders" David Remon is truly the husband in spirit of Dulcie Larondie. She is tied to a drunken, gambling, dissolute brute, whom she hates, and even loathes, because of the odious suggestions he makes to her; on the other hand, she apparently returns Remon's love. Remon is invited by her husband to play, and the husband accepts Remon's bargain. Remon wins, and Dulcie goes with him to his observatory. Now, the natural result would be for Remon and Dulcie Larondie to live together happily as man and wife. The social conventions would, of course, be shocked; it would be adultery. But it would be the healthy, sane, proper ending; better a union like that than the sham union of Dulcie and Sir Bruce Skene. Yet Mr. Jones higgles. At the last he makes David's brother fetch him away, telling him that the platitudes which Dulcie's sister talks represent the "voice of God." Mr. Jones, in fact, seems to have been afraid to let David Remon and Dulcie live together. It would have been too outrageous.

In the same way Mr. Jones made an inconsequential play out of "The Bauble Shop" last year. The thesis—avowed thesis—of the play was that a politician who "went wrong" (in the conventional sense) was often very much better than the man who denounced him; and it was intended to illustrate the large amount of hypocrisy that enters into "purity" crusades. But Lord Clivebrook and Jessie Keber were as innocent, as far as one could judge, as the most zealous Vigilance Society could desire. The result was that all the pull-devil-pull-baker business about nothing made a farce out of what might have been a good play. Mr. Jones again was afraid; and even in his last work the same thing has to be said. Lady Susan and her calf-lover are enveloped in a mystic haze. Mr. Jones takes as the text of the play: "If women may not retaliate openly, they will retaliate secretly—and lie." But there is the greatest doubt as to what happened on that Sunday afternoon in Cairo, so much doubt that Mr. Labouchere headed a clever article in *Truth* "Is Susan Really Rebellious?" Mr. Jones seems again to be hesitant. And, as there is no compulsion on him to deal with the problems of sex relationship in his plays, it is all the more surprising that he should voluntarily get himself or his characters into such positions.

However, to turn to another dramatist of rank. Mr. Sydney Grundy must be congratulated on having scored several successes during the year. "An Old Jew," at the beginning, was a comparative failure, but "A Bunch of Violets" at the Haymarket, and "The New Woman" at the Comedy, went splendidly. "A Bunch of Violets" dealt with the career of a financial trickster, *a la* Jabez, who trades on his goody-goody surroundings and his charitable reputation to swindle large sums out of a blunt Yorkshireman, who had not so much portable virtue. Amongst the many admirable societies to which Sir Philip Marchant belongs is the Sunday Anti-Enjoyment League. Ultimately, having been proved to be a bigamist, he commits suicide. So ends the man of sanctity.

The other success of Mr. Grundy's, "The New Woman,' was a very clever caricature. The "old woman," who glories in "obeying" her husband and so forth, is held up in contrast to her "new" rival, much to the disadvantage of the latter. Mr. Grundy hits off the extravagances of the new movement admirably—the ladies who write books called *Men the Betrayer*, and *Naked but Not Ashamed*, and *The Ethics of Marriage*. All this hitting was very clever; but, of course, it was caricature. In order to plead for the removal of unjust laws and conventions, which even still restrict women's freedom, it is in no wise necessary to bounce about like a savage, wear ridiculous costumes, and talk brilliant nonsense to everybody who doesn't want to hear you. Nor is there any reason why a woman might not have all the grace and charm and sweetness of Marjorie; and a good deal of the sweet and charm, we fancy, was Miss Emery's nature rather than Mr. Grundy's art—without being a giddy, ignorant, frivolous little doll. But Mr. Grundy's play, of course, was not meant seriously as an attack on the ideals that underlie what has come to be called the new woman movement.

And we suppose we must add to Mr. Grundy's list "Slaves of the Ring," produced on December 29 at the Garrick; which makes Mr. Grundy the most prolific playwright of the year. "Slaves of the Ring" is a great play, too, and it is a realist play—realist in the best sense of the word. For true realism need not, and does not, perpetually concern itself with the dung-heap and the cess-pool; these things certainly are part of life, and in the rebound against the old it is well to emphasise that they exist. But there is the realism of "Slaves of the Ring" that refuses to end well and make everyone live happily ever after. "You know well enough that things don't really happen like that," says Ibsen's Petra. Tragedies are not so easily settled in real life as they are on the Surrey-side stage.

Mr. Beerbohm Tree has not had a very successful year. There was a pretty little fairy story, "Once upon a Time," which really, as an allegory illustrating the make-believe of the multitude on matters of which they are ignorant, was charming. The crowd who pretend to see the king's fine clothes when really there are none, and persuade themselves they see lest their fellows should think them fools or knaves—all this hit popular superstition to the heart. But the play was not a success, which, under the circumstances, is not surprising. And Mr. Tree also produced a moderately successful play of Robert Buchanan's,

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called "The Charlatan," which was directed at Theosophy. There was a Madame Obnoskin, a Russian adventuress, and a hysterical young lady who was shown a vision of her father by occult means, and so on. But it was more or less flat. Indeed, it is curious that Mr. Buchanan, master as he is of a pungent, full-bodied, biting style of prose, is yet not very convincing as a dramatist.

But one cannot omit in these columns to thank Mr. Tree for his reviving, and to some extent popularising, Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People"—perhaps the most defiantly Freethought play put on the English stage. It is not likely that allegories, and, least of all, such an one as this, will ever reach great popularity. But Mr. Tree's excellent personation of the heroic Stockmann fighting a world in arms, the perfect revelation—as in a flash—of how every "vested interest" is enlisted against an unpopular truth, and the demonstration that truth is even strongest and most feared when it is most attacked; all this won thousands of admirers. Take, for instance, this one extract from Stockmann's speech to the public meeting—a speech that ought to be circulated almost as a Freethought tract, and then judge of the effect of the performance. We quote from Mrs. Marx Aveling's translation in Mr. Archer's edition:—

Dr. Stockmann: "I'm going to revolt against the lie that truth resides in the majority. What sort of truths do the majority rally round? Truths that are decrepit with age. When a truth is so old as that it's in a fair way to become a lie, gentlemen. (Laughter and jeers.) Yes, yes, you may believe me or not, as you please; but truths are by no means the wiry Methusalehs some people think them. A normally-constituted truth lives—let me say—as a rule, seventeen or eighteen years; at the outside twenty; seldom longer. And truths so stricken in years are always shockingly thin; yet it's not till then that the majority takes them up and recommends them to society as wholesome food. I can assure you there's not much nutriment in that sort of fare; you may take my word as a doctor for that. All these majority truths are like last year's salt pork; they're like rancid, mouldy ham, producing all the moral scurvy that devastates society."

Such is a sample of the style, not very eloquent or polished perhaps, with no brilliant epigrams or daintily-worded commonplaces, but plain, direct, straight to the point, as becomes the character who utters it. For Stockmann is not one of your yellow drawing-room butterflies; he is a type of the sterlingly honest, clear-eyed thinker. And one owes some gratitude to the manager who put such a play on his stage.

But we have transgressed beyond our limits, we fear. We can only say, in conclusion, that in the drama too we can trace the influence of what we have called the Freethought spirit. We are leaving the old, worn-out, rosy-colored but false style behind. We want to see life as it is, not as in an imaginary world imaginary characters might be; we want real men and women on the stage, not fairies and phantoms, who talk a language that never was talked, and live a life that never was lived. And one has only to glance at the drift of things to see how far we are moving towards that ideal. Frederick Ryan.

God Sends the Little Babies.

They say, "God sends the little babies." Of all the dastardly revolting lies men tell to suit themselves, I hate that most. I suppose my father said so when he knew he was dying of consumption, and my mother when she knew she had nothing to support me on, and they created me to be fed from stranger hands. Men do not say God sends the books, or the newspaper articles, or the machines they make, and then sigh and shrug their shoulders, and say they can't help it. Why do they say so about other things? Liars! "God sends the little babies!" the small children say so earnestly. They touch the little stranger reverently who has just come from God's far country, and they peep about the room to see if not one white feather has dropped from the wing of the angel that brought him. On their lips the phrase means much; on all others it is a deliberate lie. Noticeable, too, when people are married, though they should have sixty children, they throw the whole onus on God. When they are not, we hear nothing about God's having sent them. When there has been no legal contract between the parents, who sends the little children then? The devil, perhaps! Odd that some should come from hell and some from heaven, and yet all look so much alike when they get here.—*Olive Schreiner, "The Story of an African Farm."*

ACID DROPS.

Parnell is said to have referred to Tim Healy as "the dirtiest little hound in all his pack." When the split came Tim did his best—and it was a very good best—to justify this description. The language he used about his old "chief" was simply disgusting; and still more disgusting the language he used about the unfortunate woman who shared in Parnell's calamity. Tim was always "on the make." All his variations have been determined by one motive. Years ago, at a South London meeting in favor of Home Rule, after a speech by Mr. Foote, Tim Healy said that Irishmen had watched his brave struggle for freedom with much sympathy. The remark served the turn at the moment, which was all it was intended to do. Tim is now on quite another tack. He is the most conspicuous champion of the Catholic hierarchy. His latest denunciation is launched at men like Michael Davitt and T. P. O'Connor for opposing Cardinal Vaughan's orders to the London Catholics to support the Diggleites in the School Board elections. Cardinal Vaughan, Tim says, was "simply carrying out the Gospel and the mandate of his Master." Tim Healy is shrewd. Now that Parnell is gone, he sees that the Church is the greatest force in Ireland, and he means to be on the winning side.

Mrs. Besant has left Australia and gone to India. We understand there are Mahatmas somewhere in that part of the world, and Mrs. Besant should really bring one home with her. It is all very well to say, as she does in her hasty letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, that she is a member of the Theosophic inner circle, which is pledged to secrecy like the Freemasons. The world at large—except in relation to its inherited religions—is sane enough, in the long run, to turn away from a curtain that is never lifted, and to say, "There is nothing behind it."

Mrs. Besant does not appear to see that she is playing the old confidence trick, which is really the basis of Paley's defence of the Christian miracles. Have I not been before the public for twenty years? she asks, and have I ever been detected in falsehood? Just in the same way, Paley argued that the Apostles were good men and true, that they suffered hardships in maintaining what they taught; therefore they were entitled to be believed, and, therefore, it is a fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. All this is logical hocus-pocus. Honesty in a witness does not prove the accuracy of his evidence. Every sensible person recognises this in daily life, and to ignore it in religion or philosophy is to hand one's self over to the dominion of the most vulgar credulity.

"I am a lady" is the burden of all Mrs. Besant's explanations and defences. The *Westminster Gazette* was unchivalrous in opening its batteries on the Theosophical Society while she was at the antipodes! It does not occur to her that it might be asserted, *per contra*, that she had gone off in order to be out of the way when the attack was delivered. Newspapers must deal with matters of immediate interest. They cannot wait until Mrs. Besant tells them it is convenient for her that they should begin.

High Churchmen, last week, were celebrating the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the execution of that pedantic bigot and callous persecutor, Archbishop Laud. Relics of this unfortunate man of God were publicly exhibited—such as his chair, his chalice, and his red skull-cap. The exhibition would have been far more interesting if it had included the sword of Oliver Cromwell, with the expressive if inelegant inscription, "I settled the blooming lot."

It was under Laud that Dr. Leighton, a Scotch divine, father of Archbishop Leighton, was punished for writing *Zion's Zeal against Prelacy*. For this offence he was fined £10,000, imprisoned for life, put in the pillory, whipped, and after whipping had one of his ears cut off, one side of his nose slit, and was branded on the forehead with "S. S." (sower of sedition); after this his other ear was cropped and the other nostril slit. Laud pulled off his cap when this merciless sentence was pronounced, and gave God thanks for it.

Hugh Price Hughes is back again, and the judges are once more complaining of perjury in Wales.

Hughes had a great reception at St. James's Hall on returning from his six months' holiday. By arrangement the meeting stood up and sang the Doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Did they include "The Atheist Shoemaker"?

A very pious man at Thorncliffe Collieries, near Barnsley, is in the habit of carrying God's Word about with him.

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Recently he was missed for two days, and when he was discovered his only companions were the Bible and a keen frost. The skin of his legs came off with his stockings. Of course we have all read of the Bible stopping bullets on a battle-field, but it doesn't seem able to counteract the cold.

The ancient wheeze about the pious soldier who was saved through a bullet lodging in the Bible which he carried in his pocket right over his sympathetic heart was improved on the other day by a Wellington evangelist. According to this man's story, a private, who was serving in Havelock's army when it entered Lucknow, had the usual Scripture buttoned inside his waistcoat and adjacent to his stomach, and while thus encumbered he was rushed by two mutineers—one in front with a gun, and one on the flank carrying a large axe. The Briton's own rifle was empty, and he felt that it was all up with him. Therefore, he uttered a silent prayer, and was going to lay on with the butt-end; but at that thrilling moment the man in front fired, and the bullet glanced off the Bible and killed the person with the axe; and, before the gunner could reload, the British soldier leaped on him and pounded him to death. This, said the speaker, was another proof that Providence was a great institution; and the audience evidently believed him. The average mission audience, in fact, will believe anything.

John Angell Gibbons, a well-known evangelist, named after Angell James, is a fallen angel. He was, for a considerable time, superintendent of a mission, held at Pin Mill Brow, Higher Ardwick, and in that capacity obtained a credit account at Mr. John Heywood's, the well-known publishing firm. From time to time he visited Heywood's place, and was detected stealing. When his house was searched three hundred and sixty new books, one hundred and twenty-eight of which were identified as stolen from Heywood's, were discovered. His counsel gave him a high character for religion, and contended he was a victim of kleptomania. The magistrate thought six months' imprisonment a proper prescription for the evangelist's disease.

Miss Tessa L. Kelso, librarian of the Public Library of Los Angeles, California, has sued the Rev. J. W. Campbell, of that city, for praying for her in public. She is said to be a "worthy young woman," and recently advised the purchase of certain books for the library. The offensive prayer was to this effect: "O Lord, vouchsafe thy saving grace to the librarian of the Los Angeles City Library, and cleanse her from all sin and make her worthy of her office." The prayer has been declared to be slanderous, and Miss Kelso demands $5,000 for "the defamation of her character in public."

Those who like to see Bibliolaters striving to squirm gracefully will enjoy the following from a Christian Evidence writer on the stoppage of the sun when Joshua fought the Amorites: "The whole narrative is perfectly consonant with reason and experience. Joshua makes a forced march all night to the relief of Gibeon, and when the rising sun and waning moon both have influence he makes the attack on the besieging army. He requires a continuance of the light, and the great God of the universe, in whom we believe, hears his petition by bringing natural forces to operate for the desired purpose at the precise time required."

This is not the best of it. The following is still more delicious: "An analogy is given in the action of Sir Garnet Wolsey at Tel-el-Kebir. He, like Joshua, wanted neither moonlight nor sunlight, but a mixture of both, so that the enemy could not see his approach. A mistake of half an hour would have been fatal to the whole British force, and a similar error in the case of Joshua would have resulted in the total annihilation of the Israelitish army. So closely do the two cases parallel each other that one is strongly inclined to think that the British Commander specially took Joshua as his guide and pattern."

We have reason to believe (says the *English Churchman*) that Cardinal Vaughan is pushing the claims of the Papacy in every department of English life. Information reaches us that he now holds courts, and exercises judicial functions. On one recent occasion he sat in great state, wearing the well-known historic robes of a Papal prince, and having the assistance of two of Her Majesty's County Court judges as legal assessors.

Cardinal Vaughan got his secretary, Monsignor Johnson, to say that he only acted as arbitrator in disputes between Catholics who loyally accepted his decision as final. This, however, appears not to have been the case with Mrs. Alice Laidlaw, who sued Father Fleming for £100. The Cardinal arbitrated in the priest's favor, but Judge French at the Bow County Court decided in favor of the lady, with costs.

"Peter Lombard," in the *Church Times*, laments the growing neglect of "kowtowing" in Church at every mention of the Lord's name. "Merely as a protest against Unitarianism, the wholesome practice should not be dropped." The inculcation of bowing is part of the game of inducing people to order themselves lowly and reverently.

The Jewish Rabbi at Hampstead has been insisting on the necessity of strict observance of the Sabbath. The priests of all religions are the same. They want the day reverenced and observed on which they come to the front. The motto of these would-be monopolists is, "No competition with our business."

John Burns has returned from America full of admiration for the public school system. He says the classes are smaller and better managed than at home. A correspondent of the *Times*, however, says that the common school system is largely going down before the Church, and especially the Roman Catholic, schools. It seems that, while 13,000,000 scholars are enrolled, there is only a daily average attendance of 8,329,234, and that the increase of scholars does not keep pace with the population of the States.

Christians are laggards in the path of secular progress, but when they come to a point which Freethinkers have long passed they generally ejaculate a lusty cock-a-doodle-doo. Some of our readers, perhaps many of them, will remember that Charles Bradlaugh once called a demonstration in Hyde Park to protest against the English slaughter of the Egyptians. The ministers of religion were dumb dogs; few of them whined, fewer still barked, against the iniquity; for the poor Egyptians were foreigners, and, worse still, Mohammedans—followers of that "Arab thief," as the Wesleys called him in their hymn-book. It was the Atheist who raised a voice on behalf of humanity, and all he got for his pains was brutal ill-treatment, which nearly robbed him of his life.

Peace principles have made much progress since then. "Now," says the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, "the very idea of war is utterly loathsome, except as a patriotic act." Surely there is much force in that "now." Why was it not always so, in the old days of Christian supremacy? Was it not Wordsworth, the Christian poet, who sang!—

> But Thy most dreaded instrument
> In working out a pure intent
> Is man arrayed for mutual slaughter;
> Yea, Carnage is thy daughter.

Mr. Hughes might also read a famous sermon by the great Baptist preacher, Robert Hall, addressed to soldiers who were going forth to fight the French. Such a sermon could not be preached "now." But we owe no thanks for this to Christianity. We owe them to the general spread of common sense and humanity.

The good Christians of Liverpool cannot let the Moslems of that city perform their devotions in peace. The *Crescent* reports that on Sunday evening last the snow lay heavily on the ground, and when the Muezzin, Brother A. Hassan Radford, went to give the Azan, a mob of Christians, who had collected near the Mosque, rushed forward and pelted the "caller to prayer" with snowballs. He was struck on various parts of the body, and one of his hands was severely cut open by the sharp edge of a stone which had been enclosed in one of the snowballs. Some hundreds of missiles were thrown, and many of them contained stones.

The male big drummer and the female cornet player of a Dumfriesshire Salvation Army band having simultaneously disappeared, an elopement is inferred. The drummer's wife is left lamenting.

It appears from Mr. Bramwell Booth's just-published account of *Work in Darkest England* that the financial aspect of Booth's much-vaunted scheme is very unsatisfactory. The Farm Colony has incurred a loss during the past year of £2,445 6s. 4d., and the City Colony of £4,423 12s. 4d., although the Food and Shelter section boasts a profit of £1,179; though it may be doubted, after the recent revelations of the poor woman who died from cold and exposure after paying twopence for her bunk, if the General can place this profit to his heavenly, or, at any rate, to his humanitarian, credit. The Hanbury-street Shelter, where the recent scandal took place, shows a profit of £6. The item of "firewood" also shows a respectable profit; but we are reminded of the wood-choppers who have complained of being driven to the workhouse because Booth spoiled their trade.

The curious fact, which, however, will not surprise readers of *Salvation Syrup*, is that, speaking generally, the Salvation Army, or Mr. Booth, has earned profits on such charitable schemes as the shelters, where losses might be expected, and provided for by generosity; but has incurred very marked losses on the industrial experiments, which can only

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pauperise unless they succeed financially. The accounts for 1894 show that, as a social experiment, the Salvation Army has been no more able to turn the "out of works" into profitable workers than before. The work done, therefore, can only have a bad effect on wages and prices in the ordinary labor market. And all there is to set against this is the record of an experiment.

In allusion to the story of John Morley going to prayers and joining in the singing of hymns "heartily and reverently," as told by Dr. Berry, a correspondent cites a passage from Morley's book on *Compromise* (p. 170), in which he says such conduct in others "is very edifying to all who are not in the secret, and who do not know that they are acting a part, and making a mock both of their own reason and their own probity, merely to please persons whose delusions they pity and despise from the bottom of their hearts. On the surface there is nothing to distinguish this kind of conduct from the grossest hypocrisy." We suppose the right honorable gentleman, now he is a statesman, has got under the surface.

We read in the *Christian World* that the Rev. David Thomas, the Grand Old Man of the *Homilist*, is "gone to his grave, like a shock of corn fully ripe." We never heard of a shock of corn going to its grave, but we presume that the Rev. David Thomas is dead and buried. "No thinker of the present century," we are told, "supplied so many thoughts for pulpit use." "He went in for pith and point and power." Naturally we looked out for a sample. And here it is—a bit of his versification; Martin Tupper himself couldn't call it poetry:—

> Never may sect-zeal pervert them,
> Narrow creed or priestly rite;
> God guard our pulpits from all bigots,
> And grant our preachers Christly light.

This is described as "his own characteristic prayer." What a "thinker"! What "pith" and "point" and "power"!

Christians are in communication with God Almighty, but they are no better at prophecy than other people. Dr. Parker and Canon Scott Holland have both given a glimpse of the twentieth century in *Great Thoughts*—worthy receptacle of the ideas of such tremendous personages. And what is the result? We quote from a Christian paper: "Everything that the one confidently declares is going to happen, the other, with equal confidence, assures the world is exactly what will not take place."

The Rev. Mr. Collect says he believes in personal religion. He pronounces it "purse an all."

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool (Councillor W. H. Watts) has expressed the opinion that there is nothing for the unemployed but to "let them go to the devil." This has evoked much feeling and controversy. The Lord Mayor is a Liberal, a Baptist, and evidently a follower of the "Manchester School." He was one of those who voted against granting the use of the Picton Lecture Hall for the N.S.S. Conference. In what does his "Liberalism" consist?

The *Westminster Gazette*, noticing the centenary of the London Missionary Society, concludes by mentioning that "the missionaries prepared the way and made the path straight for the Imperial authority." This looks much as if the chief use of Christianity was to make the running for Mammon.

The religious people are much elated because the Emperor of China, having heard that the Empress had been presented with a Bible by some Christian ladies, also sent and bought a "Jesus religion book." Despite its calamities, there is little likelihood of China turning to Christianity, which by no means suits the character of the people as well as the simpler ethical precepts of Confucius.

In the good old days the priests well knew they had only to convert a king or chieftain in order to obtain the following of his people; and the majority of the nations of Europe were converted to Christianity in this way. In the so-called mediæval romance entitled *Floire et Blancefor* the hero becomes a convert to Christianity, and no sooner is he received into the Church than he compels all his subjects to follow his example:

> Qui le baptesme refusoit,
> Ne en Diu croire ne voloit,
> Floire les faisoit escorchier,
> Ardoir en fu ou destrenchier.
>
> (Those who refused baptism,
> And would not believe in God,
> Floire caused to be flayed,
> Burnt in the fire, or beheaded.)

The American arch obscenist, Anthony Comstock, who has made himself notorious by prosecuting editions of *Tom Jones* and *Roderick Random*, and who is said to blush at the mention of the legs and drawers of a desk, has been charged with accepting bribes. If the immaculate Anthony is corrupt, where can virtue be found in America?

The *Twentieth Century*, of New York, says: "Of all the crimes committed in the name of Christianity, perhaps none calls for more severe condemnation than does the Trinity corporation. This trust, organised for the purpose of saving souls, has a capital of $160,000,000, and an annual income of $900,000, drawn principally from the most wretched class of New York's poor. Out of its tenant population of 1,681 there has been a mortality of 273, making the death-rate of Trinity's tenements thirty-five per cent. higher than the general death-rate of the city. This may be saving souls, but it is a process that sacrifices bodies, and such a process is generally known as murder."

The Rev. R. Heffernan, a Catholic priest, appears to have come to his death by an accident while intoxicated at the Albion Hotel, Chester. It appears that the rev. gentleman was in the habit of going to bed drunk.

Some people with a good deal of time on their hands, and others with personal grievances to air, have been writing to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* on "The Decline of Secularism." The last person who joins in the correspondence is Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who displays his old fondness for suggesting that hardly anybody ever understood Secularism but himself. He admits that Secular principles are spreading, but he complains that Secular Societies are too anti-theological. But is not this a very cheap complaint? Is it possible for Secular Societies, as such, to take a great part in "other work"? They are tabooed socially after being robbed legally. We invite Mr. Holyoake to tell us what he himself has ever done for this "other work" in connection with any Secular organisation? Has he not been obliged to do it as an independent individual? And if this has been his own experience, why on earth does he spend so much time in lecturing other people for being as unfortunate as himself?

Robert Louis Stevenson hoped to die with his clothes on, and the hope was realised. This has led to a correspondence in the *Westminster Gazette* on the prayer in the Church of England liturgy against "battle, murder, and sudden death." One writer says it only means a death unprepared for; the sudden death doesn't matter if we are always "ready to meet our God." But this was not the idea of the Church when the prayer in the liturgy originated. The idea was that we might not die suddenly, perhaps after some mortal sin, for which we had not received absolution. Julius Cæsar, and other men of heroic mould, preferred a sudden death instead of long sickness or slow decay; and, indeed, the only objection to it, if our worldly affairs are settled, is the distress which a sudden shock might give to the dear ones we leave behind us.

J. S. Mill on his Father.

I have a hundred times heard him say that all ages and nations have represented their gods as wicked, in a constantly increasing progression; that mankind have gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise, and have called this God and prostrated themselves before it. This *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is commonly presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity. "Think," he used to say, "of a being who would make a hell—who would create the human race with the infallible foreknowledge, and, therefore, with the intention, that the great majority of them were to be consigned to horrible and everlasting torment!"—*J. S. Mill, "Autobiography," p. 41.*

Obituary.

An advanced thinker and able historian has passed away in the person of Sir John Seeley, better known as Professor Seeley, of London and Cambridge. Professor Seeley first made his name by *Ecce Homo*, a work which Lord Shaftesbury described as "the worst book ever vomited forth from the jaws of hell," but which would now be considered a mildly rationalistic publication. His *Natural Religion*, which followed, was an equally thoughtful book, but did not excite the same interest. His most important historical work was the *Life and Times of Stein*, the Prussian land reformer.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

January 27, Liverpool.
February 3, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—January 20, Nottingham; 27, Hall of Science, London. February 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Camberwell; 17, Plymouth; 24, Newcastle-on-Tyne. March 3, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

J. Tomlinson.—All religionists are Spiritualists. The small party which arrogates that denomination are really Spiritists. The essence of their system is personal communication with spirits. We mean no offence in designating them properly; nor can we see why they should be ashamed or hurt when we do so.

W. F. Wray writes: "As an appreciative reader of the *Freethinker* and of George Meredith, I suggest that you give us who live so far from London an opportunity of reading your lecture upon the latter, either in the former or in a pamphlet." We have not had the lecture reported, but the substance of it will be worked up in the *Freethinker* as soon as Mr. Foote gets time to do the writing.

J. Fulton.—Thanks. We hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in the spring, when we expect to visit Glasgow.

W. Dyson.—See paragraph.

E. Shedley.—Your orthodox friend should tell you what *private* right the clergy have to *tithes*, for instance. Thanks for the jokes. We have no doubt you will be pleased with Mr. Watts's lectures at Nottingham.

H. Peasody.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder, to whom please send direct in future.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Hull Branch, 6s.

C. Hughes.—(1) We are never offended by outspoken criticism which bears no trace of malignity. The world is wide enough for differences of opinion, and only a fool or a prig is offended at them. Will you, in turn, pardon us for saying that we think you have misread what we wrote about James Thomson and Charles Bradlaugh? It was only honest to state the reason which Thomson alleged at the final rupture, but we studiously refrained from approving or discussing it. (2) We do intend to write more literary articles in future in the *Freethinker*. Unfortunately, in one sense, we are much hampered by the heavy burden of presidential duties. We are glad to hear you have found our John Morley pamphlet useful.

G. J. Holyoake.—Thanks for cutting.

We have received for the Watts Election Fund:—J. Fulton, £1; J. K., 10s.

Mr. Foote's Fighting Fund.—F. W. Sirett, 2s. 6d.

Watts Election Fund.—Mr. G. Ward, treasurer, acknowledges: F. W. Sirett, 2s. 6d.; W. W. Roberts, 2s. 6d.

J. Sullivan.—Your question is obscure. Colonel Ingersoll has written many articles in the *North American Review*. Father Lambert's reply to Ingersoll is a poor and impudent production. The writer has no standing in America, where people would only laugh at Ingersoll for condescending to notice him.

W. H. Thresil.—We reciprocate your good wishes.

H. W. Jones.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

E. Howard.—See paragraph.

C. Brown and H. Mills.—Received. Many thanks. The bird was deliciously tender, and should have been washed down with nectar from Olympus.

London Secular Federation.—Miss Annie Brown, secretary, acknowledges the following Dinner subscriptions received by her:—C. Thomas, £1; Mrs. Thomas, 10s.; C. J. Pottage, 10s.; W. Hardaker, 3s.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.—Full list in our next.

F. Attwood.—What was the subject of your verse? We do not recollect its arrival.

J. K.—Thanks. We hope there will be no earthquake.

J. C. Welch.—An amusing misprint, though not reproducible. Pleased to hear you value the *Freethinker* so highly as to take the pains to complete your set from the beginning.

A. J. W.—Your lines on Shelley possess merit, but are they not rather wild?

Papers Received.—Blackburn Times—Liverpool Mercury—Two Worlds—Eastern Daily Press—Labor Leader—Western Figaro—Progressive Thinker—Liberty—Newcastle Weekly Chronicle—Secular Thought—Liberator—Freedom—Der Lichtfreund—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Kansas Lucifer—Scottish Guardian—Truthseeker—Open Court—Manchester Evening Mail—Eastbourne Chronicle.

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

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SPECIAL.

The Hall of Science Club Committee having given the Board of Directors a guarantee that no outside letting of the premises shall be made without their knowledge and consent; and the resolution of the Executive having been passed with a view to this condition being secured; I hereby—acting upon the terms of that resolution—declare the suspension of affiliation at an end; and announce that members of the National Secular Society visiting the Hall of Science are now free to participate in the Club privileges. G. W. Foote *(President)*.

P.S.—The gratifying announcement I hoped to make this week, in addition to the above, is deferred until next week; not because I am not in a position to make it, but because I find it will take greater space than is here available.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The sudden setting in of milder weather on Sunday turned the streets of London into a dismal mud-swamp. In the circumstances, an excellent audience attended at the Hall of Science in the evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "God's in his Heaven." Mr. Guest occupied the chair. This evening (January 20) the platform will be occupied by Mr. Touzeau Parris. We hope he will have a good meeting and a hearty reception.

Mr. Charles Watts had to contend against most severe weather in Leicester last Sunday, where he lectured twice. The bitter frost, snow, and wind made it most uninviting to venture from home. Still there was a good audience in the morning, and an excellent one in the evening. Mr. Watts always receives a hearty reception in Leicester, and Sunday was no exception. To-day (Sunday, January 20) he lectures three times in Nottingham.

Mr. Charles Watts has republished some of his recent articles in the *Freethinker* in a neat pamphlet, entitled "Why Do Right?" Our colleague displays thought, care, and eloquence, and we hope his pamphlet will enjoy a wide circulation.

The annual Children's Party will take place at the London Hall of Science on Wednesday, January 30. Tea will be served at 5.30 to as many children as the funds will provide for. A first-rate program of music, games, races, etc., has been arranged, and the proceedings are to terminate with an all-round distribution of toys. Adults can sit in the gallery and see the fun on payment of threepence, and it is well worth the money. Of course the Committee will be delighted to receive presents for the little ones in the shape of cake, oranges, apples, lemonade, etc. Even plum-pudding will not be declined. Equally, of course, the Committee will be pleased to receive subscriptions. Mr. Forder is treasurer, and Miss Vance secretary. There should be no lack of funds for such an entertainment.

Three Score and Ten Years (Scribner & Co.) is the title of a book of recollections by William James Linton, the poet, engraver, and author, who edited the *National*, the *English Republic*, and other advanced publications. Mr. Linton has interesting reminiscences of Mazzini, George Sand, Carlyle, Tennyson, O'Connor, Heywood, the Howitts, and others, as well as of the political and reform movements in which he participated.

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London friends have not supplied us with the information to enable us to print a full list of Secularists returned in the late Vestry elections. Among the names hitherto omitted is that of Mr. George Standring, who was elected (unopposed) in No. 4 Ward of St. Luke's parish.

Mr. Thomas Hurley, who is ticketed "Socialist," and whose program included Secular Education, has been returned at the head of the poll in the Blackburn School Board elections. Mr. Hurley is a young man of ability, and a reader of the *Freethinker*.

The Westminster Branch held its half-yearly meeting on Sunday. Most of the old officers were re-elected. It was resolved to open the outdoor campaign in April; also that the local Free Library should be requested to include the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*. As the Bell memorial wreath in Brompton Cemetery had been destroyed, no doubt by some religious fanatic, it was decided to substitute a marble slab.

The annual social party of the Failsworth Secular Sunday School was held on Saturday, January 12, and there was a large attendance. After tea the String Band discoursed acceptable music, and dancing, singing, and recitations completed a capital program.

The *Bazaar* is a strange paper in which to find the following answer to a correspondent: "No authentic reference to Jesus Christ is to be found anywhere outside the Gospels."

The death of Sir John Seeley reminds us of the ferment aroused by his *Ecce Homo* some twenty years since. Violently denounced, it yet did its work, and the orthodox find themselves glad to take up the position which formerly excited so much indignation.

The *Monist* for January is full of interesting philosophical matter. It opens with a posthumous essay, by Dr. Romanes, on "Longevity and Death." He says: "As after the breeding age is past the influence of natural selection is entirely withdrawn, the organism may be regarded as dead as soon as it has ceased to procreate; for any diseases which belong to old age will be allowed, by natural selection, to commit their ravages without let or hindrance, while diseases which belong to earlier periods of life will be, as far as possible, eliminated." Dr. Romanes frankly says that Mr. Darwin considered his views "speculative." As notable is a paper by Dr. Edmund Montgomery which follows, entitled "To be Alive: What is it?" Dr. Francis E. Abbot writes on "The Advancement of Ethics"; Moncure D. Conway on "Ought the United States Senate to be Reformed?" and Lester F. Ward on "The Natural Storage of Energy."

To Freethinkers, one of the most interesting items in the *Monist* is a triangular debate on Christian Missions, held before the Nineteenth Century Club of New York, in which Bishop Thoburn, Virchard Gandi (a Jain of India) and Dr. Paul Carus took part. The speech of the Hindu was most interesting. He said he had studied the way in which Christian ministers and missionaries were manufactured, and had learnt to pity them, for their education was all calculated to make them narrow-minded. He said: "The central ideas of Christianity—an angry God and vicarious atonement—are contrary to every fact in nature, as also to the better aspirations of the human heart; they are, in our present stage of enlightenment, absurd, preposterous, and blasphemous propositions." We shall probably return to this debate in an early number.

The Islington Branch have arranged for a series of Thursday evening lectures at the headquarters of the Liberal and Radical Association, near the Vestry Hall, Upper-street. Detailed notice will appear in next week's *Freethinker*.

At the Battersea Secular Hall, this Sunday evening, Mr L. D. Hewitt (of the Wimbledon Branch) will give a lantern lecture on "China and the Chinese," which is sure to be interesting and instructive. Friends in south-west London are earnestly requested to support the Branch by their presence on Sunday evenings. The lectures are of a varied description, and are followed by select social gatherings for members and friends.

M. Bigeon tells the story of *Bjornson, and His Life Work*, and recalls a legend current in Norway, which tells how one morning the great writer came down as if transfigured, and, calling both his family and servants together, told them that he recognised the error of his ways, and that he would in future take his place among the Freethinkers and Agnostics! Be this story true or false, observes the French critic, it is a fitting allegory of what has befallen the Norwegian nation during the last fifty years; for there, even more than elsewhere, the philosophers have taken the place of the prophets. Bjornson, according to M. Bigeon, is a seeker after truth, an enthusiast, a sentimentalist; his large heart is full of tragic intensity and love for humanity. Those who wish to know him as he is should read in the original his *Little Verses*.

In Professor Budde's edition of *The Books of Samuel*, the verses of which are printed in different colors to represent the different strata of authorship, no fewer than nine different colors are used. We shall shortly print an article on "The Dates of the Bible Books," from the pen of Chilperic, who will bring the results of recent criticism up to date in as concise a form as possible.

The Worcestershire peasantry, according to a correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, are wonderfully "indifferent in matters of religion." The parson plays but a small part in the life of the people, and is often a nonentity in his own village. Church nor chapel excites much interest; religion, in fact, is "at a discount." The *Guardian* writer declares that "it really appears that Churches might be established or disestablished, but not one elector in ten would care, and neither friends nor foes of the Established Church see any use in attempting to excite the interest of the constituency in the question." This is good news in its way, but the indifference is carried to a point which is profitable to the clergy who are in possession of the fleshpots.

We are pleased to note that the French Freethinkers have formed a committee to raise a monument to Maria Deraismes, an eloquent advocate of Freethought and of woman's emancipation. Maria Deraismes was the first female Freemason, having been invited to become a member by the Masonic Lodge of Le Pecq, near Paris.

Miss Amye Reade, cousin of Winwood Reade, who has recently appeared on the Freethought platform, has published two novels of a humanitarian character. One is entitled *Ruby*, and is founded on the life of a circus girl. The other, *Slaves of the Sawdust*, deals with the same phase of life.

The veteran, Dr. Ludwig Buchner, writes in the *Freidenker* on Celsus as "Ein Heidnischer Kritiker des Christenthums" (A Pagan Critic of Christianity). He shows the importance of the testimony of Celsus as to the credulous character of early Christianity.

Despite the patronage of religion by the Emperor of Germany, the theological students at the principal Universities have, for the last ten years, been steadily on the decrease, while those in medicine and jurisprudence have correspondingly increased.

Whereas, fifty years ago, at Cambridge, only five out of twenty-four professors were laymen, there are now, outside the Divinity professorships, forty professors at Cambridge and forty-eight at Oxford, only three of whom in each case are clergy. And whereas in 1843 ninety Fellows of the Royal Society were in Orders, there are now only sixteen. In other words, the intellect of the country, its leaders in science, learning, and literature, are no longer in the clerical ranks.

The January number of *De Dageraad*, of Amsterdam, opens with a portrait and an account of Dr. Robin, whose conduct of the orphanage at Cempuis occasioned a notable debate in the French Chamber. Another article on "Modern Sanctity" is translated from Professor Guglielmo Ferrero, of Bologna. In the *Universal Review*, as usual, there are a number of items translated from the *Freethinker*, by J. van der Ende.

De Dageraad gives a "Sugar Plum" to Mr. Foote, both for his editorship of the *Freethinker* and his conduct of the affairs of the National Secular Society. It congratulates its English comrades on having a zealous and able *(ijverigen en flinken)* President.

Charles Rose, who some years ago wrote an able little book entitled *A Light to Lighten the Gentiles*, is now contributing to Mr. Symes's *Liberator* a series of articles on "Philosophic Materialism."

It is said by many that there is one who watches over this world, ready to aid all who call upon him. If this were true, there would be neither error nor want anywhere; for we know that all the inhabitants have been at him with their passionate requests. The rule that theology lays down for success is that we should pray as though there was no help in us, and work as though there was no help in heaven. This is doubling our labor. The Secularist sees that Secular exertion is alone productive, and chooses that course without complaint.—*G. J. Holyoake.*

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WHO WAS THE MOTHER OF JESUS?

(Concluded from page 27.)

These religious writers evidently consider faith more reasonable than evidence; but such credulity would stand but a poor chance if such a case took place to-day. When Joanna Southcott tried the same game early in the present century, it is true she deceived a very large number of people in all stations of life—medical men, clergymen of various denominations, and probably herself. A thorough exposure of her pretensions appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, February, 1815; but, notwithstanding, thousands of her followers continued to believe in her, and that she would eventually return to earth to give birth to Jesus at his second coming. Now, considering that the very existence of Mary is highly dubious, whilst Miss Southcott's existence is unquestionable, the conclusion of the *Edinburgh Review* article may be quoted as applicable to all forms of superstition: "Upon the whole, the mission of Joanna Southcott is an extremely curious article in the history of human credulity. But, while we laugh at the simplicity of her disciples, we may all of us look homeward, and consider whether our own belief is not on various occasions determined by our feelings more than by evidence; whether we are not sometimes duped by respected names or bold pretenders, and sometimes by our own fancies, fears, or wishes."

The Christian Church fixed on Sept. 8 for Mary's birthday, certified as it was by a direct revelation from heaven; for the Catholic Forster, in his *Perennial Calendar*, describes how on that day, "a concert of angels having been heard in the air to solemnise this important event, the festival was appointed by Pope Servius about the year 695." This writer, with Alban Butler, thus perverts Genesis iii. 15: "I will put enmity between thee—serpent—and the woman, and thy seed and her seed. She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." What would be said of us if we were guilty of such palpable forgery? Having found her birthday, it became necessary to find her a father and a mother in the persons of Joachim and Anne; and in the fulness of time (1854) the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was promulgated by Pius IX., and has now to be accepted by every Catholic Christian. This doctrine is that, as Mary had to be spotless and free from Original Sin, it was absolutely necessary that she should be conceived and born out of the ordinary course. But when we think on this for a moment, it will require that all Mary's ancestors should have been conceived in like manner. But Christians are anything but consistent when reason stares them in the face. It is sufficient here to say that both father and mother are purely legendary, and the miracles ascribed to them by Church writers and impudent fabrications.

Father Lambert, in that flippant and insulting tract, *Notes on Ingersoll*, quoting his antagonist, says: "Is it not wonderful that Luke and Matthew do not agree on a single name of Christ's ancestors for thirty-seven generations?" To which the wily priest replies: "It is wonderful only to those who are ignorant of the fact that Matthew gives the ancestors of Joseph, while Luke gives the ancestors of Mary, the Mother of God." What impudence! This is mendacity *in excelsis*. Yet for Lambert's readers it is sufficient; for no Catholic dare to have in his possession, let alone read, a Freethought book of any sort whatever. It is sad indeed to say it, but, during my experience years ago, when my business as an insurance agent took me to the homes of scores of Catholics, I *never* saw any literature in their dwellings other than devotional works, and these but few, except, in a few cases, Cobbett's *History of the Protestant Reformation*. Yet in every room there were cheap, gaudy prints of Mary, Joseph, saints, and crucifixes. The mental state of those who surrender their reason to a priestly caste is to-day what it was a thousand years ago—blank ignorance, dire credulity, utter neglect of all the means of secular improvement, and a thorough belief in the supernatural power of their priests. But priest Lambert's statement, that Luke gives the genealogy of the "Mother of God," is, of course, gratuitous, so far as Luke is concerned. The Authorised Version translates the passage as follows: "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli." This, of course, is early seventeenth-century English, that would now be rendered "who" in place of "which," and the parentheses would be left out. Sharpe, in his translation, who follows the original most faithfully, thus gives the passage: "And he, Jesus, when he began, was about thirty years of age, being, as was allowed, the son of Joseph, the son of Heli," etc. Not a word in the original, or to be deduced therefrom, of this being a genealogy of Mary.

Even the Roman Catholic version (Douay) is dead against Lambert's pretentious explanation, for it gives the rendering in almost the same words as the Protestant version, but has a note for the safe guidance of the faithful thus: "*Who was of Heli.* St. Joseph, who by nature was the son of Jacob (Matthew i. 16), in the account of the law, was son of Heli. For Jacob and Heli were brothers by the same mother, and Heli, who was the elder, dying without issue, Jacob, as the law directed, married his widow; in consequence of such marriage, his son Joseph was reputed in the law the son of Heli." So, from this authoritative statement of the infallible Church, Luke, or the Holy Ghost, omitted these particulars—and, by the way, if this was according to the "law," it is bad form for the Church to object to marriage with a deceased wife's sister. But the point is that the two contradictory lines of descent of Jesus still stare us in the face, and Father Lambert must try to confute Ingersoll on other lines.

Robert Forder.

PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT IN DENMARK.

Denmark is now hardly taken into account as a nation. It contains about half the number of inhabitants that daily parade London streets. Yet it has a language, government, literature, and institutions of its own; and some of the last mentioned are, I venture to say, not only unimitated, but far in advance of any country, except her Scandinavian sisters. When, a few years back, the great Norwegian writer and Freethinker, Björnstjerne Björnson, visited Denmark, he said, at a great public meeting, that the Danish country-people were the most enlightened peasantry he had encountered on his travels throughout the world. I think I may safely add—and also the most sceptical.

Now, I am bound to state that all this has, involuntarily, been brought about by Christian agencies, with a view of advancing Christianity; but we Freethinkers rejoice in the fact that it has proved itself to have the opposite result. This shows clearly to me that enlightenment is a greater factor in establishing Freethought than the most ardent propaganda. Denmark has had no great Freethought martyrs; the work of the spirit of Freethought has been going on in a docile and unconscious way within the Church, from the rigid and absurd form of Protestantism which you have here in England, through a broader and more liberal form called Grundtvigianism, Deism, and is slowly culminating in rank scepticism on the part of the young, and many of the leading Christian teachers of the young themselves.

I shall briefly review the movement, and, as far as the space at my disposal admits, record some of the principal causes of this development. In order to do this, it is necessary to take the reader back a century and a half. The people were nothing more nor less than serfs, entirely controlled by the parson and the squire, ignorant, stupid, and apathetic. Then arose a writer and poet, whose fantastically romantic nature almost bordered on madness—to practical people's minds. Nevertheless, he was a great genius. His name was Bernhard Severin Ingemann. He wrote a series of historical romances—half history, half fiction, all in a romantic style. Dry history, had it been accessible to the people, would have been too tedious for them; but Ingemann's works gave them taste for reading. They woke up, looked around for something to corroborate what they had read, found it in other manuscripts, read it, and so acquired some knowledge. Another great man of the same period was Steen Steensen Blicher. He was a village parson, but a devoted friend of the people. On Sundays, when people went home from the church he had preached in, it is said that they often met him on the heather, with his gun under his arm, and his field terrier with him. He was very fond of hunting, and also of associating with the gypsies, who then invaded the vast heaths of Jutland, and whose language, it is said, he learned. He wrote two great volumes of novels in the Juttish dialect, depicting the peasants' habits and customs, and attached them to places familiar to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. They were, and still are, read with immense delight by the peasantry. This gave them still more fascination for reading.

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The final abolition of the soccage-duty was another great step towards the emancipation of the people. When it received this liberty, it did not know what freedom was; but a child cannot learn to walk till it tries, and so, when the people got the liberty, they gradually learned to use it.

In the first part of this century arose a great literary giant and pedagogue, whose name was Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig. When he was a young man and a student, it is said, he passed through an ordeal of scepticism and temptations of affection to a married woman, which lasted for two years, and culminated in his adopting religious views, differing from those which then predominated. He began writing and preaching them at an early age. He held that no man could be saved by his actions, but only by faith; nor by knowledge of the Bible, but by believing the two articles, Baptism and Communion —which two he called "The word of God"; that playing cards, dancing, and other innocent jollifications were not necessarily evils; and that there was a chance of salvation after death. He advocated a fuller education, and that children should not learn lessons, but only be told and made re-tell, especially in religion; and contended that the clergy should not be appointed and paid by the State, but be entirely kept by the people. Of course, for pleading religious liberty he was persecuted by State and Church. His books were confiscated, and he was condemned to supervision by the police for life, his works having to be examined by them before they were published. Yet, at length, as he gained influence, this censure was retracted, for he won admirers and followers by the hundred; and he gradually rose, at last being appointed a bishop. He died at an extremely old age; but his writing—poetic and prosaic—and disciples he left behind him, to fight, suffer, and triumph.

In 1848, when the noble-minded and kind-hearted King Frederick VII., whose motto was, "The people's love is my strength," came to the throne, the hitherto existing press laws were repealed; persons undergoing terms of imprisonment for press offences were set at liberty; the Conservative ministry was replaced by a Liberal one, some members of which were leaders of the Democracy; a full constitutional Government was founded, and a so-called "Fundamental Law" was given, expressing the mutual duties of Sovereign, Government, and people towards each other.

In the same year the insurrection broke out in Holstein, which then belonged to Denmark, but which was surrendered to Germany in 1864. After a three years' struggle, the rebellion was quelled, and now, after those victories over internal and external foes, a wave of enthusiasm swept over the country. The Press revelled in its new-born freedom, poets arose on every hand, and wells of literature sprang up and flooded the land.

As time passed on, the seeds of mental independence and religious liberty, which "Old Grundtvig" had sown, speedily gained ground, and now—in order to make it short —Denmark is quite unlike what it was, say, thirty years ago. The people have banded together in Societies, Unions, and Companies; gymnastic and rifle unions, who come together once a year from whole districts to win prizes; dairy companies, the members of which send their milk to the headquarters, have their cream separated from it by machinery, and have it returned; provision companies, who have their household necessaries sent to them from Copenhagen, in order to dispense with the profit-making merchants; private schools and congregations have been, and are being, formed by people who feel themselves too independent to have their spiritual affairs guided by their "superiors." The Grundtvigian teachers and ministers gather young and old around them once a week to discourse to them on historical subjects gratuitously, besides forming evening classes for a trifle. When the youth has outgrown this instruction, he receives, on application, a sum from the Government towards his maintenance for six months at a so-called "High School." A word about these in conclusion. The High School is an entirely private institution, but is granted a certain sum from the State every year when it has attained to such a position that it is recognised as such. It has a class of young women in the summer months, and of men in the winter. For maintenance, lodging, and instruction the pupil is charged, as a rule, thirty krones per month, a krone being the equivalent of an English shilling. There are no degrees taken, no compulsory attendance, so that the degree of the instructor's ability is indicated by the number of his pupils. The students come together once a week in the lecture-room, and discuss the topics of the day with a fervor and earnestness which one would not expect to find with young people. All this tends to develop the young man's affections and intelligence. As he himself becomes a better man, so his God becomes better; he being filled with love to his fellow man, his God is no longer a revengeful monster, but a God of love, who cannot torment his children for ever, but will save all in time. Darwin's theory being proved to him, the story of the Creation and the Fall is absurd, and the Savior is gone. God is all-wise, and cannot fail in purpose; every man is created to fulfil a certain function, and if he goes to hell for ever, he has been created without a design. Hell is gone, and with it the Savior. As the many purposeless occurrences and injustices appear before the young man's widened view, and as his knowledge of astronomy increases, so God himself vanishes before his gazing eye in the chaos of the mighty universe; and although the High Schools are conducted in a Grundtvigian, Christian, spirit, somehow or other the young men and women, as a rule, leave it confirmed sceptics. Nay, what is more, the Grundtvigian leaders themselves gradually drift into infidelity.

In 1885 a Free Church minister (Henning Jensen) wrote a book which went to show that the alleged books of Moses were not written by that personage. This, of course, brought his colleagues into array, and one of them asked him to show his real colors, and admit that he was a Freethinker, in order that he might know how to deal with him. This same H. Jensen was brought into court for administering the communion to a dying child, not yet confirmed. Two eminent High School masters have lately, people assert who have visited their schools, entirely given up all belief in Hell, and are, in fact, so deeply adrift in scepticism that they don't know where they are.

Finally, at the annual Conference at a leading High School of the country, a few years since, an entirely modern spirit prevailed. Heterodoxy reigned supreme; most of the old ideas being discarded. Thus, superstition in Scandinavia is committing suicide by using the weapon against her enemies, under which she is herself doomed to fall. Scepticism is doing its work within the Church, bigotry is dying, the spirit of Freethought is gradually gaining headway, and I for one wish her "good speed."

J. A. Maagaard.

CHRISTIANITY.

Thou who standest at the threshold of the charnels of the dead,
Looking eastward, where the sunlight gloweth gloriously red,
And, with frightened eyes, beholdest how the skies grow bright o'erhead;

Thou with pallor on thy lips and the dry blood upon thy hands,
Trembling, seest how the morning spreads above the waking lands,
And how man, with eager glances, in expectant waiting stands.

All the earth before thee lieth, and, from Europe's very stones,
Goes a cry on thee with curses, and the winds are filled with groans—
Yea, before thee stand the living, and behind thee lie the bones.

By the memory of martyrs; by the children thou didst nurse;
By the evil heart of man; by thy hypocrisies made worse;
By the blood of Jew and Gentile—thou art cursed with a curse!

Thou hast trodden out the winepress; and the wine that rippled free
Was the blood of unbelievers, which thy lips have drunk with glee,
Till the richness of its virtue hath made glad the heart of thee.

From the open square at Strassburg, in discordant chorus rise
Shriekings of two thousand Jews, that roast for sacrifice
To the hell-born God thou dost invoke, who gloats on agonies.

There in Frankfort, Salzburg, Baden, thou didst scatter blood like rain,
Reddening all the peaceful cities by the waters of the Main,
Till the rivers of the Rhineland flowed encrimsoned with the stain.

Aragon, Madrid, Granada, in possession of the Moor,
Yielded shelter to the Rabbi; there in peace he might endure—
Where the Moslem banner floated he was quiet and secure.

But thy shadow loomed portentous; haughty Spain was forced to feel
What it is to groan and tremble under holy Christian zeal.
Quoth the priest, "My yoke is easy"—grinding Jews beneath his heel.

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Spurned by England, Austria, Russia, he was sheltered by the Turk;
There in Judengasse or Ghetto was no longer need to lurk;
Islamitish hands were ever clean from thy accursed work.

Through the mad and furious ages thou hast finely borne thy part—
Cowed the people into bondslaves; crushed the wife's, the mother's heart;
Laid thy rod upon the children; banished beauty, stifled art.

Savage gods!—relentless ages! But by earth be it confessed,
Thou of all hast been most cruel—thy God fiercer than the rest;
For thou hast devoured the children that were suckled at thy breast.

What have been thy mild persuasions, who in love did so abound?
Lo! at Nuremberg a sample of thy tenderness is found—
Rack and thumbscrew, boot and caldron, in black dungeons underground.

Charitable institutions? Yea, indeed, for well we know
That the Spanish Inquisition founded many a year ago
Was a Christian institution ruled by holy saints below!

Blessed had he been for ever who had strangled thee at birth,
Ere thou hadst attained thy vigor, ere with wild Walpurgis mirth,
At thy bidding hell was emptied of its fiends upon the earth;

Ere thou didst from out the clutches of the mother tear the child,
Laughing loud to think the notions of a heretic beguiled:
In the glare of blazing fagots then thou sattest still and smiled.

Thou hast kept the people darkened from thy childhood until now—
Smothered truth and bound opinion; but a mightier than thou—
Science, rising strong and godlike, hast brought low thy brazen brow.

Crown thy head with foulest ashes—hater thou of Truth sublime!
Cry aloud and rend thy garments to the utmost bourne of time;
Thy Eternity would scarce suffice to expiate thy crime!

So the soul of man rejects thee, rising as from out a tomb,
And the world of mind denies thee, and thy face is toward the gloom,
And there is no Resurrection Day for the dead that Truth shall doom.

DARIUS HYSTASPES.

A Model King.

"In St. Ferdinand, King of Castile (d. 1252), the virtues of a king shone out brightly—magnanimity, clemency, love of justice, and, above all, zeal for the Catholic faith and a burning desire to protect and propagate its religious worship. He showed this especially by the vigor with which he pursued heretics. He never allowed them to exist in any part whatever of his dominions. When they were discovered, he himself with his own hands carried the faggots to burn them.—*Breviarium Romanum, Feast of St. Ferdinand, June 5.*

"Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys," etc.—*Col. for All Saints.*

Clergyman (to his son Bobby)—"Is there any news, my son?" Bobby—"Yes, father." Clergyman—"Well, what is it?" Bobby—"Why, a church caught on fire yesterday, and all were saved except the organ." Clergyman—"Why couldn't they save the organ?" Bobby—"Because the firemen couldn't play on it."

At the sacrament a priest gave, without perceiving it, a bone counter instead of the wafer. The communicant, thinking it would melt, patiently waited and sucked, but without effect. The priest, seeing him hesitate, inquired what was the matter. "Matter," said he, "I hope your reverence has not made a mistake and given me God the Father? He is so hard and tough there is no swallowing him."

BOOK CHAT.

Madame Blavatsky and Her "Theosophy": A Study, by Arthur Lillie (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; 1895), takes for the motto of its title-page the words of Mrs. Besant: "If there are no Mahatmas, the Theosophical Society is an absurdity." Mr. Lillie, in his preface, tells us that, in sketching the career of Madame Blavatsky, "I propose to leave out as much as possible the private character of the lady as far as regards sex relations. The authenticity, or non-authenticity, of her 'miracles' is plainly too vital to be passed over."

* * *

With this side of her career omitted, the record of the modern Cagliostro is, nevertheless, a very shady one. She was ever an adventuress, and for the major, though lesser known, portion of her life posed as a Spiritist. And it is Spiritists, like Mr. W. E. Coleman, W. Oxley, and our author, who have devoted most trouble to expose her pretensions.

* * *

Mr. Lillie, however, does not advert to the accusation made by Mr. R. Hodgson, who was sent out to India by the Society for Psychical Research to investigate the lady's "miracles." Mr. Hodgson gave his opinion, in the third volume of the Proceedings of that Society, that the lady was a Russian spy. He came across some writings of hers which strongly bore out this view. Mr. Newton, who was treasurer of the Theosophic Society when first formed at New York, says she had an interview with the Russian Minister of Legation before deciding to transfer the Society to India. Possibly she only became an American citizeness with a view to protection in India. The political key of her *Secret Doctrine* is the statement in the Introduction: "We have not long to wait, and many of us will witness the Dawn of the New Cycle, at the end of which not a few accounts will be settled and squared between the races." Some other particulars of Madame Blavatsky's career, not appearing in Mr. Lillie's book, were given by Professor Coues in the New York *Sun*, of July 2, 1890, and by A. Rudolph in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of April 5, 1894.

* * *

According to Colonel Olcott, there were two distinct beings in the red dressing gown of Madame Blavatsky—a fibbing Russian lady and a mighty Mahatma. The trouble was that you could not tell t'other from which. A message was given to Mr. Sinnett as from the Mahatma, Koot Hoomi, and published in the *Occult World*, which proved to be a plagiarism taken almost verbatim from an address on Spiritualism by Mr. H. Kiddle, at Lake Pleasant. Madame Blavatsky's defence made matters worse by saying that the Mahatma explained that he had been present in his astral body at *Mount* Pleasant, and so gathered up the Spiritist discourse. A liar was never more clearly exposed than was Madame Blavatsky in *Light* of 1884. Dr. Wyld, Dr. Anna Kingsford, Mr. Maitland, Mr. Stainton Moses, and Mr. C. C. Massey retired from the Theosophical Society. But plenty of dupes remained, and the adventuress always was ready to make one defeat the prelude to another victory.

* * *

One would have thought she would never have recovered from the exposure by the Psychical Research Society. Writing experts certified that the Mahatma letters were in her writing. They contain the same misspellings and foreign locutions. But the credulous are not easily undeceived. "Doubtless the pleasure is as great in being cheated as to cheat."

* * *

Mr. Lillie's book is one which illustrates the perennial credulity of human nature, and the ease with which charlatans impose on those who are ever seeking something new. That Mrs. Besant should have become the dupe of a coarse, swearing impostor like Madame Blavatsky has been a wonder to many. And yet there is nothing surprising in it. The Russian lady really had the only secret of all magic and occultism. She understood the power of a determined will. Without any magnetic passes or hypnotism she could wind the Celt around her little finger. Madame Blavatsky had travelled widely, though Mr. Lillie gives reason to doubt her having ever visited Tibet; and she had a varied experience of human nature. The Cagliostro of the nineteenth century will long remain an interesting study.

* * *

Dr. Hermann Oldenberg, whose able work on *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, has been translated into English, has issued at Berlin a work of about the same size on *Die Religion des Veda*.

* * *

Der Jesuit und der Freidenker is a play in three acts, by W. Gerling, published by W. Rubenow, Berlin. It was written for the Freethinkers' Congress at Cologne last year.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Political Outlook." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, Touzeau Parris, "Science Against Theology." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, a lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, L. D. Hewitt, "China and the Chinese," with lantern illustrations. (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club. Thursday, at 8, committee. Friday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, George Standring, "Some Farcical Aspects of Religion." (Preceded by vocal and instrumental music.) Thursday, at 7.30, science classes. (Free.)

FINSBURY BRANCH (Minor Hall of Science): 12.30, special general meeting—all should attend.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, John Turner, "Anarchism and Trade Unionism."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Cleansing that which is Within the Cup."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Hawker, "Flowers."

DERBY: Monday, at 7.30, meeting at the Wooding Institute, Pear-Tree-road—having been evicted from the Coffee Tavern, Friar Gate.

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, discussion class—paper by a Christian on "Christian Socialism"; 12, choir practice and elocution class; 1, shorthand class; 2.30, D. Taylor, "Burns"; 6.30, Burns concert.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class—G. Faulkner *v.* J. Cowie, "State Socialism"; 6.30, Zosimus, "Great French Freethinkers—III., Pierre Bayle."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, A. Adams, reading—*About the Holy Bible*, by Robert G. Ingersoll.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, John Roberts, "James Thomson (B.V.)." (Owing to the continued illness of the conductor, the Philosophy Class is suspended for a week or two.)

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, C. Corbett, "The Bible and Theosophy." (Free.)

NOTTINGHAM (Assembly Rooms, Low Pavement): 11, Charles Watts, "The French Revolution—Causes of the Excesses"; 3, "Christ Not a Political or Social Reformer"; 7, "Why Live Moral Lives—the Christian and Secular Answers." (Admission 3d. and 6d.)

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 11, Sam Standring, "Associated Homes"; 3, "Jesus the Fish-Catcher"; 6.30, debate with Mr. Smith (of Milnrow), "That the Creeds are Essential to Christianity."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, members' general meeting; 7, W. Dyson, "The Problem of Evil—Theism's Latest Defence."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer"; 7, "Is the Belief in Miracles Reasonable?"

STOCKTON (32 Dovecot-street): 6, business meeting—all friends are invited.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "Why Should Atheists be Persecuted?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Jan. 20, Chatham. Feb. 3, Edinburgh; 10, Dundee.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Feb. 3, New Brompton.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Jan. 23, Tyldesley. March 26 and 27, Sheffield.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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THE MAHATMA BUBBLE.

MRS. BESANT'S share in the great Mahatma hoax was the subject of our last week's article. We have now to deal with some other aspects of this wretched business.

In the first place, we take a little pride in pointing out that the *Freethinker* was all along on the right scent. As soon as Mrs. Besant became a Theosophist, and a spiritual slave of Madame Blavatsky, we felt quite sure—from our knowledge of her, of her tutor, and of the past history of such superstitions—that she would travel far on the road of delusion. We also saw that it would be an advantage to the Freethought party to be disembarrassed of her presence. Without the slightest hesitation, though not without pain, we acted upon these perceptions; and, although at the beginning we were both misunderstood and misrepresented, we held on our course unswervingly, trusting to the future to furnish our complete vindication. Mrs. Besant, in her letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, states, and states truly, that the very Sunday before she made that oracular announcement about the Mahatma letters at the Hall of Science, Mr. Foote had been trying to prove on the same platform that Madame Blavatsky was herself the forger of the Koot Hoomi letters. Mrs. Besant met that charge, not by going into the evidence—which is a risky method when you have a bad case—but by stating that the Mahatma letters that used to be received by Madame Blavatsky were now received by herself. On hearing of this, we said that Mrs. Besant was probably the victim of a deception. Later on it was plainly stated in the *Freethinker* that the forger of these bogus letters would in all likelihood turn out to be Mr. Judge. Well, we were right. Mrs. Besant's public confession (under pressure) fully justifies our prophecy.

It may be asked how it was that we were so well informed. But there is really no mystery to be explicated. We were right simply because we kept our eyes open, which is the meaning of scepticism; and because we went upon the principles of common sense. Superstitionists may be convinced of one cheat, but they are just as ready to be taken in by the next. We, on the other hand, are prepared to find a cheat behind every mystery. We stand, like Hume, upon a broad assumption of reason and experience. If a man tells us of a miracle—even if he juggles with language and calls it supernormal instead of supernatural—we do not require to investigate the story. We can decide at once what is the matter. The man is deceived or deceiving; some would say, a fool or a liar. And as, in Mrs. Besant's case, we felt it was more likely that she was credulous than wicked, we concluded that someone was deluding her. The next thing was to hit upon the probable rascal, and we decided (on very good grounds) in favor of Mr. Judge.

It is likely that Mr. Judge is an old practitioner. He knew Madame Blavatsky much longer than Mrs. Besant did, and to know her long enough was either to leave her or to share in her methods. Mrs. Besant admits—at first she *boasted*—that her Mahatma letters were *in the same handwriting* as those which came (through the supernormal post) to Madame Blavatsky. She also admits that her Mahatma letters were forged—or, at any rate, written—by Mr. Judge. Is it not, then, a reasonable inference that Mr. Judge was an adept in this line? Is it not a legitimate assumption that he had been Mahatma-letter-writer-in-chief to Madame Blavatsky? And is this the reason why Mrs. Besant cannot afford to press him too severely?

Madame Blavatsky's successor, the present high-priestess of Theosophy, is prudent enough to evade a pointed and dangerous question. The *Westminster Review* writer declares, and repeats the declaration, that when she made that sensational announcement at the Hall of Science she had nothing to go upon but two letters forged by Mr. Judge. He invites her to say whether she had, or ever has had, any others. But she does not reply, and her silence is significant. It is an open secret that Mrs. Besant never had any Mahatma letters but Mr. Judge's; that no other has ever been produced; and that, now the Judge fountain is closed, the Mahatma correspondence has entirely dried up. Indeed, the strength of Mr. Judge's position is precisely this: he can say to the leaders of Theosophy—"Well, if I am a forger, you are all the veriest dupes, and your occupation is utterly gone; for all your Mahatma communications have come through me. Round on me, and you round on the Mahatmas. Drive me away, and your shrine is left without an oracle."

This is truly a pretty state of things, and Mrs. Besant's present position is far from enviable. The great Mahatma bubble has burst. And what is Theosophy without Mahatmas? Why, a hook without bait. The Mahatma was the Theosophist's appeal to the bump of wonder. It was the "walk up, walk up!" of the Theosophic show. It was the web of the Theosophic fly-trap. Take away the Mahatma, and what is left? A mass of dull, pretentious, half-intelligible twaddle. There never was such a dreary literature as it puts before the world. Mrs. Besant's own writings are open to the same reproach. There is a certain charm in her platform eloquence, whether you don't understand her or know she is talking nonsense; but when you read her Theosophic utterances in cold blood, you find they have a certain measured fluency, but for the rest they are insufferably tedious, without so much as a flash of that illumination you sometimes get from "mystics" of originality, like Swedenborg.

Yes, the great Mahatma bubble is burst. And when such a bubble *has* burst, it is impossible to blow another like it in the same generation. We consider Theosophy the silliest delusion of the present age. It is not even a great delusion. Not a single person in it—apart from the debateable case of Mrs. Besant, whose talent seems to us entirely that of an advocate; not a single person in it, we say, has achieved, is ever likely to achieve, the slightest independent distinction. They have all been lifted into notoriety on a new wave of superstition; and as the wave retires, they are all left high and dry, with nothing to save them from present contempt and speedy oblivion.

Mrs. Besant is the only person of real popularity in this imposture, and she made her reputation as an advocate of Atheism. Freethinkers cannot help speculating as to her future. Will she become a Catholic? Oh no. Catholicism offers women nothing but suffering and silence. Will the end for her come in this way?—

> Then old age and experience hand in hand
> Lead her to death, and make her understand,
> After a search so painful and so long,
> That all her life she has been in the wrong.

G. W. FOOTE.

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THE APOSTLES' CREED.—II.

(Concluded from page 34.)

Dr. Philip Schaff, in his *History of the Creeds*, while trying to argue that the baptismal creed gradually grew out of the confession of Peter (Matt. xvi. 16),* says: "It is the product of the Western Catholic Church." "It is not of primary, apostolic, but of secondary, ecclesiastical inspiration." "It assumed different shapes and forms in different congregations. Some were longer, some shorter; some declarative, some interrogative, in the form of questions and answers." "If we regard, then, the present text of the Apostles' Creed as a complete whole, we can hardly trace it beyond the sixth, certainly not beyond the close of the fifth century, and its triumph over all the other forms in the Latin Church was not completed till the eighth century, or about the time when the bishops of Rome strenuously endeavored to conform the litanies of the Western Churches to the Roman order." Dr. Lumby, as I have noticed, puts it even later.

It thus appears from the best orthodox Christian authorities that the so-called Apostles' Creed was written by no such persons as the Apostles; and with respect to the high authority which was for ages claimed for it, it is a convicted imposture and forgery, tending, from its acceptance in the Church, to cast doubt on all other productions said to be of apostolical authority.

If we turn from the history of the creed to its contents, they must be pronounced the concentrated essence of nonsense. First, a Father God, who, since he is not said to be a spirit, is presumably as much a masculine person as his Son. This son, we are to believe, was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin. Of his teachings nothing is told, but the affirmation is made that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that he descended into hell, though we are told that he said to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"; that he ascended into heaven—against the laws of gravity—and sits on the right hand of an Infinite Person, without body, parts, or passions, whence he will return to judge the quick and the dead. We are further to believe in a nebulous Holy Ghost, a Holy Catholic Church—whose holiness rests in assertion—the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body after it is resolved into its elements, and the life everlasting. The Apostles' Creed, indeed, offers nothing but the driest husk of Christianity.

The desire of the High Church Party to introduce the Creed into the Board schools is not surprising, when it is noticed that the creed itself is distinctly a Romanising document. Beyond affirming the birth from the Virgin Mary, it inculcates the belief in purgatory in the statements that "He descended into hell," and the clause in regard to the communion of saints. It is true that Pearson and others point, in illustration of the doctrine of the descent into hell, to such texts as Luke xxiii. 43, Acts ii. 41, "his soul was not left in hell," or rather "in the grave," and to the much-disputed passage in 1 Peter iii. 19 about Christ speaking to the spirits in prison; but it is not easy to say why he was preaching to them, unless their prison was virtually a purgatory.

Dr. J. E. Carpenter (*Theological Review*, April, 1870) points out that, with one exception, the clause, "he descended into hell," is found in none of the Latin creeds until the doctrine of purgatory had assumed a very definite form; and it was evidently its growing importance which gained for the article insertion into the baptismal symbol. It was under the influence of similar ecclesiastical tendencies that the addition was made to the creed, "The communion of saints." This by no means meant the community of the holy, but the relation of living saints and the dead, and the power of the souls of dead saints to operate on the living. The doctrine of the communion of saints was closely allied, as it still is in the Catholic Church, with that of purgatory; and Protestants, in repeating the creed, impart to it a sense alien to that of its original propounders. The clause, "the forgiveness of sins," also refers to priestly absolution.

The Apostles' Creed is thus seen to be distinctly an inheritance from the Roman Catholic Church; and, like so many other documents derived from the same source, it is neither more nor less than a forgery. The proof is amply sufficient in the silence of the Apostolic Fathers, and in the fact that this so-called Apostles' Creed never had any currency in the East, where the Nicene Creed occupies its place. It is the product of the Roman Church, and was imposed on the people in the Dark Ages, remaining unquestioned until the revival of criticism by Valla and Erasmus. Since criticism has been applied to it hardly any scholar has ventured to uphold the apostolic authorship, though Gruntvig, the erratic Lutheran bishop of Denmark, of whom Mr. Maagnard has told us, thought it was as much to be attributed to Jesus Christ as the Lord's Prayer itself, and that its composition is to be referred back to the period between the Ascension and Pentecost!

The fact that the Apostles' Creed is a forgery is one which throws suspicion on all early Christian literature; and the anxiety of the clergy to have infant minds recite their belief in such spurious nonsense in the public schools shows that their aim is to stultify them at the outset. "How do you get people to swallow such an absurdity as transubstantiation?" was once asked by a Protestant of Talleyrand. "Oh, we first teach them the doctrine of the Trinity," replied the prince-bishop. A mind that has once gulped the Apostles' Creed need never strain at that of Saint Athanasius; and the children taught to believe this rubbish in their early days will be little likely to question the privileges and pretensions of the priests. Those who care for the development of rational manhood will fight with all their might against the imposition of such creeds on the plastic mind of childhood.

J. M. Wheeler.

* This passage is itself a barefaced forgery to support the claim of the fisherman at Rome to have the keys of the kingdom of heaven: "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." How could a Jewish peasant make a pun in Greek and speak of a Church not in existence?

WAS CHRIST A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REFORMER?

(Continued from page 35.)

That the political views held by Jesus were exceedingly crude is evident from the circumstance recorded in Matthew xxii. It is there stated that, on finding a coin of the realm bearing the superscription of Cæsar, Jesus declared that both Cæsar and God were to have their due. The very pertinent question put by the disciples afforded a good opportunity for some sound advice to be given upon the political subjection in which the people to whom Christ was talking were living. They were in bondage to a foreign power, and were anxious to know if it were "lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not." Instead of returning a clear and intelligible answer, Jesus replied in words which were evasive and meaningless, so far as the information sought for was concerned. If he had any desire to alter the then existing political relations, or to suggest any improvement, he might have given a practical lesson upon the duties and obligations of the ruled to the rulers. Another opportunity was lost when, Pilate having asked Christ an important question, "Jesus gave him no answer" (John xix. 9).

Subsequently, however, Jesus recognised the "divine government," for he said: "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John xix. 11). He also, having stated, "My kingdom is not of this world," added: "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." Christ's notions of government were similar to those of St. Paul, who said: "The powers that be are ordained of God. . . . and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Romans xiii. 1, 2; Timothy ii. 1, 2).

Now, in the very face of these scriptural utterances, we have men to-day who allege that Christ is their hero of democracy. The belief that he ever intended to improve the government of this world by secular means is utterly groundless. His negligence in this particular cannot be explained away by saying that society was not ripe for reform, and that Jesus lacked the power to revolutionise the institutions of his time. There is truth, no doubt, in

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the latter allegation, for the power of Christ for all practical work seems to have been very limited indeed. He did not attempt any political reform, as other men in all ages have done; he did not make honest endeavors to inaugurate improvements which, under happier circumstances, might have been carried out. There is no evidence that Christ ever concerned himself with such reforms as civil and religious liberty, the freedom of the slaves, the equality of human rights, the emancipation of women, the spread of science and of education, the proper use of the land, and the fostering of the fundamental elements of human progress. His language was: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Christ's declaration that his kingdom was not of this world may be taken as a reason why he made no adequate provision for secular government; but those who worship him assert that his plan is the only one that can be successfully adopted to secure the desired reforms, and that he really did contemplate a better state of society on earth than the one that then obtained. Where is the evidence that this was so? Not in the New Testament, for it is nowhere recorded therein that such was his mission. With him the question was: "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Even Renan, who is so frequently quoted by Christian advocates as extolling Jesus, admits that he lacked the qualities of a great political and social reformer. In his *Life of Jesus* Renan says that Christ had "no knowledge of the general condition of the world" (p. 78); he was unacquainted with science, "believed in the devil, and that diseases were the work of demons" (pp. 79, 80); he was "harsh" towards his family, and was "no philosopher" (pp. 81-83); he "went to excess" (p. 174); he "aimed less at logical conviction than at enthusiasm"; "sometimes his intolerance of all opposition led him to acts inexplicable and apparently absurd" (pp. 274, 275); and "bitterness and reproach became more and more manifest in his heart" (p. 278.)

But let us further consider what it is said that he taught in reference to life's social requirements, and also what was his estimate of the world and the things of the world. Under any system conducted upon rational principles the first social requirement is to provide for sufficient food, clothes, and shelter; for to talk of comfort and progress without these requisites is absurd. Now, it was about these very things that Jesus, as it has already been shown, taught that we should take no thought. In Matthew (c. vi.) special reference is made to the Gentiles who *did* take thought as to the necessities of life; but other people were not to be anxious upon the subject, "for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," and a promise is given that he will provide them as he "feedeth" "the fowls of the air." Poverty and idleness were essentials to Christ's idea of a social state, as is proved by his advice to the rich young man, to whom he said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matthew xix. 21). In John (vi. 27) it is also said: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth." What wealthy Christian will sell what he has and give to the poor, and thus carry out Christ's idea of social duties? And if the toiling millions did not labor for their meat, they would get but little of it. It is not overlooked that Jesus said to the young man, "and follow me"; which meant, I presume, that he was to join the Christian society in which they had "all things in common" (Acts iv.). But this state of existence could only be maintained by giving up all one's possessions and adding them to the general stock. If all did this, the stock would be soon exhausted. And the point here to be noted is, that in Christ's scheme no provision is made to provide for a permanent mode of living, except by prayer or miracle.

Surely it must be obvious to most people that a communion of saints, fed directly by God, could not be any solution of the social problem for those outside such communities. Besides, there is little prospect of outsiders being made partakers with the saints, unless God the Father draws them unto Christ (John vi. 44); but no one can go to the Father except by Christ (John xiv. 6). Thus our chances of admission into the Christian fold are very remote, for if we are admitted it must be through Christ, to whom we cannot go unless the Father draws us; but then we cannot go to the Father except by Christ. This is a theological puzzle, which must be left for a "Christian Socialist" to unravel if he can.

The belief that a social condition of society is sustained by an invisible power, where no labor is performed, and where no interest is taken in its progress, or in the dignity and personal independence of its members, is the height of folly. It implies the destruction of all human institutions, and the substitution of a "divinely ordered state of things," such as some of Christ's followers allege they are now hourly expecting. Well might the late Bishop of Peterborough say: "It is not possible for the State to carry out all the precepts of Christ. A State that attempted to do so could not exist for a week. If there be any person who maintains the contrary, his proper place is in a lunatic asylum" (*Fortnightly*, January, 1890).

The Sermon on the Mount, or "in the plain," as stated by Luke (vi. 17), has been called the Magna Charta of the kingdom of God, proclaimed by Christ, although it has never been made the basis of any human government. Its injunctions are so impracticable and antagonistic to the requirements of modern civilisation that no serious attempt has ever been made to put them in practice. It may be mentioned that the genuineness of the "Sermon" has been boldly questioned. Professor Huxley writes: "I am of opinion that there is the gravest reason for doubting whether the Sermon on the Mount was ever preached, and whether the so-called Lord's Prayer was ever prayed by Jesus of Nazareth" (*Controverted Questions*, p. 415). The Professor then gives his reasons for arriving at this conclusion.

The Rev. Dr. Giles, in his *Christian Records*, speaking of the Sermon on the Mount, says: "There is good ground for believing that such a collective body of maxims was never, at any time, delivered from the lips of our Lord"; and Milman declares that scarcely any passage is more perplexing to the harmonist of the Gospels than this sermon, which appears to be inserted at two different places by Matthew and Luke.

Mr. Charles B. Cooper, a very able American writer, aptly observes: "If this discourse is so important, as Christians profess to believe—the sum of all the teachings of Jesus, and the sufficient source of all morality—it is curious that Mark and John knew nothing about it, and that Luke should dismiss it with such a short report. Luke, omitting the larger part of the matter, takes only one page to tell what occupies three pages in Matthew; and to find any parallel to much of Matthew we have to go to other chapters of Luke and to other occasions. In addition to which, they disagree as to whether it was given on a mountain or in a plain."

Taking a broad view of the teachings as ascribed to Christ, I should describe most of them as being the result of emotion rather than the outcome of matured reflection. They are based upon faith, not upon knowledge, trust in Providence being the cornerstone of his system, so far as his fragmentary utterances can be systematised. In my opinion, the idea of his being a political and social reformer rests upon an entirely mistaken view of the union of what are termed temporal and spiritual things. Examples of this may be seen in such injunctions as "Love one another" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." The first was clearly applicable to the followers of Christ, for he expressly states, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples" (John xiii. 35); and the second command applied only to the Jewish community, not to strangers who lived outside. These injunctions did not mean that those who heard them were to love all mankind. Christ himself divided those who were for him from those who were against him. To the first he said, "Come, ye blessed of my father"; to the other, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued).

Mental power cannot be got from ill-fed brains.—*Herbert Spencer.*

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ON BERNARD SHAW AND OTHER THINGS.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, it has been said, carries more heresies than any man in London. He positively revels in heresy. He is also, besides being an Atheist, a Socialist, a Vegetarian, and several other things, a brilliant man of letters; and he is, in addition, an art critic, a musical critic, a dramatist, a dramatic critic, and an expounder of Socialist economics. And knowing his capacity for saying fine, delightful, irritating things, I journeyed down to Camberwell the other Sunday to hear him give his views on "The Religion of the Twentieth Century." At least such ran the legend in the papers. But then the newspapers often know more than human intelligence could acquire. For, be it said, an ordinary individual would never have suspected after he came out, unless he were told, that he had been listening to a lecture on the religion of the twentieth century. Hence I say newspapers are useful things.

The cosy hall of the Camberwell Branch was well filled with an appreciative and not too docile audience. At least some people had a good deal to say afterwards. Mr. Shaw began by telling us, characteristically, that he had a curious knack of taking the opposite view always to that of his audience. If he were in a chapel that night, he would in all probability be very impious; as he was in a Secular hall, the chances were that he would deliver a very pious discourse. Among other things, he said that Secularists were often liable to fall into the error of thinking that all the truth was on their side, and all the falsehood on the religionist's. Mr. Shaw seemed to be generously of opinion that it was a case of six of one and half-a-dozen of the other, or, at most, seven of one and five of the other. He also had a little word to say about Secularist work in the past being concerned principally with demolishing superstitions and absurdities, without trying to get behind them and comprehend their origin. And he proceeded to gaily tell us that, for instance, the Trinity presented no mystery whatever to him. To the Camberwell chapel-goer, he said, the Trinity was simply an arithmetical absurdity—"three times one are one"—there it is, a mystery; the poor chapel-goer could make nothing of it, and he thought he believed he believed it. To the Camberwell Secularist, on the other hand, it was merely an arithmetical absurdity, and there was an end of the matter. But the brilliant G. B. S. could see it perfectly. And he gave an illustration: Many a lady is a mother and a daughter and a wife—three relationships in the one person. A man can be a father and a son, and he has a relation to his fellow-men, which typifies the H. G. in him. Then take the Immaculate Conception too. Mr. Shaw understood it. I don't know if I can convey, or, indeed, that Mr. Shaw could, his idea. It was the embodiment of the sinlessness of motherhood in the mind of the woman, or something to that effect; there you have the "poetic fancy" at the base of the doctrine. And Mr. Shaw would extract a "poetic fancy" from a cart-wheel.

And then the Atonement, that too was as simple as A B C. The martyr suffered for the shortcomings of others. Charles Bradlaugh, for instance, had raised and benefitted his country at the expense of his own life; and at the thought of what he did—as even one orthodox reviewer admitted—the pulse beat quicker and the blood ran faster. That was the "poetic fancy" at the base of the Atonement doctrine.

Now I do solemnly aver that at much of this Shawian talk hardly a ripple passed over the faces of the listeners. All this surpassing satire was more or less lost. And so at the end several gentlemen got up to righteously protest against galvanising a dead superstition into life, by extracting "poetic fancies" from falsehoods. Freethinkers have something better to do than spend themselves in propping up old and mischievous shams by delving for some possible support on which there is a shade of a chance the sham can rest. And it was shown that the Shawian formula would equally demonstrate a "quaternity," or any other like monstrosity. For a man can be father, son, husband, uncle, nephew, cousin, pork-butcher, and vestryman rolled into one—which, I think, leaves the Trinity a long way behind. In the same way, when you are at the "poetic fancy" business, you can work it up out of anything. "Two and two make five." Now that is quite understandable by the Shaw method. For if you take, say, a penny, and put it on the table, it is only a penny. Add two pennies and two pennies to it, and lo, you have five pennies. So that two and two really do make five where there was not five before. This "poetic fancy," I should remark, is patented.

It was also seriously remarked that, since large numbers of people are still enthralled by dogma, the "destructive" work of Secularists is more essential and more practical for the moment than any amount of the "fancying" business, though there is as much serious work done by Secularists as a body as by any other party. But if there is a condemned house which is a danger to human life that requires to be cleared away, most people would think it more profitable to get pick-axe and spade than to discuss what was the original object for which the house was built, what "fancy" the architect had in mind when he designed it, and what amount of propping and patching would render it merely harmless. The person of common sense would argue that, as the house stood in the way, the first and necessary thing was to clear it out of the way, and then start to re-build a habitable better dwelling in its place. All this was pointed out, not as I have said it, but substantially. And Mr. Shaw replied. He kept up splendidly. And he said several delightful things by the way. One was that his first impulse, on seeing the Bradlaugh statue at Northampton, was to take up a stone and fling it thereat, because it was a bad statue, and, "as an artist," it offended his eye. He also incidentally gave a testimonial to John Bunyan, whom he—"actually a professional writer himself"—considered one of the masters, if not the greatest master, of the English language. But his great sallies were really lost; the irony possibly was too subtle, and so, as Mr. Shaw says of something else, it was probably understood only by a few kindred spirits.

And, when I returned home, I took up the *Saturday Review* and pondered again some sentences therein, in an article over the initials "G. B. S." It should be mentioned, perhaps, that Mr. Shaw and Mr. Oscar Wilde are both Irishmen. And Mr. Shaw, in the course of a criticism of Mr. Wilde's last play, speaks thusly:—

"In a certain sense Mr. Wilde is to me our only playwright. He plays with everything: with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience—with the whole theatre. Such a feat scandalises the Englishman, who can no more play with wit and philosophy than he can with a football or a cricket-bat. He works at both, and has the consolation, if he cannot make people laugh, of being the best cricketer and footballer in the world. . . . Ireland is, of all countries, the most foreign to England, and to the Irishman (and Mr. Wilde is almost as acutely Irish an Irishman as the Iron Duke of Wellington) there is nothing in the world quite so exquisitely comic as an Englishman's seriousness. It becomes tragic, perhaps, when the Englishman acts on it; but that occurs too seldom to be taken into account—a fact which intensifies the humor of the situation, the total result being, the Englishman utterly unconscious of his real self, Mr. Wilde keenly observant of it and playing on the self-consciousness with irresistible humor, and, finally, the Englishman annoyed with himself for being amused at his own expense. . . . He is shocked, too, at the danger to the foundations of society when seriousness is publicly laughed at."

And then this passage had a new meaning for me, and Mr. Shaw was vindicated. But the majority of the audience had not read Mr. Shaw's article, and, therefore, did not understand Mr. Shaw's lecture fully. But Mr. Shaw cannot complain if his Irish humor is misunderstood in these days when even English statesmen—and who is so intelligent as an English statesman?—fall foul of a very cheap piece of English irony.

Frederick Ryan.

An Infinite Person.

The very notion of a person implies limitation. A person implies an agent capable of affecting external agencies. No person ever was, or could be, infinite. The very notion of infinity, as the Brahmins, who wasted much time in reflection upon the subject, saw, implies the absence or dissolution of personality. When the devotee, they say, is absorbed in Brahm, his personality is like that of a grain of salt dissolved in the ocean. To talk of an infinite personality is to talk of a round square. It is an infinite absurdity.

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OLD AND NEW CREEDS.

A PERUSAL of printed sermons, or an auricular attention to pulpit discourses, is instructive of what fearful straights the preachers are in to defend their theological positions. Hearty thanks must be rendered to all publishers who give to the world parsonic utterances in printed form, for the opportunity they afford to those outside the fold to become acquainted with modern Christian methods of controversy, to follow the ever-changing attitudes of the lights of the Churches, and to learn how they are readjusting their beliefs in deference to scientific discoveries, ascertained truths, and the improved culture of the human mind. "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" cannot be said of Christian doctrines, or rather of the doctrines of Christian sects (for which among the myriad bodies can properly claim possession of the pure and undiluted faith?), no more than it can refer to the Christian God, or, to be more precise, to the properties which Christian worshippers ascribe to their deity. To comprehend that this is inevitable, it should be borne in mind that change is the natural corollary of the existences of countries, peoples, and persons; and as no two Deists ever had an identical conception of their god, and as no two religionists ever had a similar comprehension of their faith, so, when nations arise and decay, when people are differently constituted, and influenced by altered environments and conditions, and when life itself scarcely appears to be composed of the same elements, do beliefs and ideas of gods fluctuate, and relations to old faiths become metamorphosed. This occurs in the ordinary process of things, and no one will question it, be they ever so affectionately attached to crude dogmas and stale fancies of bygone periods. The natural laws, however, which wreck unsupported mental conceptions, do not affect demonstrated facts and unquestionable truths, for these remain, like adamantine rocks, unmoved or unshaken by the ceaseless roll of ages.

Of the two classes of Christians—those who adhere to the literal interpretation of the Bible, and endeavor, or feign, to order their lives in unison with the teachings of Christ and his apostles, and those who accept, according to their own personal opinions and prejudices, the contents of the New Testament, and virtually reject the admonitions of the Nazarene—it is difficult to decide which to hold in the most contempt. The former certainly have sincerity on their side, which is, perhaps, their only virtue; but it is an advantage in these times to find some who are simple and fossilised enough to cling with pathetic affection to old and eccentric traditions. Still, it is lamentable that their intellectual depravity is so great, that they are so sunken in the mire of superstition and shallow-mindedness, and that they are so far from the saving arms of light and truth. It is hardly, however, with feelings of scorn that their position should be viewed, or with chastisements of angry words that their misplaced faith should be condemned. Thoroughness is an enviable quality in a man, be he a blackguard or a saint.

It is with the dishonest, insincere, and elastic adherents (if they are adherents) of the Christian religion that chief concern should rest. Professedly attached to a faith whose plain and unvarnished items are mostly repulsive to them, they have not the courage or the honesty to openly cast off its trammels; avowedly subscribing to a form of belief, and a manual of historical narrative, they exhibit, by every means in their power, their abhorrence of the essentials of the one, and their rejection of the veracity of the other; seemingly devoted to a spiritual ideal which excludes participation in worldly affairs, they do their utmost to excel in earthly matters, and revel in carnal delights. Perhaps an impossible standard of conduct, a crude and incomplete ethical code, or a false conception of human duties and responsibilities, is the main cause of the discrepancies which exist between the teaching and the practice of the Christian creed. Whether that be so or not, it must be recognised what William Hazlitt has written, that "there is not a bigger hypocrisy in the world than religious hypocrisy." Nothing engenders hypocrisy so much as religion. The vilest murderers are those from whose lips there hang pious phrases; the worst deceivers are those who are immersed in religion; the biggest swindlers are all fine Christian gentlemen. Praying Jabez will not be forgotten in a hurry.

Up-to-date sermons by advanced clericals are distinguished for a condescending recognition of the worth of sceptics, and of the merits of their works; and the assimilation of the discoveries and accomplishments of science. Where formerly heretics were treated to the scantiest considerations, their characters maligned, and their persons persecuted and tortured, a tardy tribute is now paid them for their disinterested services to mankind, their whole-hearted concern for the well-being of their fellow creatures, and for their honor and integrity. It is regretted that they cannot be numbered among the faithful; but the fold is being gradually made sufficiently accommodating to take them in, or some saving clause in the tenets of the faith is discovered to prove them to be working on the "Lord's side." But the most glaring hypocrisy of representative pulpiteers is their method of crediting religion with scientific knowledge and truths. "Science," say these men of God, "is but another blessing of the merciful Father to increase the delights and comforts of his children on earth. He reveals the hidden treasures of nature to man for his benefit; his handiwork is shown in the wonders of the universe. God has designed that man shall investigate his creation, and then glorify him for his goodness." But surely, if the products of science are blessings to man to-day, they would also have been equally blessings two thousand years ago. Then why did God allow man to be kept in ignorance of what would have been a great blessing to him? If the facts which science reveals to man to-day are of any value, they would have been infinitely more so to God's thick-headed chosen people four thousand years ago. And yet God kept them in ignorance of the properties of nature, through which lack of knowledge they suffered. But to whom shall be rendered thanks for the revelations of science? To God, who has kept them hidden for centuries, and has allowed his worshippers to persecute and murder those men who have sought to reveal the beauty of his handiwork? To God, who taught his people false ideas of the universe; who distorted their minds, and made them indifferent to all save the use of the sword and their neighbors' wives? To God, whose book contains more unscientific nonsense and inaccuracies than the mind of the most untutored savage? Or to man, who, during countless eras of the world's history, has searched the book of Nature for truth, and added to the store of knowledge at the cost of blighted constitutions and early graves? To man, who has fought the monsters of superstition and ignorance, heedless of the dungeon and the stake; who, being encompassed by unmerciful enemies, has still persevered in the sacred task of enlightenment? There can be no doubt who it is. Of course, no intelligent person whose mind was unhinged by dogmas would credit a deity with such performances as Christians do theirs. They rival savages in painting their God in devilish hues.

Even on the supposition that God is the creator and manipulator of the universe, it is difficult to conceive how his beneficent qualities can be thereby proved. While many of nature's laws tend to the advantage of the human race, there are those which are cruel in their working and their inflexibility, and which bring about untold evil and misery. Some even threaten to obliterate the human species. The aim of science is to obtain control over the forces of nature by becoming acquainted with their properties; to utilise them for man's benefit, instead of allowing them to militate against his prosperity; to direct their influences into channels from which blessings may flow. Will anyone question this? Yet it is tantamount to saying, if God be above, behind, or in nature, that as soon as man has frustrated God's creation, and as soon as he has brought into subjection and control God's forces, he will be safer, happier, and more successful in his worldly avocations. But there, the clericals were always dense, and the controversial bog into which they have now fallen will serve as a fine pictorial representation of the ridiculous.

So surely as the remark ascribed to Christ, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," was true to the early believers—it has been made possible since—is the truth incontestable that religion and science have nothing in common. Let Christians be honest, and they will acknowledge that, if they really believed what they professed, they would say that this earth is but a vale of tears; that it is insulting to God to endeavor to improve his work; that the world is but a temporary ante-room to the mansions prepared above; and that it is not their dwelling-place, but a desert through which they travel before gaining the joys of their heavenly

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home. Let them, like the honest Scotchman in Mr. Barrie's play, "The Professor's Love Study," who declares his unbelief in, and horror of, such scientific contrivances as electrical engines, on the ground that he does not read about them in the Bible, adhere to their text-book and abjure worldly matters, and then they may command, if not the admiration, at least the respect, of Rationalists for their sincerity.

FRED WILSON.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.

FREETHOUGHT can boast its noble army of martyrs and its glorious company of the apostles. Worthy work has been done, however, by those in the rank and file who have never aspired to eminence; and as it has been my fortune to know some of these, and to look up the lives and writings of others, I think well to jot down a few particulars of some minor workers in the good old cause. I begin with an early friend,

MYLES MCSWEENEY.

I was but a lad when I first heard the rich brogue of this Irish advocate at the Brill, Somer's Town, adjacent to the spot now crossed by the Midland Arches. The humorous way in which he referred to the myths of "Jasus and the Vargin" was irresistibly funny. His pet subject was the non-historical character of these legendary personages, and he brought to bear on his topic intimacy with the rites and doctrines of the Roman Church, in which he was educated, and a wide acquaintance with mythological lore. Born at Enniskillen in 1814, he early migrated to London, and, hearing the Rev. Robert Taylor at the Rotunda, in 1830, adopted the views of the "Devil's Chaplain." When I knew him he was a peripatetic stationer and book dealer, living in a very humble cottage down Westminster way. Yet his room was filled with books explaining "all the mythologies." Many of them were rare and valuable. There were the works of Drummond, Bryant, Maurice, Holwell, Pluché, Savory, Asiatic Researches, etc., mostly picked up secondhand during his peregrinations. Nor were later books wanting, such as those of Dr. Inman, presented by the author, whom McSweeney supplied with many books, as he did also Bishop Colenso.

He sold me some books, said to be "worth their weight in gold," and lent me others, from some of which I enlarged drawings for his lectures. Every Sunday he went from place to place discoursing on some phase of his constant theme. On one occasion I recollect that he took the chair for Mr. Bradlaugh at the Hall of Science, when our leader was lecturing on some similar topic to his own. I once accompanied McSweeney to a meeting of the old Anthropological Society to hear a paper by the Rev. Dunbar Heath. Myles opposed, and afforded much amusement by his rich brogue, and the Irish humor with which he satirised the lecture. At this meeting William Simpson—"Crimean Simpson," of the *Illustrated London News*, who was as good an antiquarian as he was an artist—was present and spoke. Some years afterwards, under the pen-name of Phandye, Simpson contributed to the *Secularist*, when under the conduct of Mr. Foote, an amusing skit, entitled "Is Myles McSweeney a Man, a God, or a Myth?" applying his own principles to resolve the living man into a solar hero. Myles was a good-humored man, and took the skit well. For his plainness of language about "Jasus and Mary," and what he considered the remnants of phallic worship in Christianity, he was regarded as coarse. Essentially he was not so. I well remember the fatherly way in which he advised me, while in my teens, to abstain from all indulgences and adopt the Stoic philosophy, which he not only held, but acted up to. For drawing my attention to the noble counsels of Antoninus and Epictetus I owe a debt of gratitude to this self-taught Irishman.

"Larn abethinince," he said, "afore ye thry motheration." His information was good and extensive, and it was at his tongue's tip. But two things he lacked that were essential to his studies—a sound knowledge of languages and philological evolution, and a knowledge of "primitive culture" and evolution. His mind was formed in the pre-Darwinian era. His writings in the *National Reformer* and *Secular Chronicle* are only valuable for their out-of-way information, which some other might shape to better purpose. The same criticism may be passed on a pamphlet on *Moses and Bacchus*, which he published, and which he intended to follow by *Biblical and Mythical Parallels*, which he compiled. An American, Mr. T. W. Doane, has since carried out this project in a way which reminds me of McSweeney's idea, which never received sufficient encouragement to obtain book form.

J. M. W.

Women's Christian Unionist—"Which do you consider the most improper and dangerous book in your stock?" Bookseller—"Well, mum, the Bible is very warm in parts."

ACID DROPS.

OUR "forward" contemporary, the *Methodist Times*, has just made the startling discovery that "what gave Mr. Bradlaugh his great position in Northampton was not his theological attitude, but his political opinions." This is not strictly true, for Bradlaugh's great personality counted for much in the long fight of thirteen years before Northampton elected him to a seat in the House of Commons. But, so far as it is true, it is certainly not new. Bradlaugh said so himself again and again; and, as a matter of fact, he dropped his Freethought propaganda at Northampton when he aspired to represent it in Parliament. On the other side, however, it is a fact that he was fiercely opposed in the name of Christianity, and vehemently denounced from Nonconformist pulpits. He did not win *as* an Atheist, but he certainly won *in spite* of his Atheism.

The *Methodist Times*, we observe, is still at war with the *Christian Advocate*. "Most people," the former says, "would apply to the statements of the *Christian Advocate* a very short, vigorous, and expressive Anglo-Saxon word." But it will not employ this word, because it believes its contemporary is only "grossly prejudiced and appallingly ignorant," and not animated by a desire to "deliberately and intentionally misrepresent the facts." From which it is a legitimate inference that the *Methodist Times* would employ the word "lie" if it were justified by the facts. But what a howl was raised when, *being* justified by the facts, we applied the word "lie" to Mr. Hughes's story of "The Atheist Shoemaker." The man's "dignity" was "outraged," and under this paltry pretence he avoided a Committee of Honor, which he knew would have to brand him as a liar in the face of the world.

Mr. Hughes does not use short, vigorous, and expressive Anglo-Saxon words. He shudders at "lie"—that is, when applied to himself—but he speaks of the *Advocate's* "moral obliquity," declares that what it says is "absolutely false and inaccurate from beginning to end," and calls a certain part of it an "outrageous untruth." Well now, it is a proverb that tastes differ; but, for our part, if a man thought all that about us, we would rather he said "lie" at once than waste his time and ours in ridiculous circumlocutions.

Considering that the *Methodist Times* is so rabidly teetotal, it is curious that it takes money for advertising "Mariani Wine."

Mrs. Mellon, the Spiritist medium at Sydney, who was "detected" in materialising "the small spirit form known as Cissie," has given the world an explanation. The gentleman who got hold of Cissie found he had caught Mrs. Mellon, whose shoes and stockings were afterwards discovered in her cabinet. But it appears that the spirits were bothered by the "inharmonious feeling at the meeting," so they "drew" only from Mrs. Mellon's "lower parts," and principally the "legs." "At one time," she says, "I felt as though I had no legs at all—they were rendered very small and shrunken; and that is how I explain my shoes and stockings coming off." It is said that this explanation satisfies the Chief Justice of the Colony. We hope he is not so easily satisfied when he sits upon the bench.

There is a ghost at Darweston, in Dorsetshire—one of those parts of the world in which ghosts are pretty much at home. This ghost is a real one. Of course! It has baffled the rector and the schoolmaster; but, as it writes on a slate, and spells *money* "mony," it seems greatly in need of the schoolmaster's services. We hope he will improve its neglected education.

Mr. W. T. Stead is a curious bundle of contradictions. In the new year's address to his readers he once more boasts that he is engaged in a Holy War on behalf of Human Brotherhood. A few pages farther he rather rejoices that Mr. Cecil Rhodes will soon be in a position "at any moment to be at hand's-grip with the Mahdi." What a pity it is that Mr. Stead and Mrs. Besant cannot work up a new religion between them! It would be one of the wonders of the world.

Mr. Stead has taken to singing the praises of Albert Edward, who is going to "marshal the forces making for the improvement and the amelioration of the social system." Mr. Stead sees all this in his mind's eye. "Hereafter," he says, "I may return to it again." The grammar is characteristic of the hasty gentleman who superintends the affairs of this globe. Ordinary people return; Mr. Stead returns again. Ordinary people would write "improvement" or "amelioration"; Mr. Stead writes both. And his style is on a level with his thinking.

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Mr. Maskelyne, the conjurer, says that Mr. Stead arranged with his son to photograph a spirit under conditions which would preclude the possibility of trickery. To this end Mr. Stead endeavored to find a medium of unimpeachable character, but was informed by the Spiritists that they knew only of one—a lady who had left for Australia. Probably Mrs. Mellon, whose spirit, Cissie, so depleted her legs that her stockings came off when she was grabbed with bare feet at Sydney.

"Some time afterwards," continues Mr. Maskelyne, "I received a letter from Mr. Stead, saying that he had met with a wonderful materialising medium, and desired that we should attend to photograph a spirit at a *séance* to be held the next day. But, as usual, by the next post we heard that the medium had been taken ill, and the *séance* was postponed. Since then the camera and accessories have been constantly in readiness, but we are still waiting."

Credulity is ever bursting out into new developments. Many people believe in "graphology," or telling people's characters from their handwriting. The "graphologists" have been at work on Mark Twain's caligraphy—of course, without knowing whose it was; and they find him "inconstant, illogical, insincere, absolutely devoid of feeling, self-conscious, and wanting in moral rectitude." That's a pretty large order for poor Mark, isn't it? But he can afford to laugh at it—and at the "graphologists."

By and bye the world will be overrun with "professors" of all sorts of nonsense. Matthew Arnold was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, but he dropped the title of "professor," feeling, as he said, that it was so much better adorned by men like Professor Anderson and Professor Pepper.

The Unitarians were defined by Dean Hook, in his *Church Dictionary*, as "certain heretics who do not worship the true God." And Coleridge, who had been one of them, gave his opinion that they were not entitled to the name of Christians. Now they are making a considerable fuss over the Sinai palimpsest, which says that Joseph begat Jesus, as a proof that they are the true primitive and only original Christians after all.

Mr. F. C. Conybeare argues this thesis in the *Academy*. He holds that the doctrine of the virgin birth is late, not being found in Paul. "The Christian dogma," he says, "is a materialisation of a philosophical myth found in Philo." The myth—viz., that the Logos is born of the virgin Sophia, or Reason from Wisdom, and "the story of the descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove, had a similar origin in the pre-Christian Philonean and Talmudic symbolisation of the Divine Spirit as a dove."

The crowing of the Unitarians, of course, makes the orthodox repudiate the newly-discovered heretical gospel. The *Church Times* frankly says there is "only one solution—to reduce the claims of the Syriac gospels," and "to recognise them as relics of a side tradition of a corrupt nature"; and it concludes by saying that, "if the Lewis Codex is heretical, it must involve the Cureton, which all admit to be closely allied to it, in its own fate." One thing the orthodox can never admit, and that is, that Jesus had an earthly father.

The Bishop of Manchester has been fulminating from his cathedral against the claims of the Roman Church. "These claims," he said, "from the very first, had been based on forgeries." Well, Dr. Moorhouse cannot deny that the Roman Church was antecedent to his own, which has adopted a great deal from it. Does not this suggest that the claims of the entire Christian Church require rigid scrutiny?

Mrs. Justice, the lady who collected money for a bogus Orphanage, of course protested that she was working for the Lord, and the respectable young ladies who were used to assist in the collection were provided with religious badges with a lamb and an angel upon them. These pious frauds are stayed from their practices for a while; but while dupes abound rogues are likely to be forthcoming.

Gradually but surely the nasty priest is being expelled from the marriage laws. In Hungary just now the emperor has consented to create sufficient new lords or magnates to carry a Civil Marriage Bill through the "upper" house, where the creatures of the Pope had previously kicked it out. It is an instructive fact, as we have noted before, that it is in Catholic lands, where the priest is best known, that he is the most intensely hated; in Protestant England, etc., where he apes the Protestants for his own base ends, he is not only tolerated, but treated as a respectable fellow, although he is the deepest-dyed villain in the community.—*Liberator*.

At Minneapolis one Blitz, put in the dock for the murder of Miss Catherine Ging, brought his Bible in court and clung to it tightly all through the proceedings, as if it was his only hope. "His eyes were bloodshot and restless, his hair dishevelled, and his whole appearance disquieting."

On this the *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago, remarks: "That Bible had taught the guilty wretch if he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, though his sins were scarlet he should be made white as snow, and should enter the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem; while she who had no moment for preparation for the awful change did not believe, and was damned."

A Reuter's telegram from St. Petersburg mentions the trial of eleven persons of the province of Viatka for offering human sacrifices. They belonged to a sect known as Votiaks. The *Daily News* calls them an idolatrous sect, but we should like to know how many of the Russian Christians are not idolaters, or worshippers of *icons*. These Votiaks, however, are Pagans, though the population of Russia is classed as Christian.

From the evidence given at the trial it appears that the accused induced a certain beggar-man named Matriounine to visit the house of Moses Dimitrieff, one of the prisoners. After making the beggar drunk, they cut his throat and decapitated him. They then suspended the headless trunk from the ceiling, and, after making five incisions, collected the blood in dishes, and extracted the man's heart and lungs, which they subsequently used in their idolatrous rites. The mutilated body was thrown by the side of a high road. This atrocity was perpetrated as long ago as March, 1894, during the great Russian famine, and the object of the sacrifice was to appease the anger of Kourbane, the spirit of evil, and prevent a fresh visitation of the scourge.

According to the *English Churchman*, Judge Bagshawe, Q.C., and Judge Stonor sat with Cardinal Vaughan when, in his official robes, he tried a case in this country, by virtue of his position as head of the Roman Catholic Church in England. The court may have been an informal one of arbitration; but the Cardinal seems to have done all possible to a private person to give it an authoritative aspect. And, after all, one of the parties would not accept his decision.

Nominally, the Church of England is the Church of the entire nation. Judged, however, by the bishops' confirmations, which are necessary for the admission of adolescents into the Church, it is only the Church of an insignificant minority. Out of a population of thirty millions the only persons confirmed in 1893 were 222,893. The immense majority of these were females. This fact suffices to prove that, despite its boasted activity, the Church is losing ground, and should encourage those who are looking forward to Disestablishment and, what is still more important Disendowment.

The remedy suggested by the *Church Times* for the paucity of confirmations betrays the weakness of the Church. It wants children to be confirmed earlier in order to prevent leakage. All sensible persons acquainted with the thoughts of the juveniles who are confirmed would rather suggest that such a rite should be deferred till their minds were more matured. But the less mature and the more credulous the mind of the child, so much the better for the Church.

The Borough Polytechnic, London, is an institution supported by all sections of society, including Freethinkers. Its managers, however, are making a big effort to get the working classes to come to the Victoria Hall, where various ministers are to dose them with Christianity. As the Polytechnic funds cannot be used for the purpose, a circular has been sent to the subscribers, begging funds for this pious enterprise. Mr. George Anderson, having received one of these gentle solicitations, replied as follows:—

"BOROUGH POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE.

"I would be pleased to subscribe to any effort to make better the lower classes; but preaching Christianity will not do it. Christianity has been preached for many hundreds of years, and it costs the country millions of money annually, and see the result. 'The neighborhood has been the despair of every Christian worker,' you write. Then why continue a system that has so failed? Why not teach the people something they can understand?—how to preserve their health, to keep the skin and hands in order, and not to fret over passing difficulties, but to *work* out their salvation instead of praying for it. Teach them the laws of health—sanitary science, some knowledge of the structure of their own bodies, and how to avoid prevalent diseases, the air to breathe, the clothes to wear, and things to avoid. Teach the people such things, and they will flock to you; they will understand what is said to them, and carry away ideas they can talk about; but the other leaves them in the clouds of ignorance, where neither teacher nor taught know anything. Instruct as I advise, and I will subscribe.—Yours,

"GEORGE ANDERSON."

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Providence doesn't mean that we should enjoy cheap Florida oranges this year and forget our dependence on "one above." Towards the end of December an extraordinary frost visited Florida, and destroyed 85 per cent. of the orange crop, the damage being estimated at £1,000,000. The gospel is declared to be without money and without price, but the object-lessons of Providence are very costly.

Raphael's picture of the Miraculous Draught is a splendid piece of artistic audacity. The boat is tremendously dwarfed, and attention is thus concentrated on J. C. and the apostolic fisherman. Naturally speaking, it is clear enough that the little cockle-shell of a boat would capsize if a stout apostle stepped into it carelessly; and several of them, hauling away at a monstrous catch of fishes, is really grotesque—only, of course, the great painter knew that as well as his critics. The whole drama was *miraculous*; and, as nature was contravened in its details, she might be equally contravened in their representation.

Unfortunately for five fishermen on the Irish coast last week, they had no J. C. on board, and no miracle to help them. They had an extraordinary catch of herrings, but in hauling them in the boat capsized, and the poor fellows were all drowned. Miraculous draughts don't pay except on the Sea of Galilee—and probably not there in this sceptical, god-forsaken age.

Fiji—Wesleyan converted Fiji—has been visited by a terrible hurricane, in which many lost their lives. Of the five churches in Suva, the capital, three collapsed. The Anglican Church was unroofed, while the Catholic sustained less serious damage. The Customs bonded store was destroyed, but the sugar mills remained uninjured.

A special service of supplication to God on behalf of the entombed miners at the flooded Audley Colliery was held on the spot; but, despite the prayers, and the heroism of men wh o did something better than pray, over seventy of the men were drowned.

Alexander McInnes, of Dumbarton-road, Glasgow, would seem to need the attention of his friends. He writes to the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* that he has studied "faith science" for more than thirty years, and can turn on the weather pretty much as he likes. He says: "According to Revelation iv. 3, Christ is the true magnet-stone, attracting all that is true, but repelling all that is false; further, imparting the true electro-magnetic power to his genuine followers, that they may do impossibilities. *Inter alia*, I find that, with a very small jet of gas-light, I can fill my bedroom every night with a supernatural light, and angels are attracted, but demons are driven away—the two kinds of electrical energy." If Mr. McInnes is really responsible for the weather, he deserves something severer than the care of his friends.

Mr. Savage Landor, in his book on *Corea*, tells a story of the King and telephones. When the invention was shown him, he immediately, at great expense, set about connecting by telephone the tomb of the queen dowager with the royal palace, a distance of several miles. Needless to say, though many hours a day were spent by his majesty and his suite in listening at their end of the telephone, and a watchman kept all night in case the queen dowager should wake up from her eternal sleep, not a message, or a sound, or murmur even was heard, which result caused the telephone to be condemned as a fraud by his Majesty the King of Cho-sen. After all, the King of Cho-sen, the Hermit Kingdom of Corea, is not much unlike some good Christians who fall out with science because it does not confirm their old superstitions.

Scene, a Salvation Army meeting on the South coast. Captain to the meeting—"Dear friends, the collection is one shilling and fourpence halfpenny. Will some kind friends make up the other three shillings and sevenpence halfpenny?" They didn't.

"Dagonet" (Mr. G. R. Sims) in the *Referee* writes strongly on the subject of General Booth's shelters, which he regards as "capable of breeding enough disease to decimate London." Mr. Sims says it is "monstrous" that Mr. Booth should be the one person in England allowed to keep a common lodging-house without complying with the Act of Parliament. "The matter must be seen to at once," he concludes, "and the Booth shelters placed under proper police inspection and control. There is not a shadow of excuse for the continuance of the present disgraceful state of things."

We recently drew attention to some anecdotes retailed by the Rev. Charles Berry about John Morley's condescension to family prayers in houses where he is staying. Mr. Berry has hopes of the sceptic yet. "Perhaps some day," he remarks, "his spirit of piety will find a body for itself in a credible statement of the Christian message." What a roundabout way of prophesying that John Morley will become a Christian—as he may if he ever descends to the intellectual level of Mr. Berry. Happily that seems impossible.

The lauding of Laud, whom the High Church papers have been calling "the English Cyprian," "a martyr to the faith," etc., shows how these Churchmen would like to deal with Dissent. The hammer of the Puritans, who put in force against them all the musty old laws he could find, and who had no conception of tolerance, is the very ideal of the Romanising section of the Church; though in himself he was, as Carlyle said, "a kiln-dried man, a baked man, hard and dry like a cricket, unlovable as a locust." Worse, he was a bigoted persecutor.

A *fac-simile* begging letter from Father B. Murray, of Wellingboro', reaches us. It begins by saying, "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered by Father Murray for you and all who read this letter, or who listen to it." It appeals for help for the struggling mission of our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and promises in return that "your name, too, shall lie on the altar of God and at the shrine of our Lady with the Sacred Heart." A medal or picture of our Lady is also promised. These fishers of men have learnt how to land their tin with glittering but valueless tin-bait.

An Aberdeen female pauper, in sending to St. Nicholas Parochial Board a letter pleading on behalf of another pauper whose allowance had been reduced, accompanied her letter with the following "revised" version of the 23rd Psalm:—

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,
Now seems to me a lie;
He leads me not in pastures green,
Nor quiet waters by.

My soul I must myself restore,
The walk myself must make;
My comfort and my happiness
Depend upon the path I take.

Yea, when I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For truth and justice are my creed
And staff to comfort still.

My table's always furnished,
Though very poor, Lord knows;
My head I don't with oil anoint,
My cup ne'er overflows.

Troubles and trials all my life
Have surely followed me,
And in old age the Poorhouse
My dwelling-place must be.

Last year the Bishop of Winchester inhibited the Rev. H. Lindsay Young, vicar of St. John's, Portsea, from joining in a Communion service at the Presbyterian Church, Portsmouth. Mr. Young asked his bishop to supply him with the law which prohibited him, and was referred to the Chancellor of the diocese for information. But he got none, and this year accepted the Presbyterian invitation to assert his civil and religious liberty. At which insubordination to bishops the *Church Times* is greatly shocked.

The Dreyfus affair exhibits one of the dangers of democracy, the danger of losing its head. Guilty or not guilty, the man was tried *in camera*, and found guilty beforehand by the crowd of journalists, who fancy themselves leaders of the people, though they merely echo its prejudices and voice its passions. The mobbing of Dreyfus at La Rochelle is a pitiable climax to a very sorry drama. Beating a helpless convict with sticks and umbrellas is simply disgusting. One is bound to say, after all, that the "spy" bore himself more proudly than his judges and executioners.

According to the *Crescent*, the police of Liverpool succeeded in arresting one of the fanatical Christians who threw missiles at the Muezzin, who called to prayers at the Mosque in that city. It turns out that the person arrested is a Christian Sunday-school teacher.

The Rev. W. Campbell, of Los Angeles, California, mounted his pulpit, stood on his hind legs, screwed up his eyes, and besought the Lord to vouchsafe his saving grace to the lady Librarian of the City Library, and to cleanse her from all sin, and make her worthy of her office. That minister will have to consult a solicitor in future before he prays in public for anyone but himself. The lady librarian has instituted an action against him for libel. She reckons she's as much "cleansed" as the minister, anyhow.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 27, Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool:—11, "Problems of Civilisation"; 3, "Angels"; 7, "Did Jesus Ever Live?"

February 3, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—January 27, Hall of Science, London. February 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Camberwell; 17, Plymouth; 24, Newcastle-on-Tyne. March 3, Manchester. April 7, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Mr. Foote is obliged to defer the announcement he promised to make in this week's *Freethinker*. A serious obstacle has arisen, which may or may not be removed or surmounted. Next week, in any case, it will be his duty to print a public statement.

Chatham Branch.—Lecture Notices are too late on Wednesday, when yours arrived last week.

T. G. Dowse.—Dr. Parker is a Congregationalist. He is minister of the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct. The Temple, of which Dr. Vaughan is Master, is quite another place—a Church of England establishment.

Inquirer.—If you want to tackle George Meredith, we advise you to begin with *Richard Feverel*.

E. Gage.—We cannot reply to legal questions, except in relation to Freethought; though it is clear enough to the lay mind that you cannot leave a house without giving some notice, which will, of course, depend on the special circumstances of the case.

R. Ward.—That is exactly what happened before. A suitable hall could not be obtained at Hanley. Sorry to hear of your illness.

F. J. Boorman.—Mr. Foote was absent from London, and your letter could not be answered by the time desired. Financial considerations need not stand in the way of the debate. Mr. Foote will agree to anything in reason, only he cannot afford to lose money.

E. C. Ramsey, of the Wood Green Branch, who was educated at Christ's Hospital, would like to correspond with any old "blues" who are now Freethinkers. Address from R. Forder.

L. Levine (Charleston).—Always glad to receive your useful papers.

J. S.—You will see in Algar's *Glimpses of the French Revolution* that the story of Cazotte's prediction of the Reign of Terror, so famous with lovers of the marvellous, was invented for him after the event by La Harpe. Probably other remarkable prophecies might be explained in a similar way.

G. R.—Shall appear.

Watts Election Fund.—Mr. G. Ward, treasurer, acknowledges: O. Featherstone (2nd subscription), 5s.

Mr. Foote's Fighting Fund.—W. W. Roberts, 2s. 6d.

Inquirer (Bacup).—The oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament books are supposed to belong to the early part of the tenth century, but we are not inclined to admit this chronology without a reservation. The earliest manuscripts of the New Testament are supposed to be several hundred years older; to belong, that is, to the second half of the fourth century. Dr. Giles's *Christian and Hebrew Records* is one of the best and most honest works to which we can refer you.

G. Cruddas.—The clergy are State-supported in the sense that their right to their incomes is absolutely based on the law of the land. We cannot go into the matter at length in this column.

C. Kendrick.—What is the "critical" mistake you refer to in *Darwin on God?* We say that the lecture which Charles Bradlaugh delivered in aid of the Forder Testimonial was his last. Mrs. Bonner says so too in the Life of her father. What is the use of asking "Was not" this, that, or the other? Make your statement, if you have one.

G. J. Holyoake.—Shall be dealt with in our next.

E. H. B. Stephenson.—Shall appear.

E. J.—Not without some merit, but hardly up to the mark for publication.

J. Lightowler.—Will try to find room.

F. J. Voisey.—In our next, owing to Mr. Foote's absence from London.

Rushden Branch.—All members are requested to attend a special meeting in the Miners' Hall at 11 a.m. to-day (January 27).

In consequence of Mr. Foote's absence in the country, some answers to correspondents, and other items, stand over till next week.

Papers Received.—Montreal Saturday Times—Newcastle Weekly Chronicle—Progressive Thinker—Liberty—Lucifer—Open Court—Liberator—Western Figaro—Crescent—Clydesdale Catholic Herald—Post—Two Worlds—Rad—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Daily News—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Twentieth Century.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A good Wednesday evening audience assembled at the London Hall of Science on January 16, when Mr. Foote gave "A Night with George Meredith." The lecture was followed with much interest, and the selections, especially the poetical ones, were highly appreciated. Mr. Foote did no lecturing last Sunday, but he lectures three times to-day (January 27) at Liverpool. The local Freethinkers should endeavor to bring as many as possible of their Christian friends to the evening lecture on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" The afternoon lecture is also a new one on "Angels." The morning subject is "Problems of Civilisation." On the following Sunday (February 3) Mr. Foote will be at Manchester.

We regret to say that, owing to inflammation of the eyes, Mr. Parris was precluded from lecturing at the Hall of Science on Sunday. His place was taken by Mr. Forder, who dealt with the subjects advertised, and received quite an ovation at the close of the evening lecture on "Science and Theology."

Mr. Charles Watts had a very hearty reception last Sunday in Nottingham, where he lectured three times in the Assembly Rooms. The weather was severe in the extreme, raining in torrents the whole of the day, without a moment's cessation. Friends from all the surrounding districts braved the storm and attended all the lectures, and the audiences increased in number at each meeting. In the evening every seat was occupied. We are pleased to hear from Mr. Watts that the Nottingham Branch has an energetic Committee, who are arranging week-night meetings, to be held regularly during the remainder of the winter.

Mr. Watts lectures this Sunday evening (January 27) at the Hall of Science, London, taking for his subject, "Trust in God a Delusion."

The following is the complete list of donations received at the London Secular Federation's annual dinner:—G. Ward, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Fincken, 10s.; A. Sumner, 10s.; E. Wilson, 10s.; J. Pottage, 10s.; R. Forder, 10s.; Mrs. Foote, 10s.; G. Harlow, 10s.; Touzeau Parris, 10s.; W. Hunt, 10s.; E. Henderson, 1s.; P. Sabine, 2s.; J. West, 2s. 6d.; F. J. W., 5s.; Mrs. Forder, 5s.; H. Poulson, 4s.; J. C., 5s.; F. R. Cottrell, 2s. 6d.; A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.; J. W. Hancock, 5s.; Miss E. Robins, 5s.; Mrs. Miller, 3s.; B. Bowden, 5s.; E. C., 5s.; F. Martini, 5s.; E. Dunn, 5s.; C. Burton, 5s.; A. and D. Bury, 5s.; R. Cook, 1s.; L. Roger, 2s.; F. Wood, 2s. 6d.; P. Rossignal, 2s.; C. F., 3s.

Among members of the N.S.S. elected on the new vestries is Mr. R. W. Parsons, for Ward No. 1, Pentonville, N.

Those members of the West London Branch who are desirous of the lectures at Kilburn being resumed during the forthcoming season are requested to attend a meeting to-day (Sunday, Jan. 27), 3.30 p.m., at 4 Springfield-gardens, N.W.

The annual meeting of the East London Branch will be held to-day (Jan. 27), at 11.30 a.m., at the Tower Hamlets Radical Association, 16 Durham-row, Stepney, E. A full attendance is requested.

Commenting on the death of Professor Seeley, *Reynolds's Newspaper* pays a tribute to the memory of Houston, who issued a book called *Ecce Homo* in 1813, for which he was condemned to two years' imprisonment and a fine of £200. "This is the way," says *Reynolds's*, "that an ignorant clergy met an argument which they found unanswerable." Our contemporary also speaks in the highest terms of Strauss, and says it is largely through the influence of such men that "some of the best men in the Church, and the most educated of the aristocracy, are Agnostics, if not Atheists."

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Monday's *Daily Chronicle* contained a review of the second volume of Mr. M. D. Conway's collected edition of Thomas Paine's writings. It speaks of the *Rights of Man* as "the most pungent and forcible statement ever made of the grounds and claims of English Radicalism," and as "a far more able and vigorous piece of thinking than Burke's work, though the literary form has not the charm of Burke." The reader is informed that "he will be surprised throughout at the long prevalent conception of Paine as a vulgar brawler against authority," and that "he will come into contact with a powerful mind, well-balanced, clear, honest, and able to express itself through a lucid and vigorous style." This is excellent. But what a pity that the truth cannot be admitted about a great writer till he has been dead nearly a century, simply because he had the courage to think all round the compass.

Darwin's grandfather defined Unitarianism as a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian. In the spirit of this definition we hail with satisfaction the news that Unitarian ministers are increasing faster than those of any other denomination in the United States. During the past three years the increase has been 25 per cent., and the accessions have mostly come from other Churches.

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne seems to have become more Pagan since he wrote his *Religion of a Literary Man*, in which he championed a vague idea called "Essential Christianity." Lecturing at South-place Institute lately on "The Puritan Crusade," he praised the old Greek view of life, and then proceeded as follows:—"Suddenly there comes to him, like the clang of a dolorous bell, the sound of the clock of time, striking the Christian era. A bitter east wind, full of spiritual influenza, swept across the world. As the poor Greek shivers in the blast, he realises for the first time, like Adam, that he is naked, that it is wrong for him to be happy in his simple, natural way." The *Christian World* says that all this will only provoke a smile, but, judging from some words in our contemporary's criticism, we should say it had produced an opposite effect.

Secular Thought, of Toronto, has now commenced its seventeenth volume. We congratulate Mr. J. Spencer Ellis on having so ably maintained a Freethought organ in priest, parson, and presbytery-ridden Canada.

Mr. Symes continues his *Liberator*, and mentions that it is now eighteen years since he delivered his first Freethought lecture at Newcastle. He has had a hard fighting life ever since, but then a good soldier always rejoices in the battle. The number of the *Liberator* before us reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "Buddhism and Christianity."

Mr. Foote will lecture for the Humanitarian League at the Lecture Room, 32 Sackville-street, Piccadilly, on Thursday, February 14. The subject of his discourse is to be War. Full particulars will appear in our next issue. Mr. Foote has also consented to revise his pamphlet, *The Shadow of the Sword*, so as to bring it quite up to date for general circulation, and to let the Humanitarian League print it as one of their tracts.

The final meeting of the Children's Party Committee will be held at the Hall of Science on Sunday (January 27), after the lecture, when all collecting-cards should be returned. Those ladies and gentlemen who have promised assistance should be present, *if possible*, or write Miss Vance the time at which they can attend on Wednesday. Children's tickets can be obtained from members of the Committee and Branch Secretaries. Unattached members should apply to Miss Vance at 28 Stonecutter-street, enclosing stamped envelope. The tickets admit children not under five or over fourteen years of age, and not more than three can be given to one family. To make the Children's Party a thoroughly enjoyable one, cash is needed, and should be sent in at once to Mr. Forder or Miss Vance at Stonecutter-street.

Everybody is tinkering away at the great "drink question," including the Church of England Temperance Society, which recently held a demonstration at Newcastle, the local Bishop being in the chair, and two other Bishops in the list of speakers. A non-sympathiser got up and asked if an amendment would be allowed; whereupon he was surrounded by a mob of intemperate clergymen, and speedily ejected from the premises. After this there was perfect harmony. Resolutions were passed in favor of the Bishop's Bill, which aims at reducing licences to one per 1,000 of the population. This would allow about twenty-five public-houses for the clergy of the Established Church. Does any man in his senses think it would be sufficient? Now and then we read of a clerical toper who would keep a considerable part of that number of public-houses going by himself.

HOW IT FEELS TO BE AN ATHEIST.

MANY years ago, when I was a Christian, I often used to wonder what the feelings of an Atheist were like. I used to believe that there must be a constant dread of approaching death. Like other Christians at that time (years ago), I used to think that prominent Atheists had a really unhappy time of it, and I often joined in that old-fashioned Christian war-cry, "Wait till that Atheist gets on his death-bed." To me an Atheist was a person who, out of pure cussedness or bad morality, sets himself up to defy the Supreme Being. Consequently, when his span of life was run out, his end would not be an enviable one. And many Christians hold that view to-day. But how erroneous are these opinions, how faulty is the argument. If anyone had told me in those days that I would ultimately become an Atheist, I would, in all probability, have used forcible or physical arguments to rebut these statements. Yet to-day I am an Atheist; as proud of that title as, years ago, I used to be of that of Christian. And yet I am no God-defier, no man of bad morality. I do not deny God or the Supreme Being. I am an Atheist, but not because I wish to transgress some laws supposed to have been laid down by God years ago. No; I am an Atheist because my reason has made me one. Blind faith is detrimental to the society in general, and to the individual in particular. Where Faith reigns supreme Reason is powerless. Generals do not expect to win battles by the aid of faith, but they use their reason, and find out if their soldiers are numerous and brave enough to beat the enemy. Captains do not go to sea and trust to faith; they use compasses and charts instead. Inventors do not reckon on faith to help them when they wish to give to the world some great invention. No; they use their brains instead. And the same holds good as regards belief in Christianity. Christians walk by faith, and not by sight—not a safe mode of locomotion.

I became an Atheist, not from pure cussedness, but from logical reasoning. Literature of a Freethought nature came into my possession, materially changing my views. Sadly, at that time, did I give up my entrenchments of Christianity to the ever-conquering foe. My last fortress—namely, Deism—ultimately fell. I became an Atheist. The God to whom I worshipped became a shadow; Christ, my Savior, had fled from me; the Holy Ghost was a thing (?) of the past. The Bible was to me only like other books. The fires of hell have no terrors to me, and the expected joys of Christianity's heaven are to me less than tinsel of my childhood's toys.

And I have found out that the Atheists in general are brave men. Ostracism stares them in the face, bigotry is brought to bear upon them, and slander plays a prominent part in endeavoring to wreck the Atheist's career. I have found that the generality of people do not understand Atheism, and, what is much to be regretted, many do not want to; they will not reason, they trust to faith.

Why should an Atheist fear death? When he comes to his death-bed why should he call upon the "Lord" to forgive him? The Atheist knows that everything which has life must, sooner or later, come to an end—must resolve itself again into the elements. The Atheist knows man is no exception to this rule; be he Christian, Jew, Pagan, or Atheist, none can escape. If this is so, then why fear death? If an Atheist lives a good and upright life—and there are many of them—what cause has he to fear death? If a Christian has faith, but does not lead a good life, *he* is the one who should, and probably would, cry to the "Lord" to help him when on his death-bed. But when the Atheist, who has never seen or heard God (or gods), and lives a moral life, comes to die, *he* wants no one to save him, for his own actions and words will stand him in good stead if (?) there should be anything after death. And if death ends all, then what has the Christian gained by rejecting reason and preferring faith?

Speaking for myself, I am not the least uncomfortable as to whether death ends all or not. All my belief or disbelief cannot close the gates of heaven—if there be one. All the parsons in Christendom cannot make me believe that a fiery hell exists somewhere, the whereabout of which has, up to now, not been discovered. All the sermons in the world cannot make me believe that a good father exists somewhere in space, and that he allows

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misery to be so great a factor in life without endeavoring to help it or minimise it. Earthquakes swallow whole nations, disease carries off millions of our brothers and sisters, hunger is rampant, whilst riches are produced in abundance. Justice is seldom seen, might takes the place of right, the worker starves and lives in hovels, whilst the idlers fare sumptuously and live in palaces. The worker often ends his days in the workhouse, whilst the drone, when he comes to die, has all the luxuries of life to make his dying moments the easier. And where is God? Where is our father? What is he doing? Receiving no reply, man feels in his heart that he must do those things which require aid. Man, in all his majesty, then stoops to do that work which benefits mankind, and finds that God, or gods, have never done anything themselves. Then feelings (aided largely by reason) creep into the heart that perhaps there is no supreme, intelligent, and loving being up in the sky. And circumstances happen which strengthen and confirm this view, and then man becomes an Atheist. No fear of hell has he, no longing for heaven; no favor does he require from God or gods. The knowledge of having done his duty during life would debar him from calling on the "Lord." The knowledge of having lived a moral life, according to his lights, will smooth away all terrors of death. He knows that if there is nothing after death, his worn-out body will once more live again in flowers, and air, and water. And if there is something after death, his good actions and honest endeavors will be to him a passport to that place where suffering is not.

Looked at, then, from every standpoint, the Atheist has no cause to fear the approach of his end, but will look to it with equanimity, considering that if he lives right, then he will die right. The Atheist, therefore, jogs along on life's highway quite contented, calm, and philosophical. If any Christian should read this article, let him ponder these remarks carefully.

G. E. Conrad Naewiger.

WHAT ARE WOMEN HERE FOR?*

I was asked the other day if I was going to speak on "Woman's Rights" at a meeting of women which I was expected to address, and my questioner said that a good many somewhat "conservative" friends of hers were anxious to hear me, but might not want to come if I was to speak upon that topic. Personally, I do not recognise that there is such a topic as woman's rights, and certainly I have never spoken upon it in my life. There are human rights, and some of these have, so far, been withheld from woman; but what do these people mean by "rights," if it is not the opportunity to do and to be all of those things which are recognised as the legitimate occupations or means of development or support which human beings are capable of undertaking, or wish to undertake for their own benefit or happiness?

The lady who asked me that question did not realise, and her friends do not realise, that for a woman to stand before an audience at all and speak upon any subject in the world is a full assertion of what they are pleased to think they are shocked at under the name of "woman's rights." Every time a woman earns a dollar in any occupation whatsoever (outside of the kitchen) she is a living exponent of "woman's rights," unless she refrains from taking that dollar, and it is paid over to and spent by the men of her family. Until this movement began for the equality of the sexes before the law (which by these nervous folks is called woman's rights), every dollar a woman earned belonged to her father or to her husband. She couldn't collect it. She didn't own it. It was looked upon by those who were the "conservatives" of that day as exceedingly unwomanly for her to want to. They said: "Do you suppose I want to handle and own my own money? Never! Why, that would proclaim to the world that I suspected my husband of dishonesty. Would I give myself to a man, and not give him all my property?" And so, if the wife inherited property from her father, the moment she married she didn't own that property. If she earned it herself, she didn't own it. And it was looked upon then as far more "unwomanly" and "brazen," and as a "dangerous undermining of the family relation," and as "unsexing" the wife (whatever that absurd and hard-driven word may mean) for her to *want* to own her own property and collect her own wages, than it is now for her to want to own *herself*, and to count as one in the economy of life.

There are always timid people, however, who think it is just as good form to be what they call "conservative"—that is, to keep just far enough behind the procession of progress to reap all of its benefits without having met and helped to solve any of its difficulties. But I will venture to assert that there is not one so-called conservative woman in New York who does not take full advantage of her "woman's rights" to own her own home, collect her own rent, or her salary (if she does anything to earn one); to draw her own royalty if she is an author; in short, that she does what she can to reap the benefits of this struggle for woman's human and equal footing before the law, in so far as it has already been established; and if she does so, she is (whether she knows it or not) proclaiming to the world that she is in favor of "woman's rights." Now, all these concessions, so far, have been gained as concessions, and not at all as inalienable rights of a human being to stand before the law on a dignified and equal footing with other human units.

So long as this is true, it is possible for woman to lose those concessions. She has absolutely no way to guard or protect them. There is a way to enable her to secure them in perpetuity—a way that takes nothing from man; that deprives him of nothing; that is in no way or sense antagonistic to his interests—a simple, easy way, which has in its favor all justice, all honesty, all logic, all common sense; which has against it absolutely nothing but ignorance and prejudice—absolutely nothing! Because there has never yet been given one single logical argument in favor of self-government for men, in favor of a democratic government at all, which does not apply absolutely and wholly to women also—not one! Because there has never been one single objection brought against woman's equality before the law with man which is not equally valid against self-government of men, or else is based upon wholly unproven and untenable evasion or assumption; assumptions which have been met, and which can be met, with entire ease, and disproven without using a great deal of brain matter in the process. One of these was reset in its old frame in a recent article by Janette Gilder. She argued that there was too large an ignorant vote in New York now—and so there may be; but upon what possible idea of justice is this means of self-protection and self-development given to ignorant men and withheld from ignorant women? If there is to be an intelligence test (or an educational one), let it be an educational test; but that will have nothing to do with sex! That argument is entirely too large. It covers entirely too much ground to meet the demands required of it. It is a *non sequitur*.

Then there is another worn-out, frayed-at-the-edges argument about serving as soldiers. Now, in the first place, citizenship does *not*, as is so often asserted, rest upon man's ability to serve in the army or navy. If it did, then all men incapacitated for such service would lose their votes. Are you aware that that would disfranchise very nearly three-fifths of the male voting population? Don't you see that that argument cuts two ways? Don't you see that it is spurious? Don't you know that it would, in the main, be the most intelligent of all the voters who fall under this ban? It is not the man who is a good fighter (a perfect animal) who is the wisest or safest legislator. That soldier argument would disfranchise almost all of our college professors, our physicians, clergymen, lawyers—in short, almost all of the ablest professional men in the country. It would really disfranchise pretty much everyone who would fall *inside* of the educational test; while the intelligence and educational test would disfranchise a large majority of those who come under the war-service test—both of which are mere evasions of the basic question—the question of woman's right to stand before the law as a human being on exactly the same level as other human beings.

If you take "male" out of the constitution, women will make no objections to all the intelligence tests, and all the physical perfection tests you care to devise, and apply to both sexes alike! She is not afraid of a fair and equal test on an equal footing with man. *She* asks for no special privileges. It is *he* who insists upon protective privileges against those who, he says, are his inferiors; and, somehow or other, it looks to me as if there was an African in that woodpile! If he is so sure that he is her superior, why is he so mortally afraid of meeting her on an equal footing?

But, jesting aside, did it ever occur to you what a coward a man is who insists upon claiming legal and political rights which he is afraid to allow his wife and mother to share with him? Can he not hold his own on a level footing with her? And did it ever occur to you that it is not the large-brained men, the able men, who are opposed to this measure? Such men as Abraham Lincoln are always in favor of it, as he was. It is the men who are instinctively aware of personal inferiority to many women who cling so tenaciously to the legal privilege which makes him her superior by law—a position in which he is unable to sustain himself on simply his own merits. That is a coward's refuge. And it matters not one whit whether he

* Delivered before a meeting of fashionable women who had said they would "open their parlors" for discussion of the "legal status of women" if Helen H. Gardener would agree to be one of the speakers.

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can march and shoot in a war or not; he is a coward who claims for himself legal advantages which he withholds from his sister.

Again, no man is subject to duty as a soldier absolutely. He is permitted to furnish a substitute. The women of a nation have not only furnished their substitutes, but they have furnished to that country *all* of the soldiers it can get—substitute, conscript, and volunteer. And she has faced a greater danger and more suffering in doing it than that substitute will be called upon to face in protecting his mother in any war that may call him out. Yet again, whenever a war is stirred up in this country, voted for, wanted, and managed by women; whenever the flag is fired upon by an armed force of women, there will be an equal number of women ready, willing, and able to protect it. Whenever an army of women invades our country, there will be an army of women ready to repel the invasion. Until then, let those who want the wars, who bring them on, fight them out!

There is another assertion which sometimes passes for argument upon this question. It is said that "the immoral vote" will be doubled. I do not believe that (using the word "immoral" in the sense in which it is always implied here for women) there is anybody who will assert that there are half as many "immoral" women as men. We cannot measure the whole country by a few large cities in this regard. But that argument surely covers a good deal more ground than its inventors intended it to. It would result, would it not, if applied, in enfranchising about nine-tenths of all women the world over, and in disfranchising about nine-tenths of the present voters, not omitting our small army contingent? But *is* it the morality test which they want rigidly applied? *Is* it a man's morality which secures him his suffrage, his status before the law? or is it his needs as a human unit in a republican form of government? Which ground does he claim it on? If on the morality ground, as they apply that to women, don't you think his tenure of office or of citizenship is on a pretty shaky foundation? Ask them down in Kentucky?

HELEN H. GARDENER.

—*Truth Seeker Annual.*

(To be concluded.)

OPPORTUNITY.

A GREAT man dies, but still the world goes on,
For many quite as good are always left
To work the world with minds and hands as deft
As those of all the greatest, dead and gone.

Not one is indispensable; the world
Has sons of opportunity at hand
To fill the leader's place of ev'ry band,
Whate'er the banner be by it unfurled.

The seed that falls on barren stoney ground
Is just as good as that which elsewhere lies;
'Tis opportunity that makes it rise
To growth and strength, till full fruition's found.

A man has toiled through life, but who shall say
That what he *best* could do was what he *did*?
Perhaps, through lack of quick'ning chance, all hid
Within his brain some germ of genius lay.

Success is not secured by work alone,
Nor merit always measured by success;
A man may win, and yet have conquered less
Than he who, striving, fails to hold his own.

The unit works, but worlds for it must toil;
The ages clog each step that man may take,
With hosts at flanks, at rear, and van, to make
Or mar the opportune congenial soil.

Like anchored ships upon a restless sea,
We're tethered to the depths of all the past
By chains invisible that hold us fast,
And hold us most when most we think we're free.

The men who conquered nations were the fruits
Of circumstance that generated crimes;
Those men, perchance, in less unsettled times,
Had lived like honest folk, and less like brutes.

We hope to raise our race, and speed the course
Of progress, with the spread of mental light;
For Science breeds the love of truth and right—
The antidotes to baneful cosmic force.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

WAR UPON PHYSIOLOGY.

PHYSIOLOGY treats of the phenomena of organised life. To know one's self, and the laws governing his being—to preserve a healthy mind in a healthy body—a person should be educated in this department of scientific knowledge. In Illinois, and probably in other States, it is taught to the higher classes in the public schools. Teachers, to obtain first-class certificates, must be well educated in this science. It enables a person to guard himself against a thousand ills, and it is very essential to those who are entrusted with the care of the young, and to those who watch at the bedside of the sick and dying.

Churchmen have recently discovered that the teachings of physiology are pernicious, yea, heretical. In some school districts public meetings have been held protesting against its being taught, alleging it is inconsistent with the inculcations of the Bible.

The advanced student learns that miracles are incompatible with natural law; that God never intervenes, even in answer to prayer, to protect persons from being burned in furnaces; that life cannot be sustained for three days in a whale's belly; that virgins do not bear children; that the dead cannot rise, clothed in mortal form, and be seen of many.

It is very apparent, from this brief statement, that either knowledge must be restricted, or the dogmas of the Church must be constructed along new lines. The Catholics saw this, hence the real motive for their warfare on the common school system. For three hundred years the parent Church refused to allow the Copernican system of astronomy to be taught in its schools, because it conflicted with Bible teaching. All the sciences, as they have sprung up with advancing knowledge, have met with similar opposition. To be consistent with its past, physiology must be opposed, and suppressed, if possible.—*Progressive Thinker.*

After a Royal Dinner.

A single incident may help us to realise the moral atmosphere which was shed around the brilliant Court in Paris, where Admiral Coligny spent his boyhood. The Royal household was entertained after dinner by the burning of six heretics, one of whom was a woman. It was on January 19, 1535.

Among the company was Cardinal Duprat, Chancellor of France, bishop of half-a-dozen sees, besides his archbishopric of Sens, whose cathedral never saw him enter until his corpse was borne there to its burial.

The mode of execution of heretics was the *estrapade*. The victims were fastened to a beam which played up and down, and alternately dipped them into, and withdrew them from, the flames. As the torture was prolonged, the Duchess d'Etampes turned to Duprat and complained, not of the atrocious cruelty of the punishment, but of the smell of burning flesh.

"Madame," replied the Cardinal, jocosely, "it is clear you have never entered your kitchen when pork was being cooked—the odor is exactly the same."—"*Pearson's Weekly*," *January 12.*

Obituary.

ON Friday, January 18, William Dawson, of Annistford, was interred at Bedlington Cemetery. It was deceased's ardent desire to have a purely Secular burial. His remains were allowed to rest in the church, where Mr. R. H. Wharrier read the Secular Burial Service in an impressive manner. Mr. John Bryson also delivered a short address, pointing out the many sterling qualities of the deceased. Mr. Dawson was a veteran Freethinker, being eighty-three years old. He was a great admirer of the late Mr. Bradlaugh.—JAMES LATTY, Sec.

AN eminent German Freethinking philosopher has passed away in the person of Moritz Carriere, who died on January 18, at the age of seventy-seven. He was professor of philosophy at Giessen and Munich. Though a Theist, he showed considerable independence of thought. He wrote on such historical subjects as Abelard and Heloise, and the character of Cromwell.

It can do truth no service to blink the fact, known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected, the Christian faith.—*John Stuart Mill.*

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BOOK CHAT.

We are pleased to note that a biography of Judge Stephen is being prepared by his brother, Mr. Leslie Stephen.

* * *

The Life and Teachings of Jesus, by A. Kenyon Rogers (Putnam & Sons; 3s. 6d.), professes to be a critical analysis of the sources of the gospels, together with a study of the sayings of Jesus, but goes on the plan of selecting about as much as the average modern religious body can be expected to swallow with its eyes partly open. The author admits, with regret, that on examination "a very large part, indeed, of all we seemed to know about Jesus has crumbled away."

* * *

According to the *Academy*, Messrs. Macmillan are just issuing *A Confession of Faith*, by an Unorthodox Believer, who seeks to show that the religious spirit, in what seems to him the true sense, is independent of belief in the miraculous.

* * *

A holiday book reaches us from the New York Truth-seeker Co., entitled *A Tale of a Halo* (28 Lafayette-place; cloth, $1; paper, 50 cents). The author is Morgan A. Robertson, and the amusing illustrations, which are even superior to the verse, are by A. Carey K. Jurist. The *Tale of a Halo* is all about a visit of Beelzebub to heaven, wearing a specially fine halo, and the "ructions" that ensue. The opening lines may be taken as a sample of the author's irreverent style:—

> St. Peter was gazing one day by the gate
> At a sign on the rampart, and, sad to relate,
> His face wore a look of surprise and chagrin,
> For the sign bore the legend, "No Smoking Within."
> It seems that Peter's pipe had a smell of its own,
> Too strong for the incense that hung round the throne.

The story contains some fun and satire on the pretensions of the Church. The illustrations are capital.

* * *

The daughters of Thackeray mingled with some notable people, and in *Chapters from Some Memoirs* (Macmillan) Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie has given reminiscences of Chopin, Dickens, Leach, Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle, Fanny Kemble, her sister, etc. The book is written in a strain of tender feeling, which recalls the style of the father of the authoress.

* * *

From the Humanitarian League we have received two of its latest twopenny publications—No. 15, dealing with *Cattle Ships and Our Meat Supply*, by I. M. Greg and S. H. Towers; and No. 16, on *Public Control of Hospitals*, by H. Roberts. The writers seem to have a competent knowledge of the matter on which they treat.

WAS COLUMBUS A JEW?

Jews figure prominently in the history of the discovery of America. The plans and calculations for Columbus's expedition were largely the work of two Hebrew astronomers and mathematicians. Two Jews, also, were employed as interpreters by Columbus, and one of them, Luis de Torres, was the first European to set foot in the New World. When Columbus sighted the island of San Salvador, he imagined he was approaching a portion of the east Asiatic coast, and he sent Torres—who was engaged for his knowledge of Arabic—ashore to make inquiries of the natives.

It was probably this Torres who was the Madrid Jew to whom Columbus bequeathed half a mark of silver in his will. Another curious fact is that it has been seriously suggested, by Dr. Delitzsch we believe, that Columbus himself was a Jew, or of Jewish birth. The name Christopher was frequently adopted by converts, while the surname Colon was borne by a distinguished family of Jewish scholars. Christopher's brother, Diego, bore originally the Jewish name Jacob, which sounds surprisingly like a Shem Kadosh. Perhaps some Jewish scholar in Italy will make inquiry into the validity of this daring suggestion.—*Peterson's Magazine.*

The liberality of the age, or, in other words, the weakening of the obstinate prejudice which makes men unable to see what is before their eyes because it is contrary to their expectations, has caused it to be very commonly admitted that a Deist may be truly religious; but if religion stands for any graces of character, and not for mere dogma, the assertion may equally be made of many whose belief is far short of Deism.—*J. S. Mill, "Autobiography," p. 46.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BRIGHTON CO-OPERATORS AND LOCAL OPTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I was not a little disgusted to see the report in your journal, that Mr. Holyoake had headed a deputation of Brighton co-operators to pray for a diminution of the number of public-houses in Brighton. I could understand Mr. Holyoake doing this as a Methodist; but what have co-operators, as co-operators, to do with the licensing question? You have in this spectacle an object-lesson *re* Local Option. Brighton is a great place for excursionists, and, of course, requires greater facilities for rest and refreshment than ordinary towns. Public-houses being primarily for travellers, it follows that the reasonable requirements of people who are away from home is the question to be studied in licensing, not the requirements of any particular locality. The fact is, snobs and bigots would like to prevent excursions—especially Sunday excursions—altogether. Now, Stiggins has grown artful, and has evidently become a co-operator, and he knows that to openly attack even Sunday excursions won't do. But there are more ways than one of trying to fill chapels and churches. To reform the public-house or to suppress drunkenness would not answer. Let us diminish their number, if we cannot close them altogether on Sunday, so as to put these vile excursionists to as much discomfort as possible, and we shall drive some of the wretches to the conventicle. Before the prayer of the Brighton co-operators is acceded to, let them show that Brighton is more drunken than towns where public-houses are more restricted in their numbers.—Yours truly,

A. J. Marriott.

Christianity.

Christianity is to be regarded as a system rather than as a doctrine, for, like Proteus, it changes its forms, and whenever defeated in attack, if policy so dictates, it adopts the proved ideas of its assailants, and thus preserves its organisation, which is more essential to its official supporters than are its dogmas. These are abandoned or changed whenever expediency dictates, making aggressive effort very difficult; for whenever a point is successfully assailed it is declared to be "unessential," or else not to belong to *true* Christianity. Everything is abandoned but natural morality, and still men call themselves Christians and support the system which has no excuse for continuance unless miracle and revelation are facts. When Rationalists see the duty of consistency, they will cease to uphold a system which has no logical existence apart from supernaturalism.—*Robert C. Adams.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Son—"What is that ceremony known as 'elevating the host,' papa?" Dad—"Dunno! Lifting him out from under the table, I suppose."

Nellie (looking at picture of Adam and Eve)—"Say, Bertie, which is Adam and which is Eve?" Bertie—"Don't be silly! How can anyone tell that when they're not dressed?"

> If the Devil should die,
> The priest would sie,
> Perhaps crie;
> For the reason whie
> His salarie
> Would "take wings and flie"
> To the "by and bie"
> "High and drie";
> He would have to trie
> To earn his pudding and pie.

Parson in the Pulpit (to congregation)—"I will take for my text this morning the subject of 'What must we do to save our souls?'" Voice from Congregation—"Walk on your heels."

Inspector (in the schoolroom)—"Who drove the Israelites out of Egypt? you, little boy in the corner." Little boy in the corner (trembling all over with fright)—"I-I never, sir; I only came from the country last week!"

Gabriel—"Well, what can I do for you?" Applicant—"I want to see St. Peter." Gabriel—"Engaged on important work, and can't be bothered just now." Applicant—"What is he doing?" Gabriel—"Making up his report on how many sparrows fell to the ground during the past month."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, T. Jarvis (Fabian), "Why Do We Pay Rent?" (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion." (Admission free; reserved seats 6d. and 6d.) 9, Children's Party Committee meeting in the Minor Hall; helpers wanted. Wednesday, at 5.30, Children's Party.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, musical and dramatic entertainment. (Free.) Tuesday and Friday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Tonsean Parris, "The Causes Leading to the Formation of the Independent Labor Party." (Preceded by vocal and instrumental music.) Thursday, at 7.30, science classes. (Free.)

ISLINGTON (Liberal and Radical Association Committee Rooms, Upper-street, near Vestry Hall): Thursday, Jan. 24, at 8, Stanley Jones, "How We Got Our Bible." Thursday, Jan. 31, at 8, A. Gunst, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, W. A. Coote, "The National Vigilance Association in Relation to Literature and Morals." (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Modern Rivalry of Duty, Humanity, and Christ."

WEST LONDON BRANCH: 3.30, important meeting of Kilburn members at 4 Springfield gardens, N.W.

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 7, W. Mawer, F.G.S., "Creation *v.* Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible"; 3.30, Stanley Jones, "The State and the Schools."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, J. Kenat, "Christianity and Progress."

CHESTER (Old Chapel, Commonhall-street): 7, Lawrence Small, B.Sc., "Evolution and Design."

DERBY: Monday, at 7.30, meeting at the Wooding Institute. Tuesday, at 8, Anye Reade, "Secularism and Immorality—A Reply to the Church."

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, discussion class; 1, shorthand class; 2.30, J. Bowman, "The Prophecies Concerning Christ"; 8, elocution class; 6.30, concert.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class—8, Downie, "Labor Problems"; 6.30, soirée, anniversary of Paine and Burns. (Tickets 6d.)

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Oxley, "Answers to Some Christian Objections."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, G. W. Foote, "Problems of Civilisation"; 3, "Angels"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Abraham Newell, "The Local Government Act, 1894, and its Effect upon the Life of the People." (Free.)

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): impromptu evening by members and friends.

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 11, discussion; 3, Bible study; 6.30, Sam Standring, "Worlds Outside Ours," with lime-light illustrations. Monday, at 7.30, discussion class.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3 and 7, vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc. (Collections for local hospitals.) Thursday, soirée and ball in honor of Thomas Paine.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "The Creed of a Man of Science"; 7, "The Existence of God."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Feb. 3, Edinburgh; 10, Dundee. March 10, Sheffield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Feb. 3, New Brompton.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Feb. 10, Bradford. March 26 and 27, Sheffield.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—NO. 5. SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. HOLYOAKE'S QUESTION.

MR. G. J. HOLYOAKE writes to us with respect to a paragraph in the *Freethinker* of January 20. "I will readily answer your questions," he says, "when I fully understand your meaning." He encloses a copy of his letter in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, to which our paragraph referred, and adds: "I wish you would print such parts of it to which you take objection."

Our paragraph was so plain that we despair of making it plainer. Here is the principal portion of it, containing the questions which we are asked to elucidate :—

"He admits that Secular principles are spreading, but he complains that Secular Societies are too anti-theological. But is not this a very cheap complaint? Is it possible for Secular Societies, as such, to take a great part in 'other work'? They are tabooed socially after being robbed legally. We invite Mr. Holyoake to tell us what he himself has ever done for this 'other work' in connection with any Secular organisation. Has he not been obliged to do it as an independent individual? And if this has been his own experience, why on earth does he spend so much time in lecturing other people for being as unfortunate as himself?"

Whatever may be the "constructive" side of Secularism—and we have our opinions on the subject, which we long ago expressed—it is utterly impossible to do any justice to it without the necessary means, and this is denied us by the law of England, which is upheld by infamous bigotry and despicable indifference. All the Churches subsist largely on dead men's money, secured by legal trust to the purposes for which they intended it; but Secularism is excluded from this source of income. We are in a position to state—and we do so with profound sorrow and indignation—that thousands of pounds have in this way been lost to our party during the last four years. And when we consider the small support that was accorded to Mr. Bradlaugh's attempt to repeal the Blasphemy Laws, and the little or no progress made by Mr. Holyoake's "Liberty of Bequest" bill, we cannot help seeing that, whatever may be urged theoretically, the only practical policy of Secularism is to go on attacking the Christian superstition, which erected and maintains these barriers to our natural rights and just opportunities. We cannot cultivate the Promised Land until we enter it. At present we have not crossed the Jordan.

So much for one aspect of the "other work," which Mr. Holyoake complains that Secularists do not engage in sufficiently. There are other reasons, and they were involved in the questions in our paragraph. We unhesitatingly affirm that Secularists are doing as much (perhaps more) political and social work as any section of Christians. They are to the front in every reformatory movement which is not of the purely soup-and-blanket order; most of them thinking that the promotion of justice is better than the extension of charity. But they are obliged to do all this work in their individual capacity. Secular Societies, as such, are still tabooed. Their co-operation in social reforms is neither requested nor desired, except in rare cases which only accentuate the general rule.

To a considerable extent the taboo is applied to individual Secularists, unless they are content to mouth the most commonplace party shibboleths. It is understood that they must serve orthodox interests, at least by holding their tongues. When they are outspoken they are usually ostracised. During the recent London School Board elections, for instance, Mr. Holyoake's friend, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, made a passionate appeal to Nonconformists not to allow any Secularist to be selected as a "Progressive" candidate. Yet, in the face of all this, Mr. Holyoake has spoken of Secularist action as weakening the "Progressive" strength.

Mr. Holyoake opens his *Chronicle* letter with a compliment to Mr. Wakefield, who had written about the decline of Secularism, and denounced the policy of the National Secular Society's president. (Poor president! He is everybody's Aunt Sally. If anything goes wrong, fling something at *him*. No matter what.) Surely it would not have been a strain on Mr. Holyoake's generosity to put in a word for a colleague who cannot discuss himself in the public press. Instead of which he simply says that Mr. Wakefield "understands what he writes about," leaving the *Chronicle* readers to imagine that the denunciation of Mr. Foote is well-founded.

We remarked in our paragraph that Mr. Holyoake had a "fondness for suggesting that hardly anybody ever understood Secularism but himself." In reply to this he writes to us—"I mention Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant as well understanding Secularism. I should have added your name, Mr. Watts's, and others, had I been making an exhaustive examination." This is excellent, in its way; but it is not exactly accurate. Mr. Holyoake did mention Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant as at one time understanding Secularism, but he also said that at another (and later) time they did not understand it. Now by understanding Secularism he means understanding it as he does—which is rather papistical. We cheerfully concede to Mr. Holyoake the title of the Father of Secularism, but it is a title of courtesy, not one of patriarchal dominion. Mr. Holyoake did not invent our movement, and he has not patented our principles. We all aim at the same thing—the cultivation of human nature without theology. But that word "without" does not, and never did, appear to us as simple as it appears to Mr. Holyoake. To be without theology in the political, social, and ethical regions, you have to destroy it in very large quantities. We might give a hundred illustrations, but they will suggest themselves to the readers of the *Freethinker*. It is a cheap way out of the difficulty to describe "the existence of Deity and the reality of a future life" as "open questions of speculation." Such they are in theory, but they are not so in fact. The speculations have crystallised into dogmas and great historic faiths, with a tremendous power over the public and private life of whole communities; and you must challenge these to do anything decisive and durable in the way of reformation. Theology and Secularism, in short, cannot live peacefully together.

With all Mr. Holyoake's high qualities—his eloquence, his wit, and his charming style—there seems to us a certain defect in his composition. It is a lack of logic. He has written a book on Logic, but even grammarians have written very bad English. Mr. Holyoake does not see, in some cases, what is as clear as daylight to other persons. He did not see the logic of his position in the Atheist Shoemaker controversy. He has never seen the logical relation of Secularism, even as he understands and defines it, to such a religion as Christianity. Comte was even more denunciatory of "negation" than Mr. Holyoake, but though mistaken (as we think) he was logical, for he held that the negative work was all really done in the eighteenth century.

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Mr. Holyoake praises the Leicester Secular Society. So do we. But we do not make its praise a reproach to less fortunate Societies. Affluent and generous men like the late Josiah Gimson are rare in our party. It was principally his investment and donations which enabled Leicester Secularism to hold up its head so proudly. But even in Leicester there is plenty of "negative" lecturing, and we doubt whether the Secularists of that town would endorse Mr. Holyoake's view of "anti-theology." Even when theology smiles on Mr. Holyoake it does not disarm their suspicions. "One may smile, and smile, and be a villain."

G. W. FOOTE.

ARE THE GOSPEL TEXTS GENUINE?

A SERIES of articles which appeared in the *Scottish Guardian* of last year, signed J. M. C., on "St. Clement's Epistle and the Newly-Discovered Latin Translation,"* have an important though indirect bearing on the above question. For the articles are directed against the genuineness of the Epistle attributed to Clement, and tend to show that both it and the newly-discovered Latin translation are forgeries, probably of the early sixteenth century. Now, this Epistle is found in what is reputed to be the oldest MS. of the New Testament in the British Museum, the Codex Alexandrinus, ascribed to the fifth century; and if the Epistle of Clement is spurious, and of late date, it will be difficult to contend that other portions of the famous Codex A are genuine. The portion of the second Epistle attributed to Clement is now generally allowed to be spurious, but till of late it has been supposed, nevertheless, of early date. If, however, the arguments of J. M. C., who it is not difficult to identify with the Rev. Joseph M. Cotterill, an able Greek scholar and critic, author of *Peregrinus Proteus* and *Clement's Epistle to the Virgins*, are valid, the epistles of Clement are little better than centos founded on other writings extending to a much later date. J. M. C. has even come to a conclusion, not merely as to the date, but also as to the personality of the forger, who he shows to have used the late and faulty text of Clemens Alexandrinus, and even to have used the notes of Hervetus (1499–1584). That forger was Stephens, of the great printing family of that ilk. J. M. C., having shown the remarkable affinity between the Greek of the Epistle and the *Rudimenta Fidei* of Henry Stephens, says:—

"I do not see how the force of the coincidences which have been produced, and which can be multiplied to almost any extent, can be resisted. They point unmistakably, as it seems to me, not to mere knowledge of the *Epistle*—that, if the document is genuine, Stephens could not have had—but to authorship. Questions, of course, on this point come readily enough to mind. It must suffice to say that something in some part of his life's history will be found to suggest an answer to every inquiry that may be made, if we dare to think of him as the master spirit, at least, in the manufacture of Clement's *Epistles*. Born and bred, as one may say, in musty libraries, he learned languages from MSS. rather than from printed books. He was as familiar with Latin as with Greek (though it is by his Greek *Thesaurus* that he is best known); and we find him, from time to time, discoursing upon old Latinity, and quoting Tertullian and other writers for their Latin as readily as in his *Thesaurus* he cites Plato and others for their Greek. Distinguished he was among men of his day for his scholarship, and for his penmanship as much as for his scholarship. Afflicted, too, he was, from time to time, so he tells us, with a strange disease unknown to medical books, which obliged him to shut himself up, to suspend his ordinary occupations, and to allow even the printer to knock at his door in vain for 'copy.' A strange disease truly it must have been, for it affected neither his mental nor his manual powers. On one occasion he resumed and completed a translation of the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus, which, in his health, he [illegible] thrown on one side because of its difficulty (see his [illegible]ce thereto); while on another occasion, when the [illegible]sm had passed by, he produced some specimens of [illegible]ship on which he had been engaged. What he did [illegible]ny other occasions we do not *know*, but we can [illegible]s."

[illegible]win Johnson may certainly notice this as a [illegible]rmation of his views coming from an un-

This is not all. In the *Scottish Guardian*

[illegible]pril 6 to July 27.

of January 4 this year, "W. D. W." has "A Note on Clement's Epistle," which indicates that the work of forgery is still going on. By referring to a former article in the *Critical Review* (May, 1891), "W. D. W." identifies himself with the Rev. W. Dundas Walker. Both in that article and in the present note "W. D. W." shows the suspicious connection existing between the various MSS. of Clement's Epistles. Until 1875 the only known MS. was Codex A of the British Museum. But in 1856 a photographic *fac-simile* of the part of Codex A containing the Clementine Epistles was published, which facilitated the providential discovery of new MSS.—namely, a Greek version published in 1875, and a Syriac version in the following year.* Now, Mr. Walker supplies the clearest evidence that the text said to have been found by Byrennios (the metropolitan of Nicomedia, and the discoverer of the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) at Constantinople, is a forgery. One point is decisive. On one page the Alexandrine MS. is defective. There is a hole in the parchment, which is otherwise defaced. At the self-same passage in the Constantinople MS. there is a mutilation. The parchment "has been scraped and scraped until a hole has been made closely resembling, in size and form, the hole just mentioned as in A. And it must be observed that the catastrophe happened not after, but before, this and the preceding page were written, for on both pages the Greek runs on correctly on either side of the hole." There is no other leaf of A so broken as this, and the Constantinople MS. is perfectly sound except at this one spot. It is incredible that an epistle, alleged to have been read in the churches, and consequently widely spread, should have, in manuscripts said to have been written in different countries and hundreds of years apart, exactly the same defect in exactly the same place. This, and other circumstances adduced by Mr. Walker, is sufficient to show that forgery has taken place, and I am grossly deceived if the same business is not going on to-day. The race of forgers did not die out with Constantine Simonides. Those who know the career of that individual, and the ease with which he imposed on experts at Berlin, Leipsic, Oxford, and the British Museum, and who recognise how supply keeps pace with demand, will not be surprised at the providential discovery of ancient manuscripts, and will be inclined to examine their history and evidences with a great deal of caution.

J. M. WHEELER.

WAS CHRIST A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORMER?

(Continued from page 51.)

IT has always appeared to me to be remarkably strange that Christ should be regarded as the exemplar of universal love. Neither his own words, nor the conduct of his followers, justify such a belief. It is, of course, desirable that a social state of society should be based upon love and the universal brotherhood of man. This is the avowed foundation of the religion of the Positivists, their motto being, "Love our basis, order our method, and progress our end"; but no such commendable features are to be found in the Gospel of Christ, or in the history of the Church. Jesus declared that his mission was only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew xv. 24). Moreover, the conditions of discipleship which he imposed would, if complied with, exclude the possibility of love among all men (Luke xiv. 26); as would also his avowed object of breaking the peace and harmony of the domestic circle (Matthew x. 34, 35). It may be said that such are the contingencies attending the belief and adoption of a new religion. Be it so; but that only shows the futility of the contention that Christ established universal brotherhood. It is absurd to argue that he did so, when we are told in the Gospels that his mission was to the Jews only (Matthew xv. 24); that he would have no fellowship with unbelievers (Matthew xv. 26); that he threatened to have his revenge upon those who denied him (Matthew x. 33); that he instructed his disciples to "go not into the way of

* It is notable that photography has not aided in the detection of forgery, but has given a powerful aid to the forgers. No one is allowed to test old skins or ink, because there are photographic reproductions.

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the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not" (Matthew x. 5); and, finally, that he commanded those disciples, when they were about to start on a preaching expedition, that "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city" (Matthew x. 14, 15). Shaking the dust from the feet, be it remembered, was an Oriental custom of exhibiting hatred towards those against whom the act was performed. And surely the punishment that it is said was to follow the refusal of the disciples' administration was the very opposite of the manifestation of love. This accords with the non-loving announcement that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9).

These references ought to be sufficient to convince any one that Jesus cannot be reasonably credited with a feeling of unqualified love for the whole of the human race. His conduct, and the general spirit of his teachings towards those who differed from him, forbid such a supposition. His injunctions, if acted upon, would annul the influence of the ancient maxim of "doing unto others as you would they should do to you." Certainly he failed to set a personal example by complying with this rule, as his harsh language to those who did not accept his authority amply proves. It is reported that Jesus said (Matthew v. 22), "Whosoever shall say Thou fool shall be in danger of hell fire"; yet we find him exclaiming, "Ye fools, ye fools and blind" (Luke xi. 40; Matthew xxiii. 17). He advised others to "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you," while he himself addressed those who were not his friends as "hypocrites" (Matthew vii. 5); "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers" (Matthew xxiii. 33). We may here apply Christ's own words to himself: "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew xii. 36, 37). In Luke (vi. 37) he counsels us to "forgive, and ye shall be forgiven"; but in Mark (iii. 29) it is stated, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." The unfortunate point here is, that we are not told what constitutes blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

From these cases, and there are many more in the Gospels of like nature, it is clear that Jesus taught one thing and practised another—a course of conduct which his followers have not been slow to emulate. But such an inconsistent trait of character disqualifies those in whom it is found from being the best of social reformers. Example is higher than precept.

Whatever may be urged in favor of Christ's supposed "spiritual kingdom," his teachings have but little value in regulating the political and social affairs of daily life, using those terms in the modern and legitimate sense, inasmuch as he has given the world no practical information upon either the science of politics or of sociology. The affairs of this world had but little interest with Christ. With him pre-eminence was given to the soul over the body. We are not to fear him who can kill the body only, but rather fear him "who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew x. 28). Here we recognise the great defect in Jesus as a societarian reformer. He treats this world as if it were of secondary importance, and he furnishes no useful rules for its practical government. True he says, "Blessed are ye poor," and "Woe unto you that are rich"; but what does this amount to? These empty exclamations will not abolish pauperism, neither will it produce the organisation of honest industry, whereby human wants can be supplied and social comforts secured. Would it not have been better if Jesus had devised some plan whereby poverty should become extinct?

To talk, as Professor Graham does, about producing a better state of society by a "union of believers" is, in my opinion, folly. How is it to be done? Every member of "the union" would have to live on the alms of the wealthy members. It would, in fact, be a society of the destitute supported by voluntary contributions. Surely no sane Socialists ever proposed to divide mankind into two classes—*i.e.*, paupers and those who feed them. We know what the result of such a policy was in the case of the Church. As the Professor says, the Church obtained the funds of the rich in return for certain considerations which were supposed to affect them in this world and in the next; and out of such proceeds the clergy distributed bread to the poor and kept something better for themselves. Thus Europe for centuries was infested by fat, idle monks and an army of miserable beggars. A more detestable condition of society to men of honor and independent spirit never existed. Yet this "Christian plan" finds favor, as we have seen, in "the Abbey," and is really the necessary outcome of Christ's mendicant teachings. For did he not allege that the poor were blessed, and that "ye hath the poor always with you" (Matthew xxvi. 11)? If he contemplated that the period would arrive when "it should be impossible for men to be poor," why did he not give some practical instructions to hasten its advent? This would have been a grand contribution to social reform. But his overwhelming anxiety about another life was, with him, the "one thing needful," and to it every other consideration had to give way.

I am quite unable to understand how anyone can mistake the obvious meaning of the parable in which the rich man appears in hell and the poor man in heaven (Luke xvi. 19–26). The only assigned reason is that the one was well-to-do in this life, while the other suffered privations. This is no justification for either of the men being where they are represented to have been. For poverty is no virtue, neither is it a crime to be rich. Men of wealth can be worthy characters, and poverty may be allied with much rascality. The wrong does not consist in possessing riches, but rather in the misuse of them; and, therefore, to be poor does not seem the highest qualification for future bliss, and to be rich is not a sufficient cause for anyone being excluded from an abode of happiness. But this parable is another illustration of Christ's exaltation of poverty. He even dispatched his disciples on a mission of propaganda, without scrip, money, or purse, to beg their way through the world (Luke x. 7–10). Is this the highest model that can be given for a mission to the poor? It is thought so little of to-day, even by professed Christians, that they never adopt the plan suggested by their "Master." They may preach "Blessed be ye poor," but they have no desire to be one of them. They read the warning, "Woe unto you that are rich; for ye have received your consolation" (Luke vi. 24); but they appear to be exceedingly comfortable with their material consolation. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," and they are consoled more with the riches of this world than with the chance of having a harp in the next. In the case of the rich young man (Luke xviii.) it is true Christ advised the giving up of private property; but it is also true that the advice was not deemed practical, for the young man "went away sorrowful" (Matthew xix. 22). Supposing he had accepted the advice, he would then have swelled the ranks of the poor unemployed, and thereby have become the recipient rather than the benefactor, although it is recorded that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). The giving up all one's possessions would be as injurious to a community as the amassing of wealth by the few is pernicious.

What is required is a social arrangement whereby all members of the community shall have their fair share of the necessities and comforts of life; and this arrangement Christ did not understand, or, if he did, he made no effort to bring it into force, and consequently he lacked the elements of a true social reformer.

There is an incident recorded in Luke (xii.) which shows that Christ refused to say anything upon the subjects of property, civil rights, and law and government. "One of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Here Jesus had an opportunity, as a social reformer, to give the world an important lesson upon the duty of one man to another; but he did not avail himself of it. He acted more like a modern lawyer would do, who, when asked by a stranger to give him advice, would reply: "I am not your appointed solicitor; if you want information, you must consult your own legal adviser."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

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THE DATES OF THE BIBLE BOOKS.

We have all heard the story of Pappus, that at the Council of Nice the assembled bishops put all the sacred books under a table in the church, and besought the Lord that the *inspired* writings might get on top of the table, while the spurious ones remained behind; and so the canonical writings were separated from the apocryphal. According to the Talmud, the Hebrew scriptures were verified in much the same way. Whenever an inspired author wrote a book, it was placed in the temple and left there all night. In the morning, if Yahveh had affixed his seal to it, it was at once placed in the canon; but, if not, it was rejected. It would have saved a great deal of trouble if such a rule had been followed, but we know for certain that most of the sacred books of the Jews differ very much from what they were when written by their original authors, and that some of them were not admitted as canonical till a very late date. We have no authentic record of any canon of Jewish scripture till the time of Josephus, about A.D. 80, who only mentions twenty-two sacred books instead of the twenty-four now reckoned by the Jews; and from his description his canon comprised all we have now, with the exception of the Books of Esther and Ecclesiastes, which were not admitted till a century after his death. It therefore follows that the books of the Old Testament must have all been written before the time of Josephus; but how long before we have no external evidence. We can only judge by the contents of the books themselves.

The *Pentateuch* and *Book of Joshua* are now generally recognised to form one body of writings, presenting the same peculiarities, and resulting from the same literary processes. Three main documents can be recognised in it the Yahvist, the Deuteronomist, and the Priestly Code. The Yahvist document appears to be the oldest. It gives a history of the world from the creation (commencing Genesis ii. 4) to the conquest of Palestine by Joshua, and its religious teaching differs little, if any, from that of ordinary Semitic heathendom as known to us from other sources. The Deuteronomist Code is entirely legal, and not historical. It mentions the Levites, but equates them with the priests, and represents them as living on the charity of the population. Its great doctrine is that Yahveh can only be worshipped at one religious centre. The Priestly Code commences at Genesis i. 1, gives a historical sketch entirely independent of that of the Yahvist, and embodies a definite and peculiar code of law. It distinguishes between priests and Levites, mentions the "High Priest," and represents that Jahveh was worshipped in the wilderness in a portable temple called the Tabernacle. The Yahvist document agrees essentially with the earliest-known Jewish prophetical writings, and may be dated about 750 B.C. The Deuteronomist is ignored by all writers before the prophet Jeremiah at the end of the seventh century B.C., when it suddenly becomes of great importance. It is generally recognised to have been the Book of the Law, which Hilkiah professed to have found in the temple in 621 B.C. The Priestly Code is unknown till the time of Ezra, and appears to be essentially the same book as that read to the people about 440 B.C., as related in Nehemiah viii.–x.

So far, critics are agreed; but, for the most part, they give us no indication of the date when these three codes of law were amalgamated into the work now known as the Pentateuch and book of Joshua. Seeing that the priestly code—the last and most important part of the Pentateuch—was only promulgated in the second half of the fifth century B.C., we must allow at least fifty years for its complete acceptance by the Jewish community, say 400 B.C. Then we must allow a further period of time for a feeling of its sanctity to grow up, and for the necessity to be felt for its amalgamation with the two earlier codes of law. Therefore, it must be evident that the Pentateuch, as we have it to-day, cannot have been compiled much earlier than the conquest of Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.

Judges, *Samuel*, and *Kings* must also, from their style and contents, be taken as one continuous work; for the divisions of the books of the Old Testament are quite arbitrary, and often absurd. When the book of Joshua was separated from the Pentateuch, in order that the latter might be better ascribed to Moses, the editors made the separation in the wrong place; and the result is that Moses is made to describe his own death and burial. The Talmud asserts that Samuel wrote the book of Samuel, who, therefore, went a step beyond Moses; for he not only details his own death and burial, but also relates the appearance of his own ghost to King Saul, after he was dead and buried. The combined work relates the history of the Jews from the death of Joshua to that of King Jehoiakin, who lived as late as the reign of Evil Merodach of Babylon, 560 B.C. The history, therefore, cannot have been composed till after the latter date. But it bears traces of being later still. The Babylonian conqueror of Jerusalem is called Nebuchadrezzar in the oldest portions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and this form of the name agrees very closely with that found in the Babylonian inscriptions. But Kings uses the late corrupted form, Nebuchadnezzar. The book of Kings also calls Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, by the name of *Pul*—a late contraction which does not occur upon any contemporary monument, and is first found in records of the time of the Persian king, Darius Hystaspes, about 480 B.C. Judges, Samuel, and Kings are written entirely from the point of view of Deuteronomy. They know nothing of the peculiar legislation of the priestly code. Therefore, they are earlier than the time of Ezra; but, as we have seen, they cannot be much earlier. The most probable date is 450 B.C.

Chronicles, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah* are still more closely related together than Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Ezra and Nehemiah are still one book in the Hebrew MSS., though in the printed books they are generally divided for facility of reference. Ezra i. 1–3 repeats the last verses of Chronicles verbatim, and shows us that Chronicles ends in the middle of a sentence, the division of the books being even clumsier than usual. The Priestly Code is the standpoint from which the Chronicler views everything; and he colors the whole history in the interest of that Code. His sole authentic authority for the history of Judah is the present book of Kings, which is often quoted verbatim; and wherever he differs from the book of Kings he is giving us something out of his own imagination. De Wette, Graf, and Wellhausen have shown that the Chronicler had no other source, and that when he quotes authorities it is always a section of the book of Kings to which he refers. He holds the same theory that we meet in Josephus and the Talmud—namely, that the prophets of old each wrote the history of his own time; and, therefore, he quotes the book of Kings as the work of Samuel, Iddo, Jehu, or Isaiah, according to the period of which he treats. The Chronicler does not always understand the history related in Kings; for instance, he makes Pul and Tiglath-pileser into two distinct monarchs (1 Chronicles v. 26). His military ideas are not those of the Assyrian period, or even of that of Alexander. He is acquainted with the *Roman* artillery, and in 2 Chronicles xxvi. 15 he equips Uzziah with catapults and slings, which are entirely unknown to the Assyrian sculptures, and which were objects of wonder even to Josephus. Even in Nehemiah xii. 26, 47 the author speaks of "the days of Nehemiah" as though that were a remote epoch. We cannot well admit Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah to a much earlier date than the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey, 65 B.C.

The *Book of Ruth* cannot be considered to be a veritable history. Its evident object is to explain the genealogy of King David. The Book of Kings knows nothing of David, except that he was the son of Jesse. Chronicles, on the other hand, knows and accepts the genealogy of David as given in the Book of Ruth. Consequently the latter was composed in the interval between Kings and Chronicles. As the story turns upon the marriage of a Gentile woman with a Jew who becomes the ancestor of the sainted King David, critics see in it a parable against Ezra and the Priestly Code, where Gentile marriages are denounced. Therefore, the Book of Ruth must be assigned to about 440 B.C.

The *Book of Esther* is also a romance. It professes to relate how a Jewess became the queen of Ahasuerus or Xerxes. The Book of Ezra, however, which gives a summary of the connection of the Persian kings with Judaism, represents Xerxes as an enemy of the Jews. It mentions an individual named Mordecai, but nothing is said of his relationship to the great King of Persia. In fact, the Book of Esther seems to have entirely escaped the notice of everyone before the writer of the second book of the Maccabees, who speaks of "Mardocheus' day," or the feast of Purim. 2 Maccabees can hardly have been written

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before the Christian era; and it does not profess to be an original work, but an abridgment of an earlier history by Jason of Cyrene (2 Maccabees ii. 23). The first Book of the Maccabees knows nothing of Purim, and Judas Maccabeus would not have instituted a fresh feast on the eve of Purim if the latter were known in his day. The canonicity of the Book of Esther was denied by the Jewish doctors as late as the time of Hadrian (120 A.D.). And it appears, from the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius (iv. 26), that the book was rejected by the Christians as late as A.D. 180. There is no evidence that the feast of Purim was observed by the Jews before the third century A.D.; in fact, it appears to have been illegal. The feast only rose into vogue with the public recognition of Christianity. The Hebrew text of Esther speaks of Haman as being *crucified*; hence the Jews at Purim could have a fling at the crucified Christ. We have seen that Esther is not mentioned by any writer before the Christian era, and the very earliest date we can assign to it is 50 B.C.

CHILPERIC.

(To be concluded.)

WHAT ARE WOMEN HERE FOR?*

(Concluded from page 59.)

ANOTHER argument which crops up once in a while is that, if the suffrage were extended to women, only the low and vile would vote or run for office. Of course, I know that this is really no argument at all, for it is based on pure assumption, and, if true of men, would still not disfranchise those who did not wish to use the privilege. But, in point of fact, up to this stage of the proceedings it has been *only* the well educated, the able and the thoughtful women the world over, who have entered into this question. It has been conducted so far—for over forty years—by women who are the intellectual peers of the best men to be found in any country or in any state; and surely, with the experience we have constantly before us—the examples of our public men—no one will venture to say, or even to hint, that these fine women, upon whose lives a flood of light has been thrown for all these years, are not so far above the average male office-holder in moral character that it were absurd to even discuss the question. I feel that I can say this with a good deal of grace, for I am not myself one of these hard workers; but I honor them, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart for what they have already accomplished for me—for what they will yet accomplish for us all. I am only sorry that they who have borne the brunt of this struggle will not all be here to reap the reward when the time comes; and women ought to feel ashamed to enjoy what these women have already secured for us of liberty, of justice, and of hope, unless they are willing to stand by their colors and help to push this car of progress along.

Upon what possible grounds can anyone claim that these fine and able women will not continue to take an interest in their own and their less fortunate sisters' elevation? Will they suddenly labor to put into office the vile of their own sex? Hardly. Will the male voters insist upon doing this? We can scarcely suspect them of such a desire; but surely, if some had it, there are enough good women and good men combined to prevent the sad disaster. But suppose, simply for the argument, that this gratuitous assumption were true; I repeat the question, *Is* the suffrage to be given or withheld on the basis of moral character? Who is going to conduct the examination? How will the male voter stand the test? Are they prepared now to make all suffrage rest upon such qualification? If not all, why woman's? Let us be fair. Let us remember that humanity is a unit, and that its interests and aims are, and must ever be, indivisible.

One half of the human race cannot progress alone. In the effort to do so it has thrown itself into a tangle that has filled its madhouses, its hospitals, and its homes, alas! with dwarfed, half-developed human pawns, who are the legitimate fruit of the conditions under which they are born and under which they develop.

Perhaps you are wondering how woman suffrage is to remedy all this. Perhaps you are wondering if I think that women are so much wiser, more lofty, and better than men that they will legislate in the millennium the first vote they cast. Let me reply to that right here. I do not think anything of the kind. I am always sorry to hear anyone claim that women will vote this or that evil out of existence. We can't afford to mortgage woman's vote before she gets it. We don't know how she will vote; and it is not the least little bit of our business. What we do know, and what we claim will do the good, is this: that she is a human being, with interests and needs and aims that are as real and as strong and as vital both to herself and to the community as are those of her brother, and that it is *right* that she should be so placed as to be able to express herself about them on an equal legal footing with her brother—to count as *one*, and that one not an idiot, in the economy of nature. It is right that she should have a voice in her own affairs. It is right that such wisdom and ability as she does possess should be used to benefit not only herself, but the race. This is not a contest between men and women. It is silly, it is petty, it is failing to grasp the root of this subject at all, to place it upon such a basis as that. Man has quite as much to gain by the change as has woman.

One half of the race has not brain power enough to do the thinking for the whole race. It has proved this pretty fully in the past. It is proving it pretty fully in the present. And so long as the race is deprived of the earnest, honest thought of the other half—just so long as the half which *produces* the race is held as a subordinate and a mere pawn in the national life, just so long will the world continue to be only half as wise, half as good, half as true, half as lofty as its entire capacity warrants. If only half of the men were allowed to think—if only the Democrats of America were counted as voters, we would, as everybody knows, lose all the wisdom and ability that the Republican mind has evolved. If only the Republicans voted, were allowed to express themselves in the national life, we would lose whatever of thought has been contributed by the Democratic brain. I could hardly find one who would confess himself so narrow as to say that he believes it would be wise, or right, or just, to disfranchise every man who does not belong to his party. Yet that is exactly what is done with women. In a sense, woman is a party—that is to say, she is a special, unrepresented feature of the world far more truly than would be a disfranchised Republican or Democratic party, which all concede would be wholly unfair and unwise.

The time is coming, and it is not far off, when men will be utterly ashamed to remember that they were ever so unwise or so unjust (or so timid) as to claim for themselves the dignity, and the privileges, and the rights and duties of citizenship while denying them to women; and women will be utterly ashamed to let it be known that they had so little self-respect, so little public spirit, so little dignity of character, that they were satisfied to remain the only sane outlaws who had not wilfully forfeited their right to the dignity of citizenship.

In one of the newspapers the other day a writer said that evidently some of the ladies engaged in the effort to secure a dignified and equal footing before the law for one-half of the entire race were actuated by revenge! Revenge for what? Revenge upon whom? Why revenge? How would it be revenge, if in so doing no right or dignity is taken from man—if human rights and dignities are extended to women? Let us have enough dignity to look upon the question as if it were one between parties of men.

It is the fortunate women who must help, who must struggle for the liberty of all. The unfortunate have already all that they can bear. We who were born of, and have lived our lives with, men who had dignity of character enough not to be afraid of losing their influence in their own homes if their wives and daughters are permitted to stand upon an equal legal plane with themselves—those of us who have had the rare good fortune to have lived with men who scorn to take advantage of the situation, and who are as heartily ashamed of it as we are—can very readily understand how impossible it would be for those classes of women who are associated with narrow-minded or brutally inclined men to come out openly upon this or any other topic in opposition to that grade of man who is so absolutely certain of his own superiority that he recognises that the only way to prove it is to retain legal privileges which state his superiority in black and white.

Our great American orator, Ingersoll, has well said: "The men who claim that they are the intellectual superiors of women cannot prove the assertion by putting themselves in evidence." And it is equally true that no nation can hope to prove that the genius for self-government rests wholly in its male citizen so long as it insists upon protecting him from competition with those who he says are unfit. If men are the natural and only capable rulers of the race, the only way to prove it is to take the protective tariff off of him and allow nature to decide upon equal and fair terms the survival of the fittest in government as in life.

HELEN H. GARDENER.

—*Truth Seeker Annual.*

* Delivered before a meeting of fashionable women who had said they would "open their parlors" for discussion of the "legal status of women" if Helen H. Gardener would agree to be one of the speakers.

"Beg pardon," said the missionary, "but will you translate His Majesty's remarks again! Did he tell his daughter that he was to have guests to dinner or for dinner?"

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THE PARSON'S SONG.

(From a Comic Opera of 1950.)

A servant of the Lord am I—
A parson meek and lowly,
And here on earth my trade I ply
With unctuousness so holy.
I wear each day a look of gloom—
It's burdensome to bear it—
To help impress the sinner's doom
Upon the fools who hear it.

Chorus—I'm a servant of the Lord,
And I preach his blessed word;
For it pays, in these days,
Of ranting and of canting,
Of gas-bag rant and canting.

When I was little but a lad,
My folks sent me to college,
And there what little brain I had
Was crammed with Bible knowledge.
To theologic classes then
They sent me as a student,
To learn the art of 'guiling men
In divers ways and prudent.

Like many another simple lad—
And few young men are clever—
I swallowed all the good and bad
I heard the Prof. deliver.
Betimes they gave me a degree
And sent me out as preacher,
To tell the yarns they told to me
Before they made me teacher.

But sometimes one is bound to think,
Let one be e'er so wary,
And soon I was upon the brink
Of doubt, and somewhat chary
Of hobbling to the gospel dodge;
But then—the job is steady;
And one need only preach at Hodge,
And miss the squire and lady.

The Gaberlunzie.

ACID DROPS.

Ingersoll's new lecture, "About the Holy Bible," is creating a big sensation in America, and the clergy are "answering" him right and left. One of these gentlemen, the Rev. F. Carson, a Presbyterian minister of Brooklyn, thinks it enough to point out that the Bible has withstood all assaults—by which he means, we presume, that it is still printed and circulated. Mr. Carson says he is not going to "reply" to the "infidel," as it would be defending the sun against the fog. Poor man of God! We should like to feel his bumps, as Charles Lamb said. He must be well developed at the bump of self-esteem, and very small at the bump of caution. The Yankees will only smile at such belated efforts to stem the tide of "infidelity." They can guess why Mr. Carson will not reply to Ingersoll. It doesn't require any miraculous penetration to see that.

Golf has been played on the Rye Links on Sunday, and this shocking desecration has roused the ire of the Rev. A. J. W. Crosse, a local sky-pilot, who calls upon God Almighty to vindicate the Lord's Day from such a terrible scandal. It is to be hoped that Rye will not be visited by an earthquake or a blizzard. Airs from heaven would be very agreeable, but sky-pilot Crosse appears to be soliciting blasts from hell, which may do when it is freezing hard, though not at other seasons of the year.

Preaching in Exeter Cathedral, the Rev. A. Mortimer denounced the School Board system as State Atheism, and said it had "blasted and ruined the happiness of more homes than all the dark horrors of drunkenness and adultery put together." This man of God must be drunk to say so, though the intoxicant in his case is not gin, but gospel. Parson Mortimer would evidently rather have the whole population drunkards and adulterers than see them educated without his own religious specific. Could madness go farther than this? It is really a case for a commission in lunacy.

Having half wiped out the Matabele, the Christians are going to instruct the remnant in the beautiful truths of religion—that is, to fit them for the kingdom of heaven before sending them there with the utmost dispatch. Mr. Cebil Rhodes, who doubtless understands the "civilising" power of the Christian religion, has subscribed £50 towards the erection of a Wesleyan chapel at Bulwayo, which will supply a snug job to some man of God who is amongst the unemployed in the overcrowded clerical labor-market of England.

At a lecture on Theosophy, at Bangor, the lecturer asked, in stentorian tones, "What comes after death?" No one answered, and after a pause he vehemently repeated the question. At this moment the door opened, and in walked one of the leading undertakers of Bangor. The audience smiled.

How thankful we ought to be that we dwell in a Christian land, where the tender mercies of God are over all his works. In a single day last week one coroner, Mr. Baxter, had to inquire into the deaths of four persons starved to death. These tragic cases only represent the acme of a vast amount of misery which stern winter brings on the poor.

Winter has been accompanied by lightning, which, in several cases, has struck churches and chapels, as if in indication that the elements are not entirely under the control of the being to whom these edifices are dedicated.

Many lives have been lost on the coast of late. At the shipwreck on the Cornish coast only nine were saved out of a crew of twenty-two. Subscriptions have been appealed for on behalf of the families of one hundred and six Hull fishermen who were drowned during the great gale at the end of last year.

The Lord Bishop of Down and Connor is working away at a Church Building Fund, which everybody knows will pretty well put an end to all the evils and miseries of Ireland. He is supported, of course, by the Belfast *Evening Telegraph*, which devotes a leader to the subject. According to this profound oracle of Orangeism, the enemies of law and order, who have "no sense of responsibility to either God or man," are "recruited principally from the ranks of Atheists, or, more correctly speaking, Agnostics." This is too contemptible for refutation. It is sufficient to point to the fact that the most violent Anarchists have all had a rigorous Christian education. What we wish the *Telegraph* to ponder is, that the greatest scoundrels of the age are recruited from the ranks of orthodoxy. Atheism doesn't seem to produce men like Hobbs, Wright, and Jabez Balfour, nor even fellows like De Cobain, who was one of the burning and shining lights of Belfast religious society.

Parson Davis, vicar of Ramsbury, has a perfect right to send out begging letters for his church, but it is playing rather low to express an "earnest hope of at least one shilling," and a waste of paper and stamps to address his circulars to Freethinkers.

Archbishop Ireland has been giving what the *Chicago Tribune* calls a "Crushing Reply to Ingersoll." The gist of the Archbishop's statement was that Christianity means civilisation. "Where Christ is not there is barbarism." Now, is this true? Were Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Buddha, Confucius, and Lao-tse barbarians? Was Spain barbarian when it was under the Moors or when it was under the Christian Inquisition?

Beyond the reduction of the tithe commutation rent-charge, which gives a value only of £73 13s. 0½d. for £100, the editor of Kelly's *Clergy List* says that "in many counties, particularly in the east of England, the tithe rent-charge has largely remained unpaid, while we have not unfrequently met with cases in which livings have had to be given up owing to the income being insufficient to meet the charges on the land." If this process goes on, the Church won't be good enough even for the fools of the family.

It was stated at the meeting of the Evangelical Free Churches Council, at Birmingham, that in that city and suburbs there were 387,963 persons who ought to attend some place of worship. Even on Sunday evenings some 300,000 of these are absent. There are 426 places of worship, with sitting accommodation for 180,208 persons. In the churches, however, there are 38,212 unoccupied seats, and in the Dissenting chapels 42,300. Yet the Church Extension Society wants more churches and a bishop, and the Nonconformists are always wanting cash for more chapels.

The Quakers of Massachusetts have petitioned against capital punishment, on the ground that it is contrary to the law of God. While people have the text, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," facing them at Genesis ix. 6, they are little likely to attend to this plea. Indeed, a man of God of the name of Macmaster has put out a big book on *The Divine Principle of Capital Punishment.*

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Among the stories of the late Father Healy is one that shows his geniality did not over-ride his sound Catholicism. It is said that a pompous Protestant ecclesiastic once met Father Healy at dinner, and after the second glass of port he said: "Father Healy, I am very glad to meet you, very glad. I have never been able to find any difference between a good Protestant and a good Catholic, and I have lived sixty-five years in this world." Father Healy immediately replied: "Ye won't be sixty-five seconds in the next without finding it out."

A French newspaper says there are in the French Academy three Protestants, Victor Cherbuliez, Leon Say, and M. de Freycinet; one Freethinker, Alexander Dumas; one Atheist, M. Challemel Lacour; while nearly every one of the rest is a nominal Catholic.

Several Italian bishops of small towns, advanced to that position while they were parish priests in Rome, are at variance with the Vatican, because, being used to a city like Rome, they feel miserable in their narrow surroundings, and continually appeal to the Pope to be called so some office in the Eternal City, or some canonship in one of the churches there. The Pope, vexed to find them so little inclined to do their duty, has, it is said, given it to be understood that he will never again nominate a parish priest of Rome to any Bishopric.

The attention of the Lord's Day Observance Society ought to be called to the fashionable club that uses "Niagara Hall" as a skating rink on Sunday. Among the patrons are the Duke of Wellington, the Earl of Essex, and many others of the nobility and gentry. A long list of fashionable ladies and gentlemen who spent last Sunday in skating appears in the *St. James's Gazette*.

We do not often have to thank the Secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society, but we do this time for letting a little daylight on the fifty-four ministers who were boasted of as having celebrated Museum Sunday. "These," he says, "comprised twelve English Churchmen, two Scottish Churchmen, thirty-four Unitarians, one Baptist, one Independent, one Theist, two Ethicals, and one Positivist." If any one supposes that the men of God are generally disposed to allow of any competition with their business, they are much deceived. Thanks, Dr. Peake; and if you will only get up a prosecution against Secularists for keeping their halls open on Sunday, we will thank you still further.

The *Tablet* is responsible for the statement that at the recent Lahore Durbar the speech of the Viceroy was so badly translated that when he said, "I am no foe to criticism," it was rendered "I am not opposed to highway robbery"—a statement, it is said, which was received with wild shouts of applause from the assembled chiefs. This was almost as bad an error as that of some translators of the Sermon on the Mount, who rendered "Judge not that ye be not judged," "Do no justice that justice may not be done on you."

It is hoped that Almighty God understands his duties as protector of the Hohenzollern interests. At any rate, he gets some delicate reminders from the pious Emperor, who, for instance, when speaking on his birthday of Franco-Prussia, said he "glorified the name of the Almighty that He blessed our arms in such measure." The Emperor's gratitude looks like "a lively sense of favors to come." Does he want more bloodshed as a proof of the Almighty's favor?

Lent, like other ecclesiastical customs, is probably pre-Christian. In Grote's *History of Greece*, iii., 309, there is quoted a fragment from the early Greek poet Alcman, who calls spring the season of short fare. Alcman's idea was that the old crop was running short and the new crop not yet in. Agriculturists then had to depend on a fish supply. These natural conditions the apostolic fishermen seem to have worked up into an institution for their own benefit.

An inspector, examining a Church school in a large railway centre, asked: "What does Epiphany mean?" One replied: "A porter;" another, "A ticket collector;" a third, "A signalman." On making inquiries the inspector discovered that the children had learnt that Epiphany meant "a man of a station."

Parson (who has been teaching about St. Stephen)—"Are there any martyrs at present?" Boy (eagerly)—"Yes, sir, *tomatoes*." Parson (to elucidate)—"What are tomatoes?" Boy—"Please, sir, my father is a toe martyr; he suffers from corns."

January 30 was the anniversary of the execution of King Charles, the martyr, for whom there is a special service in the Church of England Prayer Book. A writer in the *Church Times* says anent the Laud celebrations: "While we commemorate the Archbishop, let us not forget to observe the anniversary of the death of the King whom he so devotedly served—a monarch who, with all his faults, was a true Christian and a sincere Churchman." It is rather late in the day, however, to revive the old service for the martyr.

This reminds us of a circular we received announcing *The Legitimist Kalendar for 1895*, edited by the Marquis de Ravigny and Raineval. This Kalendar is put forward by the White Rose League, who hold that her Majesty is not the legitimate holder of the throne, but Mary, Princess of Bavaria. It gives portraits of "their most Christian majesties the King and Queen of France and Spain," and a table of the Legitimist Christian Rulers of the World, with their heirs, the laws of succession, etc. It is evidently a remarkable calendar; but we have not yet sent in our subscription for a five guinea or even for a guinea copy.

By the way, the Thames Valley Jacobite Club, which was started with the same ridiculous objects as the White Rose League, has decided to alter its program, and change its name to the Thames Valley Royal Oak Club, with the object of holding the fort against the advance of Socialism, Atheism, and Anarchy. From Jacobite it becomes anti-Jacobin.

A Vienna correspondent of the *Christian World* writes on "Why the Jews are Hated," and tries hard to make out that anti-Semitism is due, not to the Jew's religion, but only to political and social reasons. It does not, however, require much knowledge of history and human nature to know that, when strife arises, it is intensified by difference of religion.

In consequence of the Rev. A. E. Briggs, one of the curates of St. Mark's, Marylebone, having openly taught "Ave Maria" and prayers for the dead, he has been inhibited by the Bishop of London, and the curate, who still officiates at "High Mass," will appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Ritualists are offering special prayers for him.

The Rev. James Hunt, Rector of Donegore, Connor, Ireland, says, in allusion to the consecration of a Protestant bishop of Madrid: "Rather than that the horrible history of Protestant ascendency in this country should be re-enacted amid the blue hills of Spain, I would prefer that the new conventicle in Madrid should be filled to the roof with dynamite, even though half the city were blown into fragments along with it." Mr. Hunt evidently holds that Christianity came to bring fire and division.

The Pope is pushing forward his plan for the conversion of England, and, after conferring with Cardinal Vaughan, has sent for the Bishops of Salford, Nottingham, and Southwark to visit him at the Vatican and confer on the subject. The fact is, the Catholics have so bamboozled the old man with the account of the progress of their faith, and of the proximity of the Ritualists, that it is doubtful if any of these bishops will have the courage to undeceive him. As a matter of fact, the leakage from the Church of Rome is fully equivalent to the conversions from the High Church party. Of course, in the event of Disestablishment, there would be a more pronounced procession Romewards.

Providence has been pretty active of late. To say nothing of the weather, there is the earthquake in Persia, which has wrecked hundreds of houses and killed hundreds of people. Still worse is the volcanic outburst on the island of Ambrym in the New Hebrides. One half the island is covered with ashes, and of the 8,000 inhabitants but few remain.

During a recent earthquake in Italy sixty people fled into a church to pray; but the earthquake destroyed the church, and buried the worshippers in the ruins. It is under such painful circumstances that the Presbyterian Assembly sees with regret the spread of modern indifferentism, and lays stress upon the great necessity for encouraging faith in a personal deity.

A writer in the *Guardian* deplores the fact that Oxford is no longer distinctively a Christian university. He says: "It was a home of learning that was Christian; now it is a home of learning that is non-Christian." True, a good deal of the tradition of the old religious *régime* lingers on at Oxford as elsewhere, together with other anomalies. M.A. degrees are still conferred in the name of the Holy Trinity, and so on. But, as Canon Liddon used to say, we have not yet seen the full effect of secularisation. The fact remains, "The University was founded on religious principles; now it is not so."

The New York City Christians, who have a Jew for a god, refuse to allow their children to associate with the Jewish children in the private schools of that city.

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"A clergyman," writes a correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette*, "set out, the other afternoon, on a begging expedition. Three rich men were on this occasion selected as victims. Said Number One, after listening to an earnest appeal for funds to build a new church: 'I'm sorry I cannot help you; but the fact is, I don't like your views. You are too Evangelical.' Number Two would have been glad to contribute to the funds, but, unfortunately, the poor vicar was not sufficiently Evangelical to suit him. Arrived at Number Three, all seemed to promise well, and, after a very sympathetic chat, the rich man exclaimed, with a warm hand-shake: 'It is most cheering to meet with one whose views accord so perfectly with my own, but as I am firmly persuaded that the second coming of the Lord will take place before your church is built it would be useless for me to give you anything.'"

During his long holiday in Italy the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes found a dreadful want of true religion. He couldn't understand why the Italians were not all Wesleyan Methodists. Most of them, alas, were Roman Catholics—at least, by profession; and we all know what a horrid religion that is. How happy is England, with her true-blue Protestants, who boast of all the virtues under heaven! Above all, how blest is she in her Wesleyan Methodists, who are all the very souls of honor, and would sooner be burnt alive—every man of them, including Hugh Price Hughes—rather than tell the smallest untruth!

Somehow or other, though, those idolatrous Italians, while they don't understand Teetotalism and Purity Societies and Vigilance Committees, contrast very favorably with the people of (really) Christian England. Mr. Hughes witnessed a popular demonstration at Florence, and this is how he writes of the behavior of the multitude: "We were greatly impressed by two facts—first of all, the entire absence of coarse horseplay which disgraces so many English crowds; and, secondly, the yet more significant fact that among these thousands of persons there was not one single individual under the influence of excessive drinking. There was no crowding, no pushing, no swearing, no improper conduct of any kind." How different from the demeanor of an English crowd! But what of that? Englishmen may be rude and drunken, but they are Christians, and are going to heaven, while those polite and sober Italians have taken the wrong road, and are going to hell. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.

Mr. Hughes paid a visit to the Franciscan monks, one of whom offered him some black coffee and brown bread. The monk wished to put some brandy into the coffee. "He seemed to be incapable," Mr. Hughes says, "of understanding the possibility of any man existing who could drink coffee without brandy in it." The Methodist visitor "made a tremendous effort," but could not imbibe any of the "dreadful mixture." Jesus Christ would probably have been less squeamish. Is it not curious that the very countries which breed people who are too sensitive and virtuous to take a spoonful of brandy are the very countries which breed the most awful drunkards on this planet? There is a moral here, if one could only beat it out.

A curious instance of superstition is mentioned in *Notes and Queries*. A writer cites from Mrs. Panton's *Within Four Walls* that in Roman Catholic villages in America it used to be a custom to place in the centre of a hive of bees, found in every cottage garden, a morsel of the sacred wafer kept back from the celebration of the Eucharist. This atom used to be called "the little God Almighty," and was supposed to ensure the bees from all harm, and that the crops of honey in such a protected hive should be above the average.

The good Christian who was caught throwing missiles at the Muezzin who calls to prayers at the Moslem mosque, Liverpool, was asked by Mr. Morgan, the ex-Mayor: "Why don't you leave these people alone and let them worship God in their own way?" Defendant: "They are heathens, and don't worship God." Magistrate's Clerk: "That is nonsense, and no defence, even if true." Defendant: "Well, they are not Christians." Evidently, in the mind of this attendant at St. John's Church, this is a justification for any outrage. He got off very lightly with an adjournment, "to see if there was any repetition of the offence."

Another illustration of "Christianity as it works out" is supplied by a wealthy Mexican Alcade, who, according to a Mexican correspondent of the United States Associated Press, treated his native town to a bull fight "in honor of the festival of Santa Eulalia, virgin and martyr."

Felix L. Oswald writes in the *Open Court*, *apropos* of *Isis Very Much Unveiled*: "The *expose* amusingly illustrates the fact that distance not only 'lends enchantment to the view,' but an aspect of plausibility to the idea of enchantment. Thousands, whose organs of mental digestion rejected Cock-lane ghost stories, had welcomed the chance to satisfy their miracle hunger with reports from distant India. A large proportion of these famished would-be believers will now have to fall back on the old expedient of chronological distance."

Mrs. Mellon, the Sydney mejum, who explained her being found barefooted by the spirits having depleted her legs so that her stockings came off, has been outdone. The *Banner of Light*, a Spiritist paper of Boston, reports that at Helsingfors, Finland, at a dark *séance*, given by Mme. Esperance, the visitors noted that the medium showed symptoms of excitement, and appeared to be in pain. "A few moments later she asked a neighbor to let her take his hand—which he did; whereupon she said, 'Feel here,' and put his hand where her person should have come in contact with her seat, but he felt only the chair. Another gentleman joined the first in a search for the lower parts of the medium without success, and then it dawned on the medium and the visitors that she had become dematerialised from the waist downward." This fact was held to account for Mme. Esperance's excitement, as it well might, especially as she expressed a fear that perhaps the parts would not return. If these are spiritual doings, verily they are horrible to contemplate.

The Rev. N. H. Boston is a Christian clergyman. He is also the pastor of Bullom, in the colony of Sierra Leone. This chosen missionary to the heathen black man is also at present the defendant in a charge of rape preferred against him, and which is to be tried at the present sittings of the Supreme Court of the colony. This little item of news from West Africa will, we are sure, be very gratifying intelligence to the old women of both sexes who contribute to the funds of missionary societies.—*Crescent.*

At the Congress of the Vegetarian Federal Union Colonel Wintle read a paper on "Christian Missions in India," arguing that they would never convert the Hindoos. Indeed, the latter were rather converting the Europeans with whom they came in contact, for their standard of justice, humanity, charity, courage, and resignation was of the highest. Mr. Chaganlal Haridas Vora quite agreed with Colonel Wintle, and maintained that the so-called conversions of Hindoos by missionaries were only those of persons seeking relief from poverty.

A Miss Katherine Drexel has taken her final vows of retirement from the world at the convent of the Blessed Sacrament, near Torresdale, Maryland. By her retirement the Church comes into her worldly possessions, valued at over a million dollars. This is the way the religious oracle is worked. It is worth an expensive apparatus to land such a fine fish as Miss Drexel occasionally.

Oh those belated Christians! The *Methodist Times* has just discovered "Nunquam," the editor of the *Clarion*, whose penny edition of *Merrie England* is having such a phenomenal sale. Our Methodist contemporary thinks that not one in a hundred of its readers has the remotest conception of who is "Nunquam." The "immense majority of Christian teachers" in this country have not so much as heard of his "existence." Of course not. They never wake till twelve o'clock. Secularists are earlier birds. They made the acquaintance of "Nunquam" years ago; in fact, they had him speaking in the Manchester Secular Hall at the unveiling of Mr. Walter Sickert's portrait of Bradlaugh. Mr. Blatchford is a Secularist himself, and we hope the *Methodist Times* will chronicle the fact. It might also report that the *Clarion* has expressed the view that Mr. Hughes may be worthy of attention when he has answered Mr. Foote's exposure of the Atheist Shoemaker story.

Obituary.

We have to chronicle the death, at the early age of 43, of Oscar Beck, one of the leading Belgian Freethinkers, founder of the Freethought Society at Liége, and editor of the *Almanach des Libres Penseurs*, published there. His civil funeral was attended by over two thousand people, prominent Freethinkers from all parts of Belgium being present.

The Gospels.—That no writer before Irenæus has named these writings, or seems to have known either them or their writers, save two or three notices of St. Paul found in works of suspected antiquity, can hardly lead to any other conclusion than that these books were written immediately preceding the time when they are first mentioned.—*Rev. Dr. Giles, "Christian Records," chap. li., p. 418.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 3, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester: 11, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 3, "Angels"; 6.30, "God's in His Heaven."

Wednesday, February 6, Hall of Science, Old-street, E.C.:—8.30, "Kit Marlowe—Atheist, and Morning Star of English Drama." (Free.)

February 10 and 17, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—February 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Camberwell; 17, Plymouth; 24, Newcastle-on-Tyne. March 3, Manchester. April 7, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Pessimist.—Such questions have been repeatedly asked in our columns. We are now waiting for the orthodox to answer them.

T. Barnett.—Thanks for your trouble in copying the verses. "Near the drum" will not do for us. We can't take that seat, so must decline the ticket.

A. Mitchell.—Always pleased to receive suitable verses.

Spectator (Southport).—We have no space to record the exploits of such a ruffian. He seems to belong to an essentially criminal type. If he were not defending Christianity (heaven save the mark!) he might be doing worse—if that were possible.

J. K. (Greenock).—Sorry we cannot undertake it. Our hands are already too full.

G. S. Coole.—According to Matthew ii. 1, Jesus was born in the days of Herod the king, who died B.C. 4. From Luke ii. 2 it appears it was when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria, which was not till ten or more years after the death of Herod.

E. H.—Socialism is a special method of reform to which the N.S.S. is not committed. If it were so, all the non-Socialists would have to leave the Society. The destruction of the Christian superstition is our principal work at present; and it is the indispensable preliminary of all wise and desirable reform. We have no belief in a renovated society which is still under the dominion of theology. All the old evils would soon reappear, though perhaps in fresh and more insidious forms.

J. Keast.—Glad to hear the Bristol Branch is enrolling new members. Mr. Foote has written to you with respect to a date for lectures.

T. E. M.—Pleased to know you appreciate Mr. Ryan's article on the Drama. He is one of our most esteemed contributors. The article shall appear.

F. Holland.—The lines have merit, but are not quite suitable. We do not know Miss Reade personally. The paragraph you refer to was based on a correspondent's report.

B. Ingham.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. Kendrick.—You did not indicate what you thought the right date; you merely said our date was wrong—which was not much assistance. The evening lecture referred to was not delivered on a Sunday. We followed Mrs. Bonner in the matter. Mr. Forder says the date was early in December, not late in November. Unfortunately we have not the *N.R.* file to consult.

G. G. Leonard.—We are unable to give you the address of Mr. A. Dawson who left Newcastle for America in 1893. Perhaps his address is known to our Newcastle friends.

H. Poulson.—We cannot answer such questions by post. Josephus (in the forged passage) says that Jesus drew after him many Jews as well as Gentiles. This implies that the majority were Gentiles.

M. Wellington.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. H. Harnor.—You have a perfect right to your own opinion. Ours is not affected by your comments. You do not appear to have followed the Parnell case with close attention. The facts were certainly not as you represent them.

T. Garbutt.—Mr. Foote's pamphlet on Randolph Churchill can be obtained from Mr. Forder.

W. Wilson.—We will not give publicity to the blackguardism of such a half-insane "anti-infidel." Mr. Foote would be happy to visit Southport when he is in the neighborhood.

E. Howard.—Your letter was dated January 21, but did not reach us till Wednesday morning, too late for last week's issue.

Philalethes.—It is impossible to take that young pretender seriously.

F. S.—See paragraph.

J. W. Stafford.—Shall appear. Glad to know that you find the *Freethinker* an oasis in the benighted desert you are obliged to inhabit.

Watts Election Fund.—We have received: E. P. 42, £1.

Mr. Foote's Fighting Fund.—E. P. 42, £1; T. W. Gore, 2s. 6d.; M. Bywater, 2s.; H. Lyon, 2s. 6d.

H. Lyon.—Can you obtain a hall now for lectures at Leeds?

Papers Received.—Freethinkers' Magazine—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Monro's Ironclad Age—Secular Thought—Southport Visitor—Isle of Man Times—Lancashire Post—Huddersfield Examiner—Truthseeker—Two Worlds—Freedom—Twentieth Century—Freidenker—Liberator—Liberty—Open Court—Progressive Thinker—Sporting Sketches—Reynolds's Newspaper—Saturday Times—World's Advance Thought—Literary World—Universal Republic—Catholic Herald—Weekly Bulletin.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Owing to the cold, snowy, cheerless weather at Liverpool on Sunday, Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon audiences were not as large as usual; in the evening, however, the hall was crowded. Opposition was offered to this lecture by an earnest but unconsciously comical disciple of the late Black Champion, who proved the existence of Christ by the argument that there must have been a Christ, or there would not have been any Christians. Some of this gentleman's interpretation of Scripture was unspeakably diverting. Mr. George Wise, of the Christian Evidence Society, also opposed the lecture in two speeches; and rather astonished the meeting by standing up for the authenticity of the famous exploded passage in Josephus. Mr. Wise also cited Professor Sanday as supporting the orthodox view of the authorship of the Gospels. We advise him to read the sixth of Sanday's recent lectures on "Inspiration." Mr. Wise is not up to date.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Feb. 3) at Manchester. As the hard weather threatens to continue, and people may be deterred from coming in from the surrounding districts, it is to be hoped that the Manchester friends will make a special effort to provide good audiences on this occasion.

Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience last Sunday evening at the Hall of Science, London, when he lectured upon "Trust in God a Delusion." The subject "caught on," and was enthusiastically applauded. Mr. Rowney made an excellent chairman. Several questions were put to Mr. Watts at the close of the lecture by an intelligent young gentleman, who evidently had not been accustomed to Freethought lectures.

This (Sunday) evening, February 3, Mr. Watts again occupies the same platform, taking for his subject "Religion with and without Theology."

A debate is to take place in the Camberwell Secular Hall on Tuesday evening, February 5, between Mr. S. E. Easton (Secularist) and Mr. W. S. Clarke (Christian Defence Association) on the question—"Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better Calculated to Benefit Mankind?" The admission is free, and there should be a large attendance.

On the following Sunday evening (February 10) Mr. Charles Watts lectures at Camberwell. We believe it is his first appearance there since his return from America.

In the *United Presbyterian Magazine* Dr. Whitelaw seeks to damage the higher criticism of to-day by showing that its main conclusions were anticipated by Thomas Paine in his *Age of Reason*. He wants to know if Jesus Christ was wrong in saying that Moses wrote of him (John v. 46), and Thomas Paine right in asserting that Moses did no such thing. Well, that is the conclusion the world is coming to.

Here, for instance, is Professor Guthe, who, in *Die Christliche Welt* (1894; Nos. 40, 41), points out that, according to Deut. xxxi. 9, Moses wrote down the laws. But the facts

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show that the law that Israel should worship in one place only (Deut. v. 12) was unknown by men like Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, and Elijah, who are praised for patterns of piety. He holds they were not aware of such a precept of Moses. They did not transgress it only because it did not exist. So, also, he says: "The Book of Daniel professes to come from the time of the Babylonian exile; it arose, however, about the middle of the second century B.C. To write under a pseudonym became a favorite practice in later Judaism."

The *Freethinkers' Magazine*, conducted by Mr. H. L. Green at Chicago, now appears as the *Free Thought Magazine*. It opens with a capital portrait of Mr. J. A. Greenhill, and contains a number of interesting articles; also a summary report of Ingersoll's lecture, "Which Way," delivered before a crowded audience in the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, on the first Sunday in January. "God is dead," Ingersoll says in his fine peroration. This is a sufficient answer to some half-superstitious "Agnostics" in this country, who try to make out that Ingersoll is not an Atheist.

The *Literary World*, noticing *Voltaire: A Sketch of His Life and Works*, by J. M. Wheeler and G. W. Foote, says: "The English people ought to know Voltaire, an admirer and lover of their nation, better than they do, and this lively shilling pamphlet will give them a good deal of information as to his life and work. Cultivated men of all schools have long since ceased to regard the great Frenchman as the moral monster he was represented to be by the people he attacked, and have learned to do justice to his splendid services to the cause of intellectual freedom, and in the interests of the suffering and of the oppressed." It goes on to say that "the defect of this work is in adopting an attitude towards religion, as did Voltaire, which has been outgrown." As the same number of the *Literary World* speaks of Professor Huxley as "a belated Voltairean," we can easily reconcile ourselves to the criticism.

Rabbi Schindler has been lecturing for the Ingersoll Secular Society, Boston. Dr. Schindler referred to Jesus as the ideal of the Christian, the child of the imagination, and said that, when people came from the regions of the ideal to solid ground to deal with flesh and blood, they had a right to ask for facts and proofs of them. He claimed that the only place where Jesus was mentioned was in the gospel, and went on to show how improbable the story was, having been written 150 years after the time Jesus is alleged to have lived.

Dr. Schindler read extracts from Jewish authorities to show that, according to the Bible stories, Christ was tried and executed on a holiday, and that trials were not held by Jews on holidays; and he gave further quotations to show that the Gospel writers knew nothing of the jurisprudence and customs of the times of which they were writing. He spoke at length of the Jewish criminal code to show that, while the Bible claimed that Jesus was tried and convicted on the same day, such a procedure was entirely at variance with the custom of the Jews.

Public Opinion (Jan. 25) quotes at length from a Danish paper, *Danskeren*, on "Plato as a Forerunner of Christ." The paper bears out what Mr. Maagaard has recently written in our columns on "The Progress of Freethought in Denmark."

Mr. Robert Forder visits the Battersea Secular Hall this Sunday evening (February 3), and delivers his new lecture entitled "Christ and the Labor Party." There should be a large attendance.

In London, out of twenty-nine public libraries, sixteen are open on Sundays. With a little pressure, most of the others might be induced to follow suit.

In giving a free concert on Sunday to 1,200 of the inmates of the City Road Workhouse of the Holborn Union, the National Sunday League has started a humane and beneficial work, which, we trust, will soon be imitated all over the country. The L.D.O. Society may try its game of frightening, by an appeal to obsolete laws; but the work commenced is one which will at once commend itself to all the enlightened section of the public.

There are few ways in which a little money can promote more happiness than in giving a treat to children. Miss Vance has been very energetic in seeing that the usual party at the Hall of Science is a successful one; but she complains that the funds have not come in as desired. We hope our well-to-do readers will take the hint, remember the children, and remit their donations to 28 Stonecutter-street as speedily as possible.

Mr. Foote will deliver a series of Wednesday evening lectures at the London Hall of Science during February. They will all be literary. The first, on February 6, will be upon "Kit Marlowe—Atheist, and Morning Star of English Drama." The admission is free to all seats, and, as Mr. Foote gives all Wednesday evening lectures gratuitously, the whole of the collection will go into the N.S.S. exchequer. Freethinkers, we hope, will not only attend themselves, but bring their more orthodox friends on the occasions.

CHILDREN'S PARTY.

BEFORE this reaches the eyes of the readers of this journal the party will be a thing of the past. We anticipate a most excellent evening of enjoyment for the little ones; but, up to the present, we have not sufficient money to meet the expenses. Since my last list the following donations have been received: J. Mosenthal, 5s.; Philethesis, 1s.; E. Cruttenden, 1s. 4½d.; Mrs. Marks, 5s.; R. Parsons, 2s.; H. S. S., 10s.; G. Wenborn, 5s.; R. Malster, 2s.; W. Cabell, 2s. 6d.; W. L. B., 10s.; A. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; J. Robertson, 2s. 6d.; C. Thomas, 10s.; C. C. Andrews, 5s.; R. H. Side, 5s.; J. Brown, 6d.; Collected at Hall of Science, £2; C. Watts, 5s.; Collected by T. Wilmot, 3s. 6d.; J. Burrell, 3s.; Mrs. Courtney, 3s. 3d.; Mrs. Henderson, 8s. 10d.; Mrs. Sleigh, 2s. 11d.; H. Fox, 4s. 1d.; Miss K. Ward, 4s.; Mrs. Standring, 8s.; Bobby Forder, 5s. 10d.; Jimmy Forder, 5s. 10d.; Miss Robins, 14s. 9d.; Miss A. Brown, 10s.; Mrs. Casey, 3s.; Mrs. Fleming, 3s. 6d.; Mrs. Hindeman, 4s. 3d.; Mr. Guest, 1s.; M. A. M., 5s. Goods and cake sent will be acknowledged next week.

ROBERT FORDER, *Treasurer*.

MAX O'RELL AND THE PARSON.

MAX O'RELL tells this story about himself:—"I had just returned to the hotel, after having given a lecture on the Scotch at the town hall. I was half undressed when there came a knock at my bedroom door. It was a waiter bearing a card. The Presbyterian minister of the town wished to see me at once on a very urgent matter. I bid the waiter show the reverend gentleman up. A man of about fifty, in the usual black ecclesiastical coat and white cravat, and holding a soft felt hat, appeared in the doorway, wearing a sad face. I recognised him as one of my audience that evening. 'Excuse my costume,' I began, 'but you wished to speak to me on urgent business, and I thought best not to make you wait.' 'There is nothing the matter with your dress,' he broke in; 'this is not an affair of the body, but of the soul. I have come to pray for you.' I was taken a little by surprise, and felt a trifle discountenanced; but I quickly regained my composure. 'Why, certainly,' I said, 'with the greatest pleasure, if it can make you happy.' He knelt, put his elbows on the bed, buried his head in his hands, and began: 'Lord, this man whom thou seest near me is not a sinful man; he is suffering from the evil of the century; he has not been touched by thy grace; he is a stranger, come from a country where religion is turned to ridicule. Grant that his travel through our godly lands may bring him into the narrow way that leads to everlasting life.' The prayer, most of which I spare you, lasted at least ten minutes. When he had finished, my visitor rose and held out his hand. I shook it. 'And now,' said I, 'allow me to pray for you.' He signified consent by a movement of the hand. I did not go on my knees, but with all the fervor that is in me I cried: 'Lord, this man whom thou seest beside me is not a sinful man. Have mercy upon him, for he is a Pharisee, who doubts not for one moment, and that without knowing me, that he is better than I. Thou who has sent in vain thy son on earth to cast out the Pharisee, let thy grace descend upon this one; teach him that the foremost Christian virtue is charity, and that the greatest charity is that which teaches us that we are no better than our brethren. This man is blinded by pride; convince him, open his eyes, pity him, and forgive him, as I forgive him. Amen.' I looked at my good Presbyterian. He was rooted to the floor, amazement written on his face. I once more took his hand and shook it. 'And now,' said I, 'we are quits. Good night.' He went away somewhat abashed, pocketing the mild reproof."

A story is told in *Fairplay* of a north-country shipowner, whose vessel was detained in the Danube, and wired his captain, "Move heaven and earth to get the steamer away by Saturday." The reply he received was to the following effect: "Heaven unknown in these parts, earth played out; but hope, by playing the devil and moving hell, to get her away by Monday."

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SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—II.

DR. THOMAS INMAN.

IT was through Myles McSweeney that I became epistolarily acquainted with the author of *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*. Myles recommended me to the Doctor to make some drawings to illustrate his works; and this led to a good deal of frank correspondence, in which the Doctor treated me as one very much older than I then was. All bore on his discoveries of the evidences of phallic worship, which, as is often the case with discoverers, Dr. Inman pressed beyond their real importance. I have since learned that neither McSweeney nor Dr. Inman was original in the detection of phallicism as underlying Christianity. Earlier even than Payne Knight, Higgins, or Dulaure, was a Kabbalist crank in the last century, a Frenchman, whose work on *Les Mystéres du Christianisme*, published in 1771, is certainly one of the most curious volumes it has ever been my lot to look into. The Old and the New Testaments, and the seven sacraments of the Romish Church, are interpreted phallically. Dr. Inman had, however, arrived at his view independently, though he doubtless derived some hints from the *Anacalypsis* of Godfrey Higgins. His researches were originally into the meanings of names, and the mere inquiry why John was convertible into Jack led to some extraordinary results.

Dr. Inman was a Liverpool physician of high standing. He was born at Leicester, January 27th, 1820, and his father became director of the Bank of Liverpool, and his brother founded the famous shipping firm of that port. Educated at King's College and London University, he took the degrees of B.A. and M.D., settling at Liverpool, where he became lecturer on botany, medical jurisprudence, therapeutics, and the principles and practice of medicine. He was for some time President of the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society, and was physician to the Royal Infirmary of that city. He wrote several medical works, and his volumes on *The Preservation of Health* and *The Restoration of Health* are still worth reading. Dr. Inman was original-minded in his profession. He published a work, entitled *Foundations for a New Theory of Medicine* (1861), in which he regarded all disease as arising from a deficiency of vital force; and in his treatment he frankly placed dietetics before drugs, which, he pointed out, were chiefly respected because they deranged the vital force. He stated, as the conclusion of his large medical experience, that "the physician could do harm, but that his power for good was limited." But it was chiefly as an archæologist that his Freethought manifested itself. In his principal work, *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, he examines all the cognomens in the Bible, eliciting many curious facts that lie behind those names, and showing there was no essential difference between the faith of the Hebrews and that of other Semites. Incidentally he notices that the alleged sojourn in Egypt left no evidence of having modified Israelitish language, names, or faith. He held that biblical testimony itself disproved the story of the sojourn in Egypt.

In my essay on "Phallic Worship among the Jews," in *Bible Studies*, I have given my opinion on the views of Dr. Inman more fully than is possible here; and I shall therefore at once pass to his less known Freethought work, *Ancient Faiths and Modern*, which was published at New York, though printed at Edinburgh, in the year of his death (1876). In the preface he tells how he came to doubt the nostrums both of physical and spiritual doctors. He says: "The physician, when professing to cure, has too often assisted disease to kill; and he who has the cure of souls has invented plans to make believers in his doctrine miserable. The first fills his coffers proportionately to the extent to which he can protract recovery; the second becomes rich in proportion to the success with which he multiplies mental terrors, and then sells repose. The one enfeebles the body, the other cripples the intellect, and aggravates envy, hatred, and malice." On examination, he says, "I found that in every nation there have been, and still are, good men and bad, gentle and brutal, thoughtful and ignorant; that the best men of Paganism—Buddha, for example—did not lose by comparison with the brightest lights of Christianity; and that such large cities as London and Paris have as much vice within them as ancient Rome or modern Calcutta. I found, moreover, that there is a culpable coloring in the accounts given by Christian travellers of Pagan countries. The clerical pen rests invariably and strongly upon the bad points of every heathen cult, and contrasts them with the best elements of Christianity." Dr. Inman entered considerably into the question of the rival merits of Christianity and Buddhism, and gave his preference to the latter as a non-persecuting system, and as containing no obscene stories such as those in the Bible. He says:—

"If we now ask ourselves what parts of the Bible most offend sense of propriety, we should answer that they are its untenable cosmogony; its preposterous accounts of the longevity of the men reported as being the earliest formed; the legend of the flood; the origin of the rainbow; the tales of Moses, Pharaoh, the plagues of Egypt, the sojourn in the desert, the capture of Canaan, the miraculous battles. We would wholly expunge the fabulous account of Elijah and Elisha; the ravings after vengeance uttered by the prophets; the apocryphal episodes described in the books of Jonah and Daniel; every obscene story and disgusting speech or writing, whether uttered as a threat against Israel or his enemies. In like manner, we would wish to expunge from the teaching of Jesus everything relating to the immediate destruction of the world, everything connected with community of goods, the advantages of beggary, and the potency of faith and prayer. We would suppress every miracle, and say nothing of a resurrection of the dead Jesus. We would equally abandon any attempt to describe Heaven or Hell or any immediate state. When all these were removed from the Bible, we positively should have very little left, except a certain amount of morality which is sound, and a large portion which is radically bad."

Ancient Faiths and Modern, like all of Dr. Inman's works, abounds in a variety of learning culled from all quarters. He concludes the book with a challenge to the champions of orthodoxy. He says:—

"I defy scholars to prove that the Israelites were ever, as a body, in Egypt; that they were delivered therefrom by Moses; that the people wandered during forty years 'in the desert,' received a code of laws from Jehovah on Sinai, and were, in any sense whatever of the words, 'the chosen people of God.'

"I assert that the whole history of the Old Testament is untrue, with the exception of a few parts which tell of unimportant events—*e.g.*, it is probable that the Jews fought with their neighbors, as the Swiss have done in modern days; but I do not believe the tale about Samson, any more than that of William Tell.

"I assert that there is not a single true prophecy in the whole Bible which can be proved to have been written before the event to which it is assumed to point, or which is superior, in any way, to the oracles delivered in various ancient lands.

"I assert that the whole of what is called the Mosaic law had no existence in the days of David, Solomon and the early Hebrew chieftains or kings, if they are thought to deserve the title."

This was plain and to the point, and I am not aware of any orthodox champion who has successfully taken up his challenge on these topics.

In 1871 Dr. Inman retired from practice, and resided at Clifton, near Bristol, where he died on May 3, 1876. He was a man of handsome presence, and his genial temperament made him generally popular, despite his outspoken heresy. His antiquarian works will long hold a distinguished place in the cabinets of the curious. J. M. W.

A Waning Faith.

Notwithstanding the claims of the paid attorneys of Christianity to the contrary, the fact remains that this great system of religion has lost its grip on the intelligence of the people, and is fast assuming its rightful position among the fossil and exploded chimeras of the past. It is no longer a living force amongst the well balanced of mankind, but excites only ridicule and contempt where once it shook the brain of man with terror and despair.

Whoever doubts the truth of this assertion has only to follow the great Agnostic, Ingersoll, in his triumphant tour of the United States to have this doubt dispelled. Night after night his most radical and stinging utterances against Christianity are applauded by admiring thousands, who have paid regular theatre prices for the privilege of seeing this old theological scarecrow riddled by the shafts of satire, wit, and logic. Christianity will, of course, for many years, continue to exercise its baneful influence in the land; but it is patent to the most casual observer that its work henceforth will become more and more the spasmodic twitching of a dying serpent, until at last its workings fade entirely in the lethargy of death.—*The Boston Investigator.*

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

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RELIGIOUS IMMORALITY.

The following article, signed J. B., which appeared in a recent number of the *Christian World*, shows how far rational secular considerations are penetrating the religious world. J. B. says: "Religion in this country is, with a great proportion of the fashionable, the monied, and the influential classes, identified with the Established Church. This great institution has a teaching body of over twenty thousand clergy. Leaving for the moment the question of the relationship of the Church to its laity, let us consider what it has to say to this body of teachers, and especially to the new generation from whom its future ministerial recruits are to be drawn.

"It comes to them with both hands full. In the one are the statements of belief which are to be accepted, signed, and publicly taught. These, to the scientifically educated consciousness of the nineteenth century, are somewhat curious reading. They include a fourth century presentation of the most detailed kind as to the Being of God and the Incarnation and person of Christ, the acceptance of every part of which is to be declared necessary to salvation; a doctrine about Adam and the Fall, framed certainly not in view of modern discoveries concerning the ascent of man; a doctrine of regeneration by baptism, and another affirming the Divine choice of a certain number of persons to salvation, with its inevitable though unexpressed corollary of the leaving over of the rest of the human race to eternal perdition.

"There are over twenty thousand more or less educated men in England who have solemnly bound themselves, in full view of present-day knowledge, to hold and teach all this, and much more of a like kind, as representing the absolute truth concerning God, man, and the universe. These have actually taken the leap, and it is, perhaps useless to inquire into the mental processes by which they brought themselves to this position. It will be more profitable to study the Church's method with the new generation from which she expects to get her future teachers. Let us imagine the case of a theological neophyte who proposes to himself the career of a minister of religion, and to whom she makes her advances. She has presented him with the contents of one of her two full hands. As he ponders this fourth-century system of the universe, and asks himself whether the modern knowledge of human origins, the modern science of comparative religions, and the modern philosophy of the Divine Self-manifestation in nature and in history are reconcilable at all points with the antique view to which he is asked to commit himself, there is offered to him a series of considerations of another order. The Church opens her other hand. Its contents are dignities, privileges, and social and religious distinction. She says to him: 'Accept my terms, and you pass at once to the sunny side of the ecclesiastical hedge. You shall receive a social consideration and precedence entirely beyond what your own moderate abilities alone would secure. If you have real ability, or have influence, I can promise you a dazzling perspective of preferment. You may bask in the sunshine of a court. You may receive the social and spiritual homage of a prince of the Church. If you refuse these terms, if you declare yourself unable to sign your adherence to my fourth-century system, make up your mind to ecclesiastical exile and to social ostracism. Be prepared for a career as a religious teacher in which every door to titles, honors, and preferments will be close barred, and where, whatever your talents or character, no recognition will be vouchsafed you in court, law, politics, or society.'

"The argument is undoubtedly a powerful one. With a certain order of minds it is sure to be a prevailing one. But let this further, however, be said about it, that it is a distinctly immoral one. What happens to our neophyte? In some cases he signs, while distinctly at issue with many of the things to which he is declaring his assent and consent, saying to himself that, after all, the thing is demanded by the present constitution in Church and State, that he is only doing what multitudes of better men have done, and that he signs as giving a general adhesion to the Church system, without including all its details. This position is regarded by many as entirely satisfactory. Perhaps it is a question of temperament; but there are other men who would rather cut off their right hand than, as they say to themselves, soil their honor by following such an example. In other cases the neophyte signs, accepting the Church's authority for the things to which he is giving his adhesion, and believing that he believes them. If we admit this man's sincerity, it will certainly be at the expense of our sense of his competence as a public religious teacher. The natural consequence of his attitude will be the shutting up of a mind which has pledged itself to the fourth-century scheme of things to any truth or fact which may seem to militate against it. If this attitude is not immoral, it is, at any rate, an offence of the gravest kind against the spirit of truth, and against the intellectual progress of the race."

J. B.'s indictment is directed only against the established clergy. But the Dissenting ministers are tarred with the same brush. The Rev. T. Moore, in his *Dead Hand in the Free Churches*, proves that the Nonconformists are pledged to doctrines they now no longer preach. Chapels, where the freest salvation is offered, are often endowed on condition of teaching strict Calvinism. In narrow Bibliolatry and subservience to the bigoted of their congregations the dissenting sky-pilots are, as a rule, even worse than the clergy.

HOW LONG?

In the trusting infant world
God was manifest in might;
Lightnings on the impious hurled,
Stood in Israel's wondering sight
A cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night.

Then the serried ranks he led,
And his arm in strength was shown,
And his children's hands were red
In the blood of foes o'erthrown;
In his path like leaves his enemies were strown.

Israel slept beneath his care;
And whene'er his children cried
He remembered him to spare,
And his wrath was turned aside
That in peace before his face they should abide.

Never now the lightnings blind;
Never falls consuming flame
On the man of evil mind,
On the citadels of shame;
Sin goes scatheless; evil scarcely knoweth blame.

Nowhere now in flood or fire,
Or in mountain or in wood,
Speaks the voice in love or ire—
Words by any understood:
Mute is all the air, the earth a solitude.

Unto whom is he revealed?
Who has heard his awful tones?
Now methinks our ears are sealed,
Or the crying of the stones
Drowns that voice in sounds that seem like human groans.

Darius Hystaspes.

The Church in the Middle Ages.

To meddle with things not included within the narrow comprehension of the medieval Church was the most heinous offence of which a human being could be guilty. Converse with evil spirits, or with science, in the days of the power of the Church, was punished with torture and death. It was the Church that put Galileo upon the rack, and burnt Giordano Bruno at the stake. Under priestly influence human intelligence sank to a level of pitiable brutishness. Learning came from the cloister, and took the form of superstition. Belief in witchcraft and in possession by unclean spirits was universal, and it was gravely argued that an animal might be guilty of heresy. People in all countries tormented themselves with interminable and unintelligible doctrinal discussions, and it was accounted meritorious to throw stones at a cock on Sunday, because since Peter's denial the cock was the Devil's bird.—"*Pall Mall Magazine*," *January*.

Fragments.

Civilisation civilises religion—not *vice versa*.

All the good in religion is not religion, but morality, benevolence, love, culture, music, art, etc., all antecedent and surviving any special religion.

How vain for a man, who did not live fifty or a hundred years ago, to believe he shall live during eternity "hereafter."

It is no harder task to prove that there is no heaven or "spirit world" than that there is no hell. Such localities are born of superstition, and impossible in the economy of nature.

It seems to me that a God who has made such a wretched failure of a world here (though, personally, I have no reason to complain, so far) can hardly be trusted to make a success of it "over there."—*Otto Wettstein*.

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IS CHRISTIANITY PLAYED OUT?

"Hence, doubting spirit, cease thy troubled guest;
Believe, have faith, and God will do the rest."
So speaks the wise apologist for that
Which seems to be at present falling flat.
"Our Christ," the parson cries, "our Christ played out?
Away! 'tis hideous sin to raise a doubt.
If you suggest that such a thing is true,
In everlasting fires you're sure to stew.
We know the Church does not, and cannot, cope
With human ills; the parsons, clergy, Pope,
On earthly misery have naught to say,
But tune their harps to heaven's immortal lay.
'The earth's the Lord's,' the Bible tells us so;
He's thus responsible for earthly woe.
'Tis naught to us what ails the human scum,
If good subscriptions to our coffers come.
Our occupation 'tis to advertise,
And wealth amass as pilots to the skies.
With squabbles oft we draw the public eye,
And thus to 'draw' the public pocket try.
From suffering men our path is very wide;
We pass their troubles 'on the other side.'
The only matter that we care about
Is 'What's the richest crowd?'—with them we'll shout.
Distress in everything around we see;
Oh, Lord, may no distress abide in me!
Such is our pleasant, though p'rhaps selfish, song;
With happy hearts through life we jog along.
We preach the gospel, and to faith exhort;
And, though 'tis true salvation can't be bought,
Still all our worshippers we oft assure
The more they give, the Lord will bless the more."
Religion pays too well to be played out;
Whilst fools exist, so will the pious tout.

G. R.

An Illustration of Design.

Mr James B. Alexander gives in the *Truthseeker* the following instance of providential design: "There is a newly-discovered worm called the *Filaria Nocturna*, that gets into the blood of men (and probably other animals) in India. The embryos of this worm are in the water, and when it is drank are taken into his stomach. From the stomach they bore their way into the lymphatic vessels, where they become sexually mature, and reproduce a prodigious number of minute embryos enclosed in a delicate shell. These pass from the lymphatics into the blood, and during the day are quiet and not easily detected, but are active at night. Now the mosquito, also a nocturnal animal, comes along, and, sucking the blood of her victim, transfers some of these embryos to her own stomach, where they grow. When the mosquito retires to water where she lays her eggs and dies, these embryos are scattered in the water, where they swim about and never develop any further, unless some drinker of the water swallows them, and so gives them a chance to produce a new generation. Providence has thus very ingeniously arranged this partnership between men and mosquitos for the benefit of the *Filaria Nocturna*. They are sometimes injurious to men, but not unless they are in great numbers."

Other-Worldliness.

I once asked Tom Clarkson whether he ever thought of his probable fate in the next world, to which he replied: "How can I? I think only of the slaves in Barbadoes!" Does Mr. Wilberforce care a farthing for the slaves in the West Indies, or if they were all at the Devil, so that *his soul were saved?*

As there is a worldliness, or the *too much* of this life, so there is another worldliness, or rather, *other-worldliness*, equally hateful and selfish with this-worldliness.—*S. T. Coleridge.*

I would rather go to the forest, far away, and build me a little cabin—build it myself—and daub it with clay, and live there with my wife and children; and have a winding path leading down to the spring where the water bubbles out, day and night, whispering a poem to the white pebbles from the heart of the earth; a little hut with some hollyhocks at the corner, with their bannered bosoms open to the sun, and a thrush in the air like a winged joy. I would rather live there and have some lattice-work across the window, so that the sunlight would fall checkered on the babe in the cradle. I would rather live there, with my soul erect and free, than in a palace of gold, and wear a crown of imperial power, and feel that I was superstition's cringing slave, and dare not speak my honest thought.—*R. G. Ingersoll*

BOOK CHAT.

Dr. J. Gilchrist has translated Professor Haeckel's *Confession of Faith*. It is published by Adam and Charles Black, and is entitled *Monism as Connecting Religion and Science: The Confession of Faith of a Man of Science*. We hope to give our readers further particulars shortly.

* * *

Cope, the Universal Soother, is the title of a *brochure* of verse issued at the office of Cope's Tobacco Plant, Lord Nelson-street, Liverpool. Though an advertisement, the illustrations by Pipeshank, and verses by Leland, Ashby Sterry, Manville Fenn, H. Lloyd, J. Brander Matthews, etc., are excellent, and will be treasured by lovers of good literature, even if anti-tobacconists. Two of the poems are by R. Le Gallienne, whence we conclude that the "Religion of a Literary Man" includes the rite of incense offering.

* * *

Miss Hester Pengelly, of Lamorna, Torquay, is engaged on a memoir of her father, the late W. Pengelly, F.R.S., whose geological and antiquarian researches at Kent's Hole did so much to enlarge ordinary ideas of human antiquity. Professor Bonney will supply a summary of Mr. Pengelly's scientific work.

* * *

Mr. W. M. Salter, one of the leaders of the American Society for Ethical Culture, has published at Philadelphia the first number of a new periodical, called *The Cause*.

* * *

In vol. xli., just issued, of the *National Dictionary of Biography* the account of William Nicholson, the chemist, man of science, and inventor (1753–1815), who conducted the *British Encyclopædia* and the *Journal of Natural Philosophy*, makes no mention that he was the author of *Doubts of Infidels* (1781)—a work republished by Carlile and also by Watson—although the fact is stated on good authority by Mr. Wheeler in his *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. The lives of Feargus O'Connor and George Odger are both brief, but will be read with interest by old Radicals.

* * *

The second volume of *A Concise History of Religion*, by F. J. Gould, is now published by Watts & Co. This volume deals with Judaism and the Jewish sacred literature, with a chapter on the religious environment of early Christianity. We have not yet examined the work with the care it demands, but we recommended the previous volume, and those who possess volume one will also be pleased to read its successor.

* * *

In the third volume of *English Prose Selections*, edited by Henry Craik, the editor, in giving a selection from the old Anglo-Dutch Freethinker, Bernard Mandeville, says he "deserves a place in the division of English prose-history which includes Latimer and Bunyan, Defoe and Cobbett."

PROFANE JOKES.

Boston Girl—"Do you know, I fancy heaven will be much like Boston." Chicago Girl—"Why? Because there will not be men enough there to go around?"

Tommy—"Does God make everybody, mamma?" Mamma—"Yes." Tommy—"Does he have a pattern?" Mamma—"Yes; the Bible says we are made like himself." Tommy—"Humph! I guess he must follow that pattern by his eye."

Mamma—"What was the sermon about this morning, Willie?" Willie—"Well, I guess it was tellin' about cash boys." Mamma—"What did the minister say about them?" Willie—"Nothin', but his text was, 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.'"

Sunday-school Teacher—"The prodigal son suffered dreadfully for his wickedness in running away from home; but when he returned his father forgave him and killed the fatted calf." The New Pupil—"But what did they kill the fatted calf for? Hadn't he stayed at home all the time?"

The contradictions of popular theology are not unperceived by the child mind. A little girl four and a half years old lately said: "Papa, who made Mary and Joseph?" "Why God, of course." "Oh, no, papa, that could not be; for, if Jesus is God, and Mary is Jesus's mother, how could God make his own mother?" There are millions of grown-up people, however, who ought to possess sharper wits than this infant, who still place implicit faith in this infantile fallacy.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, a lecture. (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "Religion with and without Theology." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "Kit Marlowe—Atheist, and Morning Star of English Drama."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, Robert Forder, "Christ and the Labor Party." (Admission 2d. and 4d.) Tuesday and Friday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Benjamin Dent, "Has Man Fallen?" (Preceded by vocal and instrumental music.) Tuesday, Feb. 5, at 8.30, debate between S. E. Easton and W. S. Clarke, "Secularism or Christianity: Which is the Better Calculated to Benefit Mankind?" (Free.) Thursday, at 7.30, science classes. (Free.)

ISLINGTON (Liberal and Radical Association Committee Rooms, Upper-street, near Vestry Hall): Thursday, January 31, at 8, A. Guest, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, "Shakespeare." (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Sidney Webb, "The Making of London."

WOOD GREEN: 7, members' meeting at secretary's house, 71 Gladstone-avenue.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BLACKBURN: 3, members' meeting at secretary's house.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, vocal and instrumental music, recitations, and readings.

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, discussion—"Individualism"; 1, music class; 2.30, "The Prophecies Concerning Christ," by a Christian; 3, elocution class; 6.30, concert.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, Thomas Ritchie, "Criticism of Gospel History"; 6.30, "Agnosticism and Theology." (Free.)

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Sketchley, "The Relation of Freethought to Socialism."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 3, philosophy class—"Kant" (Ernest Newman); 7, L. Bergmann, B.Sc., "Macbeth."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, G. W. Foote, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 3, "Angels"; 6.30, "God's in His Heaven."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, Mr. Chubb, "The God of the Bible."

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street); 6.30, Sam Standring, "Thomas Paine's Death bed."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Joseph Pearson, "My Religion, by Count Tolstoi—A Review."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. H. Reynolds, "Freethought Essential to Social Progress."

STOCKTON (Borough Hall Dining-room): Monday, February 4, at 7, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion." (3d. and 6d.)

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Feb. 3, Edinburgh; 10, Dundee. March 10, Sheffield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Feb. 3 New Brompton.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Feb. 10, Bradford; 17 Failsworth. March 26 and 27, Sheffield.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 6. SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. DAVIDSON'S BALLADS.

Ballads and Songs. By John Davidson. (London: John Lane.)

NEARLY thirty years have elapsed since Mr. Swinburne burst upon the world with his *Songs and Ballads*. He had made a reputation already with his *Atalanta*, and was one of the established "younger poets." Much was expected of him, but the heresy and eroticism of his new volume horrified the godly purists, and young poets became odious. Shelley had shocked the world, and Swinburne had done the same thing; and bards would have to be looked at askance until they were turning bald or grey—in short, until their fervor cooled down to the temperature of mediocrity, when they might be "safe" even for bread-and-butter misses. Poets, however, will not be old before their time. They have their youth, like the rest of us; and it is a longer youth, for the divine enthusiasm burns hotter within them, and survives more of the sad chills of experience. For this reason, if for no other, we talk of our "younger poets," though they have lived into middle-age; indeed, it may be said that "younger poets" are poets under fifty.

Of this junior fraternity of song the most conspicuous, perhaps, is Mr. John Davidson, whose work has more substance than that of his colleagues or rivals. We need not chant his praises in tones of exaggeration, like the "log-rollers" who "laud each other face to face" in the newspapers and reviews. We need not say, with Mr. Zangwill, that he is "prodigal of every divine gift," or, with Mr. Le Gallienne, resemble him to George Meredith. Still less need we declare, with one of his panegyrists, that "everything" he does "bears the hall-mark of originality." Originality is a rare article, and everything is "a large order." It is enough to say, in more sober language, that Mr. Davidson has done some beautiful and forceful work, that he thinks as well as feels, and that his poetry challenges the attention of those who want something more than mere "sugared rhymes" when they invest their time and money in a volume of verse.

Mr. Davidson's latest production is of interest to Freethinkers. It is full of the new spirit. It is bright and bold in its defiance of orthodoxy—even the orthodoxy of "advanced" Christians. We like the two couplets, which are a kind of dedication of the book. The first is "To My Friend"—

> What is between us two, we know:
> Shake hands and let the whole world go.

The second is "To My Enemy"—

> Unwilling friend, let not your spite abate:
> Help me with scorn, and strengthen me with hate.

The longest poem is called a Ballad, though written in blank verse. It describes the "making of a poet." The youth lived "far in the North" (Mr. Davidson is a Scotchman), where

> Time could take his ease,
> And Change hold holiday; where Old and New
> Weltered upon the border of the world.

His father, a rigid Calvinist, has no sympathy with the youth's poetical and pagan dreams. He addresses him in this fashion:—

> My son, have you decided for the Lord?
> Your mother's heart and mine are exercised
> For your salvation. Will you turn to Christ?
> Now, young and strong, you hanker for the world;
> But think: the longest life must end at last,
> And then come Death and Judgment. Are you fit
> To meet your God before the great white throne?
> If on the instant Death should summon you,
> What doom would the Eternal Judge pronounce—
> "Depart from me," or "Sit on my right hand"?
> In life it is your privilege to choose,
> But after death you have no choice at all.
> Die unbelieving, and in endless woe
> You must believe throughout eternity.

The father's beseeching is helped by the mother's, who implores God to save her "foolish boy," who, at that very moment, saw not the Holy Ghost, but Aphrodite, rising from the sea, stepping inland, and evoking Adonis from his sepulchre.

> Then all the trees were lit with budding flames
> Of emerald, and all the meads and leas,
> Coverts and shady places, glades and dells,
> Odored and dimly stained with opening flowers,
> And loud with love-songs of impassioned birds,
> Became the shrine and hostel of the spring.

But a "savage faith works woe." His mother dies in anguish for his sins. To spare his father he professes confidence in Christ, and goes to kirk and takes the communion. But he walks again in the evening beside the purple firth, and dreams again his old dreams. He says to himself that consciousness is God, that *he* is God; and he will preach this gospel of emancipation to all the crushed and suffering slaves of earth. He tells this to his father, who is horrified, but at last finds an awful comfort in the thought that he will himself go to heaven, and experience there

> the exceeding glory of delight,
> That shall entrance me with the constant thought
> Of how in Hell through all eternity
> My son performs the perfect will of God.

The stern Calvinist dies, and the son, kneeling beside him, suddenly thinks that, if it be terrible to fall into the hands of the living God, it is

> much more dire
> To sicken face to face, like our sad age,
> Chained to an icy corpse of deity,
> Decked though it be and painted and embalmed.

Finally he dismisses the proud thought that man is God. To convert men to that faith would only found

> A new religion, bringing new offence,
> Setting the child against the father still.

He will have nothing to do with the "ruthless creeds that bathe the earth in blood." They are moods made into dogmas, petrifactions of metaphors. He will be a man apart, a poet, a mouthpiece for the souls of all men.

> And lo! to give me courage comes the dawn,
> Crimsoning the smoky east; and still the sun
> With fire-shod feet shall step from hill to hill
> Downward before the night; winter shall ply
> His ancient craft, soldering the years with ice;
> And spring appear, caught in a leafless brake,
> Breathless with wonder and the tears half-dried
> Upon her rosy cheek; summer shall come
> And waste his passion like a prodigal
> Right royally; and autumn spend her gold
> Free-handed as a harlot; men to know,
> Women to love are waiting everywhere.

"Free-handed as a harlot" is a daring but convincing simile, and the whole poem is powerful in conception and execution.

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The next longest poem is "The Exodus from Houndsditch"—after Carlyle, the preacher of the old faith being obviously suggested by Irving. One verse will show this preacher's attitude :—

> I preach no system nebulous and new ;
> God is or is not : I have not to sell
> Cosmetics for the soul : I offer you
> The choice of Heaven or Hell.

A vision is vouchsafed to this apostle of Jehovah of the break-up of his creed and of what shall succeed it. A man appears carrying a massive cross, which he flings into a deep abyss, whereupon despair falls from him, and there descends from the skies a sound of "joy and clapping hands." Hell at last burns out, and the "parish Heaven" ceases with it ; earth and sky are left fair and clear, and the people sing a song of emancipation ; at which the preacher starts aghast and falls down dead, and no one heeds his disappearance.

The "Ballad of a Nun" has earned the denunciation of Mr. W. T. Stead, who calls it a consecration of unchastity. The heroine is doorkeeper of a convent, which stands on a high hill, looking across a duchy :—

> Where everlasting mountains flung
> Their shadows over tower and town.
>
> The jewels of their lofty snows
> In constellations flashed at night ;
> Above their crests the moon arose ;
> The deep earth shuddered with delight.
>
> Long ere she left her cloudy bed,
> Still dreaming in the orient land,
> On many a mountain's happy head
> Dawn lightly laid her rosy hand.
>
> The adventurous sun took Heaven by storm ;
> Clouds scattered largesses of rain ;
> The sounding cities, rich and warm,
> Smouldered and glittered in the plain.

These are superb verses, with a strong, sure touch in every line. The poor nun scourges herself to suppress the rebellion of her blood, until one night, when the Carnival is being kept in the nearest city, she flings off her robe, and resolves to "taste of love at last." After a period of wild indulgence she returns to the convent, where she has not been missed, for the Virgin Mary has assumed her personality and acted as door-keeper in her absence. The Virgin speaks—

> "You are sister to the mountains now,
> And sister to the day and night ;
> Sister to God." And on the brow
> She kissed her thrice, and left her sight.

Mr. Stead's denunciation of this poem is based upon a fallacy. He assumes that a poet writes affidavits and syllogistic arguments. Mr. Davidson vindicates "the flesh," as Christianity calls it, in the heightened, telling way of a poet. What he means is this, that woman is marked out for a wife and mother, and that those who deny their sex are farther off from nature than those who abuse it ; also that if nature is turned out of doors she is very likely to come in at the window. Mr. Davidson is not one to be frightened by the Steads of journalism. He is a true poet, and he will deliver his message—in the poet's way.

G. W. FOOTE.

DECEIVING THE VULGAR.

CHRISTIANITY in England has been intellectually undermined. What keeps it in place is its material establishment with wealth, power, and respectability ; and a chief buttress of this is the dread of imaginary issues, should it fall. There are a class of people who view with dismay the break up of supernatural beliefs. They fancy that, whether true or not, these beliefs form a good auxiliary to the policeman. Some even of those who have given up belief in supernaturalism themselves think it good enough for others.

They think truth is too good a thing to be made common. For, they say, people cannot be got to think. To most it is a painful process. Why not rather let the herd lie in their happy delusion of angels and saints, gods and devils, while the thinkers, teachers, and rulers remain a caste by themselves? This was a philosophy which suited the slavish conditions of the past, and which the era of democracy has not entirely destroyed, as anyone will find out who gets in intimate conversation with some members of "the Broad Church." They are fond of saying with Voltaire : "*Ah, croyez-moi l'erreur a son mérite.*" And with him they exclaim : "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him!" which, as Miron remarked, is exactly what has been done.

A double doctrine has run through the history of Christianity. Jesus Christ is said to have taught in parables, "That seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark iv. 12). Paul boasted of being all things to all men, of having been crafty and caught some with guile ; and he said that God would send strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they might all be damned (1 Corinthians ix. 22 ; 2 Corinthians xii. 16 ; 2 Thessalonians ii. 11, 12 ; see, too, Romans iii. 7).

Bishop Ellicott admits (*Cambridge Essays*, p. 175) of the early ages of the Church : "They certainly cannot be pronounced free from the influence of pious frauds"; and Mosheim (cent. iii., sec. 10) speaks of their "disingenuous and vicious method of surprising their adversaries by artifices, and striking them down, as it were, by lies and fictions." Hermas, who is supposed to have been saluted by Paul (Romans xiv. 14), and whose *Pastor* was said by Origen to be inspired, and is included in the Sinaitic Codex of the New Testament, is represented as confessing to an angel that he never told the truth, whereupon his divine visitor informs him that, if he keeps the commandments now, "even the falsehoods which you formerly told in your transactions may come to be believed through the truthfulness of your present statements. For even they can become worthy of credit." Eusebius, the father of Church history, in the words of Gibbon, "indirectly confesses that he has related whatever might redound to the glory, and that he has suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace of religion."

It is curious and suggestive that the Society of Jesus has pre-eminence for the use of deception for the cause of religion. But Jesuitism, *ad Majorem Dei Gloriem*, is not confined to the followers of Ignatius Loyola. It is seen in the Anglican, who reads new interpretations into the Thirty-nine Articles, and who preaches the salvation of the heathen, although he has sworn that he holds "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." It is seen in the Presbyterian, who, sworn to believe in the Westminster Confession of Faith, preaches a doctrine wholly at variance with that confession. It is seen in religionists of all kinds, who studiously conceal the facts they have learnt about the history of the Bible and of theological beliefs.

Of all forms of deception the most detestable is that practised on children. Parents, guardians, governesses, and teachers ward off undesired questions with the old fables, and the minds of the young are warped and stultified with nonsense which no mature and rational mind could entertain. But often the children grow up to see that their own teachers do not believe the fables, and the discovery gives a far greater shock to their faith than if a frank, truthful explanation had originally been given. The religious practice of deceiving the vulgar leads to a cowardly hypocrisy, which stands in the way of all rational improvement, because it will not squarely front the facts.

J. M. WHEELER.

POLITICS IN THE PULPIT.—"Before the choir begins," said the minister, "I should like to make a statement to the brethren. I am told that Deacon Jones is a candidate for the legislature. Now, under ordinary circumstances, I should advise the brethren to vote for him ; but, as I am a candidate for the same place myself, it would not be good politics to do so. You who are not afraid of hot weather hereafter can vote for Brother Jones ; but all who desire short sermons, small collections, and cool salvation must step over on my side."

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WAS CHRIST A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REFORMER?

(Continued from page 67.)

THE parable of "the rich man who set up greater barns," related in Luke (xii.), is another illustration of Christ's defective teachings in reference to the affairs of this life. The man in the parable proposed to enlarge his premises so that he might be able to put by increased stock of fruits and goods, and thus be in a position to take his "ease, eat, drink, and be merry." There does not appear to be any great crime in this, for he lacked room wherein to bestow his fruits, etc. (v. 17). Surely there could be no serious objection to making such careful provision for "a rainy day." Such conduct is frequently necessary to the advancement of personal comfort and general civilisation. Have not Christians in all ages, since their advent, done the same thing, when they have had the opportunity? Laying up treasures on earth, although forbidden by Christ, is often an effective precaution against starvation, and against being in old age the slave of charity. But for doing this very thing the man was told: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (v. 20). Jesus then said, "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat," etc. Here we have the prominent Christian requirement of making the duties of this world subservient to the demands of a future existence put forth by one who is claimed as being a model social reformer. If it is alleged that Christ meant that the man in the parable should have distributed his fruits and goods rather than store them up, the reply is, the account does not say so. Why did not Christ, instead of making heaven the principal consideration, point out the evil influence of the monopoly of wealth upon human society? The social problems cannot be solved by indulging in speculations as to another world, of which we have had no experience. The principle sought to be enforced in this parable is evidently that the soul is of more importance than the body, and that heaven is of greater value than earth. Thoughtlessness of the things of time is directly encouraged by reference to the ravens: "For they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them" (v. 24).

It is worthy of note that Jesus never once intimated throughout his career, either by direct statement or illustration, that this world was the noblest and most desirable dwelling-place for man, and that it was the home of social felicity and mutual happiness. His heart and home were in his Father's house, whither he went to prepare a place for his followers, to whom he gave a promise that he would come and receive them unto himself (John xiv. 2, 3). So little did Christ understand the philosophy of secular reform that when he condemned covetousness (which was very laudable upon his part) it was because he thought it interfered with the preparation for inhabiting "mansions in the skies," rather than in consequence of its effects upon homes on earth. He entirely overlooked the agencies that promote human comfort. The means that have been employed to produce and to advance civilisation received from him no matured consideration. If every word attributed to him had been left unuttered, not one feature of modern progress would be missing to-day. Let anyone carefully read, with an unbiassed mind, the four Gospels, and then ask himself the questions: What philosophic truth did Jesus propound? What scientific fact did he explain? What social problem did he solve? What political scheme did he unfold? The New Testament does not inform us. On the contrary, while other men, with less pretensions than himself, were active in giving the world their thoughts upon these great questions, Jesus remained silent in reference to them. It is no answer to say that to deal with the subjects was not his mission. For, if he came simply to talk about another world, at the sacrifice of the requirements of this, then my contention is made good that, whatever else he was, he certainly was no political and social reformer.

It appears to me that the gospel of Christ is a very poor one for any practical purposes, inasmuch as it never deals with the material comforts of human beings. It does not suggest any means by which the poor could obtain that power by which they could secure the amelioration of their sad condition. It is not here overlooked that Christ is credited with saying that those who sought the "Kingdom of God" should have food, drink, etc., added unto them (Luke xii.). But, unfortunately, experience teaches that such a promise cannot be relied upon, for it is too well known that many of those persons who occupied much of their time in seeking the kingdom of God remained destitute of the necessaries of life. It was during the prevalence of this superstitious belief, and of an unreasonable reliance upon Christ, that personal misery and intellectual sterility prevailed throughout the land. For many generations the indiscriminate followers of Jesus failed to give the world any new thought, or to establish any new political or social institution; and from the Church nothing of practical secular value emanated during the fifteen centuries of its uninterrupted reign. This, however, is not all that can be fairly urged upon this point. The followers of Christ not only failed to originate any social scheme for the good of general society themselves, but they did their utmost to crush those who did. It appears almost incredible that such persistent efforts were ever made to extinguish every new thought as those recorded of Christians, when they had the power to do as they pleased. New books were despised and destroyed, and new inventions were said to be the work of the Devil. True happiness cannot co-exist with physical slavery and mental serfdom, and yet, it must be repeated, Jesus did nothing to remove these evils. His apathy towards the institution of slavery is the more strange if we accept the authority of Grätz, that Christ was connected with the Essenes, and that, to some extent, he founded his system upon theirs. By that community slavery, we are told, was prohibited; yet we read that both bond and free were one in Christ Jesus. Is not this striking evidence that Jesus had no intention to seek the removal of this inhuman blot from the history of our race?

Those persons to-day who desire to establish a relationship between Socialism and Christianity dwell with much persistency upon Christ's views as to the division of property. But let us see what are the facts of the case. Jesus told those who were willing to leave their homes, families, and lands for his "sake and the Gospels" (Mark x.), that they should receive "an hundredfold" of each in this world, besides "eternal life in the world to come." Now, this is ridiculous in the extreme; for what possible advantage could it be to any one to have his or her relatives multiplied a hundredfold? Besides, where could Christ get either a hundred mothers to replace every one that had been forsaken, or a hundred acres of land to compensate for each one that had been given up? And even supposing he could do this, what becomes of the theory of despising landed possessions? Moreover, if the smaller number and quantity were a drawback, the larger must be more so. Further, there is but little self-denial involved in parting with ten acres of land to secure a thousand. It is really surprising that the Jews did not "catch on" in this matter. Probably they saw that it was all a sham, because Christ had no means of keeping his promise. Where were the houses, land, etc., to come from? Evidently Christ had none, for he appears to have been entirely destitute of all worldly goods, having "not where to lay his head" (Matthew viii. 20). Would not such an augmentation of property be antagonistic to the principle Jesus taught on another occasion, when he said "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" (Matthew vi.)? No marvel that his friends thought he was "beside himself" (Mark iii. 21), or that the Jews considered "he hath a devil, and is mad" (John x. 20), and that "neither did his brethren believe in him" (John vii. 5). If any man at the present time dealt with the question of property in the same way as Christ is here represented to have done, he would not be regarded as a social reformer, but rather as a man whose intellect was far from being brilliant, and whose ideas were exceedingly confused. Christ's reply to the high priest, who asked him the question, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark xiv. 61), is, to my mind, clear evidence that he was neither the political nor the social Messiah that some persons allege him to have been. His reply was, "I am; and he shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Does not this accord with his statement, "I am not of the world," and "my kingdom is not of this world"? Should not this settle at once, as a fact, that the mission of Jesus was not to be the founder of an earthly government, or the promoter of a mundane social system?

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As to the idea that Christ will come, as he said, "in the clouds," that relates to the future, and has no bearing upon the present inquiry, the results of which will not be affected by either the fulfilment or the failure of that prediction. The question is not what will be, but rather what Christ did to entitle him to be classified as a secular reformer. Professor Graham, as we have seen, admits that Christ did not inaugurate State Socialism, but that he only proposed a sort of friendly society among Christians themselves. In doing even this, however, he showed himself sadly defective in the knowledge necessary to a real reformer. There exists to-day in this country an old-established Christian sect, termed Quakers, who keep a common treasury for the purpose of aiding those of their numbers who are in need. But, be it observed, they fill their treasury by industry and the result of laboring "for the meat which perisheth," the very thing that Jesus forbade. The method of the Quakers is a very charitable one, for it prevents their poorer members from going to the workhouse, or from begging in the streets, as other Christians are so often forced to do. They are enabled, by this plan of industry and of "taking thought for the morrow," to preserve their dignity and self-respect, and to receive all the advantages of assistance without being branded as paupers, who have to forfeit many rights in consequence of their poverty. This scheme of mutual aid is not based upon Christ's advice to "forsake all," under the insane idea that they will be kept alive, upon the same principle that the ravens and the lilies of the field are; on the contrary, among the Quakers all who can both "toil and spin." Jesus, in his method, counselled no sort of thrift, nor made any provision for the time of need. There is no record, that I am aware of, that any society of men ever lived upon help from heaven without labor, and due care being taken for the requirements of life. Certainly such a society does not exist in "Christian England."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE DATES OF THE BIBLE BOOKS.

(Concluded from p. 69.)

Job.—The date we assign to Job will depend entirely upon our ideas of the date of the Psalms, for the book of Job displays close familiarity with the book of Psalms, even with the later ones. As we shall see presently, the Psalms are not earlier than the Maccabees; so that Job cannot have been written before 100 B.C., and was probably later. The speeches of Elihu, at the end of the book, are universally recognised to be by a much later hand; so that the work, in its complete form as it exists to-day, cannot be much earlier than the Christian era.

The *Psalms* betray a unity of thought and expression which precludes the idea of their having been written at various times during an extended period. They differ widely from the ancient songs of the Hebrews, such as the Psalm of Habakkuk iii., or the fragments quoted from the book of Jasher, and they move in a circle of ideas of their own. They seem generally to refer to a period of great unrest, when Judaism was suffering from external and internal foes, such as we find during the period of the Maccabean revolt. Psalm cx. agrees in its phraseology with 1 Maccabees xiv. 41, and contains the name of Simon Maccabeus in an acrostic. But if the Psalms themselves date from the Maccabean period, the book itself must necessarily be later, for it shows traces of being an amalgamation of previous collections, even to the extent of giving two versions of the same Psalm (such as xiv. and liii.). The most probable date for the amalgamation of these different collections of Maccabean Psalms is the enlargement and rebuilding of the Temple by Herod, B.C. 14.

Ecclesiastes.—Dean Plumptre has shown conclusively that this work is full of Greek idioms, and that it was written by one having a complete knowledge of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies. He places it between the deaths of Zeno, the Stoic (240 B.C.), and Ptolemy Epiphanes (181 B.C.). The latter date is dictated by the particulars given in the prologue to the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus—a work which is founded upon Ecclesiastes. But Professor Grätz has shown that the text of this prologue varies widely, and that it is not found in all the copies and versions, so that it must be a late addition. We must allow a considerable interval from the death of Zeno before the Stoical philosophy could have penetrated to the Jews. Grätz assigns Ecclesiastes to the time of Herod, 4 B.C.; and, although most critics make it older by a century and a half, yet the balance of probability is in his favor. Ecclesiastes was not admitted into the Jewish canon till 160 A.D.

The *Song of Solomon* is an amorous stage play in dialogue form. Its canonicity was denied as late as the time of Hadrian, and many Jews treated it as a secular song, which they sung at their banquets—a practice vigorously denounced by Rabbi Akiba. It is written in very late Hebrew, and contains Persian and Greek words. It can hardly be earlier than 250 B.C.

Proverbs.—The book of Proverbs is difficult to date, as it offers no historical allusions. Seeing, however, that the language in some parts closely resembles Aramaic, and several common Aramaic words are used, the collection must have been made at a very late period, when Hebrew was passing out of general use. It is generally admitted to be later than the return from the Exile; and, as throughout it speaks very loyally of the "king," it is probably earlier than the Maccabean revolt.

Isaiah is a composite work. It is generally distinguished into two parts: 1 Isaiah and 2 Isaiah. 2 Isaiah comprises chapters xl.–lxvi., and is assigned by all critics of note to a poet living in the time of Cyrus; for the whole standpoint of the poem is that of the Babylonian exile. But it must not be supposed that the first thirty-nine chapters are all of an earlier date; some are even later. The only parts of the book which profess to be by the hand of Isaiah are vi. 1–13 and viii. 1–18; but these very verses speak of the Exile, "cities wasted without inhabitants"; "the land utterly desolate." When we study the sections referring to the Assyrian period, we come upon traces of Exilic coloring. Thus, in chapter vii., Isaiah is said to have a son bearing the unique name, Shear-jashub, "the remnant shall return." And this at a time when no remnant had gone away! xiii. 1–22, xiv. 1–23, and some other passages, are generally admitted to have been written during, or shortly after, the captivity. But the latest portion is contained in chapters xxiv.–xxvii. These chapters differ widely from Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or the Exilic writings. The seemingly historical allusions are really symbolical, and cannot be made to square with our knowledge of ancient history. The theological views of the writer accord more with those of the book of Daniel than any other Old Testament writer. xxiv. 21 teaches of guardian angels similar to those of the Persians and Jews in Daniel; and xxvi. 19 announces the resurrection, another late Jewish doctrine. xxvi. 20 advises the Jews to hide themselves for a while till the anger of Yahveh is passed, thus implying that it was written at a time of trouble. These points can hardly be accidental, and we are therefore justified in assigning these chapters to the Maccabean period, 165 B.C. Consequently, 1 Isaiah is a collection of prophecies, formed at the very earliest 160 B.C.; and the book was completed by the addition of 2 Isaiah at some unknown later period.

Jeremiah.—Strictly speaking, the present Hebrew book of Jeremiah is later than the Christian era. The Septuagint version differs widely from it in the arrangement of the prophecies, and in bulk, for it is quite a third smaller. So that the Greek translators must have had a different and shorter Hebrew text before them. This text, however, was not entirely by the hand of Jeremiah, for l. 2 to li. 50 are recognised as having been written after the Exile; while chapters xxvii. to xxix. differ in style and orthography from the rest of the book, and must have been taken from a post-Exilic source. Therefore, these prophecies cannot have been collected together till somewhere about 500 B.C.

Ezekiel is one of the most homogeneous books in the Old Testament, and we are justified in taking it as having reached its present form about 550 B.C. Its canonicity was disputed by some of the Rabbins on the ground of its divergence from the Pentateuch, for it is really a link between the Deuteronomist and the Priestly Codes; and, while advancing beyond the former, it falls obviously short of the latter.

Daniel was written in the early part of 165 B.C.

Hosea professes to have been written in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; and Jeroboam, King of Israel. But Jeroboam was not the

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contemporary of these other kings; and Hosea, a prophet of northern Israel, is extremely unlikely to have dated his productions by the reigns of kings of Judah. The idea of the editor who prefixed this title appears to have been to make Hosea a contemporary of Isaiah, who is credited with the same date (Isaiah i. 1). Hosea iii. 4 clearly refers to the destruction of Samaria, and must be dated about 720 B.C.

Joel is dated in the margin of our Bibles as 800 B.C. As, however, he is quite silent about the kingdom of Israel, the Assyrians, or Babylonians, but mentions the Greeks, and speaks of the temple as though it were standing, and services regularly carried on in it, we can only conclude that he lived in the early days of the Greek domination, about 300 B.C.

Amos is the earliest book in the Bible. It is dated "two years before the earthquake" which happened in the joint reigns of Azariah of Judah and Jeroboam of Israel; probably about 750 B.C.

Obadiah mentions "Sepharad," which is shown by the cuneiform inscriptions to have been the ancient name of Phrygia, where Jews were settled by the early Greek kings; and he alludes explicitly to the exploits of Judas Maccabeus in 164 B.C., to which year the book must be referred.

Jonah.—The book of Jonah is referred to in the New Testament, and must have been well known when the Gospels were written. Modern critics see in it an allegory. Jonah typifies the Jewish nation, which has a mission from Yahveh to preach to the world. Judah neglects his mission, and is, therefore, swallowed up by Babylon (compare Jeremiah li. 34); but, after being disgorged by the monster, he preaches to the Gentiles and saves them from the threatened wrath of Yahveh. But, if this explanation be true, to what period must we assign the book of Jonah? It does not accord with the time of Ezra, for Ezra has no friendly feeling for the Gentiles; and his adversaries had no idea of evangelising the heathen either. Not until the beginning of the Christian era do we find the Jews anxious to spread a knowledge of the law among the Gentiles; and then it is only the sect of the Pharisees, who are described by the Evangelist as "moving heaven and earth to gain one proselyte" (Matthew xxiii. 15). Consequently we must consider the book of Jonah to be a kind of missionary tract, circulating at the Jewish May Meetings, and inculcating the conversion of the heathen. It may probably be dated about 50 B.C., or a little later.

Micah professes to have been composed in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; but this can only refer to chaps. i. to v. Ewald has shown that vi. to vii. 6 is by a later hand, about the time of Manasseh; while Wellhausen shows vii. 7–20 to date from the Babylonian captivity, about 550 B.C. Thus the book cannot have been compiled before that date.

Nahum is a poem, celebrating the destruction of Nineveh in 606 B.C., and was most probably written shortly after that event.

Habakkuk is in two parts—one prose, the other poetry. He wrote before the Exile, but how long before is a matter of doubt. We will put him 600 B.C.

Zephaniah is dated, by the title in the reign of Josiah, about 620 B.C.

Haggai gives its date in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, 520 B.C.

Zechariah consists of prophecies by at least two different hands. In the title Zechariah is styled the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo. But in Ezra v. 1, vi. 14, he is "Zechariah, son of Iddo." Knobel suggests a confusion with Zechariah, son of Berechiah, mentioned in Isaiah viii. 2.* Another Zechariah, son of Berechiah, is mentioned by Josephus as having been murdered in the temple shortly before the death of Nero; and he is also referred to in Matthew xxiii. 35. Zechariah i. to viii. are dated in the second and fourth years of Darius I.—*i.e.*, 520 and 518 B.C. But the rest of the book is by an entirely different writer. Professor Wellhausen, in his article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, points out that chapters ix. to xiv. can best be explained as having been written during the time of the Maccabees; but he hesitates to accept this conclusion, as it would imply too late a date for the formation of the canon of the Minor Prophets. As, however, it appears that Obadiah must, from historical reasons, be dated in the time of the Maccabees, this objection disappears. Therefore, Zechariah, as a whole, must date from 160 B.C.

Malachi is part of the book of Zechariah, and has only been separated from it in order to make up the number of twelve minor prophets. Its title is in the same form as Zechariah ix. 1, xii. 1. "Malachi" is not a Hebrew name, but merely means "my messenger." The Septuagint has "The word of the Lord by *his* messenger," which shows that the translator read a Vau, instead of Yod, as in the present Hebrew text. The older Jews recognised perfectly that Malachi was not a proper name; for the Targum of Jonathan assigns this prophecy to Ezra, and the Talmud to Mordecai, which also affords proof that the real author was unknown.

CHILPERIC.

* The present Hebrew text has *Jehorechiah*, but the name is still **Berechiah in the Septuagint.**

NOT PEACE, BUT A SWORD.

THEY say England is a Christian country. If the country thinks this a desirable and honorable appellation, let it not question the justness of its application; if Christians consider the country a credit and a testimonial to their religion, let them not cavil at the fitness of the description. But the world is governed by terms, and ruled by appearances. The use of the word Christian in the present age in this country provides a clothing of respectability, and how necessary it is to assume respectability—society respectability—even if the quality be not really possessed, is the knowledge of the least experienced. There may, nevertheless, be an amount of accuracy in the observation that England is a Christian country. When we are brave enough to throw off our hypocritical airs and fictitious assumptions, and when we release ourselves from patriotic influences and come to impartially examine ourselves as a nation, we confess that one of the most respected and cherished institutions in England is that of drunkenness; that we support living monuments and systems which speak our licentiousness; that selfishness is soundly ingrained in our national character; that ingratitude is one of our distinguishing characteristics, and that avarice and hypocrisy are two vices with which we are not altogether unacquainted. Finally, we confess that, as a nation, we are marked for our religious proclivities. England is a Christian country. Of course. Last year our Christian legislators devoted over £21,000,000 of the country's funds for the support of the army, and over £18,000,000 for the navy, two "branches of the public service" whose functions are the destruction of human life. These vast sums, which are utilised for the maintenance of men trained in the use of deadly instruments, seem to regulate the propagation of the belief that it is glorious to engage in the slaughter of fellow men if the whims and fancies of kings and governments are thereby appeased, and the expenditure of so many millions on the implements of war can be taken to authorise on behalf of the nation the savage custom of honoring those who have devastated countries, wrecked homes, and washed their hands in human blood. The men who now so ruthlessly squander the national finances may one day be reproached for encouraging the gratification of the base and brutal instincts of men, for stifling their higher passions, for blasting their feelings of love, and for establishing their fellowship with the beasts. But that time is not yet.

That war is a curse—perhaps a necessary one under present conditions—is acknowledged by all classes to-day, and even Christian clergymen wax indignant in their denunciation of it. What value may be attached to their indignation can be estimated when we read that a sum of more than £58,000 was entered in the army estimates of last year for the remuneration of chaplains, whose duty it is, presumably, to accompany regiments to the battlefield in time of war, and pray for the defeat and slaughter of the opposing forces. There can be no doubt that England is a Christian country.

The National Debt of England is now fixed at a figure above £587,000,000. The greater part of this huge debt has been incurred by past wars, and more than half of the taxation which is levied on the country to-day is the price Englishmen have to pay for the unrighteous shedding of blood in the past and the preparation for similar sanguinary exploits in the future. Europe, which is for the most part

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Christian, is saddled with the sum of £200,000,000 per annum for the maintenance of vast armaments, a similar sum representing the interest which has to paid on the debt incurred for previous wars.

If it were but calmly considered what good might be accomplished were these immense sums diverted from their present purposes, how much better in the matter of moral and intellectual strength nations would become, and how the brutal instincts of man could be subjugated and his affections cultivated were countries not cursed with the incentive to conflict, surely some great effort would be made by which greater securities for peace would be provided in the future. The patriotic Englishman is ever ready with the unholy cry that peace can only be promoted by keeping England armed to the teeth. Fancy, preparation for war being the best manner to ensure peace! Certainly in the present state of universal armament it would be absurd for any one country to divest itself of arms; but, viewed from an impartial standpoint, is the boasted aim of England to maintain a naval fleet equal to that of any other three combined more moral than the enforced militarism of continental countries? This anxiety on the part of one particular nation to equal in power the combined forces of any number of other nations is really the cause of the maintenance of such vast military and naval bodies, and constitutes, further, the principal danger to international peace. Is England, then, responsible for the present condition of armed Europe?

How well can we remember that oftentimes in our recent history a body of sensationalists have, for party or commercial purposes, raised a scare as to England's insecurity, and that many millions have been consequently expended on additions to the navy and the army. And how well do we also remember the sequels: Foreign countries have increased their armaments in a similar degree, and eventually our relations with foreign powers have been exactly the same as they were before the last big expenditure had been made. There is no soundness in the contention that England must arm herself so lavishly for the mere purpose of protection. The incentive of war lies in the maintenance of big armed forces. Lord Rosebery bore witness to the truth of this in his speech at Guildhall last November. He said: "There are three elements in the present situation which are not altogether reassuring in the interests of peace. One is those enormous armaments that roll up like snowballs, and snowballs which seem never to end, and which are, I freely acknowledge, in their essence, being territorial armies, measures of defence, and not of defiance; but there are in these great armaments some danger to peace itself. In the first place, there is the feeling that you cannot for ever perfect tools of great precision, of great expense, without sometimes having the wish to test them and to use them; and, in the second place, there is the still greater danger that the people who have to bear the burden of these armaments, weary of the blood and taxation that they involve, may some day say it will be better to put an end to this long-continued pressure and put all to the hazard of the die."

Such is the alarm of an English Prime Minister after centuries of religious education and domination. Had Agnostics, Atheists, and others of unorthodox bearings been the guardians of the country's fortunes, their descendants would have been long ere now swept from power, on the score that existing conditions were sufficient commentaries on the tendencies of their teachings. But Agnostics and anti-Christians have *not* been in power, and they have *not* moulded the fortunes of the country. England has given many of her best sons, and almost all of her governors and legislators, as partisans of that creed "in whose name," Mr. John Morley declares, "more human blood has been violently shed than in any other cause whatever." England has been subject to the sole direction and care of the disciples of one who, if we are to believe the Gospels, stated it was his mission to bring a sword upon earth, and not establish peace. Surely about the only thing he ever succeeded in doing! And not only has the long-continued establishment of Christianity failed to prevent nations battling one against the other with cannons, powder, and bayonets, on the slightest and most imaginary provocations, but its spirit of racial and class hatred, of personal animosity, uncharitableness, and persecution has permeated individual natures. In the wake of religion there lurk the monsters of oppression, tyranny, and war. It is said that the shedding of innocent blood was necessary for the world's salvation; the adherents of this belief have been guilty of the shedding of much innocent blood since the event in which they place so much concern. Be a household ever so happy and contented, the introduction of religion invariably tends to discord and sorrow; it turns the father against the son, the daughter against the mother, the brother against the sister. Be a community ever so peaceable, amicable, and loving, a bitter spirit of sectarianism is created, and riot and unrest occur in the event of religion obtaining a hold in its midst.

Mr. W. T. Stead, who is very cold-blooded at times in criticising his friends, recently wrote: "There are people, and good people too, who will make a prayer-meeting as much a field for the indulgence of their pugnacious instincts as Von Moltke and Yamagata made of the districts in which their armies operated. Indeed, there would often be a great deal more of the true Christian spirit in some of our little meeting-places if class leaders and officials could liberate their embittered sentiments by a good bout of fisticuffs, instead of taking them to the throne of grace and praying at each other in language the venom of which is very imperfectly concealed by conventional phraseology and a copious veneer of scriptural texts. There is nothing more familiar to those who are acquainted with the manifestations of the old Adam under a Christian cloak than the dexterity with which he can use texts from the Old Testament and the New, as the soldier uses the bomb, or the sailor his torpedo-boat. The spirit is there, full of wrath and bitterness and rivalry and all uncharitableness; and Diotrephes, in the class, or in chapel, or in church, is quite as much a child of the devil as any swashbuckler of them all." He came not to bring peace. Verily hath Christ succeeded, and truly is England a Christian country.

Arbitration, no doubt, is a very desirable substitute for war. The arbitrament of reason is preferable to the arbitrament of the sword; but the danger lies in the likelihood that those who are worsted in the reasoning may yet resort to the argument of the sword. International peace, however, will scarcely be brought about by deputations and public meetings. Not until nations cease to be cradled in the hatred of "foreigners," until children are trained no more in racial exclusiveness and affection for the trappings of war, and until men are educated out of the false ideas of the glories of slaughter, will arbitration be possible. It will only be brought about by the gradual and systematic eradication of the pugnacious instincts of man; for, while people of the same race, blood, and religion perpetually fall foul of one another, there will exist little probability of their becoming more amicable to those of a different nation, blood, and creed.

FRED WILSON.

ACID DROPS.

MR. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL has done some "Birrelling" in the *Nineteenth Century*. He remarks that first-class Freethinkers are caressed by society and hob-a-nob with bishops, while second-class Freethinkers are insulted and persecuted. Charles Bradlaugh belonged to the second-class, says Mr. Birrell. His life was a hard one, and he was "abused, but never criticised." "In a single sentence," writes Mr. Birrell, "he was never taught the extent of his own ignorance." Perhaps not. But we doubt if Mr. Birrell would have been able to teach him. Of all the impertinence in the world there is none so insufferable as the impertinence of "culture."

Now that Hugh Price Hughes is back again his "all very fine and large" style is spread over the *Methodist Times*. His adjectives, and especially his adverbs, are such as only a religious paper would tolerate. Every epithet, every description, is superlative. Mr. Hughes scorns such a miserable word as "greatly," and condescends to nothing less than "immensely." His cocksureness, too, is enough to startle a Macaulay. He is in an indentured partnership with God Almighty. Every servant of God, every true friend of Christ, every real promoter of the Kingdom of Heaven will (to put it briefly) agree on all points with the editor of the *Methodist Times*.

It is a significant fact that Mr. Hughes's paper is lusty in its praise of Sir William Harcourt, and steadily distrustful of Lord Rosebery. Sir William flatters the Nonconformist Conscience; Lord Rosebery is too proud to do anything of the kind. This is the whole explanation.

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A great cause of the "crushing defeat of the Liberal party" at Evesham, according to Mr. Hughes, is "the failure of Lord Rosebery to arouse the moral enthusiasm of the Nonconformists." Poor creatures! Cannot they vote straight, not to say early and often, unless Lord Rosebery has his galvanic battery in constant application to their "moral enthusiasm"? We should have thought their own weekly organs supplied enough "arousing."

"Mr. Gladstone knew perfectly well, as he often confessed," says the *Methodist Times*, "that the Nonconformists were the backbone of the army of progress in England." Every Nonconformist on reading this should grow two inches taller. But is it true? Well, it all depends on what is meant by "progress." The "progress" of the Nonconformist Conscience means the reduction of English life to a monotonous drab, only relieved by tea-fights and muffin-struggles, and the excitement of a sermon by Mr. Hughes.

Nonconformists are the backbone of the army of progress, are they? Let us take an illustration. The last Wesleyan Methodist Conference was startled by the portent of a lady delegate. A special committee was appointed to consider this tremendous novelty. Should women be admitted to the Conference, or should they not? This committee met in the Centenary Hall recently, sat in the morning, adjourned for lunch, and sat again in the afternoon. At last it came to a decision, by a majority of sixteen to eleven, that women should be admitted to the Conference. The pill was coated, however, with the comforting assurance that "it is not probable that many women will be so elected." It was also pointed out that a delegation to the Conference is only "a lay office." The male sex is still to monopolise the pulpit, and every other function that has any salary attached to it.

This is how the Nonconformists assert themselves as the backbone of the army of progress. Secular Societies settled this woman question long ago; or rather they never regarded it as open. It did not occur to them that there was any reason why women, if they chose, should not be as useful as men; or any reason why they should be debarred, either by law or custom, from any office they were capable of filling. This was one of the things which John Stuart Mill admired in our movement. It is amusing to Secularists to see the Nonconformist backbone of the army of progress in a state of agitation over such a simple matter. They can only lift their eyebrows, and exclaim, "What a backbone!"

The *Crescent*, noticing the case of Mr. Wise, of Kansas, who is to be tried for sending a passage from the Bible (Isaiah xxxvi. 12) on a postcard, says: "What a contrast there is between this Christian Bible, with its plethora of filthy and disgusting passages, and the Holy Koran, not a single line whereof contains a word which would bring a blush to the cheek of the most modest virgin."

My readers credit me with power to do a great deal, but I mistrust my ability to get the Book of Common Prayer revised, or even to get the Psalter re-edited. I am obliged to say this, because a gentleman in the country has come to me for assistance in getting the imprecatory passages in the Psalms omitted from the public services of the Church. He cites such verses as the following:—

"55. v. 16.—Let death come hastily upon them, and let them go down quick into hell.

"58. v. 6.—Break their teeth, O God, in their mouths.

"58. v. 9.—The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly.

"68. v. 23.—That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and that the tongue of thy dogs may be red through the same.

"109. v. 9.—Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread.

"109. v. 11.—Let there be no man to pity him, nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children."—*Truth*.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes said that the mind of the bigot is like the pupil of the eye—the more light you throw into it, the smaller it grows.

Frank Marscamp is a scamp who has marred the fortunes of several servant girls, and who is now retired for eighteen months at the public expense. Detective Sergeant Ward testified that the prisoner had been a speaker at religious meetings in Hyde Park.

A Glasgow chemist had a touching appeal from a callow younker on Sunday. "Gimme a penn'orth o' plaister, mister." "All right, my boy. Been cycling on Sunday, eh?" "Naw, I wis shavin' for the Sunday-schule!"

The Pope asks the American bishops to teach journalists to have respect for religion; but journalists are an intractable lot, and even those connected with Catholic papers sometimes consider their own office superior to that of a bishop.

When the convict first arrived at Princetown it struck him as rather appropriate to hear the warder whistling that lovely air, "Abide with me."

A church at Marsala was unroofed during a cyclone, and, a marriage being in progress, the bride was fatally crushed by the falling *débris*.

A writer in the *Living Church* analyses the returns of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, and shows that there are 4,366 churches with less than 100 communicants each, 1,506 having between 100 and 200, twenty-four with 1,000, two with over 2,000 and one with over 3,000 communicants.

The American House of Bishops, assembled in Council at New York, have issued a pastoral letter in opposition to the growing rationalism and latitudinarianism. They affirm that all who minister in holy things must hold and teach the Incarnation; that Jesus Christ was, "by the operation of the Holy Ghost, made very man, of the substance of the Virgin Mary, his mother, and that without spot of sin." They say: "Unless our Lord Jesus Christ is firmly held to be God's own true and proper Son, equal to the Father as touching his godhead, and to be also the true Son of the Blessed Virgin, by miraculous conception and birth, taking our very manhood of her substance, we sinners have no true and adequate mediator; our nature has no restored union with God; we have no sacrifice for our sins in full atonement and propitiation, holy and acceptable to God."

They further affirm that the Holy Scriptures *are* the word of God, and "any instruction," say they, "or any study which makes any part of the Bible less authoritative than it really is, which weakens faith in its inspiration, which tends to eliminate Christ from the utterances of the Prophets, or which leads a man to think of miracles with a half-suppressed scepticism, is a pernicious instruction and a pernicious study."

The *Church Times* rejoices over this piece of mediævalism, and says: "Seeing how keenly the same truths have been attacked in our own country, and how much many ill-balanced minds have suffered in consequence, the present would seem to offer a fitting opportunity for the Bishops of the Church in England to issue a similar authoritative utterance, whereby the weak may be strengthened, and the faith of the Church may be declared without gainsaying." This would, at any rate, make the members of the Broad Church feel uncomfortable, and that would be a matter of rejoicing to the *Church Times*.

In the matter of the "Armenian atrocities," it appears the atrocities were not always the work of the "unspeakable Turk." The special correspondent of the *Daily News* says: "I believe there is no doubt of the fact that certain of these Armenian conspirators arranged to murder the Rev. Dr. Edward Riggs and two other American missionaries at Marsovan, and fasten the blame upon the Turks, in order that, as they imagined, the United States might inflict summary punishment upon the Turkish Government."

The Turks allege that Armenians have inflicted shocking outrages upon Turkish men and women, and, says the correspondent, "from what is already known of conspiracy methods, it is quite likely that the assertion is true."

In the case of an old man arrested for conspiracy, says the writer, "it was shown at the trial that the charge against him was a piece of religious spite, not of Moslem against Christian, but of Presbyterian against Baptist. There had had been a denominational dispute of some sort or other, and this was the way in which it was settled. The facts in this case will suggest to the person of impartial mind that the wholesale arrests that have been filling the wretched prisons of Armenia for several months past may not all be the work of the unregenerate Turk, and that controversial Presbyterians and Baptists may possibly be deciding knotty points of doctrinal usage with a thoroughness strangely suggestive of the early religious history of England and America."

Religion does not always impress the youthful mind—at least, not seriously. A bright youngster of eight, near Manchester, coming home from Sunday-school, was asked by his mother what he had learned. He replied: "Oh, about Jesus, the man that does the tricks."

Mr. R. H. Charles, who continues to write on the Syriac Gospels in the *Academy*, now thinks that verses 2 to 17 of Matthew i. are, in this version, an interpolation. We should say that the parties who did not scruple at this did not

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stick at much else. What a pity God does not clear up all difficulties by editing an infallible version of his revelation himself.

Mr. Bell, in his book on *Obeah*, says that candles are purchased from the Romish priests under the belief that they bring down a curse on an enemy's head. He says: "This, I fear, is quite a common thing, and frequently have I heard the threat used, 'I go to put a candle on your head.'"

Another characteristic of the West Indian negro is thus related by Mr. Bell: "A nigger begins a phrase with 'Please God,' in the same spirit as he generally ends it with a 'Damn it!' and I should not wonder if, when passing an especially tempting bunch of plantains within reach, he might find himself saying: 'Please God, I go tief dat plantain to-night?'"

A nice man of God is the Rev. Herbert Gregory, formerly of Southport, and afterwards curate of St. Michael's, Manchester. His wife, in the Divorce Court, gave evidence of brutal ill-treatment, and disgusting, indecent language. He spat in her face, and told her that no one cared for a married curate, and that if he had not married her he could have married some rich woman who would have kept him. The man of God elected to give evidence, but was threatened by Lord Lopes with an indictment for perjury. A decree nisi, with costs, was granted to his wife.

The Rev. Mr. Mackey, curate of St. Margaret's, Plumstead, endeavored to obtain a divorce from his wife, but the jury considered there had been wilful neglect of such a kind as to conduce to adultery, and the petition was dismissed with costs.

In another divorce case, that of Aubourg *v.* Aubourg, the wife prays for the dissolution of her marriage on the ground of the adultery of her husband, who was a Sunday-school Superintendent, with one of the young lady teachers.

That the constant contemplation of one subject, to the exclusion of all others, is apt to play sad havoc with the reasoning faculties is shown by a lecture recently delivered at Milton Hall, Kentish Town, by Mr. Coote, the Secretary of the National Vigilance Society. After expressing his belief that the bulk of our juvenile population gratify their prurient tastes by stealthy perusals of Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Zola's *Nana*, although most of us labor under the delusion that boys much prefer literature of the Dick Turpin sort, Mr. Coote, in answer to questions, said "that, in his opinion, none of the so-called filthy stories in the Bible could be considered indecent, from the fact that they were inspired."

After the laughter occasioned by this statement had subsided, Mr. Coote, who is not easily abashed, inquired in tones of cheery optimism, "how any story could be considered nasty that was found within the pages of the grandest, noblest, best book ever in the world?" When asked why, if this was so, it had been thought necessary to publish a children's edition of the Bible with all the suggestive passages and stories eliminated, Mr. Coote said: "Thank God I have not sunk so low as to question the morality of my maker's own book," and that he pitied any person who had. This reply provoked a perfect avalanche of awkward questioning, which, it is only fair to state, Mr. Coote endured with Christian-like resignation and pious fortitude. "Laugh as much as you please," he cried, "I do not mind, the Holy Ghost is with me." One gentleman asked him "Whether, in the event of the Empire presenting a tableau representing the expulsion of Eve from the Garden of Eden, he would consider that indecent?" Another wanted to know "What sort of a tableau Mr. Coote thought Lot sleeping with his daughters would make?" To neither of these questions did Mr. Coote vouchsafe a reply.

The schoolmaster has been abroad for a long while now, yet it appears that there is a considerable percentage of the world's inhabitants who cannot yet read, and, alas! some who can have no opportunities for perusing God's Word. Yet the Holy Bible is the sole revelation of truth and duty to the world, and he who dies ignorant of Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for sin must be eternally roasted.

The Romish Church is pledged by Papal Bulls to the authenticity of the Holy House at Loretto having been transported from Nazareth to Italy. Accordingly, we are not surprised to find an English Catholic paper seriously arguing that the stones are identical with others found at Nazareth. The trouble is that the monks at Nazareth say the Holy House is still there, and never has been shifted.

The truth about the House of Loretto is probably that when the Moslems held Palestine a good source of revenue was cut off from the monks for showing the birthplace of Jesus, and they accordingly declared that it had been removed bodily in the night by angels to Italy.

In one of E. Fitzgerald's letters to Fanny Kemble, published in this month's *Temple Bar*, he narrates the following, which was told him by "a pious but humorous man":—

Scene.—Country church on Winter's Evening. Congregation, with the Old Hundredth ready for the parson to give out some Dismissal Words.

Good old Parson (not at all meaning rhyme)—"The light has grown so very dim, I scarce can see to read the hymn!"

Congregation, taking it up, to the first half of the Old Hundredth:

> The Light has grown so very dim,
> I scarce can see to read the Hymn.

Pause, as usual. Parson (mildly impatient)—"I did not mean to read a hymn; I only meant my eyes were dim."

Congregation, to second part of Old Hundredth:

> I did not mean to read a Hymn;
> I only meant my eyes were dim.

Parson, out of patience, etc.:

> I didn't mean a Hymn at all—
> I think the Devil's in you all.

Henry Mansfield, a chorister at St. Mary's, Moorfields, died in the church while the service was proceeding.

Bishop Harold Browne used to relate, with great amusement, how, coming out of church on Trinity Sunday morning, after having preached as clearly as he could on the topic of the day, an old woman stopped him in the road to thank him for his "beautiful sermon," "for," said she, quite earnestly, "I never did see so clear before how there were three Gods!"

Mr. Symes, referring in the *Liberator* to the reading of the new Syriac Gospel that Joseph begat Jesus, says: "Unitarians and some others will be delighted to learn that Mary was not false to her spouse, that Jesus was lawfully begotten, and that the old gospel scandal is at length removed. But the orthodox will be in a terrible rage, and will perhaps send a few extra persons on to hell at once for daring to bring to light so decent a blasphemy. The ultra-pious would rather keep up the old fiction and regard Mary as—well, you know, you know—than adopt this decent record. It is so shocking, don't you see, to believe that Jesus was naturally and lawfully begotten. It takes away all the romance of his origin, and leaves you with—nothing in particular, to save your immortal soul upon." The *Liberator*, by the way, reprints entirely what the *Freethinker* had to say on the subject of this Syriac Gospel.

The disaster of the "Elbe" on our coast was even more appalling than the flooded pit of the Diglake Colliery. A terrible shipwreck like this should bring home to the least thinking how little reliance is to be placed on providence for safeguarding the lives of men, women, and children.

The parish church of Whittington, near Chesterfield, has been burnt down. One of the firemen, who endeavored to save the building, was struck by masses of falling stone, and was seriously injured.

A writer in the *Sunday Times* says that in democratic New York certain members of the plutocracy are so exclusive that they will not take the Communion in common with their fellow Christians. A "Sanitary Communion Outfit Company" has been started, which provides racks containing rows of small goblets, and the officiating priest tenders the rack, from which each one takes his own glass. This is Christianity as brought up to date.

The *Church Times* notes with alarm that, whereas the general marriage-rate shows a decrease, the marriage-rate in the case of divorces shows a marked increase. It urges that clergymen should not perform such marriages even in the case of innocent parties.

Whether Mr. Impey, the rejected of Evesham, is right as to the decadence of Dissent there, it is certain that the old type of Evangelical Puritanism, which was to the front in the last generation, is now pretty much in the background. As the rottenness of the Church becomes more evident, it is compelled to put on more paint and varnish. The old dogmas being incredible, musical and other attractions are resorted to in order to maintain the prestige of religion. The old type of religionist, who lived his religion, and was ready to die for it, is almost extinct.

Scene: Camp-meeting; young man coming down from the mourner's bench. Anxious Friend (grasping him by the hand)—"Is it well with your soul, brother?" Young Man (ruefully)—"Yes, but I've lost my hat."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 10, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London :—11.30, "The Government Program"; 7, "Humors and Absurdities of the Life of Christ."

Wednesday, February 6, Hall of Science, Old-street, E.C. :—"Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice.'"

February 17 and 24, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—February 10, Camberwell; 17, Plymouth; 24, Newcastle-on-Tyne. March 3, Manchester. April 7, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

A. LEVITT.—Thanks for cuttings.

A. LEWIS.—We will try to find the reference and let you know.

PLODDER.—There are plenty of English Grammars. Almost any would serve your turn. Professor Bain's is a good book on English Composition. We advise you not to waste a great deal of time on such studies. Just master the chief rules, and then study with the utmost care some picked passages from a few of our greatest writers.

W. B. JEVONS.—Paper subscription handed to Mr. Forder, and N.S.S. subscription to Miss Vance. Thanks for your good wishes.

A. HINDLEY.—Glad to have your good opinion. Mr. Foote is not likely to imitate the example of M. Casimir-Perier. The French President resigned justly, finding the constitution gave him responsibility without power. Happily the N.S.S. constitution gives the President more authority, which he is resolved to exercise while he holds the office. Many tell us, as you do, the *Freethinker* improves in quality. We should like it to improve proportionately in circulation.

DARIUS.—The article shall appear. Glad you opine that the *Freethinker* "grows steadily better." The *Westminster Review* article on the Blasphemy Laws is from the pen of Mr. Taylor, a member of the N.S.S. Manchester Branch. We shall deal with it next week.

J. DRAPER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

E. S.—(1) Christians never found out that Freethought objections to their faith were based upon caricatures of its doctrines until they had lost the chief part of their power to persecute. Besides, the Christians accuse each other of caricaturing the teaching of the Bible. Read what Catholics say of Protestants and Protestants of Catholics, and what the various Protestant sects say of each other. (2) We have never denied the part played by Christians like Wilberforce, Clarkson, and Sharp in the abolition of slavery; but other Christians upheld slavery; and, if both sides appealed to the Bible, it shows what a lucid text-book of morality is "Holy Writ."

A. THORNTON.—See "Acid Drops."

W. RUDD.—We cannot comment on the case until it is concluded. The report you send us ends with "continued on p. 8."

W. MOLE.—We think you will find the authority for the paragraph about the Rev. J. Hunt in the *English Churchman*.

S. T. PHILLIPS.—The texts you require are probably Genesis i. 2; Psalm cxlvii. 16, 17; Job xxviii. 9-11; Isaiah xlv. 7. You should furnish yourself with a copy of our *Bible Handbook*.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—F. Jones, 2s. 6d.; W. V. Keeble, 5s.; M. E. M., 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. Lupton, 5s.; G. Willock, 6s.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—Miss Annie Brown, secretary, acknowledges:—W. H. Baker, 2s. 6d.; E. Robins, 5s. The 5s. acknowledged to J. W. Hancock should read Mrs. Hancock.

W. H. WHITNEY.—Thanks for the information.

W. H. HARRAP.—Draconian law is the policy of impatience, and it always increases the evils it would remove. Mr. Bradlaugh would never have brought in your bill to make adultery punishable with long terms of penal servitude. That was the old Christian plan of reformation, and history shows what came of it. Does it not occur to you how many women with adulterous husbands (or *vice versâ*) would suffer almost anything rather than take the first step in sending the fathers of their children to convict prisons? Only the more callous would obtain redress under your scheme. You forget that wisdom, not indignation, must prescribe the remedies for social evils.

J. KEAST.—Secularists who say the work is done simply mean they are tired of doing it. Go forward, and leave the "rest-and-be-thankfuls" to their inglorious repose.

C. DOBB.—All right.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—We will gladly advertise the little volume for you, as a small acknowledgment of your clever contributions.

A. N. STAIGER.—Better be glad of the good that has been done than lament it is no more. It is never any use depending on the majority. Whenever any good work is being done we may also be sure that some good man or two are really doing it. Active and zealous men find this out and get disheartened; and thus pay for a lesson they might have learned gratuitously.

WELL-WISHER.—There is still a deficit on the Watts Election Fund, for which we are personally responsible. Any who can assist to clear it off will save us from a loss which we can ill afford.

D. F. GLOAK.—Your lecture notices arrived as we are going to press—too late.

A. CLARK.—The arrangement was only one to tide over a present difficulty with the least possible unpleasantness. A strong feeling prevailed on the Executive, as it prevailed outside in the party generally, that the Hall of Science Club, on its existing basis, should be abolished, and that the social element there should be entirely confined to the members of the National Secular Society. This view was shared by the Directors, who intend, if they have the opportunity, to bring about this alteration, and thus to make the establishment worthier of our party's aims and objects. Unfortunately it is not possible to be "as swift as meditation" in the sphere of action; and the difficulty is all the greater in consequence of some recent, and different, complications, which the Directors have had to face, and which we shall probably have to write about next week in connection with the announcement already promised, and which we have been obliged to delay.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The Rad—Vegetarian Messenger—Liberator—Two Worlds—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—De Dageraad—Manchester Spy—Liberty—Open Court—Bobcaygeon Independent—Isle of Man Times—Herts Leader—Reynolds's Newspaper—Church Reformer.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

DARWIN AND MISSIONS.

ABOUT the time of the death of Charles Darwin a paragraph went round the religious journals to the effect that, when the great naturalist heard of the success of the mission to the Yahgans, or coast Indians, of Tierra-del-Fuego, he was so struck that he contributed to the funds of the Church Missionary Society to the day of his death. A writer in the current number of *Scribner's Magazine* gives a sad sequel to this story; for it appears that the missionising of the Tierra-del-Fuegians has resulted in their virtual extinction. Whatever good was worked by the missionaries, their efforts have been fatal to their poor converts.

It was in 1870 that the first missionary landed, to make his home among the natives. "He was backed by a great society, and assisted by white men and women who believed as he did. To improve the Yahgans, warm houses were built to take the place of twig wigwams. Some of the Yahgans were taught to dig, to plant, to saw lumber, and so on. In return for furs and labor on the missionary plot of ground, the Yahgans received clothing and soap, which they were taught to use. An orphanage was erected, where orphan children were entirely supported.

"But the tribe had been ruined by its friends. The Indians, who had thrived when naked and living on whale-blubber, did not thrive as clothed farm-laborers, living on bread. The woollens of the whites were less efficient as clothing than whale-oil. Children, who had been sturdy and strong when naked in the storms of sleet, died when well-dressed and living in a warm orphanage; every child taken into it died. Pneumonia and consumption became plagues.

"In 1871 there were three thousand Yahgans; in 1894 there were less than three hundred. In 1871 every man among them was ready and eager to stand up and fight for his home, man-fashion. Of those that the traveller now may see, every soul is a cowering, hypocritical beggar. The attempt to change a tribe of wandering fishermen into farmers failed utterly. Nature had not fashioned them so."* P.

* "The End of the Continent," by John R. Spears, *Scribner's Magazine*, February, 1895.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

The libel case, affecting the reputation of the London Hall of Science—Smith *v.* Snow and another—will be tried soon after this week's *Freethinker* goes to press. Our next week's issue will contain a full report of the proceedings. We shall print a large edition, so that our readers may take extra copies for distribution among their friends.

The bitter weather at Manchester thinned Mr. Foote's morning audience on Sunday, but there was an improvement in the afternoon, and the hall was filled in the evening, when the audience was very enthusiastic. Mr. Taylor presided on all three occasions. All copies of the *Freethinker* were sold out in the afternoon.

Manchester Freethinkers have long put up with the ridiculous antics of a certain Christian who has always abused the opportunity for discussion. Those who were most annoyed by his performances will be glad to know that he has now been refused admittance. He came in on Sunday morning without a ticket, and after a little scene he was ejected with the least possible violence.

Mr. Foote is engaged for three Sundays at the London Hall of Science. To-day (Feb. 10) he lectures in the morning on "The Government Program," and in the evening on "Humors and Absurdities of the Life of Christ." On the Wednesday (Feb. 13) Mr. Foote will deliver the second of his February course of literary lectures, the subject being "Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*."

The Humanitarian League holds a meeting at the Lecture Room, 32 Sackville-street, Piccadilly, on Thursday, Feb. 14, at 8 p.m., when a paper will be read by Mr. G. W. Foote on "The Shadow of the Sword." The paper will deal with the subject of War up to date, and will afterwards be published by the Humanitarian League as one of its propagandist pamphlets. It should be added that the admission on Feb. 14 is entirely free. Tickets are not necessary.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts's lecture at the Hall of Science, London, upon "Religion with and without Theology," was most enthusiastically received. Mr. Guest ably presided. Although several Christians were present, they could not be induced to oppose Mr. Watts, in spite of the Chairman's repeated invitations. This evening (Sunday, February 10) Mr. Watts lectures in the North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road, S.E.

Mr. C. Cohen lectured for the Bradford Sunday Society on February 3, his subject being, "Lucretius, a Roman Poet in the Light of Modern Science." Mr. W. P. Byles, M.P., was in the chair, and the lecturer earned the applause of a large audience. The local press describes his address as of "a most interesting and lucid nature."

The San Francisco *Bulletin*, noticing the benefactions of Mr. James Lick, the infidel, who erected the Paine Memorial Hall at Boston, says: "It will be noticed that James Lick gave nothing for mere charity. He did not believe in relieving any human being able to work from the necessity of earning his bread. Lick gave to science and educational improvement, to public necessity, and to art."

Mr. A. B. Moss is not asleep on the new Camberwell Vestry, though he would have liked to be recently when the Vestry had an all-night sitting. It was all over the question of the proper day for the elections. The Moderates wanted Thursday—for the shopkeepers; the Progressives wanted Saturday—for the working men. Mr. Moss created a sensation by saying that the really proper day was Sunday, when all classes would be free to vote at their leisure. Two clerical members of the Vestry were horrified. No doubt they fancy the end of the world must be approaching when such irreligion is allowed to pass without a thunderbolt from old Jahveh.

At the last meeting of the N.S.S. Executive leave was given for the formation of a Branch at Stockton-on-Tees. There are a good many Freethinkers in that district, and we hope they will organise for an active propaganda. The new Branch starts with the advantage of a zealous secretary in Mr. Dobson, who has lately removed from Huddersfield.

The usual circular is being sent out to N.S.S. Branches with regard to nominations for the Conference. It is hoped that the conditions will be carefully considered before answers are forwarded, and that the replies will be sent into the Secretary with all possible promptitude.

Bristol Secularists are reminded that the N.S.S. Branch meets every Sunday evening at 7 at the Shepherds' Hall. A social gathering takes place on the first Sunday evening in each month. The one held on February 3 was a great success. Mr. J. Kesst (secretary), 32 Morgan-street, St. Paul's, will be happy to hear from any lady or gentleman ready to join the Branch or to assist in its work; also to receive parcels of Freethought literature for distribution.

In the *Truthseeker* of January 26 Mr. W. H. Burr returns to his thesis that Thomas Paine was Junius, and seeks to show that Paine, in his early days, was better off than he is generally supposed to have been. But we cannot see that Mr. Burr adduces anything decisive; while the evidence of style and of handwriting goes against the hypothesis.

A number of gentlemen have formed themselves into an association called "The Sunday Philharmonic Union," for the purpose of organising public performances of music on Sundays and holidays. The enterprise is in no sense a commercial one, and, indeed, application has been made to the Board of Trade for registration as a company "not for profit." It is, however, intended to associate the concerts with literary, scientific, and art lectures and exhibitions.

The abortive prosecution of the Leeds Sunday Society has led to the formation of a National Federation of Sunday Societies, at a Conference of which resolutions were passed in favor of making Sunday lectures and concerts legal.

The *Freethinker* and *Truth Seeker* are now allowed upon the table at the Rochdale Workmen's Club, and are read by many who would otherwise never see them.

In the *Open Court* Mr. M. D. Conway, under the title of "The First French Socialist," writes upon one of the most interesting characters of the French Revolution—François Babeuf. Mr. Conway gives a letter of Thomas Paine, addressed to the French directory, in which he deals with the conspiracy of Babeuf, and which has never appeared in English until now.

In *De Dageraad* for February Dr. J. G. ten Bokkel writes on Vivisection, and on Darwinism and Belief. H. Peypers gives an account of the life and works of Dr. Herman Hartogh Heys von Zouteveen, one of the leading Freethinkers of Holland and the translator of Darwin's works into Dutch. Our contemporary continues its translation of our *Crimes of Christianity*.

Our lively exchange, the *Ironclad Age*, of Indianapolis, reprints Mr. Wheeler's recent article on "Hypocrisy," and the contribution to the *Freethinker* by Mr. J. A. Richardson on "How the Sun Stood Still the Second Time."

The Rev. A. J. Waldron, of the Christian Evidence Society, lecturing in the Public Hall, New Brompton, is reported to have spoken as follows: "He stated his willingness to accept the challenge of the Secularists for a two nights' debate in that hall. As the challenged party he had a right to choose both his opponent and the subjects." It is a pity Mr. Waldron did not also claim to settle the "conditions." He added: "As the champion of the Secularists he should choose Mr. Foote, and the subjects would be 'Which has been productive of the greatest good to the world, Atheism or Christianity?' and 'Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead?' He was willing to add a third subject if necessary." Mr. Waldron does not see that the subject opposed to Atheism is Theism, and that the one to be opposed to Christianity is Secularism. However, if he is really willing to debate with Mr. Foote, we have no doubt that satisfactory arrangements can be made, especially if Mr. Waldron is put forward as a representative by the Christian Evidence Society.

Ingersoll delivered his lecture on the Bible at Lima, O., Saturday, January 5. The churches all had free concerts and lectures. Ex-governor Chase talked to the disciples. At the P. B. O. Elks hall all the reading circles gave a free musical and literary entertainment. The Church might have been spared this great exertion and loss of cash, for the theatre where Ingersoll spoke was packed, even standing room at a good price. The intelligent masses are seeking enlightenment, and the Church trembles at the voice of Ingersoll demolishing its idols.—*Ironclad Age*.

Here is an advertisement from the *Church Times*:—"Young Rector (bachelor), in a beautiful part of Norfolk, with right of shooting and fishing over 1,000 acres, desires Paying Guests, ladies or gentlemen, from two guineas upwards. Dogs and guns furnished; golf and tennis. Late and early dinners.—Address, in first instance, Woodhouse, Fern Lodge, Cley, Norfolk." We should like to know the condition of the agricultural laborers in this beautiful part of Norfolk, and what they think of their young bachelor rector and his paying guests—ladies or gentlemen.

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MR. HOLYOAKE ON HIS NEWCASTLE LETTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You do not cite any portion of my letter to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* (Jan. 12), but merely repeat what you said before; thus your readers have no means of judging whether I have done what you allege against me. In your questions and remarks I do not recognise my own letter, which is no doubt owing to that incapacity you discern in me, of not being "able to see, in some cases, what is clear as daylight" to more fortunate persons.

My object in writing the letter in question was to elucidate Secularism, as at first explained, and as assented to at one time by Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, and, I might have added, by yourself. Where, in all this, do I show any "fondness for suggesting that hardly anybody ever understood Secularism but myself"? This would be conceit and fatuity. On the contrary, I show pride in my letter that so many persons do understand what was new, when first proposed. Now many writers and speakers, more bright minded and more perspicacious than myself, illustrate the same way of thinking. My compliment to Mr. Wakefield related alone to his defence of Secularism against others. I am sorry I did not notice what he said of you. It would have been with me an act of party loyalty to disown anything unfair said of you.

You request that I will tell you what I have ever done of Secular work in connection with Secular organisation. In the *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, which you reviewed in the *Freethinker* in many generous sentences, I tell of many things I did in consequence of my being a Secularist, though I have never ceased to contend against theological errors. But if, as you contend, we must first see the end of such error before joining in Secular work, neither I nor you will live to see the day when that work can begin.

I am busy on a book on the origin and nature of Secularism, which will prevent any saying, after my death, that I have in any way failed to maintain Secularist principles or the rights of Freethought. I may not be so unerring as you, but I am always for truth and the honor of the party to which I belong.—Very faithfully,

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

[We gave the pertinent sentences of Mr. Holyoake's letter. Most of it had no relation to the point raised in our criticism. We did not say that Mr. Holyoake had done no Secular work—which would be a contemptible absurdity. What we said was, that he had not done it, and could not have done it, in connection with a Secular Society, but as an individual Secularist. We also pointed out that other Secularists take their share of Secular labor in the same way. Secularism as a principle is permeating the whole of our civilisation, but Secularism as an organisation is obliged to fight for its very existence, in consequence of oppressive old laws which still disgrace our jurisprudence. This is the principal point at issue, and Mr. Holyoake does not touch it. His jocularity is admirable at his time of life, and we do a little in that line ourselves occasionally, but we like sticking to the argument for all that.—EDITOR.]

Hopes and Happiness.

To destroy a groundless hope is not to destroy a man's happiness. The instantaneous effort may be painful; but it is the price which we have to pay for a cure of deep-seated complaints. The infidel's reply is substantially this: "I may destroy your hopes; but I do not destroy your power of hoping. I bid you no longer fix your mind on a chimera, but on tangible and realisable prospects. I warn you that efforts to soar above the atmosphere can only lead to disappointment, and that time spent in squaring the circle is simply time spent. Apply your strength and your intellect on matters which lie at hand, and on problems which admit of solution. The happiest man is not the man who has the grandest dreams, but the man whose aspirations are best fitted to guide his talents; the most efficient worker is not the one who mistakes his own fancies for an external support, but he who has most accurately gauged the conditions under which he is laboring."—*Leslie Stephen, "Essays on Freethinking and Plain Speaking," p. 356.*

LUTHER ON THE DEVIL.

IN Dr. Martin Luther's *Colloquia Mensalia* there are several interesting particulars concerning the devil and his works which deserve to be extracted, as they illustrate the nature of the faith of the founder of Protestantism.

"I hold," said Luther, "that the devil sendeth all heavy diseases and sicknesses to people (for he is a prince of death); from hence St. Peter saith, Christ healed all that were oppressed of the devil." "A physician," said Luther, "is our Lord God's Botcher—he helpeth corporally, we divines spiritually; we make the case good again when the devil hath spoiled it. The devil ministereth poison to kill people." "The Devil is the Lord God's hangman." "I would wish," said Luther, "rather to die through the Devil than through the Emperor or Pope; for then I should die, nevertheless, through a great and mighty prince of the world. But if I die through him, he shall eat such a bit of me as will be his bane; he shall spew me out again; and at the last day of judgment I will, in requital, devour him."

"Witchcraft," said Luther, "is the Devil's own proper work, wherewith (when God permitteth) he not only hurteth people, but also often times through the same he maketh them quite awry; yea, in this world we are both body and soul cast under the devil, as guests and strangers. The Devil is so crafty a spirit that he can ape and deceive all human senses. He can bring to pass that one thinketh he seeth something, which, notwithstanding, he seeth not. Also that one heareth a thundering, a pipe, or a trumpet, which he heareth not." Worse still, "he bewitcheth and deceiveth the hearts and conscience in such sort that they hold and receive erroneous and ungodly doctrine and opinions for the upright and divine truth." A sufficient proof was found in the Sectaries, the Anabaptists, and other seducers.

Luther had scriptural authority for asserting that Satan could transform himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians xi. 14). He goes yet further, and says: "It is a fearful thing when Satan intendeth to torment the sorrowful consciences with intolerable melancholy; then the wicked villain, master-like, can mask and disguise himself into the person of Christ, so that it is impossible for a poor human creature (whose conscience is troubled with such great and heavy tribulations) to mark and discover the villainy of the devil. From hence it falleth out that many of those (that neither know nor understand the same) do run headlong into despair, do kill and make themselves away; for they are blinded and deceived so powerfully by the devil that they are fully persuaded it is not the devil, but Christ himself, that vexeth and tormenteth them in such sort."

Satan often sought to seduce Martin himself, and in the room of the Wartburg, where he sat translating the Bible, they still show the stains from the inkstand which Luther flung full in the face of the fiend, who forthwith disappeared. It was a terrible belief, and Luther consoled himself with the faith that the Devil, once overcome, could never recur with the same temptation. Luther sometimes met him in even more ridiculous style than flinging inkpots. But, as the matter is rather coarse, I must refer to the Reformer's own words (*Colloquia*, chap. 35).

Luther believes that "the Devil can deceive people and beget children." He gravely tells the story of a gentleman who had a wife that died, but who came back and had children by him, vanishing when he uttered a particular oath. "The Prince Elector of Saxony (John Frederick), having received advertisement of this strange accident, sent thereupon presently unto me (said Luther) to have my opinion; what I held of that woman, and of the children which were begotten and born of these two persons. Whereupon I wrote to his Highness that, in my opinion, neither that woman, nor those children, were right human creatures, but devils. For the Devil casteth before the eyes a blaze, or a mist, and so deceiveth people; insomuch that one thinketh he lieth by a right woman, and yet is no such matter; for, as St. Paul saith, the Devil is strong by the children of unbelief. But inasmuch as children, or devils, are conceived in such sort, the same are very horrible and fearful examples, in that Satan can plague and so torment people as to beget children. Like unto this is it also with that which they call the (Nix) in the water, who draweth people unto him, as maids and virgins, of whom he begetteth (devils) children. The Devil can also

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steal children away (as sometimes children, within the space of six weeks after their birth, are lost), and other children called (supposititi) or Changelings, laid in their places. Of the Saxons they are called Killcrops." Luther has a section on these Changelings or Killcrops, who were known by sucking their mothers dry. He had seen one at Dessau, aged twelve, who did nothing but feed, and would eat as much as two clowns. He advised the Prince of Anhalt to throw it into the river Moldaw. Another near Halberstad, who sucked his mother and five other women dry, being carried in a basket to the Virgin Mary, when, crossing a bridge, "another devil that was below in the river called, and said: 'Killcrop, killcrop!' Then the child in the basket (which never before spake one word) answered: 'Ho, ho!' The devil in the water asked further: 'Whither art thou going?' The child in the basket said: 'I am going towards Hocklestad, to our loving Mother, to be rocked.' The man, being much affrighted thereat, threw the child, with the basket, over the bridge into the water. Whereupon the two devils flew away together, and cried 'Ho ho ha,' tumbling themselves one over another, and so vanished." Certain it is, said Luther, that good and godly Christians may be bewitched. "I am persuaded that my sicknesses are not always natural; but that the Devil, by witchcraft, practiseth his wilfulness upon me; but God delivereth his chosen from such evils."

"Dr. Spalatine," said Luther, "told me that a young maid at Altenburg was lately bewitched, insomuch that she wept tears of blood. The magistrate should make haste with such witches to punishment. I had lately a matrimonial cause in hand. A wicked woman, by poison, intended to make away her husband, insomuch that he vomited and cast out little vipers. When she was put to the torture, she refused to confess anything; for such witches are altogether dumb, and contemn the rack; the Devil will not suffer them to speak. But such actions are sufficient proofs for them to receive condign punishment to the example of others." Luther then gave his view that witchcraft is, as the Bible says, worthy of death; "forasmuch as witchcraft is an abominable offence, in that one giveth himself from God over to the Devil, who is God's utter enemy; so is the same well worthy of death's punishment.'

LUCIANUS.

FIEND OR FOOL.

To discover the will of a Deity whose sway
In the universe nought can resist,
It would seem at first sight that a sensible way
Is to notice the things that exist.

By his hand into space all the planets were hurled;
He for ages unchallenged has reigned.
It would seem as if God who created the world
Had created the things it contained.

But no; we must learn we are wide of the mark.
What is logical need not be right;
The disciples of Reason are all in the dark,
The disciples of Faith in the light.

If from slavery, cruelty, carnage, and crime
The intentions of God should be gleaned,
The Almighty Creator would seem for all time
But a paramount Infinite Fiend.

So we learn the Almighty is not what he seems,
But is better and kinder by far.
He intended great things that are still only dreams—
Is distressed by the facts as they are.

The Lord is a potter, and man is the clay;
But, in spite of his infinite skill,
He sadly refuses to have his own way,
And mould the poor stuff to his will.

The Lord is a shepherd who places his sheep
On the edge of a dangerous rock;
And, while to destruction they stumble or leap,
Sits bewailing the fate of his flock.

But, on seeing the fruit of the theory they state,
His defenders may open their eyes;
For, in robbing our hearts of a Deity to hate,
They have given us one to despise.

In working his dolls on their miniature stage,
If a showman would imitate God,
He'd weep for poor Judy and tremble with rage
When his Punch was applying the rod.

But, despite all the freaks that his puppets have played,
The showman contrives to keep cool;
While God by *his* puppets is grieved and dismayed,
And sits in despair like a fool.

Great God! though the timid who cringe at thy feet
May in terror thy wisdom avow,
The man who's conducting the show in the street
Is a hundredfold wiser than thou.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

THE CHILDREN'S PARTY.

NEARLY three hundred children enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content at the Hall of Science on January 30 The cake and tea they stowed away was a caution. And after that, during the evening, sweets, plum-puddings, etc., washed down by twenty-eight gallons of lemonade; for the skipping contests, walking matches, three-legged races, thread the needle, and tug-of-war contests were warm work, though Jack Frost was both within and without. The musicians, too, must have been thirsty, for they were kept going with little intermission, though they did not all drink lemonade. "Jack Frost" was the name of the children's operetta, and capitally performed it was by Misses O'Donoghue, Harding, Ward, Drew, and Guest, and by Masters Courtney, Winsor, J. and R. Forder, C. Shepherd, and B. Fox. The scenery, by Mr. R. G. Brown, represented an old Mill House. On the wall appeared, "Bill Stickers Beware"; but, just before the play, old Dan Chatterton solemnly stalked up and pasted a *Freethinker* bill over the notice, much to the amusement of youngsters and oldsters. There was a magic mill wheel, which had been stopped by Jack Frost, but which, after his defeat by the Fairy Sunshine, worked by hydraulic power, and ground out prizes for all the children present. None went empty away. Miss Vance was the substantial fairy behind the scenes who worked the oracle, and generally saw that things went right. Thanks are also due to Miss Robins, Miss Brown, Mrs. Sleigh, Mrs. Leekey, Mrs. Burch, and Messrs. Brown, Ward, Courtney, Forder, Guest, Bater, and Searle, for assistance in making the evening a delightful one to the children. A few pounds are still needed to clear up all accounts, and we hope they will reach Mr. Forder without delay.

FURTHER SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Per Mr. Searle, 7s.; Mr. Balchan, junr., 9s.; Mrs. Lightowler, 8s.; E. Winsor, 1s. 6d.; G. Ward, 5s. 6d.; Miss Simson, 3s.; Mr. Wood, 4s. 9d.; H. Cowell, 2s.; Mrs. O'Donoghue, 3s. 2d.; Mrs. Billot, 2s.; Mr. Bater, 2s. 6d.; W. Webber, 1s.; F. Schaller, 5s.; C. Shepherd, 5s. 3d.; Miss Neate, 6d.; H. M. Ridgway, 2s. 6d.; J. Walker, 1s.; W. Stewart, 2s. 6d.; E. Furby, 10s.; E. Newman, 5s.; Miss Pullen, 5s.; A. Wheeler, 1s.

The Committee desire to sincerely thank Mr. Church, of Holloway, and Mr. Godwin, of Hackney, for large supplies of sweets and cakes; Mr. Caspary for three hundred Bon-bons, and Messrs. Warborn, Penny, Mrs. Dunster, and an unknown friend, for toys, confectionery, etc.

Friends having collecting-cards are requested to return them not later than Sunday next, to Miss Vance.

R. FORDER, *Treasurer.*

AN UNKNOWN HERETIC.

IN Martin Luther's *Colloquia* (p. 86; 1652) I read: "Anno 1530 (said Luther) there was here at Wittenberg a student that had written in a book manie ungodlie questions; hee would wrest the Scriptures according to his own brains, and in a manner would prepare a new Epicurism; he alleged there were neither good nor evil angels, besides manie other blasphemous things against the Holie Ghost, the Resurrection of the dead, etc. The same was sharply reprehended by the Professors, who informed mee thereof; whereupon I desired the magistrates of the town to take these things into their consideration, and according to their offices would caus that Epicure to bee punished as other public offenders."

I should much like to know the name and the book of that Epicure. Can any German friend inform me if there is any record of his punishment at Wittenberg?

J. M. W.

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JEHOVAH'S JOKES.

When cruel, bloody Abel seized a lamb,
And through his tender throat a stick did ram,
What do you think God did? Blamed him?
No; *praised him.*

When kindly Cain—who shrank from shedding blood
In "cold blood"—offered God a harmless "spud,"
What do you think God did? Praised him?
No; *blamed him.*

When Jacob sneaked from Esau all he had,
And vilely tricked his blind and dying dad,
What do you think God did? Cursed him?
No; *blessed him.*

When brutal Moses, Joshua, & Co.
Filled neighbors' lands with blood and fire and woe,
What do you think God did? Killed them?
No; *helped them.*

When Saul from cutting captives' throats refrained,
And thus respect from later ages gained,
What do you think God did? Blessed him?
No; *cursed him.*

When careful Uzzah carted Yahveh's box,
And held it safe when slipped the stumbling ox,
What do you think God did? Thanked him?
No; *killed him.*

When selfish Mary—vain, and lazy too—
Left worthy Martha all the work to do,
What do you think Christ did? Blamed her?
No; *praised her.*

When God's own folk assisted God's own plan,
By helping God to die for good of man,
What do you think God did? Blessed them?
No; *cursed them.*

This *topsy-turvy* God, whose *best's* our worst,
Who cursed and blessed where we'd have blessed and cursed,
This heav'nly clown had made, in playful spite,
His sense of *wrong* his creatures' sense of *right*;
And yet—and here's the joke—his Scriptures state:
Unless we love this God, whose deeds we hate;
Unless we honor those whose guilt amazes,
And scorn what all our moral judgment praises,
We'll die like dogs, and howl in hell and blazes!
(Selah!—and other refreshment.)
Let none, then, heed the disrespectful rumor
That God's a solemn party, void of humor.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

PROVIDENTIAL ACCIDENTS.

How often we read and hear of a "providential escape." The words are uttered so frequently and glibly as almost to make them sickening to the ears of those who understand their hollowness. One can hardly take up a newspaper without meeting with the phrase. It seems to be a sort of tail piece to nearly every accident recorded. If, while scores of lives are ruined, there can be found even one who gets off scot free, that person is sure to be the hero of providential interference, of at least one sort. But most people seem to lose sight of the other side of the picture, and, while rejoicing over the escape, forget that the same power—if such power there be—was also the cause of the disaster, and responsible for those who met their miserable fate. The term, "providential escape," is at best contradictory. If a providence presides over the destinies of the world, it should be a guarantee of perfect safety, and so control our lives as to leave no room for anything to happen which would tend to endanger our existence. A true providence ought rather to be an unfailing preventive of causes which would otherwise lead to mishaps.

This providential idea has also a tendency to lead those who have chanced to escape the clutches of a catastrophe to lose their manhood and offer up canting expressions of thanks for their deliverance to a "heavenly father," whose parental love and watchfulness has been the means of all the suffering to their fellow creatures. Of the many instances of this unmanly spirit we might mention that displayed by the few survivors of a terrible calamity at sea, who invariably tender thank-offerings to him who has drowned the rest.

If no other evidence will avail to persuade men from the notion that a god rules the universe, surely the obvious unconcern of that god for our welfare ought to dispel for ever such a misconception. If man will intelligently reflect and exercise some of his latent common sense and experience, he must inevitably come to the conclusion that human beings are of no more account than sparrows, and that both species of life exist without the slightest trace of divine intervention.

This foolish conception of an interfering providence is the bane of society, and not until it is swallowed up in reason will there be a stalwart, clear-headed, loving people, with all their energies centred upon the betterment of this world, judging its disorders in a rational light, and thoroughly convinced that upon man, and him alone, depends the lasting welfare of humanity. And let us for the future, when our Christian acquaintances begin to talk about providential escapes, call their attention to the other side of the account, and show them that for one providential escape there are a hundred providential accidents.

J. W. C. S.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. MARRIOTT'S LETTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. A. J. Marriott, tells you (*Freethinker*, January 27) that "he is not a little disgusted that I should head a deputation of Brighton co-operators to pray for a diminution of public-houses in Brighton." In the courteous note you gave on this subject there is no foundation for Mr. Marriott's disquietude. There was no "deputation"—so I never "headed one." I merely forwarded a memorial, because a co-operative store, formed to promote thrift, always suffers if the members are induced to waste the wages, which, spent at the stores, bring saving and economy in the household. I am sorry Mr. Marriott should be "disgusted" at this. I have no doubt he has good sense enough to be delighted, if he understood the question.—Yours faithfully,

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

PROFANE JOKES.

Rev. Dr. Goodlee—"Tell me, Robert, why is it that you say your prayers?" Bobbie—"'Cause dad spanks me when I don't."

Darkey (in U.S. post-office)—"Please to gimme one stamp, sah." Clerk—"What denomination?" Darkey—"Baptis', sah! Baptis', o' course."

At prayers—Minnie (in a whisper)—"Jimmie, wot makes Uncle Eben shet 'is eyes wen he's prayin'?" Jimmie (in a louder whisper)—"Mebbe he's ashamed ter look the Lord in th' face."

Over the portal of a magnificent villa near Dresden, Saxony, is written: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." But at the back entrance to the garden is a sign that reads: "No beggars admitted. The dog bites."

An old darkey arose recently in one of the Southern prayer meetings and exclaimed: "Brethren and sistern, I've been havin' a dreffal time since las' we met together, chawing hard bones and swallowing bitter pills. I'm afraid I've broken every one of the Ten Commandments, but, thank the Lord, I haven't lost my religion!"

He was a curate, and nervous. On one occasion he read a chapter from Exodus, which he remembered for some time, as also did the congregation. "I am," he informed them, and then hurriedly turned over the pages, "an ass—the foal of an ass!" Realising that the pages had stuck together, he quickly parted them. "That I am!" triumphantly added the disconcerted youth.

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(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, G. W. Foote, "The Government Program." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Humors and Absurdities of the Life of Christ." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice.'"

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, Herbert Burrows, "Why Secularists should be Socialists." Monday, at 8, musical and dramatic entertainment and dance. (Tickets 3d. and 6d.) Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings for N.S.S. members and friends.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Why Should we Live Moral Lives?—The Christian and Secular Answer." (Preceded by vocal and instrumental music.) Thursday, at 7.30, free science classes.

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road, E.): 8, J. Fagan, "London To-day and Forty Years Ago."

ISLINGTON (Liberal and Radical Association Committee Rooms, Upper-street, near the Vestry Hall): Thursday, at 8.30, a lecture.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.15, Olivia Dante Rossetti, "The Social and Political Conditions of Italy."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Conscience as God's Voice."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, Notting-hill-gate): Monday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 7, C. James, "Still it Moves."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: are they True?"

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, G. E. Harris, "Phrenology."

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road): 7, Sam Standring, "The Prayer of Faith."

CHESTER (Old Chapel, Commonhall-street): 6.30, Charles Lewis, "The French Revolution—to the Overthrow of Robespierre." (Free.)

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, discussion class—James Gilbert, "Liberty in Art and Literature"; 6.30, Zosimus, "Great French Freethinkers—IV., Voltaire." (Free.)

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, S. Ackroyd, "Gladstone as a Theologian."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, tontine society; 3, philosophy class—"Kant" (Ernest Newman); 7, Ernest Newman, "The Logic of the Faithful."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. Greave Fisher, "Secularism and Individualism." (Free.)

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, miscellaneous evening.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, J. A. Ashton and others, recitations, music, etc.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Ernest Evans, "Science the Friend of Man—A Reply to the Grumblers"; 7, "Science from Lantern Slides." Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen "Voltaire"; 7, "Christianity: its Rise."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "Mind Considered as a Bodily Function."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Feb. 10, Dundee; 24, Edinburgh. March 3, Hull; 10, Sheffield; 11, Chesterfield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 24, Camberwell.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Feb. 10, Bradford; 17, Failsworth. March 26 and 27, Sheffield.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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CROMWELL'S STATUE.

A VERY amusing incident was recorded in Tuesday's newspapers. The evening before, in the House of Commons, Mr. W. Johnston asked the First Commissioner of Works when it was intended to erect the statue of Oliver Cromwell, and if he could specify the proposed site. Before the question could be answered, up jumped Mr. Stanley Leighton and asked another. He desired to know whether the right honorable gentleman could also find a niche for a statue of Protector Richard, better known as "Tumbledown Dick"—the heir and successor of his Highness Oliver Cromwell. This laborious joke—about as silly as was ever perpetrated—caused a good deal of laughter in the House of Commons, which, after the House of Lords, is about the dullest assembly in this kingdom. Silly things, however, do get ended; and when Mr. Stanley Leighton sat down, Mr. Herbert Gladstone replied that the proposed cost of a Cromwell statue would appear in the 1895-6 estimates, but the question of the exact site was still under consideration.

We may take it, then, that the House of Commons will, in all probability, vote a sum of money for a statue of Oliver Cromwell, and that it will be placed on some site under the control of the First Commissioner of Works, possibly in one of the passages of that architectural monstrosity, the Houses of Parliament.

Was ever anything more stored with latent humor? Oliver Cromwell was the one man in English history who turned the House of Commons out of doors—and the House of Commons is going to give him a statue. Charles the First went down to the House to arrest the Five Members, and met more than his match. He also dismissed parliament in 1628, and did not call another till 1640, but that was the Long Parliament, which would not be dissolved, and which lasted till after his head was amputated. Oliver Cromwell did worse than this. He went down with a band of resolute soldiers and sent the Rump a-packing; and as all the members wore swords and could use them, and some were fanatical enough for anything, it was no child's play. Then he locked the door and put the key in his pocket. And the worst of it was that not a dog in the whole of London barked against this unconstitutional proceeding. Cromwell called three parliaments afterwards, but they would jaw without doing any business. One of them spent a week discussing whether James Nayler, the Quaker, should be burnt alive, besides being branded and mutilated. Cromwell thought a week was too long for such nonsense; and he said so in his own way, by a deed; he told the parliament to go home. And again the key was in his pocket.

Fancy a statue put up by parliament to a man like that? Does it only mean that, say what we will about him, Cromwell was a great Englishman? Or does it mean that Cromwell was right in shutting-up parliaments? Let there be no mistake about it. Cromwell would have had as little sympathy with *our* National Palaver as with any to which he administered the quietus. How grimly he would have smiled at the statesmanship of appointing a special committee to report some time next summer on the "unemployed" who are starving this winter! Talk! Talk! Talk! Cromwell hated all that incontinence of speech. What was the use of talking unless it led to something? What wisdom could he perceive in debating for weeks when the voting could be foretold at the beginning? What can any man—not a jackass, or a pedant, or a time-server—see in it but mere vanity and vexation of spirit; vanity on the part of the talkers, and vexation of spirit to numerous other people?

It may, of course, be contended that Oliver Cromwell attempted the impossible; that human affairs will always refuse to be conducted in a sensible way. That is one view, the pessimist's. But there is another view, which is not exactly the optimist's—namely, that Cromwell was born three hundred years before his proper time. The late Prince Consort was not a particularly wise man, but he sometimes saw the truth; and he certainly did see it when he said that Parliamentary Government was on its trial. It was one of the few sensible things he ever said, and of course he was bitterly censured for saying it. Parliamentary Government is, indeed, more than on trial. It is under sentence. Every man who has any idea of business, and any honesty to back it, is perfectly aware that Parliamentary Government has proved a most ridiculous failure. Is despotism, then, the only alternative? Nothing of the kind. The alternative is common sense. Were it not for the standing armies, which might be used against a nation's liberties, there is no reason in the world why the affairs of every civilised nation could not be conducted on business lines, like the affairs of a ship on the high seas, or of a great commercial house on dry land.

Cromwell was not a parliamentarian. He saw "divine right" royalty break down. He also saw parliamentary government break down. After his time the two patched up a treaty of alliance; and, now two hundred years have rolled by, it is fatally discredited.

Cromwell would have done immense good for England, but the rogues and fools—especially the fools—would not let him do too much. He was a professed Christian, but he had little of the Christian's bigotry. Long before he was Lord Protector, he remarked, in a letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, that if a man could serve the state no inquiry should be made into his opinions. He would not tolerate open Catholicism, but Catholicism was then a perpetual intrigue and rebellion against every liberal government. He would not sanction the persecution of the Quakers, he let the Jews come back to England after hundreds of years of banishment. He would never have assisted in persecuting even an Atheist, merely on account of his opinions. Men of all opinions, to use his own language, could serve the state. Whether they were going to Heaven or Hell was their own business.

Cromwell's heart was eaten out by the rogues and fools. They tried to kill him by poison and dagger, but they failed. They killed him more slowly. And after he was dead they had *their* innings; and what an innings it was! There is no argument like *comparison*.

Cromwell was the first man in English history who understood toleration; certainly the first great statesman who tried to reduce it to practice. He would have gone farther than John Milton. What does a man like this want with a niche and a statue at the hands of some insignificant Commissioner of Works? He fills a whole big chapter in English history—and fills it for ever.

G. W. FOOTE.

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THE MORAL CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY.

If any instance were wanted of the spread of Secular principles, it might be found in the changed tactics of Christian advocates. In the good old days of Christian supremacy Christianity was put forward as a divine revelation and the only way of salvation. Stress was laid on its credentials of miracles and of prophecy as proving it to be superhuman and divine. The joys of heaven and the terrors of hell were dilated upon to attract the faithful and warn the unbelieving. Satan, the enemy of souls, was evoked as the explanation of all difficulties. Now-a-days Satan is superannuated, and hell never mentioned to ears polite. Its temperature is popularly supposed to fit it for a skating rink. Miracles and prophecies are kept in the background; the former are felt to be rather sources of difficulty to minds trained in the scientific conception of natural law, while prophecies only raise the troublesome question of proving that their records were in existence before the time of their alleged fulfilment. Accordingly, we now hear of the sublime moral teachings of Christianity, of the sweet reasonableness of Jesus, and of the good which Christianity has done to the world. Virtually this is a surrender of the whole question to the Freethinker. For he has no quarrel with morality or moral influences, and only objects to their being ascribed to superhuman sources and placed upon what he considers a false basis of supernaturalism.

The point at issue between the Christian and the Freethinker is not whether Christianity has done some good or not, but whether it is of supernatural origin. Is it infallibly divine, or is it but one of many religions which have guided men's lives? Let it be granted it has had a moral influence. Can this be denied to Buddhism, to Confucianism, or to Mohammedanism? All religions teach morality, but does Christianity give assurance of practice? When you say a man is a Mohammedan, for instance, you know he is sober. Can you have the same assurance when you say a man is a Christian?

Then, is there not a sufficient set-off to the good done by Christianity in the persecution, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness which it has engendered; in the slavery and tyranny of the past taught by its god-given code; in its persecution of witches also inculcated by the Bible; in its opposition to science? It is Christian theology which has placed creed before conduct, which has extolled death-bed repentance above an honest and consistent life. It is Christian theology which has taught men to hate father and mother, and that duty consists in obedience to the will of God, irrespective of considerations of human welfare. It is Christian theology which has increased selfish egoism by its contemptible offer of salvation through the merits of another, its terrors of burning brimstone and torments, and its even more contemptible bribes of thrones and golden harps, and the recompense of a hundredfold hereafter for all that is resigned now. All this the Secular spirit of the age is recoiling from, and Christian advocates accordingly keep their theology as much as possible in the background.

The political and social life of the modern world shows a complete disregard for the teachings of Jesus. Indeed, Dr. Magee, the late Archbishop of York, admitted that the Sermon on the Mount was not practicable by the State. The profession of Christianity is only profession, upon which practice does not follow. In Mohammedan lands all law decisions are founded on the Koran. But Christian magistrates censure and punish the Peculiar People, who follow St. James, and when anyone is sick call in the elders and pray over them. They punish men who desert their wives for the sake of religion. Yet Jesus, or the monks who wrote about him, said: "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life," and "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Matthew xix. 29; Luke xiv. 26).

The truth is that, while pretending that the words of the Bible are wholly divine, people pick and choose, take what suits them, and quietly put aside the rest. Protestants forget that the books come down to us through the monks of the Romish Church, and that their view of Jesus and his religion is an entirely different one.

Is it true that, as Prebendary Row says, the evangel of modern enlightenment was taught more than 1,850 years ago? I answer, No. Jesus never spoke a word for education, enlightenment, industry, or social amelioration. He thought the world was coming to an end in the lifetime of those standing around him. He preached other-worldliness. He said, "The poor ye have always with you," and would deal with it by almsgiving. Science goes to work another way, and seeks to remove the causes of poverty and other evils. Nor were the teachings of Jesus original to himself. Everyone of his precepts can be paralleled from earlier Pagan teachers, and from the doctrines of Buddha, of Confucius, and of Lao-tse. Christians may be safely challenged to instance a single doctrine which was new to the world. Why, then, should it be supposed to be divine?

It is wrong to ascribe the benefits of Christianity, such as they are, to one man. From the New Testament itself it is plain that Paul had more to do with the spread of the religion than Jesus, who said he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that it was not fit that the children's food should be cast to dogs. In truth, the Christian Church has been built up by the labors of thousands of men. And it is being slowly improved by the influence of the Secular spirit, substituting work for prayer, science for faith, conduct for creed, and attention to this world for attention to kingdom-come.

J. M. Wheeler.

WAS CHRIST A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORMER?

(Concluded from page 84.)

The burden of Christ's preaching was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What was meant by this kingdom it is rather difficult to decide, for it is variously described in the Gospels. It is certain, however, that, whether it signified the reign of peace and justice on earth, or the appearance of Jesus "in the clouds," neither event has taken place up to date, although Christ said that in his time the kingdom was "at hand." In Luke (xvii. 21) it is stated "the kingdom of God is within you"; but that does not quite harmonise with the description given of it in Matthew (xiii. 47–50), where it is alleged that the kingdom of heaven is "like unto a net that was cast into the sea," which, when full, had the good of its contents retained, and the bad cast away. "So shall it be at the end of the world," when the angels are to "sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Now, if this refers to a condition upon earth, it is not a very happy one. And in neither case is there any light thrown upon the rational conduct of men, either politically or socially. Besides, the repeated references made by Christ to the approaching end of all earthly institutions render the idea of his being a reformer of this world altogether meaningless. The termination of mundane affairs was to occur in the presence of those to whom Jesus was speaking (Matthew xvi. 28). Whatever other texts may be cited to the contrary, the meaning here is clear, that no opportunity was to be given, and no provisions made, to reform the political and social conditions of earth. Let any one read the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and try to harmonise the declarations there ascribed to Christ with the belief that his mission was to reform the world, and the impossibility of the task will soon be evident. True, in Matthew (xxv.) works of utility are required to secure a place at the "right hand" of God. But what does this involve? Uniformity of belief (Mark xvi. 16), and only the relief, not the cure, of poverty. No scheme was even hinted at by Christ whereby the great army of the poor and depraved should be impossible. He was inferior to the French philosopher, who aimed at providing a condition of society wherein men should be neither depraved nor poor.

To put the matter concisely, what are the factors of political and social progress? Briefly, they are these: The cultivation of the intellect, the extension of physical and mental freedom, the recognition and the application of

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the principle of justice and liberty to all members of the community, regardless of their belief or non-belief in theology, the knowledge and application of science and art, the organisation of labor and the proper cultivation of the soil, the possession of political power, the understanding of the true value and use of wealth, and, finally, the persistent study of, and the constant struggling against, the numerous evils, wrongs, and injustice that now rob life of its comforts and real worth. These are the agencies that all men, who claim to be political and social reformers, should support and cultivate. Not one of these originated with Jesus, and throughout his career he never availed himself of these essentials of all progress. Thus, to designate him as the great social redeemer is entirely unjustifiable. His very mode of living was the opposite to that of a practical reformer. He was an ascetic, and avoided as much as possible the turmoil of public life, from which he might have learnt something of what was necessary to adjust the social relations. Prayer, not work, was his habit. In the day, and at night, would he retire to the solitude of the mountain, and there pray to his father (Luke vi. 12 and xxi. 37). So far did he believe in the efficacy of supplications to God that he frequently told his disciples that whatever they asked of his father he would grant the request (Matthew xviii. 19; xxi. 22; John xvi. 23). That this was a delusion is clear from the fact that he prayed himself for the unity of Christendom, that his followers might be one (John xvii. 21); yet from his time down to the present divisions have always existed among Christians. He distinctly promised that "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do" (John xiv. 13, 14). Relying upon this, the Church for centuries has been asking that unbelief should cease, and yet we find it more extensive to-day than it ever was. The lesson learnt from experience is, that all reforms are the result of active work, not the outcome of prayerful meditations.

With all these drawbacks in the character of Jesus, it is to me marvellous how he can be accepted as a model for us in the present age. But thousands of his devotees insist upon claiming him as their Ideal, although they cannot regulate their conduct by such a standard. Such persons overlook the fact that, if the better parts of an Ideal are marred by that which is erroneous and impracticable, it is comparatively useless as a guide in life. That Christ's alleged teachings are so marred the Gospels amply testify. His conduct, on several occasions, was such as his followers would not attempt to emulate to-day. Such, for instance, as his treatment of his parents (Luke ii. 43–49; John ii. 4); his cursing of the fig-tree (Matthew xxi. 18, 19); his driving the money changers from the temple with "a scourge of small cords" (John ii. 15); his possession of an ass and a colt, which evidently did not belong to him, and riding upon both of them into Jerusalem (Matthew xxi. 2-11); his expletives to the Pharisees (Luke xi. 37–44); his breaking up the peace of the domestic circle (Matthew x. 34–36).

Judged by the New Testament, Christ was certainly not "The Light of the World," for he revealed nothing of practical value, and he taught no virtues that were before unknown. No doubt in his life, supposing he ever lived, there were many commendable features; but he was far from being perfect. While he might have been well-meaning, he was in belief superstitious, in conduct inconsistent, in opinions contradictory, in teaching arbitrary, in knowledge deficient, in faith vacillating, and in pretensions great. He taught false notions of existence, had no knowledge of science; he misled his followers by claiming to be what he was not, and he deceived himself by his own credulity. He lacked experimental force, frequently living a life of isolation, and taking but slight interest in the affairs of this world. It is this lack of experimental force throughout the career of Christ that renders his notions of domestic duties so thoroughly imperfect. The happiness of a family, according to his teaching, was to be impaired before his doctrines could be accepted. So far as we know, he was never a husband or a father; and he did not aspire to be a statesman, a man of science, or a politician. Now, a person who lacks experience in these phases of life is not in the best position to give practical and satisfactory lessons thereon. Even in the conditions of life he is said to have filled, this "Light of the World" failed to exhibit any high degree of excellence, discrimination, or manly courage. As a son, he lacked affection and consideration for the feelings of his parents. As a teacher, he was mystical and rude; and as a reasoner, he was defective and illogical. Lacking a true method of reasoning, possessing no uniformity of character, Christ exhibited a strange example—an example injudicious to exalt and dangerous to emulate. At times he was severe when he should have been gentle. When he might have reasoned he frequently rebuked. When he ought to have been firm and resolute he was vacillating. When he should have been happy he was sorrowful and desponding. After preaching faith as the one thing needful, he himself lacked it when he required it the most. Thus, on the cross, when a knowledge of a life of integrity, a sensibility of the fulfilment of a good mission, a conviction that he was dying for a good and righteous cause, and fulfilling the object of his life—when all these should have given him moral strength, we find him giving vent to utter despair. So overwhelmed was he with grief and anxiety of mind that he "began to be sorrowful and very heavy." "My soul," he exclaimed, "is sorrowful even unto death." At last, overcome with grief, he implores his father to rescue him from the death which was then awaiting him.

It is contended by some that, although Christ did not give detailed remedies for existing evils, he taught "general principles" which would, if acted upon, prove a panacea for the wrongs of life. This was not so, for his "general principles" lacked the saving power that was desired. What were those "principles" as laid down in the Gospels? So far as they can be understood, they were as follows: Absolute trust in God; implicit belief in himself; reliance upon the prayer of supplication; disregard of the world; taking no anxious thought for the morrow; encouragement of poverty, and contempt of riches; obedience to the law of the Old Testament; neglect of home and families; non-resistance of evil; that persecution in this world and punishment in some other would follow the rejection of Christianity; and that sickness was caused by the possession of devils. These are among the leading "principles" taught by Christ; and, if they were acted upon, there would be an end of all progress, harmony, and self-reliance. But even if the "general principles" propounded by Jesus were good, that would not be enough to make him the greatest reformer. It is necessary, in addition to knowing what is to be done, to have the knowledge of *how* it is to be done. And this is just what Jesus has not taught us. Principles do not aid progress unless they can be applied; and, whatever value his teachings may have as matters of belief, they are incapable of application in the great cause of political and social advancement in the nineteenth century.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE CHURCH AND THE DEMOCRACY.

LATTERLY there has been shown a most remarkable interest in social problems by a section of advanced Churchmen. Now, we would be very reluctant to in any way deprecate such a movement, or say aught that might be taken as a sneer against it. It is only by everyone who considers there are grievances to be exposed and wrongs to be righted, making his voice heard, that any progress can come. And, reason knows, there are enough evils and social sores to engage the attention and study of every honest thinker. But when one sees this new-born zeal on the part of the Church—or a small portion of it—one needs to be cautious. When we bear in mind that, historically, the Churches have been the inveterate enemies of all reform; when it is recollected that the bishops, as the representatives in Parliament of the Church, have consistently voted against every measure calculated to make for advancement; when one remembers that the Church has always been the foe of science, and that science is the only hope of the future; when all this is kept in mind, one must scrutinise very carefully these new professions of democratic love. The Church, in short, has betrayed progress too often for her mere verbal promise to be accepted now.

One example of this new fervor is the Christian Social Union, under whose auspices courses of Socialistic sermons, full of denunciation of the capitalist and mammon-seeker, are delivered by clergymen—who are not exactly starving. Such a sermon was delivered a few weeks ago by Dr.

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Stubbs, Dean of Ely, in Holy Trinity Church, Sloane-square—an eminently democratic neighborhood; and a report of the discourse is before us. It is because it contains a few remarkable things that may be noticed that we deal with it here. It is probably only a type of many sermons which the pulpit is now giving forth.

At the beginning of his sermon the Dean quotes an apocryphal saying of Jesus, that he was practically going to turn the existing state of affairs upside down. "Unless ye shall cause that which is on the right hand to be on the left, and that which is on the left hand to be on the right, and that which is above to be below, and that which is before to be behind, ye have no knowledge of the kingdom of God." Now, that is a pretty large order. Certainly, one would say such a preacher was a revolutionary, if the word "revolutionary" has any meaning. There must be an absolute change—that is the meaning of the declaration. Yet Dr. Stubbs says that Christ "was not a revolutionist." Probably Dr. Stubbs has an aversion to revolution. "Christ," it seems, "did come to remodel society; He did come to turn the world upside down . . . . . and the Christian Church, in the idea of its Founder, had for its object the reorganisation and the reconstitution of society, no less than the salvation of the individual." But what a commentary on all this is the simple record of nineteen Christian centuries! Christ came to turn the world upside down—and the world was too strong or too heavy for him. And he was omnipotent, forsooth! Let the Christian get out of this eternal dilemma as he may. Christ, he is always telling us, came to save the world, and the world is still "unsaved." Was Christ, then, a failure? Was he not powerful enough to effect his object? Was "God Almighty" too weak for his own "creation"? What has the religionist to say? Let us hear Dr. Stubbs again. He tells us that "it is, alas! only too easy to find many chapters which record only the Church's failure to sustain the character of a savior of society; yet, when we remember that all history is but a record of imperfectly realised ideals, it is only fair, surely, to ascribe the social failures of the Church to a falling short of the original ideal, rather than to any want of completeness in the ideal itself." How suave! The Christian ideal is perfect *only*—it can't be realised. And the Church, it seems, is just an ordinary natural phase of human effort, such as "all history" is concerned with. But we understood that this Church was the peculiar favorite of God; that it had large quantities of the Holy Ghost and divine grace, and other like commodities, stored on its premises. Now, Dr. Stubbs says it is only a human, imperfect institution. The fact is, these religionists cry hot and cold to suit their purpose. Just as the Bible is a unique and miraculous book at one time, and a merely human record when its errors and its filth have to be explained away, so the Church is a divine institution to-day, and a human one to-morrow. One can only say that sophistry of this kind does not evidence that love of truth and candor to which the democratic Dean aspires.

But the Dean, after some talk on the "democracy of to-morrow," gives expression to what we believe to be the real aim of, and object of, these ecclesiastics in the social movement. He is concerned, in fact, for the religiosity of the future. "For if," he tells us, "the English democracy of the future is not going to be a religious democracy, then God help us all." Aye, there's the rub! We must make sure that "religion"—and the loaves and fishes—are safe, anyhow, democracy or no democracy. And that we venture to suggest is the mission of what we may call these interlopers in the camp of reform; nine-tenths of them are there for the purpose of laying the foundations of their priestcraft in the new soil that seems so fruitful and so full of promise. Honest men in the Church who desire to assist the cause of progress there may be; nay, honest men there undoubtedly are. But they are the exceptions, not the rule. They represent a phase of opinion which cannot be general or permanent. You cannot belong to the camp of Progress and the camp of Faith without feeling the strain, and soon you will be compelled to break either with Progress or with Faith. And as the typical Churchman is a Churchman first and a humanist afterwards, one is compelled to look askance at the typical reforming ecclesiastic.

And, read in that light, this passage of Dean Stubbs's sermon is ominous and reveals a good deal. Listen! "There is no use mincing matters: unless the world goes back, democracy must go forward; the will of the people must more and more prevail. *We cannot prevent numbers ruling; we can only try to teach them to rule well.*" The italics, of course, are ours. But doesn't that one sentence reveal worlds?—"We can only try to teach them to rule well." Isn't it the expression of a man forced against his will to concede something, and then trying to make the best of a bad necessity? Trying to teach them to rule well means, of course, dosing them up with "Christ" and reverence for his "Holy Church" and her deans. But the Dean gets even more definite. He goes on: "And the Church of Christ, if it is to be of any use at all in the world, must take part in that work. She must not waste time in lamenting the mistakes of the past—and God knows the social errors and sins of the Church, in its travesty of her Master's message of social salvation, have been great—but she must address herself to the tasks of the future." So there it is. The Church captured the old civilisation and dragged it down; it must set itself to the task of capturing the new. But Dr. Stubbs moves a bit too fast. If the Church has made so many mistakes as even he admits, we have surely a right, in the light of that history, to question her credentials now. To say in effect, in the one sentence: "We have blundered hopelessly in the past; we have made desperate mistakes. We are going to guide you in the future"; isn't it a little out of gear? The fact is, the meekness and candor displayed by Dr. Stubbs are very admirable in their way, and we welcome these admissions of the Church's incompetency and the Church's cupidity; but even Dr. Stubbs's meekness is a flimsy foundation for a fresh support to an organisation of which he is but a more or less unrepresentative unit.

Even in the conclusion of his sermon he suggests an analogy which he can hardly have intended, which bears out our point. He tells us that Christ "uttered words until then almost unknown—Love, Service, Sacrifice, Duty—and the dead arose . . . . . from that dead society arose the Christian world, the world of Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood." For the moment, it matters little that these statements are not true; indeed, if Dr. Stubbs were given to that sort of thing, we should take the reference to the Christian Liberty and Equality as downright joking. The "Brotherhood," of course, one may admit when one calls to mind Torquemada, St. Bartholomew's Eve, Calvin, Smithfield, and other brotherly memories. Decidedly the "brotherhood" part of Christianity has always been a strong point. But the real significance of the passage is this: Christ, *vide* the Dean, came with these fine phrases on his lips, and everything was to run smoothly ever after. Yet, instead of running smoothly, there were blunders and failures and crimes—*vide* the Dean. Now, however, comes the Christian reformer with a fresh batch of fine phrases—everything is to run smoothly *now*. Will the result be different? Or will some newer new Christian of the twentieth century come to tell us of the blunders of the Christianity of the nineteenth?

FREDERICK RYAN.

REWARD.

THE idea of reward as a stimulus to virtue is radically wrong. It must ever appear in a disfavorable light to thinking minds. The substance of a thing may be the same, but only that deed which is actuated by righteous motives can be properly considered as good. The man who throws a sovereign upon the plate from a wish to appear respectable has not done a righteous deed. A good motive, though it should result in abortive effort, is to be counted for righteousness. But to do good for sake of reward is to act on a bad motive. To hold up the rewards of heaven as a stimulus to mankind to act rightly is to instigate men to act by unworthy motives, and is, in itself, morally wrong. Yet this is what is constantly done. The highest rule that man can act upon—namely, to do right for righteousness' sake—occurs nowhere in the Bible. Man always asks himself, "Why should I do this thing?" and has not as yet acquired sufficient nobility of mind to satisfy himself with the answer, "Because it is right."

It is instructive to examine into the practical force which this idea of reward in a future life possesses in connection with the conduct of men here and now. Is it effectual in

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furthering the interests of truth and virtue in our midst? Is it useful in promoting the moral welfare of mankind? Regarded as a recompense, it has, to ordinary minds, the disadvantage of offering a reward of a different kind from the pleasure for whose loss it is to compensate. If a man abstain from the pleasure of the table, he knows the recompense of heaven will not be one of a similar kind to that pleasure he loses. It boots nothing to say it will be something far higher and nobler, or that the things of this transitory life are not to be compared to it. If men are to look upon it as a return for abstinence here, they will naturally look for a repayment in kind. Men's minds are made so, and will not be persuaded out of their nature into desiring to lose one thing and gain another in its place. There is also the lapse of time between the loss and its recompense to be considered. Man feels his abstinence as a very actual thing. Is the certainty of heaven (though it were assured as a fact of science) a very actual thing to him? Are the thoughts of heaven ever very real to men? How hard it is to throw away a little actual good which we hold in our hands, even on the assurance of a much greater benefit to follow. The idea, we may safely say, can be but rarely strong enough to persuade us to forego the pleasures of the hour. The fact is exemplified again and again in life. We choose intinctively the nearest and most certain good. If I may be excused a homely illustration, we prefer to sustain ourselves on broken victuals when we are hungry than await the feast that is being prepared. It is precisely the same with the great promised compensations of heaven, which most of us would barter for a little comfort to be enjoyed now, when we feel the want of it. Faust is not intended to represent a bad man, and in exchanging his soul for present pleasure he is but fulfilling the natural desire of all men. We can but possess the present, and most of us are in the habit of leaving the far future to take care of itself.

Over and above all such considerations it should be recognised that reward heresfter cannot truly be compensation for present ills. To be happy at one time does not repay the unhappiness of an anterior period. Man's present feelings are all-in-all to him. He lives but, as it were, a moment; for the past and future seem like unreal shadows. If, then, he experiences a moment of pain, he has suffered; and, though the next be spent in the most entrancing pleasures, it is so sharply divided from the first as to seem scarcely related. To say that in the past we sorrowed, but that now we experience pleasure, is to define two separately existing epochs, which do not interact upon each other—do not obliterate or annul one another. Pain is grievous, though happiness may follow; happiness retains its nature, though sorrows compass it on every side. It may be said that to look back on past sorrows when the present is bright and prosperous often brings an added feeling of comfort to men. It may be so; but whether memory of all the world's cares and vicissitudes must not also produce something of sadness is doubtful. Pain and sorrow are not merely grievous because of the negation of joy, but are inherently disliked and feared for their own sake. The idea of an after-life recompense, therefore, gains no sanction or reason for existence from the suffering of the present.

In placing reward as the ultimate aim of ambition we act merely on animal principles. The cattle follow us for food; the horse runs after the corn-sieve; our dog awaits his daily bone at our hands. Yet even the dog will follow his master out of pure affection, and often clings to him with a devotion which has been found faithful unto death. Shall man prove himself to be lower than his dog in that he cannot follow that which is higher than himself but from selfish motives of gain and aggrandisement? It is untrue that any man has been heroic or noble from such motives. The idea of heaven is more tolerated than loved. If a scientist can work laboriously year after year expecting no return, seeing his discoveries sink into the mass of things which benefit mankind, but call for no special remark, the moralist surely can live in a similar fashion. Good is, at least, partially rewarded here—sometimes with generous fulness. Is heaven to pay for what is already recompensed? The good man will count himself sufficiently rewarded by the approbation of his own soul; the inward sense of having done right will be abundant reparation for any loss sustained. This is the true man's reward. Heaven is the wages of servitors and minions. The smile on the pale face which greets our efforts to ameliorate pain; the look of gratitude from the oppressed whom we have befriended; the warm shake of the hand when some noble soul recognises that, though weak and erring, we have done our best: these things are a full and overflowing reward to all generous hearts. Why should we ask for more? If we are paid in kind, the score is wiped out, and charity no longer blesses him that gives and him that takes. Repaid, we are on a mere equality with him whom we have benefited. To have the world in one's debt is to be surpassing rich in inward satisfaction. Let us thoroughly recognise the highest principle that man can act upon, and learn, as far as in us lies, to do the right for righteousness' sake alone.

DARIUS.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA ON HELL.

As a set-off to the excerpts from Martin Luther's *Table Talk* on the Devil, I extract the views of the founder of the Society of Jesus on hell. These views are not, like those of the Protestant leader, personal ones. They are the creed of the company, and are taken from the *Spiritual Exercises*, which have to be meditated upon by every Jesuit novice during his thirty days' retreat. The book almost takes the place of the Bible in the eyes of Jesuits, and is even said to have been inspired by the Holy Ghost. The work is devoted to various religious meditations, the fifth of which is on Hell:—

The first prelude gives the composition of place—viz., the eyes of the imagination must behold the length, breadth, and depth of hell. The second consists in praying for an intimate knowledge or consciousness of the sins for which the reprobate are suffering; so that, if ever we should forget the love of God, the fear of punishment, at least, should restrain us from sin.

The first point is to *behold*, in imagination, the vast conflagration of hell, and the souls therein, enclosed in certain flaming bodies, as it were in a prison of fire.

Secondly, to *hear*, in imagination, the wailings, the shrieks, cries, and blasphemies against Christ and his saints issuing thence.

Third, thoroughly to *smell*, even with the smelling of the imagination, the smoke, brimstone, and the horrid stench of some sewer or filth and rottenness.

Fourthly, to *taste* in like manner the bitterest things; such as tears, rancour, the worm of conscience.

Fifthly, to *touch* in a manner those fires, by whose touch those very souls are burnt up.

In the colloquy with Christ we must call to mind the souls of those who are condemned to hell, either because they would not believe in the coming of Christ, or, if they believed, did not live in conformity with his precepts, either at the same time when Christ lived in this world, or after and subsequently. We must then give thanks to the same Christ most fervently for not having permitted us to rush to such destruction, but rather has, to this very day, treated us with clemency and mercy.

Having thus thoroughly immersed the novice in the thought of burning hell, he is fitted to become as the waxen mould, ready to take any impress his superiors chose to stamp upon him. The Jesuits well know the value of the hellish teaching of Christianity, and would endorse the saying of the old Scotch beadle, that "a kirk without a hell is'na worth a damn."

LUCIANUS.

The Bible and Truth.

We have proof in the Bible that, apart from the lying which constituted false witness and was to the injury of a neighbor, there was among the Hebrews but little reprobation of lying. Indeed, it would be remarkable were it otherwise, considering that Jahveh set the example; as when, to ruin Ahab, he commissioned "a lying spirit" (1 Kings xxii. 22) to deceive his prophets; or as when, according to Ezekiel xiv. 9, he threatened to use deception as a means of vengeance. "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel." Evidently from a race-character, which evolved such a conception of a deity's principles, there naturally came no great regard for veracity.—*Herbert Spencer, "Principles of Ethics," sec. 158, vol. i., p. 404.*

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ACID DROPS.

Mr. Harry Foster, M.P., intends to move an amendment to the Address, regretting that the Queen's advisers have given no promise of "a policy of justice, fairness, and consideration" towards voluntary schools. Upon this matter we have two questions to ask. (1) Is Mr. Harry Foster selected, for the purpose of moving this amendment, by the Archbishop of Canterbury and his pious gang who want to thrust their hands deeper into the ratepayers' pockets? (2) Is this Mr. Harry Foster the company-promoter who came so badly out of that libel action against the *Westminster Gazette*? If these questions are answered in the affirmative, we commend this bit of business to the attention of Bishop Moorhouse, who ought to work it into the next speech he delivers on the immorality of Secular Education.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has given fresh currency to the statement of Bishop Moorhouse, of Manchester, that in the colony of Victoria, where the education in the public schools is purely secular, crime, and particularly juvenile crime, had alarmingly increased during the last ten years. The Archbishop's speech has been much commented upon at Melbourne; and, according to a Dalziel telegram, his figures as to the criminology of Victoria have been examined by Mr. H. Hayter, the Government statistician, who declares them to be incorrect.

We never could understand Bishop Moorhouse's figures except as pious efforts of imagination. Twenty years ago the Victoria Government stopped the grant of £50,000 a year which used to be distributed among the various Christian denominations. This horrible fact, taken with two others—namely, that no Christian minister is allowed to sit in the Legislature, and that no religion is allowed to be taught in the schools—will probably account for a good deal of clerical invention. If you fight priests, you must look out for calumny.

Mr. John Rae, in his new volume, *Eight Hours for Work*, gives a very interesting account of Victoria, where the eight-hour day is nearly universal. The working men there read more, save more, and drink less than they do in England. Victoria has actually less crime than any other part of Australasia. New South Wales tops the list with 213 commitments and 139 convictions per 100,000 of population. Victoria comes last with 68 commitments and 38 convictions. In the matter of convictions she shows better than England, where the proportion is 44 to every 100,000 of population. Yet here in England we have the great Bishop Moorhouse; we have also the Bible in the overwhelming majority of our schools; we have, further, many millions of public money spent in supporting Christianity.

Christian denominations are all alike in their use of "infidel death-bed" stories. One by one the heroes of Freethought are traduced by these black assassins, who slay reputations when they can no longer kill lives. Here is Pastor James Douglas, of Kenyon Chapel, Brixton, printing in his *Silent Messenger*, which is a very loud liar, that the great Ludwig Feuerbach died in "bewilderment" and "despair," crying "Truth! O Truth! where is it?" We have asked so many retailers of pious falsehoods for their "authorities" that we shall not waste our time in putting the question afresh to James Douglas. We just look at him and pass on.

The Price Hughes gang are playing the "converted Atheist" game again. At the annual meeting of the Central Mission, in the Holborn Town Hall, one of those veracious Sisters trotted out her rescued infidel. This is the report in the *Methodist Times*: "Sister Dorothy did not believe in arguing with persons who were opposed to Christianity. She had a different way of dealing with them. This way she made plain in a fine description of the conversion of an Atheist brought to Christ under Mr. Wakerley's ministry. The subject of her sketch was in the congregation."

Of course we shall never get the name and address of this converted Atheist, unless we get it by accident. That he was "in the congregation" is easy to affirm, and difficult to deny, especially if the man was not there. May be the man was there, but was not much of an Atheist before his conversion; something like Charles Alfred Gibson, the Atheist Shoemaker, who was never known to be an Atheist until he was made into one by Price Hughes and the Sisters who "converted" him.

Sister Dorothy is wise in not arguing with persons opposed to Christianity. Mr. Hughes follows the same discreet method. But then he is base enough to lie over them, and that is carrying discretion to the point of infamy.

The *Herts Leader* of February 1 gives an illustration of the Watford fig-tree, in which a tree is growing out of a tomb, the stones of which it has riven asunder. The little legend in connection with it is that the lady buried in the vault from which the tree is growing was an Atheist, and that on her death-bed she adhered to her tenet, and expressed a wish that a fig-tree might grow out of her heart if there was a God. Of course, the thing is absurd; but it was not thought so by the credulous of the last century, who handed the tale down from one to another.

The *Leader* says: "When the churchyard was lowered an opportunity accidentally presented itself for a peep into this vault, and those who embraced that opportunity clearly saw that the root of the tree was not in the vault, but in the crown of the arch, four or five feet from where the lady's heart must have been. A few of the tendrils of the root had found their way through the brickwork of the arch, and had attached themselves to the bottom of the vault; and to this probably may be attributed its luxuriant growth, as much more moisture must be obtained by these tendrils than the parts of the root attached to the crown of the arch." No doubt the Watford fig-tree serves the pious purpose of making the yokels regard Atheism with horror.

Really we would not be able to get along without our parsons. The *Railway Review* opens out on the Rev. J. T. Wardle-Stafford, who bosses the Wesleyan Chapel at York. The members of the York Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants asked him to preach a sermon in aid of the Orphan Fund. They supplied him with an Orphan Fund book and all the necessary literature to enable him to speak correctly and fully about the splendid work the fund is doing. Instead of which, Wardle-Stafford preached fire and brimstone upon the men and the cause of which the fund is a part. The collection, which was taken before the sermon, amounted to £11, and Wardle-Stafford refuses to give it to the Orphan Fund. He has offered half of it to the local secretary as a compromise, and the local secretary has told him rightly enough that he will have none of it. York is a fine old city, and contains some fine old curiosities. —*Spy*.

"What a grim tyrant is money!" exclaims the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse. No doubt. But how the grim tyrant is sought after by all the clerical tribe! Say to them, "Silver and gold I have none," and they soon drop your acquaintance.

The Rev. Samuel Smith, rector of Landulph, sued the Rev. F. G. May, rector of St. Mellion, Cornwall, for burying one of his parishioners and not handing over the fees. Letters were put in, in which the plaintiff called defendant "a sacerdotal snob," and said: "I will put him in court and see him damned." To prevent misunderstanding, he added: "Lest some pig-headed people should think this is a swear word, I beg to observe that I use the word damn in its proper sense." The plaintiff got as damages one farthing, and may consider himself damned by the observations which the judge made on the case.

The clergy in South Africa are complaining of poverty, and, at the Graham's Town Diocesan Synod, seem to have given their entire attention to the important question, how to improve their worldly position. The Bishop gave his opinion that the stipend of a married clergyman should be at least £400, but did not offer anything himself towards seeing that it reached this amount.

We have here a Christian Social Union, which puts itself a good deal in evidence at the propaganda of Christian Socialism. But we notice that the C.S.U. says nothing of equality of clerical incomes. If they would first start levelling matters among their own fraternity, we should have more faith in the consistency of the principles of these Socialists of the cloth.

An attempt to rob a bank was made at Portland, in San Francisco, by a Baptist minister, named Reid, who had disguised himself for the purpose. He entered the office with a revolver, and made the cashier, who was alone, hold up his hands while he was being bound and gagged. As Reid was putting all the coin on which he could lay his hands into a sack, a cashier of another bank entered the office with a shot gun, and Reid had to give himself up.

Mr. Franklin Steiner has recently given in the *Truthseeker* particulars of the religious status of the convicts in sixteen United States penitentiaries and in Canada, as gathered from official reports, all made by parties favorable to Christianity. The total list embraces 33,168. Of those who were members of churches, or were taught in Sunday-schools, there were 29,906. Of the remaining 3,262 two are reported Atheists, and one an Infidel. He reports as many preachers in one penitentiary as there are Atheists and Infidels in seventeen.

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Mr. Steiner quotes the following from the *Christian Advocate*, a leading Methodist organ: "In Sing Sing there are 1,515 men. There are among them about one hundred men who, in the past, have been connected with Protestant churches as members. There are at least fifty who have confessed their sinfulness, and have professed to find God's favor. Of all those 1,515 men fifty-five per cent. are Roman Catholics, and forty-five per cent. nominally are Protestants. Of the whole number ninety per cent. went to Sunday school when boys."

Edwin O. Quigley, the Wall-street broker, whose wholesale forgeries have been the sensation of New York, and who is now remitted to Sing Sing Prison for fifteen years, was the son of a Methodist minister, and as remarkable for piety as Jabez Balfour and his colleagues.

The *Montreal Daily Star* (January 24) says "Christian Science" was responsible for the death of Mrs. Hammel D. Moore, who committed suicide by drowning herself. "Christian Science" taught her that the mind had complete power over the body, but her corpse testifies to the contrary. The jury in the case found that she walked into the river "deliberately of her own will, the said Mrs. Moore not being of sound mind, but distracted and despondent. We, the said jury, further find that her despondency was caused by her having taken up with a pernicious and dangerous doctrine called 'Christian Science,' which said doctrine we, the jury, wish most emphatically to denounce and repudiate as delusive and dangerous in the extreme to any community."

Anna Boecker, the one lady rescued from the "Elbe," curiously displayed her piety in her letter to the captain of the "Wildflower," who picked her up. She said: "Next to our Heavenly Father, I owe my safety to you and the crew." Our Heavenly Father does not seem to have had much care for the immense majority of Miss Boecker's fellow passengers. One would think modesty would make her silent as to his special regard for herself while drowning so many others of his children.

The papers during the past week have been filled with accounts of heartrending sufferings through the severe weather. In several cases omnibus drivers and cabmen have been frozen to death in their seats, and numerous tramps have succumbed to the cold. Sheep and game have perished in large numbers, children have had to be dug out of their schools, and the ranks of the unemployed have been increased so much that the ordinary channels have been inadequate to cope with the distress.

Not only England has suffered from the weather's severity. In many countries it has been far worse. In Austria there have been forty degrees of frost. The dead birds fall from the trees, and many human beings have died from exposure. In Russia wolves have attacked women and children on their way to church, and in Poland also they attack the villages in herds, and carry off children and domestic animals. In America they have had severe blizzards, destroying many lives, an entire family being frozen to death in Nebraska. In Nova Scotia small houses and shops near the beach have been blown into the sea. A moderate estimate of the damage done to fruits and vegetables in Florida places the loss at ten million dollars. In Texas thousands of yearling cattle have perished. How any one can simply read the papers, and yet credit that all things are under the superintendence of a Divine Providence, is a mystery.

At Constantinople they have had a revival of cholera, and in Norway earthquake shocks, eleven persons having been killed by the fall of an avalanche.

Jesus Christ, in speaking of God's providential care for sparrows, showed a very limited acquaintance with the facts of natural history. It is now well established that birds perish wholesale in their annual migrations; they drop by millions, and God does *not* notice. In severe weather, such as we have had recently, birds are deprived of their sustenance; and the consequence is that myriads on myriads die of sheer starvation, while others are literally frozen to death by the intense cold.

Whittington Parish Church, St. Bartholomew, Chesterfield, has been completely destroyed by fire; the Lord letting the conflagration break out in his house when the roads were thickly covered with snow and all the hydrants were frozen. The safe in the vestry, containing valuable deeds, registers, and plate, was red-hot. Evidently there will be no books or papers in Hades, unless the characters are stamped on asbestos.

At another House of God, at Hucclecote, near Gloucester, the fumes from the coke stoves half suffocated the congregation. One lady screamed before fainting. Perhaps she thought Old Nick had come at last.

Some sorts of Christian charity are as cold as the weather. An Edmonton correspondent tells us of a poor woman whose husband was at home suffering from consumption, and who applied, not vainly, to a Freethinker for help. On being asked what the district visitor had done for her, she replied that she had called and left a Church magazine. This for a woman who had only one sheet to cover herself, her husband, and four children!

Jules Cæsar Aubourg, a Civil Service clerk who has been figuring in the Divorce Court, is a peculiar gentleman. Besides making his wife a drudge, keeping her short of money, and urging the children to treat her disrespectfully, he brought a Miss Sharp into the house. He used to go into Miss Sharp's room, but then it was only to *read prayers!* Pah! An ounce of civet, good apothecary!

The Rev. Herbert Gregory is a fit companion for Jules Cæsar Aubourg. This man of God, in defending himself against dreadful charges of cruelty and adultery brought against him by his wife, was pulled up by Lord Justice Lopes, who hinted something about perjury and the Public Prosecutor; whereupon Saint Gregory caved in, and a decree nisi was granted forthwith.

The Library and Arts Committee of the Liverpool Corporation, which refused the Picton Lecture Hall for the N.S.S. Conference, have let the Walker Art Gallery for an exhibition to further the objects of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews. The Society has been misdescribed as the "London Jews' Society" in the announcements.

According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, the agents of the London Missionary Society do not stick at invoking the aid of the law to assist them in their gospel work among the Jews. In Poland, for instance, they always claim "police protection" for their blessed work as soon as they arrive. Accordingly, when a Jew thus coerced to accept a copy of the New Testament burns it, he is promptly arrested, and we are left to hope that he is not sent to Siberia.

"In Wolkovitz the missionaries put up at the Jewish hotel, and because the landlord refused to profane his Sabbath for the convenience of Christian visitors they apply to the police again. Those obliging authorities undertake to post up the bills 'inviting' Jews to attend the missionary service; and the Chief of Police himself attends to protect the good man from insult. So another Jew is arrested—for expressing his opinion to his own people on these doings, and the landlady tells her amiable guests to leave. Of course, they appeal to their powerful friends, 'and [it is from an English missionary journal that the *Jewish Chronicle* quotes] *nolens volens* she was obliged, not only to keep us, but to find accommodation for the "accursed" books on her premises.'"

After this triumph, however, they feared that "the Jews would not accept our New Testaments, so gave several hundred over to the police, who would gradually get them into Jewish hands." Those hapless Russian Jews! Heathens and Atheists pity them, but these devoted Christians pile yet more trouble and sorrow on their heads.

Virchand R. Gandhi, the representative of the Jains of India at the Parliament of Religions, says that it is only among the lowest classes that the missionaries can make converts, for every intelligent Hindoo knows the spurious origin of Christianity, and that its precepts were borrowed from India.

Christianity is a divine religion, but it needs certain adjuncts to keep it afloat. The negroes of Hayti have been Christianised for a long while, yet, under native rule, thousands of them have given up Christianity and replaced it by Voodooism and fetish worship. Many think that, if the West Indies was deserted by the whites, the punctilious church attendance of the negroes would soon be replaced by savage fetish dances.

Another case of insane fanaticism is reported from Constantinople. A Turkish soldier suddenly sallied forth from his quarters with a naked sword in his hand. Uttering cries of "Allah!" he rushed through the crowded streets slashing madly at men and women alike. He was finally seized, but not until he had inflicted mortal wounds upon five men and serious injuries upon eleven men and three women. Unless diluted with Secularism, religion is about as virulent as typhoid fever.

According to some official data just published, it appears that during the ten years, 1884-94, no fewer than 178 German Lutheran pastors were placed upon their trial before the Baltic Criminal Courts on various alleged charges of infringement of the Russian State Church regulations. One pastor died in prison. A considerable number have

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transferred their labors to the German side of the frontier to be out of the way of their fellow Christians of the orthodox Greek Church.

It was announced that the new Czar was going to be ever so much more Liberal than his father. It does not look like it. The *Russkaia Zhizn*, one of the Liberal papers, has been suppressed. This journal had already suffered repeated penalties for its advocacy of reform, and finally called down upon itself the displeasure of the Government by protesting against the exclusion of Freethinkers from the benefits of a fund in aid of needy literary men.

According to the special correspondent whom Reuter's Agency sent to Armenia to report on the alleged atrocities, there is little or nothing to choose between Christian Armenians and Moslem Turks. They both want the influences of secular civilisation to moderate their fanaticism.

Thurgau is a small canton, but its folk have a great repute for a singular wit. The *Basler Nachrichten* supplies us with the latest instance of a "Thurgauer joke." A rich old bachelor died last December in a village in Canton Schaffhausen; and, as the story goes, he bequeathed all his property to three old friends, one of whom was a Züricher, the second a St. Galler, and a third a Thurgauer. He expressed a wish that they should all take a last look at his corpse before following him to the grave, and that each should deposit a sum of 200 francs in his coffin, to be buried with him, according to a pre-historic custom. After the funeral one of the three friends, the Züricher, was anxious to learn whether the other two had loyally complied with the wish of the departed. "I placed my 200 francs in the coffin," he said, "in five-franc pieces." "And I," said the St. Galler, "put in a 200-franc bank-note." "I am thoroughly convinced of your fidelity," said the Thurgauer, "for I have taken out your 400 francs, and have placed in the hand of our dear friend a cheque for 600 francs, payable in heaven." —*Westminster Gazette.*

A story is told of a Roman Catholic priest whose sermons are usually of a practical kind. On entering the pulpit he took with him a walnut to illustrate the character of the various Christian Churches. He told the people the shell was tasteless and valueless; that was the Wesleyan Church. The skin was nauseous, disagreeable, and worthless; that was the Presbyterian Church. He then said he would show them the holy Roman Apostolic Church. He cracked the nut for the kernel, and found it rotten. Then his reverence coughed violently and pronounced the benediction.

The Unitarians in connection with a "forward movement" have published *A Brief Account of Unitarianism*. We see that they claim among adherents the name of R. W. Emerson. A reference to the lives of Emerson, by either Cooke or Conway, will show that he was outside all the Churches. T. Jefferson is also claimed, and he was a Deist, though he doubtless attended Unitarian services occasionally.

In the good old gospel days circumstances were managed so "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of by the prophet"; but now-a-days things go on without any regard to these gentry. Last year there were to have been lots of earthquakes, and this year no snow; while Prophet Baxter has to shift on his date for the great wars and confederacy of ten kingdoms. Baxter, however, only shares the fate of all the many of his predecessors who have predicted the end of the world. Even Paul, who in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians had declared that "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air," found it well to hedge, and to say that first of all the man of sin must be revealed—the son of perdition. Jesus Christ promised there were those standing around who should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom. As he was so egregiously mistaken, we cannot wonder at the minor delusions of his followers.

The *Progressive Thinker* asks: "Had six days been given to God and only one to productive labor, where would the money come from to pay the preacher? Things might be worse. One day in seven set apart to the service of God, six days in seven to practical life, is a great deal better than if all time was wasted on an abstraction."

Evidently there are some Americans who do not appreciate free institutions. There is, for instance, the Rev. Dr. Williams, who writes thus to the *Baltimore American* in regard to Ingersoll: "Now, considering the appalling wretchedness that a gifted writer and an attractive orator may bring to many, we think, no matter how much we believe in free speech and an untrammelled press, that his lips should be closed and his pen stopped in such terrible work."

The Rev. Dr. Williams ought to know that the only means to stop Freethinkers expressing their thoughts are those used by the Inquisition. To close the lips of all the Freethinkers in the United States would be a task beyond the power of Mr. Williams and all his fellow sky-pilots. He is, we understand, a Presbyterian, and perhaps regrets the days when his leader, Jean Calvin, burnt Servetus at a green-tree fire. That was an effectual way of closing the lips of an opponent.

Local Vetoists sometimes assume that, once the question of Sunday closing is put to the decision of the popular vote, their object will sure to be attained. Let them look at Cardiff, where the *Western Mail* has just taken a house-to-house vote, by means of voting cards, with the result that, out of 18,606 electors whose names appear on the last municipal register of the town, 8,553 were in favor of "amending the Welsh Sunday Closing Act, so as to permit of the licensed houses in Cardiff being opened on Sundays for one hour at dinner time, and between the hours of eight and ten in the evening." The "Noes" only numbered 2,574, the remainder of the electorate being either neutral or giving no account of themselves. This *plebiscite* appears to have been conducted very carefully, and is certainly an index to public opinion on Sunday closing.

Arguing in favor of written as preferable to extempore sermons, though Baxter glories in the burning for witchcraft of "an old reading parson" in the days of Matthew Hopkins, the *Daily News* says: "A Scot has been heard to say, from the pulpit, that eternal punishment is 'exceeding abundant, above all we can ask or hope.' Another has invited Heaven to 'keep one eye on thy servant, the minister of this parish.' These things, and a great many others of the same sort, could never have been soberly written down, and then read."

Lord Grimthorpe, who is Vicar-General of the diocese of York, makes a strong attack upon his Archbishop in the *Nineteenth Century* anent the question of the re-marriage of innocent divorced persons. Christians have been quarrelling on the subject through the ages, and it is no wonder, for the Gospels themselves variously report the teachings of Jesus on the matter.

The *Church Times* has been noticing some cases of public penances performed at church within the present century. One which took place at Begeley, Pembrokeshire, is amusing. In 1844 the person who supplied the stone for the rectory had a dispute with the rector, and was abusive. As a punishment, he had the choice of doing penance or being prosecuted. He chose the former, and on Sunday walked down the church in a white sheet, saying three times, "I called the Rev. R. Buckley a rogue"; he added each time, *sotto voce*, "which is true enough."

The American men of God are entering on a crusade against the Sunday papers. From their pulpits and through the *Christian Statesman* they preach a boycott of those papers which issue a Sunday edition, and of the advertisers who patronise their columns. The effort is a good deal like that of Mrs. Partington to mop up the Atlantic.

A curious one-act play by the well-known Neapolitan dramatist, Signor Antona-Traversi, has been put on the stage of the Sannazzaro Theatre at Naples. An Atheist father and Catholic mother, workpeople, have lost their only son, an infant who has not been baptised; and, while the little corpse is awaiting burial, the parents argue as to whether it shall have Christian sepulture or be cremated, as the father wishes. The deep grief of the mother prevails. A parish priest comes to bless the house, as is the custom at Easter. He bestows a benediction on the corpse (behind the scenes), and the father yields to the prayers of his wife. The artistic value of the piece (writes our correspondent) consists in the psychological condition of a wife who passionately loves her Atheist, or rather free-thinking, husband, who is herself a sincere Christian, and who is full of anxiety for the future of her child in the other world. The language of the married couple is necessarily too elevated for people of the class they are represented to be. The short piece was enthusiastically applauded by a full house, and the author called before the curtain eight times.—*Daily News.*

In Egypt, Tanta, "the city of healing," is yearly visited by over 200,000 pilgrims. This Lourdes of the East is the tomb of Seyvid, a Moslem saint, that has for 800 years stood in the mosque, and to which every day a crowd of halt and blind are led. Credulity is the same among all peoples, and doubtless the list of miraculous cures at the tomb of Seyvid is a pretentious one.

The saying, "The better the day, the better the deed," hardly applies to dairymen, for, according to the Analyst's Report, while the percentage of adulterated milk supplied on week days is only 5½, on Sundays it rises to 20. We suppose the inspector is not expected round on the Lord's Day

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 17, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London :—7, "Mr. Balfour's Plea for Belief."

Wednesday, February 20, Hall of Science, Old-street, E.C. :—8.15, "Shakespeare's Golden Comedy of *As You Like It*."

February 24, Hall of Science.

March 3, Camberwell ; 10, Sunderland.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—February 17, Plymouth ; 24, Newcastle-on-Tyne. March 3, Manchester. April 7, Sheffield. All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

J. G. FISHER.—Thanks. May be useful.

W. SIMONS.—Obliged. See paragraphs.

H. G.—The Church accommodation in Wales, as given in the *Official Year Book* of the Church of England, is no more than 416,000.

W. L.—Carlyle meant, of course, that it was scepticism which had "abolished hell-fire." Not the *thing*, but the *belief* in it, which is after all the practical reality, so far as this life is concerned.

W. D. ROLLEY.—The passage occurs in Mill's essay, *On Liberty*.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—There is some truth in your observations, but you do not sufficiently allow for the great differences in the two nations. Our Churches have, all of them, fixed creeds, to which ministers must subscribe. Besides, there are enormous vested interests bound up with orthodoxy.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

S. F. GRAY.—See "Acid Drops."

H. COURTNEY.—You have not sent the address.

GUILDFORD, SURREY.—Are there any saints in this neighborhood? A London lecturer is there for a few weeks, and should be utilised if there is an opportunity. We shall be glad to forward his address to any Freethinker in the neighborhood.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—Wood Green Branch, 10s. ; J. D. Feilding, 10s. ; W. Clarkson, £1 ; H. A. Lupton, 10s. Cast-off clothing is greatly needed.

CHARLES WATTS'S ELECTION FUND.—G. Ward, treasurer, acknowledges :—Per Miss Vance, W. Clarkson, £1.

J. W. C. STAFFORD.—Shall appear.

WATTS ELECTION FUND DEFICIT.—E. P. 42 sends us a second subscription of £1.

E. P. 42.—Thanks for your assistance. It is a wonder the London friends do not wipe off the deficit on the Watts Election Fund. The letter by Mr. Gladstone, which you refer to, was used on behalf of Mr. Watts's candidature in Finsbury, and will be used again in future struggles.

J. TRAUKRAY.—You had better trust to the figures in the "Bible Absurdities" part of our *Bible Handbook*.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cape Times—Reading Observer—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Western Figaro—Melbourne Age—Irish Weekly—Ulster Examiner—Lindsey Star—Montreal Daily Star—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Le Bluet—Secular Thought—Blackpool Gazette and News—Isle of Man Times—Crescent—Islamic World.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One Year, 10s. 6d. ; Half Year, 5s. 3d. ; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d. ; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements* :—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s. ; half column, 15s. ; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d. ; half column, £1 2s. 6d. ; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OWING to the time taken by cases before it on the list, the Libel Case affecting the London Hall of Science has not yet been reached. Notice that it will be heard some time on Wednesday or Thursday (February 13, 14) reaches us as we are preparing to go to press with this number of the *Freethinker*. The full report of the proceedings, which we have arranged for, cannot therefore appear until our next issue.

Mr. Robert Forder took Mr. Foote's place at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, the latter having caught a cold, which, though not serious, was quite sufficient to keep him indoors, and certainly from lecturing in such bitter weather. Mr. Foote expects to be all right for platform work again this evening (February 17), when he will discourse on "Mr. Balfour's Plea for Belief." The Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, the Tory leader in the House of Commons, has just issued a big and costly book, entitled *The Foundations of Belief*, and it is this book which Mr. Foote will criticise.

On the following Wednesday (February 20) Mr. Foote will lecture upon, and give selections from, "Shakespeare's Golden Comedy of *As You Like It*."

Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience and a most enthusiastic reception last Sunday evening at the Camberwell Branch of the N.S.S. At the conclusion of his lecture he received quite an ovation, and was urged to visit the Branch again at an early date. The Camberwell friends deserve support, for they have an attractive hall and many active workers.

To-day (Sunday, February 17) Mr. Watts lectures three times at Plymouth.

Leave has been asked to form an N.S.S. Branch in Burma, where clericalism is creeping along stealthily, and where education—with the exception of a neutral Government college—is entirely in the hands of the religious parties. There seems to be a number of Freethinkers scattered over Burma, and it is believed that, if they were united, they would be able to wield some influence.

Bishop Gimyo Adache, a Buddhist missionary from Japan, has arrived at San Francisco. His object is to preach the faith as it is in Gautama the enlightened, and to bring benighted Christians to the practice of virtue without hope of reward. Gimyo Adache is but only twenty-five years old, but he has already built one temple at Kioto, and intends to erect one in America. He says: "When Americans see the beauty and goodness of my faith, they will wish to learn it, and many will become Buddhists of my order." Incidentally he will prevent Japanese in America from seceding to the Christian faith.

The Buddhist faith has no sacrifices or atonement; no Jew Shylock God, who will have his pound of flesh, even if he takes it out of his own begotten son. Such salvation as it offers has to be achieved by each individual for him or herself, and not in reliance on the merits of any other person. Altogether we fancy the Americans will be none the worse for the preaching of Bishop Gimyo Adache.

The Rev. R. C. Fillingham, who is vicar of Hexton, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, is an almost solitary advocate of Disestablishment among the clergy. In a letter to the *Daily News*, after citing the Acts of Elizabeth, whereby all who remained members of the pre-Reformation Church were deprived of their benefices, dignities, and emoluments, and these were handed over to the post-Reformation Church (which declared her predecessors to have been sunk in "damnable idolatry," and rejected her principal services as "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits"), he says: "Those who are content to enjoy the proceeds of the disendowment of the Church of Rome must not, for very shame's sake, talk of sacrilege when it is proposed to deal similarly with the Church of England."

We think Mr. Fillingham and Lord Rosebery are both at sea in alluding to the claims of the Roman Church to English religious endowments. The true position is that the nation can at any time do what it likes with its own. Even Bishop Butler saw, and said, that no property could be gifted in perpetuity irrespective of the needs of posterity. "Property in general," he says, "is, and must be, regulated by the laws of the community." The statutes of mortmain suffice to show that the State has ever held religious endowments under stricter conditions than any other kind of property.

Miss Susan B. Anthony, who has been re-elected President of the National Woman Suffrage Association of America, is seventy-four years of age, but does not look it. Her figure is still as straight as a dart, and her eyes alert and bright. The oldest thing about her is the way she wears her heavy load of hair, which is combed, in soft white folds, over the tips of her ears, in the manner of a former generation. Her manners are charmingly fresh and young, and her enthusiasm for women's rights undimmed. Like her veteran colleague, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she is a downright Freethinker.

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A Bill has been brought before the Legislature of Michigan proposing that churches shall be taxed the same as other property. This is a step in the right direction, for, although there is said to be no connection between Church and State, the Church virtually obtains millions of dollars by its exemption from taxation.

The *Daily News*, noticing Mr. Dobell's edition of the complete works of James Thomson, says of his *City of Dreadful Night*: "It ranks with Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* as a lyrical expression of despair, and it strikes a deeper note."

In the western part of Washington Territory there is a grand mountain, about 5,000 feet high, known as Mount Ingersoll. Locally it bears the appellation of "Colonel Bob."

Colonel Ingersoll's lecture, "Which Way?" recently delivered to a crowded audience in Columbia Theatre, Chicago, will be reprinted in an early issue of the *Freethinker* from the *Progressive Thinker*. The report seems to be verbatim as far as it goes, but it can hardly contain *all* the Colonel's afternoon lecture. Probably it comprises the freshest and most important passages.

A PARSON.

A PARSON is a person, mild and bland,
Who's paid to preach what none can understand;
He undertakes to solve divine enigmas,
And rescue souls from Satan's sinful stigmas;
All free of charge, eternal life he's giving
To dying men, from whom he seeks his living;
He booms the heav'n above, to which they'll go
If they'll provide for him on earth below.
Says he: "Our home's in heav'n, there's not a doubt of it!
But, meanwhile, do your best to keep me—out of it."

The book he calls the "Word of God" he reads
For texts to sanction all his words and deeds;
To whatsoe'er his heart may be inclined
A friendly text within the book he'll find:
Ev'n texts that seem to contradict his thesis
Support it, when illumed by exegesis;
The handy texts need no illumination,
The awkward ones require interpretation.
Approving texts are always clear and logical;
The doubtful ones are always anagogical.

He turns a page to find a friendly text,
But sees a hostile one, so turns the next;
If Paul condemns, so much the worse for Paul—
He passes on, nor quotes from him at all.
To hide's discreet, when quoting's not discreeter.
So Paul's suppressed for James, or John, or Peter.
If Gospel-texts condemn his pet behavior,
He quotes from Paul to controvert his Savior.
If critics quote from Moses, he'll reply
By quoting Christ, whom erst he did deny;
And if they quote from Christ, he'll quote from Paul,
And yet maintain that Christ is all-in-all!
Quote 'gainst him Christ, Paul, Peter, John, and James,
He'll say you're "dead in sin," and call you names,
Or say, with pious pity in his eye,
"You'll see your error when you come to die!"

His Book's to "all men, all things," so he finds
For ev'ry text that loosens one that binds.
Whate'er he does or says—resists, submits—
In Holy Writ he finds a verse that fits.
The Book's convenient, so's a feather-bed;
You squeeze it here, it bulges there instead,
And shapes itself to every droway head.

He'll praise a bad deed, or a good asperse,
With warranty of chapter and of verse;
Through all the ethic gamut he will run
Amuck, and wash himself with texts, when done;
And say, should any stains persist uncleaned and ugly:
"Christ's precious blood will wash them!" smiling smugly.

A parson is a person mild and bland,
The sweetest-mannered humbug in the land!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Only a few weeks ago a lecturer at a big meeting gave utterance to the following: "All along the untrodden paths of the future we can see the hidden footprints of an unseen Hand."

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—III.

WILLIAM JOHN BIRCH.

IT was only in his old age that I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Birch. His appearance was truly venerable, and his portrait (which adorns my room) is always remarked as that of an extremely fine-looking old man. Mr. Birch was born of a well-to-do family on January 4, 1811. He was educated at Baliol College, Oxford, and graduated M.A. at New Inn Hall. He became a barrister-at-law, but was never under the necessity of practising for a livelihood.

During the prosecution of the *Oracle of Reason*, in 1842, Mr. Birch came forward as a generous supporter of that paper and of the Anti-Persecution Union. He contributed to C. Southwell's *Investigator* valuable articles on "The Blasphemy Laws" and on "Money the Motive in the History of England." He also wrote in the *Movement*, the *Reasoner*, and the *National Reformer*. To him Mr. Holyoake dedicated his *Last Trial for Atheism*, as "a friend who was twice a friend, who helped us when we were unknown and struggling." Through his liberality "The Library of Reason"—a valuable set of reprints from Hume, Spinoza, Hibbert, Ensor, Burdon, Southwell, Strauss, Lyell, etc.—was issued, edited by W. Chilton. The *Reasoner* and the publications of the Fleet-street House, under Mr. Holyoake, were also aided by his ever generous assistance. On one occasion he gave Mr. Holyoake 600 acres of land in Canada, with the purpose of forwarding Secularism; but when the bulk of Mr. Birch's large fortune was lost Mr. Holyoake returned the land-script.

In 1848 Mr. Birch published his principal work, *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*. Mr. Birch held that Shakespeare was a sceptic in regard to a future life, and devoid of reverence for the fundamental dogmas of religion. This position he endeavors to substantiate by a thorough examination both of his dramas and poems. He also wrote a work on *The Real and the Ideal*; and in a pamphlet, *Paulus Idet not a Fact*, first questioned the existence of the Apostles to the Gentiles. In 1856 he published *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of the Bible*. In his preface he states: "The principal inquiries in this book are the sum of what is taught in the Bible about a God, a Providence, and a future state; the Messianic idea, religion, and morality; the nature of things and of men. We still inquire whether God and Christ are ideas or facts, or, in other words, whether they personally existed. We shall inquire whether the Bible is a revelation of a God, or a revelation that we know nothing about him." In this book Mr. Birch strongly contended that education should be in morality, and not in religion. He says: "Nothing creates such a difference between mankind as religion. There often would be nothing but love between individuals, arising from their natural disposition, if they were not severed by religion. As there is said to be no morality without religion, unbelievers are treated as having no morality, and believers are absolved from morality towards them. We believe there can be no morality with religion."

Mr. Birch published through Mr. Truelove, in 1870, *The Jesus Christ of John Stuart Mill*, by "Antichrist," quoting on the title-page, "He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son, and confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1 John ii. 22, iv. 2, 3, and 2 John 7). This showed his standpoint. Like all Mr. Birch's productions, it was somewhat desultory. He wrote, like St. Paul, in an unconnected way, but he culled good things from all quarters. The work was adversely criticised in the *National Reformer*, and did not sell well. He also published anonymously *Bible Bestiality and Filth from the Fathers*, and a little book with much information on nicknames, entitled *Tom Paine, Charlie Bradlaugh, and Bob Ingersoll*.

Mr. Birch had a fine library and was a voluminous reader. He carried to excess the good habit of taking notes of what he read. To this I ascribe the fact that, although reading and writing all his long life, he never attained concise statement. He was always reminded of what others had said, and this led to over-much quotation and digression. Every theme elaborated itself to huge dimensions. To me he confided, when he went to Italy, the whole of his manuscripts, weighing many hundred-weight. They are full of rare information; yet no publisher would venture to print them.

As a gentleman of means and leisure, Mr. Birch collected, read, and made notes upon, I think, every work on the subject of Christian origins and early Christianity, published either in English, French, or Italian. His conclusions, though expressed on many points with the caution of one who had a legal training, was emphatic on the crucial question. He held that no such a person as the Jesus Christ of the Gospels ever lived. He thought the character an ideal, amalgamating Pagan myths on a Jewish basis. To the subject of the existence of Jesus, and cognate questions of Pagan religion and mythology, Josephus, Philo, the early Christian Fathers, etc., he devoted immense research, to which at least one individual (and that the present writer) is much indebted.

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Mr. Birch, in the days of Garibaldi and Mazzini, had been a generous supporter of the cause of Italian freedom. He usually spent the winter in Florence, where he was well known both to the English colony and to the leading Italian Freethinkers and men of letters, such as Count Ricciardi and Angelo de Gubernatis. His wide reading was always at the service of others; and several of the Freethinking writers who gathered round Thomas Scott were indebted to him for assistance with their works. He died at Florence on April 4, 1891; and it is simple truth to say he was deeply lamented by all who knew him. J. M. W.

MAHATMAISM DEAD.

THE die is cast, the bubble's burst,
Theosophists look gloomy,
And dupes no longer conjure up
That King of sprites, Koothoomee.

Take Vitchli—Putzli, Jupiter,
Beelzebub, or Jesus;
They're nothing but exploded gods:
Koothoomee alone could please us.

Grand letters did he write to Judge,
And spicy ones to Besant;
But when compelled to "show the hand,"
Things turned out most unpleasant.

I do not blame the cunning rogues
Who gather in the honey;
I only laugh at silly fools
Who contribute their money.

The fool crop is perennial:
By spider-webs surrounded,
The silly flies are quickly caught,
And utterly confounded.

Oh, for a little common sense
To guide us in our actions!
That dreary spell, Theosophy,
Must lose its chief attractions.

L.

LUTHER AND THE DEVIL.

IN the contribution of "Lucianus" upon this subject he has omitted the coarsest expressions of Luther in regard to the Devil, and, indeed, they are not fit for the columns of the *Freethinker*. For Luther was coarse, and, as Mr. David Masson notices in the work, *The Three Devils: Luther's, Milton's, and Goethe's*, he illustrated the Evil Being of Scripture to himself by means of his personal experience. As Mr. Masson says (p. 48): "The narrative of his life abounds in anecdotes showing that the Devil with him was no chimera, no mere orthodoxy, no fiction. In every page of his writings we have the word *Teufel, Teufel*, repeated again and again."

"Lucianus" has also refrained from giving the moral of the subject, which is, indeed, sufficiently obvious. But I find it very well expressed in *Flowers of Freethought* (First Series, p. 136), and take the liberty of transcribing it: "Here is a case in which the Doctor of Divinity, though naturally a kind man, is quite ready to take human life at the behest of a devilish superstition, while the less fanatical laymen shrink from such inhumanity. The only devil in the story is the devil of fearful ignorance and misbelief in Brother Martin. He it was who needed the exorcist, although the truth would have greatly surprised him."

LUCIFER.

CHILDREN'S PARTY.

MANY thanks to the friends who have enabled us to give a most successful party to the little ones. I am glad to say that from sale of gallery tickets and programs, we have received sufficient to meet expenses. This is due to the kindness of Mr. W. Bell, of Drury-lane, who has done the entire printing gratuitously, as in past years. The cake, etc., acknowledged last week from Mr. Godwin, Hackney, should have been Mr. Goodwin, of Shoreditch. A balance-sheet will appear next week.

R. FORDER, *Treasurer*.

Brain and Mind.

No fact in our constitution can be considered more certain than this, that the brain is the chief organ of mind, and has mind for its principal function. As we descend in the animal scale, through quadruped, birds, reptiles, fishes, etc., the nervous system dwindles according to the decreasing measure of mental endowment.—*Professor A. Bain, "The Senses and the Intellect," 4th edition, p. 11.*

The Gospel of John a Forgery.

The author meant his work to be taken for the apostles' He intimates that he was an immediate disciple of the Lord, *the beloved disciple*, who was none other than the apostle John, and avoids all mention of the *name*. Instead of employing a direct method, he is contented with an indirect process, which served his purpose more effectually. John's authorship is but delicately hinted. To make his character correspond with the nature of the gospel, the writer idealised the apostle to a certain extent. . . . Under the inspiration of a philosophical Hellenist the Jewish Christian apostle—impetuous, ambitious, intolerant—becomes the calm preacher of love, the speculative disciple whose heart is as large as his view is extended; the expounder of a new and absolute religion, founded by the only-begotten Son.—*Dr. S. Davidson, "Introduction to the Study of the New Testament," vol. ii., pp. 495, 497; 1894.*

Imitating God.

Plato has said that "virtue consists in resembling God." But how is man to resemble a being who, it is acknowledged, is incomprehensible to mankind, who cannot be conceived by any of those means by which he is alone capable of having perceptions? If this being, who is shown to man under such various aspects, who is said to owe nothing to his creatures, is the author of all the good as well as all the evil that takes place, how can he be the model for the conduct of the human race living together in society? At most, he can only follow one side of the character, because among his fellows he alone is reputed virtuous who does not deviate in his conduct from justice; who abstains from evil; who performs with punctuality those duties he owes to his fellows. If it be taken up, and insisted he is not the author of evil—only of the good, I say, Very well; that is precisely what I wanted to know. You thereby acknowledge he is not the author of everything. We are no longer at issue; you are inconclusive to your own premises, consequently ought not to demand an implicit reliance on what you choose to assert. —*D'Holbach, "System of Nature," part ii., chap. viii.*

About the Holy Bible.

Is anything to be learned from Hosea and his wife? Is there anything of use in Joel, in Amos, in Obadiah? Can we get any good from Jonah and his gourd? Is it possible that God is the real author of Micah and Nahum, of Habakkuk and Zephaniah, of Haggai and Malachi and Zechariah, with his red horses, his four horns, his four carpenters, his flying roll, his mountains of brass, and the stone with four eyes? Is there anything in these "inspired" books that has been of benefit to man?

Have they taught us how to cultivate the earth, to build houses, to weave cloth, to prepare food? Have they taught us to paint pictures, to chisel statues, to build bridges, or ships, or anything of beauty or of use? Did we get our ideas of government, of religious freedom, of the liberty of thought, from the Old Testament? Did we get from any of these books a hint of any science? Is there in the "sacred volume" a word, a line, that has added to the wealth, the intelligence, and the happiness of mankind? Is there one of the books of the Old Testament as entertaining as *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Travels of Gulliver*, or *Peter Wilkins and his Flying Wife*? Did the author of Genesis know as much about nature as Humboldt, or Darwin, or Haeckel? Is what is called the Mosaic Code as wise or as merciful as the code of any civilised nation? Were the writers of Kings and Chronicles as great historians, as great writers, as Gibbon and Draper? Is Jeremiah or Habakkuk equal to Dickens or Thackeray? Can the authors of Job and the Psalms be compared with Shakespeare? Why should we attribute the best to man and the worst to God?—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS.—Their credulity was unbounded. They had a sublime disregard for truth; not so much from perversity as from carelessness and indifference to its sacred character. Their unscrupulousness when seeking for arguments to enforce their positions is notorious; as well as the prevalence among them of what are known as pious frauds.—*Judge C. B. Waite, "History of the Christian Religion to the Year 200," p. 454; Chicago.*

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BOOK CHAT.

The Danish critic and Freethinker, Dr. Georg Brandes, is finishing a book on Shakespeare, which will appear in German at Paris.

* * *

Herbert Spencer has reprinted his essay on Weismannism from the *Contemporary Review*, and it is now published with a postscript. Mr. Spencer rightly says that, "as influencing men's view about Education, Ethics, Sociology, and Politics, the question whether acquired characters are inherited is the most important question before the scientific world." The question still remains an open one, though Mr. Spencer ably sustains the affirmative, while the case for a negative conclusion is strongly presented by Mr. W. P. Ball in his book, *Are the Effects of Use and Disuse Inherited?*

* * *

Dr. J. R. Monroe, the founder of the *Ironclad Age*, who died in 1891, at the age of sixty-eight, wrote, when in his teens, a Byronic skit entitled *Will Cobbett's Vision; or, the Devil and Tom Paine*. It has been reprinted by his daughter, and is published at the office of the *Ironclad Age* (Indianapolis) at 25 cents. Like all Dr. Monroe's writings, it is full of gay wisdom. In portraying his Satanic Majesty and his abode there are opportunities for much fun and satire upon orthodox doctrines, of which Dr. Monroe fully avails himself.

* * *

An English translation of Dr. Max Nordau's pessimistic work, *Degeneration*, will be published shortly. Those who know his *Conventional Lies of Our Civilisation* are aware of the iconoclastic character of the writings of this Hungarian Freethinker of Jewish birth. Among the subjects which come under his lash, as symptoms of the sickness of the *fin de siècle*, are Tolstoism, pre-Rephaelism, Wagnerism, and Ibsenism.

* * *

Lives of Christ are as numerous as blackberries, and as divergent as Christian creeds. Many have lamented that Jesus Christ never left any records himself, or even any instructions to his disciples to do so for him. It seems that at last—can it be owing to disgust at Farrar's gush?—J. C. has determined to rectify the omission; and an *Autobiography by Jesus of Nazareth* is published by J. P. Cooke, of Boston. One Olive G. Pettis is the "humble instrument" of this revelation. Olive declares: "Sentence by sentence it has been printed before me in bright electric letters ere I consigned them to paper, and every expression was as new to me as to the reader from first to last." We have not yet seen the book, but only its announcement in the *Two Worlds*. If, however, the revelation reveals anything, it will be vastly different from others of its species.

* * *

Some time ago a Glasgow Spiritist published the revelations of *Hafed, Prince of Persia*, supposed to be a contemporary of J. C., who gave particulars of his early life. The revelations came through the influence of Mr. David Duguid, a toucher-up of photos to Mr. Bowman, a leading Glasgow Spiritist—this "mejum" being also celebrated for skimble-skamble pictures, attributed to the spirits of Jan Steen or Turner. It appears from *Hafed* that both the Prince of Persia and Jesus Christ talked in the Scots tongue, using "will" for "shall," etc. This revelation, however, was surpassed by that vouchsafed to a member of the French Academy, who was a great collector of autographs, and purchased a letter signed by Jesus Christ, written in excellent French. Why not?

* * *

In Mr. Wheeler's pamphlet on *The Christian Doctrine of Hell* he has given many citations from the old divines to the effect that one of the enjoyments of heaven will be to witness the torments of the damned. To these might be added the Scotch poet, Sir David Lindsay, of the Mount, 1490–1567, who says of the blessed:—

> They sall rejoyis to se the great dolour
> Of dampnit folk in Hell, and thair torment,
> Because of God it is the juste jugement.

* * *

Professor C. H. Tawney's translation of the collection of Jain stories, entitled *Kathakosa*, for the New Oriental Translation Fund (at the rooms of the Royal Asiatic Society, 22 Albemarle-street, London, W.), will be ready in the course of the present month. Students of comparative folk-tales must be eager to have this work in their hands, as Mr. Tawney's notes of variants of the tales in different countries of India, as well as in Europe, cannot fail to prove both interesting and useful.

* * *

The Religions of the World, by G. M. Grant, D.D. (A. & C. Black), is a very different production from the *Religious Systems of the World* published by Sonnenschein, which attempted to give a view of various faiths from the standpoint of those who hold them. Dr. Grant's work should be entitled "Other Religions as Seen by Christian Eyes." The book, nevertheless, gives much information in a cheap form, and will help to open eyes to the fact that there are other religions besides Christianity which can claim to have done good among the races who have held them.

WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW.

In these modern times of misery, daily trouble, pain, and strife,
While the poor class toil and labor in the struggle for dear life,
We are taught that a Creator, an essence of sweet love,
With fond sympathy and pity regards us from above.
We are told that on Mount Sinai the just Jehovah said
That the father's sins should rightly be heaped on their children's heads.
For what did this God create us all to suffer here below?
That's what I cannot comprehend, but what I'd like to know.

With infallible foreknowledge, why made he Mother Eve,
And, knowing well what would ensue, let the Devil her deceive?
Did he desire mankind's fall when, with his endless might,
With ease he could have kept the fiend from Eden's holy site?
Then, not content with having to degradation brought the pair,
He blessed them with two children, their misery to share.
Why Cain should hate his brother, and slay him as a foe,
Perhaps his God could comprehend, but *I* should like to know.

Then Cain he set his mark upon, and banished him to Nod,
Where, strange to say, he found a spouse, provided by his God,
That this pair they might propagate sin *infinitum ad*—
For the world it got so wicked that it made Jehovah mad.
Said he, "Of you I've had enough; I'm sorry I'm your God!"
(Which speech, for the Almighty, seems just a trifle odd).
"I'll drown the cursed lot of you, then send you down below!"
Why God made man to drown and roast is what I want to know.

"But no," said God, "this will not do; you're getting off too cheap;
I formed and put this race of man on earth to wail and weep:
If I the lot exterminate, the fiend will only grin
And say the great 'I am' has had to knuckle down to him."
So he commanded patriarch Noah to build a boat so huge
That he and household (pets as well) could float on the deluge.
But how they from all parts of earth into the ark did go
Is one of those great mysteries that I should like to know.

As years rolled by, strange to relate, the world grew worse than ever;
"Confound it all," said Pater G., "Old Nick's for me too clever;
I'll go on earth, in form of man—save them by hook or crook:
Beelzebub, mine enemy, *now* to your laurels look!"
But Satan only laughed with scorn, he knew his "biz" too well
To fear that such a helpless God could thin the ranks of hell.
He tried; but how the universe fared with its God below
Is what I cannot comprehend, but what I'd like to know.

Now, faithful all, just ponder deep before you bend the knee
To that imaginary God, the father of J. C.
Can he be kind and loving who could mankind create
To torture in this world and next with endless fiery fate?
The profligate, the wealthy, the good, the poor, and all:
Rascality predominant—the weakest to the wall.
Say rather, to yourselves be true, as through this life you go,
And since you cannot comprehend you need not seek to know

Alex. Mitchell.

Pupil Teacher (to little Isaacstein, who is learning the Ten Plagues)—"Now, Master Joseph, what would you have done had you been in the thick darkness, that might be felt?" Master Jo—"Vat might be felt? Vy, I vould start a hat factory."

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FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

I AM quite amazed to discover the extraordinary gresdiness and facility with which men assert, believe, and reassert, and are believed.—*George Grote.*

WE ask for long life, but 'tis deep life, or grand moments that signify. Let the measure of time be spiritual, not mechanical. Moments of insight, of fine personal relation, a smile, a glance, what ample borrowers of eternity they are!—*Emerson.*

No truth can, properly speaking, be apprehended and made a portion of our mental acquisitions which cannot be verified when told to us; and any proposition which we can verify we could discover—that is, what *man* can verify man could have reached and worked out for himself.—*W. Rathbone Greg.*

WE have never witnessed the construction of a world. We only perceive the everlasting flux and reflux of phenomena, the ceaseless pulsation of nature and life, evolution, transformation, birth, death, and birth again. But nature herself is dumb as to her whence or whither.—*Professor W. Knight.*

CASTING OUT DEVILS.—It is important to remember that the theory of demoniacal possession, and its supposed cure by means of exorcism and invocations, was most common among the Jews long before the Christian era. As casting out devils was the most common type of Christian miracles, so it was the commonest belief and practice of the Jewish nation. Christianity merely shared the national superstition, and changed nothing but the form of exorcism.—"*Supernatural Religion*," *vol. i., p. 145.*

THE Church has not allowed women to inherit or hold property. It was a general ecclesiastical rule that a woman could never take part of an inheritance with a man unless by the particular and ancient customs of certain towns and cities. This restriction upon woman's right of property so obliterated the sense of justice in men's mind that husbands have not hesitated to use property coming to them through wives in the maintenance of a second or illegal family, while denying the legal wife and children the commonest necessaries of life. As late as 1878, when a law was enacted in one of the Swiss cantons allowing sisters to share inheritances with brothers, it met with great opposition from such brothers, many of whom protested their own ruin would follow.—*Matilda Joslyn Gage, in "The Truth Seeker Annual for 1895."*

PROTESTANT PERSECUTION.—But while the pre-eminent atrocity of the persecutions of the Church of Rome is fully admitted, nothing can be more grossly disingenuous or untrue than to represent persecution as her peculiar taint. She persecuted to the full extent of the power of her clergy, and that power was very great. The persecution of which every Protestant Church was guilty was measured by the same rule, but clerical influence in Protestant countries was comparatively weak. The Protestant persecutions were never so sanguinary as those of the Catholics, but the principle was affirmed quite as strongly, was acted on quite as constantly, and was defended quite as pertinaciously by the clergy.—*W. E. H. Lecky, M.A., "History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe," chap. iv., part ii., pp. 42, 43, vol. ii.*

"It was in the War of the Rebellion," said the diffident and blushing assistant rector. "A company of Union soldiers were ordered to take a Rebel battery. Quickly they sprang to the charge; but, alas! before they reached the guns they broke and fled. All, that is, except one corporal, who rushed in, seized a gunner, and carried him off captive. When the company reached the little clump of trees from whose shelter they had started, they gathered round the gallant corporal, and asked how he managed to capture his prisoner.

"'I just went in and took him,' said the hero, modestly. 'Ah, boys, why didn't you all keep on? There was a man for every one of you there.'

"And so I say to you, my dear young Christian soldiers. There is a man for every one in this world.

"Yes, my dear young brothers; there is a man for every one of you here.

"Yes, my dear young sisters; there is—er—there is—er—there is work for you all in the vineyard of the Lord if you only seek it. Let us now sing the 425th hymn:—

"'Oh, save me from the careless word,
The swift, unbidden thought,
And make me always think and speak
Exactly as I ought.'"

And the young assistant sat down with an intensely relieved expression, and mopped his burning brow.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Is the bishop a broad man, and liberal in his views?" "O my, yes. He's abroad most of the time, and in giving his views he is most prodigal."

A gentleman dined one day with a dull preacher. Dinner was scarcely over before the gentleman fell asleep, but was awakened by the divine, and invited to go and hear him preach. "I beseech you, sir," said he, "to excuse me; I can sleep very well where I am."

Jenkins—"Great stroke of luck for Brownley. I knew him when he was a poor theological student, and he has just been selected as pastor of one of the most fashionable churches in the city." Mrs. Jenkins—"So I understand. Rich congregation, isn't it?" Jenkins—"Rich? They have special monthly prayer-meetings to pray for a tight money market."

A "hard case" was interrogated the other Sunday by a friend who had just seen him at church, but whom he now found swallowing a glass of brandy and water at a public bar-room. "I saw you in church this morning listening to a discourse upon righteousness and temperance. How comes it that I now see you here drinking?" "I always thirst after righteousness," was the reply.

Two colored men took refuge under a tree in a violent thunderstorm. "Julius, can you pray?" "No, Sam," was the reply; "nebber prayed in my life." "Well, can't you sing a hymn?" Just then the lightning struck a tree near by, shivering it, when the first speaker exclaimed: "See heah, honey, sumfin' 'ligious has got to be done, an' dat mighty suddin', too; s'pose you pass around de hat."

A Scotch minister, who was very fond of using the personal pronoun, often placed it wrongly. While preaching in London he once took for his text, "The devil he goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." "My friends," he said, "we will divide our subject into three headings. Firstly, who the devil he was; secondly, who the devil he was seeking; and thirdly, what the devil he was roaring about." The congregation also roared, but with laughter.

Darwin's Opponents.

One eminent clerical reviewer, in spite of Darwin's thirty years of quiet labor, and in spite of the powerful summing-up of his book, prefaced a diatribe by saying that Darwin "might have been more modest had he given some slight reason for dissenting from the views generally entertained." Another distinguished clergyman, vice-president of a Protestant institute to combat "dangerous science," declared Darwinism "an attempt to dethrone God." Another critic spoke of persons accepting the Darwinian views as "under the frenzied inspiration of the inhaler of mephitic gas," and of Darwin's argument as a "jungle of fanciful assumptions." Another spoke of Darwin's views as suggesting that "God is dead," and declared that Darwin's work "does open violence to everything which the Creator himself has told us in the Scriptures of the methods and results of his work." Still another theological authority declares: "If the Darwinian theory is true, Genesis is a lie, the whole framework of the book of life falls to pieces, and the revelation of God to man, as we Christians know it, is a delusion and a snare."—*Andrew D. White, in "The Popular Science Monthly."*

Obituary.

ON Sunday morning I had the melancholy duty of conducting the funeral, at Finchley, of Frederick Wilkinson, the grandson of our late much-respected friend, Mr. Trevillion. The deceased was a young man of great promise and ability, cut off at the early age of nineteen. All friends will condole with the bereaved mother and other relatives.—R. FORDER.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, a lecture. (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Mr. Balfour's Plea for Belief." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Tuesday, at 8.30, dramatic class rehearsals. Wednesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "Shakespeare's Golden Comedy of *As You Like It*."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Robert Shore, "Why Secularists are Not Socialists." (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing for N.S.S. members and friends. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "The Star of Science in the Night of Faith." (Preceded by vocal and instrumental music.) Thursday, at 7.30, free science classes.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, Rev. Stewart Headlam, "The County Council and the Ballet." (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Empire of the Dead Over the Living."

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 7, W. J. Heath, "What Caused the French Revolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8 papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, J. P. Cogito, "Knowledge *v.* Belief."

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, Stanley Jones, "God, Man, and Design"; 2.30, "The Doctrines of Christianity"; 6.30, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, J. M. Robertson, "Mr. Mallock and Socialism"; 2.30, "Mr. Gladstone on the Atonement"; 6.30, "The Failure of Christianity."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Monro, "Christ and the Twelve Apostles a Myth."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 3, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "Kant"; 7, C. Doeg, "Religion *v.* Superstition."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Leonard Hall, "The Unemployed: the Problem Stated and Solved"; 3, "Twelve Months of Liberal-cum-Toryism"; 6.30, "From Slavery to Socialism." (Free.)

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street); 6.30, Orris Kaye, "Cremation," with limelight illustrations.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "The Divine Sacrifice in its Newest Light—A Criticism."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Population and the Social Question"; 7, "Christianity: its Progress."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6, business meeting—friends invited.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, Robert Weighman, "Thomas Paine."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Feb. 24, Edinburgh. March 3, Hull; 10, Sheffield; 11, Chesterfield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 24, Camberwell.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Feb. 17, Failsworth. March 26 and 27, Sheffield.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—NO. 8. SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

HUNTED DOWN.

A YEAR ago, this very month, I had the honor of exposing a shameless fraud—the story of the converted Atheist Shoemaker, by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Now that February has come round again I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have succeeded in publicly branding the vilest libel that was ever launched against our much-abused party. I do not mean that I have done this piece of work entirely by myself. I simply mean that it would not have been done without me. Others have shared in the labor, and I should be base to conceal or minimise the fact; but this matter, like all others, has required leadership, and I have not shrunk from the responsibilities of my position.

One of the responsibilities of my position is the facing of misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and detraction. Our party encourages freedom of opinion, and a good deal of it is exercised upon the President's policy. Notwithstanding the unanimous opinion of the Executive that something should be done to check the infamous slander referred to, there are persons who shook their heads, muttered misgivings, whispered that it was all a mistake, and hinted that the President had urged the party upon a rash course. Some of them prophesied disaster, and perhaps they are secretly grieved at the failure of their vaticinations. The great majority of the party, however, is always sound enough, and always generous in its loyalty. It does not expect supernatural wisdom or capacity; it only expects its officers to do their best, and it supports them in their endeavor. There was no need to incite the majority to defend its reputation. It longed to do so. Indifference to insult is all very well in its way, and some of it is indispensable; but it should never be carried to the point where it may be mistaken for guilt or pusillanimity. There is a time to bear and a time to resist; a time to be grimly silent, and a time when the sword of indignation should leap from its scabbard. And surely that time had arrived when an incredibly filthy libel upon the headquarters of the National Secular Society was circulated in a pamphlet, with an abundance of detail which gave it a very dangerous air of plausibility.

This libel will be found in the report of last Monday's trial in the Court of Queen's Bench, which has been reported verbatim for the *Freethinker* by the Press Association. Unfortunately, the whole of it could not be given in this week's issue. Neither time nor space permitted of this being done. It will be concluded next week; after which it will be republished in a permanent form, with introduction, notes, and a decisive statement about the "Leeds Orgies," which have been for so many years the theme of heated rhetoric on Christian platforms, and which, alas! have even been held up for abhorrence, as an outcome of "Bradlaughism," in a journal with pretensions to Freethought!

As the whole of the trial does not appear in this week's issue, I may briefly tell the readers what is in store for them. There is first the examination of John Snow, the Christian publisher, and his merciless cross-examination by Mr. Walton; secondly, Mr. Walton's splendid speech in reply to the defence, a speech which commanded universal admiration; thirdly, the judge's charge to the jury; and, lastly, the jury's verdict with the Court's judgment.

The trial itself occupied several hours, though the issue was, legally, a very narrow one. Mr. Harper, of the firm of Harper and Battcock, the solicitors for our side, was in attendance with his clerk, Mr. Hurrel. It would be impossible to praise too highly the care and ability displayed by this firm in their preparation of the case. Mr. Cluer, the junior counsel on our side, is a son-in-law of Mr. R. A. Cooper, of Norwich. His capacity and attainments ought to have secured him a high position at the bar. Mr. Lawrence Walton, M.P., the senior counsel, had the case remarkably well in hand. He is a first-rate speaker, with a real oratorical faculty. I listened to him as a connoisseur, and I was delighted. His plea for freedom of thought and speech for all inquirers, his reprobation of bigotry, and his censure of the "charity" which thinketh all evil of opponents, were delivered in beautiful language and with great force and sincerity. Mr. Murphy, the senior counsel on the other side, struck me as an excellent browbeater. There was an absence of "breeding" in his whole manner. He bluntly told Mr. Smith that his opinions were important in estimating the value of his character. He had no case, and he knew it. His object was to excite prejudice, and to introduce illegitimate evidence. In this attempt he was foiled in a masterly manner by Mr. Walton. Finding the game was up, Mr. Murphy decamped, leaving the poor, battered case in the hands of his junior, Mr. Rawlinson; a gentleman of loose, shambling, but fluent eloquence, with a great gift for worrying a point, and pressing an obvious absurdity as though it were a cogent argument. Mr. Rawlinson is of a pious turn of mind. He occasionally indulges in open-air preaching. I hear that he was very interested in this case, and that he pleaded for Snow & Co. gratuitously. If this be true, he has furnished a fresh illustration of the truth that what is got for nothing is generally worth it.

Judge Lawrance did not exhibit any particular ability. What little he did display seemed rather at the service of the defendants. He never uttered a word in reprobation of a libel which Mr. Justice Wright said was about the worst he had ever read. He appeared to regard it as one of those things which a Christian disputant might be expected to say in a moment of exaltation. His lordship remarked that people forgot themselves in politics, for instance, as well as in religion; as though it were common, in political controversy, to accuse opponents of crimes like the promotion of unnatural vices! On the whole, his lordship created the impression that he would not be displeased by a verdict for the defendants. Of course an English judge is beyond suspicion of partiality; but, as a matter of fact, Justice Lawrance, when he sat in the House of Commons, was a rabid opponent of the late Charles Bradlaugh.

John Snow, the principal defendant, cut a sorry figure under cross-examination. He is evidently a Christian. You could not mistake him for anything else. His code of morality would make an Atheist shudder. Somehow or other, John Snow kept at a safe distance from his friend, W. R. Bradlaugh. As far as profane eyes could see, they exchanged no civilities; in fact, they held no communication. W. R. Bradlaugh himself I saw in court for the first time. One inspection is sufficient. He has nothing of "Bradlaugh" but the name. If there is anything in physiognomy, he is—well, fit to edit the *Anti-Infidel*.

Mr. R. O. Smith, on our side, bore the brunt of cross-examination. Owing to his legal position at the Hall of Science, in the old days, he had to figure as plaintiff—no other person having any status in an action. Mr. Smith

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has had a lot of trouble in this matter, which I cordially recognise. He should not have said, however, that I solicited subscriptions on his behalf. I have done nothing of the kind. Certainly I have opened a Fighting Fund, of which I will give an account when it is prudent; probably at the next Conference. But I have not said what I wanted the money for, nor have I told anyone; still less have I authorised anyone to make any sort of statement in regard to it; and I entirely decline to endorse Mr. Smith's statement in the witness-box. Of course I say this merely out of self-defence, and not out of any discourtesy to Mr. Smith, who was no doubt under the impression that he had to state as a fact what was only his inference. I must also correct the statement that Mr. Smith built the Hall of Science with his own capital. It would never have been built at all if the Freethought party had not subscribed the initial sum of £1,298, which Mr. Smith has admitted that he received through Mr. Bradlaugh. More money was subsequently expended by Mr. Smith out of his earnings and savings; but it is a little misleading to put it, as it was put in court, that Mr. Smith built the Hall of Science entirely out of his own capital; as though the National Secular Society, and Charles Bradlaugh at its head, were simply housed there at Mr. Smith's good pleasure. I am well aware that Mr. Smith did not intend to create this impression. It was an exaggeration into which Mr. Walton fell through not knowing all the details. Nevertheless, as I am giving the report to the world, I am bound to provide the correction.

Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Robert Forder, and Miss E. M. Vance, the other witnesses on our side, were not much cross-examined. The testimony in favor of Mr. Smith's moral and legal responsibility for the conduct of the Hall of Science was simply overwhelming.

The line of defence adopted by the other side was a singular exhibition of Christian morality. When the action was begun, the defendants boasted that they had at last an opportunity of publicly establishing the vile immorality of Secularism. They promised their dupes that when the case was tried the charges in the libel would be "proved up to the hilt." Christian evidencers went about chuckling. It was rumored that a whole army of detectives would appear as witnesses to cover the Atheists with confusion. I heard all this, and I smiled. It soon came to my knowledge that the gang of libellers were quarreling amongst themselves. W. R. Bradlaugh bitterly complained of being led into a trap by Powell. There was not a shadow of a shade of evidence obtainable; the libel was a mere malignant invention. But it was against the rules of Christian Evidence to confess an error and offer reparation. The sole desire of the libellers was to save their own skins. Accordingly they instructed their counsel to plead that they never meant their accusations to apply to the Hall of Science, but to a hall at Leeds. This was a policy of desperation. It has been a jest among Christians for twenty-five years that the Hall of Science is opposite a lunatic asylum. It is also known to be the headquarters of the Secular party. Yet although the place referred to in the libel was "the headquarters of the Secularists" and "opposite a lunatic asylum," these good Christians, these champions of virtue, these guardians of morality, set up the monstrously base and lying plea (at the eleventh hour) that the place referred to was two hundred miles away in Yorkshire!

It is easy to see what the libellers were depending upon. Their trust was in the Christian prejudices of the jury. But the libel was too gross to be countenanced by any dozen men who had no interest in its circulation. The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, with £30 damages. The libellers have also to pay costs, and their total bill will amount to something like £250.

Thirty pounds is not a great sum. It would hardly repay me or Mr. Smith (I should imagine) for the time and attention we have given to the case. But the great thing is the VERDICT. It is the opening of a new era. Henceforth the baser sort of Christians will know that they cannot libel Secularists with absolute impunity. All the London papers, with the exception of that ridiculous *Daily News*, have published the fact that a jury has punished Christians for libelling Freethinkers. The fellows tried to send me to prison for an article headed "Hunting Them Down," but they failed, and I have now the pleasure of putting the title in the past tense. They are now "*Hunted* Down."

G. W. FOOTE.

A RATIONAL SUNDAY.

THE City Corporation of London is hardly the most enlightened or liberal of bodies, yet by the substantial majority of ninety-eight against sixty-eight the Court of Common Council has decided that the forthcoming Art Exhibition at the Guildhall shall be open on Sunday afternoons. On the last occasion the Sunday opening was allowed by a narrow majority as an experiment, and the large increase of the majority may be taken as a sign that the orderly character of the attendance is quite satisfactory. Indeed, this is the universal testimony. Wherever such Sunday exhibitions are opened those who attend them are orderly. Quiet, innocent enjoyment is afforded to thousands, and sobriety and good conduct are increased. In congratulating the City upon the good sense of the majority of its Council on this question, I cannot but ask if it is anything less than a scandal that collections formed by the State and paid for out of the money of the people should be closed to the toiling thousands on their one day of leisure. Under the most despotic government on the continent such an infringement of freedom would not be tolerated. Yet in this boasted land of liberty, with a Premier who was at one time a president of a Sunday Society, and with Mr. John Morley in the Cabinet, no assurance can be obtained of a speedy removal of those restrictions which bar working men from seeing their own property in the British Museum, the National Gallery, and other national treasure-houses on the one day when they can view them with ease and convenience.

Here, as elsewhere, it is clericalism that is the enemy. The priests want no competition with their own monopoly of the Lord's Day. The Sunday Society instituted a Museum Sunday, and boasted that fifty-four sermons had been delivered on their behalf. It proved that the bulk of the preachers were Unitarians, while Ethical culturists and Positivists were included to swell up the number. The men of God, as a whole, want no such healthy competition with their avocation as is afforded by museums, art galleries, libraries, lecture and concert rooms. The shut-up Sunday is an institution preserved in the interests of this particular class of parasites on the commonwealth. If they believed in the Sunday as a commandment of God, as they preach, they should keep holy Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, the day on which the Almighty rested from his labors. They should put to death any one who as much as kindled a fire on that day (Exodus xxxv. 3, 4). As to Sunday, its very name betrays its Pagan origin, and indicates how much of sun-worship and sun-myth is interwoven in the fabric of Christianity. It is to Constantine, if to any one, that the sacred character of the first day of the week is due.

To Jesus, the Sabbath-breaker, is attributed the sensible utterance, that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. But the men of God virtually say to the rest of the world, "The Sabbath was made for *us*; but *you* were made for the Sabbath." They have resorted to every device to preserve the monopoly of their day. They have pretended concern for the poor attendants at public institutions; but, when shown that that objection could be obviated by the attendants having another day, they have, to put off Sunday opening, increased the hours of attendance by the needless opening of the museums in the evening, when the jaded workers, having journeyed home to rest, have no inclination to return to visit museums. They have pretended that Sunday opening is not desired by the workers, though the *élite* of them have again and again pronounced their decision from their Trade Unions. They hold up the bugbear of a Continental Sunday, especially to those who do not know what the Continental Sunday is like. One might as well pretend that, because preachers are fond of vestments and histrionic attitudes, therefore they will proceed to wear paint, powder, and wigs like actors, as to suppose that the English workmen will turn Sunday into something they do not desire.

A day of rest existed before Christianity, and would remain though all its dogmas had vanished. But the worker requires not only physical rest, he needs the best rest of recreation: the employment of new faculties, the refreshment of eye and heart by contact with the beauties of nature and the masterpieces of art; and the interested men of God, in restricting their choice between the church

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and the public-house, are largely responsible for the degradation they so often lament.

The irksome stress of the Sabbatarian Sunday, as Charles Dickens pointed out nearly half a century ago, falls mainly on the poor. The well-to-do can, and do, enjoy themselves then as on any other day. At their homes and clubs they can take any amusements and any refreshments they please. At the Niagara Hall an aristocratic crowd skate regularly all Sunday, unheeding the invitation of church bells. In summer time pleasure boats, carriages, wagonettes, and trains take out of town the well-to-do; or the rich man, if pious, can go on Saturday to his country house, and as he is walking in his beautiful gardens can turn up his eyes at the passing cyclist, who risks damnation by obtaining fresh air and change of scenery in his own way.

Children, as well as the poor, are the worst sufferers from our pious Sunday. Only those who have lived in Scotland or in religious families in England, where "keeping the Lord's Day holy" is enforced in its full austerity, can tell the suffering regularly imposed every seventh day upon little ones by their forced restraint on Sunday. Every natural impulse is set down as a sin. To play, run, jump, sing, or whistle is checked as though inspirations of the devil, instead of the spontaneous ebullition of natural, healthy life. Mr. H. Crabb Robinson, in his *Diary*, tells how he was not even allowed to look into a picture book. To read anything save "the word of God" or pious literature was considered an infringement of the fourth commandment, as likely to be punished as an infraction of any of the other prohibitions of the Decalogue. Such teaching is largely responsible for making us, what the continental nations do not scruple to call us, the most hypocritical nation on the face of the earth. I have frequently had the pleasure of witnessing children, brought up in strict observance of the Sabbath, yet romping and dancing with delight when they spend the Lord's Day with a Freethinker's family.

The little progress made with the legislative enfranchisement of the Sunday shows how much work has to be done; but little by little the ice-bound creeds of the past are loosening. The sun of Freethought is rising, and the Sunday, wrested from the hands of the priests, will become a day of gladness instead of a time of gloom.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE REAL REDEEMERS OF THE WORLD.

THE present condition of the world is certainly not all that could be desired; still, it is satisfactory to know that it is a considerable improvement upon the past. The history of the human race has been one of progression from physical serfdom and mental darkness towards freedom and knowledge. The men who have been the principal contributors to this advancement were not founders of religious systems, but expounders of science, philosophy, and the principle of individual liberty. The real redeemers of the world are those who study the great facts of nature, learning her secrets, and revealing her power and value to the human family. While Christ devoted himself to the mysteries of theology, such reformers as Copernicus, Galileo, Bruno, and subsequently Newton, Locke, Darwin, and a host of other servants of humanity, endeavored to the best of their ability to ascertain the truths of existence, and to vindicate the principle of freedom. Copernicus and his immediate successors redeemed the world from errors which for ages had been nursed by the Church; Locke based his philosophy upon knowledge, not upon the faiths of theology; Newton contended that the universe was regulated by natural law, not by supernatural power; and Darwin exploded the Bible error of creation. These redeemers rescued mankind from the burden of ignorance and superstition that had so long prevented the recognition of truth and the advancement of knowledge. Shakespeare contributed more to the enlightenment of the human race than Christ was capable of doing; Darwin far surpassed St. Paul in bringing to view the great forces of nature, and the Freethought heroes and martyrs aided the emancipation of intellect to a far higher degree than either the "Carpenter of Nazareth" or the whole of his followers. The power that has enabled these secular redeemers of the world to achieve their glorious results was found, not in perplexing theologies, but in the principles of Science and Liberty—the true saviors of men.

Christ is paraded as the one redeemer of the world, but his system lacks such essentials of all reform as worldly ambition, and reliance upon the human power of regeneration. If we lament the poverty and wretchedness we behold, we are told by Christians that "the poor shall never cease out of the land." If we seek to remove the sorrow and despair existing around us, we are reminded that they were "appointed curses to the sons of Adam." If we work to improve our condition, we are taught that we should remain "in that state of life in which it has pleased God to call us." When we endeavor to improve our minds and to cultivate our intellects, we are informed that "we are of ourselves unable to do any good thing." If we seek to promote the happiness of others, we are assured that "faith in Christ is of more importance than labor for man." We to-day have but a vague idea of the extent of the influence such teachings once exercised over the minds of those who believed them. These teachings have permeated the minds of orthodox Christians, stifling their reason and perverting their judgment, till they cherish the delusion that the reasonings of philosophers, the eloquence of poets, and the struggles of patriots are all worse than useless unless purified by the "Spirit of Christ." It is such delusions which foster the erroneous and retarding belief that every thought which does not aspire to the throne of Christ, every action which is not sanctioned by him, and every motive which does not proceed from a love for him should be discouraged as antagonistic to our real progress in life.

The two elements in society which are termed respectively radical and conservative have, it is supposed, been in operation in all periods and in all nations. Hence, in every country some freedom has been found; but its extent has always had to be determined by the amount of culture that existed. No doubt the conservative element in nature has its advantages; it is, however, a mischief when it is employed to retain the existing condition of things merely from a dread of change, and not because what exists is right or needful. It is, in my opinion, through this error that the notion that Jesus was a secular reformer has been so long perpetuated. In times of mental darkness and political servitude Christ was accepted by some as the "star of hope," and ignorance and fanaticism have since fostered the delusion. It is not surprising that the superstitious ideas which were imparted to the young, and encouraged by priestly influence, self-interest, and bad training in the domain of real knowledge, should have held their sway upon the human mind. Robert Owen showed clearly that men are the result of the conditions in which their characters were formed and developed. The circumstances which surrounded the early stages of societarian man were favorable to intellectual stagnation; hence the slavish prostration to the machinations of theology, and the persistent adherence to false notions of the duties of man, and of the power of the universe. It is science and liberty that have redeemed mankind from their primitive state of ignorance and slavery.

When knowledge and freedom were secured, the power of theology decreased, and men acquired faith in self-help and united effort. Men who live under the influence of science and liberty create the institutions, the government, and the sentiments of their time. They are no longer the slaves of others, dependent on doles and alms, but they become a self-supporting productive power in society. Thus is developed in the race that which is always admired—namely, dignity in character, and self-reliance in action. To call forth and sustain these features in man should be the object of all social reformers. Christ failed to do either, and his principles do not possess the power necessary for such a purpose.

If science and liberty had never been known, or if they had never operated in the improvement of human affairs, in all probability theology, with its prophets and priests, would have allowed all that is noble and best in human nature to become extinct. The policy of the Church has been to crush mental freedom and to curb all criticism, particularly criticism of its own teachings. But, in spite of all this, knowledge has become a power that, to a large extent, has deprived the Church of the position it once had. When it held uninterrupted sway true freedom was unknown. With the advent of science the emancipa-

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tion of mankind commenced. The deliverance from that ignorance and slavery which for centuries degraded mankind, and which Christ and his system failed to remove, was the work of the real redeemers—Science and Liberty.

There is something sublime in the contemplation of the scientific intellect at work seeking for the solution of the problems which nature presents to those students whose minds are free from the trammels of ignorance and of prejudice. Progress is supported by, and is grown upon, the discoveries such men are constantly making. Science, the great providence of man, is not mere guess-work, but it is the investigation into, and the application of, the facts of existence. From these it learns what the possible and the actual really are. Its disciples set their affections on things below, and they are anxious for the morrow, although the New Testament advises the very opposite. Their faith rests upon the experience of the past, not upon conjectures of a future, that is hidden from the gaze of mortal man. Science and liberty are founded upon the requirements of human nature; they are the levers by which men can alone be permanently elevated; they are the stars that guide us safely through life, and that enable us to leave valuable legacies for the service of future generations.

The true redeemers of our race are those who, disregarding Bible injunctions, love the world and the things of the world; whose kingdom is of the earth, and whose yearnings are for the secular well-being of their fellows. The world's reformers are not influenced by spiritual imaginations, but by the power of reason; they are captivated, not by the allurements of theology, but by the grandeur and potency of natural truths; not by the hope of sharing mansions "beyond the skies," but by the desire to enjoy happy homes in the life we now have. With such reformers facts are more important than fiction, realities are more serviceable than fancies, and knowledge is of greater value than belief. These are the characteristics that have marked the true benefactors of all time, who have ever found in science and philosophy the resources which have contributed to personal and national progress, shedding the halo of mental freedom upon a too long neglected humanity. CHARLES WATTS.

ACID DROPS.

"UNSCIENTIFIC SCIENCE" was the title of a rare old Hugh Price Hughes article in last week's *Methodist Times*. It was a review, or rather a laudation, of Mr. Balfour's new book. First of all, the volume is called "one of the most remarkable books this generation has seen"—meaning, of course, *produced*. But any slipshod is good enough for an excited Methodist. Secondly, Mr. Balfour is called "one of the ablest apologists for the Christian religion since the days of Bishop Butler." All the infidel arguments against Christianity may be used with "*tenfold* greater effect" against his own boasted science. A little lower down we read that "every objection which is made to Christianity is *equally* applicable to the dogmas of its enemies." What a state of mind the man is in, to be sure! "Tenfold" and "equally" are just the same in his boiled-rice-pudding intelligence.

Mr. Hughes declares that Mr. Balfour has shown "the hideous immorality of Naturalism." Mr. Balfour does not employ such language; the expression belongs to Mr. Hughes; who, by the way, would consider it shocking if we were to talk about "the hideous immorality of Christianity."

"Many living advocates of Naturalism are immeasurably better than their creed," says Mr. Hughes. It is a gross piece of impertinence, and abject would be the Secularist who could take it as a compliment. For our part, we don't at all think that Mr. Hughes is immeasurably better than *his* creed. He is about on its level—intellectually and morally, especially in the matter of lying for the glory of God.

Mr. Hughes winds up with the statement that "in England, at any rate, the extreme foolishness of Agnosticism is being found out." Well, if anything could exceed the extreme foolishness of the observation, we should like to see it introduced. Fancy a poor creature like Hughes, who is absolutely incapable of anything like thought, in the philosophical sense of the word; fancy a man who means the same by "tenfold" and "equally"; fancy such a fellow talking about the *extreme foolishness* of John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, Professor Huxley, and Herbert Spencer! Why, he isn't worthy to tie up the shoestrings of any one of them.

Mr. Holyoake should note that any virtue he has ever displayed, according to Mr. Hughes, is entirely owing to Christianity. This applies to all Secularists at present. None of them will have any virtue to display if "the views they advocate prevail and the existing Christian environment disappears." The Christian environment means the presence of a lot of people like the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Mr. Holyoake was influenced by that environment during the Atheist Shoemaker controversy, and the result was not such as to induce other Secularists to follow his example. Mr. Hughes could probably teach Secularists a good many things, but whether he could teach them anything worth knowing is quite another question.

"It is a distinctly Christian move," says the *Methodist Times*, *apropos* of the effort which is being made to induce the Government to "raise the British to the French standard" by fixing twelve years, instead of eleven, as the limit for juvenile labor in factories and workshops. What kind of a move was it, then, when France made it before England? Was it a Christian move then? Or did it only spring from the natural depravity of French infidels?

A Northumberland lady is reported to have given £2,000 for the sepulchre wherein Christ was laid outside Jerusalem. This, however, is not the only sepulchre of Christ, and if the price rules at £2,000 there will soon be a still larger supply in the market.

The Bishop of Winchester was addressing a Church meeting at Bournemouth. He was dealing with the necessity of keeping clear and bright the light of Christianity. Just at that point the gas went out.

Sophia Dobson, who also called herself Minerva, has been fined £25 for telling fortunes in the City of London by aid of palmistry. The fine was paid, so the business is probably a lucrative one; indeed, Sophia said she had practised it for four years in Manchester without molestation. At the same time thousands of black-coated gentry are able, not only to obtain money from the willing, but the unwilling also, by telling people's fortunes after they are dead; and the theology upon which they base their pretensions is quite as little of a science, and as much discredited a superstition, as palmistry.

Christian clergymen, and other prominent officials, have been distinguishing themselves lately. Three "reverend" Church of England parsons have figured in the Divorce Court, either as respondents or co-respondents, and have been found guilty of both adultery and cruelty; and one of them was threatened by the judge with a prosecution for wilful and corrupt perjury. A Nonconformist minister made a successful *debut* in the Birmingham Police-court, and was fined five shillings and costs for being drunk in the public streets. A superintendent of a Wesleyan Sunday-school is charged with an indecent outrage upon one of his female teachers, and a Catholic priest is accused of similar offensive practices with one of his flock. The Prophet Christ said: "By their fruits shall ye know them." Judged by this standard, Christianity must be a very corrupt tree to produce such evil fruit.—*Crescent*.

The *Behar Times* says Englishmen succeeded with apparent ease in conquering India, but there can be hardly any doubt that English missionaries have failed in conquering the religion of India.

The *Crescent* gives a very far from flowery account of the Armenians, whom it calls the Shylocks of the East. It says: "Although as a nation they pretend to be the gentlest and most docile of people, their creed contains the most fearful curses upon everybody who differs from them. Like the Russians, they permit no instrumental music in their churches. Their Bibles contain two books in each Testament unfamiliar to our ears—the History of Joseph and his Wife, and the Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs in the Old Testament; the Third Epistle of the Corinthians and the Epistle of the Corinthians to Paul in the New Testament."

According to the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, at a recent presentation of a handsome watch in the Western Highlands, the gentleman who made the presentation hoped the recipient "would not wear the watch on the Sabbath, because it might be a temptation to himself and to others by withdrawing their attention from higher things."

In the course of a lecture in Aberdeen, the other night, the speaker produced a rude kind of harp, declaring that the one used by David of Israel was probably very similar. The lecturer jangled a tune on the instrument, after which

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the clergyman who occupied the chair remarked that he now knew why Saul threw a javelin at David.

At a public dining-table, the other day, a discussion arose on Bible knowledge, and one gentleman, to test a disputant's acquaintance with the sacred print, asked him if he could tell where "whisky" was mentioned in the Bible. "Whisky," was the reply, "is not referred to in the Bible; at least, if it is, I do not remember." "Look at Hezekiah iii. 4," said the first speaker, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the others around the table. No one seemed to know the passage, and there was a general reference to the Old Testament, with what result we leave our readers to find out for themselves.

The *North Bay Times* reports: "A unique method of raising money for church purposes was introduced at last Sunday morning's service in the Baptist tabernacle, Ingersol. The pastor, Rev. J. F. Barker, gave to each member attending the morning service a dollar bill, on the promise that they were to invest it, and, at the end of the year, 1895, return it along with what it had earned in the meantime. About $100 was passed out." No doubt there will be much prayer offered for the safe investment of those dollars. But how about the Bible injunctions against usury?

The *Catholic*, of Dublin, alluding to St. Winifrede's Well, says: "Opposition being the life of trade, the wise Roman Catholics of Wales have set up an opposition shop to Lourdes." Evidently it looks at the matter from the proper commercial point of view, though it complains further on that "eighteen-pence for a tin of water is a little too much."

In the New York *Cosmopolitan* for February, Julian Hawthorne gives an account of the tortures used by the Inquisition, etc., under the title of "Salvation *via* the Rack." He points out that the horrible cruelties of the torture chamber flowed naturally from religious beliefs. He remarks that men then believed the Bible with an intense faith. "They read in the Bible that God punished sin; that, if it were persisted in, He punished it after the death of the body with an eternity of torments, compared with which the worst that man can inflict were as nothing. That was their precedent."

"Their excuse," he goes on to say, "was yet more plausible. Evil in man was caused by the machinations of the Devil—by the suggestion and persuasion of his angels. The Inquisition, by torturing the body, aimed to cast out these devils. This accomplished, the soul would be saved from the everlasting torments of hell. Temporal pain was the severe but merciful means of guarding against the pains to which there was no end."

Mr. Hawthorne does not mention that this belief in the agency of devils was also a Scriptural one. Jesus especially inculcated it (see Matt. vii. 22; ix. 32; xii. 27; Mark ix. 17-27; Luke xi. 14-19), and the belief led to the persecution of witches, as well as to the horrors of the Inquisition. The Pagan Hippocrates wrote a treatise with the view expressly to combat the superstition, which was sanctioned by the authority of Jesus Christ.

The Devil, on the one hand, has been a great scapegoat for religious sinners, who have ascribed all their backslidings to his temptations. On the other hand, his supposed agency has led to the persecution, torture, and death of myriads, as recorded in the annals of all Christian countries.

The Rev. M. Macaskill, of the Free Church of Scotland, is determined that the evolutionary doctrines of Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man* shall not go before the world as the teaching of his church, and he has accordingly called the attention of his Presbytery, that of Dingwall, to the matter. He cited many passages from the work to show that Professor Drummond's views were heretical, and not in accord with the word of God.

"If," said Mr. Macaskill, "Professor Drummond's theory of creation by evolution was true, then the Bible was a mass of fables, a tissue of the most terrible falsehoods from beginning to end. Evolution, as expounded in this book, plucked up by the roots all the doctrines of grace, blotted out all hope for man of a blessed eternity, and left him in as *orphaned* a world and in as *fatherless* a universe as infidelity ever painted, and all this by a gentleman who, on taking his professorial chair, had solemnly professed his adherence to, and solemnly vowed his defence of, the confessional statement acknowledging the truth of the record of the Creation and the Fall of Man."

Mr. Macaskill emphatically gave his opinion that "the man who taught such theories could neither be a Christian nor a Professor of the Free Church." Evidently Professor Drummond is too "free" for him. It was resolved that a committee should inquire and report upon the book, the Revs. Macaskill, Munro, and Beaton being appointed. This will be a good advertisement for the *Ascent of Man*.

Mayor Strong, of New York, proposes to settle the Sunday liquor question by allowing saloons to open between the hours of 2 in the afternoon and 11 at night. If this is done, as seems likely, despite the howling of ministers and prohibitionists, the folly of closing libraries and museums will only be more apparent.

If, instead of seeking to put a stop to all use of the Sunday except church attendance, and trying to put "God in the constitution," the American States were to raise the age at which they permit a girl to consent to her own ruin, they would have a better title to be considered civilised. According to the *Arena*, this age is fixed at ten years in Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina; twelve years in Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, Wisconsin; thirteen years in Iowa, New Hampshire, Utah; and fourteen years in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont, and West Virginia.

"Ayjay," writing in the *Two Worlds*, says: "For the vivisectionist inquisitor Secularism had, so far as I know (I should be glad to be shown to be in error), no condemnation." "Ayjay" is in error. Cruelty to animals is expressly antagonised in the principles of the National Secular Society. It was Bentham whose motto was, "Maximise morals, minimise religion," who first spoke with effect for animals' rights in England; and among those who have worked on the same side have been many Secularists. In America Colonel Ingersoll is the most eloquent opponent of vivisection.

It appears that bishops sometimes repent, in their after life that is. At any rate, a gentleman at the Conference of Sunday Societies, in alluding to the Act of George III. against Sunday lecturing, which is said to have been inspired by Bishop Porteous, created much amusement by stating that, at a Spiritist meeting at Notting Hill on the previous night, they had the "apparition" of Bishop Porteous, who said he exceedingly regretted the use which had been made of his Act, and that, if he were in the House of Lords now, he would vote against any such measure.

A certain minister in Perthshire was very particular that the hymns sung should be suitable to his discourse, to the sometimes no small annoyance of his precentor. One Sunday morning, on the precentor appearing for his list, the minister remarked to that worthy, "Weel, John, my subject for to-day is 'Self-help'; have you anything to suit?" "Nothing," replied John, "except 'Paddle your own canoe.'"

The American Board of Missions claim to have issued five hundred millions of pages in the Arabic language. Can they claim to have converted even five Moslems?

The cause of the conservatism and hatred of progress among the Chinese is superstition. They object to developing their great resources of coal because the good-luck spirits, coming every spring from the south, would fall into the mines and be lost. They object to railways because the digging would disturb the bones of their ancestors. No improvement can be suggested that would not, in some way, make trouble between them and the spirits of the departed. There is a fine sentiment in the reverence for antiquities, but the civilised man tries to do something that will entitle him to the goodwill of his successors.—*Chicago Interior*.

We never heard of the International Tract Society before. It dates from 451 Holloway-road, London. In connection with it there is a printing business, and the Society has been summoned at Clerkenwell police-court for employing two females and one male young person on Sunday, January 27. Mr. John Gibson, the secretary, stated that the Society's object was to bring about the recognition of Saturday as the Sabbath. They gave a half-holiday on Friday, and closed their premises on Saturday. Mr. Gibson contended that this was all the law required, but the magistrate said the law would have to be obeyed as it stood. A fine was inflicted which, including the costs, amounted to nearly £4; but Mr. Gibson said he had a conscientious objection to paying—as a good many other people have, only they don't find it catch on.

Seriously, however, we rather sympathise with the International Tract Society. So long as its employees are satisfied, it does seem hard that their "Sunday" should be confined to one day in the week. If they get their day of rest, what does it matter if they take the "wrong day"? What's in a Sunday? The rest on any other day is just as sweet.

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But there is a far more important point. The magistrate is a Christian, and so are the members of the International Tract Society. All of them accept the Bible as God's word. Yet they read it in different ways, and one of them punishes the others for not reading it as he does. What a pretty book the Bible is, to be sure! God wrote it, and perhaps the Devil understands it. Anyhow, men don't. They've been quarreling over it for ever so many centuries.

The Rev. Archibald Brown recently told the London Baptist Association that "things are simply going from bad to worse in Christendom." Evidently it is high time for the "second coming of Christ." And the worst of it is that, while the world is waiting, there are sceptics who unblushingly question whether he really came *the first time*.

Leeds is keeping behind the age in some things. The City Council has decided, by twenty-eight votes to thirteen, not to open the Fine Art Gallery on Sundays. Perhaps the City Fathers feel that if the inhabitants were to gaze at works of art on Sunday they might grow dissatisfied with the beauty of Leeds.

Professor Cornill, a German theologian, says he has read the book of Jonah a hundred times. He says that Jonah is one of the grandest things ever written, and he can never read it or talk about it without moist eyes and a beating heart. Professor Cornill is really too simple for this sophisticated age. He should have lived in the time of Jonah. How he would have enjoyed the prophet's company—everywhere, that is, but in the whale's belly.

At the breakfast of the Liberation Society Mr. Illingworth spoke strongly of the curse of religious disability and religious favoritism, saying that "Nonconformists feel the effects of this curse in every branch of life, whether social, political, ecclesiastical, or religious." How about the Freethinker, then, who suffers from disabilities from which the ordinary Nonconformist is entirely free; who not only has to support a State Church of which he disapproves, but who may be legally robbed of any endowment left to further his own views?

Alarmed at the progress of civil marriage and religious liberty in Hungary, the Bishop and Magnates have formed a Catholic People's Party, with whose aid they hope to battle against the new Church Laws. In an address they appeal to the industrial classes to support them in efforts to place social reforms on a Christian basis. This appeal is now answered in the most satirical manner by the Hungarian Socialists. They publish a proclamation in which they say: "We shall certainly join the People's Party, for with its help we will abolish class differences. The Magnates will be sure to give up their ranks and titles and their property, and the Bishops will give up their rich estates for the good of the community to prove that their ideals of universal brotherhood are sincere."

The Rev. Leon Penrod, a Baptist minister, of Grassy Creek, Kentucky, argued about baptism with a layman, Mr. John Slate; and, not finding his arguments convincing, he seconded them with a revolver, shooting his obdurate opponent in the leg. Mr. Slate did not appreciate this kind of reasoning; he rushed at the man of God, who seized a butcher's knife, and was going to argue the matter out completely, when the interesting controversy was stopped by "friends."

Twenty-six inquests in one day in London on persons who had died from the effects of the cold weather make a striking item in connection with the theory of an all-controlling Providence. In most parts of Europe a similar state of things prevails, many having been killed by avalanches as well as exposure, while in the rural parts of America, where the fierce winter blizzards rage, the deaths from exposure came thick and fast.

Nonconformists at Blackburn have accepted donations for Church purposes from Alderman Rutherford, but they would have nothing to do with his £50 for the relief of local distress, on the ground that he is a brewer. It is a rule of prudence with these gentlemen to be punctilious when it costs them nothing, and to be magnanimous at other people's expense.

A college student was invited one Sunday to occupy the pulpit in a little country church. After what he considered a masterly effort on the subject of "Lazarus and the Rich Man," he called on a good old brother to pray, and was somewhat electrified to hear the following: "O Lord! we thank thee that we are not like this poor despised beggar, Lazarus, who we've just been listenin' to."

THE HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE.

On Monday, February 18, before Mr. Justice Lawrance and a Common Jury, in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice, the case of the National Secular Hall Society and another *v.* Snow and another came on for trial.

Mr. Lawson Walton, Q.C., M.P., and Mr. Cluer appeared for the plaintiffs; and Mr. Murphy, Q.C., and Mr. Rawlinson were for the defendants.

The officer of the court, by his lordship's direction, ordered that all women and children were to leave the court.

Mr. Cluer said the plaintiff was Robert Owen Smith, and the defendants were John Snow and Messrs. Cook & Co. The plaintiff claimed damages for a libel, printed and published by the defendants. Defendants admitted the publication, but denied that it in any way referred to the plaintiff.

Mr. Lawson Walton: Gentlemen of the jury,—As no doubt, you have gathered from the announcement just made by the officer of the court that all women and children are to leave the court, this is a somewhat painful and distressing case. Mr. Robert Owen Smith, the plaintiff, has come into court to meet a libel, published (as he thought and you will probably have no doubt) of him, possibly in common with other persons, of a most flagrant kind. The defendants are the printers and publishers of the paragraph which Mr. Smith impugns, and they are responsible for having given to the world one of the most atrocious charges which, perhaps, can be launched against the character of any individual. The libel appeared in a publication which professed to be a report of a public discussion which took place in the city of Leeds between a Mr. Powell and a Mr. Fisher. The pamphlet was headed "Is Secularism Degrading?" and it placed into the mouth of one of the controversialists the charge of which Mr. Smith complains. It runs thus: "Now, sir, in the Hall of Science in the Dancing Academy, the headquarters of the Secularists, which is built just opposite a lunatic asylum—(laughter)—they had held meetings—and this is vouched for in the daily *Standard* of August 11, 1879—where they got boys together and taught them the act of self-abuse, in order, so they said, to make muscular and strong the organs of procreation. I am in a mixed audience, and cannot open my mind freely." I think, notwithstanding the mixed audience, that disputant had opened his mind freely, and had used his tongue with equal freedom. That charge, of as horrible a course of instruction for the young as the human mind can conceive, was fixed to a class of persons, not designated by name, but sufficiently designated by description to lead every person acquainted with the facts to come undoubtedly to the conclusion at whom it was directed. *They* have had meetings. *They* have established a dancing academy, and in that academy they have given this atrocious and horrible instruction. The question which arises, and which appears to be the only question involved in the inquiry, is the identification of the persons against whom the charge was launched. Who were the individuals referred to in the expression as "they"? Who was responsible for founding the National Hall of Secularism which existed in the City of London? Who had organised, at the headquarters of Secularism, the meetings for the purpose of propagating Secularist opinions? Who established the Dancing Academy in connection with the hall, and who organised these classes for the young in which this horrible doctrine was supposed to be propagated? Unfortunately, Mr. Robert Owen Smith has had to come forward, because, undoubtedly, to every person who is acquainted with his relationship with this Hall of Secularism, and his connection with the classes, there can be no doubt that, if anybody was responsible, Mr. Smith was responsible; and if anybody was to come forward and clear his character from these odious accusations, that person was Mr. Smith; and I will tell you why. Mr. Smith, in the year 1868, purchased the site upon which the Hall of Science, in Old-street, was built. That was the very year in which Mr. Bradlaugh, perhaps one of the best-known lecturers at the Hall of Science, first stood for the borough of Northampton. Mr. Smith built the hall with his own capital, and conducted it at his own expense. The lecturers were paid by him, and any receipts from them were received by Mr. Smith, and were applied by him to meeting the expense of the venture. Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, and various other persons of Secularist opinions, lectured from week to week at the Hall of Science; and, after a while, Mr. Smith established in connection with it a Club and Institute. Classes were opened for the instruction of the young, entertainments were given of a special character, and among other classes was one for teaching dancing. Mr. Smith organised these classes, superintended them, and some of them he actually conducted himself. Under his supervision the art of dancing was taught to young people by dancing masters whom he employed, and I hold in my hand the public bills which were issued, and the tickets which were issued: and on the face of them Mr. Smith was publicly described as the Secretary and Manager of the hall, and of all the undertakings and

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classes held in connection with it. Therefore, the Hall of Science which was referred to in the paragraph owed its origin to Mr. Smith's enterprise, to his capital, and its operations to his supervision and personal management. Therefore, if it is suggested that, at that Hall of Science, practices which outrage human nature took place at classes actually superintended by Mr. Smith himself, the person who came forward to meet an accusation of that sort, and the only person against whom it can be levelled, and popularly regarded as such, is Mr. Smith, the plaintiff in this action. When this paragraph appeared a letter was written to the defendants, who had given it to the world, and to the defendants alone. The obscure libeller and slanderer, who said what he had to say in some obscure hall in a provincial town, is a comparatively unimportant person, and the slander was a comparatively unimportant matter. But here, in the City of London, under their own names, the two defendants, as publisher and printer, gave to this slander the prominency of print, and the currency of a pamphlet scattered broadcast over the whole country. Mr. Smith therefore wrote to these two defendants, and called upon them for some explanation and retractation of this horrible accusation. They met that appeal with absolute silence. Neither of them deigned to answer the letter which was written to them. Absolute silence on the part of both of these defendants. But some third person, who had not originally uttered the slander, and to whom no letter was written, voluntarily put himself into the breach, and made himself responsible for the charge. Mr. Smith had, under advice, sought to hold the two defendants—the printer and publisher of this pamphlet—as primarily answerable; and it was from them alone he was determined to have some retractation, as public as the original charge was which had been made. Unfortunately, the matter does not rest there. This accusation was not met by silence, but it was met by persistent repetition; and I shall be able to show you that another publication, which was issued by one or both of the defendants, and which describes itself as the *Anti-Infidel*, made an appeal for subscriptions from the credulous public—who, I suppose, are willing to believe any foul thing, in their wealth of charity, of anybody who does not share their own religious opinions. An appeal was made for contributions—for the purpose of retracting? No; but for the purpose of proving the charge up to the hilt; and in this publication an assurance is made that the charge is going to be proved up to the hilt. What is their course now? They originally start by bluster, and they now meet us in this Court of Justice with the cowardice of the person who would make such a charge, and then say that they will prove it to be true. Now, do they say it is true? Do they use the subscriptions raised by the credulous public for the purpose of proving it is true? No! The appeal, I presume, resulted in the flow of the money they desired; and, having obtained these funds, they put them into their pocket, and come into court, and try and back out of it, and escape their responsibility for having made it; and the defence, and the only defence, that they have put upon the record is this: It is true it was said—we don't say whether it is true or false; but we certainly say we did not say it of Smith. I doubt not that you will deal with such a defence in the way that it merits. If they did not say it of Mr. Smith, of whom did they say it? If they did not speak of the person who organised the classes, and who personally superintended them, then who was the man responsible for this outrage? Why did they not care to take the first chance of exonerating him, and repudiating the suggestion that he was the person referred to. Instead of meeting the challenge, they tell the world, when Mr. Smith is suing them, that they are going to prove the truth of the charge up to the hilt. The defence has only to be set out for you to grasp the true situation, that there is, and can be, no answer to the action. Why are the defendants here if all this could not be proved, as they did not suggest it could? Why, if it cannot be seriously denied that Mr. Smith is seriously reflected upon, are the defendants here in a public court of justice to resist the accusation? I think you may guess. They are here because they think there are persons so steeped in religious prejudice that they will believe to be true any gross accusation made against persons who do not share their views, and because they think that, on the jury, there may be a man so biassed by his religious opinions that he cannot do justice to a fellow citizen who does not happen to share his opinions. I hope they will be defeated by your verdict, and that you will show that spirit of justice which shines among the highest virtues. On behalf of Mr. Smith, I ask you by this action to clear his character from a stain cast upon him for which there is no sort of justification; a stain on a long record of an honorable life, and to give him the only reparation which the law allows for such an injury.

Mr. Robert Owen Smith, the plaintiff, then went into the witness-box and made affirmation, giving his address as 81 Ridge-road, Hornsey. He was examined by Mr. Cluer.

In 1868 did you take a lease of the premises on which the Hall of Science in Old-street is built?—I did.

Did you yourself have the building erected there?—I did.

And paid for it?—Yes.

What position did you hold from 1868 to 1892 with reference to the Hall?—I was the leaseholder and proprietor. I was also secretary and manager of the Club and Institute, which was established by myself, up to 1881. Through ill-health I gave up the secretaryship and management, and was the treasurer of the Club; and I was the sole proprietor and organiser of the lectures given there.

Was the Hall of Science the headquarters of the Secularist party?—It was; and their council meetings were held there.

Is it an annual meeting you refer to?—No; monthly.

And they meet there regularly?—Regularly.

Were there lectures delivered at the hall?—Yes; every Sunday evening, and sometimes Sunday mornings and week nights.

Who arranged the lectures?—I did.

Did you pay the lecturers?—I did.

Had you control over the hall and the meetings that took place there?—I had.

And did you personally attend to it during the years from 1868 to 1892.—I did.

When was it that you started a series of dancing classes there?—In 1869.

Would you look at this? Is that an advertisement of the dancing classes?—Yes.

Was that inserted by your authority?—It was; and my name is at the bottom of it.

The Judge: What is the book?—It is the North London College and School Guide.

Mr. Cluer: Is it a fact that every day in the week there was dancing carried on under your superintendence?—There was.

Did you personally supervise those classes and see to them?—I did.

For how many years did you personally look after them?—From 1872 to 1881.

At that time did you actually yourself give dancing lessons with assistance?—I did.

Was any instruction given there during that time without your supervision?—There was no instruction given there that I was not responsible for. I did not give instructions in science, because I was not a duly-qualified teacher. All the classes held there I was responsible for, and for everything that took place in the building. Science classes were taught by Dr. Aveling.

Were there classes in which the pupils were examined by a Government department?—In connection with South Kensington.

And examinations were held on the subjects taught in the science classes of the subjects prescribed by the South Kensington school?—They were.

And lectures delivered by responsible, qualified persons?—Yes.

I believe the Rev. Stewart Headlam was one of the lecturers?—Yes; he has given lectures there, and he was a member of the Science Classes Committee, who were responsible for the teaching. The authorities at South Kensington insist on having a committee on which there must be one clergyman. I was also on the Committee.

With reference to the club, did you establish a club and institute?—I did.

Were you daily on the premises?—Daily.

That was your business, you had no other?—Yes.

What date was it that the club was established?—1870.

Were you a member of the club yourself?—I was secretary and manager.

Did you see yourself what went on from time to time among members of the club?—I did.

Will you just look at this copy of the libellous pamphlet, *Is Secularism Degrading?* Will you tell me, with regard to the paragraph in question, first, was the name of the building in Old-street the Hall of Science?—It was.

Had you there a dancing academy?—I had.

Is St. Luke's Lunatic Asylum nearly opposite your place in Old-street?—Yes.

Your place is on the South side, and that is on the North?—Yes.

Before you saw that pamphlet, had you ever heard of any such report, as is there vouched, in any paper called the *Daily Standard* or any other paper?—Never.

Mr. Justice Lawrance: What is the *Daily Standard?*

Mr. Cluer: There is no such paper, I believe. (To the witness) Is there a word of truth in the suggestion that is made in this libel?—There is not.

Cross-examined by Mr. Murphy, Q.C.: This pamphlet purposes to be a debate between Mr. Walton Powell and Mr. Greaves Fisher. Is that so?—Yes.

And the preface seems to be in these words: "In October last Mr. Walton Powell, President of the Liverpool Branch of the National Anti-Infidel League, conducted a crusade in Leeds; and as the debate, of which the following pages contain a report, arose out of that discussion, it is now published in the belief that it will excite thought on matters of importance to society, and enable readers to answer for themselves the question, 'Is Secularism Degrading?'" and that appears to be signed by W. R. Bradlaugh, President of

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the Anti-Infidel League. Is there such a person as W. R. Bradlaugh?—There is.

The next thing we find is this: A reporter's certificate, dated January 1894, certifying that it is a correct transcript of the debate between Walton Powell and Greevz Fisher, at St. James's Hall, Leeds, October 17, 1892, signed by two reporters. Then there is the debaters' certificate as to accuracy, signed by Mr. Powell and Mr. Fisher. Then follows what purports to be a verbatim report of this debate, as it is called. When first did you hear of this pamphlet?—I cannot tell the exact date.

Shortly after it took place?—Yes.

And you knew the name of Powell, who used these words, and you knew the name of Bradlaugh too?—I knew of Bradlaugh, but not Powell.

Did you make any complaint of the publication at the time?—I did not.

Although it was published in the papers. Have you made any complaint to Mr. Powell, the utterer of these words?—I have not.

The debate took place at Leeds?—Yes.

Had there been, to your knowledge, in the year 1878, a great scandal about some immoral proceedings at a hall in Leeds?—I heard something.

Very disgusting proceedings had taken place there?—I don't know.

Did not you ascertain that? Was it not a matter of discussion, to your knowledge, of this trial that took place in 1878?—There was a trial.

And evidence was given of very disgusting proceedings at a hall there?—I was not aware of it.

Do you seriously say that you did not know the trial was with reference to certain obscenities at a hall in Leeds?—I was under the impression that it was for disorderly conduct; but I did not read the trial.

And had never heard it discussed?—I had heard that proceedings were taken.

And that evidence was given of disgusting conduct in the hall?—No.

You say that? Think! You never heard it alleged that evidence was given of disgusting proceedings in a hall between boys and young men. Have you ever heard of it? I beg for a distinct answer to a plain question.—I have not.

Do you know Mr. Foote?—I do.

Has it been discussed in his presence and in yours?—I don't know.

Come, do yourself justice in this matter. Do you say you never it heard alleged that evidence was given of disgusting conduct in the hall in the year 1878?—I am not aware of any of the proceedings in relation to the matter.

I am not asking whether you are aware; my question is whether you heard it discussed.—Not to my knowledge.

How can you have heard it if it was not to your knowledge?—I will say no more than that.

Do you persist in saying you never heard the matter discussed?—I don't remember on any occasion it was discussed, in my presence, with Mr. Foote.

With anyone?—Or with anyone.

You never heard of it before?—I have heard of the proceedings.

Have you heard it suggested before that evidence was given of disgusting proceedings in the hall at Leeds?—I have said I believe it was for disorderly conduct, but I really don't know any more about the matter.

Have you never heard until this moment?—I have heard that evidence was given.

Never heard it suggested?—No.

Have you not seen the report in the public paper of what occurred there?—No, I have not.

Have you never seen the report?—No, I have not.

Did you ever hear of a place called the Secular Hall, Leeds?—I have heard of a hall at Leeds used for Secular purposes and lectures.

Lectures in connection with gentlemen of your opinions?—Yes.

And owned and leased by gentlemen connected with them?—I have no knowledge who was the owner.

Well, leased by persons of your opinions?—I believe so.

Did you hear there was a prosecution about something that occurred there?—I did hear there was a prosecution in connection with proceedings held at that hall. I do not know whether the proceedings were against the persons who leased it, or against other persons.

Did you never hear of this charge?

Mr. WALTON: I object. My friend is referring to a matter extremely remote, because we are dealing with a hall specifically described; and now he is travelling to some other matters in another part of the country. The witness has already said he saw no report relative to that prosecution. My friend is not entitled to suggest that such a report did appear, unless he can prove it by his witnesses. He is not entitled to hold by this witness that there was a report after the witness has said he did not see it.

Mr. MURPHY: I disagree entirely with my friend. My friend says the article here points to his hall. I say, Nothing of the sort. The debate was carried on at the Secular Hall at Leeds, which is another hall entirely. I am going to put to the witness ——

Mr. WALTON: My friend is not entitled to read a document with the object of suggesting to the jury certain facts (of course that is his object), after witness has said no such paper was ever seen by him.

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE: Yes; but he may put it to him.

Mr. WALTON: The opening out of a newspaper is a way to suggest facts which he is not entitled to prove. I think it is most irregular. If the witness says he did not see these reports, that is the end of it.

Mr. MURPHY (to witness): Have you not been present when the report of these trials has been discussed?—I may have been present when the matter was talked about.

The report of this trial?—No.

Never in 1878?—No; I don't know the date. I have never been present when the report of the trial was discussed.

Nor about what was reported to have occurred then?—I have said before that I have heard this matter talked about.

Have you never heard it suggested that disgraceful proceedings took place there?—No, I have not.

Do you read the *Secular Review* sometimes?—No; I have seen it.

Did you ever see the passage speaking of the unspeakable, obscene character of the orgies seen in the Leeds Branch of the National Secular Society?—No. You are speaking from the *Secular Review*?

Yes. You have never taken pains to ascertain what took place at Leeds?—No.

We have heard something about subscriptions. Have you and Mr. Foote been applying for subscriptions in support of this action?—I have not.

Has Mr. Foote, with your knowledge?—Yes; on my behalf.

Was it with your authority that this passage was written: "The London Hall of Science, for instance, has been the constant object of calumny. It is said to be opposite a lunatic asylum, though it is not. It is really midway between the church and the asylum, and on the opposite side of the road. The position is a good one, as it gives us an opportunity of intercepting persons whose wits may be disordered by the House of God"?—No, not on my authority.

Is the *Freethinker* one of your party's papers?—Yes, it represents the Society's views, but it is Mr. Foote's paper.

It was one of the papers in which you advertised for subscriptions to conduct this trial?—Yes.

And on the 15th April it contained the passage I have just read?—Yes.

Without any protest from you?—Yes.

And the same number contained an appeal for subscriptions?—Yes, I believe so.

Mr. MURPHY: I did not read the whole of the quotation, to do Mr. Foote justice: "It gives us an opportunity of intercepting persons whose wits may be disordered by the House of God before their arrival at the house of imbeciles."

Mr. WALTON: I submit my friend is not entitled to read this, unless he has called evidence to connect it with the plaintiff. Mr. Smith says it was not issued by his authority.

Mr. MURPHY: I entirely disagree. The witness has said this paper was issued for the purpose of obtaining subscriptions for this trial, and was issued by the Society.

Mr. SMITH: No, not by the Society.

Mr. WALTON: That does not make the witness responsible for the language Mr. Foote may have used. The paper was not issued by the plaintiff, and it does not belong to the Society.

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE: I do not understand it.

Mr. WALTON: The witness went on to say it was not the property of the Society, but belonged to Mr. Foote, and that it only represented the views of the Society.

Mr. MURPHY: He saw the article, and used the paper to collect subscriptions.

Mr. WALTON: My friend is not entitled to use this. The article is published by some other person without being submitted to Mr. Smith. It is true it contained an appeal for subscriptions, but that does not make Mr. Smith responsible for the language used in it. Until my friend shows that Mr. Smith authorised the publication of the article he cannot be held responsible.

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE: I understood him to say he saw it.

Mr. WALTON: Yes, after it was published.

Mr. MURPHY: He saw it, and used it for the purpose of obtaining subscriptions.

Mr. SMITH: I did not use it to get subscriptions.

Mr. WALTON: I think it was in October that this appeal for subscriptions went out?

Mr. MURPHY: No; you are wrong.

(Continued on page 122.)

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

March 3, Camberwell; 10, Sunderland.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—February 24, Newcastle-on-Tyne. March 3, Manchester. April 7, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Openshaw.—We presume so.

R. Green.—Nothing can be sillier, in a public debate, than to quote a passage from a great historian, which agrees with your own view, and to call it "an authority" on your side. It may be an authority on a mere matter of fact; it cannot be an authority on a matter of opinion. If it is so, you are confronted with this dilemma. One "authority" says one thing, and another "authority" the very opposite. You cannot bow to both, and if you choose between them you set up a third authority, namely yourself.

S. Howard.—Ingersoll is not alone in regarding parts of the book of Ecclesiastes as interpolations. See Canon Driver's *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 447-449. Of course no Christian scholar now regards the book, or any part of it, as the writing of Solomon. The statement to that effect in the opening of the book is a piece of imposture; or, as "the wise call it," a "literary artifice." See also Dr. Giles's *Hebrew Records* and Canon Cheyne's *Job and Solomon*.

H. L. Sumner.—We handed your order to Mr. Forder. Kindly send to him direct in future at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. Glad to hear you are "much pleased" with our writings.

C. Glendinning.—Thanks for cuttings. Always pleased to receive such useful bits.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—H. F. S., 8s. 6d.

E. P. 42.—The want of pence which vexes public men is always acute in an unpopular and comparatively poor party like ours. Still, there are a good many, as you suggest, who could subscribe more liberally to Freethought if they would.

A. Spencer.—There is no Freethought paper in France like our own. Some of the leading Paris journals contain Freethought articles from time to time, so there is less need for a special Freethought organ there.

L. C. H.—Thanks for cutting.

J. K. Maagaard.—Shall appear as early as possible.

J. Barnes.—Hardly up to the mark. Writing poetry does not come by nature like sucking milk. It requires deep study and hard training.

Mr. Foote's Fighting Fund.—E. P. 42, £1.

R. Mellor.—Sorry we are unable to give you the information.

E. Howard.—The obituary of the late Jonathan Taylor shall appear in full in our next issue. We are sorry to delay it, but we are short of space this week. Mr. Charles Watts would have attended the funeral had he not been kept waiting at the Law Courts day after day as a witness in the Hall of Science libel case.

C. Doeg reports that the great distress at Liverpool has been mainly coped with by the Socialists. The clergy and religious organisations have been almost unheard of in the crisis. The *Daily Post*, speaking of the Central Relief Society, says that, "with its army of highly-paid officials, it is barely equal to the cooking of a boilerful of soup."

Mr. Watts made a slight mistake in his evidence on Monday. He omitted to mention the *second* Hall of Science outside London—the one at Grimsby.

E. H.—Dr. Coit was referring to Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *A Virgin Mother*—one of the "Bible Romances;" but he did not say what the journal you mention ascribes to him. Anyone who can find "filth" in that or any other of Mr. Foote's pamphlets must have a nose of preternatural sensitiveness. Of course, it is impossible to write at all about the miraculous birth of Jesus without giving offence to some persons; but that is the fault of the doctrine itself.

Papers Received.—Armagh Standard—Birmingham Gazette—Ironclad Age—Secular Thought—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—Open Court—Crescent—Islamic World—Brisbane Telegraph—Echo—Lucifer—Newcastle Weekly Chronicle—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Isle of Man Times—Las Dominicales—Church Reformer—Munsey's Magazine—Cosmopolitan.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's lecture at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening dealt with Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*. His criticism of the book was highly appreciated. In the next issue of the *Freethinker* we shall begin a lengthy reply to Mr. Balfour's attack on Naturalism from the pen of Mr. Foote.

Mr. Foote managed to keep his engagement with the Humanitarian League on Thursday evening, February 14. For several days he had been kept indoors with a bad cold, and it was a bitter evening when he went westward to lecture on "The Shadow of the Sword." Mr. Ernest Bell presided, and was supported by Mr. H. S. Salt, the League's honorary secretary, who cannot be too highly praised for the steady devotion he has given to a noble cause. The attendance was only fair, partly owing to the weather, and partly to the press boycott. It seems hardly credible that not only the press, but even the most "advanced" people, would not tolerate a lecture by the President of the National Secular Society, even in favor of Peace. One part of the boycott, into which we are not free to enter, was simply disgusting.

A Church of England clergyman present spoke in the highest terms of Mr. Foote's discourse, and there was marked applause at the announcement that it would soon be published by the Humanitarian League. This clergyman assured the audience that *he* would never consecrate a military banner, even if he lived to sit on the episcopal bench.

There was a report of Mr. Foote's lecture in the *Westminster Gazette*. It now remains to be seen whether the general press boycott will be maintained when "The Shadow of the Sword" is published by the Humanitarian League.

A national Humanitarian Conference, called by the Humanitarian League, will be held at St. Martin's Town Hall, Trafalgar-square, on the afternoons and evenings of Thursday, February 28, and Friday, March 1. The subjects of discussion are "The Criminal Code," "The Public Control of Hospitals," "Slaughter House Reform," and "Cruel Sports." The National Secular Society has been invited to send delegates. The general public may obtain entrance by tickets.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times last Sunday in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth. The audiences were most enthusiastic, and there was a large number of ladies present. The proceedings in the evening had to be abbreviated to enable Mr. Watts to catch the night mail for London, in order that he might be in Court on Monday morning.

To-day, Sunday, February 24th, Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Amphitheatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne. An interesting debate is expected, as several clergymen have been invited, and a well-known Christian debater has intimated his intention to be present to oppose the lecturer. We hope the friends from the surrounding districts will rally on the occasion, as Mr. Watts intends giving his impressions upon the result of the trial of Monday last.

The Hall of Science platform will be occupied to-day (February 24) by Mr. Oswald Dawson in the morning, and by Mrs. Frederika Macdonald in the evening. Mr. Dawson, who is Honorary Secretary of the Legitimation League, holds views on the question of marriage and children which most people would regard as peculiar; but he is entitled to a hearing, and his views must be opposed in a reasonable way. Mrs. Macdonald is already known to the Hall of Science audience, and is sure to be well received.

Ryhope is the place where Mr. Foote had such a stormy reception, which nearly ran to riot and bloodshed. The stirrer-up of the excitement was the fellow Powell, who uttered that filthy libel on the Hall of Science which has just been branded by a jury in the Court of Queen's Bench. This fellow is a most reckless liar; among other things, he stated as a fact of his own knowledge that Mr. Foote was the author of the *Elements of Social Science*! By working upon the baser sort of Christians he made Ryhope warm

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for a time for the little band of Secularists there. They were turned out of their meeting-place, and the newsagent refused any longer to sell the *Freethinker*. Still they persevered, and the cloud has lifted. For some time the *Freethinker* has been allowed a place on the table of the Miners' Reading Room, and now it is to be paid for out of the Miners' funds.

Mr. Bertram Dobell sent us a few weeks ago a book which we intended to notice at considerable length, and which we *shall* thus notice as soon as we find the time amidst our multifarious duties. We refer to the *Poetical Works of James Thomson (B.V.)*, in two handsome volumes, with a portrait and a memoir. The work is published by Messrs. Reeves and Turner at 5 Wellington-street, Strand, and Mr. Dobell at his shop in Charing-Cross-road; the price of the two volumes being twelve shillings. The second volume will be of special interest to Thomson's admirers. It contains several poems never before published, including a long one entitled *The Doom of a City*, which has passages of great power and one or two really splendid lyrics. There should be a fair demand for this collected edition of Thomson's poems, though we fear it will yield little or no profit to Mr. Dobell, who, however, has never looked for that kind of satisfaction. His efforts to obtain recognition for Thomson's genius have always been a labor of love.

Mr. Louis Levine, of Charleston, to whom we are indebted for many American papers and periodicals, publishes an excellent circular letter on the Sunday Laws of the United States, intended and well calculated to promote more liberal and rational views of the day of rest.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, the successor of Henry Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, is an evolutionist, who seeks to reconcile evolution with Theism. But he confesses that it cannot be reconciled with the story of the Fall of Man as given in Genesis, and distinctly says so in a sermon reported in the *New York Press* of January 29: "I am an Evolutionist. Frankly, I believe Genesis iii. to be an ancient legend, which a great writer took, as Tennyson took the Arthurian legends, and rewrote it, in order that he might write into it a moral and spiritual lesson. I think that the Hebrew people believed that the Fall of Man affected the whole human race. I think very likely Paul believed so; at all events, Paul used that belief in his arguments and teachings with the Hebrew people in his writing."

Here, too, is pastor B. A. Elzas, of the Beth Elohim Synagogue, Charleston, who tells his Bible-class that the Bible story of Creation is based upon a similar story in Babylonian literature, and that the only rational way of regarding it is as apoem. "The world does move," though the Freethinkers who move it often have to suffer at first; while the sky-pilots afterwards say, "Just what we told you."

GIORDANO BRUNO.

NEARLY three hundred years ago
A hero in the cause of man
Was seen to pass the streets of Rome,
To die upon the Field of Flowers
(Fit emblem of his purity),
And bear alone the agonies
Of fire, without a murmur.
The only man amid those Christian fiends
Who piled on wood to scorch and feed on flesh;
The truest, bravest in the world,
So soon to mingle with the winds
And permeate all following days
With spurs to valor in the fight for truth,
And overthrow of that same faith
Which from its birth has stamped on liberty.
One speck of manhood in that motley crowd,
Towering above his torturers
As zenith above horizon,
To calmly end a valiant life,
More nobly than a Christ.
Dying for what?—for bigots' creed
To gain a heaven? No! Spurn such thought.
It was for Reason, Truth, and Victory!

J. W. C. STAFFORD.

Would you subject all other things to yourself? Then first subject yourself to Reason.—*Seneca.*

Easy men dream that we live under a government of law. Absurd mistake! We live under a government of men and newspapers. Your first attempt to stem dominant and keenly-cherished opinions will reveal this to you.—*Wendell Phillips.*

THE HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE.

(Continued from page 120.)

Mr. WALTON: Well, they are Mr. Foote's views, and not Mr. Smith's. The whole object of my friend is to prejudice this gentleman. If he says, I have not published it, it is clear my friend can't use it.

Mr. MURPHY: The whole object is to make this gentleman responsible for their opinions.

Mr. WALTON: My friend must prove that Mr. Smith published this article.

Mr. MURPHY (reading): "The solicitor is instructed to accept no offer of compromise. The case must be determined in court, where all the circumstances can be clearly understood"—was that with your consent?—No, it was not.

Was this with your consent: "There happens to be a man of reckless scurrility—"

Mr. WALTON: I object to this. He cannot produce this till he has shown Mr. Smith is responsible for the publication.

Mr. MURPHY: I am going to ask him if he authorised this.

Mr. WALTON: But before you can read the passage you must first show the witness published it. You are not entitled to get the advantage of reading the passage, and then ask the witness was that published with his authority. If it is his publication, you must first show the witness was responsible for it, instead of taking it as the foundation of your question. The witness said he never saw it before it was published. It was not published by him, but was published by Mr. Foote.

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE: I did not know he said he did not see them before they were published.

Mr. SMITH: I had not seen these things before they were published, my lord.

Mr. MURPHY: Did you see them after they were published?—Yes.

Did you afterwards agree with Mr. Foote that he should write in the same *Freethinker* and invite subscriptions for this case?—I did not agree with him in anything. He did not consult me.

Did you know he was doing it?—I did not know until the articles and paragraphs appeared; but I knew he was going to solicit subscriptions in the *Freethinker*.

And you thought it right that he should do this?—I could not help myself. It is his own paper.

You left him to write what he thought proper, and to ask subscriptions for your case?—Yes; of course he would write what he thought proper.

I will put the matter in another way. Does this passage represent your opinions? "It is said to be opposite a lunatic asylum, though it is not. It is really midway between the church and the asylum on the opposite side of the road. The position is a good one, since it gives the opportunity to intercept persons whose wits may be disordered by the House of God before they arrive at their destination in the house of imbeciles." Does that represent your opinions?—Are my opinions under discussion?

Yes; your character is at stake.—My character?

Does that represent your opinions?—They are not my opinions.

You are not shocked by them?—No, I am not shocked. (Laughter.) Abuse is given on both sides in this question.

That was in the course of the debate, was it not?—I was not at the debate.

You have read it?—I have read it.

You have not applied to Mr. Powell, or to Mr. Bradlaugh, I understand?—No.

Here is a book called *The Elements of Social Science*. Are you familiar with it?—Yes.

Is it sold by your Society?—Yes; by members, not by the Society.

I see in the book the passage: "Prostitution is a valuable substitute until we have reached a better state of things, by banishing the marriage laws." Are those your opinions?—No.

But it is one of your books, which you sell?—No, it is not sold by the Society. It is sold only by members of the Society.

Is it sold at a shop over which your Society has control?—No; our Society has no control over any shop.

Is it sold at the hall?—Yes.

By the Society of which you are a committee-man?—Yes.

Is this a passage from that book: "The laws of exercise, and the health of the reproductive organs and emotions, depend on their having sufficient means of normal exercise; and the want of this tends to produce diseases in men and women"?—I have read that.

Is that one of the books you sell?—It is one of the books sold.

Have you seen advertisements of this pamphlet?—I have not.

Re-examined by Mr. Walton: Have you any connection with either the printing or the publication of this work,

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The Elements of Social Science?—No; all the books we sell we do not approve of. We do not approve of every doctrine. We sell books containing all sorts of doctrine; but it does not follow we approve of them.

You do not hold yourself responsible for the opinions of every professor of Freethought?—Certainly not.

Freethought means freedom of thought on the part of every member of society?—Yes.

And this book my friend has referred to, which is written by a doctor of medicine, has on its frontispiece this quotation from J. S. Mill: "The diseases of society cannot be prevented or cured without being spoken of in plain language." How many years has that book been before the world?—I have known it for thirty years.

Has any effort been made to suppress this book as immoral or illegal?—Not so far as I know. I do not agree with the writer of the book.

But he is entitled to his own opinions?—Certainly.

And the law allows him to sell the book?—Yes, but they are not my opinions.

Have you ever made any charges of immoral misconduct or any accusation of that kind against your opponents?—I have not. I am not in the habit of making charges.

It is now suggested that this pamphlet had reference not to what took place at the Hall of Science in London, but at the hall in Leeds. Have you ever, till this moment, heard the suggestion?—No, I was not aware that there was a Hall of Science in Leeds. I do not think there is a hall called the Hall of Science there.

Did you instruct your solicitors to write to the defendant before the action commenced?—Yes.

Mr. MURPHY: The only one I know of is the one issuing the writ.

Mr. WALTON: In answer to that letter, or at any time during this action, have you ever heard it suggested by anybody that the Hall of Science here mentioned was the hall in Leeds?—I have not. I am informed there is no Hall of Science in Leeds.

Is there any other headquarters of Secularism except that with which you and the late Mr. Bradlaugh were connected?—No.

Is there any other Hall of Science opposite a lunatic asylum?—No.

Is there any Hall of Science in the kingdom to which this description can apply except your own?—No; it has been specially spoken of as being opposite a lunatic asylum. It is some twenty-five years since I first heard the expression.

Have you any sort of connection with what has been described as the Hall of Secularism at Leeds?—No; and I am not aware of what goes on there.

Or any responsibility for what happens there?—No.

You are told fifteen years ago there was a prosecution of some persons at Leeds in connection with the hall. Do you know anything about it? Have you ever heard it suggested that that prosecution referred to disgusting conduct in the nature of that imputed?—I never knew any of the facts. I knew there was a prosecution there, but I did not know the facts connected with it.

Do you happen to know if the prosecution was withdrawn?—I do not know how it terminated.

Suppose there had been a conviction, would you have expected to hear of it?

Mr. MURPHY: You may have expected a good many things.

Mr. WALTON: Did you ever hear of anybody being convicted in connection with it?—No, I did not.

By Mr. MURPHY: Have you seen the advertisement of this pamphlet in the *Torch*, under the head of "The Leeds Orgies. Full account of the Abominable Proceedings in the Leeds Secular Hall. Demoralising Result of Secular Teaching"?—I never saw the *Torch*, and never heard of it.

Mr. WALTON: The date is significant. It is February 1, 1895, and the writ was issued April, 1894.

Miss EDITH VANCE was the next witness. She made an affirmation, and was then examined by Mr. Cluer.

Are you the secretary of the National Secular Society?—I am.

Did you, on April 14, go to the defendant Snow's place of business?—I did.

Five days after the writ in this action?—Yes.

Did you purchase there, from his place of business, a copy of the publication of this libel?—Yes.

Mr. MURPHY: I have nothing to ask the witness.

Mr. ROBERT FORDER, examined by Mr. Cluer: Have you known the plaintiff since 1868?—I have.

Have you constantly been at the Hall of Science yourself from that time?—From 1868 to 1870 there was a break, but I came back in 1871. I became committee man in 1873, and I was elected paid secretary.

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE: We don't want all this history.

Mr. CLUER: In 1873 you were a committee man?—Yes.

From that time had you an intimate connection with the hall?—Yes.

Was Mr. Smith there?—Yes, as a rule, every night.

Who was the person responsible for the meetings, lectures, and classes that went on there?—Mr. Robert Owen Smith.

Did you know that science and art classes went on there?—Yes; I was secretary of them.

Did Mr. Smith supervise what went on at the Hall?—Yes.

Was he known among Secularists generally as the manager?—Yes, of the hall. We hired the hall for the science and art classes of him.

Was he known generally as the person who conducted the dancing academy there?—Yes.

By Mr. MURPHY: Who were you who hired the hall?—The Society engaged the hall every Sunday.

Were you your own manager?—No; Mr. Smith managed them all.

He was the lessor of the hall and manager of it?—Yes; on Sundays.

It was only on Sundays you held it?—Yes; but we were entitled to it on Good Fridays, Christmas Days, and every Sunday, and generally also on Wednesday evenings.

He managed the dancing?—Yes; with lady assistants.

Mr. CHARLES WATTS, examined by Mr. Cluer: Have you for many years known the Hall of Science?—Yes; and Mr. Smith in connection with it.

Who was responsible for the conduct of the classes?—Mr. Smith.

He would be regarded as responsible for the conduct of the classes of the Dancing Academy and for the Society's meetings held there?—Just so.

By Mr. MURPHY: What did you say you were?—I am a journalist and lecturer.

Lecturer for any particular body?—No.

A general lecturer?—Yes.

What connection, if any, have you with the Hall of Science?—I was on the committee.

How long have you been so?—Since my return from America, about two years ago. Formerly I was there for ten or twelve years.

Where were you in 1879?—In London.

It is suggested you were in America?—No; I went to America in 1884.

Then you were in London at the time of the Leeds trial?—Yes.

Did you hear of the trial?—Yes, I heard of it.

Mr. WALTON: I object to this. This cannot be relevant to the question of damages—what he may have heard about the Leeds trial—until my friend is in a position to make the evidence at the Leeds trial pertinent to this matter.

Mr. MURPHY: I really don't know what the meaning of this objection is. The question is whether these words uttered in the reports pointed to something in London. All the surrounding circumstances must be taken into account, in order to see what the words meant. One of these things was whether there was a trial at Leeds immediately before, and what occurred at it. My friend assumes that this relates to the Hall of Science in London. My case is that it does not.

Examination continued: You have heard of the trial at Leeds?—Yes.

Did you hear evidence was given there of abominable practices?—I did not.

Never heard it suggested till to-day?—Never.

Do you know a paper called the *Secular Review*?—I have not read it lately, I used to.

Were you not editor of it?—I was.

In what year?—Up to 1883.

And not after that?—Not after that.

Had you a kindly interest in it after that?—No, no interest directly, kindly or unkindly.

On June 26, 1886, will you undertake to say you did not see a paragraph in that paper about the obscenity alleged to have occurred at the Hall of Science at Leeds?—In 1886 I was in America.

Was it never discussed in your presence?—Never.

There are many of these Halls of Science in different parts of England, are there not?—I only know of two; one in London, and one in Sheffield.

One in Leeds?—No, that is not a Hall of Science; it is never known by that name.

So far as you know?—That is all I can say.

Mr. WALTON: I put in a paper called the *Anti-Infidel* of May, 1894. It is printed by the defendant Cook, and is published by the other defendant, J. Snow & Co. The letter appears on the first page of the paper. The passage I rely upon is the last paragraph in the first column [stating that when the case came into court the libel would be proved up to the hilt].

Mr. MURPHY insisted the whole article should be read.

Mr. WALTON thereupon read the whole of the letter, and upon concluding said that was the plaintiff's case. The Court then rose for luncheon.

After the luncheon interval Mr. MURPHY proceeded to open the case for the defence. He said: That the statement which is contained in this paragraph is untrue I am not here to dispute. My client does not pretend to justify it. It was set out in this book as having been stated publicly at this debate—about that there can be no sort of doubt; but to say that it was true at present is a thing my clients have not said, and do not say. That they are legally

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responsible I do not also dispute. One is the publisher and the other the printer of the pamphlet. The publisher's position in this particular matter seems to be this. He allows his name to be used as the publisher of the pamphlet, and he gets a commission, which, in this particular instance, if the number which had been sent to him had all been sold, would have produced the magnificent remuneration of 16s., and in respect of that matter he stands his trial for libel. The printer, on the other hand, has had his remuneration for printing the pamphlet, and I think you will find it is not of an extravagant character. The one was employed to print, and the other to publish, by Mr. Bradlaugh, whose name has been mentioned; and it has been known to the plaintiff and to the committee of this National Secular Hall Society ever since the time of the discussion, when Mr. Powell was the person who uttered these words, subsequently that Mr. Bradlaugh was the person who authorised their publication in the shape which they are at present. For reasons best known to himself, the plaintiff, who is most anxious to vindicate his character, which he says has been assailed, but which I deny, has passed by the man who used the words and the man who authorised their publication, and has come upon the printer and publisher, neither of whom, it will be proved, ever had any idea that there was any libel contained in the words at all, much less that the plaintiff was the person designated by them. It is a lawful course for a man to take; whether it is a just or a fair one is another question. It has been said that the plaintiff came into court without the slightest idea that there could be any question that the Hall of Science in London was not the one designated by Mr. Powell when he spoke at Leeds. Do you believe it? Do you believe that these gentlemen, one and all, have come up here and told you the full truth as to whether or not they ever heard of a disgusting trial at Leeds in the year 1878? What do you think of the way in which the plaintiff answered my questions? Had he answered them in a straightforward way? Do you think you got his whole mind? Do you think he told you all he knew about the trial? Do you think he ever heard it suggested there was a scandal attached to the proceedings of 1878 which came before the public, and published in the newspapers of the time in reference to the occurrences in the Hall of Science, or the hall connected with the Association, whatever it might have been called, in the year 1878? You are men of the world. I could not force them to say more than they did; but was the impression left on your minds that they were telling the whole truth about the matter? Judge for yourselves. The President of the Society (Mr. Foote) is, for aught I know, in court, sitting in front of my learned friend. Does he know nothing about it? Why was not he called? His name has been frequently mentioned, and he is the person who was employed to collect subscriptions in support of the action. Where is he? He is a gentleman whose opinions on the subject of the proximity of the lunatic asylum to the place of worship you have just heard would be valuable. Where is Mr. Foote? Does he know too much about the Hall of Science, or the hall at North-street, Leeds, about which it is suggested this trial took place? Do you think this discussion has been going on all the time without any inquiry being made by the authorities as to what took place at the trial? Gentlemen, don't believe it for a moment. Bring your own good sense to bear on the matter, and then you will be in a position to see whether the article points to anything that occurred in London, as distinguished from what occurred in Leeds. The pamphlet purports to give an account of a public discussion, not in London, but in Leeds, between two advocates of the two systems. The subject was whether or not Secularism was degrading, and you won't expect me to attempt to justify the course of that debate upon the one side or upon the other. If there are people who think that the cause of religion, upon the one hand or upon the other hand, is advanced by discussions of the character you have heard, let them have their opinions. You won't get me to express an opinion favourable to the one or to the other. What I have got to do is to defend my client as best I can against the proceedings in this libel action, which neither of them ever contemplated or intended. They may be legally responsible, and, in one sense, may be morally responsible in not having read this article and pamphlet, and inquired what was referred to, and justify the statements made before they published them; but as regards any feeling in the mind of either of them, either against the National Secular Association or against Mr. Smith, before the end of the case you will be satisfied, I am certain, that they had no malice of any sort or kind. Of Mr. Smith I believe they never heard until this action, and certainly it is a very strange thing that it should be in the year 1895 that Mr. Smith should emerge from his comparative obscurity in order to fight the battle of this Secular Association. When this action was commenced, it began as one would have expected. It was an action brought by the National Secular Hall Association, Limited, and another. That another was Mr. Smith, but the real plaintiffs in the matter were the Association. It was found, as the action went on, that they had no *locus standi* in the matter, and their names were struck out, so that they had to fall back on the "another." Mr. Smith nobody had heard of until this matter was brought to its present shape. What is the answer to this case? It is this. It is made on behalf of my client, who knew nothing about the facts. That the debate at Leeds took place in reference to matters that were familiar to the audience, we have proved. They all knew about the trial of 1878. Somebody has got the name of the *Daily Standard* in, showing the muddle that Mr. Powell must have got into. He was obviously referring to the Leeds *Daily News*, which did contain a report of the trial—a trial which disclosed, if the evidence was to be believed, the existence of obscenity and filthy practices in this hall, and which was disclosed in the course of the prosecution. It was a prosecution against licensed premises, and the license was opposed by the police; and it was the subject of discussion, not merely in Leeds, but all over the country. Perhaps that is the reason why we do not see Mr. Foote. He is a journalist, and is familiar with the subject of Secularist literature, and would know how far discussion went at Leeds. He is not called, and you can draw your own inference. I have been wondering to see whether they would call witnesses to say: "We have read this article. We know Leeds, and we know London; and, when we read the article, we saw at once that Mr. Smith was the person pointed to." No such person is called, and you are left in the dark. Every attempt has been made to exclude me from throwing any light on what took place in 1878, in order that you might be invited to take a leap in the dark, and find a verdict for the plaintiff. I shall ask you to keep your judgment open, and say whether or not it is more probable that the people were talking in Leeds to a Leeds audience, and were referring to matters that took place at the North-street Hall, Leeds, and not in London. That is the main question, and the one upon which I propose to address you. I shall lay before you, as one of the surrounding circumstances in the case, the papers from the British Museum containing an account of the trial. I shall also lay before you such papers referring to the Leeds scandal in order to enable you to form a judgment as to whether the speech of this gentleman pointed to the plaintiff. No doubt it is a very convenient matter for the proprietors of the Hall of Science to come here and obtain a cheap popularity, with the assistance of other people's money, by bringing an action of this sort; and, if it ever becomes a question of damages, I beg you will remember some of the views expressed by the champion of this hall, and say what damages ought to be awarded to persons of such a character. People who sell such a book in their own hall as the one that I have read passages from to you, admitted by the plaintiff to be part of the current literature of this sect—what title have they to come and ask for damages, even if they are unjustly assailed? Let them sue Mr. Bradlaugh or Mr. Powell, the people who are responsible; but don't let them go and make victims of the printer and publisher, even though, perhaps, they ought to have exercised some supervision, even although the name of Smith was not known to them at the time, and they never anticipated, for a single moment, the feelings of him or his friends could be affected by the paragraph in question.

Mr. GRAVES was then called. He said he was an officer of the British Museum, and produced from their custody a file of the *Leeds Daily News*.

Mr. WALTON: I take your Lordship's opinion whether it is admissible evidence to produce the file of a newspaper. I do not see on what issue this has bearing.

The JUDGE: I understand Mr. Murphy's case is that this matter had reference only to what took place in 1878.

Mr. WALTON: My friend says that the Hall of Science referred to is the Hall of Science so called at Leeds. That is the first proposition, and that is evidence which can be proved by calling persons who will describe the situation of this hall in Leeds, and tell us how it is known; but it cannot be proved by producing the file of a newspaper.

The JUDGE: This witness only produces a file of the paper. The use made of it after is a different thing.

Mr. WALTON: I object to the file going in at all as evidence.

The JUDGE: This is the paper which I suppose Mr. Murphy means is referred to as the *Daily Standard*.

Mr. WALTON: Of course London should be Leeds, and *Daily Standard* should be *Daily News*. His friend could not put in the *Daily News*, and say it was meant instead of the *Daily Standard*.

Mr. MURPHY: The view I present is this. The question for the jury is: Has the plaintiff made out that the pamphlet refers to the London Hall of Science, and to the orgies there? I propose to prove, not the facts of what occurred in the Hall of Science at Leeds, but that it was a matter of discussion amongst newspapers at the time referred to in the pamphlet; that there had been in the hall at Leeds orgies of a scandalous description. That will enable the jury to decide one way or the other.

Mr. WALTON: My learned friend is trying to draw a herring across the scent. When the question as to whether

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the Hall of Science described here as the headquarters of the Secularists, and the situation in which it is in reference to a well-known public institution, is the London hall, how could his learned friend propose to show, not that it was an accurate description of the Hall of Science at Leeds, but that certain proceedings, which he does not propose to prove, took place in another institution, which is not this institution, and to which this description does not apply? I submit we have nothing to do with any proceedings except those in the Hall of Science, which corresponds to the description.

The JUDGE: This took place in October, 1892. Was he clearly referring to something which took place in 1879?

Mr. WALTON: At a place indicated. If his learned friend could prove that the place indicated was not the place I have referred to, let him do so.

The JUDGE: It may be that the paper is not sufficient proof.

Mr. WALTON: That is my objection. The production of the paper is evidence of nothing, and I submit is irrelevant. The contents of the paper are not proved, and can have no bearing on the inquiry. I object to its production.

The JUDGE: Well, I think the paper had better go in now. What use is made of it is a different matter.

Mr. MURPHY: I may as well meet the matter now. I have got no witnesses from Leeds, but I press the paper upon these grounds. It would have been open for me to have proved that during the meeting someone called out: "Oh, you are referring to the hall at Leeds." That would be evidence to satisfy the jury that the speaker was referring to what took place in Leeds. In the same way, publication of the paper is known to the audience that was being addressed at Leeds.

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE: That is a long way from producing the paper, saying you put everything in it in.

Mr. MURPHY: I don't put it in as evidence of what occurred there, but as evidence of what the speaker was speaking about. The paper shows there is a scandal at Leeds.

Mr. WALTON: Let him call Mr. Powell, and ask him what he was referring to.

Mr. MURPHY: My friend is inviting me to call a person whom he won't bring an action against. I decline to do it. I propose to read an account of a trial in 1878, dated September 6, 1878.

Mr. WALTON: The paper referred to in the libel is August 11, 1879.

Mr. MURPHY: I am quite aware they were wrong dates, wrong names, and wrong towns.

Mr. WALTON: I ask your Lordship to rule that it is not evidence.

The JUDGE: I think not.

Mr. MURPHY: I tender it as containing an account of a trial in which obscenity took place at the Hall.

Mr. WALTON: My friend is not entitled to use that description, because I don't agree with him. There is no suggestion in this report to which the term "obscenity" can apply. He is not entitled to describe an article which he is seeking to prove, bearing on the case.

The JUDGE (to Mr. WALTON): Your people knew nothing about it, except that there was a charge of disorderly conduct.

Mr. WALTON: They do deny that they ever heard the conduct was obscene.

Mr. MURPHY: Your lordship rejects it.

The JUDGE: Yes.

Mr. MURPHY: I ask your lordship to take a note of the objection.

Mr. RAWLINSON (to witness): Do you also produce another Leeds paper?

Mr. MURPHY: You need not go through the form. I have another witness on another paper, but the objection will be the same.

(To be concluded next week.)

Rough work, iconoclasm; but the only way to get at Truth.—*O. W. Holmes.*

The moral amelioration of man is the principal mission of woman.—*Auguste Comte.*

To be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false—that is the mark and character of intelligence.—*R. W. Emerson.*

Theology is nothing more than a science of words, which by dint of repetition, we accustom ourselves to substitute for things.—*D'Holbach.*

In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule;
But they who pierce the secrets of "The Truth"
Sow not such empty chaff their hearts to fool.
—*Omar Khayyam; E. H. Whinfield, Trans.*

Carlyle and the Church.

His (Carlyle's) destination was "the ministry," and for this, knowing how much his father and mother wished it, he tried to prepare himself. He was already conscious, however, "that he had not the least enthusiasm for that business; that even grave prohibitory doubts were gradually rising ahead." It has been supposed that he disliked the formalism of the Scotch Church; but formalism, he says, was not the pinching point, had there been the preliminary of belief forthcoming. "No church or speaking entity whatever can do without formulas; but it must *believe* them first if it would be honest."—*J. A. Froude, "The Early Life of T. Carlyle."*

Religious Prejudices.

If your nurse has told you that Ceres presides over corn, or that Vishnu or Sakyamuni became men several times, or that Odin awaits you in his hall towards Jutland, or that Mohammed or some other travelled to heaven; if, moreover, your preceptor deepens in your brain what the nurse has engraved, you will hold it all your life. Should your judgment rise against these prejudices, your neighbors, above all your female neighbors, will cry out at the impiety and frighten you. Your dervish, fearing the diminution of his revenue, may accuse you before the Cadi, and this Cadi impale you if he can, since he desires to rule over fools, believing fools obey better than others; and this will endure till your neighbors, and the dervish, and the Cadi begin to understand that folly is good for nothing, and that persecution is abominable.—*Voltaire, "Dictionnaire Philosophique."*

Why Infants Ought to be Damned.

If we want to see Christian theology at its best, we must go to the old divines. A famous Presbyterian of his day was Dr. William Jameson, who occupied the post of Professor in Glasgow University. In his *Verus Patrocles*, published in 1689, he explains why children are damned in the following manner (pp. 147–8): "Certain it is, from the whole tenor of the Scriptures, and, in special, Revelation xxii. 25, that those who in the sight of God are dogs are guilty persons, and to be excluded from heaven, and, therefore, to be thrust into hell; but whole nations, without exception, are such (Matthew xv. 26). Therefore, infants, being a part of these nations, deserve to be excluded from heaven and sent to hell.' . . . . 'None can enter into the kingdom of heaven except they be born again' (John iii. 7). But surely this new birth is the gift of God, and a privilege which he may withhold from whom he will; and, therefore, without prejudice to his justice, may exclude whosoever hath it not from the kingdom of heaven; but none are excluded from it but guilty persons, which, I believe, none will deny; therefore infants may well be accounted guilty persons."

The Second Epistle of Peter a Forgery.

Jude is copied or imitated by Peter, a fact inconsistent with the position and character of an apostle. Is it likely that Peter would follow Jude's letter as it is followed? Had Jude been an apostle, Peter might, perhaps, have adopted his sentiments and words; but even in that case it would be improbable. There is a visible anxiety on the part of the author to identify himself with the apostle Peter. Thus, in i. 1, he uses the double name, Simon Peter. He has a threefold allusion to his death (i. 13, 14, 15). In i. 16–18 he refers to the transfiguration on the mount, wishing to show that he was present. In iii. 1 he identifies himself with the author of the first epistle, and in iii. 15 he wishes to appear as an apostle. A self-prominent air and conscious effort are visible. "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things." "I think it meet to stir you up," etc. "I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease," etc. "In both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." The language is an echo of Jude's. "I gave all diligence to write unto you . . . . it was needful for me to write unto you." "I will, therefore, put you in remembrance." Those expressions are hardly consistent with the conscious authority of an apostle.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii., pp. 539, 540.*

They have stormed the stars with their passion-cry
For hope or mercy or justice here,
Plead that their darlings should never die—
Plead with many a sob and tear.

Folly! for never an answer came,
And never an arrow was turned away;
It sped to its beautiful mark the same,
Whether they prayed or scorned to pray.
—*Kenneth Lamar.*

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PROFANE JOKES.

"Ah, Charley, old boy, off to church? You go to St. Highjinks, don't you? Very High, isn't it?" "Yaas; candles, crosses, confession; ah, everything except—burning pastilles."

"I want to be an angel,"
Sang the choir, sweetly solemn;
An editor in the audience said,
"Put an ad. in our 'want' column."

A Yorkshire clergyman had been taking an eager part in a cricket match on Saturday, and next morning thoughts of the stirring contest would creep in; for, much to the amusement of some hearers, he said, very solemnly, after the first lesson, "Here endeth the first innings."

"Are you the Judge of Reprobates?" said an old lady of the Malaprop school, as she walked into the Judge's office. "I am the Judge of Probate," was the reply. "Well, that's it, I expect," said the old lady. "You see my husband died detested and left me several little infidels, and I want to be their executioner."

Country Parson—"You have no idea how hard it is for me to perform my duties here." Visiting Bishop—"What are some of your difficulties?" Country Parson—"Take this week, for instance. Just as the piece of swamp they allow me for a garden got dry enough to make my potatoes thrive, the congregation requested me to pray for rain."

A small youth is just now deeply interested in the mechanical arts, and especially devoted to the various forms of the steam-engine. His aunt was recently instructing him in Bible history, and dwelt, at some length, on the story of Abraham. "He was a very rich man," she told the boy; "he had a great many horses and cattle and sheep; he had a great deal of land, and ever so many servants; and he had a dear little boy whom he loved very much. But he was a good man, and there was something he loved more than all else—even more than his little boy." "I know!" interrupted the youth, with enthusiasm. "What was it?" asked his aunt, pleased to have led him up to the right point. And the boy's eyes sparkled with sympathy for Abraham when he answered, "An engine!"

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, Oswald Dawson, "The Bar Sinister and Licit Love." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, Frederika Macdonald, "The Rights of Childhood according to Jean Jacques Rousseau." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, a lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, musical and dramatic entertainment. (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing for N.S.S. members and friends. Thursday, at 8, committee.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): Tea and Soirée. (Tickets 1s., members 9d.) Thursday, at 7.30, free science classes.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, Enid Stacy, B.A. (I.L.P.), "Modern Shams." (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Corruption in the Church before the Reformation."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH (Mr. Stace's, 42 Vincent-street): 8, members' meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 5.30, tea; 7, musical and dramatic entertainment.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, W. D'Matteo (Fabian), "The Blight of Dogma"; 7, "Municipalisation of Industries."

EDINBURGH LABOR HALL: afternoon, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science"; evening, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—James Woodburn, an essay; 6.30, social meeting. (Tickets 6d.)

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Gustav Smith, "Social Movements in Ancient Rome and the Triumph of Cæsarism."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, tontine society; 3, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "Kant"; 7, John Walter, B.A., "Herbert Spencer."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Robert Law, F.G.S., "My Journey to the Rocky Mountains and Visits to the Camps of the Blackfeet Indians." (Free.)

NEWCASTLE (Amphitheatre, Northumberland-road): 11, Charles Watts, "The Bible Not the Cause of Modern Civilisation"; 3, "Christ Not a Political and Social Reformer"; 7, "Why Should we Live Moral Lives?—the Christian and Secular Answer."

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, Sam Standring, "Charles Bradlaugh and his New Critics"; 8.30, members' meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, H. Ancketill, "The Land Question and the Drink Question"; 7, "The Abolition of Poverty." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "The Awakening of Modern Europe"; 7, "Christianity: Its Decline."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, the Secretary, "Man's Place in Nature."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Feb. 24, Edinburgh. March 3, Hull; 10, Sheffield; 11, Chesterfield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 24, Camberwell.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Feb. 17, Failsworth. March 26 and 27, Sheffield.

On Sunday, February 24, 1895,

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From the "Bradford Weekly Telegraph," Saturday, February 16, 1895.

GREAT FIRE IN BRADFORD.

EXTENSIVE DAMAGE.

Early on Saturday a big fire took place in the warehouse, No. 2 Union-street, Bradford, occupied by Mr. R. Higgins, who occupies a large part of the ground floor, and numbers the following tenants occupying the other offices and rooms: Mr. Ernest Hahnel, Messrs. Schmidt & Co., Mr. J. W. Gott, Messrs. G. D. Wright & Co., and Mr. J. Pepper. The damage done is very extensive, and is roughly estimated at a figure between £8,000 to £10,000. It certainly cannot be less than £8,000, as many of the firms occupying the building had large and valuable stocks stored in the various rooms. Mr. R. Higgins had a big stock of woollens, stuffs, and yarns, and estimates his loss at over £4,000. He is insured up to £4,000. Messrs. Wright & Co., stuff merchants, have had fully £1,000 damage done to their stock and premises, but it is completely covered by insurance. Mr. J. W. Gott, cloth and stuff merchant, had a stock valued at £1,500, and it is partially destroyed, chiefly by water. The other firms, with the exception of Mr. J. Pepper, have suffered in like manner, a lot of stock being destroyed by water. The cause of the fire is unknown, but, judging by appearances, it broke out in the packing-room of Mr. R. Higgins.

To the Readers of "The Freethinker."

We had just got the New Spring Goods ready for Sale when this unfortunate fire took place, and, although we have sustained no damage by the fire itself, most of our goods have been soaked in water. We have taken immediate steps to have all the goods dried, and for all practical purposes they are not worth one penny less than before the fire took place. The finish which is put upon new goods has, of course, been disturbed, but that always takes place in making garments up. So that if you get a length of this cloth, or stuff, and have it made up, there is not the slightest difference between that and any other new goods you might buy, when made into garments.

We have got a Big Allowance from the Insurance Company,

and to make room for New Goods, which we have already ordered, and which will be ready for sale in one month,

We now offer all our Present Stock at HALF PRICE.

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☞ State what will be most useful. ☜

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 9. SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE WOMAN WHO DID.

The Woman Who Did. By Grant Allen. London: John Lane.

MR. GRANT ALLEN is one of the brightest of the champions of Evolution. His arm is not so strong as Professor Huxley's, nor is his sword of the same weight and trenchancy. But there are very few Huxleys. We never find more than one in a single generation. It is therefore no disparagement of Mr. Grant Allen to place him below our great protagonist of Evolution. Yet in one respect he has a decided advantage. He has not hesitated to speak out plainly on the subject of religion—far more plainly than Huxley, whose Agnosticism seems at times a mere excuse for reticence.

Mr. Grant Allen has also written with the utmost plainness upon the social and ethical aspects of Evolution. He may be right or wrong, but at least he is honest. At one time we could only have said this with a reservation. But that was Mr. Grant Allen's own fault. He told the world that he had written a masterpiece, which he had not published, but destroyed, because he could not run the risk of committing the unpardonable sin against Mrs. Grundy. This was an act of cowardice, though there was some courage in the confession. But we take it that the masterpiece was only destroyed in a Pickwickian sense. It is presumably the book which has just been issued from the Bodley Head.

Mr. Grant Allen has waited until the air is thoroughly saturated with the odor of the Woman question, and he is sure of a hearing. He has also put his revolutionary argument before the world in a handsome attire. Mr. John Lane issues dainty volumes from his press in Vigo-street, and a dainty volume helps to disarm prejudice. There is nothing furtive about it. It seems to say that we may dislike it, but we must admit it is good-looking; and so it moves about, challenging a certain inevitable admiration.

It is a pity, however, that the title on the cover was not punctuated. "The Woman Who Did Grant Allen" is a very awkward joke. Of course it is a small matter; but the worst thing a revolutionist can do is to start a laugh at his own expense.

The Woman Who Did is a brightly written story; in some parts it is written beautifully. But it is not a mere story. It is really a fierce impeachment of marriage. Now this is a dangerous line for a writer to take, though less dangerous than it was ten or twenty years ago, and far less dangerous than it was in the days of Shelley. Mr. Grant Allen displays a discreet instinct, therefore, in dedicating the book to his wife—"to whom I have dedicated my twenty happiest years." After this he informs us that the book was written at Perugia, in the spring of 1893—"for the first time in my life wholly and solely to satisfy my own taste and my own conscience." By this time the reader is put, if possible, in the frame of mind to judge the book upon its merits.

Before we proceed to judge the book upon its merits, we have a word to say on the subject of novels with a purpose. We conceive them to be an utter mistake, unless the purpose is latent, as it is in the tragic masterpieces of Shakespeare. The method of art is indirection. Shelley learnt this long after he wrote *Queen Mab*, and forcibly expressed it in the sentence, "Didactic poetry is my abhorrence." You may write a novel with a purpose ever so powerfully, but you will never make it convincing. The reader who dissents from your conclusions can always say, "This proves nothing; it never happened; it is all imaginary." Besides, as Flaubert said, somebody else may write a story as powerfully to illustrate the opposite thesis. And where are you then? Art—if it *is* art—has counterbalanced art; and the result is a futile equilibrium. If you have a thesis to maintain, do it in the proper way. Challenge the intellect directly. Appeal to fact and logic. Put your case so that it may be proved or disproved. To do otherwise is to evade your logical responsibilities.

The only good a novel with a purpose can really do is to draw attention to a principle or a grievance. It is very doubtful, however, if the persons whose attention can only be excited in that way are capable of any profitable thinking. The chances are, therefore, that you have appealed to the wrong audience; which is a serious waste of time and energy.

These are general considerations, and we now come to a more particular criticism. Mr. Grant Allen has made a tremendous blunder in logic, even as a novelist. He sets out to illustrate the argument that marriage is a relic of ancient slavery, and that men and women should unite their lives, or separate them, not only without the sanction of religion, but also without the sanction of the law. Accordingly, he introduces a beautiful, cultivated, and high-spirited girl, who refuses on principle to marry the man who loves her, and argues him into becoming her husband in the merely natural sense of the word. So far so good. But it is only, after all, the beginning; the first act, so to speak, of the drama. Mr. Grant Allen should then have worked out the after-life of this couple; he should have shown us how they bore themselves towards the world, and how the world bore itself towards them; he should have developed their relationship to each other when passion had settled into affection; he should have told us how the experiment answered *for them*, in the course of many years, and in the existing social environment. Instead of doing this, he kills off the hero (if we may call him so) in seven months with typhoid fever; giving him no time to echo Shelley's apostrophe to the skylark, "Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety." Mr. Grant Allen says that it is the fools who always put that question, "What of the children?" and think it a crushing one. All the more, then, was he bound to work out the problem from the point of view of the unmarried husband and wife. Killing the husband off—and it is the novelist, not nature, who perpetrates the assassination—is a weak evasion of the real difficulty. The problem that remains is not the

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primary one, but the secondary one, which Mr. Grant Allen rather hastily declares to be no problem at all, or only a problem for fools.

The second half of Mr. Grant Allen's book answers his first half, and proves (if it proves anything) that "What of the children?" is not merely a question for fools. Herminia Barton is cut by most of her old acquaintances, and even by her father, the Dean of Dunwich. She is also cut by the family of her child's father. Her child grows up a Philistine. It was a case of atavism. Dolores Barton's beauty brings her a good offer of marriage. She learns of what she regards as her mother's "shame," rounds upon her in vehement Philistine language, goes to her paterna grandfather for "protection," and leaves Herminia no alternative but to take poison and leave a free stage for her daughter's career.

Mr. Grant Allen winds up with a funeral dirge, in which is a certain note of triumph. "Herminia Barton's stainless soul had ceased to exist for ever," but—"Not for nothing does blind fate vouchsafe such martyrs to humanity. From their graves shall spring glorious the church of the future." The sentiment is worthy of reverence; yet the cool intellect bids us ask what can possibly spring from imaginary graves, and whether the blood of imaginary martyrs can ever again be the seed of a church.

Dolores Barton was a beautiful young Philistine. She could not rise to the level of her mother's principles. But was it *her* fault? Mr. Grant Allen brands as "a silly error" the idea that parents can "influence to any appreciable extent the moral ideas and impulses of their children." Character, he maintains, is congenital, and cannot be "altered or affected after birth by the foolishness of preaching." Very well, then; if the law of atavism, which is only a *deeper* heredity, so often makes children unlike their parents, is it safe, is it fair, to involve children, whose character you cannot foresee, in the consequences of your own social experiments? Herminia Barton meant to give her daughter the glorious blessing of being "the first free-born woman ever begotten in England." But the blessing proved a curse, and it is idle to say that the daughter "made a curse of it." It *was* a curse to her. "All my life has been sacrificed to you and your principles!" exclaims Dolly. "You had no right," she cries, "to bring me into the world at all; if you did, you should have put me on an equality with other people." Herminia is unable to reply effectively; in other words, Mr. Grant Allen is unable to lay the spectre he has raised. We put it to him, in all seriousness, whether the fate of offspring is really a problem for fools. If it is, he should have been logical; he should have made Herminia resolute to the end, and have raised the "glorious church of the future" on the martyrdom of Dolores as well as the martyrdom of her mother.

In every civilised society the principle is gaining recognition that the rights of children are supreme. However marriage originated—and all good things had vulgar beginnings—it has held its own, just as monogamy has triumphed over polygamy, by virtue of the protection it affords to offspring. Family life may be purified; it can never be abolished without the ruin of civilisation. Children cannot grow up as they should without a home, and how is a home possible without marriage? This is the very kernel of the question, and not to see it is to be blind to the very essence of human evolution.

Mr. Grant Allen has strong views on the subject of marriage, and we shall deal with them in our next article. We shall also note some of his outspoken observations on other points in ethics and religion. He has put his heart into the work, and is entitled to a fair hearing and a candid criticism.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH PROPERTY.

THE Parish Councils Act has been generally recognised as an excellent piece of legislation, developing the possibilities of public life in the villages, and helping to remove the village parishioners from the thraldom of parson and squire. The Act was opposed by these interested classes, and the bishops were consistent with the whole course of their legislative career in their antagonism to the measure. It is an open secret that their opposition was not extreme, both because it was seen to be unavailing, and because the new measure was not without some benefit to the Church. The old vestries having had their church functions swallowed up by their civil business, it became a distinct advantage to the Church to make the new civil council go to the schoolroom, or other building, instead of to the church vestries, thus dissevering the old and true idea that the church belonged to the parish, and could itself be used, as in old time it was used, for parish business. Still more, to retain parish charities as ecclesiastical charities, without the control of the parish councils, was, as it were, to obtain the advantages of disestablishment without the disadvantages of disendowment. Within narrower limits the Church may have more real power than ever. The Act restored to the vestry and the churchwardens their ecclesiastical character, and now Churchmen in Convocation have been discussing the question whether the election of the parish vestry, formerly the right of parishioners, cannot be confined exclusively to Churchmen. At first sight the question may appear to have no more importance than the ordinary discussions of Convocation (which, by the way, once had the right of examining all Bills brought before Parliament that in any way related to religion, but which can now only pass resolutions that nobody heeds); but on examination it will be found to be wide-reaching. If the church affairs of the parish are to be decided by Churchmen only, and not by the majority of the parishioners, it is evident that the Church of England, which has long ceased to be really co-terminous with the nation, will also cease to be entitled to the designation of the National Church. The Bishops in the Upper House of Convocation saw this, and adhered to the old precedents, which, as laid down by Hooker, declared "there is not any man a member of the Commonwealth who is not also of the Church of England." The Bishops of London and Rochester distinctly admitted that every citizen, as such, has a right to a voice in the affairs of the Church. The Bishop of Ely dissented; but he appears to have been the only member of the Upper House of Convocation who ventured to antagonise the existing law. For, by the law, all members of the nation are, *ipso facto*, members of the National Church, entitled to all the privileges of such membership. Though I have ceased to be a Christian, and consequently do not claim these privileges, I am in law a nonconforming member of the Church of England, and have as much legal right to a voice in Church matters as any of my fellow-parishioners.* I may, moreover, if able, invest money in the purchase of advowsons, and present livings to any ordained clergymen I may select. The Lower House of Convocation appeared to be in a hopelessly muddle-headed condition on the question. Evidently they wished to limit the right of voting for the vestries to Churchmen; but as evidently they feared the State would never permit such a limitation of the rights of other parishioners. That mysterious body, the new House of Laymen, which has been, under the leadership of Lord Selborne, more sacerdotalist than the sacerdotalists, rejected the propositions of the Upper House. They would limit the voters for vestries to persons baptised in the Church of England; and since it is notorious that many who have been so baptised have become "nonconforming members of the Church of England," some would limit the voters to confirmed and communicating members. As, however, less than ten per cent. of baptised persons, and those mostly females, go through the ceremony of confirmation, any such rule would at once restrict the membership of the Church of England to within much narrower bounds than that of the Wesleyans, and render more glaring the

* Even if excommunicated, my excommunication might not be recognised by the State. The Church was compelled, in the case of Mr. Jenkins, who was refused the sacrament because he did not believe in the Devil, to admit an acknowledged heretic into the fold.

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iniquity of its holding for its exclusive behalf vast sums of national wealth. The Church is in a strait "between the Devil and the deep sea." If all parishioners vote, it must face the possibility of a nonconforming majority some day altering the very constitution of the Church, and possibly re-applying its buildings, lands, and endowments, or it must, by narrowing the term of its membership, confess it is no longer the Church of the nation, and consequently no longer entitled to those endowments. It hopes to sail between Scylla and Charybdis, and use the Liberal Parish Councils Act to dish the Liberationists. The very proposals show that the Church has lost its ancient, national basis, and that it has no more title to national property than any other of the various sects that teach in the name of religion. For it must never be forgotten that the churches, cathedrals, glebe lands, tithes, rents, and other funds in the administration of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, are national property. The clergy have no more right to consider the churches as their property than the Admiralty have to consider the dockyards and the ships of the navy as their property. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the various Church corporations are trustees for the entire nation. Nor is this affected by the fact that private persons have endowed the Church. As a matter of fact, of the aggregate annual income of six millions, only the comparatively small sum of £284,380 is derived from "private benefactions since 1703." The Churchman who gives his property to a church of which every member of Parliament is a ruler, and of which every citizen is a member, can no more question legislation concerning it than had he given property for a road or for a public park. The nation cannot take gifts on the condition that it shall never afterwards legislate concerning them. Mr. Gladstone made this clear in the debate on the Irish Church Bill in 1869, and the late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge remarked that, "if men give property to the Church, and the Church takes it, the property is given and taken subject to State control, on State terms: upon conditions laid down from time to time by the State, and liable to be altered by the power which has laid them down."

The Church is shrieking against its disestablishment in Wales as spoliation and robbery, though it has long robbed and despoiled a people who want none of it. Its talk of sacrilege and robbery will be regarded by no wise statesmen. A nation can no more rob itself than a man can rob himself. Should the nation deem it wise and expedient to devote the whole or any portion of ecclesiastical property to secular purposes, whether for the promotion of education, the encouragement of science, the endowment of research, the establishment of pensions for old age, or for the relief of the poor, it has exactly the same right as any individual has to buy books or give alms, instead of paying for fire insurance. When the nation is convinced of the unsoundness of theological *post-mortem* fire insurance it will certainly reconsider the wisdom of investing six millions and more per annum in that dubious business.

J. M. Wheeler.

CHRISTIAN HISTORY NOT TRUSTWORTHY.

Whatever value the Christian religion may possess in itself, there can be no reasonable doubt that its early history was associated with fraud, falsehood, and barefaced forgery. For centuries the followers of Christ were not only guilty of interpolating different writings, with such alterations and additions as were deemed necessary to suit the purpose of Christian propaganda, but they actually forged entire passages that were favorable to their dogmas, attributing them to authors who had nothing to do with their production. Bishop Faustus says: "It is certain that the New Testament was not written by Christ himself, nor by his Apostles, but a long while after them, by some unknown persons, who, lest they should not be credited when they wrote of affairs they were little acquainted with, affixed to their works the names of Apostles, or of such as were supposed to have been their companions, asserting that what they had written themselves was written according to those persons to whom they ascribed it" (Lardner's *Gospel History*, vol. vi., part 2, chap. 63, p. 559). Probably these writers were influenced by the words of St. Paul: "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (Romans iii. 7).

Mosheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, writes: "Thus it happened . . . . that they who were desirous [in the third century] of surpassing all others in piety looked upon it as lawful, and even laudable, to advance the cause of piety by artifice and fraud" (p. 77). "The interests of virtue and true religion suffered yet more grievously by two monstrous errors which were almost universally adopted in this [the fourth] century, and became a source of innumerable calamities and mischief in the succeeding ages. The first of these maxims was, 'that it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie, when by that means the interests of the Church might be promoted'" (p. 103). "Nor did the heralds of the Gospel think it at all unlawful to terrify, or to allure to the profession of Christianity by fictitious prodigies, those obdurate hearts which they could not subdue by reason and argument" (p. 171). Such falsehood and deceit were not confined to mere *professed* Christians, for Mosheim says: "It cannot be affirmed that even true Christians were entirely innocent and irreproachable in this matter" (p. 55).

One of the most audacious instances of the endeavors of the Christians to palm off upon the world forged writings as real is that of ascribing to the Jewish historian, Josephus, a direct reference to Jesus as "the Christ." There are two passages that refer to Jesus in the *Antiquities*, which Josephus is supposed to have written A.D. 93; but the more important of the two is that found in chapter iii., book xviii., which reads thus: "Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." Now, there is a general consensus of opinion among able writers (including eminent Christians) that this entire passage is a forgery.

C. B. Waite, who published his *History of the Christian Religion* in Chicago during the year 1884, says: "It is the general verdict of scholars that the paragraph in the third chapter of the eighteenth book of the *Antiquities*, wherein it is stated that Jesus was the Christ, etc., is an interpolated forgery" (pp. 16, 17). Eusebius is the Christian charged by several writers with the forgery, as it is well known that this pious writer was not over particular in keeping to the truth, if, by the use of falsehood, he could promote the interests of the Church.

Dr. Lardner, in the third volume of his works, says: "Probably some learned Christian, who had read the works of Josephus, thinking it strange that this Jewish historian should say nothing of Jesus Christ, wrote this paragraph on the margin of his copy; and thence it came to be afterwards inserted into many copies of Josephus." In the preface to his fourth volume Lardner writes more definitely, for therein he observes: "Indeed, it is not Josephus, but Eusebius, or some other Christian, about this time, who composed this paragraph."

Judge Strange, in his *Sources and Development of Christianity*, speaks of the passage as "a recognised forgery," and remarks: "The language is plainly that of a Christian, and not such as would be held by a Jew. Nor can it have proceeded from one so near the alleged events of Christianity as Josephus, who, sixty years after the atonement said to have been made by the Messiah, would not have had to point to the fact that he still had a following at this day as a noteworthy circumstance" (p. 21).

The Rev. Dr. Giles, in his *Apostolic Records* (p. 285), observes that the forged paragraph "is not noticed by any earlier writer than Eusebius, and plainly shows that the writer of it was a Christian. It has been rejected by all critics as a forgery, introduced into the text of Josephus to supply what was thought to be a serious want of evidence in favor of the Christian history." A host of other authorities could be cited, all being decidedly against the theory that the passage under consideration was written by Josephus. Even Professor Graetz writes, in his *History of the Jews* (vol. vii., p. 166), in referring to the circumstances

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that are said to have occurred in connection with the life of Christ: "Strange that events fraught with so vast an import should have created so little effect at the time of their occurrence at Jerusalem that the Judæan historians, Justus of Tiberias and Josephus, who related, to the very smallest minutiæ, everything which took place under Pilate, never mentioned the life and death of Jesus."

In my opinion, the paragraph, as it appears in the *Antiquities*, bears the strongest possible evidence of its being a forgery, and it requires no scholarship to detect its lack of genuineness. If anyone were to read a speech delivered by an archbishop of the Church of England in favor of the Establishment, and found that it was interpolated with opinions of the Liberation Society, the difference of the language and its import would be speedily detected. All that is required to discover the forgery in the book of Josephus is to remember who he was, and what religious views he held, and then to note the nature and position of the interpolation. Josephus was an orthodox Jew, and would not, therefore, use language that would indicate he believed in the divinity of Christ. There would be nothing extraordinary in a Jew mentioning the name Jesus, for that was an ordinary name, whereas Christ was not; it was a title, the "Anointed One," the Messiah. But the passage says that Josephus wrote, "He was the Christ," which is absurd, inasmuch as, had he done so, the early Christian Fathers would surely have alluded to the fact in their discussions with the Jews. "Origen," says Judge Strange, "could not have failed to have made use of it in his argument with Celsus, when occupied in bringing before him the testimony of Josephus. On the contrary, he has to admit the absence of any sufficient notice of Jesus by Josephus, and to endeavor to account for his silence."

Let us note the position of the passage as it appears in the *Antiquities*. The edition of 1737 gives in the margin the dates of the events recorded. It mentions three things as having happened A.D. 28—the first being a riot, in which Pilate's soldiers killed many of the populace, while others ran away. The account then says: "Thus an end was put to this sedition." Following in the order of this date, the historian adds: "About the same time, also, another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder." But between these two accounts appears the forged passage, which has no relation whatever to what preceded and what followed. In fact, it entirely destroys the continuity of the two narratives of the national disasters. Besides, the whole affair of the birth, miracles, death, and resurrection of Christ is disposed of in a few sentences, which is a most improbable thing for Josephus to have done, considering he gave full details upon local riots, which had no comparison in importance with the wonderful incidents mentioned about Christ. The concluding sentence of the paragraph ought to settle the matter once and for all. It reads thus: "And the tribe of Christians, so named from him [Christ], are not extinct at this day." Does not this point to the fact that the passage was written long after A.D. 93?

The allegation that the paragraph is after the "style" of Josephus is not true. His usual plan was to enlarge even upon trivial matters; yet in this case he is made to dismiss events of unparalleled magnitude in a few words. The fact is, all trustworthy evidence that has any reference to this "testimony of Christ" shows it to be one of the many glaring forgeries for which the early Christians were noted. As the author of *Supernatural Religion*, speaking of the early Christian Fathers, says: "No fable could be too gross, no invention too transparent, for their unsuspicious acceptance, if it assumed a pious form, or tended to edification. No period in the history of the world ever produced so many spurious works as the first two or three centuries of our era. The name of every apostle or Christian teacher, not excepting the great Master himself, was freely attached to every description of religious forgery." Such were the men who controlled the infancy of the Christian faith; and such were some of the elements that comprised its history. CHARLES WATTS.

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught,
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.
—*Shelley.*

ACID DROPS.

THE recent severe weather is not much of a testimony to the wisdom and benignity of "Providence." It has inflicted the most frightful hardships upon the poorest classes. Inquests have been held in London upon men and women who died of sheer cold and starvation. In one very sad case the Coroner was very pathetic in his lamentations, and gave some coal and food tickets to the surviving family. After the inquest it was discovered that several of the jurymen were themselves suffering from lack of sustenance, and the coroner distributed tickets amongst them as well. All this is a curious commentary upon our boasted "Christian civilisation." It is very doubtful whether any ancient pagan state, or any modern heathen country, could show such poverty, destitution, and misery as obtain where the Bible is read and Christ is worshipped.

Mr. Barnes, a Sheffield publican, determined to give away soup and loaves to the destitute poor in his neighborhood. Some tickets were sent to the Rev. C. F. Knight, of St. Simon's Vicarage, to distribute, but the man of God would not have anything to do with such tainted charity. He would not have people go to a public-house, even to save themselves from starvation. Of course this is a very noble attitude, but a correspondent of a local newspaper wants to know whether the reverend gentleman, who took a tour on the continent lately, stayed at hotels or not. We have not seen his answer to this pertinent question. Probably we never shall.

A story is being circulated about Mr. Gladstone at Cannes, where the venerable statesman is escaping the rigors of our English winter. Going to church one day, the G.O.M. was accorded a seat near the pulpit; but his deafness still prevented him from catching the sermon. "I can't hear," he said, turning to his helpmeet. "Never mind, my dear," said Mrs. Gladstone, "never mind; go to sleep. It will do you much more good." We should think so.

The Gifford lectures are becoming quite jocular. Professor Wallace, the latest Gifford lecturer at Glasgow, has just defined the soul as follows: "Our soul was that not in which we were separated from others, but that in which we were most one with others; that which was not a part of our structure, but something that was higher than physical structure, something which used physical structure for its ends, something which, so far as we knew, did not live, did not exist, except where two or three are gathered together." If this sort of thing continues, the *Freethinker* will have to look to its laurels.

The old man Moyes, recently murdered at Liverpool, earned a living by selling Bibles. He couldn't have been less under the protection of Providence if he had earned a living by selling the *Freethinker*.

John Jones, sub-postmaster at Trealaw, in the Rhondda Valley, has been arrested on a charge of embezzlement to the extent of £1,000. The prisoner, who has been a Nonconformist deacon, thanked God that he had been a Christian for thirty years. He trusted God would have mercy upon him, and incline the hearts of the officials to pardon him. Nice man, John Jones!

The goody-goody paper which boasts the title of *Great Thoughts* gives, in its issue for March 2, a portrait of Pierre Joseph Proudhon. But there is no hint that the Father of Anarchism was a Freethinker, though his saying, *Dieu c'est le mal*, was almost as famous as *La propriété c'est le vol*. This is the more notable as the writer of the paper upon him is the Rev. S. E. Keeble, who says: "Proudhon's life was strictly moral and upright. He appears to have been singularly free from personal immorality, an affectionate husband, a true friend, an upright man, free from feelings of personal hatred against any man." After this it might have astonished the Christian readers to be told he was an Atheist.

Mr. E. Thornton has been stating in the *Church Times* that in London shops and factories, out of 2,000, 1,000,

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and 700 men, only two or three are found to go to church or chapel. The statement has provoked a revival of the oft-discussed question why working men do not go to church, to which so many answers have been given without bringing them any nearer to the house of God. Perhaps the causes mentioned by the Rev. F. L. Donaldson are as amusing as any. They are "carnality, conceit, and Calvinism."

It appears from the second annual report of the Liberator Relief Fund that there are on the books of the Fund 2,472 victims of that sanctimonious fraud, their losses amounting to £700,000. Most of them were people of small means, who, misled by the pious aspect of the scheme, thought to have treasure above and increase their possessions here at the same time. After much has been done for their relief, hundreds of the sufferers still have the workhouse staring them in the face.

Christians, conveniently forgetting the past of their faith, which has been found compatible with the most atrocious forms of persecution, war, and slavery, put it forward as synonymous with all that is humane. They should read the series of articles in the *Law Times* on the history of punishment, and they would discover that in the palmy days of Christianity its professors were as inhumane and remorseless as North American Indians or South Sea Islanders. No Christian expressed pity when, in the reign of Henry VIII., Richard Mekins, a boy of fifteen, was publicly burned for "heresy," or even when a woman was boiled to death in Smithfield, in the middle of the sixteenth century.

As late as 1812 Daniel Isaac Eaton, then aged sixty, was placed in the public pillory, a punishment which often meant the violence of the mob, as well as the torture of the instrument, for having published Paine's *Age of Reason*. Fortunately, the populace was sympathetic, and a ballad in his honor was sold round the pillory. The sentence, however, excited the indignation of Shelley, and evoked his spirited *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*.

We have already referred to the shameful boycott of Mr. Foote's lecture for the Humanitarian League on "The Shadow of the Sword." We now invite our readers to look at an opposite picture. On Sunday afternoon St. James's Hall was crowded. The *Daily News* says 8,000 people were present, but that is nonsense. Still, it was a large meeting, and it was held under the auspices of the West London Mission. The speakers included Sir John Hutton, chairman of the London County Council, the Rev. Alderman Fleming Williams, and the Rev. Dr Clifford. The boss of the show was the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. It does not matter that he is a convicted liar. He is in the swim; he is respectable. Nor does it matter that Mr. Foote exposed the lie. He is out of the swim; he is a naughty Freethinker; and he must be boycotted.

According to the report in the *Daily Chronicle*, the Rev. Fleming Williams expressed himself in a fashion which he professed to disdain when he had that friendly discussion with Mr. Foote at the Hall of Science. Speaking of the project of breaking London up into twelve municipalities, he said that this "involved consequences as black with Atheism and as foul with iniquity as anything outside hell."

We acquit Mr. Williams of meaning anything particular by this, except that, as a Progressive alderman, he hated the policy of the Moderates. Logic is not his strong point, and we do not expect it of him. At the same time, it would be well for him to be a little less wild in his utterances. He knows that he had no sort of right to bring in "Atheism" in this connection. The Atheists in London are almost to a man Progressives, and the party of reaction is almost entirely composed of rather ostentatious Christians. Mr. Williams should give *this* fact his careful attention, instead of dragging in "Atheism" to please the bigotry of the Methodist groundlings at St. James's Hall.

"Outside hell" is a good mouthful, and Mr. Williams loves big phrases. But, as the Yankees say, what the hell did he mean by it? The sentence implies that there is fouler Atheism in hell than outside it. Perhaps there is. Mr. Williams may be a better authority on hell than we are. But is he a better authority than the Bible? And does not the Bible say that "the devils also believe and tremble"? The natural inference from this is that there is no Atheism in hell. Mr. Williams, however, asserts otherwise; and we leave him to settle the matter with the Holy Ghost.

Dr. Clifford made a very unfortunate historical reference. He said that the Progressives should go forward in the spirit of the Crusaders, who cried "God wills it." Yes, that was indeed their cry; and what did they do on the strength of it? They went forward plundering, torturing, ravishing, and massacreing—like the vilest set of ruffians ever let loose upon the world. It is to be hoped that the Progressives will not fall under the same spiritual influences. The fact is, Dr. Clifford was like Alderman Williams; he did not think beyond the exigency of the moment; otherwise he would have let the Crusaders rest in their unhallowed graves.

"That ridiculous *Daily News*" was an expression in our first leading article last week. Of all the London newspapers, this highly respectable organ of official Liberalism was the only one that gave no report whatever of the Hall of Science libel case. The *Daily News* has always pursued these ostrich tactics. It treats as non-existent what it does not like to recognise. For a long while it affected not to know that there was such a person as Charles Bradlaugh. It kept up the affectation until its own public laughed at its absurdity. When the whole country "stunk of Bradlaugh," as the Tories put it, the *Daily News* readers opened its pages and could never see his name. In the same way, Mr. Foote's name has been systematically excluded from the reports of meetings, even when he was one of the principal speakers. The *Daily News* has an unconquerable aversion to anything and everybody connected with Freethought.

A week or two ago the *Daily News* gave a very appreciative review of M. Fouillée's biography of M. Guyau, in which it lavishly praised the latter's power of thought, fine imagination, and grace of style. But not a word suggested that he was a Freethinker, and the author of a striking book on *The Irreligion of the Future*. Of course the silence was not due to ignorance. The writer knew his subject well enough. He was obliged to be reticent. Freethought is tabooed by the editor. He cannot "abide" it. Like Macbeth, he exclaims, "Come in any other form but that!"

"A Stupid Boy," who is really very different, writes a jocular letter in the *Eastern Daily Press* on the Bible teaching he suffered in his youth at a Church school. The chief thing he recollects is the schoolmaster, who was very muscular, and who wielded the cane most effectually. After the schoolmaster comes the parson:—

> His coat so sleek and buttony,
> His cheeks so smug and muttony.

The authorities up in Springfield have intercepted a package sent thither from China. It was ostensibly a book, but on being opened it was found that the leaves had been cut out and a gorgeous silk handkerchief, of dutiable value, was smuggled therein. The sad thing about it is that it was sent by a converted Oriental to a Springfield missionary.—*Boston Herald*.

The *Tablet* notices Mr. Balfour's book so favorably that it evidently thinks that in denouncing Rationalism he is preparing others for the road to Rome, even if he is not sufficiently logical to take that road himself.

A bishop with £8,000 a year can hardly be expected to be in favor of Disestablishment, but it is a notable sign of the times that the Bishop of Durham should address a letter to his diocese on the subject, in which, among much other questionable matter, he states that, if the Church be disendowed, the heaviest losses will fall on the poor. Nonsense, bishop. The fact is, that the poor might then resume their right to the tithes, and the national property now devoted to the Church might provide the whole of the aged poor with pensions.

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Representatives of Burial Boards, in different parts of the country, have waited on the Home Secretary and represented to him that the clergy in many cases made excessive charges on account of graves, monuments, tombstones, etc., in the consecrated portions of cemeteries and burial grounds provided out of the public rates. The public were at the expense of providing those places, and the clergy rendered no service for the charges made.

Mr. T. E. Page writes to the *Times* that, in consequence of the head-mastership of public schools being given to clericals, those posts are occupied by persons who, at the university, would not be considered worthy of a college lectureship. He says: "That this should be so is a scandal to education; but it is men like the Bishop of London who are mainly responsible. They know that teaching is not a necessary appanage of the clerical profession; but they prefer to keep it so, no matter at what cost of public detriment."

A big Missionary meeting was recently held at Dr. Parker's City Temple. Mr. H. M. Bompas, Q.C., who presided, tried to stir up young men and women to take part in missionary work, and to push the Gospel of Christ with the energy displayed in pushing English commerce all over the world. While this gentleman was exhorting his hearers to go and convert the heathen, thousands of people were living in poverty, squalor, and degradation within a mile of the place where he was speaking. Christianity, thy name is (or should be)—Hypocrisy!

The next speaker was the Rev. R. P. Ashe, of the Church Missionary Society. This gentleman was very eloquent over the change that Christianity has produced in Uganda. He admitted the melancholy business of the fighting, says the *Daily News* report, but he appeared to find some subtle consolation in the fact that the machine guns were made by European Christians. Guns or no guns, the Bible was being read in Uganda, and there was liberty of conscience—at least for the missionaries. Mr. Ashe forgot to say, however, how soon, in his opinion, the natives of Uganda would be exterminated. The guns, the rum, and peculiar Christian diseases, will probably send them to kingdom come, and leave their soil free for the occupation of the missionaries' friends.

Fred Douglass, the runaway slave, and afterwards the eloquent champion of the black race in America, is just dead, and the Christian newspapers are gushing over his grave. It would be more honorable, and perhaps more profitable, if they reflected on the old attitude of Christians in general to slavery, before it was condemned by the conscience of civilisation. Fred Douglass once delivered a lecture in the town where Colonel Ingersoll resided, and after the lecture he walked the streets because no hotel would afford him accommodation. When this outrage came to the ears of the "infidel," he sallied out into the streets and took the "nigger" to his own house. No wonder that Douglass spoke of Ingersoll on public platforms as the eloquent friend of the downtrodden blacks.

The Rev. Conrad Haney has too much of the man after God's own heart in his composition. In 1879, while pastor of a Methodist flock in Sherman, Texas, his admiration of other men's wives made him conspicuous, and he was obliged to seek fresh woods and pastures new. Recently he has had to skedaddle from Chicago, where he saved souls in the Lake Avenue Evangelical Church. He has gone off with a Mrs. Brandt, leaving his own wife and children destitute. No doubt he will turn up in another part of the Lord's vineyard, and find there another Bathsheba.

What knowest thou, man, of life? and yet, for ever twixt the womb, the grave,
Thou pratest of the coming life, of heaven and hell thou fain must rave.

The world is old, and thou art young; the world is large, and thou art small;
Cease, atom of a moment's span, to hold thyself an all-in-all.

—*Hajji Abdú El-Yezdí.*

THE HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE.

(Continued from p. 125.)

Mr. John Snow, one of the defendants, was then examined by Mr. Rawlinson. He said he was a publisher and bookseller, carrying on business in Ivy Lane, London. His name appeared on the pamphlet.

As a matter of fact, what connection had you with the production of the pamphlet?—I am merely agent for the sale of the pamphlet.

That is a common practice in your trade, I think?—It is.

You receive so many copies from the printers, and sell them and account to the proprietors?—Yes.

On what terms do you receive them?—I sell them at a commission of 5 per cent.

That is all the connection you had with the production of these pamphlets?—Yes.

Before this action was brought had you ever heard of Mr. Smith?—Never heard of his name before.

I need hardly ask you whether you had any feeling of any sort against him?—None.

You knew that this pamphlet was a reproduction of what had already been published in some other paper?—Yes.

It also appears that it is a verbatim report of what occurred at Leeds?—Yes, certainly.

So far as you were concerned, had you any knowledge at all even of the existence of this paragraph in the middle of the pamphlet?—Not until I received a letter from the plaintiffs' solicitor.

The Judge: What is the date of that?

Mr. Rawlinson: 6th April, 1894. (To witness) In that letter there was no indication to you as to what part of the pamphlet was complained of?—None whatever.

And no suggestion that Mr. Smith was in any way connected with the Hall of Science, which it now appears he is connected with?—No.

And at that time had you any idea of what was complained of in the pamphlet?—None.

Now since this action was brought have you, through your solicitor, collected a large number of different papers, Secular or otherwise, having reference to the conduct of Secular halls at Leeds?—Yes.

Amongst others have you received a copy of a review called the *Secular Review*?

Mr. Walton: How is this evidence, passages which may have appeared in other contemporaneous papers?

Mr. Rawlinson: In this way. The question here is whether or not the audience who heard this remark would apply it to the Leeds or London hall. I venture to submit it is evidence of a discussion which appeared in the Secular papers published by people who held the same line of thought, to show, as a matter of common notoriety, it was a subject which had been under discussion between Christian and Secular debaters shortly before the time of the speech complained of. I propose to bring a large number of papers to show the Leeds question had been discussed, and it was a matter of public interest at the time, and therefore to ask the jury to hold that when the speaker referred to a hall, speaking at Leeds, he referred to a hall in Leeds, and not in London.

Mr. Walton: It is a very simple issue. The question is whether Mr. Powell said this having reference to a building in Leeds. That could be proved by calling persons who heard it and the person who spoke it, and proved by giving a description of the building in Leeds, which would answer the description given in this article. It is not proved by throwing in a large armful of newspapers and saying, If you look at them you will see the speech discussed.

Mr. Rawlinson: I propose to show that the speech on conduct at Leeds was the subject of public discussion.

The Judge: You don't find in the pamphlet that it was a subject of discussion.

Mr. Rawlinson: Up to that time it was an important subject of discussion; and in the pamphlet itself it was also the subject of discussion.

Mr. Walton: Your lordship has already ruled upon that point.

The Judge: You cannot put papers forward as evidence of what took place in Leeds. There is surely another way of getting it.

Mr. Rawlinson: I don't care what took place at Leeds.

The Judge: You have got a faint denial from the plaintiff of having heard that some scandal had taken place at Leeds. Had not you better be content?

Mr. Rawlinson: I am showing that this subject was under discussion between the parties during all these years, and that it was referred to by these gentlemen on that occasion. That is the line of my argument. Of course it is a very loose description on page 29 of the pamphlet. In other parts of the pamphlet the matter is put more accurately. I don't know that I can put it any further than that.

The Judge: You have got the pamphlet there, and if you can find a case in that, so much the better.

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Mr. RAWLINSON: Then I will deal with the pamphlet, and I shall hope to alter your lordship's mind, to a certain extent, so as to show what I mean. I submit I am entitled to prove what he was referring to.

Mr. WALTON: He describes it, not as having happened at a Hall of Science, but at the North-street Hall, Leeds; but that was in his first speech.

Mr. RAWLINSON: I submit it is the same subject.

The JUDGE: Then you are met with the same difficulty. If you can call somebody who is able to tell us what happened, all very well; but at present it is like asking to put in a copy of the *Times*, and saying you are not going to call any witnesses, asking me to believe everything in it.

Mr. RAWLINSON: If it was a subject of ordinary interest, I should be entitled to read articles in publications which appear to show that it was an article of public interest. Here I am asking your lordship to allow me to read a matter which must have been known to the Secularists at the time.

The JUDGE: Already you have got proved by the plaintiff that something had taken place at Leeds, and that the matter had been discussed in his presence. You have got that. Mr. Smith says himself he was present when the report of the trial was discussed.

Mr. RAWLINSON: I was wishing to tell your lordship what the nature of the scandal was.

Witness was then cross-examined by Mr. Walton.

I understand, Mr. Snow, you publish numerous publications of this class?—Yes.

Do you publish a paper called the *Anti-Infidel*?—I do.

With your name upon the face of it?—Yes.

And I think you were the first in the pages of the *Anti-Infidel* to give this discussion to the world?—The proprietor, Mr. Bradlaugh, was.

I am speaking of you as publisher. You published it under your name; is that so?—The discussion was published in the *Anti-Infidel*.

Do I understand you to tell the jury you published that discussion in the newspaper, without troubling yourself to read it?—I did not read it.

The JUDGE: What had Mr. Bradlaugh to do with it?—He is the editor and proprietor.

Mr. WALTON: What is the circulation of the *Anti-Infidel*?—I sell about 2,000.

I did not ask you what you sold.—I only receive it from Mr. Bradlaugh on sale.

How many copies pass through the press?—I don't know. I am not the printer.

You have no idea?—No.

Not the remotest?—No.

The JUDGE: You did not print the pamphlet, I understand?—No.

The JUDGE: It was sent to you to sell, the same as the *Anti-Infidel* was?—Yes, on the same terms.

Mr. WALTON: It appeared in pamphlet form, with your name on frontispiece?—Yes.

Do you regard yourself as responsible for what appears under your name as publisher?—No.

Mr. RAWLINSON: That is a legal question which your lordship may have to decide later.

The JUDGE: If he does regard himself as liable, and he is not legally so, it won't hurt him to say he is.

Mr. WALTON: You tell that to the jury. You issue a pamphlet with your name on the front, and you do not consider yourself responsible for having given it to the world?—I am responsible for the copies I sell, of course.

Are you responsible for allowing your name as publisher to appear on the document for its contents?—Responsible for the name appearing.

Before you allowed your name to appear on this, do I understand you did not trouble to read it?—I did not see it before it was put on.

Your attention was called to it by the solicitor later?—It was.

That was a serious letter?—It was.

Did it complain that this pamphlet contained a serious libel both upon Mr. Smith as the manager of the Hall of Science, and upon the National Secular Hall Society, Limited?—I don't think the letter did.

Let me read it; perhaps you did not read it?—I did read it.

Mr. WALTON (reading): "I have received instructions from the National Secular Hall Society, Limited, and from Mr. Owen Smith, the late manager of the Hall of Science, to commence an action against you and the printer for certain defamatory libels." Did you, after you got the letter, take the trouble to read the document?—I did.

Did you come across the passage in question?—I did not notice it particularly when I received the letter.

When did you first notice it?—On the receipt of the writ.

Did you answer the letter?—No, because I thought I had better see the proprietor of the pamphlet first.

When you did read the passage, did you think it a very shocking libel on somebody?—I thought it was a libel on the Hall of Science.

In London?—Well, I did not know where it was.

Do you really tell the jury that?—I do.

You are the publisher of the *Anti-Infidel* and similar literature, and did not know where it was?—No; I had never seen it.

Did you know it was in London?—I knew there was one in London.

Did you know it was the one in London that was suing you?—I did not suppose anything about it.

Did you say you did not form any opinion?—No.

Did you think it was any other Hall of Science in London?—I did not know.

You did not know which it was?—No.

And you did not trouble to inquire?—I went to see Mr. Bradlaugh.

Did you ascertain from him that it was any other hall than the one in London that was referred to?—No.

You thought, then, it was the Hall of Science in London?—I thought it might be.

And was no other?—Well, I knew of the hall in Leeds.

Did you think that the one referred to?—I thought it quite possible?

You swear that?—I do.

Then you thought it did not refer to the plaintiffs?—I thought not.

When you were served with a writ?—Yes.

That you swear?—Yes.

Then, having come to the conclusion that this did not refer to the plaintiffs at all, did you write and tell them so?—No.

Why not?—Because I saw Mr. Bradlaugh.

I am not speaking of what you said to Mr. Bradlaugh, but of what you said to these gentlemen complaining of the libel?—I said nothing.

Why not?—Because I did not know him. (Laughter.)

You think that is a serious answer?—I do.

And you tell the jury you thought it did not refer to him?—I put the matter in the hands of my solicitor.

I see. Did you continue to publish the *Anti-Infidel* after the action had begun?—Certainly.

Did you happen to have been publishing it in May and June, 1894?—Yes.

In May and June, 1894, you were strongly of opinion that this did not refer to the plaintiffs who were suing you?—I cannot say what happened in May and June. This was in April.

Did you change your opinion before May, 1894, as to whom the libel referred to?—No.

Then you thought it did not refer to the plaintiffs?—I thought so.

Will you tell the jury, if you did not think the action referred to the plaintiffs, how you came, in May, 1894, to publish a letter containing this passage: "The fact that Mr. G. W. Foote can only bring forward one solitary paragraph on which he thinks it even possible to base an action is a tacit admission on his part that every other charge concerning the filthy and immoral literature issued from the Secular press, and the vile conduct and practices of Secularists themselves, has been proved up to the hilt. When the case comes before the court the evidence lacking in the involved paragraph will be forthcoming, and then the charges will be proved up to the hilt"? How came you, if you thought in May, 1894, that this paragraph did not refer to the plaintiffs at all, to publish a statement that you were going to prove the charges up to the hilt?—Mr. Bradlaugh wrote that; I did not.

You published it. Do you mean to say you did not read that?—No; I don't mean to say so.

And do you mean to tell the jury you allowed these gentlemen to come into court under the impression that the libel referred to them, without having in any way sought to correct that opinion? You know now, perfectly well, it refers to them?—It was only my opinion.

Have you any doubt about it?—Oh yes.

Do you suggest there is no Hall of Science in London?—No, there was one.

In 1879?—I cannot say what year.

Did you ever hear of a Hall of Science in Leeds, so-called?—Yes.

The National Secular Hall is referred to in this libel. Is there any Hall of Science in Leeds the headquarters of the Society?—I don't know.

Can you suggest any Hall of Science in the United Kingdom which can be described as the headquarters of the Secularists, except that managed by Mr. Smith?—I cannot suggest any.

Or any situated, as that is, near a lunatic asylum?—I don't know where it is situated.

Inasmuch as this Hall of Science is a Hall of Science in London, and inasmuch, therefore, as Mr. Smith manages it and conducts it, you now understand that the passage refers to him?—He says it does.

Have you any doubt?—Oh yes.

If what he says is true, it must?—Yes.

Have you offered any retractation or apology yourself?—No, I have not.

Are you indemnified in respect of damages and costs?—Yes.

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Re-examined by Mr. RAWLINSON: My learned friend has asked you about the Hall of Science in Leeds in 1878. Did you know when it was shut up?—I can't say from my own knowledge.

Only from what you have read?—Yes.

The JUDGE: Is it shut up?—It is, I believe.

Mr. WALTON: There is no such building, and never was.

Mr. RAWLINSON: There was a Secular Hall.

Mr. WALTON: There is this hall in North-street, Leeds; but it has not this description. It was not called the Hall of Science. I am instructed that that is a malicious and malignant fabrication.

Mr. RAWLINSON: The Secular Hall was the one I asked about. You can, if desired, tell what has become of the hall in Leeds?

Mr. WALTON: My friend is not entitled to that.

The JUDGE: You are both knocking your heads against a brick wall. One of you refers to the Secular Hall, and the other to the Hall of Science.

Mr. RAWLINSON: I was only going to ask the date.

The JUDGE: Mr. Walton says there is no Hall of Science at Leeds.

Mr. Cook, the second defendant, was then called, and said he was the printer of this pamphlet.

Were you instructed to print it in the ordinary course of your business?—Yes.

At the time you printed it did you know of this paragraph, the subject-matter of this action, being in at all?—I did not.

It was printed as a reprint of what had been in the *Anti-Infidel*?—Yes.

And that was a copy of a report of a meeting held at Leeds?—Yes.

You never heard of Mr. Smith before this action?—No.

Cross-examined by Mr. WALTON: Are you indemnified too, are you in that happy position?—Yes.

Damages and costs?—I don't know.

Which?—I don't know.

Both?—I don't know.

Which do you think? (Laughter.)

The JUDGE: Have not you got what you want, Mr. Walton?

Mr. WALTON: I think so.

Mr. RAWLINSON then addressed the jury for the defence. He said: I shall detain you a very short time in summing up the evidence laid before you. The point which my learned leader, Mr. Murphy, made when he addressed you is one which I think is certainly worthy of your consideration. The main question for you is, Was this remark, which was made by Mr. Powell, reasonably to be understood as referring to the London Hall of Science, or was it referring to a Secular hall in Leeds, about which scandals had arisen. And a prosecution had taken place shortly before the date referred to in the pamphlet? I do call your attention most carefully to this. As appears from the pamphlet, these two disputants, Mr. Powell and Mr. Fisher, made alternate speeches. Mr. Powell first made a speech, and Mr. Fisher replies at some length. Mr. Powell again replies on him, and so the combat is carried on. In his first speech Mr. Powell opened the case against Secularism in great detail, and in that opening, one very short part of which I shall read to you, he deals in detail with the charges of disgusting conduct against the National Secular Hall at Leeds. There is not the slightest doubt as to what he is referring. When he refers to the "rotten proceedings" at the National Secular Hall, he is obviously referring to the scandal which was well known to his audience, because he does not go into detail. Mr. Fisher then makes a speech of some length, and then Mr. Powell has the reply upon him, and it is in the second speech that this paragraph occurs. If it was meant to have referred to the London hall, you would have found it set out in his first speech. As it is, you find it in the second speech, which is a continuance merely of his first speech. He puts his case in his first speech, and details very shortly the proceedings which occurred before the Leeds magistrates, and then goes on to the *Elements of Social Science*. In his second speech he again refers, as I submit, to the Leeds Hall in the paragraph complained of, then reverts to the *Elements of Social Science*. My friend very properly objects when I want to put in the Leeds *Daily News*, because it is not the *Daily Standard*, so I cannot show you to what this libel refers. It is spoken by a man who is summing up his case replying to Fisher. He has identified the hall before in detail, and he sums it up, saying: "If you doubt me, look at the *Daily Standard* of August 11, '79." There is no such paper, and so you are asked to take the words verbatim, and say, if you take the man as having spoken exactly what he knew, you cannot have the slightest doubt it applied to the National Secular Hall in London, and it was impossible to apply them to the hall in Leeds. The point I wish to make here is this: Mr. Fisher, one of the disputants, was a member of the Council of the National Secular Society. He went down to speak as representing the Secular Society to that extent. He was a member of the committee, fighting their side of the case. After this remark had been made he had a reply, and he made full use of his opportunity and entered fully into the reply. If he had thought it applied to the London hall, would not he have replied at once and said: "What a scandalous lie you have told? There has never been a suggestion against the London Hall of Science. There has never been a suggestion that the Hall of Science allowed unnatural offences to take place in their hall"? He was in Leeds; he was present there carrying on the dispute. If he thought it meant London and not Leeds, would he not have answered it? Of course he would; but he does not, because he knows perfectly well it has been referred to properly in the first speech, and he knew what was being referred to—the hall at Leeds. If he had, the answer would have been: "We know the class of thing that went on there; we know what came out before the magistrates." I am entitled to use that as a fair argument here. My learned friend has suggested that I ought to call Mr. Powell. As a matter of fact, we cannot call him to help us in this matter. He is not helping us; but why does not my learned friend call Greaves Fisher, the member of the National Secular Society who took part in the debate, and who did not answer the charge. He must have known perfectly well to what hall it referred, and the whole facts of the case. Why is he not called? My friend comes down here and defends, with the ardor which is perfectly right, the idea that anything could be meant about Leeds instead of London. Why does he not call Mr. Fisher to come and say, "I knew he meant the Leeds hall"? Remember that my friend has opened the case saying they had no idea of the case they had to meet. The defence, in this matter, was put in on June 4, 1894, and that defence was this: "They admit that the words set out in the complaint were printed and published by them; but they deny that the said words had any reference to the plaintiff, either in reference to the position as alleged, or at all." Could you expect a clearer denial than that? We have said from the beginning that this does not refer to the plaintiff at all. Greaves Fisher must have known it never referred to them, and he did not reply on it. It was not until it was printed by Cook and published by Mr. Snow that the action was brought against us. My friend has made a very strong point about why we did not answer that solicitor's letter more fully before the action was brought. Can he suggest any sort of answer we could have made? We know that Mr. Powell had not been attacked in the matter; that no action had been brought against him. He had spoken the words complained of, and could have been attacked. They knew we had done it at the request of Mr. Bradlaugh, the proprietor of the *Anti-Infidel*. We are the first to get the solicitor's letter. What possible answer could have been sent to that? A great point has been made that no answer was made to it; but what sort of reply was there to a solicitor's letter of that kind? Does it request an apology or withdrawal? Does it tell us what part of the pamphlet of forty pages was complained of? Never a word suggested as to what the libel complained of was. Never a suggestion it was that passage subsequently taken out and put in the statement of claim. Never a suggestion that it applied to Mr. Smith as manager of the hall. The answer is obvious: we cannot, because we don't know what part we are attacked about. The letter does not ask for an apology or withdrawal, but simply says: "I wish to have the address of solicitors to accept service on your behalf, and if you do not send it I will serve you personally with a writ." I can only say that my friend must be consciously hard driven when he had to come to such a complaint against the defendant in this case. Directly he puts in his defence he says: "I admit I published the words, but they do not refer to you, either in your position as manager of the hall or refer to you in any way." What more can my friend wish for than that? Have we had a chance from beginning to end of more clearly expressing our case than we have to-day, and in our defence? Now, I have put the simple facts before you. I don't think anything the plaintiff has done here will make you think he is entitled to large damages in this matter. Do you think his character has been seriously affected? They all knew the attack was made in Leeds, and the whole subject of the controversy was in Leeds; and do they mean to say the plaintiff was damaged at all, looking at all the circumstances? Further than that, are there any matters in the conduct of the defendants which make you think they ought to pay larger damages than they ought to if they are wrong? Both the defendants knew nothing at all about the libel before it was put in print. They were very negligent, and possibly they ought to have read it before they put it in. But I say there is nothing which defendants have done which should lead you in any way to unduly press the case against them. The last topic of prejudice is this: They have been indemnified; and, it is suggested, by Mr. Bradlaugh, on whose behalf they were published. If you think that is a topic which you ought to take into account, by all means do so. But the main question is: Did the audience who heard the statements, and the persons who read them, not know perfectly well from the context, and from the fact that Fisher did not reply in any way to the charge—must they not have known that the real sting of the libel was against the Leeds hall, and had no reference to the London hall, still less to Mr. Smith, whom nobody ever heard of?

(Continued on page 185.)

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 3, Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell-road, S.E.:—7.30, "God is Dead."

March 9, Ryhope; 10, Sunderland; 17, Nottingham; 24, Bristol.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—March 3, Manchester; 17 and 24, Hall of Science, London; 31, Newcastle-on-Tyne. April 7, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

J. G. Fisher.—You are quite right. The libellous pamphlet referred to the North-street Hall, Leeds, on p. 8, and the utterance on p. 29 about "headquarters" is, as you say, in every respect additional and distinct. This is dwelt upon in Mr. Walton's speech, which we give this week in the second half of our verbatim report of the trial.

J. K. Maagaard.—Thanks for your interesting letter. You are quite right in exercising a certain discretion. But a leader's position is necessarily different. If he knows a moment's fear, he is unfit to lead at all. In fighting bigots, liars, persecutors, and libellers, he must take Danton's motto: "*De l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace.*"

C. Harwood, 4 Wingmore-road, Church-road, Tottenham, is the new secretary of the Edmonton Branch. Mr. Patten has been obliged, for domestic reasons, to resign the office.

T. E. M.—Pleased to receive your congratulations on the result of the libel action.

H. Gillett.—The amount claimed as damages in a libel suit is little else than a formality. It is usually fixed by the lawyers.

W. Simons.—Thanks for cutting. See paragraphs.

Mr. John Payne, 6 Heavily-grove, Horwich, Lancs, will send, to any Branch willing to pay carriage, twenty-four dozen of mixed *Freethinkers* and *National Reformers*, for distribution.

Inquirer.—Mr. Foote caught a nasty cold, but he nursed himself carefully, and got better. Mr. Watts caught a bad cold too, but he too is nearly himself again. Mr. Parris has been unwell for some weeks. Mr. Moss had a bad fortnight's bronchitis, but is now able to follow his vocation, though he has to be careful. Secularists are just like Christians—liable to the ills that flesh is heir to—especially in bitter weather.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—C. J. Pottage, 10s.

New Reader.—If you read the report in our last number carefully, you will see that all our witnesses in the Hall of Science libel case *affirmed*, instead of swearing.

A. B. Moss.—Glad to hear of your recovery. Be careful for some time.

H. Jones.—Pleased to have your congratulations. There is too much truth in your remark that "All the rascality of the churches seems to filter down into the slime of Christian Evidences."

P. Sabine.—See paragraph. Many thanks.

W. Owen.—Success atoones for a lot of trouble. We hope to teach some other rascals a lesson before we have finished.

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. T. Ives.—We cannot print a list of all the apocryphal books in this column. You can obtain a copy of the New Testament Apocrypha for half-a-crown, and the Old Testament Apocrypha for less.

London Secular Federation.—Miss Annie Brown acknowledges:—Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Lupton, 5s.; H. A. Lupton, 5s.

Implacable.—Any persons who now circulate the libel on the Hall of Science, either by sale or gratuitously, can be prosecuted under the criminal law, and sent to prison if found guilty. We beg our readers to send us immediate information if they learn of any continued circulation of the libel.

Mr. Foote's Fighting Fund.—W. Owen, 2s.

Papers Received.—Manchester City News—Eastern Daily Press—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Ironclad Age—Progress—Toronto Globe—Boston Investigator—Newcastle Daily Leader—Puck—Travel—Open Court—Liberator—South Wales Echo—Freethinkers' Magazine—Two Worlds—Newcastle Chronicle—Cambria Leader—Twentieth Century—Echo—Brisbane Telegraph—Nottingham Evening Express—Sheffield and Rotherham Independent—Liberty—Melbourne Age—Cape Times—Progressive Thinker—Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The verbatim report of the Hall of Science libel case is concluded in this week's issue of the *Freethinker*. It is our intention to keep the case on permanent record. The report will be put into pamphlet form, with an introduction and notes, and a statement as to the Leeds affair which was so lied about in the trial. The pamphlet should be circulated by Secularists wherever they hear any slander against our movement.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (March 3) in the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, his subject being "God is Dead." On the following Saturday evening (March 9) he will lecture at Ryhope, and the next day (Sunday) at Sunderland, which he has not visited for a considerable time. The local Branch has engaged a large hall capable of holding three thousand people, for two lectures in the afternoon and evening. No doubt friends will come to Sunderland from the surrounding district, and help to fill the big building.

The Bristol Branch congratulates Mr. Foote on the success of the Hall of Science libel action, and hopes he will live long to continue his leadership of the Freethought party.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts had excellent audiences at Newcastle, where he lectured three times. The opposition by local Christians was considerable. In the evening Mr. Lynn, the vice-president of the Christian Evidence Society in Newcastle, spoke for half-an-hour in an able and most gentlemanly manner. The audiences thoroughly enjoyed the discussion after each lecture. There was a great demand for the *Freethinker*, on account of the report of the trial.

To-day, Sunday, March 3, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Manchester, where we hope to hear that he has had good audiences.

This Saturday (March 2) the Failsworth Sunday School holds a tea party at 5, the proceeds of which will go towards defraying the expenses of the Whit-Friday procession. On Sunday Mr. Evans, of Burnley, lectures at 6.30.

Last year the *National Secular Society's Almanack* arrived when Mr. Symes was in New Zealand, and no notice of it appeared in the *Liberator*. This year the *Almanack*, edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, appears in a new and improved form, and is full of the most interesting matter. We have never been so pleased with it as in the present number. The price is 6d., but it is honestly worth double the money, and would be a capital shilling's worth. We wish it every success.—*Liberator.*

Professor H. D. Müller, of Vienna, has called attention, in his *Studies in Ezekiel*, to some suggestive parallels between the phrases of scripture and those found in cuneiform inscriptions. For instance, Assurbanipal records that certain persons were punished "according to the curses as many as were written in the writing of agreement" (see Deut. xxix. 21). Professor Müller thinks his many instances prove Hebrew indebtedness to Assyrian sources.

Hugh Price Hughes was the principal speaker at the anniversary meeting of the South London Mission on Monday evening, and the Camberwell Secularists thought they would go and hear him. A dozen members of the Branch committee armed themselves with three hundred copies of our "Atheist Shoemaker" pamphlet, which they

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distributed outside the chapel. One copy was carefully handed to H. P. H. as he went in. When the Secularists took their seats they were amused at seeing the audience busily reading the great man's exposure. After the great man's speech Mr. Sabine rose and asked if he might put a question; whereupon the great man, looking very chalky, nudged the chairman, who said, "No, no." Mr. Sabine, however, got out the explanation that his proposed question had reference to the great man's book about a converted Atheist. H. P. H. then left the meeting, leaving both the County Council candidates behind him.

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* gives as frontispiece a capital portrait of George Everitt Macdonald, brother and assistant to the editor of the *Truthseeker*. In the sketch accompanying the portrait George is described as the Prince of Good Fellows. Having read with interest his "Observations" in *Freethought* and the *Truthseeker* for many years, this is a statement we can well believe. His character shows in his portrait.

Mr. Maurice Russell, of the West Ham School Board, is standing for re-election. He is running, as before, on the "secular education" ticket, and it will be a misfortune if he does not retain his seat. We hope the local Freethinkers will work for his return as well as vote for him at the poll. Mr. Russell's committee rooms are at 33, High-street, Plaistow, and 61, West Ham-lane, Stratford.

Kingsland and district Freethinkers are requested to meet to-day (March 3) at 12 noon, at Mr. Davey's, 21, Castle-street, to make arrangements for carrying on the open-air propaganda at Ridley-road. Lecturers have already been engaged for almost every Sunday during the summer.

The East London Branch has just held its annual meeting. Mr. G. J. Warren, ever faithful and zealous, was reappointed honorary Secretary and Treasurer; a strong committee of seventeen was appointed, with Messrs. Loafer and Thorrington as auditors. It was decided to carry on the open-air work at Mile-end-waste from April to September. A resolution was passed expressing pleasure that the Hall of Science Club was to terminate on its present basis. It was also resolved to nominate London for the Conference in view of Mr. Putnam's intended visit.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE.

(Concluded from page 136.)

Mr. RAWLINSON (to the Judge): I do not know whether I ought to have taken the point as regards the question whether the publisher is liable. As Mr. Snow was merely a conduit pipe for the selling of the book, under a case which I will hand up, he would not therefore be liable, as he was in the position of a mere news-vendor. Where a publisher publishes, it is another thing; but here the evidence is that he simply received copies from the printer, to sell on commission.

The JUDGE: His name is put on them as publisher.

Mr. RAWLINSON: But that is only a custom of the trade. He certainly sold them on commission. If necessary, I will put the point before your lordship later.

Mr. WALTON then addressed the jury on behalf of the plaintiff. He said: I am not surprised that my learned friend has not more than once in the course of his speech referred to three persons who are before you in this litigation; and, before I advert to one or two material observations which, it occurs to me, I ought, on behalf of the plaintiff, to make, I think it would not be inadvisable to ask ourselves for a moment, Who is Mr. Smith? who are these two gentlemen in the position of defendants? Mr. Smith and his connection with the Hall of Science, referred to in this libel, has been made abundantly clear. My learned friend has had the opportunity of cross-examining Mr. Smith; and, with that opportunity, with the large license which the law gives him—with the little scruple which has characterised my learned friend's method in using that license, which you have witnessed—he has completely failed to discredit and disparage Mr. Smith; but my learned friend has had no instructions to suggest that Mr. Smith has not been a man of eminent respectability and of unimpeachable character, and who has borne himself honestly and honorably in all relations of life. It is perfectly true that Mr. Smith has what some of us would regard as a misfortune—not those religious opinions which many of us hold. But, except the fact that his religious opinions differ from those of the majority of us, there is no kind of suggestion that Mr. Smith is not moral and trustworthy in every relation of life. Mr. Smith has been connected with this building called the Hall of Science in a very intimate way. He helped to found it; and within those walls men of the most eminent character, men who lectured in the cause of Freethought, have lectured; men who, although they have suffered for their opinions, won the respect of the British people. These men here have had the opportunity—which I trust every man may be afforded in the light of day of expressing freely, to the people who thought them worth hearing, the views which they entertained. And it turns out further that Mr. Smith, through a long course of years, endeavored to make the Hall of Science a centre of education and instruction. He connected it with the Art and Science Classes of South Kensington. He had associated with him a clergyman of very free opinions, but of the very highest character—the Rev. Stewart Headlam, who was a member of the committee, and co-operated with him. He had, in addition, entertainments for the amusement of the young people who were members of his Society, and whose parents were connected with the movement; and in this way it is obvious that, in the actual conduct of these very classes, the foundation of the dancing academy, admission to which was by ticket, the regulation of these proceedings, the supervision, and the mode in which it was conducted, Mr. Smith is regarded by his own people—by the Secularists throughout the country—as a respectable person. Mr. Watts only told us what is obvious. He said: "I regard Mr. Smith as responsible in this matter." Mr. Smith of himself says: "I am responsible. I was actually present at these instructions, and actually superintended these very classes. A state of things such as that indicated would have been impossible without my knowledge, and could not have occurred without my authority"; and therefore Mr. Smith, with the long years of respectable character which he is bearing, comes face to face with these honorable and moral and honest men, who hold Freethought in relation to religion. Mr. Smith is compelled to come into court, and to challenge from them some sort of substantiation for this monstrous attack levelled against him. It is essential that Mr. Smith leaves this court to-day with your verdict, with damages marking your sense of the attack made against him, and his right to invite an expression of opinion against him. Who are the defendants? They have been put into the box, and, if they had to pay these damages and costs, I could understand why my learned friend should call them, and make an appeal *ad misericordiam* that you should take into consideration their own negligence and own general respectability in awarding that sum; but why they should be put forward when they are not the real defendants, and when the verdict will not involve them in any damages, when they are merely show defendants for the spirits that are stabbing in the dark, wreaking their malignity in the dark, and were not put into the box, gentlemen, it is very difficult to understand. Of course Mr. Cook is only the printer, and of course Mr. Snow is only the publisher, and your verdict will be a verdict against them. But through Cook and Snow you are hitting those men who, for aught I know, have been sitting here within sound of my voice, and who have put in motion the printing press which gave currency to this malignant attack, and who dare not answer for it and submit themselves to cross-examination. After Snow and Cook have told us they will not be affected by your verdict, you need give very little consideration to the sort of appeal which my learned friend has addressed to you. Even though they are the defendants, I fail to see how they can ask for any consideration in the matter of this action. Mr. Powell, the obscure person who goes from Liverpool and vanishes into the obscurity from which he emanated, might have been made a defendant in this action. What would have been said then? They would have said that what Mr. Powell stated he said in the heat of the moment, and it was an excess of zeal; and, therefore, he made a statement which, in calm moments, he would regret. It is these defendants who have given prominence to the libel. They have put it into the hands of every person interested in the matter throughout the kingdom, and they have professed to refer to a paper called the *Daily Standard*, which most men would understand referred to one of the most influential London papers. The defendants, who carelessly printed and carelessly published a document such as this, are not in a position to ask for any consideration from the jury when they have to do justice to the unfortunate man who may have been injured by the publication for which they are responsible. Now, let me consider for a moment how my learned friend, on behalf of the defendants, has sought to meet the case. I do not wonder at the line he has taken. I think I proved a true prophet in my opening. I ventured to predict what the real defence to the action was, and what the real tactics were which Mr. Murphy was instructed, on behalf of these persons, to pursue; and I do not wonder he tried to induce you to disregard the motive of justice,

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which is, perhaps, as sacred as any other motive in human nature, to disregard the motive of justice, because you disapprove of the opinions of the man who asks you for the justice of your verdict. My learned friend produces this book called *The Elements of Social Science*, and reads pages from it, and from the work of another Freethought writer; and he said to Mr. Smith, Are these the opinions of Freethought writers? are they your opinions? My learned friend knew perfectly well they are not the opinions of Mr. Smith, and he said so at once. He said: I am a Freethinker, and belong to the school which says that every man is entitled to speak and think freely on those subjects, and these are the opinions of honest men published in the light of day. It challenges the interference of society and the interference of the police, and neither society nor the police have interposed in any way to stop the dissemination of these books. We may dispute them and think them in error; but every person thinks differently. Here is a book which for forty years has been on public sale, being sold up and down the kingdom, dealing with matters of great importance, and it has never been challenged by any public authority, charged with the administration of the law in the matter. Mr. Smith says it is perfectly true it is sold on a bookstall which is licensed to a bookseller by the person who owns the Hall of Science in Old-street; but he is entitled to sell any books he likes. If they ought not to be sold, the police can interfere; but we simply let the man the bookstall, and he sells what books he likes, and Mr. Smith says it would be an impertinence to come forward and attempt to revise his list and proceed to make out an index of certain books which I, Mr. Smith, in the exercise of my superior wisdom, will not allow him to sell. That is an affair between the owner of the book shop and the police. And this book has laid on this bookstall for thirty or forty years without any sort of challenge. It is the kind of line by which my learned friend hopes to disparage Mr. Smith in your estimation. I think all of us draw a strong line between opinion and moral conduct. My learned friend would be the last man to say this was a country in which opinion ought not to be as free as air. There was a time when those who professed different religious opinions had no tolerance, even in courts of law, or in society; but, fortunately, the time has come when every man is entitled to express his views freely; and just as we give freedom to men for religious opinion, so we allow freedom to other opinions, conscious that the forces of orthodoxy are stronger than the forces of error; and therefore we need have no fear of error. Against Mr. Smith's moral conduct, and the character of all the men associated with him, there is not a suggestion in this case; and yet this libel is not a libel of his opinions, but of his conduct, because it alleges a condition of things which makes the best feelings of one's nature rise in revolt. It is not that he taught these lads Freethought; that he taught them to disregard the Divine Being; that he gave them his views about the future state; that he expounded the tenets of Secularism; but it is that he taught practices which can only be mentioned in order to be scouted in every society of human beings. It is not a matter of religion, depending on orthodoxy or heterodoxy of religious opinions; but it is a matter of ordinary common decency, in connection with which this libel has been published. What is the sort of defence which has been put forward? First we have what I may describe as the illegitimate defence; then we have the legitimate defence. The illegitimate defence I described, while my learned friend was cross-examining, as drawing a herring across the scent; and it has been admirably illustrated by the tactics in this case. We have had to deal with what occurred, in the year 1879, in connection with the Hall of Science in London; but my learned friend has sought to divert the whole of our attention to what occurred at a different place and at a different time; to what occurred, not in London, but in Leeds; not at the Hall of Science, but at the North-street Hall in Leeds; and my learned friend has suggested, in what is the most dangerous and the most illegitimate mode conceivable in a court of justice—he has suggested that these proceedings were in relation to obscene and improper conduct. The suggestion is absolutely false. There is not a tittle of evidence to support it. The only evidence is that given by Mr. Smith himself. He said he heard that certain proceedings had been taken against a place in North-street, Leeds; but what those proceedings were Mr. Smith had never heard. He never heard until this moment that they spoke of obscene conduct, or that the nature of the conduct was obscene; and, so far as Mr. Smith is aware, that prosecution was withdrawn. He never heard of a conviction as in fact having taken place, and Mr. Murphy would have been the first one to prove it.

Mr. Rawlinson: You ought not to say there was no conviction.

Mr. Walton: I say it was a charge of disorderly conduct. My learned friend is a lawyer, and knows that if, a publican allows dancing to take place in his house, he can be charged with keeping a disorderly house; and the prosecution against the Jockey Club at this moment is for disorderly conduct. My learned friend ought to be the last to make cheap capital out of the facts, because he knows perfectly well that, if you allow proceedings to take place on premises and you are not properly licensed, you are charged with allowing disorderly conduct to take place if you allow the public to take part.

Mr. Rawlinson: The proceedings were not against a licensed house.

Mr. Walton: I quite understand my learned friend's restlessness—(laughter)—and his anxiety to make up a case which cannot be proved by evidence of what took place. Where is the conviction—where is it? In the imagination of those who instruct my learned friend, in whom they have succeeded in infusing some of the spirit which seems to have characterised the proceedings on their part. Nothing would have been easier than to have called the police who laid the prosecution. Nothing could have been easier than to have put in the conviction; but we are told, and that is the whole evidence you are told by Mr. Smith, that the prosecution took place; but, so far as he knows, no conviction occurred, and if it occurred he would have been the first to hear of it. I say this effort to draw this question into a trial of what happened at Leeds, in another place, and for which other persons are responsible, is done in order to confuse your minds as to the real issue. That is the illegitimate defence, and, like all illegitimate defences, tries to establish itself by illegitimate means; and my learned friend, instead of bringing witnesses from Leeds to prove the facts, comes here with an armful of newspapers. A more irrelevant and and fruitless inquiry I cannot imagine. These papers, some of which have been raked up from the cellars of the British Museum, he wants to scatter around, and create a confusion as to what we have to try. I am perfectly certain if any witnesses came up from Leeds we should have listened to them with the greatest respect; but, as there is no substance in this sort of suggestion, they have endeavored to infuse into these proceedings an animus which can only have been introduced to confuse your minds. What is the real defence? It is that this was not spoken of the Hall of Science in London at all, but spoken of the Hall of Science in Leeds. In the first place, that defence would have been established by calling two or three witnesses. It would have been established by calling the speaker of this at the discussion, who would have told us what hall he was referring to, and by calling the people to whom he was speaking; but, instead of calling them, they leave you to imagine that this description applies to a hall in Leeds. If you look at it, there is no Hall of Science in Leeds at all. The only Hall of Science out of London is the one at Sheffield. It is true the Secularists have a hall at Leeds, but they don't call it the Hall of Science. But this is referred to as the headquarters of the Secularists, which is in Old-street. Then you have a reference to a newspaper called the *Daily Standard*, which is not produced, but the Leeds *Daily News* is attempted to be set up as the one meant. Such efforts are only the sort of devices which we expect from persons having a hopeless case. Now how is this case met, because that is the real question for your consideration? It is obvious they know perfectly well (both Snow and Cook) the very serious nature of this libel. The solicitor's letter has been read, and when that letter was received I should have thought that one course—and only one course—could be pursued by honorable men anxious not to do injustice to anyone. Honorable men in a matter of this kind would be most anxious not to do an injustice to people against whom a prejudice was entertained, because there are some men of whom if you say a foul thing it does not matter, because no one believes it; but if a man happens to be a Secularist, there are a great many evil-minded men who will believe it. And the defendants knew this was being said of persons who were Secularists. If they were anxious to act honorably, they would have been the first to repudiate the libel and make reparation. Mr. Snow said he thought it did not refer to the plaintiff. Why did not he write so at once and say they were mistaken, withdraw it, and offer an apology? Because he had those behind him, those who had indemnified him, and were putting him forward to bring this into court to satisfy their fanatical prejudice. Instead of that, Mr. Snow published a letter, signed under the name of the man he represented, and those who were supporting him in the matter, which contains this passage: "When the case comes into court we will not say, 'It is not true what it was I said about you': we will not say, 'It is a mistake,' and ask the jury to give as little damages as they can, because we are poor printers and publishers. Not that sort of defence at all. But, when it comes before the court, the evidence lacking will be forthcoming, and that charge, like others, will be proved up to the hilt." So that we get, until the last moment, when they are anxious to save their skins—we get the language of bluster. "It is true. Take us into court, and we will prove it. You did give this instruction. You (the plaintiff) are responsible for the Hall of Science, where it took place. We shall prove it, and publish it to the world; and kind friends will come forward with their subscriptions, and we will fight under the flag of truth." Now, instead of fighting under the flag of truth, they are skulking and crawling away, and making piteous

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appeals to the jury. I should have had some respect if they had stuck to their guns, and, having got the public money, had tried to prove their case, and failed. But, having got it under this brave profession, the courage oozes and the bravery vanishes, and they now say: "We are poor publishers and printers. Let us off, because we are only agents." I ask you to give Mr. Smith such a verdict as will enable him to still hold up his head, so that those who may be connected with this matter will have no ground for saying there was one tittle of evidence of the monstrous and barbarous charge made against him. (Subdued applause.)

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE, who was very indistinctly heard, in summing up, said: Gentlemen of the jury, the question you will have to consider is, how far the defendants have made out that which they say is an answer to the case—viz., that this matter had no reference to the plaintiff's place at all; that it was not known to the man who uttered the slander first—Mr. Powell. Smith was not known to him, and he was not known to Mr. Cook or to Mr. Snow, the other defendant, the publisher and printer of the libel; and it is said that the transactions had no reference to the Hall of Science in London at all. A great many considerations have been imported into this case, necessarily from the very nature of the case. All I can suggest is, that you should do the best you can in the matter, and not allow whatever feelings you may have on one side or the other to interfere with you in the discharge of your duty. Look at it just as you would at an ordinary case. The matter is a very simple one. Smith, the plaintiff, is the manager and treasurer and organiser of lectures, etc., at the Hall of Science in London, and he held that position till, I think, 1892, when it was turned into a Limited Company. (To Mr. Walton) What position does he hold now?

Mr. WALTON, Q.C.: He is a director of the Company, and that is why the action by the Company was discontinued, because the Company were not the proprietors of the hall at the date referred to. The action was originally brought by the Company, but when it was seen that the Company were not the proprietors of the hall in 1879, the action was discontinued.

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE: Now, Mr. Smith says it was his duty to carry on the business of this Company, and to do so he had lectures and science classes, and was generally responsible for the management of the hall. The debate took place in October, 1893, and the plaintiff says he heard of it soon afterwards, and made no complaint against Mr. Powell, who said there had been a great scandal at Leeds. He also said he had heard of the trial in 1878, but he did not read it, and did not know what the evidence was. He says he knew Mr. Foote, but never heard the matter discussed in his presence, and he had not seen the report of the debate. He says he did not know who owned the Secular Hall at Leeds; but he seemed to say he had heard the report of the trial discussed. Now, gentlemen, Mr. Murphy has asked you to say that Mr. Smith's answers were not satisfactory on that point, and that he was not clear in giving a distinct denial to the statement; but that the fact was he knew exactly what had taken place at Leeds. On that point you must judge by your own conclusions from the evidence given before you. With regard to the suggestion that the defendant has been indemnified of the costs of this action, the plaintiff also seems to have been getting up money for the costs of the trial; so there is not much to be said on either side, because "what is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander." (Laughter.) It appears that both of them were getting up public funds for the trial. No point has been made that plaintiff was not responsible for the management of the Hall; and Mr. Charles Watts said he was on the Committee, and always looked upon Mr. Smith as the responsible person of the Company. Then a copy of the *Anti-Infidel* was put in, in which portions of the letter from Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh were printed, and on this it is said, on behalf of the plaintiff, that the points taken by Mr. Bradlaugh there were that, if this case went on, the charges made in the libel would be proved. Well, that was said to depend on what was the defence in the action; and I may have a word more to say about Mr. Bradlaugh's position, and the letters written by him in the case, because he is the person responsible for them and the person making profit out of it as the owner of the *Anti-Infidel*. Therefore, he is one of the persons who would be primarily responsible and liable for any injury the plaintiff might have sustained. Well, Mr. Murphy's case is shortly this: That the observations made by Mr. Powell at Leeds had reference to what had taken place at Leeds, and that Mr. Powell, like a great many other public speakers, not only in matters of religion, but in other matters which we read of every day—say politics, for instance—(a laugh)—Mr. Powell was like a good many more people who used extremely strong language, and had gone a great deal further than they were entitled to go, or would have gone in their calmer moments. There can be no doubt at all about that; and it is said here that what Mr. Powell had done was to mix up two or three things, and what he really intended to convey was that what he was saying had reference to the scandal that took place in Leeds in 1878. That there had been a scandal at that time there can be no doubt from the evidence of the plaintiff himself. Mr. Walton is quite right in saying he won't permit anybody to say that it was so of the Hall of Science, because there is no evidence about that. There had been something in the shape of a prosecution in Leeds, which may have been for only keeping a disorderly house—we are left in doubt; but there had been something—a prosecution which was of interest to Secularists generally, because the plaintiff said the matter had been talked about before him, and Mr. Watts remembers the Leeds trial. But I suppose we shall never know the real truth about the Leeds trial. That being the state of things, let me read you the parts of the pamphlet relied on by the plaintiff. It is said the Hall of Science was not the proper name, and that it should have been the Secular Hall, and therefore it could not refer to the London hall. It was said by the plaintiff: "The dancing academy must refer to me because there is no proof that there was a dancing academy at Leeds"; and then he relies on the fact of its being near a lunatic asylum, thus completing the identification. These things are said by the plaintiff to point—and can only point—to the Hall of Science in London. It is said by the defendant that the date 1879 was wrong, and was intended for 1878; that it was wrong to call it the Hall of Science; it should have been the Secular Hall in North-street, Leeds, and that the *Daily Standard* should be the *Daily News*. All that is said to be a mistake made by the speaker in the heat of debate, and what he really meant was the hall in Leeds; and the reference to 1879 was a reference to what had already taken place in 1878 in regard to the hall at Leeds, and not to the London hall. It is to be noticed that Mr. Powell was a Liverpool man; he was said to be an obscure Liverpool man, who had emerged from there, had spoken, and had retired again. Mr. Fisher was a Leeds man; and Mr. Powell, I observe, talks about certain books sold by Kingfisher of Leeds, and in one discussion Fisher acknowledges he is the person who sold the books referred to. Then he goes on to make the charge complained of. The question you have got to decide is whether that really had reference to the place in London, or whether it had reference—badly expressed by a man in the heat of debate—to the proceedings which had taken place in Leeds, and was intended and taken to be understood by those who heard him to have reference to the Leeds hall only.

Mr. WALTON: May I say, so far as the libel is concerned, would not the question be whether persons reading this pamphlet would not take it to refer to the London hall?

The JUDGE: Quite true. It is not what was spoken at Leeds. The question is this: Without knowing anything further, would anybody taking up this book, and reading what was said there—and you have heard the most that can be said, and the best way it can be put for the defendants—the question is whether a person taking that up would apply it to the Hall of Science in London, and so apply it to the person—namely, the plaintiff—who was responsible for the manner in which that business was carried on. Mr. Murphy produced a paper which is not the *Daily Standard*, but is the *Leeds Daily News*; but of course he cannot go any further than that. Mr. Snow then comes, and it turns out that the contents of the pamphlet had been published week by week, so far as I can gather, in the *Anti-Infidel*; and therefore it must have been going on for some time between October and January. It is dated January, 1894.

Mr. RAWLINSON: The pamphlet was not published until March, I am told.

The JUDGE: There is the whole of the evidence upon the one side and the other. There are only one or two other considerations. We have heard a great deal why Mr. Powell has not been called on one side, and Mr. Fisher on the other. You always have, in cases of this kind, complaints by learned counsel on each side. They have each got complaints, and I suppose the answer to them really is—Mr. Walton does not hesitate to say: "I have nothing to do with Mr. Powell. He is not worth powder and shot, and I am not going against him." I do not know what your view is; but, when you are considering the position, one would have thought there was some reason why Mr. Bradlaugh should not have been made a party to the case. It may be that they think he is not worth going for. I don't know. He is the owner of the pamphlet and of the *Anti-Infidel*, and he was the person who was going to take any profits, and when you cannot get the man who is going to profit by the libel then you generally go for the printer and publisher. There may be some reason, but no reason has been forthcoming, as to why Mr. Bradlaugh should not be made a party to this suit. Mr. Bradlaugh was the person who, if any profit was to be made, would be entitled to it. But the writ reached the printer, who, I do not suppose, ever takes the trouble to see what he is printing; and the publisher, who only had a certain number of copies sent to him, having no control over the matter at all. But for some reason, best known to the plaintiff, Mr. Bradlaugh was not included. He seems to have been one of the principal parties concerned. There are the whole facts. The question is, Did those words refer, or would they reasonably be taken by anybody reading the pamphlet to refer, to the plaintiff, or do you think that the

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defendants' case is made out that they referred, and ought only to be taken to refer to, the case at Leeds and the Leeds hall? If you find they refer to the plaintiff, then comes the question of damages. That is a matter for you entirely to deal with. The libel, no doubt, is a serious one. The action is brought against two men, who are, as far as they are concerned—if there is any injury to the plaintiff—are not nearly so much concerned with the matter as the parties who get a profit by it, and who have been let go—viz., the man who spoke the words and the man who was the owner of the pamphlet. That may make a difference to you when you come to consider the amount of damages to which the plaintiff is entitled. It is for you to say whether you find for the plaintiff or defendant. If for the plaintiff, what damages do you think he is entitled to?

The jury retired at 4.30, and, after a deliberation of three-quarters of an hour, came into court and gave a verdict for the plaintiff, with £30 damages.

On Tuesday, February 19, Mr. Lawrence Walton, Q.C., who appeared for the plaintiff, said, in the case of the National Secular Society and another *versus* Snow and another, in which the jury, the day previously, found for the plaintiff, he had now to apply that judgment be entered in accordance with the finding of the jury.

Mr. JUSTICE LAWRANCE assented, and judgment was entered accordingly.

Obituary.

ON Saturday, February 9, the remains of the late Mr. William Morton, of Failsworth, were interred in the Failsworth Cemetery. Mr. Morton's family were connected with the Secular School at Failsworth, and have been workers for, and supporters of, the school all their lives. The deceased was fifty-nine years of age. Mr. S. Standring, of Rochdale, conducted the Secular funeral service in a very sympathetic and impressive manner.

ON Monday, February 11, the remains of the late Mr. Jonathan Taylor, of Failsworth, were interred in the Failsworth Cemetery. All the members of the District Council, the guardians and officers for the district, the sanitary inspector, the medical officer of health, the School Board officer, a deputation from the Failsworth Liberal Club, of which deceased was a member, and a large number of the teachers and members of the Secular School, of which body he has been a member for a large number of years, besides many of his friends and acquaintances, attended, along with the members of his family. The funeral service, which was of a Secular character, was conducted by Mr. S. Standring, of Rochdale, who, in the course of his remarks, said Mr. Taylor had never been afraid of death. He died as he had lived. Mr. Taylor's life might be divided into two parts: the public and the private life. His public life had been well known to all. He was one of the originators of the co-operative movement in Failsworth, and that alone gave a halo to his name. For long before the formation of the Local Board he was connected with the Ratepayers' Association, and for over twenty-seven years had been clerk of the Failsworth Local Board. He was one of the originators, and on the first board of directors, of the Failsworth Liberal Club. In his private life he was a member of the Secular Society; first as a scholar, then as a teacher. Thirty years ago he was conductor of the singing, and later he taught a grammar class, and in various other ways was a worker and supporter of the school, to which his loss will be irreparable. The Secular lecturers visiting Failsworth always found in Mr. and Mrs. Taylor a kindly and obliging host and hostess. General sympathy and respect were manifested by the hundreds present at the graveside for the members of the family in their sad bereavement.

Accuracy of language is one of the bulwarks of truth.—*Mrs. Jameson.*

No indwelling deity now regulates the burning of the life sun, no guardian angels drive the stars across the arching firmament; the divine Ganges is water flowing down into the sea, to evaporate into cloud, and descend again in rain. No deity simmers in the boiling pot, no presiding spirits dwell in the volcanoes, no imprisoned demon shrieks from the mouth of the howling lunatic. There was a period of human thought when the whole universe seemed actuated by spiritual life. For our knowledge of our own history, it is deeply interesting that there should remain rude races yet living under the philosophy which we have so far passed from since physics, chemistry, biology, have seized whole provinces of ancient Animism, setting force for life, and law for will.—*Dr. E. B. Tylor.*

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

THE adjourned General Meeting was held at the Hall of Science on February 7; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. J. M. Wheeler, G. Standring, G. J. Warren, C. Thomas, J. Wood, A. Wheeler, J. Neate, A. F. Taylor, W. Williams, M. Loafer, Edith Vance, and the secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. The old list of officers was proposed for re-election, and carried. Mr. Charles Watts was invited to become a vice-president. The undersigned was re-elected as hon. secretary, and Mr. Robert Forder as treasurer. It was decided to arrange a course of lectures for the North-West London Branch; and the secretary received instructions to make inquiries concerning a second course, either for Battersea or West London Branch. Proposed by Mr. Warren, seconded by Mr. Wood: "That a dramatic performance, etc., take the place of the usual Federation Ball, and a sub-committee be appointed to arrange details." £5 was voted to the printer, and the meeting closed. ANNIE G. BROWN, *Hon. Sec.*

Branch secretaries are reminded that delegates' fees for 1895 are now due, and an early remittance will assist the work in hand.

PROFANE JOKES.

It was an Ardrossan schoolboy who the other day, when asked by the school inspector which was "the longest day," struck bottom facts by the reply, "Sawbath."

"How, brethren," shrieked the Salvationist, "how shall we save souls?" "Walk on your uppers like me," remarked the blear-eyed man who had come in to get warm. And then the doorkeeper showed him out.

The Rev. Rosy Babbleton (detecting Johnny stealing an orange from a sleeping apple-woman)—"Ah, Johnny, Johnny, this is a little matter, but where will it end?" Johnny (in an injured tone, but dividing the orange)—"That's just it; there's always somebody wants to stand in. There yer are; but if you are a square cove, you will nick some nuts and divide."

Watson—"What was the largest trout you ever caught, James?"

James—"Let's see; what day of the week is this, Watson?"

"Monday, I believe. What in the world has that to do with my question?"

"Oh, nothing; only I think you'd better wait until Wednesday. I always like to get as far as possible from Sunday when I tell my fishing experiences."

Some ridiculous mistakes are made by missionaries, who have but an imperfect acquaintance with the language in which they teach. Everyone knows how the Chinese call Christianity the pig religion, through missionary mispronunciation of the word for Lord, as if it were pig. In Japanese the word for "rat" is similar to that for "fountain," and missionaries have been known to tell the natives to fly for refuge to the rat; and, the word for hell being similar to that for post-office, unbelievers have been threatened that they would all be sent to the post-office.

Professor Sayce fancies he has discovered Nimrod in the cuneiform inscriptions. He says: "His full name was Nazi Muruda the Kassu, and he was the Babylonian contemporary of the father of the Assyrian king who restored Nineveh and founded Calah about fifty years before the Exodus." This looks pretty much like a guess in the dark, like Professor Sayce's identification of Melchisedek with Eben Tob. Probably some one will come after him and discover that Nazi Muruda was not a bit like Nimrod, and not even a mighty hunter before the Lord.

The infidels of one age have been the aureole saints of the next.—*Ingersoll.*

The altar and throne have leaned against and supported each other.—*Ingersoll.*

Humility is the first of the virtues—for other people.—*O. W. Holmes.*

A Church should put no fetters on the man; it should have unity of purpose, but with the most entire freedom for the individual. When you sacrifice the man to the mass, in Church or State, it becomes an offence, a stumbling-block in the way of progress, and must end or mend.—*Theodore Parker.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, a lecture. (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, A. B. Moss, "What Do Christians Believe?" (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, a lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, a lecture. (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing for N.S.S. members and friends. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "God is Dead."

FINSBURY BRANCH: 12, important members' meeting at 120 St. John-street, Clerkenwell.

ISLINGTON (Liberal and Radical Association Committee Rooms, Upper-street, near the Vestry Hall): Thursday, at 8.30, J. Rowney, "What Think Ye of Christ?" (Free.)

ISLINGTON BRANCH: 8.30, important members' meeting at 10 Waterloo-terrace, Upper-street.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 85 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, A. Westcott, "Pasteur: His Life and Works"—with dissolving views by limelight. (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, J. A. Hobson, "Victor Hugo and the Proletariat."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, Notting-hill-gate): Monday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 6.45, monthly meeting: 7.30, W. J. Heath, "What Caused the French Revolution?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, St. John will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "What Christ Said of Himself—a Reply to the Rev. Mr. Pedley."

COUNTRY.

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HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 11, Stanley Jones, "The Problem of Unsectarian Moral Teaching"; 2.30, "Radicalism and Socialism"; 7, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 3, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "Kant"; 7, Mr. Miller, "Energy in Nature."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Charles Watts, "Mohammed and Christ"; 3, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 6.30, "Religion with and without Theology." (3d. and 6d.)

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PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 6.30, committee meeting; 7, lantern entertainment.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6, singing practice; 6.30, Sam Standring, "The Rise and Fall of Nations."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Mr. Gorrill, "Japan and the Japanese"—with lantern illustrations.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Buddha and Buddhism"; 7, "The Rev. A. J. Harrison as Christian Apologist—A Reply."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, the Secretary, "Christianity and Medical Science."

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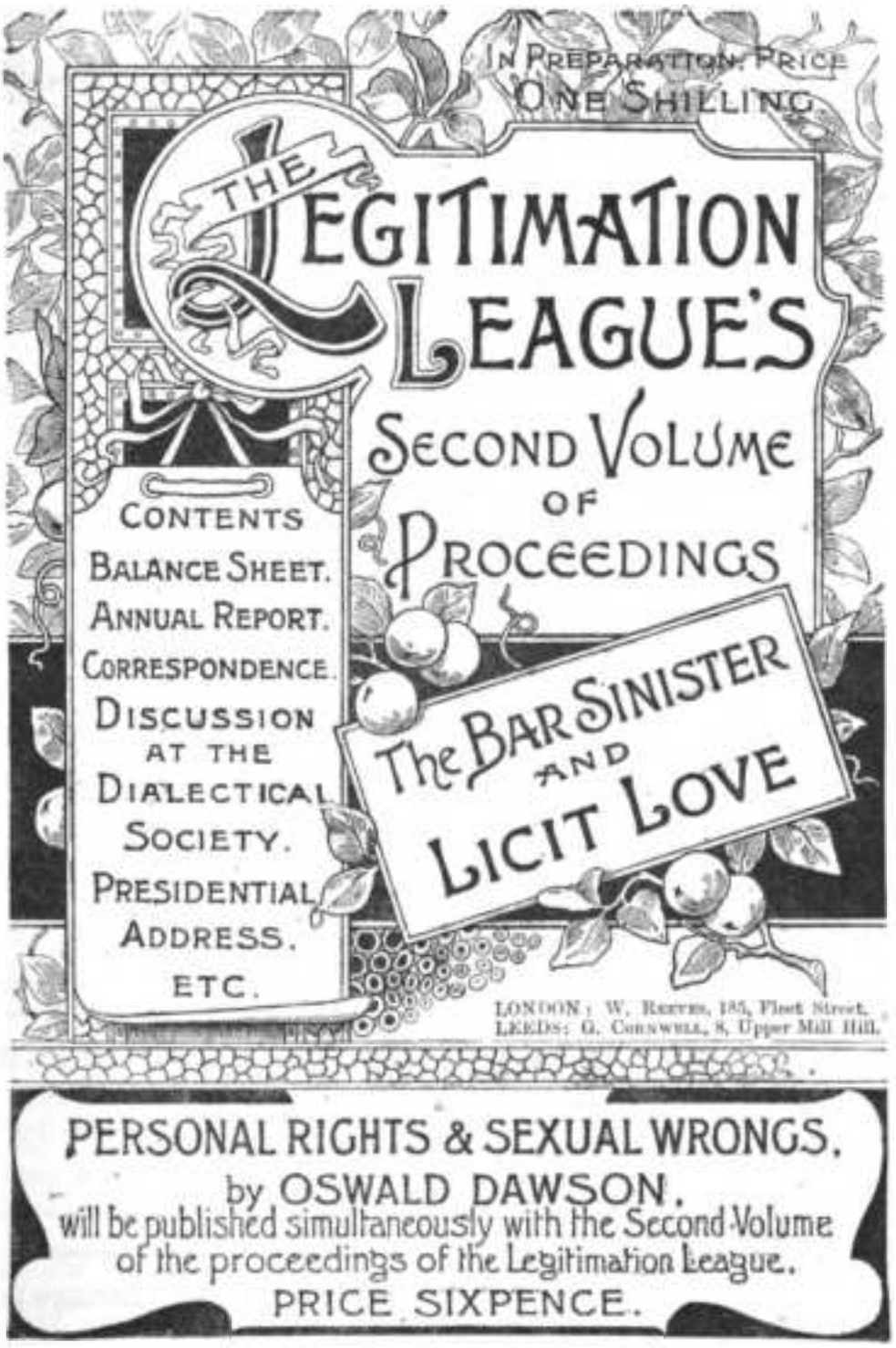
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From the "Bradford Weekly Telegraph," Saturday, February 16, 1895.

GREAT FIRE IN BRADFORD.

EXTENSIVE DAMAGE.

Early on Saturday a big fire took place in the warehouse, No. 2 Union-street, Bradford, occupied by Mr. R. Higgins, who occupies a large part of the ground floor, and numbers the following tenants occupying the other offices and rooms: Mr. Ernest Hahnel, Messrs. Schmidt & Co., Mr. J. W. Gott, Messrs. G. D. Wright & Co., and Mr. J. Pepper. The damage done is very extensive, and is roughly estimated at a figure between £8,000 to £10,000. It certainly cannot be less than £8,000, as many of the firms occupying the building had large and valuable stocks stored in the various rooms. Mr. R. Higgins had a big stock of woollens, stuffs, and yarns, and estimates his loss at over £4,000. He is insured up to £4,000. Messrs. Wright & Co., stuff merchants, have had fully £1,000 damage done to their stock and premises, but it is completely covered by insurance. Mr. J. W. Gott, cloth and stuff merchant, had a stock valued at £1,500, and it is partially destroyed, chiefly by water. The other firms, with the exception of Mr. J. Pepper, have suffered in like manner, a lot of stock being destroyed by water. The cause of the fire is unknown, but, judging by appearances, it broke out in the packing-room of Mr. R. Higgins.

To the Readers of "The Freethinker."

We had just got the New Spring Goods ready for Sale when this unfortunate fire took place, and, although we have sustained no damage by the fire itself, most of our goods have been soaked in water. We have taken immediate steps to have all the goods dried, and for all practical purposes they are not worth one penny less than before the fire took place. The finish which is put upon new goods has, of course, been disturbed, but that always takes place in making garments up. So that if you get a length of this cloth, or stuff, and have it made up, there is not the slightest difference between that and any other new goods you might buy, when made into garments.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 10. SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE WOMAN WHO DID.—II.

The Woman Who Did. By Grant Allen. (London: John Lane.)

MR. GRANT ALLEN'S preface justifies us in assuming his personal responsibility for the opinions and sentiments he puts into the mouth of Herminia Barton. There is, indeed, a perfect similarity between the utterances of the heroine and the utterances of the author. We shall quote from both indifferently, leaving Mr. Grant Allen to make any disclaimer he may think necessary.

In four consecutive pages Mr. Grant Allen argues out his case against marriage. He starts with Patriotism, which he calls "one of the lowest vices." In his opinion it means "My country, right or wrong, and just because it is my country." We regard this as a very one-sided account of the matter, but we will not pause to justify our opinion. The next vice, and "a baser and more sordid one," is "the monopolist instinct of property." The plethora of words prevents us from judging whether Mr. Grant Allen is against *all* property. Next comes "slavery." And last of all, and the hardest to eradicate, is "the monopoly of the human heart, which is known as marriage."

"Based upon the primitive habit of felling the woman with a blow, stunning her by repeated strokes of the club or spear, and dragging her off by the hair of her head as a slave to her captor's hut or rock-shelter, this ugly and barbarous form of serfdom has come in our own time by some strange caprice to be regarded as of positively divine origin. The Man says now to himself: 'This woman is mine. Law and Church have bestowed her on me. Mine for better, for worse; mine, drunk or sober. If she ventures to have a heart or will of her own, woe betide her! I have tabooed her for life; let her so much as cast eyes on any other man to admire or desire him—and, knife, dagger, or law-court, they shall both of them answer for it.' There you have in all its native deformity another monopolist instinct—the deepest-seated of all, the grimmest, the most vindictive."

"I know what marriage is," says Herminia; "from what vile slavery it has sprung; on what unseen horrors for my sister women it is reared and buttressed; by what unholy sacrifices it is sustained and made possible." Again: "Marriage itself is still an assertion of man's supremacy over woman. It ties her to him for life; it ignores her individuality." Twenty such passages might be given, but repetition does not add to the truth of an assertion.

Mr. Grant Allen very much exaggerates in all these statements and exclamations. Marriage, in any proper sense of the word, did not originate in club-law; it arose in a later stage of human evolution. Nor is it fair, or even sensible, to judge it now in the light of the mere letter of the law, apart from the influence of public opinion. Mr. Grant Allen is not even abreast of the law in France and America. Even in England the woman is not "tied" to the man, drunk or sober; it is the man who is tied to the woman in either condition. Relaxations have crept into our marriage laws, greatly in the woman's favor; and it seems to us that a rational law of divorce would provide against every valid objection to the institution of marriage. No institution will secure happiness for fools and rogues. Marriage is not the only partnership that sometimes requires dissolution. Just as many, and perhaps more, mistakes are made in the other relationships of life.

Marriage exists for the sake of children. It is curious that Mr. Grant Allen never catches a glimpse of this fact. And as society becomes more complex, with a greater division of labor, and it becomes more and more impossible for the average woman to be a bread-winner, the institution of marriage becomes more imperative than ever, for the sake of the mother as well as for the sake of her offspring.

Herminia Barton goes on school-teaching, and lives in her own little cottage by herself, as she did before her "natural" union with Alan Merrick. They do not live under the same roof, and they have separate incomes. It was a pretty arrangement, but it came to grief when she had to bear the burden of maternity. Then she needed the man's support. Precisely. Man and woman *must* unite over the child's cradle.

Mr. Grant Allen, however, longs for the millennial time when the men who do the hard work of the world will "collectively guarantee every necessary and luxury to every woman of the community equally." Then the women will be free to perform their function of maternity "without pre-occupation of any sort." Comte himself made a somewhat similar proposal; it amounted to a guarantee, but not to a universal provision. Comte, however, made this proposal in the interest of marriage and the family. Mr. Grant Allen makes it for the sake of destroying both.

It does not seem to us in the least degree probable that such an arrangement would lessen man's "virile self-assertion." "Deep down in the very roots of the idea of sex," says Mr. Grant Allen, "we come on that prime antithesis—the male, active and aggressive; the female, sedentary, passive, and receptive." Quite true, and to a certain extent the difference is eternal; and how on earth is it to be diminished by the man's doing all "the hard work of the world" and sheltering the whole female sex from the necessity of touching it with a finger?

Mr. Grant Allen's idea appears to be this, that in the millennial age he foresees in a spirit of prophecy there will be no marriage, no home, and no family. Men will not live with women; they will visit them. Maternity will continue, but paternity will be reduced to a mere fact in physiology. What a training this will be for the men! And what a training for the children! Two or three generations of it would produce a curious mixture of effeminacy and debauchery. For this at least is certain, that men are only partially monogamous; the polygamous instinct is still powerful within them; and without the discipline of domestic life, it would lead them backward instead of forward.

We are not of those who use the phrase "free love" as a reproach, for love was never anything else but free. It cannot be commanded. It cannot be had to order. It is spontaneous, like all our affections. Nevertheless, the freedom, not of feeling, but of action, which Mr. Grant Allen pleads for, runs dangerously near to promiscuity; or at least to an instability which is almost as bad. "No man is truly civilised," he writes, "till he can say in all sincerity to every woman of all the women he loves, to every woman of all the women who love him," etc. And the same will be said by the truly civilised woman to "every man of all the men she loves, and of all the men who love her." Mr. Grant Allen may explain that these many loves are not to be simultaneous, but successive. It must be confessed, however, that his language grates upon the sensibilities of ordinary people. Herminia Barton, when she is persuading Alan Merrick to try the great experiment of love without marriage, talks to him in this remarkable fashion:—

"If I love a man at all, I must love him on terms of

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perfect freedom. I can't bind myself down to live with him to my shame one day longer than I love him; or to love him at all if I find him unworthy of my purest love, or unable to retain it; *or if I discover some other more fit to be loved by me.*"

What a cold-blooded expression! How inartistic! How unnatural! Did ever a woman talk in this way to the man she loved? It is the logic of Mr. Grant Allen's theory, not the logic of human feeling. Mr. George Meredith, who understands women as no one else has understood them since Shakespeare, is incapable of making an enamored girl talk such monstrous pedantry to the lover whose first kiss is still warm upon her lips. What a relief it is to turn from this argumentative love-making between Herminia Barton and Alan Merrick to that magical twentieth chapter of *Richard Feverel*.

Mr. Grant Allen does not seem to us to understand the passion of love. Nor does he seem to understand that a mere philosophy of *rights* can only end in chaos. Rights must be balanced by *duties*; indeed, as Comte pointed out, and Mazzini after him, it is only upon duty that the social edifice can be reared. George Eliot understood this, and the fact may explain an act of hers which Mr. Grant Allen condemns.

"When Mary Godwin chose to mate herself with Shelley, she took her good name in her hands; but still, there was Harriet. As soon as Harriet was dead, Mary showed she had no deep principle of action involved, by marrying Shelley. When George Eliot chose to pass her life with Lewes on terms of equal freedom, she defied the man-made law; but still, there was his wife to prevent the possibility of a legalised union. As soon as Lewes was dead, George Eliot showed she had no principle involved, by marrying another man."

George Eliot, we imagine, might have easily replied to this censure. She might have said that she acted on principle in both cases; in defying public convention when it was necessary, and in conforming to it when the necessity for defiance had ceased.

However wrong-headed on the subject of marriage, Mr. Grant Allen is sound enough in other respects. He recognises the beauty and glory of motherhood.

"Herminia was far removed indeed from the blatant and decadent sect of 'advanced women' who talk as though motherhood were a disgrace and a burden, instead of being, as it is, the full realisation of woman's faculties, the natural outlet for woman's wealth of emotion. She knew that to be a mother is the best privilege of her sex, a privilege of which unholy man-made institutions now conspire to deprive half the finest and noblest women in our civilised communities."

He also recognises the evils of late marriage. "The worst of all possible and conceivable checks upon population," he says, "is the vile one which Malthus glossed over as 'the prudential,' and which consists in substituting prostitution for marriage through the spring-tide of one's manhood." "To be celibate," he writes, "is a very great misfortune even for a woman; for a man it is impossible—it is cruel, it is wicked."

It is on the subject of religion that we find ourselves most in agreement with Mr. Grant Allen. Herminia Barton's poor neighbors noticed that she never went to church or chapel; and it is asked sarcastically: "When people cut themselves adrift from church and chapel, why, what sort of morality can you reasonably expect of them?" Reference is made to "that vacantly, well-meaning smile, peculiar to a certain type of country rector." There is also the epigram, "The shadow of a cathedral steeple covers a multitude of sins." Here is a passage allotted to Herminia:—

"Worldly people don't care for fundamental problems of the universe at all; they accept passively what is told them; they think they think, and believe they believe it. But people with an interest in fundamental truth inquire for themselves into the constitution of the cosmos; if they are convinced one way, they become what we call theologians; if they are convinced the other way, they become what we call free-thinkers."

Herminia also bursts into versification in a time of great trouble. The first line of her brief poem (which Mr. Grant Allen published some time ago) reads, "A crowned Caprice is the god of the world." She also writes a novel which is "blankly pessimistic." Whereupon we have the following from Mr. Grant Allen:—

"Blank pessimism is the one creed possible for all save fools. To hold any other is to curl yourself up selfishly in your own easy-chair. . . . . Pessimism is sympathy. Optimism is selfishness. The optimist folds his smug hands on his ample knees, and murmurs contentedly: 'The Lord has willed it'; 'There must always be rich and poor'; 'Nature has, after all, her great law of compensation.' The pessimist knows well self-deception like that is either a fraud or a blind, and recognising the seething mass of misery at his doors gives what he can—his pity, or, where possible, his faint aid, in redressing the crying inequalities and injustices of man or nature."

But if the pessimist does this he is *not* a pessimist, but a Meliorist—to adopt a word from George Eliot. Things are not so well as they might be, nor so ill as they might be, and it is possible to improve them; at any rate, it is worth a trial. Such is the philosophy of all reformers, and it is Mr. Grant Allen's philosophy, although he almost shrieks to the contrary.

We have a word in conclusion. The best scene in *The Woman Who Did* is the love-making between Walter Brydges and Dolores Barton—Herminia's daughter. And the best fellow in the book is Walter Brydges. He would have married her "if her father had been a tinker and her mother a gipsy girl." When he knows the worst, and Dolores releases him from the engagement, he replies. "Our engagement remains exactly as it was. Nothing is changed. I hold you to your promise." Capital! Mr. Grant Allen struck a true note *there*. That is exactly how a manly fellow would feel. And it is precisely this *love* which is our best hope for marriage in the future. It is love of this kind which "bears it out even to the edge of doom." Mr. Grant Allen worked as a theorist, and produced a failure in Herminia, and a colorless shadow in Alan Merrick. He worked as a realist, and produced Walter Brydges—a real man, who loves a woman, takes her as his wife, and bids the world go hang. And thus is wisdom justified of her children.

G. W. FOOTE.

"THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA."*

Dr. Paul Carus, who was brought into intimate contact with the Buddhist delegates to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, has performed a service to the student of comparative religion by compiling the work to which he gives the above title. The aim of the volume is to expound the teachings of Gautama Buddha as they are found in the Buddhist sacred writings. Even those who have the works of Oldenberg, Beal, Rhys Davids, Spence Hardy, Max Müller, and St. Hilaire will be glad to possess this volume, for it gives in brief compass some of the finest gems of the sacred books of the East. The story of the Buddha's life and his teachings are both told in the words of these ancient records, though much that is considered superfluous or unsuitable is omitted.

Many beautiful legends and many wise sayings will be found in this Gospel of Buddha which must remind the reader of those found in the later Christian Gospels. It would be easy, indeed, to make a parallel to all the choicest Christian sayings. Yet Buddhism is essentially rather a philosophy of life than a religion. Buddha entirely dispensed with the usual apparatus of religion. Sacrifices he denounced as cruel and useless. The only worship he inculcated was reverence for the best specimens of humanity. He said: "If a man for a hundred years sacrifice, month after month, with a thousand, and if he but for a moment pay homage to a man grounded in true knowledge, better is that homage than a sacrifice for a hundred years." The object of Buddhism is deliverance from the sorrow and suffering which lie deep in the heart, as well as plain on the surface of things. The cause of sorrow is that state of grasping and striving which Schopenhauer calls the "will to live," and which must be renounced to attain eternal calm. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. By oneself evil is done; by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone; by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself; no one can purify another."

* *The Gospel of Buddha*, according to old Records, told by Paul Carus. (Chicago: *Open Court* Publishing Co.) $1.50.

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The Gospel of Buddha is a gospel of character. It depends not on creed, but on conduct. It leaves on one side the usual topics of religion. Thus Buddha says: "To feed one good man is infinitely greater in point of merit than attending to questions about heaven and earth, spirits and demons. These matters are not to be compared to the religious duty we owe to our parents; our parents are very divine." Each has to work out his or her own salvation, independently of any superhuman agency. Considered as a religion, it has a unique place by ignoring a personal god, and by setting forth Nirvana, and not any heaven, as the goal of men. It has no atoning sacrifice, no belief in the efficacy of blood; yet it aims at nothing less than the salvation of all beings by the extension of charity and the extinction of passion.

There are many coincidences between the doctrines of Buddha and Christianity; but the ethical teaching of the Buddha appears to me as, on the whole, superior to that of the Christ. For instance, the teaching of the Dhammapada, "Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth," is decidedly superior to the later and unqualified saying of Jesus, "Resist not evil." Its view of self-salvation is decidedly superior to the Christian doctrine of reliance on the blood of Jesus.

Having said thus much for the merits of Buddhism, I must add one criticism. Dr. Carus deserves thanks for his painstaking compilation. But he has perforce selected from the translated books of the voluminous literature of Buddhism, and these are naturally those most suited to the Western mind. From these books he has naturally selected the passages most congenial to Occidentals. But the evidence is indisputable that Buddhism is, like Christianity, essentially a monkish system, although it has a sphere for the layman. Equally clear is it that not monkish retirement from the world, but active participation in its work and welfare, is the true vocation of humanity. The modern man will select what is of modern value from the old religions, but will leave aside all that is incompatible with the teachings of science and the influence of modern civilisation. J. M. Wheeler.

THE PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

The term Providence has two meanings, secular and theological. In the former sense it signifies prudence and foresight, and refers to those mundane agencies whereby man is enabled to secure and enjoy the comforts and well-being of life. In the latter sense it is employed to indicate what is termed "the divine superintendence over all created beings; the care of God over his creatures." Milton exclaims:—

> What in me is dark,
> Illumine; what is low, raise and support,
> That to the height of this great argument
> I may assert eternal providence.

And Shakespeare writes: "There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow." Again he observes:—

> There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will.

Reserving for the present our views upon the Secular Providence, we purpose to inquire as to the nature and value of the alleged "Divine Providence." This phrase is intended to mean, by those who use it, that God orders all things, and that his mercy and goodness are infinite. Hence, "Trust in God" is the sheet anchor of all believers in the Providence of theology who travel by sea or land; it is the power upon which they are supposed to rely in all the perils of life, and it is the guardian angel that hovers over them at the hour of death. To use Chaucer's words:—

> Be it of war, or peace, or hate, or love,
> All this is ruled by the sight above.

Believers in this Providence contend that whatever happens to man is determined by God, regardless of the natural law of cause and effect; that nature and man are under the special personal rule of an Omnipotent Being, who regulates the whole machinery of existence; that man's destiny is absolutely controlled by this all-powerful "Creator," and that the human race are what they are as the result of the will and pleasure of this supernatural Providence. If this theory be true, then life's certainties and uncertainties, its pleasures and pains, all emanate from a source which it is impossible for man to control, or in any way to interfere with. Dr. Watts wrote:—

> Diseases are thy servants, Lord;
> They come at thy command.

And St. James says: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (v. 15). The "Peculiar People" accept this teaching as true, and they consider that to rely upon any other means for help in sickness is "flying in the face of Providence." That such a belief is a palpable delusion experience fully testifies. Still, it is the doctrine of the New Testament, although the majority of Christians will have nothing to do with putting St. James's teaching into practice.

Is the view that a "Divine Providence" preserves men from sickness or death, or from any of the vicissitudes of life, a sound one? Let us see by an appeal to facts. Lord Bacon held that the universe was not without a mind, and he says: "It is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth." But, like the Gospels, Bacon's writings are not always in harmony, for in his essay on "Vicissitudes of Things" he writes: "Certain it is that matter is in a perpetual flux, and never at a stay. The great winding-sheets that bury all things in oblivion are two—deluges and earthquakes. As for conflagrations and great droughts, they do not merely dispeople, but destroy." Now, if this work of unrest and destruction is always going on, of what use is the mind in "this universal frame," and what becomes of "rest in Providence"? Bacon's idea of "Divine protection" from heaven is entirely destroyed by the "deluges, earthquakes, and conflagrations" to which he refers. Where is such protection when the volcano pours forth its red-hot lava, and the earth opens and swallows up thousands of men, women, and children? What can be said of a "Divine Providence" that allows epidemics, war, and pestilence to decimate millions of human beings, as if they were of no more value than rats and mice? Among the poor helpless mortals who are deluded into the belief in such a Providence, ruin and destruction are continually busy with their devastating process, as though in mockery of the delusion these people cherish.

Logically analysed, this "Divine Providence" must necessarily be the direct cause of all the pain and misery that robs life of its joys and sunshine. For, if there be only one source of power in nature, then all effects, good or ill, must be attributed to that one source. The theological subterfuge that "all partial evil is universal good" is no more true than the statement would be that all partial good is universal evil. We can understand what partial personal "providential" care means, but we fail to find any confirmation of its existence in daily life, or in the constant recurrence of cause and effect. The old proverb says that "heaven helps those who help themselves," which is equivalent to saying that, unless people help themselves, heaven will render them no assistance. But how can they help themselves if they are under the absolute control of a "Divine Providence"? St. Paul says that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" (Romans ix.).

The wise thing to do is to rely upon human effort, and not to concern oneself about heaven. Bonaparte said that Providence was on the side of the largest battalions, and the pious Cromwell told his soldiers to "trust in God and keep their powder dry." The Jesuist, Loyola, who was a master of casuistry, told his followers to "pray as though there was no help on earth, and to work as though there was no help in heaven." This was equal to the Greek oracle, who proclaimed: "Alexander, a great nation, shall

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conquer." So that, whether he conquered a nation or a nation conquered him, the oracle would be right. The same principle applies to the Christian advice, "Work and pray." If the double advice is given and acted upon, the Providence of theology is fairly safe.

The manifestation of the belief in Divine Providence is sometimes exceedingly comical. A negro preacher, upon one occasion, dismissed his congregation with the announcement that, God willing and weather permitting, there would be a service on the following Sunday; but, whether or not, he would preach on the Sunday after.

Not long since a rural clergyman, who resided some distance from his place of worship, found, on arriving at the church, that he had forgotten to bring with him his written sermon. He said, however, that he would "trust to Providence." At the close of his discourse he apologised to his hearers for not having done better; at the same time assuring them that he would make up for all the defects next time, when he would have his MS. with him.

When Diagoras, who was surnamed the Atheist, was on board a vessel during a great storm, the sailors thought the raging sea was the result of God's anger because this impious person was aboard. Looking at other vessels that were in similar peril, Diagoras asked if he was also aboard all of them?

When Charles II. visited the blind poet, Milton, and told him that his blindness was a punishment from Providence for his Republican sins, Milton replied: "If Providence has punished me with blindness for my sins, how much greater must have been the sins of your father, whom Providence punished with death."

Many nations have "a God of weather," to whom they pray for rain or sunshine, according to their taste. The Hindoos attributed rain to supernatural causes; the Indians have their "rain-makers"; the same view is found among the Africans and Arabians; and in "Christian England" the clergy pray for rain and fine weather, and they thank Providence for harvests that are frequently anything but what the farmers desire.

The theological notion of Providential government must not be confounded with government by invariable law. The reign of law is not the reign of personal will. The operation of universal law is thus beautifully expressed by the poet Rogers:—

> That very law that moulds a tear,
> And bids it trickle from its source;
> That law preserves the earth a sphere,
> And guides the planets in their course.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE HUMANITARIAN CONFERENCE.

As a delegate from the National Secular Society, in company with Mr. Foote, I attended the meetings of the first National Humanitarian Conference, held at St. Martin's Town Hall on February 28 and March 1. The Conference was called by the Humanitarian League, which, thanks to its able secretary, Mr. H. S. Salt, has already done most valuable work, and which arranged the subjects for discussion. About forty societies were represented by delegates, a large number of whom were of the better sex. The first question was that of "The Criminal Code." The chairman, Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, M.P., adverted to the absurdly cumbrous forms of indictment, the defective system of prosecution, whereby only one in five is convicted, and the gross inequality of sentences. He seemed to me master of his matter, but to deal with it too much from the side of the lawyer legislator, who likes everything cut and dried. The Rev. W. Douglas Morrison, a prison chaplain, who moved that an appeal should be made to the Lord Chancellor "to consider the desirability of instituting an inquiry into the subject of judicial sentences on convicted offenders," read a paper which showed much knowledge of the influences which make criminals, and of the nature of their life both in and out of prison. Incidentally it showed how unjust was any hard-and-fast line of punishment. The motion was seconded by the Rev. J. W. Horsley, also a prison chaplain, who said it would meet the wishes of both those who wanted shorter and those who wanted longer sentences. Mr. Horsley, who is also a gentleman of great experience, spoke so much from the standpoint of a functionary that the meeting was relieved when, after Mr. Salt had read a paper by Mr. R. Johnson, Mr. Foote rose and spoke, not as a chaplain or lawyer, but as a twelve-months' prisoner who knew from experience the failure of our prison system. It was a splendid speech, and the amendment which he moved, "That, in the opinion of this Conference, the idea of reform should be substituted for that of punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those afflicted with anti-social tendencies," was received with acclamation. This was seconded by Mr. G. Bernard Shaw (Fabian Society) in a humorous speech, and supported by several speakers. A delegate from the Salvation Army, instead of speaking to the question, treated us to some preaching on the efficacy of the blood of the Christ to solve all questions. I was constrained to rise and ask the chairman if the delegate was in order, and I might have mentioned, as was afterwards suggested, that the blood of Christ might have been more appropriately introduced when we came to deal with Slaughter-House Reform. Mr. Foote's amendment was adopted as a second resolution by the conveners, and was carried with only one dissentient. As the resolution was almost word for word the program enunciated in the objects of the N.S.S., and the majority of the delegates were Christians, one congratulating Mr. Foote on his "Christian" speech; this was a decided score for our party at the first meeting.

The evening session was devoted to discussing vivisection and the control of public hospitals. It being the evening of the monthly meeting of the N.S.S., neither Mr. Foote nor myself could attend. A resolution was passed in favor of all large hospitals being controlled by the municipal authorities. On Friday afternoon "Slaughter-House Reform" was discussed. Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, M.D., presided, and introduced Mr. Lester, of the Model Abattoir Society, who spoke of the cruelty practised in private slaughter-houses and the humaner methods of the model abattoirs which have been established at Croydon and fifty or sixty other towns. He moved a resolution in favor of properly-supervised abattoirs under direct municipal control. The motion was seconded by Colonel Coulson, an earnest and effective speaker of a manly type. Mr. Josiah Oldfield, editor of the *Vegetarian*, took exception to the resolution, and moved that, slaughter-houses being but relics of the barbarism of the past, every step should be taken to terminate the necessity for their continuance. His speech, in which I understood him to advance as the highest ground for vegetarianism that the shedding of blood gave potency to evil spirits, seemed far enough from practical, though seconded by Mr. J. C. Kenworthy, who spoke of improved methods of slaughter as the consecration of iniquity; and supported by a number of vegetarian ladies. Lord Coleridge, Q.C., who reminds me much of his lamented father, and who inherits the gifts and graces of his distinguished family, gave a more practical tone by supporting the original resolution in a very neat speech. The chairman made an excellent speech, which, unfortunately, was not reported, the reporters having left. He alluded to the necessity for abattoirs in the meat-producing districts to prevent cattle being driven through towns, stated that he had successfully asphyxiated sheep in a similar lethal chamber to that which he established at the Dogs' Home, and that all cattle could be killed as painlessly as when a man's leg is taken off under chloroform. He also mentioned that he had succeeded in producing from vegetable products food chemically equivalent to that which had gone through the animal system, the only remaining difficulty being that of taste. After a somewhat lengthy discussion, Mr. Foote pointed out that Mr. Oldfield's amendment was rather a counsel of perfection than the subject the Conference had been called to discuss, and ultimately the original resolution was carried, and that of Mr. Oldfield was not put to the meeting.

In the evening the discussion was on "Cruel Sports." The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes took the chair in the place of Mr. Passmore Edwards, who was absent through illness. Mr. Hughes said he should have to run away at eight to another meeting. He has only just learnt of the good work of the Humanitarian League, but he had great opportunities of feeling the pulse of the English conscience, which, he said, was prepared to deal with this question. He should

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himself hold a conference on the subject in St. James's Hall. The Rev. J. Page Hopps moved: "That this meeting, while disavowing any desire to interfere with legitimate sports and pastimes, respectfully invites the attention of the Government to the need of strengthening the law for the prevention of cruelty to animals by the enactment of the Sport Regulation Bill now before Parliament, and by the discontinuance of the Royal Buck-hounds, an institution which is viewed with the strongest disapproval by a large section of the public." He strongly denounced the brutality of hunting tame animals, and remarked that, if any one announced a Page Hoppe' Cat Hunt, he should take every step possible to disclaim his connection with such an abomination. He wanted to know why Her Majesty did not do so in regard to the hunting of tame bucks which went on in her name, and was paid for out of the people's money. Colonel Coulson seconded, and described the cruelty of rabbit coursing and pigeon shooting. The Rev. J. Stratton, as an eye-witness, described the cruelties to tame stags caused by Her Majesty's Buckhounds, and Mr. A. C. Morton, M.P., who has charge of the Bill on the subject, told how it was blocked by Viscount Cranborne, who takes special charge of the interests of the Church. Mrs. Frederika Macdonald objected to the term "legitimate" sports, and said Humanitarianism resulted from a new view of life, which did not regard our lower fellow beings as given to us solely for our use and pleasure. Mr. Foote proposed the deletion of this passage, and ultimately the proposal of Mr. Hobson, substituting that the Conference was in favor of innocent sports and pastimes, was adopted.

My impression of the Conference, as a whole, was decidedly pleasant. If the "faddist" was a little to the front, yet the gathering of a number of representative men and women, earnestly bent on the diminution of suffering and the amelioration of the lot of the humblest of their fellow beings, was cheering to a Secularist, despite the evident attempt of the men of God to "nobble" the humanitarian movement. I mentally contrasted the Conference of the Humanitarian League with the councils of the Church, by no means to the disadvantage of the former. J. M. WHEELER.

WHICH WAY?

BY COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

I HAVE called the lecture I am going to deliver to you this afternoon "Which Way?" because I want you to think very seriously about the two ways that are always before you. There is one way we travel for the world we are in, and the other in which we travel for the world which we expect. Along one road is a tide of people who live for supernatural phantoms; along the other go those who live for what they can know and understand. One set, in a word, lives for God; the other lives for man.

THE WORLD WE KNOW.

Why should we sacrifice the world we have for the one we know not of? Why should we torture ourselves by fasting and deprivation, and weary ourselves with prayer, when we might enjoy the sunshine and sweetness of life? I say to you, do not follow that path. Be a man. Be something that will be counted "one" when the census of the universe is being taken. Take the course that developes the brain and the body, not the one in which man shrinks and withers, and at last dries up.

Since the world began it has loved the supernatural, and it has been fond of the impossible. Look at machines, and think of the labor that has been spent in the search for perpetual motion. In chemistry all science was long concentrated on finding the universal solvent; and one of the seekers was once asked what he was going to hold his universal solvent in after he had found it. In medicine people delighted to be cured by prayers, and the relics of the saints, bits of paper, and the most idiotic remedies. You will find the supernatural in every art, and in every religion, and in every people, in exact proportion to the ignorance of men.

There are two philosophies, illustrating the two ways. One is the philosophy of Diogenes, of Buddha, of Jesus Christ, of the monks and nuns, and of the pulpits. It teaches man to destroy desire, to deprive one's self of everything, to do with little food, and to go clad in rags; to live on roots, berries, and a little water; to live in a den, a barrel, or a desert. It teaches man to avoid men, to restrain his appetites, to go through the world gloomy, unhappy, and miserable, that at last he may become a glorified angel, the heir to an eternity of bliss. That is the ascetic philosophy.

The other is the philosophy of humanity, and it seeks to increase, as well as to gratify, the wants of man. The only way to civilise a people is to increase their wants. The African savage will not work until he has been taught the use of alcohol and tobacco, and then he will scour the continent for elephant tusks to trade for them. Civilised man wants good food, shelter, and clothes, and he should strive to supply himself with everything that can increase the comfort of his body or mind. He should surround himself with art and beauty and ease. I say to you, this is the true philosophy. Deny yourself nothing that will not hurt others or yourself. Make your groans as far apart as you can put them; suffer nothing that you can help suffering; live for this world and for the people in it.

Clergymen, with their faces like sepulchres, tell me that this is "sensualism, that to want nothing beyond comfort and joy and happiness is low." If it is low, how low is their motive who are striving for an eternity of happiness? Does not the harp here sound as sweet as the harp in the next world? Are not joy and content here joy and content anywhere? Enjoy what you can get. Take what you can.

TWO WAYS IN GOVERNMENT.

And so, too, there are two theories of government—the one deriving its authority from the clouds, the other from the consent of the governed. There is not a king nor a prince who is not hid behind the pillars of a church; not an aristocracy that is not grouped about an altar. Their existence depends upon the credulity of the people, and the rulers and the priests work hand in hand to keep that credulity alive. Human society will fall, they tell you, without religion. Many persons think that if you don't believe you want to steal. It is the believers who commit the crimes. Who crucified Jesus Christ? The believers. Who held the hemlock to the mouth of Socrates? The believers. Why, the Devil is a believer; but I have seen no effect of his faith on his moral character. He is just as bad now as he was at first. Calvin was a believer and a murderer. Torquemada was a believer, and he believed in God and torture. The believers have persecuted and racked and tortured and burned until they brought the darkness of the Middle Ages on the world. Voltaire was not a believer, but he was a good man. So were Spinoza, Haeckel, Huxley, Helmholtz, Darwin, Draper, Buckle, and George Eliot. Charles Sumner believed in a better trinity than your churches—the trinity of reason, justice, and liberty.

Religion has cultivated credulity and thrived on it. When the barbarian saw an eclipse of the sun he said, "That means me," and he doubled his gifts to the priests and his sacrifices on the altars to square the offended god. And this feeling is alive in the churches to-day—this sense of our importance in the universe. Ah, my friends, man makes very little difference. If not a human being existed on the earth to-day, the sun would rise just as brightly as ever in the east to-morrow morning, and set in the sapphire islands of the west. The earth's flight would not vary. The violets and the roses would blow. The beauty of the poem of the seasons would be just as lovely. The rainbow would arch the clouds. Spring would weave again her tapestry of green. Wind, wave, and fire, the architects of the globe, would go on if none of us were here.

In olden times the believers held heretics responsible for every disaster. They do yet. A few earthquakes would fill every church in Chicago to overflowing. It would go hard with me then, for very surely I would not be let address an audience like this and awake the further anger of a punishing God. Let a pestilence come, and the priests would thrive again. Famine is always followed by faith. Calamity is the sunshine of superstition. Let disaster occur, and God would soon again be placated with unbelievers. There would soon be sacrifices and prayers and a rattling of the beads and a shutting of the eyes again.

THE RIGHT GOD.

All Christians know that all other gods are false and

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unreliable; they have the only genuine article. In India they had many gods, and gave much to many priests to keep them in good humor. In the hour of their need the gods deserted them. Think of what Egypt did for its gods; but they were no good, and the descendants of the temple builders are serfs. In Greece, not having enough gods, they erected altars to the unknown God, and Greece went down. The Roman gods fell palsied from their altars when Rome was in extremity. Now, have we the right God? Their gods were all wrong. How about ours? The reverend clergy assure us that theirs is the simon-pure article, and all others are fictitious and fraudulent. How can we tell? Shall we investigate or shall we believe? How can we test the God described in our holy and blessed Bible?

To find out a man there is no better way than to give him power and watch how he uses it. Well, God has power, and how has he used it?

Would a decent god appeal to prejudice and make it the armor of faith? Would a decent god make credulity the first condition in his service? Would he frighten or enlighten? Would he love blood, or would he love love? What would a good man do in his place? Take the record. When Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden, did God try to reform them? Did he stoop over to lift them up?—and I tell you no man stands so erect as he who is stooping over a fallen brother. No, this God said, "I will multiply their sorrows," and he told the woman that she should bring forth children in anguish. Now, I will not worship any God who increased the pains of maternity. I won't adore a god who established the torture and the slavery of a sex. I tell you we have got the wrong god.

The clerical teachers tell us that the Bible first gave us the truth, and proved its inspiration by giving us one God instead of a multitude. I say this is not true. Thousands of years before Egypt believed in one supreme God. Not alone that, but they believed in the idiotic doctrine of the trinity, the immortality of the soul, judgment, heaven, and hell. Persia believed in one God, so did the Hindoos; and I tell you more, that in the matter of character Jehovah cannot compare with Zeus or Brahm or the God of the Aztecs, nor with decent people.

Our Jehovah established slavery. Cicero and Zeno protested against it before Christianity came. Jehovah himself says that he is a jealous God, and the ministers urge that he did not mean he was jealous of other gods, but of the images. Think of him—he jealous of a stone god or a wooden god! Compare him with Brahm, who said, "I receive all worship, and reward all worshippers. All gods are me, and all are true gods because they are me." Jehovah broke all his promises to the nation; he gave nothing but disaster, wreck, and misery. Friends, nothing can be worse for any nation than to have Jehovah for its God.

But they say he improved and reformed, and that when he came again 1,900 years ago his temper was sweeter and his morals better. And yet the teacher who, when half a man, said, "Forgive your enemies," when he became all God again said, "Depart, ye cursed of my father, into hell everlasting." Why should the torture be eternal, except, indeed, to give some orthodox angel the pleasure of saying "I told you so" to the damned soul. Think of the futility of the punishment. After the end of infinity that soul will be no better than at the beginning. He will not be reformed; he will be useless, except for more torture. Suppose, after 5,000,000 of years of hell fire, a soul should say to God: "Here I have been burning for 5,000,000 years, and I am no better. I never will be any better. Why waste any more brimstone on me? Give me annihilation." What could God reply?

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

What did God come for that has helped to make men higher and nobler? He taught the infamous doctrine of eternal punishment—the dogma that has furrowed the brow and chilled the hearts of generations; that tortured man and made man torture; that gave us the inquisition and the faggot. Church people are shocked that the faith of their fathers should be attacked. It is no honor to our fathers to stick to their mistakes. They will not see how it has taken centuries of persecution to bring us to liberty, and that persecution is founded on hell belief.

Look at it. In the same year that the Emperor Constantine murdered his wife and son, 325, he summoned the Council of Nice to decide upon the nature of the godhead. The council produced the doctrine of consubstantiality, and from that time on for twelve centuries the dogma of the trinity was changed and altered until it took the present form. Think of the millions of souls that have dropped into hell while waiting for the discussion to end, so that they could find out what sort of a trinity they must believe in to avoid hell.

To my mind, the saints of the Middle Ages are responsible for the darkness of the times. They murdered the sunshine. They hated everything that was really good. They brought gloom and sorrow upon the people, and yet they are everlastingly blessed; while the men and women whom they burdened with deadly hell fear are in torment eternal. Can you not see which way to choose?

(To be concluded).

EFFECTS OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

SOME of us are apt to think that enlightenment is now universally recognised as the most important factor of human happiness. Still, one hears it frequently murmured in the corners that one can be too clever, and fingers are pointed to great criminals. Were not these intelligent men? We are well acquainted with the allegations of Christians that knowledge is inferior to faith, although there is a lot of talk about "Christian knowledge"—which is, presumably, equivalent to the "wisdom" of Samuel—*i.e.*, the knowledge of God, and of his will. Indeed, we have recently heard that criminality is increasing in France, as secular teaching is gaining ground. These allegations may be true to a certain extent; but if it is to be inferred that we should confine our seeking for knowledge to the Unknowable, that Science should be stopped in her progress, and that we should keep ourselves and our fellow-men as ignorant of the laws of this visible universe and of things pertaining to this world as possible, then I emphatically say, No.

There is a proverb which says: "Where God builds a chapel, the Devil builds an inn." It is perfectly true. Wherever a good principle is advanced, its corresponding evil crops up alongside of it. This dual force pervades nature. The grandest intellects that ever adorned the world were, as a rule, childishly absurd in certain sides of life. The better men are, the greater inclinations for evil they have to struggle against. Cleverness is apt to assume the shape of cunning. Affectionate natures have the strongest temptations to become sensual. All the religions and systems of the world have their peculiar evils arising out of them to cope with. The higher civilisation, the more warfare and starvation.

But we do not say, "Let us check the progress of these good principles, because they bring their deteriorating influences." We rather help to advance them, and, at the same time, try and suppress the evils. If the secular teaching in France tends to increase criminality, it certainly has its cause in insufficient moral training, as a daily paper has remarked. But education of the moral faculties can be affected apart from what is commonly called religion. Man has made his religions, and the individual chooses to believe in the one that corresponds the most with his character and his mental capacity. The character of man makes his religion, not *vice versâ*, as sure as Christianity has as many different interpretations as there are Christians.

Instruction—mere dry intellectual study—only widens the faculties that we possess, good and bad alike; sometimes the good more, sometimes the reverse. Education—moral and intellectual—brings forth our good qualities, subdues evil inclinations, vivifies the imagination, broadens our views, exalts the intellect, and ennobles our character. Self-sought enlightenment has as many different effects as there are natures, because the student generally seeks for that kind of knowledge which will gratify the strongest phase of his nature. But the faculty, which has been gratified, is extended all the same, and makes for good in the end. A melancholy temperament, when refined by enlightenment, brings with it a steady, persevering energy, which will leave no stone unturned till the problem is

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solved, or till the ultimate goal is reached, its motto being, "Thoroughness and toleration." A loving character, beginning with its sympathy at home, will extend its love to its country, and eventually to the whole world. A sanguine or affectionate mind will develop into a fanatic, with the same result as the melancholic. Only it is narrower and more intolerant, and may wreak evil if it is pursuing a bad cause. The seemingly apathetic person, when subjected to enlightenment, will become a stoic with an iron will, unhurt by malicious slander and persecution. And, in conclusion, I would like all self-educators and pedagogues to understand this: A faculty of the human mind can never be annihilated; but it can be led into another channel, to be utilised in the service of good; whereas, in its uncultivated state, if allowed to go its own course, it would make for evil. J. K. Maggarr.

ACID DROPS.

We called attention last week to a monstrous utterance by the Rev. Alderman Fleming Williams at a Christian meeting at St. James's Hall. Our criticism of what he said was founded on the report in the *Daily Chronicle*. We have since seen a full report of this speech in the *Methodist Times*, and we are sorry to say that the objectionable passage reads worse when we have it verbatim. After denouncing the proposal to divide London into ten distinct municipalities—a proposal so silly that only a perfervid Christian could ever think of going into hysterics over it—Mr. Williams went on to brand it as "a proposal as black as Atheism." This is really outrageous, and Mr. Williams should be asked to recall his words. If he did not utter them in a moment of excitement and forgetfulness, what are we to think of the very different language he used at the Hall of Science during his friendly discussion with Mr. Foote?

Dr. Clifford, at the same meeting, uttered some dreadful nonsense. He said, for instance, that the first London County Council was the gift of God. This is the sort of rubbish we shall meet with more and more as the religious parties press into politics and social reform, and carry on their quarrels with each other at the expense of secular progress.

Fervid Nonconformists like Hugh Price Hughes, Dr. Clifford, and Dr. Horton threw themselves into the London County Council election struggle on the Progressive side. Their support has been of very questionable value; or rather its value has proved to be a minus quantity. The Progressives have lost over twenty seats, and their total poll has diminished by 20,000 votes. The fact is, these men of God are a nuisance in public affairs. They introduce wrong methods and absurd rhetoric; and as the people at large don't want pulpit tricks outside church and chapel, they resent the interference of these men of God who read other people such high moral lessons, and pretend to be so much better than their fellow citizens. If the Progressives want to win in the next elections, they will have to keep the white-chokers out of the battle. It is worth noting that John Burns himself has suffered ever since Hugh Price Hughes took to praising him.

Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes, Mrs. Baxter, and some other leading Nonconformist ladies issued "A Call to Prayer," in view of the London County Council election. The prayers of these pious women do not appear to have been answered.

A terrific hurricane has devastated Fiji. Several churches were destroyed, as well as the Customs Houses.

The severe weather and the influenza epidemic have sent up the London bill of mortality to double its normal rate. This instance of our heavenly father's regards gave the preachers a good opportunity of shaking their hearers over the verge of hell. "We may soon be launched into eternity" we heard a Salvationist exclaim. Evidently he did not think he was in eternity already.

The reactionaries in Germany are not content with bringing back the Jesuits. Dr. Rintelen, of the Centre party, has proposed in the Reichstag to punish, with a fine of six hundred marks or two years' imprisonment, anyone who publicly, or in print, or by illustrations, attacks belief in God, or the immortality of the human soul, or the religious and moral character of matrimony and the family.

The *Daily News* says: "When it first became known some time ago that this motion was being prepared, a storm of indignation went through the Liberal population of Germany, for it was clear that this monstrous legislative proposal had for its purpose nothing less than the entire destruction of scientific and philosophical research."

Dr. Rintelen remarked that modern science was answerable for the undermining of the belief in God, as was easily proved from the works of modern authors. This literature poisoned the soul of the people, filling them with doubts as to God's existence. What was called science had a most injurious effect on youth. Formerly unbelief was a privilege of the so-called educated classes, and one noticed nothing of it amongst the people. But now it had penetrated to the very lowest classes. By the Bill, as proposed by the Government, only these uneducated classes would be hit, and not the real originators and propagators of irreligion, who sat as professors at the universities.

Dr. Barth (Liberal) hailed the motion with satisfaction, for it exposed the ultimate aims of the reactionists. Should it be passed, a great part of German and foreign literature would have to be prohibited and many of the public libraries destroyed. The motion was an attack upon civilisation. Herr Bebel, leader of the Social Democrats, also sharply criticised the motion, which, as it was not supported by the Government, was lost, though it served to betray the real wishes of the clerical party.

Archbishop Magee was once reported to have said, in the House of Lords, "Drunkenness is jolly." What Dr. Magee did say was "folly."

Mr. J. L. Wilkinson, the chief goods manager of the Great Western Railway, mentioned recently that, in 1840, bishops and clergy along the line petitioned the directors against Sunday trains; and it was stated that travelling by railway was more sinful than travelling by highway.

John Thomas Clayden, a well-dressed Christian worker and preacher in connection with the Independent Church at Lower Edmonton, has been fined 20s. for brutal ill-usage of his wife. Because "she hindered him in his work for Christ" he stuck pins in her, dragged her out of bed, and kicked her round the room. She was granted a separation order, with custody of the children, and the bench ordered Clayden to contribute 12s. 6d. weekly towards their support.

The Rev. G. Hustler, rector of English Bicknor, Coleford, Gloucestershire, has become a bankrupt. He inherited £15,000 from his father, £5,000 from brothers, and £3,000 from an aunt. He had an allowance of £550 yearly, and his income as rector was valued at £400. He estimated that his household expenses had amounted to £1,000 yearly, and his creditors will have to whistle for their money.

The *Animals' Friend* quotes from "A Civilian's Life in India," "that Hindu boys never dream of throwing a stone at a bird or beast or shouting at them, or in any way annoying them, except in self-defence." Evidently these heathens need Christianising.

Michigan Adventists are said to be giving away their watches, and other earthly possessions, because their prophet tells them that they will be translated to heaven *en masse* on March 5, 1896. It would be interesting to learn if the possessions find their way to the prophet.

"Another Engineer," writing in the *Church Times* on "Why Working Men Don't Go to Church," says: "I have worked in factories where there were from 1,000 to 10,000 employed, and I can honestly say I never found a communicant of the English Church in any of the factories."

The Rev. H. E. Warner, in the *Homiletic Review*, recommends "the judicious study of science" to ministers. He says: "It is not new truth that the world needs, or wants, indeed; but old truths, reached by fearless, vigorous, independent processes." It appears, however, that what he really wants is an emasculated science, to back up what he calls "the great truths of the Gospel."

There is a man in Greenock who is anxious to be interviewed by the papers, because he believes he "is the Shiloh promised in Revelation xii." He desires them to hurry up, because he expects to be translated like Elijah.

"Five prophet evangelists have," says the *Westminster*, "appeared in Tacoma, Washington, who declare that the world is coming to an end in 1897. They declare that 'nine-tenths of the human race will perish miserably by war, plague, famine, pestilence, and earthquake during the next five years. Satan will be sealed up for a thousand years, and heaven will hang in mid-air all that time. They have seen hell, and it is six thousand miles wide, and long enough to hold all the wicked.' This out-Baxters Baxter."

It is reported that the Catholics, with the blessing of the Pope, are going to organise a special show at the Paris

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Exhibition in 1900. It is to be a side exhibition, illustrating the origin and growth of Christianity. If it begins at the very beginning, and follows the narrative of Luke, it will be a greater attraction than the *danse de ventre* was in the Paris Exhibition of 1889.

The theologians are still exercised over the Syriac version of the Gospels, which says Joseph begat Jesus. But is not this the natural conclusion from the genealogies given being those of Joseph? What was the good of tracing Jesus through Joseph to David and Abraham if Joseph had nothing to do with his parentage? The orthodox now take up the position that the reading, "Joseph begat Jesus," is an interpolation. Must not, then, the whole preceding genealogy, beginning "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," be also an interpolation?

Hugh Price Hughes had a correspondence with Lord George Hamilton. This correspondence was sent to the *Standard*, and the reverend gentleman complains that the *Standard* did not print it *in extenso*, but "actually published mere fragments of it." He calls this "dishonorable." Perhaps he will now tell us the proper epithet to apply to his own conduct as editor of the *Methodist Times*. During the "Atheist Shoemaker" controversy he did not permit a single word of our side of the case to appear in his journal. We, on the other hand, printed both sides impartially, and gave our readers the fullest opportunity of coming to a just decision. Hugh Price Hughes crying out "dishonorable" seems to us very much like Jack the Ripper crying out "murder."

In Tegg's *Dictionary of Chronology*, 1854, it is stated that in January 7, 1846, a £100 note was lodged in a Dublin bank, and offered to any clairvoyant who could tell its number, date, whence issued, and signature. It was never claimed. At the time of the thought-reading boom with Bishop and Cumberland, Mr. Labouchere offered a £1,000 note, with a similar result. Spiritists, prophets, mejums, mahatmas, and miracle-workers are generally shy of honest tests.

The *Christian Herald* and its editor, the Prophet Baxter, subsist by pandering to the lowest ignorance and credulity. We do not wonder, therefore, that Prophet Baxter's paper inserts a begging appeal on behalf of the fellow who boasts of his responsibility for the infamous libel on the London Hall of Science, which has just been branded as such by a jury in the Court of Queen's Bench. The baser sort of Christians regard anything as fair against Freethinkers; even collecting money to defray the expenses of an infamy. Not one of the miserable wretches on the Christian side in this libel action has expressed the slightest regret at having circulated a detestable lie. They do not even make a virtue of necessity. Their "charity" is maintained to the very last.

It appears from the *Straits Times* that "living pictures" have got to Singapore, where, thanks to an advertising denunciation by a Methodist minister, the Rev. Mr. Munson, they are all the rage. The *Straits Times* strongly advises the man of God to restrain his zeal.

The *Jewish Chronicle* remarks upon the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill: "As a matter of fact, the Mosaic Law not only allowed a woman to marry her deceased husband's brother, but in certain circumstances imposed the marriage on the husband's brother as a positive duty.'

We predicted that some one would soon question the Rev. A. Sayce's identification of Nimrod with Nazi Murud, and here already is Mr. St. Chad Boscawen speaking of it as a mare's nest, and declaring that Nimrod has long since been identified with Izdhubar.

According to the *Rangoon Times*, the native Karen Christians of Burmah have revolted against the authority of the American Baptist missionaries, and mean to manage things in their own way. The *R. T.* accuses the missionaries of not accounting for money received, and of trading under the plea of doing God service, and under cover of St. Paul's example.

The *Freeman* complains of the Bishop of Calcutta planting Church missions in the midst of Baptist missions in Bengal. It says: "This very Bishop of Calcutta presides over a diocese of 130,000,000 souls; and we should think that of these nearly, if not quite, 129,000,000 are non-Christians. Why not seek to convert heathens and Mohammedans before attempting to make Baptists Episcopalians?" Probably because the latter job is by far the easier.

A woman in Flemington, Victoria, under the influence of religious mania, or taking seriously the words of Jesus, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off," actually chopped off the forefinger of her left hand. She was sent to an asylum. A similar doom would probably be experienced by the author of the nonsense which turned her brain, if he visited any Christian country at present.

Mr. T. S. Henry, of Sydney, who caught Mrs. Mellon personating spirits, has published a pamphlet, *Further Light from the Mysteries of Spookland*. It includes his sworn deposition that he caught Mrs. Mellon on her knees barefooted, and with a black mask impersonating a black child spirit, and that a false beard and other articles were found in her cabinet.

The Rev. Stewart Smyth, vicar of St. Mark's, Victoria Docks, has been charged, and found guilty, of habitual intoxication and of indecent behavior towards a female parishioner, by the Consistory Court of the Diocese of St. Albans.

The London Missionary Society has been holding its centenary rather jubilantly. It was not noticed that the Bishop of Rochester had declared that the South of London was practically heathen.

Mr. Gladstone is devoting his old-age leisure to theology. He has just brought out a Psalter, and contributed a long article to a *People's Pictorial Bible* to be issued by a New York firm. In this article, says the *Rock*, he presses home the question which no Freethinker can answer. Well, we are going to disprove that by answering it, after stating that we have answered it scores of times before.

Mr. Gladstone wants to know, and the *Rock* wants to know after him, how Christianity gained its enormous influence if it were a fraud or a mere human invention? By twisting statistics he makes out that the Christians are the most numerous body—more numerous even than the Buddhists. Now, suppose we admit this, what does it prove? Mohammedans number (say) two hundred millions; therefore Mohammedanism is a fraud. Buddhists number (say) three hundred millions; therefore Buddhism is a fraud. Christians number (say) four hundred millions; therefore Christianity is true. Such is Mr. Gladstone's logic, when put plainly; and it doesn't require any other answer than just putting it so that everybody can see through it.

God Almighty enters into competition with Buddha. He gives Buddha six hundred years' start, and then takes eighteen hundred years to catch him up! Mr. Gladstone seriously asks us to believe that of Omnipotence!

We make Mr. Gladstone and the *Rock* a present of the following argument for the supernatural origin of Christianity: No other religion pays so well. No other Bible than the Christian one could bring an aged statesman a handsome cheque for a prefatory article, patting God Almighty on the back. No one gets big cheques for writing prefatory articles to the Koran. Mohammedans are not such fools as to shell out for that kind of commodity. They leave it to the Christians.

Here is another argument, free, gratis, for nothing: Most people are fools. The Christian religion is the most foolish on earth. Therefore the Christians are more numerous than other bodies.—We hope the *Rock* is satisfied.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING held at the Hall of Science, February 28. The President in the chair. Present: Messrs. V. Roger, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, J. Potter, G. J. Warren, G. Ward, E. Bater, E. Quay, H. J. Stace, C. Thomas, A. F. Taylor, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received. An application from the South Shields Branch was referred to the Organisation Committee, and the Secretary instructed to write the Branch. The President reported that the N.S.S. had been represented at the Conference of the Humanitarian League by himself, Mr. J. M. Wheeler, and other delegates, and a resolution successfully carried in accordance with N.S.S. principles. Also, that the recent libel action in connection with the Hall of Science had resulted in a verdict in our favor, with damages.

The Branches willing to receive the Conference were: Bristol, Chatham, Glasgow, and Nottingham; and the Secretary was instructed to make further inquiries in regard to accommodation for delegates, and to issue the circulars to enable all Branches to record their votes. The meeting adjourned. E. M. VANCE *(Assistant-Secretary)*.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 10, Miners' Hall, Ryhope :—10.30, "Will Christ Save Us?"

Sunday, March 10, People's Palace, High-street, Sunderland :—3, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" 7, "A Search for the Soul."

March 17, Nottingham; 24, Bristol.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 17, Hall of Science, London; 24, Hall of Science, London; 31, Newcastle-on-Tyne. April 7, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. K. LENTHORPE.—The essays you speak of are certainly not by Sir Charles Lyell. There is no copy of them in the British Museum.

C. E. SMITH.—A full account of Rachel Dashwood Lee, the "Female Infidel" of De Quincey's *Autobiographic Sketches*, and of the circumstances of her abduction, is given in the *Secular Almanack* for this year.

TRURO.—The *Freethinker* may be obtained from Mr. Vincent, newsagent.

JAMES ROWNEY, 1 Carthusian-street, E.C., will send catalogue of Freethought and other books of his library to any desirous of purchasing.

J. CARVER.—We can only smile at the fellow's "moral victory" and "premature grey hairs." We do not intend to notice his ravings.

J. KRAFT.—See paragraph. Please send us a copy of the bill you issue at Bristol. Branches should always do this in the case of Mr. Foote's lectures. Some of them omit to do it, and cause him inconvenience.

G. R.—We hope to insert your "Christian Puzzle."

H. R. SANDELL.—Why should we waste a minute over the scoundrel's vaporings? Mr. Foote's writings are all published openly, and all bear his name. Those who wish to prosecute him are free to try their hands at the business. Their attack is awaited with the most perfect equanimity.

E. A. CUMBER.—The forbidden fruit got to be called an *apple* by men in apple-growing countries. Now every man was once a boy, and most boys have "had it" for filching apples.

J. W. ELSWORTH.—Your advertisement, we believe, was not sent to us direct, but to Mr. Forder. We will see him about the matter as soon as he is well enough to attend to business, and let you know the result.

AGNOSTIC (Rangoon).—G. W. M. Reynolds's *Errors of the Christian Religion* was published in 1832. It is scarce. For particulars of his life you had better write to *Reynolds's Newspaper*.

E. HORSLEY.—The anecdote in Mushler seems given only as an instance of monkish ignorance. There was, however, a German Franciscan who seriously argued that the New Testament was written in Latin, as did also the learned Jesuit, Father Hardouin.

J. STEWARD.—(1) Mr. Bradlaugh did not *refuse* to affirm when he first went to the House of Commons; on the contrary, he *claimed* to affirm, and was actually sued for £500 penalty for sitting and voting without having taken the oath. (2) Mr. Bradlaugh did not "recant." He never said a word about religion during his last illness. On this matter we have the word of his daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, and the signed testimony of the professional nurses. It is really sickening to have to contradict these Christian falsehoods.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—W. Bed, £1 1s.; M. Christopher, 2s.; Derby Branch, 5s.

H. W. JONES.—Glad to have the congratulations of the Blackburn friends. As you say, the boasts of the libellers have ended in a miserable whine. If this lesson is not a warning to others, we shall have to administer a further dose of the same medicine; in fact, it is half-invited already.

E. S.—(1) Tertullian was a heated rhetorician and an unscrupulous partisan. No historian attaches the slightest value to any of his statements. Nero never issued an edict against the Christians; there were no laws against them at the time of Trajan; nor was any form of religious opinion, as such, ever put under the ban of the law during the reign of the Pagan emperors. Persecution for opinion was introduced into the Roman jurisprudence under Constantine, the first Christian emperor. See the first chapter of *Crimes of Christianity*. (2) Certainly the N.S.S. has no objection to its members joining a Socialist organisation. Why should it?

J. A. WILKINSON.—There is no "Easter Saturday" that we know of. Easter Sunday is a Church date, and Easter Monday came in use as a holiday. If an "Easter Saturday" *must* be made up, it would, of course, be the Saturday after Easter Sunday.

W. BALCK, 8 Celia-road, London, N., desires to form an instrumental band composed exclusively of N.S.S. members. Those who are willing to join should communicate with him, and state the instrument they play. Players, not aspirants, are wanted. Mr. Balck doesn't want applicants like the man who was asked if he could play on the violin, and who replied: "I don't know; I never tried."

J. SEDDON (Manchester).—Mr. Foote will offer you another date shortly.

A. P. CURTIS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

J. MORISON.—It appeared in our last issue. Thanks all the same.

D. T. W.—See "Acid Drops."

E. H. DALY.—Thanks. Your cuttings are always welcome.

W. W. DICKSON, Park-lane, Newbury, would like to become acquainted with any local readers of the *Freethinker*. This correspondent was a Christian till three years ago, when he suffered a painful bereavement. A friend lent him the *Age of Reason* and a few copies of the *Freethinker*, to which he soon became a regular subscriber.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Rangoon Times—North Star—Straits Times—Church Reformer—Vegetarian Messenger—De Dagsraad—Two Worlds—Civil Service Prayer Union Quarterly Paper—Isle of Man Times—Animals' Friend—Newcastle Leader—Open Court—Twentieth Century—Progressive Thinker—Liberty—Reynolds's Newspaper—Lyttleton Times—Liberator—Brisbane Telegraph—Free Methodist News—Glasgow Herald—Speler—Leek Times.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectured at Camberwell on Sunday evening. Considering the bitter weather, there was a capital attendance, and the audience seemed highly interested. Mr. Foote lectures to-day (March 10) at Sunderland, where he hopes to meet many of his Durham and Northumberland friends. The People's Palace is a large one, and good meetings will be necessary to keep it moderately warm.

The Ryhope friends appear to think that Mr. Foote is made of cast-iron. They invited him to lecture in the Miners' Hall on Saturday evening (March 9), and he agreed to do so. Then, without obtaining his consent, they advertised his lecture for Sunday morning. Of course they meant it for the best. Ryhope, however, is a train ride from Sunderland; it is a good walk (and very likely a dirty one) from Ryhope Station to the Miners' Hall. All this discomfort, especially in such weather, would be trying to the strongest of men, if he had to deliver two other lectures on the same day in a big hall at Sunderland—to say nothing of the discussion that may follow. Three lectures in one day are a tax under the best circumstances. No man alive could keep on doing it, Sunday after Sunday, without at least having quiet and comfort before and after the lectures. People should really remember this, and not fancy, after hearing a lecture, that the lecturer is just as fresh as they are, when he is often terribly fagged. Mr. Foote happens to be carrying about the relics of a cold, which he hardly expects to get rid of until the weather changes; and this makes it doubly unpleasant to have such a day's work mapped out for him by excellent, but in this instance injudicious, friends.

Mr. Charles Watts has been fighting the influenza. We are happy to state that he is the winner. On Sunday last he was to have lectured at Manchester, and he foolishly went as far as Euston station; but finding himself quite too ill to travel, he was obliged to go home again and return to bed. Mr. Forder and Miss Vance have also been down with the fashionable malady. They too are happily recovering. It is this aspect of the case which justifies a paragraph in "Sugar Plums."

On Wednesday, March 13, at 7 o'clock, the Bristol Branch will celebrate their anniversary at Shepherds' Hall. There will be vocal and instrumental music, recitations, dancing, etc.

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The Annual General Meeting of the Finsbury Park Branch will be held at 91 Mildmay-park, N., on Sunday next, March 10, at 3 p.m. prompt, when a full attendance is particularly requested, as the open-air season is near at hand, and it is desired to make arrangements for the lectures. Members in arrears with their subscriptions should bring their cards.

The Gentlemen's Annual Tea Party at the Failsworth Secular School was a complete success, and the profits (a little over £16) go towards the expenses of the Whit Friday procession.

Great Thoughts (March 6) gives a portrait of Mr. G. B. Shaw, and an article by that gentleman on "Socialism in the Twentieth Century," predicting all sorts of nice things for all except idle landlords, shareholders, and capitalists.

De Dageraad, of Amsterdam, opens with an article on the results of historical criticism on the old beliefs. In the "Universal Review" a number of items are translated from the *Freethinker*.

The Rev. E. Lloyd Jones appears to be a liberal preacher. He is reported in the *North-Eastern Daily Gazette* as having said: "The cruellest things done in England to-day were done in the name of Christ. Did they not find that the country was full of social bitterness owing to a difference of theological beliefs? Did they not find that honest men were ostracised because of the sincerity of their religious convictions? Was not the history of the Established Church an example of that? They could not imprison them, but they could look on them with social contempt. If he wanted to see the truest example of the spirit of Christ, he would not go to the bishops and clergy, but to the noble Agnosticism of John Morley."

The February number of the *Independent Pulpit* (Waco, Texas) contains some interesting original articles, and a reprint from the *Freethinker* of Mr. Wheeler's article on "Hypocrisy."

D. T. K. Cheyne contributes a notable letter to the *Academy* (February 23) on the subject of the reading in the new Syriac gospels. He admits that in the story of the Incarnation the relation of mythology to the Biblical traditions must be taken into account. He says: "For the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus (the ideal value of which is clearly by no means inseparable from the outward form of the story) we have not only the more familiar mythic parallels, but the story of the wonderful birth of Zarathustra by a ray of the divine glory descending from one sphere to another till it reached the bosom of Dughdo, mother of the prophet. The latter story has, of course, no historical connection with that in Matthew i.; its probable antiquity is admitted by Darmesteter; and its value as a parallel is not affected by the legendary character of Dughdo. It is also a fact of importance that mythic elements attached themselves to the mother of Jesus in post-evangelical times in Egypt, Arabia, and Asia Minor."

Dr. Lyman Abbott, the successor of Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, in a sermon preached on January 28, frankly confessed himself an Evolutionist. After giving his opinion that the stories of the Creation and the Fall of Man in Genesis cannot be reconciled with the teaching of science, Dr. Abbott proceeded as follows: "I believe Genesis iii. to be an ancient legend, which a greater writer took, as Tennyson took the Arthurian legends, and rewrote it, in order that he might write it into a moral and spiritual lesson. I think that the Hebrew people believed that the Fall of Man affected the whole human race. I think very likely Paul believed so; at all events, Paul used that belief in his arguments and teachings with the Hebrew people in his writing; but when he came to speak of sin, as he does in Romans vii., he has nothing to say about Adam, nothing to say about original sin; his prophecy is on an entirely different level; it is in every respect consistent with the notion that man started out of the germ, and has grown through animal conditions to his present status."

Christianity and Race.

The origin, development, and teaching of primitive Christianity were essentially Semitic, since it had its origin in a people of that race, and in a man of that people. Yet the Semitic race did not become Christian; and, after so many ages have elapsed, it still rejects Christianity. It was the Aryan race, to which we Europeans belong, which adopted this teaching and became essentially Christian, although this race is psychologically the most idolatrous of the world—as far as the æsthetic idol, not the common fetish, is concerned.—*Tito Vignoli*, "*Myth and Science*," *p. 177.*

OF WHICH JESUS WAS PAUL A DISCIPLE?

IN a short article—"Paul on Christ"—in the *Freethinker* dated August 20, 1893, I pointed out that, according to his own statement, Paul was a follower of Christ some sixty years before Jesus of Nazareth was born. A Christian, who has recently read my remarks, suggests that the reference in 2 Corinthians xi. 32 is to the Aretas, who was father-in-law of Herod Antipas. The suggestion is ingenious; and, as it is made use of as a sort of argument, it may be worth while to briefly notice it.

At the outset, it is of the utmost importance to remember that of the Jesus of the Gospels history knows nothing—apart, of course, from the hopes and fears *and crimes* of those who have professed to be his followers. Here and there an ignorant Christian may still quote the spurious passage in the *Antiquities* of Josephus; but Christian scholars, and even writers like Archdeacon Farrar, have long recognised it as an interpolation. *Pace*, then, Blaise Pascal and his modern imitators, who, with extreme simplicity, have contended that the silence of Jewish and Roman writers was intentional, and that thus the position of the Christian is the more secure, one thing is clear to the impartial student of Christianity, and that is that, whether Professor Johnson be wholly right or mostly wrong, the Christ of the Gospels never existed outside the imagination of his worshippers.

The next question is, Who was Paul? What does history tell us of him? As the writer of the article on "Paul" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* truly says: "We have no means of knowing when he was born, or how long he lived, or at what times the several events of his life took place." Justin Martyr never mentions Paul, nor does he quote any of his writings, although he deals with the doctrines of Marcion, who was Paul's greatest disciple. Christian tradition represents Paul as visiting Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and other places, boarding Roman and Greek philosophers in their strongholds, and despatching his extraordinary letters broadcast over the civilised world. But, if this be true, the silence of all historians concerning the Apostle of the Gentiles is inexplicable. In face of facts like these, the common argument, that there is surely a great personality behind the four "genuine" epistles, loses all its force. In any case, the important question is, When did this "great personality" exist? This point must be decided by the epistles themselves.

Now, the only passage that will serve as a time-marker is that one in which Paul describes his escape from Damascus "under Aretas the king." It is argued that the Aretas here referred to was the father-in-law of Herod Antipas. But is this likely? Damascus was held by a king Aretas some sixty years B.C., when Syria was conquered by Pompey and annexed to the Roman dominions; but history knows nothing of any subsequent king Aretas ruling at Damascus. The father-in-law of Herod Antipas was king of Arabia Petræa, while Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee; and although Josephus tells us that Aretas made war on Antipas and defeated him when Herod put away his wife in order to marry Herodias, there is nothing to show that Herod's father-in-law ever ruled at Damascus. By the way, it may be noted that this quarrel occurred just as Tiberius died, and Herod appealed for assistance to Caligula. So that, in any case, the chronology of the Gospels is inconsistent with Jewish, as it is also with Roman, history; for the Synoptics represent Herod as cohabiting with Herodias much earlier. Discussing 2 Corinthians xi. 32 in the *Free Review* for April, 1894, Mr. J. M. Robertson—a writer who, like Mr. J. M. Wheeler, must surely prove very helpful to studious young Freethinkers—opines that, in the unsettled state of the country about the time of the death of Tiberius, there may very well have been an occupation of Damascus under an Aretas, "otherwise it is to be presumed later Christians would have deleted the passage." But to have been consistent they would have selected every unhistorical reference in the Gospels, as well as in the epistles, and this would have been "a large order." There remains, of course, as Mr. Robertson further says, the question whether the passage is a forgery, based on Acts ix. 25.

On the whole it would seem reasonable to assume that, if the passage be genuine, the reference is to the Aretas of whom history *does* speak as king at Damascus—*i.e.*, to "Aretas, the King," who ruled there when Syria was

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conquered by Pompey. This, of course, will connect Paul with an earlier Jesus than the hero of the Gospels. But, apart from Christian tradition, what is there to connect Paul with the Gospel Jesus? Even if we could regard the Christ of the Synoptics as a real historical character, it is evident that Paul did not know him. The utmost the epistles can be held to prove is that, assuming the historic actuality of Paul, he believed in a slain and risen Christ. They reveal no knowledge of Christ's parents, or of his miracles, or of his teachings. And in connection with Paul's belief in a slain and risen Savior, it is important to remember:—

(1) The significance of Paul's doctrine that it *behoved* the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead.

(2) The prevalency of this belief *before* the time of the Gospel Jesus.

I am no scholar myself, but I have endeavored to acquaint myself with what scholars on both sides have written. And, taking a purely judicial view of the alleged facts, the conclusion seems to me irresistible that the Christ believed in by Paul was a pre-Christian Jesus. Who that Jesus was is another question. Many have suggested Jeschu Ben-Pandira, of whom the Rev. S. Baring Gould says: "That there really lived such a person as Jeschu Ben-Pandira, and that he was a disciple of the Rabbi, Jehoshua Ben-Perachia, I see no reason to doubt. That he escaped from Alexander Jannæus with his master into Egypt, and there studied magical arts; that he returned after awhile to Judea, and practised his necromantic arts in his own country, is also not improbable. Somewhat later the Jews were famous, or infamous, throughout the Roman world as conjurers and exorcists. Egypt was the head-quarters of magical studies. That Jeschu, son of Pandira, was stoned to death in accordance with the law, for having practised magic, is also probable."* The suggestion that this was Paul's Jesus would seem, on the whole, a good one; and, *toute de même*, I, at least, am prepared to accept it, provisionally.

ANDREW LIDDLE.

CHRISTIAN CIVILISATION.

CHRISTIAN civilisation and the Christian God strongly resemble each other. Much talked of, but never seen; neither have existence outside of the Christian imagination.

That many nominally Christian countries have attained a high degree of civilisation is certainly true. Where this is the case their Christianity has been largely diluted with Freethought, and the leaders in the upward march have either discarded it entirely or received it in its most diluted form. A dose of it in its full strength paralyses the intellect and renders man incapable of progress. Nations, really Christian, are always low down in the scale. Such advancement as they have made they have been compelled to fight for step by step against the opposing power of a Church. Where Christianity has acquired control of a people previously civilised, their civilisation has been slain.

To Egypt once flocked the best of earth's inhabitants, in pursuit of learning and of wisdom. In her schools philosophers were instructed, who carried to their own lands the instruction they had received. Her scientists traced the course of the planets when other races regarded the stars as tiny lamps suspended from the sky. Her architects erected gigantic structures, which to-day astonish the beholder. There was civilisation along the shores of the Nile centuries before the alleged birth of Jesus. But Christianity came, blighting the land with its infectious threat, cursing the people with its bitter, cruel dogmas, until some, in their wild fanaticism, fled to the deserts, living and dying with no companions but ferocious beasts; and others remained among men, but, neglecting all human interests, striving to win a heaven hereafter instead of making a heaven here, they sank lower and lower, from generation to generation. Between the cross and the crescent a civilisation more perfect, in some respects, than any we have in our time, and older by thousands of years than this earth, according to Bible chronology, was strangled to death, and its very memory sought to be obliterated from the historic page.

Greece saw the highest intellectual development to which humanity has yet attained. Long before the Christian era she was the home of poetry, of science, of art, of the purest virtues, and of the noblest deeds. But Greece became corrupt and weakened. In her decadence she bowed her neck to the cross. If we ask for her civilisation to-day, we must seek it among lazy beggars or ignorant fishermen, as they mumble their prayers while waiting for the finny tribe to enter the dragging net.

Rome, pagan Rome, once mistress of the world, once civiliser of savage hordes, whose rule was a blessing to the races subdued by her victorious arms—where is the power of her glorious institutions? Where is the light of her mighty mind? Fled when papal Rome usurped her authority and established a rule which proved a curse. But now the descendants of her stern old citizens are rising again. The enlightened among them refuse to submit longer to the yoke of the priesthood. Strong Roman hands are pulling down the crucifix. In the place of Jesus and of Peter they are honoring the nobler names of real saviors and of real men—of Giordano Bruno, and of Guiseppe Garibaldi.

Point to a spot where Christianity lives and reigns, where it has active power over the minds and regulates the action of a people, and you mark where the face of humanity is turned backward. It is false to say that the Church of Rome alone is guilty. The guilt of all the Churches is a question only of degree to be measured by the extent of their power. The poorest little Protestant sect is as persecuting as that great Church where its authority is as unquestioned. The meanest Bible thumper is as great a tyrant over the few he can enslave as the Pope is over the many. Anathema or social ostracism, the stake or the trade boycott, the rack and the wheel, or the tongue of envenomed slander, it matters not which. The sentence is the same in spirit, whether it is pronounced by a son of Dominic in a tribunal of the Inquisition, or by some Reverend Stiggins at a pious tea. It is always that human thought must be chained, that human progress must cease. The only difference is that between the big dog who can tear his victim's throat, and the little cur who can but snarl and snap at his heels.

Italy, Spain, Ireland, are at the feet of the Roman Church. The civilisations once theirs exist no longer. Russia is enslaved by the Greek Church, and her condition is one of semi-barbarism. Liberty is unknown to her people, and he who dares but to blame her may end his days amid Siberian snows, or perish on the scaffold. England and Scotland are but emerging from periods of subjection to their respective forms of Protestant belief. As they rise up and grow, as they develop their natural powers, they cast away the shackles placed upon them by ecclesiastical authority. In our own land we have had Christianity retarding our civilisation. We have had Blue laws. We have them yet, and even some Christians, still living at the close of this nineteenth century, who endeavor from time to time to procure their enforcement. Miserable traitors to the freedom of man, who would impose upon us all the observances of their religion, with or without our consent. These are not the people to whom we owe our railroads, our telegraphs, and the many conveniences that make life easy. They are not the people who have discovered the laws of health and the means of benefitting the masses. The world's benefactors have almost, to a man and woman, been free from theological creeds and practices. They have labored to make heaven on earth. The heaven of the Christians would be altogether too poor and mean a recompense for their grand good works.

All nations who have once started in the path of progress have continued to advance so long as their freedom to do so has been unrestrained. The people who govern themselves improve; those governed by others deteriorate. If the ruling power be of the clerical class, the populace are abject slaves, physically and mentally. Christianity and civilisation cannot unite. They are essentially antagonistic. Civilisation is the state of humanity developed and developing. Christianity would prohibit the development of the human race, that it might not outgrow its resemblance to the image of its early barbarism, the Christian God.

E. J. BOWTELL.

—*Boston Investigator.*

* *Vide* "*Lost and Hostile Gospels*," pp. 62, 63.

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A FORBIDDEN PLAY.

HAUPTMANN'S Socialistic drama, *Die Weber*, has been banished from the stage in Germany on the pretext that it undermines (!?) the moral status of the country. In this remarkable play the sufferings of the poor weavers are graphically described, and the machinations of the scoundrels who live by the exploitation of all who labor are exposed with great fidelity. All is drawn from life, even the shooting of the weavers by those licensed assassins, the soldiers.

When only a boy, I remember receiving a poem in MS. from a friend of Heinrich Heine, which was circulated privately in Germany, and caused the most poignant grief to all who read it. It was to have appeared in the *Romancero*, but the German censor ordered it to be suppressed more than forty years ago. This poem is, I assert, the keynote to Hauptmann's play, *Die Weber*. The author is Heinrich Heine. Translation :—

"THE SILESIAN WEAVERS.

"No tears in their dimmed eyes; they are seated at the loom, and grind their teeth: Germany, we weave thy shroud, we weave into it the threefold curse ;—we weave.

"A curse upon God to whom we have prayed in winter's bitter cold and starvation; in vain we longed and hoped; *He* has mocked, derided, and fooled us ;—we weave.

"A curse upon the king, the king of the rich, whose heart our misery could not soften; who squeezed the last coppers from us, and orders us to be shot like dogs ;—we weave.

"A curse upon the false fatherland where naught but shame and degradation thrive; where the sweet flower is quickly nipped, where foulness and rot quicken the worm ;—we weave.

"The shuttle flies, the loom rattles; we weave diligently day and night. O, Germany, we weave thy shroud; we weave into it the threefold curse ;—we weave."

"The threefold curse" is an allusion to the national colors—black, red, and gold.* The poet Freiligrath sang during the revolution of 1848: "Powder is black, blood is red, golden flashes the flame;" for which he was banished as inciting the people to revolt.

A day of reckoning will come. Those who toil hardest must not always be the slaves of a hardened and cruel plutocracy. Man alone will avenge the wrongs of mankind, and Job's prayer will be heard: "I know that my avenger liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (xix. 25). *Then* the gods will be dead—one and all.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

RELIGION IN JAPAN.

BUDDHISM in Japan is too firmly implanted amongst the vast mass of forty odd millions of people to be lightly brushed away. With experience of official responsibility and the cares of government under the new transient conditions, wiser counsels prevailed; many of the best men of the old *régime* came into office, and a superior class of clansmen appeared in the van of the restoration, desiring progress and the betterment of their country. The power of the priesthood was felt and recognised, and whilst in politics their interference was very properly prohibited, the value of their goodwill was felt. Mischievous meddling ceased, and the people were left to follow their own inclinations, home or foreign, Shinto or Christian, Buddhist or what not.

Whilst individual foreign missionaries have made friends and gained some influence, yet as a body they are not held in high esteem. Their relations with the foreign colonies at the treaty ports, which consist of persons of many nations and various degrees of education, are not so cordial as to lead the natives to suppose that the class from which missionaries are recruited are held in high respect in their own lands.

At the same time, the natives that visit the missionaries see something of foreign domestic life. The tone of the homes, the comfortable houses, the family relations of the Protestant missionaries—all contrast with the comparative wretchedness of the native home life (of the lower classes), and excites the envy of those who cannot imitate it. The missionaries' wives and their female domestics work in the girls' schools, gain some influence, and do some good in teaching the future wives and mothers, and in busying themselves with match-making between the young people supposed to be favorably inclined towards Christianity.

With the aid of schools, medical mission work, and other institutions, numbers of foreign missionaries, representing many different sects of Christianity from various parts of Europe and America, still reside, on sufferance, throughout the islands.

"The bread cast upon the waters" does not always return; the seed spread broadcast does not give the harvest desired, more often bearing fruit other than that intended, for the native students have their own ideas and ways of applying what is presented to them.

One result is a reaction and consequent activity among the Buddhists, and a growing desire not to be left behind in the competition.

Out of the chaos of indigenous and foreign religious and philosophical literature perused, new ideas arise. No foreigner can foresee the end, and no two Japanese agree as to the ultimate outcome of it all. The "smart" writer or lecturer of the day is followed by another, who, in his turn, gains transient notoriety.

The indigenous cults, Shintoism and Buddhism, as modified by the Japanese during the dozen or more centuries of its existence in the country, are still closely allied, and together form a very solid foundation for any superstructure of the future. Buddhism, in its entirety as a system, lends itself readily to the course of events from age to age, so that in the future there is no doubt of its adaptation to the needs, aspirations, and sentiments of the people.

With the proper education of carefully-selected aspirants for sacerdotal office, a generation or so would produce great advances in liberality, and would relegate objectionable features to the limbo of oblivion.

There is a special feature of Japanese Buddhism that is unique and of sufficient importance to warrant notice, the more so as it probably forms an important factor of the future.

The Jodo Shin Shiu sect, the new Jodo, now called Shīn, or true, sect, consisting of several branches, the East and West, the Butzukoji, Takada, and Koshoji, with several other smaller sects, include a large percentage of the temples and followers of Buddhism in Japan. Office is practically hereditary; failing male issue, a husband is adopted for the daughter, being almost invariably selected from the same order, to fill vacancies. As numerous progeny is common, many lay families, well-to-do farmers and traders, by intermarriage become closely related, and the position of incumbents in the temples of the sect occupy a somewhat parallel social position to the Church of England parson in aristocratic old England, where "blood is thicker than water," and family ties mean "taking care of Dowb."

Whatever objections there may exist to a hereditary sacerdotal class, whether from the Asiatic, foreign, Christian, or Buddhist standpoint, the fact still remains, that the greater respectability of the Shin-shiu incumbents, their social position, family ties, and consequent greater influence, are important points not to be lost sight of.

In other sects, scions of noble lineage are "settled," and too numerous offspring of those by birth "near the throne" are got rid of, and future legitimate offspring checked, by placing these, male and female, in the monasteries of one or other of the celibate sects—a policy that also binds the priesthood of these sects to the reigning dynasty.

In the Shin-shiu the noble offspring of both sexes are adopted into or married to the heads of the sect or sub-sect, thus adding to the prestige thereof; and the children, when numerous, are "settled out" in the principal monasteries, the incumbents thus being linked by family ties.

The personal interest in the temple, the congregation, and the neighborhood is thus very strong, and continuous from parent to child; practical freedom from anxiety as to old age is removed, and entire devotion to the sect secured.

The very best results may be hoped in the future from the young men of this sect, notwithstanding its sectarian narrowness and limitations of creed; the very simplicity of which makes it acceptable to the illiterate class of toilers—the laborer, agriculturist, etc.—and popular.

The best and truest friends of Buddhism in general, and of this sect in particular, will do well to get a good knowledge of all the objections that may be advanced against the hereditary system, and to spread it as widely as possible amongst the future incumbents of office, so that one and all may carefully avoid those characteristics that arouse hostile feeling and give ground for antagonistic criticism, all of which readers of the *Open Court* are familiar with. Because a youth is sure to succeed his father upon death or retirement in old age, that is no reason he should be dilatory in his studies; or that he should "give himself airs" as a "person of superior birth," or look upon his position as a sinecure to which it has been his good fortune to be born, and therefore "take things easy" and go through his duties and the routine services in a half-hearted perfunctory spirit.

The sect has established schools, and sent some of its people abroad to study at a very considerable cost. These number among them such well-known and scholarly names as B. Nanjio, M.A., Oxon, R. Akamatzu, and many others, through

* Schwarz-roth-gold.

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whose efforts the study of Sanskrit is, after many centuries, again being taken up in Japan.

Japan is, undoubtedly, at present, the most important Buddhist centre, and in the future may become to Buddhism what Rome was to Christianity. As Japan has not suffered by foreign conquest as other lands have—Ceylon, etc., for instance—the Buddhism received from the mainland still remains intact; the oldest temples still exist; and the teaching is yet unchanged and unalloyed. And as the bonzes are intellectually the superiors of those in other countries, and far better taught, we may look upon the future as hopeful if proper attention be given to the education of the youths destined to become the officiating clergy in the temples and homes of the people.

In Japan may be seen "the meeting of the waters" from the east and from the west—the old and the new. Asiatic, Aryan, and Turanian, the European, and later the American; education, science, philosophy, and religion.

America, too, has become the common meeting-ground for all the aspirations and ideals of the old civilisation and the progressive, practical ideas of the new, as shown in its liberalism in religion and in its recent congresses. The general feeling is, to glean from all, to gather from all sources. The echo, and the counter echoes, east to west, and west to east, resound about the globe. And who shall gainsay the truth that we can teach and learn, and impart fresh energy to the old that reciprocates by giving us the old-time wisdom; like ballast for the clipper, so that more canvas may be spread and more rapid progress attained? The platform has been made free to the Asiatic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Mohammedan alike; the pulpit is open to all, and every one who has a message to deliver, and is competent to set it forth, may do so. And nevermore can platform or pulpit be closed. Hereafter it will be the narrow sectarian, the little-minded bigot, the pitiable fanatic alone who shall refuse the open hand of fellowship to all alike. And, in the near future, the true, liberal Buddhist, when weighed in the balance, will not be found wanting.

—*Open Court.* C. Pfoundes.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE FREEDOM OF THE DRAMA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—It is necessary, now that the office of the Censorship of Plays is vacant through the death of Mr. Piggott, the late Censor, that a strong effort should be made to have this relic of mediævalism abolished. It is amazing that the English people should submit to a tyranny and an insult such as is implied in the maintaining of the office, the more especially as we turn up our eyes in horror at anything in the shape of interference with liberty of speech in other countries. Yet it is difficult to see a tittle of difference between our Dramatic Censorship and the Press Censorship of the Czar.

For the moment it is not necessary to dwell on the demerits of the late Censor—unless, indeed, the upholders of the office force its opponents to do so. But the fact that Mr. Piggott refused to license such a play as Shelley's *Cenci*, and only allowed Ibsen's plays to be performed because he considered them beneath contempt, while at the same time never apparently withholding his sanction to the most suggestive and smutty of burlesques—the one essential of such performances being, seemingly, that the indecency should be sufficiently obvious—all this presents a complete case against keeping such an anomaly.

The insult, too, offered to the play-going public by the implication that, without such a check, it would plunge headlong into obscenity and disorder, is monstrous. It is put better than I have seen it put, by Mr. Bernard Shaw in a vigorous article, entitled "Down with the Censorship," in the current *Saturday Review*. He writes: "The justification of the Censorship is to be found in the assumption repeatedly and explicitly advanced by the late holder of the office that, if the stage were freed, managers would immediately produce licentious plays, actresses would leave off clothing themselves decently, and the public would sit nightly wallowing in the obscenity which the Censor now sternly withholds from them. This assumption evidently involves the further one that the Examiner of Plays is so much better than his neighbors as to be untainted by their assumed love of filth. This is where the theory of the Censorship breaks down in practice. The Lord Chamberlain's reader is not selected by examination either in literature or morals. His emoluments, estimated at about £800 a year, will fetch nothing more in the market than well-connected mediocrity."

This puts the matter in a nutshell. But as Freethinkers we are especially concerned with all that threatens freedom in any direction. And it is a scandal that the dramatist is under a restraint and an injustice from which the journalist or the painter or the composer is free. It is probably a relic of the time when the stage was under a social ban, and acting and play-wrighting looked on as the pursuit of the vulgar and the immoral. Even amongst the rigid Puritans there is still the idea that actors are terrible fellows, actresses abandoned women, and the theatre the gate of the "broad-way." Still, however, the voice of all self-respecting men and women must be raised in protest against the continuance of an office which insults their taste by presuming that they are unable to choose for themselves what plays they shall see, and that, if left to themselves, they would sanction degraded or vicious performances.

While, therefore, the office of Examiner of Plays is vacant, and before (as has been said) a new vested interest is created, it is necessary that the cry should go forth, loud and strong, "Down with the Censorship."

I would, therefore, advise Freethinkers who are interested in the matter to write to their M.P.'s to initiate a discussion of the matter in the public journals, to write to the Prime Minister, and, in short, make it known that there is a resolute body of opinion in the country opposed to the continuance of the tyrannical office.

Frederick Ryan.

The Prayer-Test.

Professor Tyndall was one of the three or four men who have made English science in the nineteenth century famous for its union of German thoroughness of research with French lucidity of exposition. A great part of the influence of his writings, as of those of Huxley and Professor Foster, and, in a less degree, Darwin, has been due to the wonderful clearness and charm of their style. Clear thinking was, no doubt, responsible for a good share of the clear writing; but, over and above this, he must have had a special gift for popular presentation of scientific results. It is doubtless true that the world must assign the supremacy to the ponderous scientific learning of the Germans; but we may yet hope that the typical scientist of the future may be nearer like those Englishmen we have mentioned, who smelted their ore instead of flinging it out in amorphous masses. Tyndall came into great disrepute with the religious world in 1872 by his bold suggestion that the efficacy of prayer be made a subject of scientific experiment. In this he was substantially anticipated in Hawaii, where the natives, years before, had challenged the missionaries to a competitive test of the value of prayer and of heathen sacrifices as a means of stopping the dangerous flow of lava from Mauna Loa.—"*The Nation*," *New York*.

Are the Devils Damned Already?

The common opinion among theologians is that wherever they go the demons are tortured by the fires of hell, though they are by no means agreed as to the way in which the fires of hell exercise this strange power over them. On the other hand, it was commonly held by ancient writers that the demons will not be tortured by the fire of hell until the day of judgment, and Petavius says one who maintains "that the Devil and his angels are not yet tortured by that extreme and utmost torture, that they do not yet feel the efficacy of that fire in which the chief part of their damnation, so far as feeling and suffering go, consists, is not to be accused of error, much less of heresy." On this theory the rebel angels will begin to experience the eternal torments of hell-fire at the day of judgment.—"*A Catholic Dictionary*," *by W. G. Addis and T. Arnold; article*, "*Devil*."

PROFANE JOKES.

Evangelist—"Young man, do you want to go to hell?" Hardened Sinner—"When do you start?"

Nellie—"I wonder why they have big eagles in the church?" Freddy—"'Cause they're *birds of prey*, of course; ain't it, ma?"

Jasper—"The Rev. Simon Mangus is always up to date." Jumpuppe—"What is his latest freak?" Jasper—"He has an attendant to turn on a limelight while he is pronouncing the benediction."

Editor in Chief—"Where did you put that parrot of mine?" Office Boy—"I hung him in the religious editor's office, sir." Editor in Chief—"Didn't I tell you I didn't want that bird to learn how to swear?"

Pastor—"It is instructive to note what a flood of light one passage of scripture throws upon another." Ewe Lamb—"Yes; I couldn't understand about there being no marrying or giving in marriage above until I read how hard it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, a lecture. (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, W. Heaford, "Religion and Insanity." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote will lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, John P. Coppock, F.C.S., "The Life and Work of a Plant." (Free.) Monday, at 8, Marlowe Dramatic Company. (Tickets 3d. and 6d.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing. Thursday, at 8, committee.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30 a lecture.

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road, E.): 8, J. F. Haines, "Anti-Toxin a Disease."

ISLINGTON (Liberal and Radical Association Committee Rooms, Upper-street, near the Vestry Hall): Thursday, at 8.30, J. Rowney, "Secularism v. Christianity." (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Revival of the Roman Church after the Reformation."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, Notting-hill-gate): Monday, at 8.30, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Thank the Lord."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are they True?" 3, "Mohammed and his Bible."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Smith, "Insect Life." Wednesday, at 7, entertainment and dance. (Free.)

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road): 7, James Hooper, "Our Aristocracy: their Origin and Deeds." (Free.)

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, dramatic entertainment.

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Sketchley, "Rome and the Revolution."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, J. M. Robertson, "The Last Shifts of Religion"; 3, "The Wealth of Nations—A Reply to Mr. Mallock"; 7, "The Failure of Christianity."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, H. Smith, "The Limits of Individual Liberty." (Free.)

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, a reading from "Nunquam's" *Merrie England*.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, Sam Standring, "Voltaire"; 8, singing practice.

RYHOPE (Miners' Hall): 10.30, G. W. Foote, "Will Christ Save Us?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, Stanley Jones, "The Problem of Unsectarian Moral Teaching"; 3, "The Origin of the Bible"; 7, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Confucius and Confucianism"; 7, "Christianity and Slavery."

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From the "Bradford Weekly Telegraph," Saturday, February 16, 1895.

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Early on Saturday a big fire took place in the warehouse, No. 2 Union-street, Bradford, occupied by Mr. R. Higgins, who occupies a large part of the ground floor, and numbers the following tenants occupying the other offices and rooms: Mr. Ernest Hahnel, Messrs. Schmidt & Co., Mr. J. W. Gott, Messrs. G. D. Wright & Co., and Mr. J. Pepper. The damage done is very extensive, and is roughly estimated at a figure between £8,000 to £10,000. It certainly cannot be less than £8,000, as many of the firms occupying the building had large and valuable stocks stored in the various rooms. Mr. R. Higgins had a big stock of woollens, stuffs and yarns, and estimates his loss at over £4,000. He is insured up to £4,000. Messrs. Wright & Co., stuff merchants, have had fully £1,000 damage done to their stock and premises, but it is completely covered by insurance. Mr. J. W. Gott, cloth and stuff merchant, had a stock valued at £1,500, and it is partially destroyed, chiefly by water. The other firms, with the exception of Mr. J. Pepper, have suffered in like manner, a lot of stock being destroyed by water. The cause of the fire is unknown, but, judging by appearances, it broke out in the packing-room of Mr. R. Higgins.

To the Readers of "The Freethinker."

We had just got the New Spring Goods ready for Sale when this unfortunate fire took place, and, although we have sustained no damage by the fire itself, most of our goods have been soaked in water. We have taken immediate steps to have all the goods dried, and for all practical purposes they are not worth one penny less than before the fire took place. The finish which is put upon new goods has, of course, been disturbed, but that always takes place in making garments up. So that if you get a length of this cloth, or stuff, and have it made up, there is not the slightest difference between that and any other new goods you might buy, when made into garments.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—NO. 11. SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 1895 PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. BALFOUR'S "FOUNDATIONS."

The Foundations of Belief. Being Notes Introductory to the Study of Theology. By the Right Hon. Arthur James Balfour. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co.)

SOME years ago the finest sport in England was baiting Bradlaugh. Country gentlemen found it better than fox-hunting. There was more cruelty in it, and it gratified a keener malignity. The young bloods of the Tory party found it particularly agreeable. It gave them zest without danger, and excitement without the trouble of thinking. Above all, it gave what was called "the fourth party" a great opportunity. The leader of that party, Lord Randolph Churchill, afterwards gained a big reputation on the strength of a very slender performance. We never could perceive that he possessed any special ability; his mind seemed to us of a commonplace order. But he had a certain debating-society power of speech, and a boundless supply of that quality which, according to circumstances, is variously known as courage, tenacity, or cheek. He had ability enough, however, to see that capital could be made out of the vulgar bigotry against Bradlaugh, and he played the game for all it was worth. He was not sincere, and he had no real animosity against Bradlaugh. It was a mere matter of business with him. He wanted a platform, and Bradlaugh's broad back just suited his necessity. Or shall we say that he hopped upon Bradlaugh's shoulders like a monkey, and jabbered and gesticulated to the mob from that convenient eminence? Anyhow, the one achievement of Churchill's life was his successful appeal to the religious fanaticism of Englishmen. It was an ignoble policy, and its success could only be temporary. The time came, as it was bound to come, when the nation, once more in its sober senses, grew ashamed of its injustice. And when that time did come, it is noteworthy that Lord Randolph Churchill was already a spent force in English politics.

Lord Randolph Churchill's chief colleague, in the old days of the Fourth Party, was Mr. A. J. Balfour. Between these two young men there was a great contrast. Churchill was boisterous, Balfour was languid, and almost lackadaisical. Churchill cultivated a "gallery" style, Balfour was always academic. Appearances, however, are proverbially apt to be deceitful. It was Balfour, after all, who had the real ability and staying power. His *dolce far niente* air was an artificial cultivation. Behind the scenes he must have been a fairly hard-worker; at any rate, his knowledge, if not as exact as it is various, would have broken the intellectual backs of a dozen Churchills.

Mr. Balfour holds the undisputed leadership of the Tory party in the House of Commons, and the duties of his position cannot be very easy. Nevertheless he finds time, as Mr. Gladstone used to, for the study of religious and philosophical questions; or rather, perhaps, of philosophical questions as they affect religion. He has written essays upon other topics, but this is the subject-matter of his two books; the first, on *Philosophic Doubt*, published some years ago, and the second, now fresh from the press, on *The Foundations of Belief*.

Before dealing with the matter of this volume, we have a word to say on its manner. Professor Huxley has praised Mr. Balfour's style. It is indeed a good style in its way. There is no slovenliness about it; everything is precise and well-bred, not without a certain distinction. Mr. Balfour is incapable of the tumid and bombastic phraseology in which Lord Randolph Churchill delighted. The vice of his style is negative; that is, it is not really a vice, but a defect. He seldom sinks, but he seldom mounts. His level is maintained with remarkable regularity. He warms occasionally, but he never glows. We feel the lack of emotion. We do not assert, however, that Mr. Balfour is actually deficient in this quality. It may be that he elects to play the aristocrat even in philosophical and religious discussions; and that, in his efforts to keep himself always unruffled, he conveys a mistaken impression that he is never really in earnest.

Mr. Balfour's new book has been lauded with the utmost extravagance; chiefly, of course, by the religious journals. It was natural that the *Times* should regard Mr. Balfour's "Notes" as a remarkably important contribution to British philosophy—which of course it is not, and does not pretend to be. It was also natural that the *Methodist Times* should weep with delight over this book, and couple its author with the famous Bishop Butler. That journal is always in raptures, and always speaking in hyperboles. It found an epoch-making book in Mr. Kidd's *Social Evolution*, and soon afterwards it found another in Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*. Every defender of religion, outside the ruck of its paid advocates, is sure to meet with a gratifying reception. Theology is in such dire straits that it is thankful for the smallest mercies.

Dismissing the eulogy of flatterers and dependents, let us see what the book actually contains. Two-thirds of it is a criticism of *unbelief*; the other third does deal with *belief*, but only in the way of suggestion. The *foundation* for the great superstructure of theology does not make its appearance; unless a foundation can be found in hints, surmises, and possibilities. Part I. deals with "Some Consequences of Belief;" Part II., with "Some Reasons for Belief;" Part III., with "Some Causes of Belief;" Part IV., with "Suggestions Towards a Provisional Philosophy." The first two parts are wrongly named. They are really one essay, and should have been called "The Irrationality and Immorality of Unbelief."

Mr. Balfour rightly says that he has not written a volume of Apologetics. He has not taken up theological doctrines and defended them from current objections. He endeavors to recommend "a certain attitude of mind"—"a particular way of looking at the World-problems which, whether we like it or not, we are compelled to face." Surely this is an easy task, especially when most of your readers are already prejudiced in favor of the attitude you are recommending. Selecting it, however, may not be a sign of cowardice. It is a foolish courage which faces an impossible enterprise. Mr. Balfour is not a madman, and therefore he will not defend theology directly. He will not take its doctrines and justify them at the bar of reason. Being a man of discretion, he prefers to "recommend" them; well knowing that thoughtful "believers" do not require fresh demonstrations, which may only intensify their doubts, but a plausible justification for still professing what they half disbelieve.

What is really Mr. Balfour's object? It is this. He sees that Freethought, if successful, will swamp a great many things in which he is interested, in common with most purchasers of twelve-shilling books. He knows that the old Theology is the basis of the old Sociology. This is the secret of all his "recommendations." And this is the explanation of the following passage:—

> "Though I have devoted a chapter to the consideration of Transcendental Idealism as represented in some

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recent English writings, it is not with overt or tacit reference to that system that I have arranged the material of the following Essay. I have, on the contrary, selected a system with which I am in much less sympathy, but which under many names numbers a formidable following, and is in reality the only system which ultimately profits by any defeats which Theology may sustain, or which may be counted on to flood the spaces from which the tide of Religion has receded. Agnosticism, Positivism, Empiricism, have all been used more or less correctly to describe this scheme of thought; though in the following pages, for reasons with which it is not necessary to trouble the reader, the term which I shall commonly employ is Naturalism. But whatever the name selected, the thing itself is sufficiently easy to describe. For its leading doctrines are that we may know 'phenomena' and the laws by which they are connected, but nothing more. 'More' there may or may not be; but if it exists we can never apprehend it: and whatever the world may be 'in its reality' (supposing such an expression to be otherwise than meaningless), the World for us, the World with which alone we are concerned, or of which alone we can have any cognisance, is that World which is revealed to us through perception, and which is the subject-matter of the Natural Sciences. Here, and here only, are we on firm ground. Here, and here only, can we discover anything which deserves to be described as Knowledge. Here, and here only, may we profitably exercise our reason or gather the fruits of Wisdom."

We have ourselves defined Secularism as "Naturalism in morals, as distinguished from Supernaturalism." It is the ethical significance of the term which is practically all-important. Mr. Balfour sees this clearly enough, for his first chapter is on "Naturalism and Ethics."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued).

WHO ARE CHRISTIANS?

A general word like Christianity becomes, by much using, like a box with a false bottom, into which you can put as much or as little as you please.—*T. W. Higginson.*

To be a Christian, the modern thinker must be dull or dishonest; he must palter with his own convictions or with the world.—*Leslie Stephen.*

THE question, "What is Christianity?" is not one which becomes clearer by age. There were from the first disputes among Christians as to who were genuine believers. Paul taught a different doctrine from Peter, and James a different one from Paul. With the multiplication of sects the question only becomes more complicated, and now-a-days the influence of Rationalism has so penetrated the Churches that those call themselves "Christians" who a century ago would have been scouted as "infidels." It is not that the one divinely-revealed religion has changed, but that men have changed, and they now accommodate the old faith to their new ideas and convictions.

Those who wish to have definite ideas attached to the words they use will not allow the term "Christianity" to be applied to vague generalities. A Christian is a person with a definite faith. We should take, for instance, the Apostles' Creed, the creed into which all members of the Christian Church are baptised, as an irreducible minimum. Those who do not believe in the virgin birth, the descent of Jesus into hell, and his ascension into heaven, where he sits on the right hand of an infinite being, may call themselves what they please, but they have departed from the historic faith of Christianity. They are no longer Christians in any proper signification of the term. The term "Christian," moreover, implies at the outset a belief that the Christ has come, that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews. Those who think that the Jews ought to understand their own prophecies best can hardly be Christians, in the natural and evident sense of the word. For my part, when I discovered that the Messiah spoken of in the Old Testament was a conqueror, ruler, and judge, doing at his first coming all those things which Christians, in order to have these prophecies fulfilled, say that Christ will do at his second coming, and when I saw that this alleged second coming was prophesied as to take place in the lifetime of the generation of Jesus, and that the early Christians believed he would reappear shortly, I felt that I had ceased to be a Christian.

Christianity is a term which cannot possibly be accepted by any Jew. Nor can it be accepted by any Confucian, Buddhist, Hindu, or Mohammedan. Its claims are exclusive. It pretends to be the one only divine revelation. There is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved, said the apostle Peter; and Jesus himself is said to have affirmed that no man could come to the Father except through him. To him, also, is ascribed the saying: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." This implies that all the heathen and all unbelieving infants, and heretics, however honest, shall be damned. Those who do not accept this view, which is endorsed by the thirteenth and eighteenth Articles of the Church of England, have ceased to be Christians in the old sense. The passage last cited goes on to notify the signs whereby we may know true believers: "In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." If thaumaturgists of this description are the only true believers, they must be scarce indeed.

To-day genuine believers are almost extinct, and Christianity as a system is dying a lingering death. We hear much, from those whose wishes are father to their thoughts, of the decay of Secularism. The fact is, Secularism is penetrating and modifying every item of the old doctrines of Christianity. The pious themselves lament it. People are more and more governed, not by the supposed requirements of God, but by the ascertained needs of society. They more and more set their affections, not on things above, but on things of this world. Churches, chapels, and the religious press are becoming more secular in tone, and it is now common to hear Christ, who said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" extolled as a true Secularist. All his distinctive doctrines are abandoned, and we are offered, as real Christianity, a nebulous compound that can hardly be distinguished from old Deism. Christianity, as it appears in the New Testament, has nothing but condemnation for the things of this world. It inculcates, not work and self-reliance, but prayer and fasting as a means of combatting its evils. Its theory of life, with its reliance on the supernatural and its hope of reward for loss here in gain hereafter, is in practice scouted by its professed followers.

Its legends are discredited. Who now really believes that the creator of the universe came down to earth and was born in an obscure corner of the earth of a mortal woman, who remained a virgin, although she had a family of at least six boys and girls, and that dreams and the visits of angels were employed to induce a carpenter to father God's Son, who is as old as his father? Its miracles are absurd and paltry, compared with the triumphs of science. Christianity has a lip profession, but whoever goes in search of a Christian will have a harder task than ever had Diogenes.

J. M. WHEELER.

Pagan and Christian Morality.

The *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago, prints the following: "The newly-published official reports of the material and moral condition of natives in India give a very interesting contribution to the now discussed mission question. It appears from the figures that not alone do we, by converting the natives to our belief, decidedly lower their moral status, but the standpoint of their natural morality is so high that, although they become Christians, we cannot make them so immoral as we ourselves are. The figures which show the comparative moral status among the different classes are as follows: European, one out of 274; native Christian, one out of 709; Hindoos, one out of 1,361; Eurasian, one out of 509; Mohammedans, one out of 856; Buddhists, one out of 3,787. The last figure is a tribute to the noble purity of Buddhism; but the statistics impart to us here at home another teaching, that as regards our social life we would do better if we, for a generation or two, contributed our superfluous pennies and our energies to the moral improvement of our own countrymen, in place of trying to destroy the morality and religion of other people, people who in truth could send us their missionaries to convert us."

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THE PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

(Continued from page 148.)

THE world is constantly being startled by the sad and heartrending accounts of explosions in mines and on land, of appalling railway accidents, and is horrified to hear of the extensive sacrifice of human life by the storms and tempests of the ocean. How is it possible to reasonably reconcile such terrible incidents as these, followed by woe and desolation, with the belief in the "Divine government" of the world? Let us put this matter to a logical test. All calamities and loss of life, as indicated above, take place either according to God's will, or in spite of his will. If they take place according to his will, he is not all-good, and if they occur in spite of his will, he is not all-powerful. In either case, one of his alleged attributes is destroyed, and the theological idea of "Providential government" is thereby impaired.

It is said by theological exponents that events take place the issues of which are hidden from us, and that, if we knew more of the "Divine plan," we should be enabled to understand its purpose and to recognise its justice. But we do understand, and that too well, the nature of the acts which rob the wife of her husband, the children of their parents, and the mother of her son, upon whom, perhaps, she has to depend for her means of living. We know that such events produce untold misery, pain, and desolation upon thousands of heartbroken wives and mothers, who are left with helpless children to depend upon charity. Besides, under the rule of this "Providence," the loving, affectionate, and virtuous are often cut off from life in the flower of their youth, while the brutish and vicious are allowed to live and flourish in all their depravity. Moreover, it is an insult to tell us, in the present wretched and unfair condition of society, that there is an omnipotent being above doing his best for those below. Take the injustice and lack of fatherly care that are seen in connection with the children of the lower classes. Those who know what the tuition of the ordinary street arab has been under the theological Providential scheme; those who have compared the gutter-child, with his fluttering rags, his unkempt hair, dirty face, obscene and ribald language, habits of theft, lying, etc., with the well-clad, neat, dainty, and "respectable" scion of the aristocrat or plutocrat can well see the necessity for a higher and truer Providence than the one that theologians have hitherto endeavored to delude us with. In the image of God, says the theologian, are we all made; but shame to the hypocrisy which, Pharisee-like, suffers this neglected gutter-urchin to give the lie direct to its own loud professions of God's love and care for his children. To-day, under the shadow of our proud cathedrals and lofty domes, under which incense burns, and gaudily-vested priests and choristers chant praises to God for having done all things well; to-day, be it remembered, beneath the shadows of the towers and pinnacles of the many churches and chapels, staring with gaunt countenance, hollow cheek, and hungry eye, dying ever and anon on doorsteps, and being carted away enclosed in a parish coffin, are thousands of those "images" for whom, apparently, God has done nothing.

There is no doubt that this delusion of "Divine Providence" is directly sanctioned by the Bible. Throughout the history of the Jews the elements and human life were made frequent subjects of Providential interference. For instance, the march of the Israelites through the Wilderness and across the Red Sea, the pillar of fire, the manna from heaven, the water from the rock, the feeding by ravens of a man who was afterwards carried up to heaven alive, the sun and moon standing still, the fall of the walls of Jericho at the sound of trumpets, and the exploits of Samson are specimens of the doubtful character of the supposed interference of the theological Providence. In the Psalms we read: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (xxxvii.). "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (lv.). These are a few of the many incidents given in the Old Testament which show that the belief in "Providential government of the world" is in accordance with the teachings of the Bible. If we are to regard these Scriptural references as referring to facts, then the lessons of science as to fixed laws, the invariable order of nature, and the laws of cause and effect are all a mistake. As to the rhapsodical ravings of the Psalmist, general experience contradicts his conclusion. The believer has no more advantage from "Divine Providence" than has the unbeliever. The lightning strikes the church as readily as it does a Freethought hall; the cold hand of death grasps the Christian preacher as firmly as it does the Secular lecturer; and the pious and profane alike meet a watery grave when a ship is wrecked at sea. Whatever the writer of the psalms might not have seen, we have seen that those who are termed "righteous" have been "forsaken," and their "seed begging bread." Reliance upon a heavenly Providence is like resting upon a broken reed; it affords no solid support in the hour of need.

The doctrine of "Special Providence" in heaven is also clearly taught in the New Testament. Absolute trust in God and neglect of human effort are enjoined in the Gospel ascribed to St. Matthew (see chap. vi. 25–30; vii. 11). Such teaching has proved a dire misfortune to the world, and has been one of the greatest delusions that has ever cursed the human race. Men rely upon their heavenly Father, and, to show his "tender mercies" and loving care, he (if the "Divine government" of the world be true) sends floods, frosts, blights, and numerous insects that kill the seed and destroy the crops. George Combe pertinently asked: "Are the fertility of the soil, the health of the body, the prosperity of individuals and of nations, now governed by supernatural power?" Science and general experience answer: "They are not." We look in vain for practical blessings to flow from "on high." Remembering the havoc, ruin, and sacrifice of human life that ever and anon are being forced upon our attention in "God's handiwork," may we not exclaim?—

> Praise God from whom all cyclones blow!
> Praise him when rivers overflow;
> Praise him who whirls the churches down,
> And sinks the boats their crews to drown.

Rejecting, then, the theory that there is a heavenly Providence watching over us, ever ready to afford help in the hour of need, have we any Providence to rely upon? Undoubtedly we have; and that Providence is science, and the forces of nature, the true sources, so far as we know, of all help that has been of material service to man. We must cultivate personal effort, allied with the knowledge of those laws upon which health, happiness, and progress depend. Taking our stand upon science, we interpret all events as the result of preceding ones, and as having an influence upon those that follow. In proportion as men believe in the unalterable connection between cause and effect, so will they get rid of the false notions of "chance" and a "Pre-ordained Providence," and they will rely for help upon the known and the knowable. For ages, under the influence of the Church, this Providence was ignored, except by the few brilliant intellectual stars who illuminated the clouded atmosphere of theology. Blind, unhesitating credulity reigned on every side, and its victims looked for assistance to heaven, not to earth; to God, not to man. The result was a condition of almost universal absence of personal comfort, moral activity, and mental cultivation. But now it is seen how fallacious the doctrine is that God ordered all things for the best in a world that has its—

> ravaged plains,
> And burning towns and ruined swains,
> And mangled limbs and dying groans,
> And widows' tears and orphans' moans,
> And all that misery's hand bestows,
> To fill the catalogue of human woes.

The enlightened discovery of modern times is that "Science is the true Providence of Man."

CHARLES WATTS.

On March 17 a commemoration of the Commune will take place at Milton Hall. Among the speakers are Prince Kropotkin, Louise Michel, and P. Gori.

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WHICH WAY?

By Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

(Concluded from page 150.)

It was the triumph of ignorance, the saturnalia of credulity. Learning was lost. If the people who had lived in that night had known aught of the poetry and philosophy of Greece and Rome; if they had anything of the laws, the genius, and the art of antiquity, they could have saved themselves; but they knew nothing, and they were lost. Instead of universities they built cathedrals. Where they should have had teachers they had preachers. If they had had the light, the seeds of superstition would never have been planted; but they didn't have it, and the plant grew. The priests governed the world. They were the men who had influence with the God that the ignorant had made for themselves, and who were induced to use that influence by proper offerings and proper petitions and formulæ. The clergyman stands in the same position to-day, but his power is lessened, and it is lessening. It is not as strong to-day as it was when I was a boy. It weakens more and more as men come to consider. The ministers pray for us, and the fact that God permits their pious impertinences is a proof against him. Who has not heard prayers that were simply shocking in the light levity with which they approach infinity? I have heard preachers pray for the absurd and the utterly impossible. Only a short time since I heard the chaplain of Congress address to the Almighty a petition which was so ludicrously beyond the power of the Omnipotent to grant that I must tell it to you. He bowed his head, closed his eyes, and said: "Oh, God, give Congress wisdom."

THE EVILS OF THEOLOGY.

Theology and the theologians are at the base of most of the wrong and all of the ignorance of the world. They are antiquarians, ever digging out of the cemeteries of the past, dead and rotten opinions. Their claims are false, their results evil. They call the great men of the ended centuries theirs, and point to history. The witnesses against them they burned, and because few voices call to us they argue that their case is made. I myself have seen a religion born and come to maturity. Mormonism is younger than I. Joseph Smith's miracles and his followers I have watched. A thousand years hence Mormons will argue that, in a country bristling with newspapers, not one journal denied the authenticity of the Smith miracles. Of course they did not. The miracles were too idiotic to deny.

Let me tell you a story from Japan. A pious old monk was guardian of a very holy shrine that had bones in it of extraordinary virtue, to which good Buddhists came from all sorts of places to be cured of various zymotic and other diseases. Owing to the pressure of competition, or for some other reason, business fell off so badly that the monk was compelled to discharge his assistant, a young bonze, to whom he gave a white donkey and a fervid blessing. The young man journeyed along, playing in extremely bad luck, until, for lack of food and overwork, the donkey died on the wayside. The young monk had an inspiration. He buried the donkey on the road, and as soon as some travellers approached he prayed piously over the grave and besought the passers-by to give him money to build a temple over the last resting-place of the Sinless One. The money poured upon him, so that soon he had a fine temple up and a reputation for sanctity that drew business from all parts of the empire. He had to employ nearly thirty priests to help handle the crowds, and few monks were doing better or giving more satisfaction. At last he visited his old preceptor, travelling with a big retinue and giving evidences of prosperity that were beautiful to see. The old man was glad to see him, and the young priest, with much vanity, told him how much more successful and enterprising were the ideas of young people over old, and illustrated by showing what returns he had got from the donkey's bones.

"Son," said the old man, "truly young and old are alike. This shrine where you were raised and instructed was built over the bones of the mother of that donkey which has made your fortune."

INGERSOLL'S SOLUTION.

I am asked what I propose to substitute for religion, and what could be done to carry on the work of making men good? The answer is simple. I would put theology out of religion, in the first place. Theology has no place in religion, anyhow. Our duties are all here, not in some other place. Knowing all that can be made known about God does not help religion. Our duties are all here, and nothing that we can do or leave undone can alter these duties. We have nothing to do with God. We can do nothing for him. It is better for us to attend to our own business, and let God attend to his. Theology, remember, is superstition, organised and correlated and fixed. Religion is the performance of duty and of right action. What can they have to do with each other?

And I would put theology out of government. Government should get its power from mankind, not from God. There is no crusted relic of barbarism, from the king upon his throne to the priest at his altar, who is not holy, and who is not a theological product. When we erase theology from politics we wipe out the crown and the mitre, we abolish aristocracy, we destroy the right divine, and we replace all these with liberty and manhood.

I would put theology out of education, from the common school to the college. I would hire no teachers to make superstitious sausages out of my children, by telling them of the things they guess at, rather than the things they know. I would not have professors chosen by their faith rather than by their works. We produce no great men, because the faculties of our colleges are afraid to teach. They are afraid, because the president of the college is usually some narrow little parson, much more concerned to preserve the credulity of the pupils than to increase their knowledge. Theology is a shackle and a gag upon American learning.

And I would get theology out of morals. Superstition is not a virtue. Faith is not a virtue. Because God said this was right and that wrong does not make the thing right or wrong. God doesn't know. That which increases the world's happiness is the right thing, and here God has palpably failed. Instead of creed, we want investigation, in ethics as in other lines. That is good which is good; not that which a priest says is good.

And, finally, I would take theology out of charity, and make charity as broad as man and as wide as day.

THE TWO PATHS.

Yes, there are two ways to live. You can live for God, who has drenched this world with blood and scorched it with flame, or you can live for man, who stands for peace and liberty and brotherhood.

The blessed Scriptures tell us that there is a straight and narrow path, upon which one must walk towards heaven. It is only wide enough for one. No man may have his wife walk by his side, nor his child. It is paved with shards and ashes. There is a flower, but don't you dare to touch it. A beautiful view opens up in the fog on the side, but you dare not look at it. Keep your eyes fixed on the New Jerusalem, if you would save your miserable, worthless soul. Do not even look back to see if your wife is following safely. If she has strayed from the straight and narrow path and gone to hell, why, hell is the best place for her in God's infinite mercy. If your son has fallen, do not stop to pick him up; for what is your son to your immortal soul? Keep on the path, keep off the grass, keep on the straight and narrow path that leads to the New Jerusalem, and maybe at last your withered, shrunken soul will get there.

Give me the broad way, pleasant, flower-bordered, delightful, sunny. I want to go with the crowd, where all the good things are, the happiness and the love that last from the dawn of life's birth into the dusk of death. I want to eat the fruits and pluck the flowers. The broad path is the one for me and for you. Let us suck this orange of life so dry that when Death comes we can toss him the withered peel, sure that we have drawn from it every drop of its sweetness.

CULTURE IN ETHICS.

How shall we be moral on the broad path? theology asks. With more schools, and with culture and investigation in ethics. We want education that is education, not education that is catalogued ignorance. We want more schools and less churches. I tell you I am delighted when I come into a village now and find the school-house larger than the church, and that happens often now. We want to put deed over creed; we want to put character over faith. We

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want, above all, to wake the people from the nightmare of hell fear.

We want to reform men and women, and who was ever reformed by fear? God made a man refrain from an act by the fear of eternal torture, perhaps; but God cannot scare him into not wanting to do it. We must substitute for the vicarious atonement the law of consequences, the inexorable law of the effect that treads upon the heels of cause, the sure certainty that what a man does he does himself, and must pay for. Nowhere in the abysms of space is there a bankrupt court where ethical insolvents can clear off their indebtedness and get a clearance. Consequences are the inevitable, remorseless policemen of progress. They follow, and they will not be denied. This is the lesson we must teach our children. We must teach that honor is not an alms, but a wage that must be earned. God cannot give it, neither can he take it away. If you want happiness, you must earn it. No man can collect a jugful of happiness, seal it hermitically, and put it away on a celestial shelf, to be used when he dies.

This lesson learned, poverty will disappear, men will do their own work, and they will not hire theological attorneys-at-law to argue with God about their affairs. What little business they may have with infinity they will attend to themselves, and the lesson will be easily taught. It would be a delightful change if a congregation of sensible people would get some bright man to study up all of those questions which interest healthy-minded persons, and every Sunday tell them what he has learned during the week. Think of Sunday-schools where botany would show the child all about flowers, and entomology would open up to him the fairyland of insect life, and all of this without any of the idiotic theology which has cramped the world so long.

THE MISTAKES OF MAN.

When I think of the mistakes men have made in the gods they have worshipped, and the sorrows these gods have brought into the world, the pain, the woe, the blood, the torment, that blister the world's history, by the acts of the world's gods, it is enough to drive one mad for pity. I look back along that awful record of my race; I see the snake god waiting in his cave for the victim, the baby, that must be given him to appease him, while the mother wails without. I see altars red with blood, while the sacrificial knife plunges into the white bosom of the maiden. I see other altars, where goats and bulls are done to death, and still others, upon which the liberties of the nation were sacrificed. I see the palatial cathedral, fringed about with the wretched huts of the people. I see the millions of martyrs crushed out of life to put the world beneath the feet of priests. I see that earth a place where crime is virtue and virtue crime, and bending over it the black, starless night of religion.

INGERSOLL'S PROPHECY.

I look again, and I see the herald star of the morning, and the east brightens. There is more war, more fighting but it is now the people fighting for freedom. I see the thrones crumble and the altars fall. Then come the days when the churches are turned into schools, and the teacher sits where the priest once knelt before his empty sanctuary.

I prophesy that popes, priests, and kings are going and are gone. Aristocracy perishes. God is dead. The new religion of reason and joy is already here. The evangel of health and happiness is preached to willing ears. Soon no gibbet shadow will fall across this earth, no beggar's palm will be held out, no miser's scowl will deny him. Ours will be a folk without crime and without disease. I see life lengthen, love intensify, and fear die. I see a free world, emancipated after all the centuries, and I see the real heaven here in the real earth.

Surely this shall be.

Horne Tooke used to tell a story of Bishop Burnet. One day Lord Bolingbroke dined with him, and a sumptuous entertainment was provided. The Freethinking Lord asked the Bishop whether he thought the Apostles fared so well. "Oh, no, my lord." "And how do you account for the difference between the clergy of the present day and those of the primitive Church?" "It is so," replied the Bishop, "on all occasions; we always see that inventors and speculators are ruined, while others reap the gain."

CHRISTIANS AND EVOLUTION.

We have witnessed, during the past few years, many curious changes in the beliefs of people who take delight in describing themselves as Christians; but I venture to think that of all the changes none are more marked, or more important, than the one taken by many eminent Christians in regard to the doctrine of Evolution. Only a few years ago there was no name more detested by pious persons than that of Darwin; but to-day the name of the greatest scientist of this century is treated with respect even by editors of Christian journals. There must be some reason for this. The fact is, thoughtful Christians have begun to see that Biblical science is at a discount; that intelligent people no longer believe in the story of the creation of a perfect man about six thousand years ago; indeed, that they begin to throw discredit upon the whole Biblical story of creation altogether. Recognising this fact, some clever Christians have contrived to work the doctrine of Evolution in as a part of God's plan, and have endeavored to show that it is a much better design, and more in conformity with divine wisdom, than the idea of special creation. Once a theologian was bold enough to formulate this new teaching as a part of his Christian faith, it was only natural to expect a number of scientific men, imbued with what we may vaguely describe as "some sort of a religious spirit," writing a book on the subject enforcing the same kind of conclusion. Lately we have had a whole host of works written by Christians more or less favoring the teaching of Evolution. The most notable book, however, treating on this subject which has been produced recently is the now famous work of Professor Drummond on *The Ascent of Man*. Although Professor Drummond doubtless thinks that his admirable work will assist the Christian in taking a larger and more comprehensive view of natural phenomena, and especially of the evolutionary process by which "the ascent of man" has been brought about, I have no doubt whatever that his book will have the effect, in a much larger degree, of converting a number of nominal believers into pronounced Rationalists. For what does this learned writer demonstrate? Not only that Darwin was right when he said that man evolved from a lower animal form, but that Haeckel and other scientific men did not push the evolutionary doctrine too far when they declared that man's pedigree was to be traced through every form of animal life down to the protoplasmic germ.

In support of this view, take the following passage from Professor Drummond's work. He says: "The proposition is not only that man begins his earthly existence in the guise of a lower animal embryo, but that, in the successive transformations of the human embryo, there is reproduced before our eyes a visible, actual, physical representation of part of the life-history of the world. The same processes of development which once took thousands of years for their consummation are here condensed, foreshortened, concentrated into the space of weeks. Each platform reached by the human embryo in its upward course represents the embryo of some lower animal, which in some mysterious way has played a part in the pedigree of the human race, which may itself have disappeared long since from the earth, but is now and forever built into the inmost being of man. These lower animals, each at its successive stage, have stopped short in their development; man has gone on. At each fresh advance his embryo is found abreast of some other animal embryo, a little higher in organisation than that just passed. Continuing his ascent, that also is overtaken, the now very complex embryo making up to one animal embryo after another until it has distanced all in its series and stands alone. As the modern stem-winding watch contains the old clepsydra, and all the most useful features in all the timekeepers that were ever made; as the Walter Printing Press contains the rude hand-machine of Gutenberg, and all the best in all the machines that followed it; as the modern locomotive of to-day contains the engine of Watt, the locomotive of Hedley, and most of the improvements of succeeding years, so man contains the embryonic bodies of earlier and humbler and clumsier forms of life" (*Ascent of Man*, p. 67).

Now, the case for Evolution could not well be put in clearer or more forcible terms than these. And yet Professor Drummond writes of the wisdom and beneficence of a deity who made the arrangement by which human

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beings have had to fight through ages of animalism, savagery, ignorance, want, and misery, before they could even rise to the height of the first rung of the ladder of civilisation. Indeed, the learned Professor devotes the whole of a chapter to describing "the scaffolding left in the body" after man has passed through various stages of development—scaffolding which shows that man has not only been animal, fish, and reptile, but that he has passed through every stage of animal life, from the lowest to the highest. To use the language of Haeckel: "The history of the embryo, therefore, is a picture in little, an outline of that of the race."

Another important book that deserves the careful study of Freethinkers is one by Dr. J. Bland Sutton on *Evolution and Disease*. In this remarkable work Dr. Sutton points out that "it is impossible to state definitely the borderland between health and disease, either in relation with functional aberration or textural alteration. And in many instances we shall find conditions which we regard as abnormal in man presenting themselves as normal states in other animals." For example, the case is given of children who have been born with tufts of hair inside their cheeks, in the place usually occupied by a soft lining known as mucous membrane. It is found, however, that the inside of the cheeks of rabbits, hares, and porcupines present, naturally, patches of hairy skin. Indeed, many of the diseases from which human beings suffer are found to be but the reappearance of characteristics which were normal conditions in a lower state.

Now, if the evolutionary process is part of God's design, what shall we say either of the wisdom or goodness of a God who allows some animals to be born with two heads instead of one, six legs instead of four; human beings with webbed feet or fingers; or, as an illustration given by Dr. Sutton, of a girl born with a congenital fold of skin stretching from the thigh to the heel? What shall we say of the manifold reversions to ancestral types? Is it an evidence of God's wisdom that he allows one child in a family to be born with a well-formed head and brain, which will enable the child to develop into an intelligent and useful member of society, and another child in the same family to be born with a head and brain that will render it for life a microcephalous idiot?

Where is the wisdom of this plan? If, in reply, the Christian says, "Well, even according to you, nature plays these pranks with almost every form of life with absolute recklessness," we answer that we do not worship nature, that nature is not conscious as a whole, that nature is not intelligent, that she does not know what she is about, that she is neither all-wise nor all-good; that, indeed, man's highest wisdom consists in modifying and changing nature in her spontaneous course of action.

In my judgment, it is impossible to consider the doctrine of Evolution from a Theistic point of view without introducing the whole question of design. If all our organs and faculties are the result of development, what becomes of Dr. Paley's illustration of the beautiful design of the human eye? If the eye was once only a soft particle of matter in the animal organisation, that was more susceptible to the rays of light than any other part, and if through a series of changes it has developed to what we know it to-day, it does away once and for ever with the idea of God manufacturing a perfect eye. Indeed, it does away with the idea of God manufacturing any of the organs or faculties of man or beast, for it makes known to us the fact that all these faculties are the result of growth through untold centuries.

Professor Drummond says that, as far as the bodily faculties of human beings are concerned, man has reached the highest point of development; that, as a matter of fact, the savage races of mankind see better, hear better, and smell better than civilised man. So that the glory of man's bodily faculties is on the wane. The brain alone continues to develop. And it continues to grow, not because God has done anything to promote its development, but because man has cultivated his intelligence, and has manufactured a multitude of scientific instruments and other appliances, that assist it to grasp facts which must otherwise have remained unknown, to enlarge the scope of human inquiry, and open up new sources of information which were previously inaccessible to man. And so the evolution of man will go on; man will grow and improve with the growth and cultivation of the human intellect, until he will become nobler and grander in all his faculties than the imaginary gods who, in his vanity, he manufactured to account for his own existence.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

THE CHRISTIAN RATEPAYERS' GUIDE.

If you cannot pay your taxes, buy a hook,
And attach it to a string, without delay;
Catch a fish therewith, then down its gullet look,
And you'll find therein the wherewithal to pay.

In the Christian's Guide—Jehovah's Holy Book—
You will read that Christ to pay a tax did wish.
So he straightway told a friend to "take his hook,"
And he'd find the needed cash within a fish.

Whereupon the fish-cum-cash collector threw
Hook and line into the sea, and brought to land
The official fiscal fish, from which he drew
The amount to meet the publican's demand.

You will also read that Christ—who can't deceive—
Said the works that he performed would all be done—
Yea, and greater works—by all who should believe,
Over *all* the world, till time shall cease to run.

What a fool a sceptic citizen must be!
When believing gives believers, at a wish,
"Floating capital" and funds in ev'ry sea,
And finances in the mouth of ev'ry fish.

What an ass a Christian citizen must be
If he worries o'er his taxes, when his Book,
In the clearest manner, promises that he
Can at once procure "the needful" with a hook.

If a needy person vainly tries to hook
A financial cod or haddock, you can tell
That the person's not a Christian (see the Book),
And that probably his soul will roast in hell.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

CHRIST came to save the world, and how beautifully he has done it! After eighteen hundred years of Christian salvation the world has hardly conquered the elements of social well-being. The rich are richer than ever, and the poor poorer, at least by comparison. Is it possible to conceive a greater mockery than the promises of Christianity? Idle wealth and overworked poverty exist side by side, as they did before God Almighty condescended to be born of that Galilean "virgin."

What a satire on Christian civilisation is that terrible tragedy at Tooting! Poor Taylor, unable to get work, although he was honest, industrious, and thrifty; and unable to bear the thought of what might happen to his wife and children; takes a razor and cuts the throats of all of them, and kills himself into the bargain. The eldest boy escapes, though dreadfully injured; but eight corpses silently give the lie to all the boastings of Christian pulpits.

What audacity to talk about "saving" the world, while such tragedies are not only possible, but certain to occur! The poor Taylors—father, mother, and children—lie there with their throats cut; while a bishop, with thousands a year, with a smug smile preaches "Blessed be ye poor."

It is curious to note that Taylor was a Christian man himself. He was a regular attendant at Tooting Church, and some years ago he sang in the choir. The police found in his pocket some leaves of a Bible, and a letter full of religious expressions. His piety, however, did not prevent him from killing himself and turning his home into a slaughter-house. Yet the Christians tell us, until we are sick of hearing it, that unbelief is the principal cause of suicide.

There appears to be a Protestant Christian Evidence Society at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and, according to the local *Evening News*, it was recently regaled with a lecture by a Mr. Robert Edwards, whose discourse is described as "thoughtful and telling." After the lecture there was a discussion, which was participated in by the Secretary, a Mr. C. J. Whitfield. This gentleman was great on "morality," and, in the interest of the particular brand

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which has the great honor of his patronage, he advised Christians to vote against any Freethinkers who aspired to "public offices." After this exhibition of Protestant Christian Evidence charity and toleration there followed a hymn and a prayer, and thus ended what is called "a very profitable meeting." We should lay the accent on the "very." And, after all, it *is* profitable to witness the practical effects of Christianity when it is untinctured with civilisation and common sense.

Mr. George Wise, of Liverpool, writes an article on "What is a Secularist?" in the March number of the *Christian Evidence Gazette*. Very naturally he finds Secularism "the vilest enemy of mankind," and he is going to oppose it with "a bold front." Mr. Wise is certainly able to do *that*. He attended one of Mr. Foote's last course of lectures at Liverpool, and represented Professor Sanday as contending that the four Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. His mistake was pointed out to him, but he persisted in it. Apparently he has not "bold front" enough to correct his own public mistakes.

The "Army" welcomed its "General" home again on Monday evening. It was a big affair, with the usual raucous eloquence. But a much bigger affair was organised for Tuesday evening—namely, a midnight march and demonstration through Piccadilly, which is haunted by the females that the "General" promised to take down to cultivate the strawberry beds in Essex. For our part, we quite fail to see why the Boothites should be allowed to play bands, and perform what they call singing, in the public streets at midnight. The police would not let Radicals or Socialists hold a midnight parade in the West-end. Why, then, should they allow "General" Booth to "make night hideous with his hollow" instruments and equally hollow soldiers?

The owner of the vast trading establishment called the Salvation Army has given himself another bold advertisement by gathering his *employés* at the Albert Hall last Monday evening, to give him a reception on his return from America. The circular issued by "Colonel" Sturgess on the occasion was characteristic. It ended with the words, "believing that God will graciously respond to our endeavors for his glory." The response most appreciated was hard cash. But what if God did not respond to these endeavors for Booth's glory?

Booth said at the Albert Hall that of all the sights he had seen going round the world the one that pleased him most was people at the penitent form. This means recruits and obedient followers. Once people are hypnotised to declare themselves saved, they become mere puppets in the hands of the General. They wear his clothes, drink the tea he supplies, and put their spare cash in the Salvation Army Bank.

To-Day, speaking of the L.C.C. elections, says: "Men of the stamp of the Reverend Hugh Price Hughes and Alderman Fleming Williams have talked as if God had been specially engaged by them as their chief electioneering agent. Christ himself has been dragged through the mud of their dirty politics, has been paraded on their platforms, and patted on the back in their election addresses. A more disgusting exhibition even the Nonconformist conscience itself has never dared to parade. Had such methods succeeded, it would have been a bad thing for religion, and Christianity would have suffered another of the many cruel and cowardly stabs that are for ever being dealt it by the Devil's emissaries, who, for their treacherous purposes, have taken service within its ranks."

It is amusing to see the "Progressives" going in for petitions to the Lord for assistance, and the Tories laughing at them for doing it. At the recent annual dinner of the Lambeth Carlton Club, Mr. Jerome, a London County Councillor, said it was "lamentable that people should be imbued with such impracticable ideas as to resort to prayer in matters affecting the government of London."

Poor Mr. Hughes! He can't get away from that Atheist Shoemaker. The ghost of Charles Alfred Gibson follows him everywhere. Even on Monday evening, at Exeter Hall, during the annual meeting of the Wesleyan Mission, Mr. H. P. Chanter got up and asked Mr. Hughes: "Are you going to make any remarks as to Mr. Foote's criticism on missions re the Atheist Shoemaker?" The reverend gentleman looked surprised, and replied in the negative. Of course.

The vacancy of the head-mastership at Rugby has led to a prolonged controversy on the custom of appointing clergymen only to this position. A general feeling has been expressed that, since the best teachers are now laymen, this custom must be abandoned. Mr. Bosworth Smith points out that the clerical profession gives parents no assurance of sincerity. The minister may have secret doubts; "a lie in his right hand, which must lessen all his capabilities for good." The *Church Times* betrays its want of faith by saying: "We believe that the appointment of laymen as head-masters would, sooner or later, result in the schools being undenominationalised, then secularised." Against so horrible an event let us pray!

A writer in the *Church Times* deplores the neglect of Lenten fasting. Jesus went without food for forty days and nights, and was afterwards an hungered, and his followers will not even dine on salt cod and egg sauce in remembrance of his remarkable staying powers.

There has been a shindy on the Lynn Board of Guardians. Mr. Robert Green, a member of the Board, in the exercise of his right and duty, visited the workhouse, where he found amongst the inmates a sceptic who longed for something suitable to read. Being himself a Secularist, Mr. Green gave him some copies of the *Freethinker*; and upon this incident the Guardians had a very lively debate. The *Lynn Advertiser* actually devotes a leading article to the subject in which the *Freethinker* is alluded to as "a coarse and vile infidel publication." The sceptic to whom it was lent did not keep this "improper" publication to himself; it "naturally passed from hand to hand for the entertainment of the inmates." "Naturally" is a good word. It implies that the unfortunate paupers relished the *Freethinker* more than the goody-goody literature which the Guardians would like to see them perusing. Yes, yes; "naturally" *is* a good word. A Daniel come to judgment; yea, we say, a Daniel.

According to the *People's Journal* (Aberdeen), the Congregationalists and Evangelical Unionists have recently been discussing an alliance, and "matrimony," so to speak, was in the air. One gentleman told a story which "greatly tickled" the godly ears of his listeners. It was about an eminent divine who was staying at the house of a friend, where he became captivated by a good-looking housemaid. Meeting her on the stairs one day, he asked her whether she loved the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary said "Yes," and the man of God rejoined, "Then will you be my wife?" Mary's reply is not given, nor are we anxious to hear it. The funny thing is the way in which these pious people mix up their jokes with their "Redeemer."

Sir Robert Hunter, who was formerly solicitor of the Commons Preservation Society, told, at the Saturday Popular Lecture at Toynbee Hall, how, in the famous Loughton case, the rector of the parish, as lord of the manor, sought to enclose a part of Epping Forest, and on the following Sunday preached a sermon on "Covetousness."

A curious story is told by the Vienna correspondent of the *Daily News*: "A rich farmer named Pap, at Fekete Gyarmat, in Hungary, married about fourteen years ago; but his wife eloped after a year of marriage. Pap took no trouble to find her, but a few days ago a peasant named Gabriel Soki, from a distant village, came to him and said that it was he who had robbed him of his wife. He had, however, lately become a 'Nazarene,' and one of the first rules of that sect is, that believers must return everything that is not by right their own to its rightful owner. He therefore begged to say that he would bring back the wife and also their five children. Pap, after the first surprise, gave Soki a thrashing, but the affair does not end there, as Soki will not keep her, and the Court will have to decide who is to provide her with a home."

The chief Church of England at Broken Hill, N.S.W., has been sold by auction to pay a bank overdraft; and all over Australia ministers are deserting their pulpits because congregations absolutely refuse to cash up the necessary subsistence.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

It has at last been amply demonstrated that a really rousing effective funeral sermon is productive of good results. A Christchurch family, who believed that two young men relatives went down with the "Wairarapa," ordered an exceedingly sad and impressive discourse to be delivered in the church, and two days afterwards the boys turned up and wanted to know if dinner was ready.

Monday, February 24, the Public Library Committee of Ealing condemned Hall Caine's *Manxman* as being unfit for the public gaze, and ordered its removal. The chairman of the Committee, the Rev. J. S. Hilliard, called it "disgraceful," and Mrs. Force forcibly described it as "shocking and shameful." Not much chance for Freethought books where so mild a production as the *Manxman* is thus denounced.

The Rev. J. S. Hilliard, of Ealing, has, of course, been interviewed relative to his banning of the *Manxman*. According to *To-Day*, he described it as "disgusting," "filthy," "indecent," and "a distinct incentive to the commission of immorality." Those who expect to find the filthi-

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ness, etc., will never do so unless they have a nose like the Rev. J. S. Hilliard.

Life in Boston grows funnier. Young man—theological student—goes to Sunday night "sacred" concert to secure evidence of its non-sacredness. Young man—theological student—secures evidence; appears before committee of the Truly Good; questioned variously, says he heard nothing of a sacred nature sung at said concert; further questioned, what did he hear? says he heard song relating to the shortness of a pair of pants worn by person named McGilligan; did not think song sacred; further questioned by manager of theatre, did he not hear the "Ave Maria" sung? says he did; would he not call that sacred? couldn't say; did he know the meaning of "Ave Maria"? did not. Consternation; exit of young man witness—theological student.—*Liberty.*

Dr. Pullman points out that the sixteen American bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church take the sum of 200,000 dollars. He wants to know what they do with it. Evidently the business has improved since Peter went fishing and Paul tent-making.

It having been arranged that a lady should preside at the Aberdeen Conference of the Women's Guild of the Church of Scotland, and offer the inaugural prayer, the Rev. Dr. Cooper, of the East Parish Church, Aberdeen, strongly protested against any such arrangement, as opposed to Paul's injunction that women should keep silence in the churches.

A curious story about the Pope is being told in a French paper. Leo XIII. takes great interest in his museum of saints, and it is said he recently wrote to the prebendary of Limoges Cathedral to ask for a part of the skeleton of Saint Martial, which is in the possession of the Cathedral. The reply was that no part of the skeleton could be parted with. Thereupon the Pope made a formal demand for the entire relic. Letters passed, and the position was becoming critical, when the Bishop of Limoges came to the rescue, and, having one of the back teeth of the saint drawn, sent it to the Pope, who was satisfied with this addition to his collection.

A railway accident in Mexico has resulted in the loss of over one hundred lives, besides eighty-five severely injured. The wrecked train was conveying back to Mexico a number of persons who had been on a religious pilgrimage.

Floods in Hungary, spoiling the fields and sweeping away houses; a death-rate reaching 55 per thousand in Liverpool, and in excess in all the other large towns, are among recent instances of our heavenly Father's care.

The Rev. H. B. Ottley, vicar of Eastbourne, has been presiding at a boxing competition. He is also given to singing, his favorite ditty being "Hard Times Come Again No More." Wouldn't it be more appropriate that he should chant, "The Lord is a Mighty Man of War"?—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

Edward Holmes, a lay reader in clerical attire, has been sentenced to a month's hard labor for begging. He had a collecting book, in which contributions were entered, under the heading of "Father Edward's Mission for the Relief of East-end starving poor, without distinction of class or creed."

The *Tottenham Star* contains a full report of the case of the man John Thomas Clayden, the worker for Christ, connected with the Independent Church of Lower Edmonton. He brutally assaulted his wife, who has obtained a separation order.

In 1788, when Beaufoy made an attempt to obtain the repeal of the Corporation and Test Act, a deputation waited on the Lord Chancellor Thurlow to obtain his support. The deputies were Drs. Kippis, Palmer, and Rees. The Chancellor heard them very civilly, and then said: "Gentlemen, I'm against you, by God. I'm for the Established Church, damme! Not that I have any more regard for the Established Church than for any other Church, but because *it is* established. And if you can get your d——d religion established, I'll be for that too."

In the debate on the Burials Bill, which happily passed its second reading with a majority of 111, the House was told of one Christian clergyman who called public attention to a Nonconformist funeral in the churchyard by a sermon from the text, "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass."

Robinson Souttar writes to the *Daily News* on the necessity for the Burials Bill, as follows: "I have been at funerals all over the world; I have mourned with the Mussulman and sorrowed with the Hindoo, and I have found only one country on the face of the earth where burial with indignity is legalised, and that country is Christian England."

The *Daily News* special correspondent in Wales shows the feeling there against the Established Church. He mentions that, while the Church is nearly empty, the clergyman stoutly insists upon his tithes. Professing to be interested in the reunion of Christendom, the clergyman refused the other day to allow a Nonconformist to speak at a grave.

The Emperor William has been telling his sailors, "You are bound to give up your whole life for me." He concluded by saying: "Thus as we hope in God shall we destroy the enemy. Be you like the Brandenburghers of old."

William makes much of religion, but it must be his own. An Alsatian conscript, who belonged to the sect of Mennonites, whose faith forbids an oath and the use of the sword, has been again and again imprisoned for acting up to what he believes to be the dictates of Christianity.

The Baron Konigwater, a wealthy Jew, left the bulk of his large fortune to his son, whose wife was a proselyte to the Jewish faith of her husband. In his will he made the condition that, if his son ever became a Christian, he should pay one million florins to Jewish public charities. The son, with his wife, has since been baptised. His sister now declares that he has no right to accept the bulk of the fortune, as their father left it to him in the certain faith that he would remain a Jew. There is a paragraph in the Austrian law according to which an heir can be declared "unworthy" to inherit if he has committed certain actions, among which is having practised deceit towards a father. But it seems well nigh impossible that any Austrian court should declare a man unworthy because he has become a convert to Roman Catholicism.

The architect of the church of Lourdes, who considerably added to his banking account by that piece of work, was incited by the priests to bring an action against M. Zola for libel in his book, *Lourdes.* Judgment was delivered for the defendant, and the priests have only further advertised the book they object to.

JUDAS.

No name in legend casts a darker shade
Than that of Judas, who his Lord betrayed;
And yet, reflect, O Christian, where you'd be
Had Judas not betrayed his Lord for thee.

The controversy on "Why Working Men Don't Come to Church" still occupies much space in the *Church Times.* One writer plainly says: "Like so many men in other classes, they are practically Agnostics." A "Churchwarden" says the real question is, "Why are our churches empty?"

The Rev. Clifford Rickards, chaplain of her Majesty's convict establishment at Princetown, is not a very consistent Christian; at any rate, he does not obey his Master's injunction to give his cloak to anybody who is good enough to steal his coat. On Sunday night last the reverend gentleman, being unable to sleep, went downstairs for a smoke, and found a burglar ransacking the drawing-room. Instead of doing as he would be done by, and helping the burglar to complete his operations, the reverend gentleman seized a gun (the burglar having a knife), and the result of the battle was awkward for the visitor. Parson Rickards received a cut on the hand, while the enemy was shot in the arm, and so badly that it had to be amputated. The next time that burglar breaks into a clergyman's house he had better make sure beforehand that the man of God is a *practical* believer in the Sermon on the Mount.

Canon Moore Eds, preaching at the parish church of Stockton on "Christ and the Claims of Labor," argued that Christianity had abolished slavery. He did not explain how it did so, or why, after Christ abolished it, it nevertheless remained among Christian nations for eighteen hundred years.

Mr. Henry Maudslay, the engineer, stated that, when in Portugal fixing some machinery at the disused convent of Xabregas at Lisbon, he had occasion to cut through the walls under a staircase, and he found there a mass of bones of babies and young women, while a further examination disclosed the fact that one of the stone stairs was cunningly made to revolve on a pivot, so that a body could be instantaneously disposed of; the whole arrangement having been carefully contrived for concealing the crimes of the monks.

As the intelligence of any race increases, their religious fervor grows more timid and parsimonious.—*Charles Letourneau.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 17, Assembly Rooms, Lower Pavement, Nottingham:—11, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

March 24, Bristol; 31, Hall of Science.

April 7 and 14, Hall of Science; 21, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 17 and 24, Hall of Science, London; 31, Newcastle-on-Tyne. April 7, Sheffield; 14, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

E. H. (Longsight).—Cardinal Manning stated something of the kind in an article in one of the monthlies—we believe the *Nineteenth Century*. His position was that to steal food to satisfy hunger was not a crime. Many others besides Cardinal Manning have held the same doctrine.

W. C. HANT informs us that the London Anarchists have for some years had a paper called the *Torch*, which has "no connection with the rag of that name mentioned in the Hall of Science libel case."

J. J. CHAPPER.—Please send future orders for books or pamphlets direct to Mr. Forder. Sending to Mr. Foote only causes trouble and delay.

A. STARINGTON.—Mr. Bradlaugh belonged to a French lodge of Freemasons. In England, we believe, a Freemason must profess belief in the architect of the universe. Personally, we could never understand the use of Freemasonry in a free country. It may be said, of course, that Freemasons help each other; but every man is morally entitled to be helped, and morally bound to help others, by virtue of a common humanity.

J. MORISON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

MAURICE RUSSELL.—We are highly pleased to hear of your success at West Ham.

T. SHARP.—See paragraph. Thanks for your promise to bring it to their attention.

R. CARROLL, 42 Madrid-street, Belfast, will be glad to hear from any local Freethinkers who are ready to take part in putting the Ulster Branch upon a better footing. What is wanted in Belfast is an active propaganda.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Bolton Branch, 4s.; W. Stewart, 2s.; Camberwell Branch, £1 6s.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

R. GREEN.—Thanks. See paragraph.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Will try to find room.

P. H. ECHLIN.—Vegetarianism is too large a subject to be treated in a few sentences. We have not the slightest objection to inserting a terse, well-written plea for vegetarianism in a non-editorial part of the paper.

FORWARD.—We will bear the suggestion in mind, but it is one that we could not possibly carry out in the immediate future.

F. SHEPHERD.—Under consideration.

J. JONES.—Rev. Fleming Williams did not reject the doctrine of the Atonement at the Hall of Science; what he rejected was the orthodox, historic interpretation; what he accepted was something new-fashioned, hazy, and half intelligible.

G. J. WARREN.—It seems to us too late. An appeal now would, in our opinion, be utterly useless.

W. MANLEY.—We will send a copy weekly to the Stratford Free Library. Kindly inform us whether it is allowed to lie upon the table as promised.

A. E. ASPINALL.—Büchner's *Force and Matter* would probably suit you. The price is 7s. 6d. We are sorry to hear of your bereavement.

HAMILTON.—Our review of Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* had to be postponed, in order to find room for the criticism of Mr. Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did*.

A. G. LEVETT.—We have written some paragraphs on the Tooting tragedy. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

E. G. TAYLOR.—Indisposition and the libel case together were responsible for the oversight. Are you having the article printed as a pamphlet? Both matters shall be dealt with in our next issue. There are great demands on our space this week.

J. RICHARDS.—Received.

A. B. MOSS.—List shall appear in full next week. Glad to hear that you are quite recovered from your illness, and that you had a gratifying reception at the Hall of Science on March 3.

C. DOBB.—We note your postscripts.

A. MITCHELL.—Shall appear. Thanks for your interesting letter. It is always pleasant to hear from those we have assisted in becoming Freethinkers.

A. LIDDLE desires to correct a blunder in his article in our last week's issue. "Deleted" should stand for "selected" in the ninth line from the bottom on page 154.

W. WILSON.—Not bad, but rather far-fetched.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.—Thought it had appeared. Will look it up.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Western Figaro—Islamic World—Crescent—Freethinkers' Magazine—Truthseeker—Twentieth Century—Staffordshire Sentinel—Open Court—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Liberator—To-Day—Harbinger of Light—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—Chat—Christian Evidence Gazette—Blyth Scribe—Labor Leader—Reynolds's Newspaper—Daily News—Kent Messenger—Humanity—People's Journal—Tottenham and Wood Green Star—Reading Observer—Stockton and Thornaby Herald—Echo—Sunderland Echo.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a very busy time of it on Sunday. In the morning the streets of Sunderland were full of slush; it had snowed in the night, and a thorough thaw had set in with the daylight. Slop, slop, slop! went the boots of Mr. Foote and two local friends, Messrs. Weightman and Bowey, as they walked to the Sunderland station after breakfast. On arriving at Ryhope station, by which time they were joined by other Sunderland friends, including one brave lady, they tramped through the slush to the Miners' Hall. Ryhope is a large colliery village, and it conforms to the geometrical definition of a line—length without breadth. It was nearly a mile and a half's walk to the hall, and it was slop, slop, slop! again all the way. The hall itself was soon filled with a good audience, and on the whole the lecture was listened to with fair attention. That peculiar Christian charity which takes the form of brutal interruption, and bestial noises, had toned down a little since Mr. Foote's previous visit. What there was left of it found expression after the lecture, during the time allowed for discussion, in which three Christians participated. A piano being at the back of the hall struck up a hymn and left off when they were tired. Still, the proceedings were a considerable improvement on those of the previous occasion. Some parts of the lecture were actually applauded, and the pamphlets and copies of the *Freethinker* that were sold will probably be seed of Freethought in Ryhope.

Sunderland gave Mr. Foote, in the afternoon and evening, the two best audiences he has ever had there. The People's Palace is a very large place, and the meetings were excellent in point of numbers. Unfortunately, in the afternoon, it was far from excellent in point of conduct. Several followers were present of the most ruffianly advocate of Christian Evidences in England—perhaps in the world. We refer to the fellow who uttered that infamous libel on the London Hall of Science, for which the printer and publisher have had to pay damages with costs. Mr. Justice Wright said it was about the worst libel he had ever read; yet the fellow who uttered it knew he had not the slightest justification, and, with the courage of a pious Bombastes, he left the printer and publisher of his libel in the lurch, although he goes about saying that *he* (forsooth!) has paid all the expenses. This reckless liar and malignant libeller is kept at a great distance by the respectable Christians of Sunderland; not a single minister will condescend to have anything to do with him. But he rather pleases the baser sort of Christians, who are tickled by his vaunting language. The fellow took the Co-operative Hall for the same day, and issued a vulgar circus-bill "challenging G. W. Foote." Of course Mr. Foote has no intention of debating with this ignorant blackguard. Being questioned on this point, Mr. Foote told the meeting what the fellow had been guilty of, and said that he had to draw the line somewhere, and he drew it where the gentleman ended and the blackguard began. Respectable people cheered this statement, but the friends of Bombastes howled like emigrants from Hades. Their conduct throughout the afternoon lecture was characteristic—that is, it was disgusting. They would not listen themselves, nor let others listen. Mr. Foote kept on in spite of the noise, but,

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of course, it was a severe strain. Finally, after three Christians had been allowed to oppose, the rowdies made Mr. Foote's rising to reply the signal for a perfect pandemonium, and the meeting had to be brought to a close. And this is what some people are still proud of as Christianity!

Mr. C. Cohen presided in the afternoon, and made a first-rate chairman. He came over with a dozen friends from South Shields, returning in time to deliver his own evening lecture. Mr. Cohen held his ground manfully. We knew he had ability, and we are glad to find that he has also decision of character. Both are needed for a career in the Secular party.

A change came over the scene in the evening. Either the rowdies were hearing their own champion, or they were tired out. At any rate, there was very little interruption. The lecturer soon got command of the meeting, and held it for more than an hour. The discussion which followed was good-tempered, and the big day's work ended in peace and harmony.

The Sunderland Branch worked hard to make the meetings successful, and the advertising was particularly well attended to. They want the President of the N.S.S. to visit Sunderland again as early as possible.

The Sunderland *Daily Echo* reports Mr. Foote's lectures. It speaks of the Ryhope meeting as "a dense audience," and says that at Sunderland "the afternoon and evening audiences were very large."

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (March 17) at Nottingham. We hear that the bills are well displayed on the city walls, and we dare say there will be good meetings. On the following Sunday (March 24) Mr. Foote lectures at Bristol.

Mr. Charles Watts, having recovered from his recent attack of influenza, will lecture this Sunday evening, March 17, at the Hall of Science, London. He will take for his subject, "The Drawbacks of Theism."

Mr. Charles Watts has just republished in pamphlet form the articles he has recently contributed to the *Freethinker* on "Was Christ a Political and Social Reformer?" We happen to know that some of our readers, at least, will be glad to have this essay in a permanent form. It is carefully written, and contains much useful information. We hope to hear that it has a good sale, as its merits certainly entitle it to a wide circulation.

The Humanitarian League has begun the publication of a monthly journal, entitled *Humanity*, edited by H. S. Salt. The first number contains a report of the recent Humanitarian Conference, and in its notes mentions Mr. Foote's paper on "The Shadow of the Sword," which will shortly be published by the League.

We have received a copy of the *Secular Almanack, 1895*, issued by the English National Secular Society, and edited by Messrs. G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, editors of the *Freethinker*. The calendar is carefully filled in with dates of interest, and is accompanied by a choice selection of extracts from the greatest writers. The following articles comprise one on "The Progress of Freethought," by G. W. Foote; others by J. M. Wheeler, Charles Watts, etc., and one selected one by our valued contributor, M. Emily Adams, from our own columns, "What have Unbelievers Done for the World?"—*Secular Thought.*

"Mary" writes in the *Hawick News* (March 8) a very good account of the martyrdom of Bruno, as an instance of Christian intolerance. She concludes by remarking: "This is just exactly what some of the 'lambs of God' would do at the present time if they dared. You may say they would scarcely do that now; but it is not very long ago since we heard of three good citizens of London who were incarcerated for giving their opinion of the Christian religion. Their names are Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp; and I am perfectly sure some of the bigots of the present time would do more if they were allowed. Remember, sir, I don't say they are all alike; but when we see so many of them showing their teeth at one another in the papers, like so many curs, the only conclusion we can come to is that they would worry one another for Christ's sake."

The *Boston Investigator* announces a Symposium on the Bible for its issue of March 16. The topics discussed are: "The Bible in Civilisation"; "The Inspiration of the Bible"; "The Contradictions of the Bible"; "Ingersoll and the Bible"; "The Bible and its Critics"; "Is the Bible a Moral Book?" "Is the Bible a Fit School Book?"

The *Truthseeker*, of New York (March 2), in announcing the death of Frederick Douglass, the ex-slave orator, says: "He was a Freethinker, although the Church is now claiming him, as usual."

The Rev. Walter Lloyd (Unitarian), in an article on "The Bible in the Schools," in the March number of the *Westminster Review*, says: "It is a book for students, and not for children. The reading of it in schools is generally either useless or injurious. It either has no effect at all, which we believe is the fact in the majority of cases, or else it has a bad effect. That is to say, it fills the undeveloped mind with a mass of erroneous impressions. Children obtain from it notions of the universe at variance with the conclusions of astronomy and geology. They obtain notions of human nature at variance with the teachings of anthropology and psychology. They learn that God approves of war; that he is partial to monarchs; that ritualistic religion is of divine origin, and that morality rests upon arbitrary foundations." The article indicates that the Unitarians, at least, are being driven to the logical position of excluding the Bible from the schools.

The Nottingham Branch congratulates Mr. Foote on the success of the recent libel action, which it regards as having been most necessary and, in the issue, useful to the Secular movement.

Mr. Maurice Russell, whose candidature was recently the subject of one of our "Sugar Plums," came out third on the poll for the West Ham School Board, with 9,433 votes. Mr. Russell ran on the "secular education" ticket.

In a paper on "The Descent into Hades," in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, Mr. Percy Gardner shows that the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell was but a continuance of the legend of Orpheus in the Orphic mysteries. Mr. Gardner might have mentioned that Orpheus is represented as the central divinity in the so-called Christian catacombs at Rome. He does say incidentally that, "in the wall paintings which adorn the sepulchre of the early Christ, also we may see, side by side, representations of Christ and of Orpheus."

The Colorado House of Representatives has passed a Bill taxing all Church property in that State. There is expected to be a strong opposition to the Bill in the Senate; but the snowball has been set rolling, and it will gather.

A new Freethought paper, called *El Libre Examen*, has been started at Merida, Yucatan, Mexico. The editor is D. Thomas Péves Ponce.

The *Vossicher Zeitung*, of Berlin, reports that, while new and costly churches are constantly going up in that city, "the ministers preach to empty benches."

Mr. Foote's recent Wednesday lectures at the London Hall of Science on some of the plays of Shakespeare attracted improving audiences, in spite of the severity of the weather. Unfortunately, there was a hitch on the last Wednesday evening (March 6). Miss Vance was down with the influenza, and as she had not given notice of the lecture the hall was not cleaned and seated. Mr. Foote knew nothing of this *contretemps* until he arrived at the Hall, a few minutes before half-past eight. No such thing has ever occurred before, to our knowledge; and those who attended, and found the doors closed, may accept our assurance that it will never occur again.

Mr. Foote has not had many public debates of late years. There has been a run upon Mr. Watts in this line of business since he returned from America and settled down again in England. The Derby friends, however, have been trying very hard to bring about a debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. Lee. This gentleman has displayed the common Christian desire of having everything his own way, and all the original arrangements of the joint-committee have had to be set aside. Mr. Foote protested, as a matter of course; but he practically gave the committee power to agree to almost anything on his behalf sooner than there should be no debate at all. It now remains to be seen whether Mr. Lee will be satisfied if he settles all the arrangements himself.

One thing is very peculiar about Mr. Lee. Although the Derby friends only asked if he was willing to enter into a public discussion, and although they have told him again and again that Mr. Foote neither issues challenges nor accepts them, he insists on regarding himself as the "challenged" party, and in demanding certain "rights" in consequence. Such "rights," of course, can only mean an *advantage*; which is surely a strange stipulation for a gentleman who is cocksure that he is championing truth against error, and the cause of God against the weak invention of men.

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The Chatham friends are also arranging a debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. Mr. Waldron, of the Christian Evidence Society. We have never had the pleasure of hearing this gentleman, but we are told that he is a capable speaker, and that he eschews personalities. If this be so, the debate—which may take place in April—should be interesting, and perhaps instructive.

The annual meeting of the Finsbury Park Branch was held on Sunday last, when the secretary and other officers were re-elected for the ensuing twelve months. The treasurer reported a substantial balance in hand—the result of a very successful open-air season last year. Arrangements for the forthcoming propaganda were made, and date for commencement fixed. A hearty vote of thanks was moved to Mr. Foote for the great services he had rendered the party by exposing the tactics of the vile Christian libellers in the action just concluded.

The pamphlet containing the report of the trial of the Hall of Science libel case, with an historical and critical introduction by Mr. Foote, and an account of the so-called "Leeds Orgies," will be on sale next week. We hope our readers will see that it is well circulated amongst their Christian friends.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—IV.

Evan Powell Meredith.

I never met the author of *The Prophet of Nazareth*, though I had the honor of eliciting some articles from him contributed to the *National Reformer*, on the subject of the early Christian love feasts and immorality. They were signed "Lucianus," a signature which, like those of "Julian" and "Celsus," has been taken by more than one writer in the Freethought ranks.

Evan Powell Meredith was born in Wales in 1811. He was educated for the ministry at Pontypool College, became a pastor in the Baptist connection, and an eloquent preacher in the Welsh tongue. He made a translation of the Bible into Welsh. Study of the Scriptures led him to see through their pretensions, and about 1844, as he states in the preface to his largest work, he quietly withdrew from Christianity "whose doctrine, after considerable examination and research, he had ceased to believe, and, therefore, could no longer conscientiously preach." He adds that he had, ever since his secedure, almost daily pursued his researches after the real origin of the Christian religion. These studies he pursued to the last, and he had, I believe, prepared a work on the Gospels, which never appeared. What became of it on his death at Monmouth, July 23, 1889, I cannot say. Mr. Meredith lived a very secluded life. Probably he could have done much had he taken to Freethought advocacy in Wales; but he remained a Deist all his days, and possibly did not care to co-operate with Secularists. Mr. Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth* was evoked by the offer by Mr. George Baillie, of Glasgow, of a prize for the best essay on the question whether Jesus predicted the last day of judgment, and the destruction of the world, as events inevitable during the then existent generation of men. The prize was only ten guineas, a sum which could never have compensated Mr. Meredith for a tithe of the labor he put into his performance. But his motive was not gain. As he states in his preface, "he thought that thus to write on a given subject was an inoffensive and a favorable manner of making some of his theological views known to Christians generally, and particularly to those who had studied in the same college with him, and had taken so much pains to brand him as an infidel."

The Prophet of Nazareth is one of the most convincing works ever written. It thoroughly exhausts its subject, and the upholder of the supernatural character of Christianity is left without a leg to stand upon. Nor is it wanting in eloquence, as the following passage may testify: "There is no man, however depraved, who is not more or less strongly prompted by his own feelings to be just, from a love of justice,—to be benevolent from a spontaneously kind emotion,—and to do good, in general, from a love of virtue. The threats of hell and the promises of heaven, as incentives to virtue, together with the whole tenor of the superstitious creeds prevalent in the world, have made man believe that he is much more immoral, and more helpless, than he really is. Free him from the trammels of book-revelations—let him study nature alone—and man will make rapid strides towards happiness. He has already discovered that his degree of enjoyment is in proportion to his moral and intellectual progress. He has learned that all his miseries arise from a violation of the natural laws—either by him, or by members of the community in which he lives—and that all his happiness is the result of obedience to these laws, in discovering which, and learning to obey them, he daily progresses, gathering a thousand facts from his own experience, as well as from that of others. When mankind, universally, will learn to obey these laws, each individual will feel intense pleasure in promoting the happiness of others, which cannot fail to secure the happiness of the whole race. Then will knowledge and benevolence be inseparably connected in each individual, and vice and misery accidents in human life—rarely witnessed. The progress in knowledge and happiness which man has already made, by *studying nature*, warrants this conclusion, and forbids us to prescribe limits either to the high degree of knowledge he is capable of acquiring, or the intensity of happiness he is capable of enjoying."

In 1865 Mr. Meredith entered into some correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, in consequence of his hearing that dignity deliver a sermon in which he advocated the utility and advantages of wealth. Our Freethinker strongly contrasted the preaching of the bishop with the doctrines of Jesus, as found in Matthew vi. 25-34, xix. 16; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18, and John vi. 27. At first his lordship fenced in his reply, stating that he had been misrepresented, and had not inculcated the pursuit of riches. Mr. Meredith produced a shorthand report bearing out his representations, and persisted in asking an explanation. The bishop now changed his tack, and said he had no time for correspondence. About the same time the Rev. J. F. Francklin, vicar of Whaplode, Spalding, having perused "some extracts from your horrible and blasphemous production, entitled *The Prophet of Nazareth*," addressed him an arrogant epistle against employing his "ungodly pen in the service of Satan." He was answered at length, and the letters to the bishop and the vicar were published under the title of *Amphilogia*.

To those who enjoy the sight of Christians squirming and wriggling in the grasp of a hard-fisted Freethinker *Amphilogia* affords excellent reading. But, of course, Mr. Meredith's chief service to the cause was his great work on *The Prophet of Nazareth*. The world of letters was then giving much attention to Bishop Colenso's work on *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua*. But Mr. Meredith struck a blow, not at any outwork, but at the very citadel of Christianity; and, in dealing with the prophecies of the gospel, he hit the Christian superstition in its weakest part. As long as that superstition endures his work will retain its value, though in these days, when great books are felt to be more than ever great evils, it is to be wished that someone may condense its six hundred pages to sixty.

J. M. W.

A DREADFUL GOD.

The following pious hymn, No. 42, second book of the old collection of Dr. Isaac Watts, used to be a favorite in the good old days, when the good old religion was poured out hot and strong. The children of to-day, brought up on "sweet Jesus" pap, hardly realise what Christianity meant to their forefathers, and what a dreadful bogey was the blessed "Gord":—

"With holy fear and humble song,
The dreadful God my soul adore;
Reverence and awe become the throng,
That speaks the greatness of His power.

"Far in the deep where darkness dwells,
The land of horror and despair,
Justice hath built a dismal hell,
And laid her stores of vengeance there.

"Eternal chains and heavy plagues,
Tormenting racks and fiery coals—
Darts to inflict immortal pains,
Dipt in the blood of damned souls.

"There Satan, the first sinner, lies,
And roars and bites his iron bands;
In vain the rebel strives to rise,
Crushed with the weight of both thy hands.

"These guilty souls of Adam's race
Shriek out and howl beneath thy rod;
Once they could scorn a Savior's grace;
But they incensed a dreadful God.

"Tremble, my soul, and kiss the Son.
Sinners, obey your Savior's call,
Else your damnation hastens on,
And hell gapes wide to wait your fall."

I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go.—*J. S. Mill.*

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WHERE WAS GOD?

"YES'EM, yes'em, we had hard times," said Aunt Peggy, a little, heavy-set old woman, who had been a slave before the late rebellion.

"Yes'em, I've walked eight miles a day and washed for the young ladies in de boarding-school five days in de week, an' den pick up my own wood an' cooking my own supper an' breakfast. I done tink I earn mo' money for Ole Marse den de men slabes did, an' Ole Marse neber eben tank me. All dat money do me no good, an' now I got a bad rupture, made by de washboard. Ole Marse got dat money I yearned to spend for finery an' hab good times on; an' me, well poor ole me's jes got dat rupture to torment me all my days. Dat's wat I got!

"De ole elder wat cum roun' sometimes preachin' to us said we 'mus'en't xist de will ob God, must obey de master,' an' be 'law-erbidin',' cos if we diden't we'd be blamed wid evry ting bad 'at happened; we'd be pinted out as de onery law-breakin', 'bellious sinners, an' dat God would hide his face away from us, an' we'd be cast in der outer darkness an' be lost for eber an' eber. An' den we mus'en't complain, fer dat was a sin in de eyes ob God, an' we mus' bow our heads an', an', pass under de rod.

"Well! well! I'se done pass under de rod. I done 'bey de orders till Ole Marse Lincum sot me free.

"But, honey, I does keep a wonderin' wat de Lord let Ole Marse 'buse us so for. I knows well er nuff I'd a been worked to death and a been in my grave now if I haden't been set free. I wonder why de Lord set *me* free, an' so many more he let de slabe-driber kill wid de whip an' hard work. Dey bow dey heads, too, dey pass under de rod, too. Dey *had to!* dey couldn't he'p it. De law make 'em bow an' pass under de rod. De law was all agin us; *we mus' 'bey*, er be damned; but de masters, de law let dem 'buse us an' do tings to us we neber dare do to dem, an' dey go right on to heaben. I knows dey jes been pullin' de wool ober our eyes. I sees it, co'se I do.

"One summer Ole Marse sent ten ob us slabes down souf to pick cotton. No babies was 'lowed ter go, but Halie jes cried an' cried 'bout leaving her baby, and so Ole Marse tole her ter tuck it along. It was her fust baby, an' she 'peered kind o' crazy 'bout it. When we went on de boat de slabe-driber stood dar on de boat, an' tole Halie ter take der coon on de shore an' Ole Marse ud get it; but Halie she jes scream, an' run an' hole on tight to her baby. De boat push right off, an' Halie feel better now, an' hide on de boat, an' lay down on de boards an' go sleep.

"Po' Halie! po' Halie! so tired; been cryin' all night 'bout leavin' de baby. Putty soon roun' comes dat slabe-driber peekin' roun'. I tout he's lookin' for Halie. Sho 'nuff he find her fast ersleep. Po' Halie! You's done pass under de rod; *you had to!* Now de Lord musten't hide his face from you. No; 'cos not. You's gwine ter work fer der marser. You's gwine ter 'bey orders—*all but dat one.* Dat one 'bout de baby, an' you's tryin' to hab your way 'bout dat. Po' Halie! you can't hab you own way. What are *you* (only a nigger woman) to the master? What is your baby to him? No more, po' Halie, den de cats an' dogs dat run about de street. You know berry well dat nobody keer fer dat baby but you, an' you are its on'y pertecter; but Halie's soun' asleep. De slabe-driber slip dat baby out her lap an' frow it in de riber as quick an' careless like as if it jes' been a rat.

"De Lord turn his face 'way from po' Halie jes' wen she need him ter keer fer her an' her baby.

"I look roun' ter see if de Lord diden't strike dat man down dead; but no, he neber. Dat driber walk off and diden't 'pear ter be 'fraid o' nuffin'. After 'while Halie woke up. She look fer her baby. Po' Halie, we couldn't tell her; we nod to de riber, we point to de slabe-driber. She look all roun' at eb'ry one of us; we all nod to de riber, we all point again to de oberseer. Po' Halie! she look down in her lap, an' wid one scream she jumped up on the boat railin' an' threw herself into the riber. Po' Halie!

"Den de slabe-driber did jump roun' an' roun'; den he feel bad; but, den, dat was on'y a scare 'bout de money dey lose. Diden't matter 'bout Halie—no! no! but de money dey lose did trouble him. He talk all de time 'bout de loss ob property, an' I neber heard him say anyfing 'bout breakin' laws, er bein' 'fraid ob de law er any kind er damnation. Us po' niggah women, honey, us po' women ain't no moah 'count to de rich masters den hogs, an' dey go on 'joicin' on deir way to heaben, 'busin' us women worse'en brutes.

"An' I don't 'pear to be thankful to de Lord for anyfing, no how, fer wen we need him mos' he's lookin' de oder way. An' wen he smiles its only fer der rich, fat masters.

"An' I believes dat de 'ligion dat makes dem fat an' rich is de same 'ligion wat makes us women so po' an' tired."
—*Lucifer.*

Help yourselves, for heaven will not help you.—*Oscar Beck.*

JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST cam' here to dee,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
To save puir souls like you an' me,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Mary got him unco queer;
Hoo it was ye need na speir,
For a ghaist made her its dear,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.

Jesus cam' an' Jesus pray'd,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Ne'er a cheenge for guid be made,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Ilka Jew juist stood an' leuch,
For his tale was unco teuch;
It was hardly guid eneuch,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.

"Life on earth is but a spell,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Death'll land ye into hell,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Gif ye doobt a wird," quoth he,
"Ye'll be sure auld Nick to see,
Syne ye'll maybe think on me,"
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.

Hoo it comes lat parsons tell,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Jesus spak' a deal on hell,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
An' the Jews ca'ed him a fraud;
Thocht him juist a half-wit lad;
Mair a fool than dooright bad,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.

What fell oot the story gies,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Though at times it disagrees,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Jesus they nailed to a tree;
Kept him hangin' there to dee;
But he rose his freends to see,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.

Sic a tale as nurses tell,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Warlock, curse, an' witch's spell,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.
Superstition ga'e it birth;
Priests alane ha'e proved its worth,
An' ha'e made it curse the earth,
Ha, ha, the deein' o't.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

Christianity and Civilisation.

It is the habit of paid teachers of Christianity to credit the form of organised religion with all the higher civilisation of the world. We only know Christianity, so-called, as it is embodied in creeds and churches, and it is simply a fact that, so far from this boast having any foundation, popular churches and creeds have invariably denounced as pernicious or profane, in one age, discoveries in science and criticism which the inexorable logic of events has compelled them to approve in the next. Science and criticism have always, in the first instance, had to encounter clerical opposition.—*Matthew Macfie.*

Obituary.

DIED, on March 2, Martha Fagan, the wife of John Fagan, a well-known lecturer and worker in the Freethought movement. Like her husband, she was devoted to the Secular cause, and believed that creeds and priests were the outcome of ignorance and superstition. She was a good wife and mother, and those that knew her have lost a friend. She was buried on Friday last, March 8, at Finchley Cemetery. Our old friend, Mr. Haslam, read the Secular Burial Service.

She ne'er on fancy's wings could fly
To mansions built above the sky.

IT is with sorrow I announce the death of Laurence Perrett, aged three and a half years, son of Eliza and Sergeant Perrett, of Metropolitan Police, Greenwich, whose remains were interred in Lewisham Cemetery on Saturday, March 9, at 1.30 p.m. Mr. Ramsey read the burial service with much effect, giving the greatest satisfaction to the bereaved parents and friends.—CHARLES JOHNSON.

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WHERE WAS EDEN?

Dr. Dubois, a Dutch army surgeon stationed in Java, has found three fragments of skeletons in the pleistocene strata of the island, which introduce us to a new species between man and the higher apes. The remains are pronounced to be much lower and more Simian in type than the famous Neanderthal skull. It is peculiar that Dr. Dubois appears to think that this discovery illustrates the Biblical account of Adam and Eve, for he congratulates himself that it leads to the theory that man originated on the southern slope of the Himalaya mountains, which is not so far from the Garden of Eden! This is rather ambiguous, since no one knows the geographical situation of Eden. It would have been more to the point to have mentioned that it confirmed Darwin's conjecture that man may have originated on the submerged continent now occupied by the Indian Sea.

The question of the situation of Eden has attracted some attention in Germany of late, owing to a controversy between Professor F. Delitzsch, of Breslau, and Professor Paul Haupt. The former maintains that Eden was somewhere in ancient Babylonia, while the latter pronounces this location as most improbable. Professor Haupt contends that the story of Eden belongs to about the time of Assurbanipal (669–625 B.C.). He frankly explains that the geography is mythical. The Biblical story (Gen. ii. 10-14) says that a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads—Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates. There are no four rivers having their origin in the same source as the Euphrates. Josephus makes the Pison the Ganges, Gihon the Nile, and Hiddekel the Tigris. Kalisch, who says that "scarcely any part of the habitual globe has remained without the honor of being regarded as the happy home of our first parents," follows Josephus, save that he regards the Pison as being the river Indus. He admits this makes the geography of Genesis inaccurate, for he says, "It will be asked, How is it possible to consider the Nile as an arm of the same river which sends forth the Euphrates and Tigris?" Professor Haupt thinks Pison may mean the Persian Gulf, and, speaking of the Gihon, says: "If the reader will consult a modern atlas, he will find that there is no such river. Is it possible that the Hebrew narrator followed the line of thought expressed by Alexander, who believed that the African river Nile had its source in the north-western part of East India? Was the mythical Gihon River the imaginary Nile of India?" He reminds his readers that "the question must not be considered from the present standpoint of geography. Maps constructed in the Middle Ages show that such mistakes happened as late as that."

"Evidently," says Professor Haupt, "the Hebrew writer had no clear conception as to the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris. He did not know that they flowed into the Persian Gulf, but assumed they were lost in the swamps of Southern Babylon—a conception popular in Arabia, as a map of the world, by an Arabian geographist of the year 1000 A.D., proves. Taking the Biblical story, together with the above corrections, into consideration, we must conclude that Paradise was situated on the south of the Caucasus. This is in an eastward direction from the location of the Hebrew narrator, in the neighborhood of the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris, and in the extreme north of the earth (as far as it was then known), in that mythical region from where God proceeded to the earth, according to Hebrew legends. That God lived in the north was an idea generally accepted among the Hebrews. The Babylonians, too, believed in Paradise and the Tree of Life; according to their idea, Eden was situated near the Persian Gulf, in the neighborhood of the region where the four rivers fall into it. For there are four rivers, though not the rivers mentioned in the Old Testament."

The geographical errors of the Bible by no means prove its extreme antiquity, for all through the Middle Ages Jerusalem was generally regarded as the centre of the earth, and was so drawn on maps.

Uncle Benjamin.

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APHORISMS.

With Nature there is no forgiveness.

Nature is God to one man, and Devil to another. Skate-makers rejoice in the frost that is biting other people's noses.

Natural law is as potent and inexorable in mind as well as in matter, and the laws of natural selection and of the survival of the fittest operate as surely in the one as in the other.

Naturalism is a solid structure founded on the rock of fact. Supernaturalism is but a castle in the air.

Logically there is no medium between Atheism and the abnegation of all reason.

Were there no other reason for Atheism, a sufficient one might be found in the unmerited sufferings of domestic animals.

All gods were made in the image of man. That is the reason most of them were such ugly devils.

Metaphysics is a bog which, if you are not big enough to wade through, you had better avoid.

God is a gentleman who always retires as science advances.

It is better to be dubious of the doubtful than credulous of the incredible.

Knowledge and liberty are the best safeguards of morality.

Love of God is usually spiritual pride, a dangerous and insidious form of self-love.

The monk who wrote *Credo quia absurdum* understood the attractions of his creed. The fascination of a mystery remains, even though the mystery be an absurdity.

The doctrines of substitutionary atonement and death-bed repentance place a premium on crime.

Christianity idealises poverty; Freethought would extirpate it.

Those who transfer their hopes from a visionary heaven to an actual earth gain far more in the distinctness of their aims than they lose in their extent.

The person who always has his eyes fixed above is in danger of having his pockets picked and stumbling down an earthly hole.

What worse waste is there than the love and devotion wasted on abstractions and supernatural beings who cannot need our service, while suffering humanity everywhere around is crying for assistance.

Lucianus.

PROFANE JOKES.

Country Minister (from the pulpit)—"As the air of the church seems chilly, I would ask the sexton if he will kindly close the front doors and windows of the building. The collection will now be taken up."

Rev. Doogood (to the penitentiary warder)—"My friend, is the spiritual welfare of the poor fellows under your charge properly attended to?" Warder—"Well, sir, it ought to be, for there are eight Sunday-school teachers among them."

Aunt Mandy (at sacred concert)—"What's next, Josiah?" Josiah—"They're going to sing 'For a Thousand Years.'" Aunt Mandy—"For the Land's sake, Josiah, you'd better sell the tickets, or telegraph the children what's keepin' us."

Heard at a Pantomime.—Clown—"Good-bye; I'm going a long, long journey." Pantaloon—"Indeed; where are you going?" Clown—"To heaven." Pantaloon—"Hum; s'pose you never get there?" Clown—"Then I'll get my money back."

A rustic went into the office of a missionary society, on the wall of which hangs a map of the world, with the religions indicated by colors; heathenism, of course, by black. "Bless me," said the gentle bucolic, "I had no idea that the coalfields were so widely distributed over the world."

It occurred the other night. Their mission was to "save souls," and his to sell baked potatoes. They "queered his pitch," and he got the needle. "Friends," shouted a female, with a cast in her eye and an asthmatical wheeze in her voice, "you must be born again—" "All o't!" yelled the murphy monger. "All 'ot!" The meeting moved on.

Mrs. McGreedie—"An' fwhat dae ye say is the sma'est amoont that ye prent a donor's name in the report wi'?" Collector for the Canniballoo Islanders' Missionary Fund—"Naething lower nor five shillin's, mem." Mrs. McGreedie (reluctantly producing a crown)—"Here's the siller. It fair ruins me tae gie it ye, but it's for the guid Chreestian cause, ye ken. Noo, ma man, see that ye dinna make ony mistake, and that Mrs. McGreedie, o' Greedie Villa, comes out in yer report."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, A. J. Marriott, "The Churches, the Public, and the Public-house." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "The Drawbacks of Theism." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, a lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, J. W. Woods, "Tidal Intellects; or, the Case for the Independent Labor Party." (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club—members wanted.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, conversazione for members and friends. (Tickets 6d.)

ISLINGTON (Liberal and Radical Association Committee Rooms, Upper-street, near the Vestry Hall): Thursday, at 8.30, A. Guest, "Is there a God?" (Free.)

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, celebration of the French Commune. (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Graham Wallas, "Can Virtue be Taught?"

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 7, S. R. Thompson will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Under which Flag?" 3.30, "Some Bible Stories."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road): 7, J. G. Fisher, "Secularism and Individualism." (Free.)

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Tutcher, "An Evening with the Microscope." (Free.)

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, A. Westcott, "Municipal Hospitals"; 7, "What has Vivisection Done for Humanity?"

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Mrs. Callaghan, "Our Present Social Position."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Cowie, "Bakounine's *God and the State*"; 6.30, J. P. Gilmour, "The New Theism."

HANLEY (Secular Hall, John-street): 11, Stanley Jones, "Modern Researches for the Soul"; 3, "The Problem of Unsectarian Moral Teaching"; 7, "The Origin of the Bible." Monday, at 7, "Radicalism and Socialism." Tuesday, at 7, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future." (Free.)

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, J. W. Stark, "Spiritualism *v.* Materialism."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Hammond, "Spiritualism and its Claims."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, J. M. Robertson, "The Last Shifts of Religion"; 3, "The Wealth of Nations—A Reply to Mr. Mallock"; 6.30, "The Failure of Christianity." (3d. and 6d.)

NOTTINGHAM (Assembly Rooms, Low Pavement): 11, G. W. Foote, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" (3d. and 6d.)

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): Important business meeting.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, Sam Standring, "What is an Archdeacon?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, entertainment.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Mohammed and Mohammedanism"; 7, "The Scepticism of Christians."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6, Mr. Wallace will lecture.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, Robert Weightman, "The History of the Devil."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3, Sam Standring, "Apostolic Succession—a Reply to Mr. Smith, of Milnrow."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—March 17, Hanley; 24, Derby.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 24, Camberwell.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—March 24, 26, and 27, Sheffield; 31, Failsworth.

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From the "Bradford Weekly Telegraph," Saturday, February 16, 1895.

GREAT FIRE IN BRADFORD.

EXTENSIVE DAMAGE.

Early on Saturday a big fire took place in the warehouse, No. 2 Union-street, Bradford, occupied by Mr. R. Higgins, who occupies a large part of the ground floor, and numbers the following tenants occupying the other offices and rooms: Mr. Ernest Hahnel, Messrs. Schmidt & Co., Mr. J. W. Gott, Messrs. G. D. Wright & Co., and Mr. J. Pepper. The damage done is very extensive, and is roughly estimated at a figure between £8,000 to £10,000. It certainly cannot be less than £8,000, as many of the firms occupying the building had large and valuable stocks stored in the various rooms. Mr. R. Higgins had a big stock of woollens, stuffs and yarns, and estimates his loss at over £4,000. He is insured up to £4,000. Messrs. Wright & Co., stuff merchants, have had fully £1,000 damage done to their stock and premises, but it is completely covered by insurance. Mr. J. W. Gott, cloth and stuff merchant, had a stock valued at £1,500, and it is partially destroyed, chiefly by water. The other firms, with the exception of Mr. J. Pepper, have suffered in like manner, a lot of stock being destroyed by water. The cause of the fire is unknown, but, judging by appearances, it broke out in the packing-room of Mr. R. Higgins.

To the Readers of "The Freethinker."

We had just got the New Spring Goods ready for Sale when this unfortunate fire took place, and, although we have sustained no damage by the fire itself, most of our goods have been soaked in water. We have taken immediate steps to have all the goods dried, and for all practical purposes they are not worth one penny less than before the fire took place. The finish which is put upon new goods has, of course, been disturbed, but that always takes place in making garments up. So that if you get a length of this cloth, or stuff, and have it made up, there is not the slightest difference between that and any other new goods you might buy, when made into garments.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE HUGHES AND CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

ON returning from India, after that dreadful illness which broke his constitution, Charles Bradlaugh politely requested the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes to furnish him with particulars of that "Atheist Shoemaker" story. Hughes declined. He knew he could not face an investigation by the eagle eyes of Charles Bradlaugh. Thereupon the great Atheist declared that the story was certainly false in its main outlines, and that Mr. Hughes had peculiar notions of honor.

Hughes had enough of that discretion, which is the better part of his valor, to lie low until Bradlaugh was dead. Then he took to praising the man who had despised him, and he has been at it ever since. It is a most loathsome eulogy. Freethinkers, at least, detest it more than the virulent abuse of Bradlaugh's enemies; just as sober people hate riotous drunkards, but abominate them worse when they are maudlin. Even a blow is better than a deluge of drivel.

We have before us a copy of the *Hammer*, containing a long report of the speeches delivered at the recent annual meeting of the London Wesleyan Mission. One of the speakers was the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who had a lot to say about Bradlaugh. He had been reading the great Atheist's "Life" with "painful interest." He had actually gathered, in his feeble, fatuous way, that Bradlaugh's unbelief was "caused"—yes, actually *caused*—by the treatment he received when young at the hands of a clergyman! And if it had not been for his Atheism he would have been a Cabinet Minister. He was popular with the working classes, not because, but in spite, of his Atheism. He was a good man, and "a far better Christian than the Bishops." And so forth, and so forth; in the well-known vein of pious insincerity.

Mr. Hughes, however, could not "speak with respect of his Atheism." Who asked him to? What would his "respect" be worth? He should keep it until it is wanted.

We are indebted to Mr. Hughes for the remarkable discovery that, "When Mr. Bradlaugh's Atheism was separated from his great democratic sympathies, he had no following at all." This is followed, in the report, by a note of admiration. And it certainly deserved one. *No following at all!* Mr. Hughes has never heard of the National Secular Society! He has never heard of the *Freethinker!* There is something colossal about the fellow's affectation. It is not exactly sublime, but it only falls short of it by a single step.

It was natural, of course, that Mr. Hughes should chuckle over Mrs. Besant's defection. Atheists can smile, however, when he describes her as "the only real, active, and able disciple" that Bradlaugh ever had. Certainly she has "left Atheism," but she has not become a Christian. Nor was her defection a mortal blow to the cause of Secularism. People still flock to hear our gospel; and the *Freethinker*, even at the increased price of twopence, enjoys a larger circulation than the *National Reformer* did, except at special times of great excitement.

Now comes the crowning point of Hughes's disquisition on Bradlaugh. We give his own words as they appear in the *Hammer*:—

> "He was so alive to this, and well aware he owed his position to God-fearing constituents, that he told them there was, and should be, no Hall of Science in Northampton, and there would be no propagation of Atheism."

Mr. Hughes is not a man to mince words with. We tell him plainly that this is A LIE. Bradlaugh never said anything of the kind. The statement is a sheer invention.

One of our readers—Mr. W. Mole, of Sheffield—wrote to Mr. Hughes, asking him when and where Bradlaugh gave this pledge to the Christians of Northampton. Here is the reply:—

> 8 Taviton-street, Gordon-square, London, W.C.
> March 11, 1895.
>
> Dear Sir,—Mr. Price Hughes desires me to tell you that what he said about Mr. Bradlaugh he heard at Northampton, where it is a matter of public notoriety. You will find on inquiry that, as a matter of fact, no Hall of Science was started and maintained in Northampton during the time that Mr. Bradlaugh represented that city.—Yours truly,
>
> Mr. W. Mole. SISTER ADELINE.

Could anything be more ridiculous? *He heard it at Northampton!* Is this a ground for making a public statement? *It is a matter of public notoriety!* What is this but a liar's refuge? Sister Adeline's letter is no answer to Mr. Mole's inquiries. Mr. Hughes made a definite public statement, and he is bound to give a definite justification. It will not do to say "I heard it" and "People say so." Where is *the evidence?* Who were the people to whom Bradlaugh gave that pledge? When was it given? Where was it given? We do not invite Mr. Hughes to reply. He is too far gone on the road of mendacity. We merely put these as questions that must be answered before any sensible, honest man will believe what Mr. Hughes says about Charles Bradlaugh.

One would think that Bradlaugh went all over the country founding Halls of Science, and that Northampton was the great exception. There are only three in all England—one at Sheffield, one at Grimsby, and one in London; and it was only the last that Bradlaugh was active in establishing.

Bradlaugh did not himself deliver Freethought lectures at Northampton, and it was a wise policy. He did not choose to complicate matters in the city which he represented in Parliament; just as he would not allow "M.P." to be printed after his name on bills announcing his Secular orations. There was a scrupulosity about him which Mr. Hughes is incapable of emulating, and apparently incapable of understanding. But if Bradlaugh refrained from Freethought lecturing in the city he represented in Parliament, he continued it to the very last in every other part of Great Britain. Other lecturers spoke in Northampton, if *he* did not; and more would have done so, only the bigotry of the local Christians—who accepted Bradlaugh when they could not do otherwise—shut our lecturers out from suitable halls on Sundays. Indeed, it is still impossible to obtain one for love or money.

When our artist obtained one of Mr. Hughes's photographs for a Cartoon, he remarked that it could not be improved; it was a perfect type of the sneak, and might figure as such in any physiognomical collection. This man of God, who has all Jack Falstaff's peculiar love of truth, without a scintillation of his redeeming wit, is perpetually crawling away from the consequences of his public utterances. He first indulges in light and airy evasions, that would hardly deceive an infant just toddling from its cradle; then, if pressed, he stands upon his dignity, and refuses to give reasons upon compulsion, even if they were as plentiful as blackberries; finally, he skulks off into pious communion with his God. And there we will leave him. Such a God is well worthy of such a worshipper.

G. W. FOOTE.

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MR. GLADSTONE ON THE LORD'S DAY.

MR. GLADSTONE has been called a "born ecclesiastic," and his wonderful activities, released from the turmoil of politics, appear now to be mainly directed towards theology. To the March number of *McClure's Magazine*, of New York, he contributes what that magazine naturally advertises as an important article on "The Lord's Day." There is certainly nothing original about the article, and its only importance, in my estimation, arises from the personality of the author. Mr. Gladstone, of course, upholds the divine authority of the Lord's Day, and even goes beyond the mass of his fellow believers in maintaining that the day should, after including works of necessity and charity, be entirely devoted to divine service. Could Mr. Gladstone have declared that he attributed his own intellectual vigor in old age to this use of the Sunday, it might have been an interesting question whether, indeed, Church attendance and prayers are as healthful as wood-chopping. But Mr. Gladstone only treats his readers to a dry course of theological argument, even while mentioning at the outset that among the forces employed in Sabbath defence there are important auxiliaries "who put wholly out of view the revealed sanction and the properly Christian motive." That is to say, the utility of a day of rest can be defended from purely secular considerations. Personally, indeed, I should uphold these as strongly as any Christian. Such a rest day belongs exclusively to no particular religion. It is found in all faiths. It existed in Judaism before Christianity, among Babylonians before the time of Moses, and among the Accadians before the Babylonians. As we trace it back we may note its lunar character and its connection with feminine periodicity. Beyond its religious dedication the observance of such a day of rest and recreation serves distinct purposes of social utility, and, indeed, separates civilised man from the mere savage, to whom all days are alike. The question between the Christian and the Secularist is not whether such a day should be retained, but how it should be utilised. Mr. Gladstone would devote it entirely to a deity, to whom all days must be alike, and who cannot need man's service. The Secularist would devote it to opportunities of health, study, recreation, and enjoyment, not possible to the masses during the dull drudgery of every-day life.

Mr. Gladstone, of course, bases his argument on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, which in this case, indeed, seems a mere shifting quicksand. The Earl of Beaconsfield once sarcastically defined Mr. Gladstone as an Italian in charge of a Scotsman. The wariness implied in the definition is displayed in the agility with which he glides from the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Lord's Day. He seems aware that he is on shifting ground. He says of the former: "It was not relaxed by our Lord, who lived obediently under the conditions of the older covenant, and whom we are evidently to understand, on some marked occasions, not as impairing the Commandments, but as protesting against and cancelling an artificial and extravagant stiffness in its interpretation." Now, the Jewish law declared death even for picking up sticks on the Sabbath. Was this "not relaxed by our Lord" when he said "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath"? Mr. Gladstone says: "Two changes have indeed been imported into this law; one of them into its form, the other into its spirit. The first has been altered, by translation of the Commandment, from the seventh day of the week to the first; the second, by imparting to it a positive and affirmative, in addition to its originally negative and prohibitory, sense." Now, what authority is there for this change of form and spirit? Not one verse, not one line, not one word can be quoted from the New Testament changing the day of rest from the seventh to the first day of the week; and a Jewish delegate to the Parliament of Religions had to tell that assembly that the orthodox Jews could never sanction such a change. Mr. Gladstone, of course, cites the usual texts from the fourth and latest gospel about the disciples meeting on the first day of the week. These texts, he says, "go far towards showing that among the Apostles themselves, and, therefore, from apostolic times, the practice of divine worship on the Lord's Day has been continuously and firmly established." Here Mr. Gladstone reads into the texts what is not in them. Not a word is said about divine worship. On the contrary, we read that for this purpose they assembled on the Sabbath, and I am unaware of any clear evidence of another practice until Constantine decreed the observance of "the venerable day of the Sun." The fact is, Protestants derive their Sunday from the Catholic Church, and that Church adopted the day held sacred by Pagan sun-worshippers. Moreover, the Catholic Church, in adopting that day, by no means invested it with the rigor of the Jewish Sabbath. So far from consecrating it entirely to God, Catholics usually hold that, the religious duty of attending mass having once been performed, the day may be devoted to innocent recreation.

The observance of the Christian Sunday being absolutely without any authority in the Christian Scriptures, why is it so frantically persisted in by the Protestant ministers and their supporters? It is to retain their monopoly of the day; to fill their empty pews and extend the power of the pulpit. For this they will go the length of erecting the authority of Moses above that of Paul or Jesus; for, despite Mr. Gladstone, it seems to me that Paul, in saying, "Let no man judge you in respect of Sabbath days," and Jesus in declaring that the Sabbath was made for man, did virtually cancel and oppose the legislation ascribed to Moses. But the freedom they would have allowed may be insufficient to-day.

The Jewish law is no longer suited to us, neither is the Christian. We want not only fires in our houses on the Sabbath day, but the refreshment of eye and heart by contact with the beauties of nature and the masterpieces of art. Those who ask that the people's libraries, museums, and art galleries shall be open on their one day of leisure demand no favor but simple justice. They do not propose that those shall visit or attend them who prefer to spend their Sunday otherwise. They only claim the right to go themselves when so disposed, and the denial of that right is a violation of liberty. To tax people to support such places when they have no chance of visiting them is flagrant injustice. Mr. Gladstone, in supporting the old-fashioned notion of the Lord's Day, is maintaining the interests of the men of God at the expense of those of the masses of the people.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE SUPERNATURAL NO GUIDE FOR MAN.

IN mentioning the term "supernatural" we do not commit ourselves to a belief in its reality; we simply accept the word as representing the belief of those persons who allege that they have faith in the existence of something besides nature. Our contention is that, supposing this assumed something exists, we know nothing of it, and, therefore, to believe in it can be of no service to the human race as a guide in conduct. We start from the fact that the natural we know, but of the supernatural we know nothing. Of course, as its name implies, the supernatural means something higher than nature—something above nature. But if there is a sphere higher than nature, and yet often breaking through nature, nature itself must be limited by something, and the question that at once arises is, By what is such limitation fixed, and what is the boundary line which marks it off and separates it from the supernatural? Further, supposing such a line to be discovered and to be well known, so that no difficulty could arise in pointing it out, a still more difficult problem presents itself for solution—namely, how man, who is a part of nature, and able only to come into contact with nature, can push his knowledge into that other sphere, which, being non-natural, cannot be at all accessible to a natural being? If the supernatural region be synonymous with the unknowable, it clearly cannot concern us, simply because we have no faculties with which to cognise it, and no powers capable of penetrating into its profound depths. In this case, as far as we are concerned, there is practically no supernatural, for none can operate on that sphere in which man lives and moves and displays his varied powers.

If there be a sphere where the supernatural plays a part and exercises any control, it must clearly be in some remote region, of which we have no knowledge; and the forces in operation must be other than those with which we are conversant upon this earth. Science cannot recognise the supernatural, because she has no means at her disposal for its investigation. She leaves to the theologian all

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useless speculations regarding such a region, contenting herself with reminding him that he is, in all such discussions, travelling outside the domain of facts into a province which should be left to poets and dreamers, and which belongs solely to the imagination. All law is and must be natural law, from a scientific standpoint, because we can have access only to nature. Even the most extravagant flights of imagination that we find, either in poetry or in the products of religious ecstacy, are always shaped in natural moulds, either as a whole or, what is more general, in their parts. An image formed in the human mind cannot possibly be other than natural, if not in its entirety, at least in the component parts of which it is made up. We can conceive of a centaur, though no such thing ever existed; or of a mermaid, though no person has ever seen one, these being creatures purely of the imagination. They are compound things, each part of which has been seen a hundred times, and are formed by blending a portion of one animal with a part of another, thus making an image which, on the whole, is unnatural, but the parts of which are taken from nature.

It is well known that all the great religions of the world were first floated upon the stream of time by an appeal to the feeling of wonder, and to a love of the marvellous, both having their basis in the belief in the supernatural. Christianity was no exception to this fact, for it is said that its birth was surrounded by supernatural manifestations, and that its earliest expounders were required to cast out devils, and to perform other extraordinary and, to us, incredible things, as "signs" that they were genuine believers. In fact, the claim of Christ and his faith upon the believing faculty was based upon the alleged departure from the known order of nature; the wonderful and the marvellous were considered evidences of the truth and value of the Christian faith. Fear was by far a greater factor in early conversions to Christianity than argument; hence Mosheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, says, in writing of the fourth century: "There is no doubt but that the victories of Constantine the Great, the fear of punishment, and the desire of pleasing this mighty conqueror and his imperial successors, were the weighty arguments that moved whole nations, as well as particular persons, to embrace Christianity" (p. 91). The same Christian writer further observes: "Multitudes were drawn to the profession of Christianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain and the fear of punishment" (p. 102). Lecky also states, in his *History of European Morals*, that "Christianity floated into the Roman Empire on the wave of credulity that brought with it this long train of superstitions and legends." Again, he says Christianity "proclaimed with a thrilling power the immediate destruction of the globe—the glory of all its friends, and the damnation of all its foes" (vol. i., pp. 397, 412). Thus fear and a belief in the marvellous were striking factors in early Christianity. But the slightest reflection should convince Christians that these factors can be no evidence of the truth of their faith; for religions that are proclaimed by the followers of Christ to be false have the same claim urged on their behalf.

There is no doubt that, by Christians, Jesus is regarded as being the highest type of the supernatural. We have recently shown in these columns that, whatever his character might have been, Jesus was no guide for mankind in their efforts to secure political and social reforms. But where is the evidence that Christ was more than human? He suffered from hunger (Matthew iv. 2), he yielded to the weakness of anger (Mark ii. 5), he gave way to passion (Matthew xxi. 18, 19), he lacked power (John v. 19–30), and he was limited in wisdom (Mark xiii. 32). If a supernatural being is such as is claimed for him, Christ should have been impervious to such human weaknesses. It is utter nonsense to sing:—

Impassive he suffers, immortal he dies.

If he were impassive, he did not suffer; and if he were immortal, he could not die. It would be impossible to kill the natural body of a supernatural being, for the best of all reasons—he would not have one to kill. The infinite can no more be contained in the finite than can the mortal exist through all eternity. To urge that Jesus had a double nature is absurd. To ally the human with the alleged divine would be to destroy the perfection of both; for where humanity is, perfection cannot be. Any conception of the supernatural, whatever it may be, must be different from a conception of the natural. To think of the greater being contained in the lesser, whether actual or imaginary, is impossible; it is not a mystery, as commonly stated, but it is a contradiction and an absurdity. Our minds are incapable of conceiving an infinite being that can exist and not exist at the same time; yet the supposition that Jesus was a God-man involves this unthinkable proposition. A supernatural power can be of no value as a guide to us, for as we are only natural we can follow nothing that is above or beyond.

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus are deemed the invulnerable rocks on which the vessel of scepticism is wrecked. But these two events involve innumerable features that do not admit of being formulated in words, so as to be comprehended. They perhaps present one of the strongest specimens of what is called the supernatural, and yet what effect can such events have upon the affairs of life? Wherein can they be a guide to us? Will the belief in their reality produce good government, promote social reform, or remove our wrongs, sorrows, and sufferings? To regard the two events as true will not lighten the burdens under which society now groans. The belief that a supernatural person had power over life and death two thousand years ago can be of no value to us at the present day in forming personal character. The power that is supposed to have sustained Christ, when he died to satisfy the justice and to appease the wrath of God, will not remove the injustice and wrath of man. If Jesus pleads for us in another world, that will not compensate us for his neglecting our welfare in this. Moreover, such pleading is vain if "the judge of all the earth" is all-wise and all-good; for in that case he would know what is best for his children, and would "reward every man according to his works."

It appears to us, therefore, that a belief in the supernatural is quite valueless for all practical purposes, and that it frequently causes much waste of time, while it also impedes human effort. CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

COMFORT OF ILLUSIONS.

A CHRISTIAN friend of mine the other day said to me: "I would not wish to give up my faith in religion even though it should be proved to be untrue, because I derive the most of my happiness and comfort from my belief in the protecting power of God and the expectation of an immortal life after my death here, in which I shall meet again my wife and children, and all the friends who have made life pleasant for me here."

"Well," I said, "there is no doubt that, in a certain limited sense, happiness is the main object of life; but can there be any true happiness derived from cherishing a delusion? Go with me to the State lunatic asylum and see how many of the unfortunate patients there are happy in the illusions that it is the business of that institution to cure. Is it not cruel in the State to expend vast sums of money to destroy the happiness of that poor woman who fancies herself the queen of heaven, and who lives in daily expectation of the coming of her Lord and husband to place her on her throne, to dispel her happy illusion and send her back to the sober realities of daily life, to hard work and household cares?

"Was it not cruel in Martin Luther to prove to the purchasers of the Pope's indulgences that those same indulgences were worthless, and that they would be damned, notwithstanding they had paid their money in good faith for salvation?

"We spend millions in missionary effort to destroy the illusions of the poor heathen, who enjoy their religion as much as the Christians can theirs, and who derive all their happiness and comfort from their faith in the power and favor of Mumbo Jumbo, or some other buggaboo as invisible and as impotent as our Jewish Christian Jehovah."

The happiness which should be the object of life is not the happiness that results from ignorance or illusion. There may be a selfish gratification in cherishing a delusion; but true happiness—that which should be the object of life—is the happiness of the race, the well-being of all mankind; and that is only to be promoted by

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knowledge, by dispelling all the illusions, and opening the eyes of men to the truth. All the progress the world has made in civilisation has been by dispelling illusions. All the arts which now conduce so much to our happiness disturbed the happy dreams of our ancestors, who found their happiness in doing without them. That we are not now grovelling in the ignorance of the dark ages is due to the light of science in dispelling the ignorance and illusions of men in the golden age of the Church. The people who now hug the delusion of a protecting God and an immortal life, because it makes them feel happy, would—had they lived three hundred years ago—have condemned the Copernican system of astronomy because they found so much comfort in the belief that the earth was flat and stationary, with God sitting immediately over their heads on the solid firmament.

Granting, for the sake of the argument, that the Christian is happy in believing in God and immortality, think of the suffering, the blood and tears, the envy, hate, and discord that that belief has brought upon the world. Think of the poor man, who can hardly earn enough to feed and clothe himself and family, obliged to deny himself the necessaries of life to feed and pamper a bloated clergy, whose goodwill he must secure or be damned to all eternity.

Think of the millions upon millions of wealth piled up in churches and cathedrals, around which cluster the close-packed tenements of poverty filled with wretchedness, filth, and crime, all the direct result of that religion which promises an eternity of joy in compensation for the evils it bids them suffer here. Think of the enormous revenues wrung from vice and poverty, used to prevent the spread of knowledge and to keep men from finding out the falsity and hollowness of the pretensions of religion. Think of the man who can find happiness in the belief that his little, contemptible soul is safe from the flames of hell, while nine-tenths of his fellow mortals, including his friends and neighbors, are to burn for ever in torment immensely worse than the imagination of man can conceive. When a man with a soul so little worth saving as this asks me not to take away his comfortable belief, he seems to me like the Thug who begs us not to make any law against murder, because he finds so much comfort in performing his religious duty by strangling his victims.

Was it for the sake of saving such fellows as this that God went to all the expense of sacrificing one-third of himself to the other two-thirds to appease the wrath of his whole? If it was, he was much more saving than the man who spoiled his jack-knife to skin a flint; though the two operations were much in the same line.

But do these Christians, who believe in God and immortality, really derive any happiness or comfort from that belief? If they do, it is not manifested in their faces, for they wear a look of woe that would eclipse the "knight of the woeful countenance." Perhaps they think they are happy, or try to make themselves think so; but their efforts are not as successful as those of Mark Tapley, who prided himself upon being jolly under adverse circumstances. If you find a professing Christian with a round, rosy, cheerful face, you may be sure that his religion sits very lightly upon him.

The bitter sorrow that weighs down our hearts when we lay away the dead we have loved and lost is not extinguished, nor is it even mitigated, by the belief that some time in the uncertain future—in some unlocated place in the endless realms of space—we shall meet again those who have gone before us. The yearning of our hearts is for the love and companionship of our lost friends now and here, in the shape and bodily presence that we have known and loved; and strive as we may to console ourselves with that problematical immortality that religion vainly offers, the feelings rebel against it, and we refuse to be comforted, till time—that heals all sorrows—has wrought its perfect work. It is a feeling common to all that lives—to the so-called lower animals as well as to man; and we are unfaithful to the truth when we cling to an illusion that all Nature repudiates, for the sake of a pretended consolation that never comes to us.

The philosophical student of Nature, who recognises the truth that all forms and individualities pass away, and that Nature, with her endless chain of cause and effect, alone persists, submits to the inevitable, and finds consolation in the reflection that his loved and lost friend or companion is past all contingencies of this uncertain life, that he is safe from all troubles, and has experienced his last of pain. He finds in his memory an immortal influence from his life communion with the departed, and recognises the truth that that influence will be eternally transmitted to all who come hereafter. He mourns, but he knows that he too must follow in the course of Nature, and all sorrow will end in that peaceful sleep that will never be disturbed by angel, trumpet, or the voice of an anthropomorphic God calling upon him to take his chances in a trial for heresy.

—*Independent Pulpit.* J. P. RICHARDSON.

CHURCH BELLS.

THE above is the title of a lecture given at the Victoria Armory, under the auspices of the Freethought Club, by Captain Robert C. Adams.

The lecturer began by asking why the church bells rang at five o'clock every morning. Was it to call the attention of the few who go to early mass? Thousands can go to concerts and theatres without any such warning, and in these days of dollar clocks everybody knows the time. Was it to praise God? Surely the infinite being has not so unmusical an ear as to delight in such jarring noises. Those who, on the Lord's day, suppress an orchestra and worship their God with bell-ringing pay no compliment to his taste. Noise is an accompaniment of barbarism, and the tendency of civilisation is always towards subdued sound.

In the distance the sound of bells is often musical, although near to they are distressing, and to invalids agonising. Father Prout refers beautifully to "the bells of Shandon that sound so grand on the pleasant waters of the river Lee," and to many the bells speak of "peace on earth, goodwill to men." The Church, the lecturer said, represents the current standard of morality. Religion improves with the advance of civilisation; for all religions, being of human origin, must simply represent the mental condition of their authors. It follows, therefore, that while the church bells speak of the moral sentiments of mankind, they also proclaim the frailties of those who cause them to be rung.

After giving due credit to the Church and to the Christian religion for much that is good in them, the lecturer went on to describe some of the evil things that the bells pealed forth. He spoke, in substance, as follows:—

(1) The bells ring: "No taxation. We buy corner lots, get police and fire protection, drains and pavements, and secure the increase in value caused by the growth of the city; but we pay no taxes, because it is God's property." In the Province of Quebec the Church possessions are valued at 150,000,000 dols. The revenues of the Catholic Church amount to 12 dols. per head of the population, whereas in France, before the revolution, the Church revenue was only 1.50 dols. per head, and this was felt to be cause enough for rebellion. About 10,000,000 dols. worth of Church property is exempted from taxation in the city of Montreal, and every man who pay 20 dollars in taxes pays over a dollar for the benefit of the Church. He is robbed of this amount, and robbery in the name of God is the meanest kind of robbery.

(2) The bells ring: "No recreation. Come to church all day on Sunday and every week evening. Avoid theatres and dances. Close all libraries, museums, and art galleries on the working man's day of rest. Stop all trains or boats that will take him to the green fields and the fresh air. We have the monopoly of the Sabbath, and man was made for us." Every year a bill is introduced into the parliament of Canada to suppress fishing, hunting, and games on Sunday; and the ministers of Montreal troop to the city hall, praying that the ferry to St. Helen's Island Park may be prohibited from running on Sunday. Can there be a God in heaven who does not rebuke the men who, in his name, try to rob babes of fresh air in order to drive the parents into their musty churches? Is there a greater infamy on earth?

(3) The bells ring: "Hell and damnation." They used to ring out loud and clear, but now the tones are muffled. They seem ashamed of the barbarous doctrines of ancient times, and they only mutter, in dull tones, the old curses upon unbelievers. Still, they keep up a pretence of holding to the old doctrines, though they are ignored by

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all the cultivated preachers. The churches are becoming merely religious fun clubs, and in the Young Men's Christian Association more men are drawn to the swimming bath than to the "fountain filled with blood." Still, they teach their adherents to despise and ostracise those who are too intelligent to believe in miracles.

(4) The bells ring: "Church domination over every relation. In birth, marriage, death, and burial call for the priest, and if you do not believe his teaching you have no legal status in the Province of Quebec." A child is not deemed to have been born unless a minister of religion certifies to it; he alone can legalise marriage, and he is expected to perform all funeral services. Any drunken loafer who believes what the priest tells him is a credible witness; but any educated follower of Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley, who is too honest to say he knows all about the eternal mysteries, is not allowed to give evidence in the civil courts of the Province of Quebec. Until Quebec grants civil registration of births and civil marriages, and abolishes religious tests, she stands disgraced before the world as an uncivilised nation. In 1893 the dominion parliament granted the right of affirmation to all who have conscientious scruples against taking an oath. Every liberally-minded man ought henceforth to avail himself of this privilege, and refuse to take the oath in the criminal courts or the custom house. By so doing he will help on the reform in Quebec.

(5) The bells ring: "Woman's subjugation. The Church has been the enemy of woman. Beginning with the mythical rib story and the infamous libel upon God, that he inflicted the pains of motherhood because of woman's transgression, down to the days of Paul, the Hebrew scriptures enjoin the submission of woman to man. She is told to keep silence in the churches, not to teach, and to be in subjection. All the movements for woman's political and social advancement have, in their early stages, been opposed by the Church. It has only espoused her cause when the success of it was almost assured, and yet women are the chief supporters of the Church, and but for them its oppressions would cease in a day.

So the bells ring on: "No taxation, no recreation, hell and damnation, Church domination, woman's subjugation."

What is the remedy for these evils?

The noise of the bells could be stopped by law. In France, except at certain hours, the bells cannot be rung without a permit; and a cure was arrested for ringing the bells at midnight on Christmas Eve. Voltaire suggested that the bell rope should be used to hang the sexton. But it is better to suppress evil by moral suasion rather than by legal enactment, and it is to be hoped that the growth of refined tastes and of human sympathies will put a stop to the bell banging.

The remedy for Church oppression is to destroy belief in the Bible, from which she draws all arguments for her authority. Men must learn that the Bible is merely a collection of Hebrew literature, and that the ideas that prevailed two thousand years ago are only to be accepted when they accord with modern science and the cultivated judgment of society. Until this book ceases to be used as an authority, its claims must be unsparingly attacked, and only when it is put on the bookshelves to take rank with Homer, Virgil, and Shakespeare, as a purely human production, can Freethinkers cease to indulge in "Bible banging."

But these reforms and all other reforms hinge upon the elevation of woman. Civilisation is manifested in a country by the position accorded to woman. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. Some may fear to give woman the suffrage while she is the tool of the priest, and shows her inconsiderateness by wearing a large hat at the theatre. But the vote is a means of education. If women are to think rightly, they must have equal rights with men, and equal pay for equal work. The greatest motive power in the world is woman's love. Men will do anything or be anything under that influence. The destiny of empires has often depended upon woman's will; but too often it has been the Cleopatras and the Aspasias who have determined the fate of nations. Woman has not used her power aright. Her reproach is voiced in the lines of Coventry Patmore:—

> Oh, wasteful woman, she who may
> On her sweet self set her own price,
> Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
> How has she cheapened paradise!
> How given for naught her priceless gift,
> How spoiled the bread and spilled the wine,
> Which, used with due respective thrift,
> Had made brutes men and men divine!

When woman wakes to the realisation of her power and the full use of her reason, the world's progress will be assured. The Shakers call God he—she, and say he was first manifested as a man in Jesus, and then as a woman in Ann Lee. It will be when upon perfect equality man and woman walk hand in hand, we shall see the world regenerated by the coming of "the Christ that is to be."

The lecture was enlivened by numerous anecdotes and narrations of facts in illustration, and frequently received hearty applause.

—*Montreal Saturday Times.*

THE TOOTING TRAGEDY.

In face of the intensely pathetic story which will probably long be known as "The Tooting Tragedy," the ghastly mockery of Christian Theism ought surely to make some Christian ministers ashamed of their teaching. So highly respected were Taylor and his wife that even the poorest of their neighbors were willing to help them in their terrible struggle with poverty and sickness. Yet the Christians' God looks calmly on while starvation and influenza drive an affectionate father and husband mad, and while, in his frenzy, he cuts the throats of his wife, of all his children, and, finally, his own, feeling, no doubt, even in his madness, that it were better that they all should die at once than prolong their miserable existence in a world in which they were *de trop*. Say the newspapers: "Taylor, when found lying across the body of his wife, appeared to be in the position of a man who had been praying. Nor is this all the doctors noticed. They found an open Bible—open at a page in Chronicles." Poor Taylor seems, indeed, to have died crying "O Lord, O Lord." But the Lord was as deaf to his despairing cries as Baal was to the frantic prayers of his prophets. And it is for teaching the ignorant masses to trust in this God that Christian preachers draw handsome salaries, while those who oppose such preaching are denounced as "infidels"!

Poor Taylor's troubles are now over. But millions are being deceived as he was. Deluded by the hopes of retribution in another world, where Dives shall change places with Lazarus, solaced by the splendid promises of a Christ who never lived, "tens of thousands and thousands of thousands" are dragging out an existence as miserable as his, while priests, sovereigns, and statesmen live in luxury. Well might Shelley say that Christianity is, chiefly, a means of deceiving and enslaving the people.

As was, of course, to be expected, Christian Socialists blame our iniquitous social system for the Tooting tragedy. But our social system is just what some 1,400 years of Christianity have made it. For fourteen centuries Christianity has been established; it has had all the power and, practically, all the wealth of Europe on its side. If, then, we have a state of society in which thousands die of starvation, while many seek relief from a life of misery in suicide, it is absurd to say that Christianity is in no way responsible. It is no wonder that so many are starved, when tens of millions of pounds sterling per annum are wasted on "the foolishness of preaching."

Andrew Liddle.

The Factors of Civilisation.

Science and freedom were the great factors of civilisation, or of progress in every kind of conceptions, sentiments, and social conditions: the first dissolved and destroyed the matrix of myth in which the intelligence was at first enveloped, and liberty, which was wholly due to science, made steady progress a matter of certainty. So that it may be said that the whole web of human history, so far as it consists in civilisation or the progress of all good things, of the arts, and of every intellectual and material achievement, was the conflict of science, and her offspring freedom, against ignorance, and the despotism which results from ignorance, under all the social forms in which they are manifested.—*T. Vignoli, "Myth and Science," p. 121.*

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PARSON AND SON.

A CLERGYMAN pompous, of countenance smug,
As befitted a pious exhorter,
Entertained black-clothed brothers, ten of them all told,
In his study with whiskey and water.
Now, this generous gargle his eloquence freed,
And the sins of this world he discoursed on;
But behind the sky-pilots his son Tom was sat
(A lad whom his sermons were lost on),
For, sad to relate, an Atheist was Tom,
And a by-word with him was "damnation"—
For somehow he couldn't, in spite of his pa,
Recognise Jesus Christ as "Salvation."
But he, nevertheless, with pater agreed
That snug quarters were good for the body,
And the holy crew jostled to get nearer the fire,
And passed up his glass for more toddy.
But the rector frowned at him with visage so stern,
And bade him get back from the fire,
For to elbow a parson was deserving, he said,
Of punishment speedy and dire.
Then hot words arose, and young Tom he was told
To go per express train to Hades
(A place, we're informed, full of brimstone and flames,
Not usually mentioned 'fore ladies).
At this mandate paternal Tom took himself off,
And for six months from home was absented,
Till one fine spring morning he turned up once more,
And himself to his father presented.
The good man inquired, "Well, where have you been?"
"Where you told me to go!" "And you found it?"
"Oh yes, but 'twas chilly; so I came away."
"What! chilly in hell! is that what you say?"
"Yes, for, like our own fire in the study that day,
For parsons I couldn't get round it!"

ALEX. MITCHELL.

ACID DROPS.

DR. DALE, of Birmingham, having fallen a victim to the fashionable epidemic, the religious papers have naturally been singing his praises; and, indeed, as clericals go, he was not a bad sort. The *Daily Chronicle* lauds his spirit of tolerance, and says he was just to "all classes of honest thinkers." Now we protest against that "honest." It is an epithet which covers any convenient amount of bigotry. There cannot be "honest" thought or "dishonest" thought. These terms are only applicable to *actions*. Men do not think as they would; they think as they must. The operations of the intellect are not subject to volition. This is a primary truth of psychology, and the denial of it has been the basis of all persecution.

The *Chronicle* is wrong in stating that John Milton extended toleration to all forms of opinion. He drew the line at Catholicism and Atheism. Milton was ahead of most of his contemporaries, but it is idle to assert that he was abreast of the more advanced ideas of the nineteenth century.

Clovis Hughes, the erratic Socialist poet, produced a Passion Play at the Socialist Maison du Peuple, in Paris. Jesus Christ was represented between the two thieves. The unrepentant thief twits him with not boldly preaching the right to live, and the Prophet of Nazareth replies that he tried to teach men to love one another; which, by the way, is a thing that cannot be taught at all, except by example. Jesus Christ says to the two thieves, "I bless you both," and the bad thief magnanimously says, "I forgive you." It is reported that this stuff was "listened to with reverent attention and loudly applauded."

W. R. Bradlaugh writes in the *Christian Herald*—one of the silliest papers in Christendom—that he still wants £150 to meet the costs of that Hall of Science libel action. "I fear," he says, "that, unless I obtain the balance in a few days, my home will be sold." He leaves it to be inferred that his "home" will be sold up by the "infidels." If it is sold up at all, it can only be sold up by his pious publisher, to whom he gave (or says he gave) an indemnification.

W. R. Bradlaugh wants £150 more, and his quondam friend Powell, who uttered the filthy libel that was branded by the jury's verdict, is actually stating at Sunderland that he (Powell) has paid the money out of his own pocket. What a noble brace of worthies!

Only a few subscriptions are acknowledged in the *Christian Herald*; even Baxter's gudgeons don't seem to bite at this bait. One subscriber sends half-a-crown "For Christ's Sake." Perhaps this is an abbreviation of "For Christ's sake, don't do it again." It is charitable to suppose that the subscriber doesn't mean "For Christ's sake, libel those Freethinkers again."

Our readers have heard of St. Winifred's Well at Holywell, which is declared by the Catholics, and believed by many Protestants, to possess miraculous properties. Places of this kind were once numerous, but only a few now exist to provide for a slackened demand. It is curious how miracles keep pace with credulity.

The water of St. Winifred's Well cures all manner of diseases, though it has no effect upon ignorance and stupidity. Samples of it are ordered from all parts of the world. The *Daily News* says that two hundredweight of it is posted every night in sealed cans to all parts of the United Kingdom, to America, and to the colonies. Silliness is evidently well-spread over this curious planet.

As Easter approaches there is always an extra stir among the Second Adventists, who placard the walls with announcements of Coming Great Events, including the positive reappearance of Jesus Christ, and the ascension of 144,000 Christians to meet their Lord in the air. A strong argument for the general insanity of mankind might be drawn from the influence of the nightmare of Cranky John of Patmos, extending right down through the ages unto the nineteenth century.

Sunday last being St. Patrick's Day, the Orangemen and Catholics at the South-end of Liverpool had a riot in honor of the occasion. Ultimately, the C Division of the City Police put a stop to the religion, when it was found that a number of the celebrants were seriously hurt. Four ring-leaders were made prisoners by the bobbies, and can now wear martyrs' crowns.

Prebendary Reynolds, in his report for last year on the Church Schools of London, gives some words of warning to the teachers. It is not advisable to tell children that the evening and morning of the first chapter of Genesis means twenty-four hours, for this teaching may afterwards have to be explained away. To teach that Adam or Cain or Abraham actually saw the First Person of the Holy Trinity is to contradict the teachings of the New Testament, that "no man hath seen God at any time." Also, it would be well to restrict the teaching of the Old Testament to the smallest limits in infants' schools. Prebendary Reynolds' report forcibly suggests that, after all, the old Jew books are not suitable for children.

Once more a member of the "Peculiar People" has had to appear before a coroner to explain the death of her child. The laying on of hands and prayer treatment, prescribed by the apostle James, were the only means adopted to cure the child of convulsions. Coroner Hicks said the "Peculiar People" were illogical; for, in the case of a broken arm or leg, they would send for a doctor in the ordinary course. It was, however, explained that in the Scriptures there were no instructions that God would heal a broken bone; but they were distinctly told to call upon him in the day of trouble, and he would heal the sick by the prayer of faith. They were told of no other remedy, and they adhered to the Scriptures.

The village of Greenford, Middlesex, has been excited over the strange disappearance of the Rev. Henry Treweeke Briscoe, the rector of the parish. All sorts of rumors have been afloat as to the cause of his absence, one of the chief of these being that the reverend gentleman has become so involved in financial difficulties that he has left the village for good, and taken up his residence in an obscure district of the metropolis. The living was worth £350 a year.

Anna Gould became the Countess de Castellane in the city of New York. She was married to the Count by the Archbishop of New York, having secured a special dispensation permitting her, although a Protestant, to marry in Lent, the holy season in which marriages are usually deemed unlawful, or rather improper in the Catholic Church. On the same day this marriage took place a poor Italian applied to the Cathedral rectory for leave to marry in Lent. His betrothed was ill and friendless, and he wanted the right to protect her from a stepfather. Her mother was dead. The dispensation was refused. Moral: If you want dispensations, see that your bride is wealthy.

According to the *Record*, a clergyman in a West-end church announced the banns the other Sunday in a manner calculated to lead to a breach of promise action. He forgot to perform the duty at the proper time, much to the chagrin of the affianced couple, who attended church specially to hear their names read out. The reverend gentleman remembered the omission before entering the pulpit to preach, and accordingly he took the banns-book with him

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The result was that he announced: "I publish the banns of marriage between John M——, widower, and Elizabeth N——, spinster;' and, without a pause or introduction of any kind, he then read out the text of his sermon, "And the last state of that man is worse than the first."

The fight on the Circular of the London School Board has begun again. In a preliminary skirmish Mr. Athelstan Riley boasted that his party had been returned by a majority in defence of Christianity. Reminded that they represented a minority, he added: "Their opponents had got a majority of votes, it was true; but whose votes were they? They were the votes of persons who sent their representatives to the Board to wreck Christian instruction." This shows the way in which Churchmen regard the Nonconformists, who were so religiously anxious for the compromise.

Pure, unadulterated Christianity is a very dangerous article. Emperor William, for instance, is a first-water Christian. His wife builds churches, though the people won't fill them; and her hubby is constantly talking pious nonsense, especially to his army and navy, which he evidently regards as the most religious departments of his empire. Some time ago he took it into his head that democracy could only be checked by "more religion," and in this he was perfectly right. Accordingly his Government brought in a bill to provide a further supply of Christian teaching in the public schools; the said teaching, of course, to be forced upon all children, even if their parents happened to be Freethinkers. Germany stands a lot from its emperor, but it couldn't stand this. The Reichstag kicked the bill out, and pious William had to put it back in the cupboard. Its introduction, however, shows what the Christian disease is when a man has taken it badly.

More recently a bill was introduced in the Reichstag, rendering every person liable to a fine of £30, or imprisonment not exceeding two years, who should openly attack religion, the monarchy, matrimony, the family, or property. This was a pretty wide net, calculated to catch all but the most sluggish and conservative Germans. The measure was severely denounced by the Liberals and Social Democrats, and the Committee appointed to consider it, by a majority of 13 to 12 votes, rejected this particularly dangerous part of the Anti-Revolutionary Bill. Thirteen to twelve, however, is a very narrow squeak. Freethought has escaped a great peril in Germany. It is obvious that Christianity and bigotry are still synonymous, if not actually identical; and that there will be no security for freedom of thought and discussion until "the Galilean serpent" is sent the way of all the dead pests of superstition.

"King-deluded Germany," under its present pious and military *régime*, is fast losing every shred of liberty, and it is little wonder that the most enterprising of its sons show a disposition to quit the Fatherland as soon as possible. At a meeting at Sondershausen, the other day, Herr Weiss, a Liberal member of the Reichstag, delivered a speech on the subject of the Anti-Revolutionary Bill, in which he said that, if the Church alone had had to decide scientific questions, we should not enjoy the achievements of modern astronomy. The earth would then still be standing still, and the sun with its satellites revolving round it. In consequence of these remarks, the meeting was dissolved by the police. This occurs before the Anti-Revolutionary Bill is passed. One may imagine what would happen if it was in force. Pious William is sitting on the safety-valve. When an explosion comes he will probably be lifted to the third heaven.

A compositor's slip brought the editor of a little newspaper, published at Intersburgh, Eastern Prussia, into trouble. An article appeared in the paper on the subject of the German Emperor's speech at Koenigsberg, and in it occurred the word "damahlig" (of or relating to a previous period of time). But the printer set it up "damlig," which would be "damnable," and, although the article was perfectly loyal, and even complimentary, in tone, the censor saw in the introduction of such a word an outrage upon the person of the Sovereign. Hence there was a police-court prosecution. The magistrate who tried the case acquitted the editor, who had, he said, acted in perfect good faith in the matter; but all the copies of the incriminated issue were ordered to be destroyed.

The Rev. E. A. Barker, of Ludlow, in following the footsteps of the carpenter's wife's son, amassed a nice little fortune of £156,000. For of such is the kingdom of heaven!

Christ, if living Christ indeed, should have mercy on his namesake, Paula Christ, a Viennese seamstress, who has been sentenced to a week's imprisonment for pawning linen, the property of her employers. For four years she has supported her old parents by her needle, and this cold winter the need of fuel prevented her from saving enough to pay the small rent. Her father and mother would have been turned out of doors, so she pawned the shirts she had been working upon to pay the sum owing. During all the bitter winter this girl has been paid at the rate of a shilling for each dozen shirts made. The judge asked her how long she took to make them, and she said that she had to work hard to finish them in twelve hours. One penny for an hour's hard work, and three people to keep out of it! The Court considered the theft to have been committed under very hard circumstances, and sentenced the girl to only a week's detention.

A poor woman applied at the North London Police Court for assistance from the poor-box. Her husband was ill, and she could not earn enough to support the family. She worked at the Salvation Army Laundry, where she was paid at the rate of 1½d. for washing a dozen sheets! Booth ought to have had his laundry women on exhibit at his Albert Hall reception, as an evidence of what he is doing for darkest England.

The *Daily Telegraph*, of Sydney (February 4), has a slashing attack on the Archbishop of Canterbury for his slandering the colonies in his attempt to bolster up the cause of religious education in England. It declares that the pretended statistics given by Archbishop Benson as a proof that secular education is followed by an increase of crime are "wholly imaginary."

It observes: "The facts are precisely the other way about, as throughout the whole of Australia there has, during the period, been a steady and consistent rise in the moral standard. For the last four decennial terms the crime record shows a continuous fall, the number of convictions being in 1892 only one-third of the total for 1861. Since the secular system of education came into use the rate of improvement has been fully sustained; especially so in Victoria, which has one of the lowest crime records in the whole group."

We felt quite sure at the time that Dr. Benson's figures were, what the Sydney *Telegraph* calls them, "grossly misleading"; and it shows how they are so: "It is only within the past ten years or so that Victoria has had a native-born element of the crime-committing age. In the days of denominational education the bulk of the natives were children, amongst whom convictions in the law courts were necessarily fewer than amongst the adult immigrants. They have now grown up, and prove no better or worse than their fellow colonists. But within their own ranks the percentage increase of crime by a reckless use of figures may be made to seem abnormal simply because it started from almost nil and reached the average."

"With these facts open to Dr. Benson in the official records of the colony," says the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, "there is no excuse for his hurling such a charge against a people who have not an opportunity of effective reply." "His example," it adds, "is a very poor argument in favor of the kind of religious teaching which Dr. Benson champions. The curriculum should, apparently, include special lessons upon the propriety of not going out of your way to meddle with other people's characters—at all events, until you have taken some little trouble to make sure of your facts."

The ministers of Victoria have discovered that, out of a population of 1,170,330, there are only 511,792 churchgoers. The Rev. W. A. Quick has, accordingly, been dilating upon the ungodliness of the colony; but the Rev. W. Strong says the fault is with the Church, and reminds Mr. Quick that Jesus never inculcated either going to church or keeping the Sabbath.

Twenty-one Buddhist clergymen have been appointed by the Japanese Government to go to the front and perform the rites of the Church for the dead and dying. Their principal duty will be to pray for the souls of the departed and attend to burial services. These reverend gentlemen expressed great interest in the clerical system of the British army and navy, the garrison chaplains, the warships' "sky pilots"—a term which quite took their fancy when explained.

Two poor women, a mother and a daughter, suffocated themselves at a small house in Railway-crescent, South Melbourne. The daughter left a written message or prayer. It begins: "Blessed Father, Loving Savior,—I humbly ask thy loving mercy and pardon for the deed we are going to do. I have not been able to get any work to do. I have not a penny in the house and deep in debt, and to see my darling aged mother turned out into the cold street without any money, and not to have any place to put her dear head into. Oh, God, it is more than I can bear." The only answer to this prayer was death.

Say! What conceited things they must be who imagine God answers their trumpery, formal prayers, put up when

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there is nothing the matter, while he leaves hundreds to drown and hundreds to die in coal-pits, whose prayers are wrung out of them by the agony of their situation! And what an execrable thing God must be to attend to the cry of the formalist, and turn a deaf ear to the affrighted and horrible appeals of the direst agony! Religion is a monstrous thing, and the Christian God the most ridiculous monster that ever was feared or worshipped.

The *Jewish Chronicle* (March 13) extracts from the annual report of the Cardiff Charity Organisation Society an account of some conversionists and converts in that town. The report states that, under the auspices of some benevolent Cardiff gentlemen, a Home for Jews was opened, and a person holding holy orders was appointed agent. There was an influx into the town of converted Jews, and the Society was desired to investigate. It found the records of these converts more than doubtful. One of them was travelling about with another man's wife; another received two valuable pictures for framing, and sold them twice, besides receiving money for framing them. Reports of other converts were not at all satisfactory. The record of the agent was found to be bad, and he had been summarily dismissed by a prominent London clergyman who had employed him in similar work. A considerable amount in subscriptions had been collected in Cardiff, and, so far as could be discovered, no adequate work had been done for it, and no account rendered of it. Despite these disclosures, the work of bringing God's chosen to Christ goes merrily on.

The *Jewish Chronicle* remarks: "Jewish ministers are unanimous in deploring the growing laxity of the community in regard to Sabbath observance, and in viewing this laxity as the greatest danger which has ever assailed Judaism." It points out that the difficulties surrounding the question are not easy of solution. "Certainly, pulpit exhortations have not effected any cure." God calls one way and Mammon another, and the chosen race are readier to listen to the latter.

In Brampton, in Chinguacousy township, Ontario, an entire family went religiously mad. The second son of a widow, David J. McClure, claiming to be Jesus Christ at his Second Advent, nearly murdered his mother in his efforts to exorcise a devil, and was finally arrested and lodged in gaol with his brothers. The whole family had indulged for some days in a wild orgie of religious exercises, singing, furniture-smashing, etc. These people took their religion undiluted.

A Buffalo despatch says that Henry Koehler, a clergyman aged sixty-two, was sentenced to the penitentiary there for twenty days for vagrancy. Koehler says he has lectured in many towns in Canada, and was married in Port Elgin to a lady now living there with her parents. He fell from grace by means of an old failing of his—drunkenness, but he had been sober for two days when he was unjustly arrested. Where is "the power of Jesu's name" in such a case as this?

New Facts is the title of an occasional journal issued by Mr. Britnell, of Yonge-street, who appears to be a disgruntled Salvationist, and sets forth a number of damaging statements regarding the Army. It is stated that on December 16, 1888, the *Telegram* census showed a total of 3,541 attendants at the various Salvation barracks in Toronto, morning and evening. On Sunday, February 3, 1895, Mr. Britnell says he caused a census to be taken, when a total of 318 attendants was found. We could wish that the street noises would decrease in the same proportion. Seven years ago, says Mr. Britnell, the membership in Canada was 40,000, and the *War Cry* sold 23,000. To-day the Canadian membership is 6,000, and the *War Cry* sales less than 10,000. "How the Army Makes Sceptics" is one of the headlines.—*Secular Thought.*

So many laws for Sunday regulation have been introduced into the Missouri legislature that a senator has capped them by moving to substitute for the original Blue Law measure the following: "*Section 1*—It is a sin to steal a pin, or shave a chin, on Sunday. *Section 2*—No one shall smile or think of guile, or wicked wile, on Sunday. *Section 3*—No one shall kiss a wife or miss, on Sunday."

Cardinal Kopp, of Berlin, has given his pronouncement against woman's rights from the standpoint of the Church. He says: "It is against the order of the world that the emancipation of woman should mean her absolute equality with men. God's will is that woman should be the helpmate. She is bodily unfit for man's work, and her emancipation, to the end that she might work side by side with man, would mean the deterioration of the Christianity that freed her from slavery and made her man's social equal. Unrestricted equality would mean woman's ruin." The Cardinal holds with St. Paul and St. Peter that the woman was made for the man, and should be in subjection in all things.

Hugh Price Hughes is "in hearty sympathy with manly and recreative sport." Perhaps he is, but he doesn't look it. We fancy he speaks more sincerely in saying that "the present craze for cricket and football is a sign of mental degeneracy such as marked the decadence both of Greece and Rome." We suppose it is not "a sign of degeneracy" when people flock to hear Mr. Hughes's platitudinous sentimentalities. We also suppose, as the reverend gentleman sees danger in cricket and football, that he finds "manly and recreative sport" in tops and marbles.

"Three Hours of Hallelujah" heads the *Methodist Times* report of "General" Booth's meeting at the Albert Hall. This is *not* a "sign of mental degeneracy."

Dr. Lunn, one of Price Hughes's bosom friends, complains of the paltry way in which British aristocrats support religious movements. Their cheques are hardly worth lighting candles with. Rich men in America are always helping on the cause of Christ. American millionaires give big subscriptions to the churches. Of course they do. It is a sort of insurance premium. American millionaires are no fools. They know that one minister is worth ten policemen. He keeps the people down without their knowing it.

Father Ignatius continues on the warpath. He has been referring to Archdeacon Farrar as "that awful man." If that is how he refers to so mild a heretic as "not everlasting but eternal hell-fire" Farrar, what would he say of the editor of the *Freethinker*? He would have to outdo the Billingsgate of Jesus in Jerusalem.

The *Christian World* complains that Father Ignatius denounces even those who "hold enlightened views of the Atonement." Surely good phrases ever were commendable. What on earth is an "enlightened" view of the Atonement? Can it mean anything but a *dishonest* view—something between the acceptance of orthodoxy and the rejection of rationalism?

The average missionary, according to the late Matthew Arnold, is a "grotesque" creature. He and his friends carry unintelligible doctrines to the poor "heathen." They also carry some very questionable morality. It seems necessary, to their narrow minds, that the "heathen" in hot countries should dress like Britishers; which is incidentally a good thing for the missionary's friends at home in the cotton and tweed business. Well, the poor "heathen" get dressed in these unsuitable garments; and the result is that they get hot, dirty, depressed, and finally diseased.

These good Christians are actuated by what they regard as a sense of modesty. They are nice people—that is, as Swift said, people with nasty ideas. They forget that the Old Testament patriarchs, God's especial friends and favorites, were not overburdened with raiment; that when Rebekah sat at the well she probably thought nothing of displaying more than half of a glowing bosom; that Saul had not much to do when he stripped to lie down naked with the prophets; that David showed more skin than coat when he danced before the ark; and that Jesus Christ himself needed very little stripping when he was hung up naked on "that fatal tree."

Robert Louis Stevenson blazed out at a Christian lady in Samoa, who had all her female native servants dressed in the European fashion. "Woman," he thundered, "is your mind so base that you cannot see and admire what is beautiful in the form God Almighty has created? Do you not understand that their own dress is right for the climate and their simple way of living? And do you not see that the first thing you do on landing on this beautiful island is to pollute their minds and sully their modest thoughts?"

Those simple Samoans, by the way, have nothing to learn from Bible-reading countries in the essentials of morality. They are gentle and generous, and even when they engage in fighting they do not abandon their gallantry. Miss Frazer, the authoress of *In Stevenson's Samoa*, relates that once, during a war, both sides stopped a battle to let a woman drive a cow over the field!

At the milliner's hung a hat very fair,
And Mrs. Blinker prayed for it.
The powers immortal answered her prayer;
But Mr. Blinker paid for it.

American men of God are a privileged species. They travel half-fare on all the railroads. It is reported, however, that the New York Central proposes to withdraw the clerical tickets on the ground of abuse. Ministers are alleged to have lent or even sold their tickets. Well, well! It is a hard world for most of us; and men of God must make a dollar when they can.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 24, St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street, Bristol: 11, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

March 31, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 24, Hall of Science, London; 31, Newcastle-on-Tyne. April 7, Sheffield; 14, Liverpool; 21 and 28, Hall of Science, London. May 5, Glasgow; 12, Dundee.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

E. G. TURNEY.—Your Christian friend who told you that Mr. Foote "would not meet the late C. Edwards in debate" has a romantic imagination. Edwards was never "put forward by the Christian Evidence Society." That Society has never put forward anyone, and steadily declines to do so. Mr. Engstrom, the secretary, will corroborate this statement. The statement that Mr. Foote is "afraid to meet Dr. Parkes" is very funny. Who *is* Dr. Parkes? We have never heard of him before.

W. CARTER.—"Lesson" doesn't rhyme with "blessing." Stick to prose. You do that better.

T. ELLIOT.—We deeply regret to hear of poor Brown's sad condition. No doubt his brain trouble had been coming on for a considerable time; it explains many things that were difficult to understand. Brown has been a hard and loyal worker for the Freethought cause on the Tyneside, and we should esteem it a favor if you would acquaint us with the financial aspects of his case.

F. FRISBEE.—(1) So far as phrenology is a science, it is open to study and acceptance by Atheists as well as other people. If the author you refer to says that "no Atheist can become a true phrenologist," he simply talks nonsense. (2) Dr. Aveling's *Darwin Made Easy* would serve your purpose. Mr. Forder sells it at one shilling. It is an admirable summary. If you want larger works, read Darwin's *Descent of Man* and Dr. Wallace's *Darwinism*. Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man* is largely a religious and metaphysical disquisition.

D. D. (Brisbane).—Thanks. Australian papers are always welcome.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—J. Brown, 2s.; Newcastle Branch, 18s.

W. C. R. (Wallingford).—Pleased to hear you derive so much satisfaction from the *Freethinker*. There is a Branch of the N.S.S. at Reading, but not at Oxford. The N.S.S. secretary (28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.) will send you, on application, printed forms about Secular burials and affirming in courts of justice. There is no Freethought circulating library. Several Branches have libraries, but not of that character.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Thanks. See paragraph.

H. GUTHRIE.—Sorry we must postpone doing what you desire. The libel case diverted our attention from Mr. Birrell's article.

J. G. BARTRAM.—Mr. Foote is writing to you.

R. JOSLIN.—Received with thanks. We shall refer to the matter at length presently.

W. CLOGG.—Your suggestion shall be considered.

MR. FOOTE'S review of Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* will be continued next week. His pen is active in other directions in this week's *Freethinker*.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Christian Herald—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Echo—Reynolds's Newspaper—Newcastle Chronicle—Open Court—Liberty—Twentieth Century—Crescent—Islamic World—Truthseeker—Newcastle Leader—Sunderland Echo—Secular Thought—Liberator—Post—Sydney Daily Telegraph—Brisbane Telegraph—Melbourne Age—Melbourne Herald—Isle of Wight Guardian—Harbinger of Light—Melbourne Argus.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

I AM desired by the Board of Directors of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited) to make a statement on certain matters in this week's issue of the *Freethinker*. Communication with the shareholders in a more private way would not meet the necessities of the case. Not only is there no time to be lost, but subscribers have an interest in the Hall of Science as well as shareholders.

First of all, I will say a few words about the Club. A few months ago the Club Committee persisted in allowing a professional boxing contest to take place in the large hall, in spite of the protests of the N.S.S. Executive and of the Board of Directors; on account of which, it will be remembered, the Executive felt obliged to suspend the N.S.S. affiliation to the Club. At the N.S.S. members' meeting, held early in January, the Club president stated that it was the Club which kept the roof over the heads of the Freethought party. This statement has been industriously circulated. It is far, however, from being true. The Executive has paid a great deal more rent than the Club, and for a much less extensive use of the premises. The Club's capacity for paying rent has steadily declined. During the past year it has only paid the Directors the sum of £45 altogether. Its occupancy terminates on March 25; and the Directors are resolved, so far as they are concerned, that whatever social element is to exist there in future shall be entirely confined to members of the National Secular Society.

I now come to a more serious matter. Some five months ago the Club Committee sent a formal, written complaint to the Directors about the state of the premises. Thereupon the Directors requested a practical builder to make a survey and report. This document was not very flattering, but it was repudiated by Mr. R. O. Smith (the vendor of the premises to the Society) as partial and exaggerated. An outside builder, not a member of our party, was then called in, who made a survey in the presence of Mr. Smith and myself. His report was of such a character that it was necessary to hold a special meeting of the Board. Mr. Smith attended, and, after stating that the report was as much a surprise to him as to the other Directors, he offered to forego £600 of the purchase money (£3,000). The Directors, however, would not agree to pay more than £2,000 in all; of which £1,400 had been paid already.

The matter was then left for me to negotiate with Mr. Smith, with a view to his interest in the lease being terminated, and the premises being closed for the possibility of a speedy rebuilding.

A friend of the movement, whose name should not be disclosed without his sanction, consented at my request to find the sum of £500 for the mortgage held by Mr. Smith free of all encumbrances. After some haggling Mr. Smith agreed (I have it in writing) to take £525 in cash and £75 in shares. The gentleman in question, under a good deal of friendly pressure from me, reluctantly agreed to the higher figure; but the prolonged negotiation gave him time to see the matter in a fresh light, and at the last moment he declined the responsibility for reasons I felt it impossible to confute. I was away at the seaside then with a sick wife. On my return to London a few days afterwards, I saw Mr. Smith again, and offered to raise the money in another way if he still adhered to the terms of our agreement. Two days later the Board received a letter from his solicitor, stating he intended to obtain the money owing to him or to realise his security. Since then all our endeavors to obtain a definite answer from Mr. Smith as to a revision of the original agreement have been fruitless.

Mr. Smith objects that we have not the money in hand to make him an offer; and we reply that we shall raise no money until we have a definite understanding in black on white.

It now remains for Mr. Smith to leave the matter as it stands, in which case the Directors have no alternative but to let him foreclose the mortgage; or, after admitting that the premises are not what he thought them at the time of sale, to consider the moral claims of our party as well as his own technical rights. Personally, I am not without a hope that he will be just; I would fain hope that he will even be generous.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had three capital audiences on Sunday at Nottingham. His lectures appeared to be highly appreciated. The evening meeting was specially large and enthusiastic. Messrs. Hooper, Anderson, Stapleton, and other zealous members of the Nottingham Branch were well in evidence; and friends were present from Derby, Newark, Beeston, and other places. Announcement was made during the day that the Branch had secured a hall for its regular meetings, the new course of which is to be inaugurated by Mr. James Hooper next Sunday (March 31). We hope the Branch will be well supported in this new enterprise. Readers of the *Freethinker* in Nottingham, who have not yet joined the Branch, should make up their minds to do so at once, and to give it both moral and material assistance.

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Mr. Foote visits Bristol again to-day (March 24) after a considerable absence. His lectures will be delivered in the large St. James's Hall. Unfortunately, the hall is let on condition that no discussion is permitted after the lectures. Questions, however, will be allowed.

The debate at Derby between Mr. Foote and Mr. Lee is definitely fixed to take place on Wednesday and Thursday, May 8 and 9. The subject for discussion is "Atheism or Theism: Which is the More Reasonable?" Mr. Lee, who has practically made all the arrangements himself, has the advantage of the last speech. He has also declined to discuss Christianity, which is the speciality of his religious propaganda; Theism being a system of belief that could be defended by a Mohammedan, a Brahman, or even a Jew, quite as well as a Christian. Mr. Lee prefers to take a position in which *all* religionists will be at his side. Perhaps it was this idea which made him, at first, stipulate the fantastic condition that a vote should be taken at the end of the debate, though he never explained what the audience was to vote upon. If he meant—and it was difficult to see what else he *could* mean—that the audience was to decide by vote whether there was a God, it was a piece of most peculiar and atrocious irreverence, to say nothing of its monstrous folly. Mr. Foote replied at once that he would never agree to such an absurdity.

The debate will not be a very profitable one to Mr. Foote. The Christians maintain laws which keep our party poor; their men have salaries, and ours have none; yet they are fond of stipulating that we shall gain nothing for the hard labor of a public debate, nor even be recouped for loss of time. A debate fell through at Nottingham because the Rev. George Bishop's committee would not consent to Mr. Foote's hotel expenses being paid during the time he would be away from home debating. Mr. Bishop lived at Nottingham, so this form of self-denial would have cost him nothing; the whole weight of it would have fallen upon Mr. Foote. The Nottingham friends offered to pay his hotel expenses themselves, but Mr. Foote said he would not connive at an act of barefaced injustice, even if he were as rich as Rothschild.

Mr. Lee's friends are not so bad as this. Mr. Foote, like the other disputant, is to be allowed his railway fare and the sum of two guineas for hotel expenses. The balance of admission money will go to the Royal Derbyshire Infirmary. Mr. Foote will not be out of pocket directly, but he will be so indirectly, as he will lose two days' time, in which he would otherwise be earning something towards the maintenance of his household. This is quite independent of whatever time may be given to preparation for the debate.

Since the preceding paragragh was written we learn that the debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. A. J. Waldron has been definitely fixed to take place in the Public Hall, New Brompton, on Wednesday and Thursday, April 17 and 18. The question for discussion is, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" The bills are already posted in the district, and the Chatham friends tell us that very large audiences are expected.

Mr. Charles Watts had a hearty reception at the Hall of Science, London, last Sunday evening. His lecture, "Theism Tested," "caught on," and was throughout enthusiastically applauded. A stranger spoke fairly in opposition, and volunteered the statement that he should again attend the hall and defend the Christian faith. Mr. Rowney made an excellent chairman.

Mr. Watts lectures again at the Hall of Science this evening (March 24), taking for his subject "The Birth, Reign, and Death of Christianity." Mr. Watts will deal specially with the why and wherefore of the origin of the Christian faith.

Mr. Watts has still a few copies left of Mr. S. Putnam's *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*. The work extends to nearly a thousand pages, and comprises scores of portraits of dead and living Freethinkers. Mr. Watts will send a copy carriage free for one guinea. Applications (with remittance) to 81 Effra-road, Brixton, S.W.

Mr. Symes is in trouble once more. He now has to appear before the Chief Justice of Victoria on a charge of contempt of court for some observations made in the *Liberator* on the finding of a jury. The case was down for February 15th, but we are unable to state the result. We wish our old colleague safe deliverance from all his enemies.

The ministers of Hoboken, New Jersey, did their utmost to prevent Colonel Ingersoll from lecturing in the local theatre. As a result of their united protest the Mayor was induced to issue an order that the theatre should be closed on the day of the lecture. The decree made much excitement and comment, and the corporation attorney gave his opinion that it was illegal. The Mayor had to ignominiously crawl down. Detectives were, however, sent to stop any blasphemous utterances. Ingersoll lectured as usual, and, when speaking of the savagery of the Bible, introduced the following: "There was enacted a statute in the State of New Jersey a hundred odd years ago, when most of its inhabitants were savages, which says that nobody shall ever discuss the Bible except on one side. Since then the inhabitants have grown civilised. They have grown to have a knowledge of fair play; they have been civilised to a degree where they can realise its absurdity, and to realise that the statute sleeps in the dimness of the past. It has now been invoked by a number of narrow-minded persons, who should have died three hundred years ago. I don't blame them; their heads are that shape, and they are not to blame."

The New York *Times* says of the Rev. Mr. Beatty, who made himself prominent in the attempt to stop Colonel Ingersoll from speaking at Hoboken: "His bumps should be felt by the common phrenologist under circumstances of the utmost possible publicity."

The New York *Independent*, one of the chief religious journals of America, now tells the ministers of Hoboken: "It is not well to pay any attention to such a man as Mr. Ingersoll." They may reply in the words of the Scotch song, "Ye should have tell't me that in time." The ministers of Hoboken found that out when too late, and the *Independent's* advice must come like a mother's scolding to foolish children who have hurt themselves.

The Committee who arranged the Children's Party are requested to meet at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening at 9 o'clock, to receive balance-sheet, etc.

The second volume of Mr. F. J. Gould's *Concise History of Religion* (Watts & Co.) has for some time been lying on our table for review. We hope to give it an adequate notice in our next issue. Meanwhile we commend it to our readers' attention. It gives an excellent account of Judaism and the Jewish Scriptures; and shows great care, thought, and research.

The Hull Branch of the N.S.S. desires to remind its friends of the forthcoming Annual Soiree and Ball, held on Monday next, Lady Day. Tickets (1s. 6d. each) may be had from any of the members.

The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, March 14, reports at length Mr. M. D. Conway's lecture on "Thomas Paine," delivered before the Literary and Philosophical Society of that city.

We understand that Mr. Conway's last Sunday's discourse on "The Story of St. Patrick" is written for publication, and will shortly appear.

Liberal governments are funny things. Mr. Asquith, for instance, said in the House of Commons that it ought not to be possible for the Lord's Day Observance Society, or any other body, to institute prosecutions on account of Sunday lectures; but he added that the Government had no intention of legislating upon the subject. We presume it is not the business of a Liberal government to remove an admitted injustice, unless the people who want it removed are strong enough to turn the government out of office if their wishes are neglected. Principle counts for nothing in itself; it only counts when allied with an obvious profit. Fortunately, however, Lord Hobhouse has introduced a Bill in the House of Lords. What an irony it will be if the Bill is carried in the Lords and shelved in the Commons! Let us hope it will meet with a better fate.

Mr. E. T. Gourley, member for Sunderland, has introduced the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill. Mr. Storey, who introduced it last session, is unfortunately not well. He backs the Bill, however, along with Mr. Maden, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Lloyd-George, and Sir Henry Roscoe. The schedule is copied verbatim from the Bill that was introduced by Mr. Bradlaugh in 1889. Mr. E. G. Taylor, who has interested himself so much in this matter, had an article on the general subject of the Blasphemy Laws in the February number of the *Westminster Review*. We were too busy to deal with it at the time, but we believe it will soon be reprinted as a pamphlet, which will enable us to atone for the oversight.

Mr. Foote's recent lectures at Sunderland seem to have made a great impression, and, in response to the urgent invitation of the local Branch, he is arranging for another visit at an early date. Meanwhile two Freethought lectures will be delivered at Sunderland, in the Co-operative Hall, by Mr. C. Cohen, on the afternoons of March 24 and 31. The chair will be taken at 3 on each occasion, and we hope our Sunderland readers will do their utmost to secure Mr. Cohen the large audiences which he deserves.

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EDUCATION OF THE CHARACTER.

PARENTS who put children into the world should give them a good education, as a means wherewith to fight their way through life. There are many who will the best, but who entertain erroneous ideas as to the means. Some think that preaching morals to the child will make it moral, while example set by the elders and surroundings is really the best lesson. Once it knows that the parents' suspicion is upon it, it will pursue the vice of which the parents are suspicious, if it has it not already. What love, confidence, and example cannot accomplish nothing in the world will. It is of no use trying to introduce evil to children, and to induce them to withstand it. Their untrained will is as yet too soft and bendable to resist it, and it will result in miserable failure. The only way is to keep them away from it as long as possible, and when the time has come that they have to face it, the parents should express their abhorrence of evil and tell the child what harm it does. The old notion that to spare the rod is to spoil the child is a most fallacious and pernicious doctrine. For the stronger to lay hand on the weaker is cowardly; wisdom cannot impart itself to ignorance by physical force; love cannot prevail upon ought by striking it; and the act of beating a child is a downright declaration of mental incapability. Fear may prevent wrong-doing, but, instead of diminishing the inclination to crime, it will increase it, and, besides, originate new incentives thereto—as hatred, spite, and a desire for revenge. A most abominable practice is that of lying to children, in order to evade awkward questions, or as a persuasive. It undermines the youngster's confidence in and attraction to you; it corrupts his sense of truthfulness, and ends in imitation.

Others deem knowledge synonymous with education, and think that stuffing a lot of dry science and arithmetic into the child will educate it. Now, learning is indispensable *per se*, but something more is required besides. As soon as the child can begin to move about, symptoms of a certain character, certain likes and dislikes, are displayed. Before education begins, the educator should study the child's mind and act according to it. More prominent faculties should be cherished the most, while the rest should not be neglected. Base, brutal, and evil inclinations are often engendered by foolishness on the part of the parents. They are often seen to promise reward for good and punishment for bad conduct, which tends to degrade the moral sense; instead of teaching them that good deeds bring their own reward, and bad ones their own evil consequences. It is, further, a general habit to qualm the little one's sorrow by a piece of sugar or a farthing. It seems very benevolent and innocent, and it looks, at the most, a paltry offence. But yet the result it carries with it is appalling. When the child grows up it will likewise seek to drown its sorrows in the pleasures of the world. To let the infant quietly cry out its grief will engender steadfastness of character and consignment to fate. Others, again, will teach their children to avenge themselves—to kick the stone they fell over, to hit the boy again, etc. The primary result is, that the little fellow is cooled, he and the parents are satisfied, and no more is thought of it. But a revengeful, uncharitable disposition is developed in the little mind, and the result which may spring therefrom is better untold.

There are obstinate natures to whom warnings and punishments are only enticements for continuance in wrong-doing. What should be done to them? Mental faculties cannot be destroyed, but they can—best without the child's knowing it—be gently led into other directions. Every evil principle has its corresponding good; and it is a peculiar fact that the mind of man can be led from one to the other, can be made to serve the one side or the other, without altering its especial characteristic. The mind which has an inherited inclination for hard-heartedness and cruelty may, by the guidance of a loving hand, be transformed into one with steadfast intentions for enlightening his fellow men, as Bj Björnson has shown us in his novel, *Det Flager*. The boy who roams about in the forest, climbing trees and robbing birds' nests, may be turned into a useful sailor or a naturalist. The little fighter may be guided to take a fancy to gymnastics instead. The youth who exhibits indications of lascivious tendencies may, by a tender hand and especial care, be moulded into a loving father and a true husband. A whimsical disposition may be pacified by regular habits and exclusion from too many conditions at one time, while a one-sided mind may be enlivened by more conditions and by being forced to quick thinking. So every faculty and quality of the mind is capable of being utilised for good, as it may be manipulated by the reverse. This process must be taken in hand by parents. The school-teacher has too many under his supervision to study their minds and train them individually. Besides, they are within his reach too short a time. The education of the character does not belong to the school. The child's mind is moulded chiefly at home and in the playgrounds, wherefore care should be taken by the parents to show it a good example and provide it with good surroundings.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

CONDITIONS OF THOUGHT.

PRESENT-DAY conditions of thought are decidedly more favorable to a legitimate exercise of the reasoning faculties than have been the circumstances of bygone ages. The times when the mind was fettered as well as the body, or when the mind was retained in bondage after physical freedom had obtained, have passed away, and to-day remembrance of the tyrannical influences once exerted over peoples militates against the continuance of the insane cry for a return of the "good old times." Thought, as a function of the brain, must have existed in every era since the beginning of the human species; but thought without means and opportunities for free expression has always been valueless. What are called the lower animals think, but to very little purpose, as they are devoid of the power to give articulate interpretation to their mental conceptions. Thus, in the remotest and darkest ages of the world's history, men have turned their minds to their proper accounts; their ideas on political and religious matters, and even their conjectures respecting things pertaining to science, may have been as cultured, as finely wrought, as those of men of to-day; how many of their theories were superior to ours, and how more beneficial to the world they would have been had they been told to others and put into practice, no one can tell. Keen intellects are of no purpose unless the productions of reflection can find an outlet into the world through the tongue or by the pen. The free expression of opinion was denied our predecessors by the powers that have been, and so to-day we are not benefitted by what they thought; we do not reap the advantages of their ideas. Our forefathers—with a few exceptions—up to a few hundred years ago, may as well have been oysters for all the legacy of thought they have bequeathed us. It can be seen, therefore, that a finely constituted and active brain is, to other persons than its owner, a non-existent quantity if the conditions do not allow of the publicity of its work. Thought, to be of any value, must be freely and openly expressed.

It has never been a sin to think, but it has been made a crime to tell the world the results of your mental deliberation. Nobody would dream to-day of seeking to prevent even an excessive indulgence in reasoning. From the pulpits and the clerical platforms comes the injunction to test every question by the standard of reason and common sense, it being claimed that the old dogmas and doctrines may be examined as critically as mathematical propositions; that the foundations of belief may be as rigidly investigated as a murder by a British jury; and it is further alleged that, out of these ordeals, the grand old religious truths will emerge unscathed and firm as ever, more fully prepared to resist the onslaughts of future doubts and errors. There are, however, in those indulgences in reasoning, examinations, and investigations, important conditions laid down, which it is necessary should be fully observed. They are willing to make the conclusions coincide with established conclusions; determination to preclude from consideration everything that tends to explode these conclusions; and, therefore, exclusive assimilation of those evidences whose testimony is on the one side. Oliver Wendell Holmes remarked that "theological students developed a third eyelid—the nictitating membrane, which is so well known in birds, and which serves to shut out, not all light, but all the light they do not want."

What else was the reprimand of Dr. Pusey to a doubter, "It is not your duty to ascertain the truth; it is your

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duty to accept and believe the truth as laid down by the Church," than a command to abjure reason and the dictates of conscience? It is only conventional thought that is allowed at the present day: "thought," the free expression of which can only be tolerated if it is conformist, bearing relationship to preconceived formulas. He who is so bold (and unfortunate) as to defy public custom, impartially examine for himself without deference to the antiquity or social power of the subject of his inquiry, forming his opinions according to his accumulated information, is taking the shortest route for ostracism, boycott, and calumny. Freedom of opinion is still a long way from enjoying a pleasureable existence.

Our reverend fathers, imbued with faith in the righteousness of their cause, or prompted by an ambition for dishonorable authority, seem unable to recognise thought as leading to opinions other than their own. The stubborn, asinine position which they take up on this matter is supported by wanton ignorance and dishonest affectation. Consider their hypocritical ostentation of dependence on thought and reason. Emerson deals most effectively with those who, with a pretension to intellectuality, virtually consider their cases with the end already agreed upon. In his essay on *Self-Reliance* he says: "I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his Church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that, with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution, he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister. He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation." What an ignoble position for theological teachers to hold at the close of the nineteenth century—forbidden to think for themselves. Untrammelled thought would mean for old creeds partial extinction; being created and forced on peoples by governmental systems without the sanction of investigation or reason, they would, if subjected to the influences of these forces in a more enlightened age, be instantly dismissed from the premier position in all sane minds. It is because the conditions of the time, even yet, do not allow people to think and express their thoughts with as much freedom on religious as on, say, political matters that the star of truth continues to be obscured by the cloud of error.

An amusing parade has been made lately of what is termed "religious thought." The adjective is convenient in enabling one to determine as to the nature of the mental process denoted. That those who are striving to monopolise thought are thereby doing the best that can be done to stifle true thinking altogether is as palpable as have been the efforts of the same party in the past to render reason and thought futile by causing the prohibition of their legitimate practice and expression. The only thought which they allow distribution is the thought that is conventional.

Orthodoxists make an impossible, absurd, and unnatural claim when they demand that thought shall lead all people in one direction. Were the mind independent of the body, as some would have us believe, it might be more possible to secure uniformity of thought; but the nature of thought must, to a large extent, depend upon the state of the brain, and the nature of the brain in turn must depend upon the state of the body. Thus, in no two persons can thought be identical; there must be a dissimilarity somewhere, as the conditions are not the same. As one writer has so pointedly put it: "If all people thought the same, it would be good evidence that they did not think at all." And so it is seen that the attempt to monopolise thought is an immoral one, and can only result in closing up the means of exit by which individual thought is conveyed to the outer world. The struggle for freedom of expression is really of far more importance than the fight for free thought; for that, as we have seen, has always been possible, and has only been rendered impotent by the prohibition of the methods of egress. Thought, in the first place, must be independent—if it is independent it will be valuable; and, as all the civilised advantages and blessings we experience to-day are but the outcome of the thoughts—obscure and frail at the time, maybe—of our predecessors, it is incumbent on the present generation to facilitate the conditions of that eternal source of good, so that in the times that are to come the peoples may cry and bless our memories because we made ourselves absolutely free men. "Every revolution," to again quote Emerson, "was first a thought in one man's mind, and when the same thought occurs to another man it is the key of that era. Every reform was once a private opinion, and when it shall be a private opinion again it will solve the problem of the age."

FRED WILSON.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—V.

THOMAS SCOTT.

FEW have done more valiant work for Freethought, in a quiet way, than the subject of my present sketch. Born April 28, 1808, Thomas Scott lived the life of a cultured gentleman and scholar. He had acted as page to Charles X. of France, and he travelled widely in all parts of the world. Having thoroughly investigated Christianity, he, in the latter part of his life, set himself to the work of enlightening others as to his conclusions. To this task he devoted his time, money, and talents. From his house at Mount Pleasant, Ramsgate, he began by issuing small tracts designed to aid the cause of free inquiry and free expression of thought. These were printed at his own expense and given away, mostly sent by post to the clergy and the cultured classes. Soon a number of writers gathered round him whose works he published and distributed, mainly at his own cost. Altogether, the pamphlets which he published made no fewer than sixteen good-sized volumes. Among the writers who contributed to the series may be mentioned Francis Newman, W. R. Greg, Dr. Willis, J. Cranbrook, M. D. Conway, E. Maitland, M. Macfie, C. Bray, E. V. Neale, J. Robertson, F. E. Abbott, Sir R. D. Hanson, W. Jevons, M. Kalisch, T. Lestrange, J. Muir, J. A. Symonds, P. A. Taylor, Rev. R. Suffield, Judge Strange, Dr. G. Wild, Dr. Zerffi, and Bishop Hinds. Thomas Scott was well called a prince of propagandists. He had always fresh irons in the fire, and the entire series of pamphlets were of the scholarly, cultured order, calculated to win the attention of those for whom they were designed.

As a specimen of his own incisive style, take the first of *21 Questions*, to which answers are respectfully asked from the orthodox (1865): "(1) As we are required to love our enemies, may we not safely infer that God loves *his* enemies? (2) If God loves his enemies, will he punish them more than will be for their good? (3) Would endless punishment be for the good of any being?" As an instance of illustration, take the following from his reply to Dr. M'Neile, the Dean of Ripon, on the Resurrection: "If any one comes and tells us that a man, like the cow in the nursery rhyme, jumped over the moon, or that he walked through a six-feet-thick wall, or that he could show himself and vanish at will, we should say at once that his statements might possibly be true, so far as his report of what he thought he had seen was concerned; but that, if it was true, then the creature who did these things was not made of flesh and blood, but had an organisation so entirely different from man that no points of likeness could be traced between the one and the other."

The principal work issued with Thomas Scott's name was the *English Life of Jesus*. The title shows it was designed to do for English readers a similar work to that which Strauss and Renan had done for Germans and French. Unlike more popular and pretentious Lives of Jesus, it did not attempt to build an edifice without the needful materials, but rather examined those materials, and showed that they could not consistently be fitted together. It shows, in short, that in the Gospels we have to do with legends and fictions, rather than with facts. The work was written in conjunction with Sir G. W. Cox, or rather, I believe, was founded on manuscripts by that gentleman, who, being a dignitary of the Church of England, could not afford to put his name to such a work, and preferred that the whole credit or odium should fall on Mr. Scott, ever ready to do anything for the cause of Freethought. In 1871 Mr. Scott issued a challenge to the Christian Evidence Society, but that body acted with their accustomed discretion, and Mr. Scott followed up his challenge with a scathing exposure of *The Tactics and Defeat of the Christian Evidence Society*.

In a farewell address to his readers, after fifteen years of work, which he published in 1877, Mr. Scott said: "The spectacle of millions of my fellow-countrymen bound hand and book by metaphysical and priestly exclusiveness made so painful an impression upon my mind that I felt irresistibly impelled to expose dogmatic assumptions and promote free theological inquiry as the undoubted right of all thoughtful minds." He entered on his task single-handed, but he soon made friends who rejoiced to help him in his labors. He says: "Expressions of sympathy with my design and offers of co-operation in the work reached me from what seemed to be the most unlikely quarters, and, for a considerable period afterwards, able and highly-educated clergymen forwarded me manuscripts for publication, con-

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taining attacks on the false bulwarks of ecclesiasticism, and expositions of absolute moral verities. Cultivated and earnest laymen, capable of dealing with the points at issue, also came forward voluntarily and contributed useful papers to the series." Essays on every branch of theology were issued "illustrating the unhistorical character of many Bible records, the gradual development of beliefs and ceremonies from Solar and Phallic worship to Christianity, the priestly origin of creeds, and the true inductive methods of investigation." In laying down his work he was able to say: "The persuasion gains ground everywhere that the only true orthodoxy is loyalty to reason; and the only infidelity which merits censure is disloyalty to reason." The seed, he says, may for a while appear unproductive. Mrs. Grundy is still strong. "But over all such untoward agencies the cause of freedom of thought and freedom of expression will certainly triumph; and every anathema of priests and denunciation by bigots will but tend to accelerate its progress."

Thomas Scott died at Norwood on December 30, 1878. In a memoir contributed to the *Liberal* of March, 1879, Mr. G. G. Flaws says: "His was a grand presence; tall, yet robust, with strikingly handsome head and face; in bearing, dress, and manners every inch a perfect English gentleman. Though fond of deluding himself into the belief that he was destitute of humor, he often chuckled with kindly malicious glee at some of his own *repartees*, and unconsciously manifested great powers of drollery; albeit, his wit, if used in writing—which it seldom was—would have barbed itself with sarcasm. He hugely relished the lighter sallies in others, particularly when, through pen and pencil, they waged war against the unrealities of theology and the creeds. No man more detested cant, in every form; no man more gloried in sincerity, both in himself and others. His was as purely transparent a soul as ever honored mankind."

No notice of Mr. Scott would be complete without mention of his wife, who assisted him in all his work with whole-souled devotion. She was a lady of great culture and refinement, in every way fitted to be the helpmeet and companion of one of nature's gentlemen.

J. M. Wheeler.

SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR.

In calm and trustful confidence the missionary sat,
While the energetic sexton was a-passing round the hat.
The services were over, and now had come the pause
To give an opportunity to help along the cause.

But vainly went the sexton teetering up and down the aisle—
In all the congregation no one recognised the tile.
The missionary's hat returned as empty as it went;
He'd been preaching to an audience that wouldn't pay a cent.

O'er the parson's face there flitted a disappointed look,
As from the solemn sexton his empty hat he took;
Then, smiling on the audience, he returned it to the rack,
With the words, "I'm very thankful that I've got my beaver back."

CORRESPONDENCE.

A SECULAR BAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I am afraid I have been too exclusive in attempting to form a band composed only of *members* of the N.S.S. I have correspondents who would help to form the band who, not being members yet, would be willing to join the N.S.S.

Will you kindly announce that all players are invited to address me if the idea of joining the N.S.S. subsequently is agreeable to them?

As to capacity, any one who can play, even if only fairly, will be welcomed, when once the thing is started. Practice will conduce to perfection, and will draw talent to our orchestra.

William Balsk.

8 Celia-road, London, N.

I hate this hypocrisy! It obscures from ourselves the measure of truth we really possess. Men put forth profession instead of belief, till they do not themselves distinguish between the two. They shuffle and confuse their own best faiths among articles of creeds to which they give a mere verbal assent.—*W. H. Smith, "Thoresdale; or, The Conflict of Opinions," p. 321.*

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Forder has purchased a number of copies of the second edition of *The Evolution of Christianity*, by Mr. C. Gill, originally published by Williams and Norgate. The work is a thorough examination of the Christian legends and doctrines by a gentleman who unites erudition and common sense. The savage character of the Jewish records, the belief of Jesus in his speedy second coming, and the destruction of the world; his failure to rise above the superstition of demoniac possession, the misreading of the Messianic prophecies, and the evolution of the doctrine of the Trinity, are all dwelt upon in disproof of the divinity of Christianity. The author, who had edited the *Book of Enoch*, also shows the indebtedness of the New Testament to this apocryphal book, which is endorsed by Jude.

* * *

To the members of the Thirteen Club, who are endeavoring to eradicate the superstition attached to that number by the easy plan of always sitting thirteen at a table, we commend the following from p. 253 of *The Perfect Way; or, the Finding of Christ*, written, we believe, by Edward Maitland and the late Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford: "The number 13, which, on the earthly plane, and before the 'crucifixion,' is, through the treachery of 'Judas,' the symbol of imperfection and ill-fortune, becomes, in the 'Kingdom of the Father,' the symbol of perfection. As the number of the lunar months, it is the symbol also of the woman, and denotes the Soul and her reflection of God; the solar number, 12, being that of the Spirit. The two numbers in combination form the perfect year of that dual humanity which alone is made in the image of God—the true 'Christian year,' wherein the two, the inner and the outer, spirit and matter, are as one. Thirteen, then, represents that full union of man with God wherein Christ becomes Christ."

* * *

No. 17 of the Humanitarian League's publications is *The Evils of Butchery*, by Josiah Oldfield (Reeves, 185 Fleet-street; 6d.). This book, with its illustrations by Mr. R. E. Holding, is calculated to be very disquieting to meat-eaters. Mr. Oldfield's own statistics, however, show that, whereas in the period 1831–40 80 lbs. per annum was consumed by each person, in the period 1881–87 the yearly consumption per head had risen to 98 lbs. Under these circumstances only fanatical vegetarians would seek to disparage the attempts to reform the barbarities perpetrated in slaughter-houses; and, despite Mr. Oldfield's strictures on the humaner methods, we fully credit Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson's statement that animals can be killed painlessly. What is needed is that public attention should be drawn to the subject, and the Humanitarian League is worthy of all praise for seeing that this is done.

* * *

Some time ago F. Brunetière, in a moment of weakness, after having visited the Pope at the Vatican, uttered the words, *Science is bankrupt*. The phrase was caught up by all classes of obscurantists, mystics, and religionists. Its absurdity is well shown in an open letter addressed to M. Brunetière, by an Hungarian, Sigmund Bodnar, of which a German translation, *Ueber den Bankerott der Wissenschaften*, is sent to us from Budapest. We hope the pamphlet will have a good circulation.

PROFANE JOKES.

Inquiring Boy—"Mamma, don't the little angels have a good time in heaven?" Mamma—"Certainly, my child. Why do you ask?" Inquiring Boy—"Because it says here in the Prayer Book, 'The cherubim and seraphim continually do cry.'"

A golfer who was not in the habit of playing his lofting iron with any measure of success managed, on one occasion, to send his ball particularly high, but very short. "That's a good loft," he remarked to his caddie. "Ay," rejoined the boy, "it's a gude shot—if the hole had been in heaven."

"I was sorry, Willie," said his Sunday-school teacher, "to see you keep your seat when the superintendent asked all those who wanted to go to heaven to rise. Don't you want to go to heaven?" "Yes'm." "Then why didn't you rise?" "'Cos he didn't have no right to tell me to rise, ma'am," answered Willie. "He ain't no angel Gabriel."

Mr. Meeks—"Mrs. Sauers must have thought a good deal of her husband to erect that stained glass window to his memory." Mrs. Meeks—"No; she did it to spite Mrs. Bloom and her daughters. The window is right opposite the Bloom's pew, and just see what a sickly yellow and green light it casts over them during the entire service."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "The Birth, Reign, and Death of Christianity." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, a lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Robert Owen." (Free.) Monday, at 8, Marlowe Dramatic Company. (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing. Thursday, at 8, committee.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Arthur B. Moss, "What do Christians Believe?"

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7.15, Thomas Stephenson (of Boston, U.S.), "Do Men Live After they are Dead?"

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Graham Wallas, "The Service of Mammon."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Folly of Prayer."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture; 3.30, a lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. R. Thompson, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?"

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street): 11, G. W. Foote, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, A. E. Rowcroft, "Æriel Navigation: Is it Possible?"

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, S. Ackroyd, "Ancient Monuments and Sacred History." Monday evening, annual soirée and ball. (Tickets, 1s. 6d. each.)

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Rhodes, "The Settlement of the Jews in Palestine."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "A Chapter of Evolution." (Free.)

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, social evening.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, J. A. Aston, "Astronomical Telescopes and the Moon"—limelight illustrations.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, Sam Standring, "Secularism and Social Life"; 7, "The Prayer of Faith." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 7, "The Holy Bible."

SUNDERLAND (Co-operative Hall, Green-street): 3, C. Cohen, "Christianity the Enemy of Progress."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "Secularism Defined and Defended."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—March 24 and 25, Derby; 31, a. and e. Tottenham. April 7, m. and e. Wood Green; 14, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 24, e. Camberwell. April 14, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, Clerkenwell.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—March 24, 26, and 27, Sheffield; 31, Failsworth.

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From the "Bradford Weekly Telegraph," Saturday, February 16, 1895.

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EXTENSIVE DAMAGE.

Early on Saturday a big fire took place in the warehouse, No. 2 Union-street, Bradford, occupied by Mr. R. Higgins, who occupies a large part of the ground floor, and numbers the following tenants occupying the other offices and rooms: Mr. Ernest Hahnel, Messrs. Schmidt & Co., Mr. J. W. Gott, Messrs. G. D. Wright & Co., and Mr. J. Pepper. The damage done is very extensive, and is roughly estimated at a figure between £8,000 to £10,000. It certainly cannot be less than £8,000, as many of the firms occupying the building had large and valuable stocks stored in the various rooms. Mr. R. Higgins had a big stock of woollens, stuffs and yarns, and estimates his loss at over £4,000. He is insured up to £4,000. Messrs. Wright & Co., stuff merchants, have had fully £1,000 damage done to their stock and premises, but it is completely covered by insurance. Mr. J. W. Gott, cloth and stuff merchant, had a stock valued at £1,500, and it is partially destroyed, chiefly by water. The other firms, with the exception of Mr. J. Pepper, have suffered in like manner, a lot of stock being destroyed by water. The cause of the fire is unknown, but, judging by appearances, it broke out in the packing-room of Mr. R. Higgins.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 13. SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

THE latest book about Madame Blavatsky is entitled *A Modern Priestess of Isis.** The title is by no means so happy as that of *The New Cagliostro*, chosen by Mr. Foote for his open letter to that lady. Madame Blavatsky, though she claimed to have uplifted the veil of Isis, sought rather to be the foundress of a new religion than the priestess of an old one. About this modern priestess there was no austerity and little reticence. She smoked like a chimney, slanged like a music-hall entertainer (which at one time she was), and swore like a trooper. Her oaths were as round and as finished as her cigarettes. Her Theosophy demanding celibacy for the perfection of occult powers, or perhaps, I should say, assigning non-celibacy as a reason to any one disappointed at the failure to obtain such powers, it was given out that she was the widow of a Russian General, and the Governor of Erivan, who had left her husband before the marriage was consummated. Really, she ran away some time after her marriage with N. V. Blavatsky, who is still living (although, according to Mr. Sinnett's untrustworthy *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, the marriage took place in 1848, when she was about seventeen, and he "something between fifty and seventy"), without any hope of ever obtaining the generalship or governorship she credited him with, and who had ample cause to consider himself well rid of her. "She had," says the author (p. 141), "the reputation of a priestess of Venus, rather than of Isis." Her early life has not been fully unveiled, and probably is as well left in oblivion. Certainly she had *liaisons* with many men.

The famous medium, D. D. Home, who knew her Russian career, speaks of her as of the *demi monde*, and mentions a *liaison* with the Prince Emile de Wittgenstein, by whom she had a deformed son, who died at Kieff in 1868.†

Madame Coulomb, in a letter to Colonel J. C. Bundy, editor of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, of Chicago, in 1885, asserts: "Madame Blavatsky is not Madame Blavatsky; she is Madame Metrovitch. I have known her husband in Egypt."

It was probably the success of D. D. Home, who performed before the Czar, and received a diamond from him, that turned H. P. B. to Spiritism, at the period of life when personal charms begin to fade. Certain it is that for many years she was in the medium business.

We gain sight of her in Egypt in 1872. The *Spiritual Magazine* of April for that year (p. 176) reports: "A society of Spiritualists has been formed in Cairo, Egypt, under the direction of Madame Blavatsky, a Russian lady, assisted by several mediums." *Human Nature*, of the same date, has a longer notice, and adds (p. 190): "If you should chance to see Mr. D. Home, medium, please tell him that a friend of his late wife, 'Sacha'—a St. Petersburg friend of past years—sends him her best compliments, and wishes him prosperity." Mr. James Burns wrote in the *Daily Chronicle* (September 12, 1891):—

"It may interest your readers to learn that I corresponded with Madame Blavatsky when she was in Cairo twenty years ago. She was then a Spiritualistic investigator of the crudest order, and enclosed a printed circular of her scheme, her quest being to find a physical medium who would go out there and give promiscuous *séances*—a practice which is discountenanced by all enlightened Spiritualists. She then knew nothing of the 'Mahatmas' or the pretended enlightenment of 'Theosophy,' or she never would have thought of opening a shop for phenomenal mediumship."

Madame Coulomb, who was with her in Egypt, has left the following account of her "spiritual" fiasco at Cairo:—

"I called again when the closet was ready, but what was my surprise when, instead of finding the kind spirits there to answer our questions, I found a room full of people, *all alive*, and using most offensive language towards the founder of the Society, saying that she had taken their money and had left them only with this, pointing at the space between the wall and the cloth, where several pieces of twine were still hanging which had served to pull through the ceiling a long glove stuffed with cotton, which was to represent the materialised hand and arm of some spirit. I went away, leaving the crowd as red as fire, ready to knock her down when she came back. Later on I met her again, and I asked her how she came to do such a thing; to which she answered that it was Madame Sebire's doings (this was a lady who lived with Madame Blavatsky), so I let this matter drop. I saw that she looked very unhappy. I called on her the next day, and on hearing that she was really in want I gave her pecuniary help, and continued doing so for some time."*

Prof. Coues makes the assertion that Madame Blavatsky was expelled from Egypt by the police. She went to Odessa, taking with her Madame Sebire, who abused her confidence so shamefully in Cairo. They started an enterprise of making some extraordinary inks. The speculation was unsuccessful, though utilised afterwards. At Odessa she sought to go in the Russian Service to India *viâ* Thibet, and her vain attempt to pass that land probably afterwards suggested the location there of the mysterious Mahatmas. She then went to America, landing at New York July 7, 1873. Dr. E. Coues says: "Her real business at that time was in the secret service of her government as a Russian spy, and she was instructed, as usual, to play any part that would divert attention from the facts in the case." One reason for visiting America may be stated in her own words: "for the sake of greater protection that the citizenship of this free country affords." Russian agents in this country and in India are usually naturalised citizens. The fact that H. P. B. was one was urged on her behalf when, upon her arrival in India, she was subjected to formal police surveillance.

Madame Blavatsky went so far in her American citizenship as to get married at Philadelphia early in 1875. Her husband's name was M. C. Betanelly. He was an American from Tiflis, and in business at Philadelphia. Why a lady who had hitherto shown herself untrammelled should have contracted bigamy, with one husband at least still living, is doubtful. Perhaps she thought that at the age of forty-four it is time to become respectable. She pretended to V. S. Solovyoff (author of *A Modern Priestess*) that she was unconscious or hypnotised. Olcott "was a witness at the wedding, and signed the register" (*M. P.*, p. 163). Perhaps he was hypnotised too. The married life of Mrs. Betanelly was brief and stormy. Betanelly scratched the Russian lady, and found the very cream of Tartar. He sought for refuge in the divorce court, and the public records of Philadelphia tell how he obtained it. About the same time the wife of Henry Steele Olcott also obtained a

* *A Modern Priestess of Isis.* Abridged and translated on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, from the Russian of Vsevolod Sergyeevich Solovyoff, by Walter Leaf, Litt.D. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co.; 1895.)

† Madame Blavatsky said she adopted a son to save the honor of a friend (see *A Modern Priestess*, p. 141).

* *Some Account of My Association with Madame Blavatsky.*

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divorce, and the careers of the joint founders of the Theosophical Society were linked henceforward. But I must reserve the story of founding the Society to a new chapter.

Had H. P. B. been only a vulgar impostor and *demi mondaine*, she would certainly never have attracted the attention she did. She was much more. She was a woman of great natural ability, great experience, and great force of character. She had the real secret of all magic—a determined will—and the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research, which sent a special commissioner to India to investigate her alleged wonders there, were constrained to report: "For our own part, we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history."*

J. M. Wheeler.

(To be continued).

MR. BALFOUR'S "FOUNDATIONS."—II.

(Continued from page 162.)

The Foundations of Belief. Being Notes Introductory to the Study of Theology. By the Right Hon. Arthur James Balfour. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co.)

Mr. Balfour's attack on "Naturalism" is not, in our opinion, very formidable. It is elegant in composition, but weak and almost commonplace in argument. After laying down the propositions that no moral code can be effective which does not inspire emotions of reverence, and that its power to do this cannot be independent of its supposed origin, Mr. Balfour proceeds to ask, What is the origin of the moral law according to Naturalism? The answer is given in a long and labored passage, not without a certain academical eloquence; an eloquence that extorts admiration for its cleverness, but does not (at least in our case) excite any higher pleasure. When all is said and done, Mr. Balfour's jeremiad is but an echo of the old complaints of Ecclesiastes. Human nature is frail, life is short, and the very existence of organic beings on this planet is but "a petty episode in the history of the universe." Evolution itself will end in devolution, and as the earth cools its living forms will deteriorate and finally disappear. What is still worse, from the moral point of view, every part of man's nature has exactly the same origin; everything springs from the same matter, and arises in the same process of evolution; so that it is difficult to see "why morality should be put above appetite, or reason above pleasure."

Now there is a juggle, and no very subtle juggle either, in the use of this word "above." Strictly speaking, it is a term of space; indirectly, or metaphorically, it is a term of classification; and as classification is a matter of convenience, it is hard to see why "above" and "below" should be denied to the Naturalist any more than to the Supernaturalist. Mr. Balfour is too clever not to perceive that, on the naturalistic hypothesis, "higher" and "lower" are really terms of value; and in ethics, as in political economy, value is determined by supply and demand. Appetite is not so rare as morality, and pleasure is not so rare as reason. What is most serviceable to the race, and at the same time least available, will always be regarded as most valuable. There is no reason, in what metaphysicians call the eternal fitness of things, why gold should be more valued than lead; it is the reasons that induce us to use gold for our coinage that make us place it "above" other metals. A higher utility gives a higher position in this case; and the higher utility of reason and morality to the human race at large, as compared with appetite and pleasure, gives them their relative positions in our ethical classification. A higher utility is really a wider and longer utility. There are circumstances in which an ounce of lead would be more useful than a ton of gold; there are also circumstances in which a little appetite would be worth any quantity of ethics; but these circumstances are exceptional, and do not affect the validity of the general law which they appear to contravene.

* *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. iii., p. 207.

Let us take another illustration from botany. The loveliest rose is supported by a stem, which is connected through a trunk with roots embedded in dirty soil. The rose cannot live apart from the stem, the trunk, and the roots; nor all of them together apart from the earth. In one sense, therefore, they are all on the same level. What is it, then, which gives the rose a "higher" position? Simply this, that it ministers more obviously to our gratification; not the gratification of one man here or there, but the gratification of all men with normal eyes and noses, in all ages and in all parts of the world. Mr. Balfour may depend upon it that no Atheist will ever value roses the less because controversial Supernaturalists cannot see why "one natural agent" should enjoy "a dignity or consideration not shared by all the others."

Mr. Balfour proceeds to deal with Determinism and Free Will in their ethical aspects. He appears to think that Naturalists universally teach Determinism, and that Supernaturalists universally teach Free Will; at least, the whole of his argument is based upon that supposition; and there was never a greater mistake. Mr. Balfour reminds his readers that, "on the naturalistic view, free will is an absurdity." Well, what was it on the view of John Calvin and Martin Luther? The fact is, whether you believe in God or in Nature, you are equally left to the reign of Necessity. Every logician has seen this. Those who have argued to the contrary have never understood the question.

Mr. Balfour, we should say, is not without at least a partial perception of the truth. He admits that "there is nothing in the theory of determinism which need modify the substance of the moral law," and that "no argument against good resolutions or virtuous endeavors can fairly be founded upon necessitarian doctrines." For which relief much thanks! But we soon find Mr. Balfour arguing that Determinism conflicts with the sense of personal responsibility. His ironical criticism, however, does not amount to an explanation. He does not tell us what he means by "personal responsibility." All through his book, indeed, he evades the "personal responsibility" of defining his terms. In the absence of definition on Mr. Balfour's part, we have only to remark that "personal responsibility" is just as real, and just as operative, if it is generated by the external influence of human society as if it were generated by the external influence of a supernatural ruler of the universe.

Mr. Balfour denies the Naturalist any rational devotion to Humanity.

> "Of the combination of causes which first converted a dead organic compound into the living progenitors of humanity, science, indeed, as yet knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings famine, disease, and mutual slaughter, fit nurses of the future lords of creation, have gradually evolved, after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to feel that it is vile, and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past, and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness, which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe, will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. 'Imperishable monuments' and 'immortal deeds,' death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had never been. Nor will anything that is be better or be worse for all that the labor, genius, devotion, and suffering of man have striven through countless generations to effect."

But is not all this a greater impeachment of God than of Humanity? If this is all that God has been able, or willing, to do on this planet, he deserves not our worship, but our hatred or contempt.

G. W. Foote.

(To be concluded.)

Adhere to your act and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant, and broken the monotony of a decorous age.—*R. W. Emerson.*

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THE SUPERNATURAL NO GUIDE FOR MAN.

(Concluded from page 179.)

THERE are doubtless many persons who sincerely believe in the supernatural; but it should be remembered that belief is not knowledge. It is quite true that we have faith in much of which we have no actual knowledge, and in every-day life we are compelled frequently to exercise such faith. For instance, we believe in countries which we have never seen, and in the existence of persons with whom we have never come in contact. But such belief is not opposed to knowledge, because proof could easily be obtained; whereas the belief in the supernatural is, inasmuch as no one pretends that he knows what the supernatural really is. We should always be careful not to take for granted, without proof, that which is improbable. If a man asserted that one thing was in two places at the same time, we should not stop to ask for the evidence that he had to produce, because no amount of evidence could serve to substantiate as a truth that which experience has shown could not be. There are many subjects which no amount of testimony could prove, simply because the matter is of such a nature as not to admit of proof.

The same principle applies to the belief in the supernatural. A man may tell us that he has seen a miracle, and that, therefore, he knows from experience that the supernatural exists; and he brings a dozen persons to verify his statement. Now, the testimony may be unimpeachable, but the conclusion arrived at perfectly erroneous. The event which he describes may have happened, but how is it to be proved to be a miracle? The forces in operation in its production may be to him unknown, and, while his evidence may vouch for the fact, the cause must be a matter for inquiry. The assertion that the forces producing it were supernatural is a gratuitous one, and utterly opposed to everything that we know. Belief should have a rational basis, or it is wild and chimerical. Faith is good in its place, but it must always be confined within the sphere of knowledge. A man can have faith in that which he never saw, and perhaps never will see; but the thing in which he has faith must be a possible one, or his faith is misplaced, and he himself deluded. In our opinion, faith in the supernatural is an unreasoning faith, pre-supposing a knowledge which we do not and cannot possess, since a knowledge of that which may lie beyond nature is an impossibility. The sphere of faith is legitimate enough, but it is not a sphere distinct from that of knowledge, but one which arises out of it, and should never go beyond it.

Even if it could be demonstrated as a fact that Christ, as a supernatural being, existed about two thousand years ago, of what value would that be to us? Daily, on land and at sea, men, women, and children suffer agony, privation, and some die heartrending deaths; people are struck by lightning and consumed by fire, and Christ renders no assistance. The sick pine away, the widow is disconsolate, the fatherless weep, and the poor die through starvation, and yet the supernatural Jesus helps them not. It is of no avail to us to be told that centuries ago he raised the dead; what we need now is the power to improve the living, so that life shall be relieved of the many evils which at present so sorely oppress it. But supposing Jesus did exercise a supernatural power upon the dead, he did not select the best subjects for the operation. Had he raised from the dead such men as Confucius, Aristotle, Socrates, or Plato, the world might have benefitted by the resuscitation. But he left these great men in their graves, and raised objects of no intellectual importance to mankind. We hear nothing of their service to society after their resurrection; it was therefore a waste of energy, and indicated, upon the part of Christ, a lack of good judgment.

Besides, the use that we are told the supernatural is to be put to in the future is not either useful or cheering. When Christ comes to execute judgment at the last day, it is said, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light; the stars are to fall, and the very heavens are to be shaken. He is to come in the clouds in great glory, and gather his elect from the four winds of the earth; further, the heavens are to pass away, and the globe is to be burnt up, while all unbelievers are to meet with a fate terrible to contemplate. The beneficent character of the supernatural will be entirely destroyed if it is employed, as we are assured it will be, to raise all from the dead, and then save only a few, while the many are to be assigned to eternal misery. To an intelligent, humane mind it would appear better to let the whole human family sleep on for ever than to awaken them, and then to doom the great majority to perpetual suffering. To believe that there is a supernatural power capable of doing this may be possible to minds that have been hardened by a cruel theology; but a being who could perform such revolting deeds would, in our opinion, be a demon, and not a loving and merciful Savior. To picture a supernatural being who could design and carry out such a diabolical proceeding is an idea so odious that we wonder any rational creature can believe in it. But, unfortunately, the belief does obtain, and our duty is to point out its monstrous character, and thereby lessen, as much as possible, its pernicious influence upon weak and credulous minds.

But it is said that the belief in the supernatural inspires hope of everlasting happiness. Suppose it does, the fact still remains that the orthodox supernatural theory involves the dread of everlasting misery, and the further melancholy fact that only a few are to experience that happiness, and that the many are to endure the misery. If it is said that the hope of heaven influences people to be good, the answer is that, if so, selfishness is the basis of such goodness. That is not the highest moral teaching that could be inculcated. Right doing should not be the result of the desire for merely personal reward in another world, but it ought to be prompted by the wish to improve the general community in this life. If Christianity has not the force to ensure upright conduct without its doctrine of rewards and punishments, then the faith is placed on a lower level than the old Pagan morality. Dean Milman acknowledges that, when the belief in the supernatural was at its height in the Roman Empire, morals were inferior to those that existed in the best Pagan times. And we have no doubt that, if the belief in the supernatural ceased to-morrow, virtue would still remain, and human affections would continue to adorn and elevate the race. Good deeds spring from the natural, not from the supernatural; and useful actions originate on earth, they are not importations from heaven.

Our aim is to urge upon mankind the importance of confining their attention to the known and knowable, and those are only to be found, so far as we can discover, within the domain of the natural. To indulge in idle speculations as to some supernatural power is to divert men's minds from the real business of life, and to take their attention from the study of those subjects which have proved useful in aiding the civilisation of the world. The belief in the supernatural is not only no guide to us, but it has led to strife, divisions, persecutions, and insanity; and further, even among men of intellect, it has caused incorrect thinking, loose reasoning, the drawing of false conclusions as to the facts of life, and the substitution of wild imagining for the realities of existence.

The believer in the supernatural talks of Jesus as though he had more than human love for man, and a superhuman desire to effect his welfare. The Secularist maintains that the same high and lofty feeling of philanthropy, of brotherly love, may beat in the human bosom, and needs only wise and patient cultivation to bring forth golden fruit. He declares that there can be no grander impulse, no loftier, more animating incentive, than an honest, steadfast desire to benefit the whole human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

Real Hell.

As the idea of a material heaven was doubtless borrowed from natural phenomena such as mirages, so too was borrowed the idea of a material hell from the volcanoes found along the Mediterranean, where the idea had birth. Affidavits have been made by sea captains and sailors, representing they saw the Devil bearing into a belching volcano a lost soul. E. G. Squier, in his *Nicaragua*, in describing the volcano of Masaya, says: "Some confessors have imposed no other penance than to visit this volcano." He informs his readers that priests are in the habit of taking their parishioners to the summit of an open volcano, with the surging molten lava in full view, and then telling them of the undying misery of those doomed to spend an eternity writhing in these lurid flames.—*Progressive Thinker.*

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WONDERS IN GOZO.

Is any reader so ignorant as not to know where Gozo is? I confess with shame that I never heard of the place until I read an article in the *Month* for January, 1893, giving an account of the wonders which have recently occurred there. The obscurity of the place, however, is no argument against the wonders. Many educated Romans in the first century had probably never heard of Nazareth or Capernaum. Lourdes and Knock were not celebrated until the Virgin and the pilgrims found them out. Miracles are usually done in a corner, and for them, as for kissing, a dark corner is best—Galilee or Gascony, or Mayo or Malta, near which island Gozo is situated, and, like it, afflicted by the scourge of English heresy, "a horrible monster dwelling at the very doors of the inhabitants, meeting them at every turn, and which they detest with a passion which rules their lives."

Notwithstanding this sacrilegious environment, the suitability of the Gozitans to receive a divine revelation is indisputable. In their goodness (shown by their poverty and hatred of heresy) "there is a simplicity which is beautifully child-like, and which probably attracted Our Lady's favors to them." Now—as of old—the faith of a child is the passport to the kingdom of Heaven.

In this pious island there is, or was in 1883, a little chapel containing a picture of the Assumption of the Virgin, "borne up on the heads of three cherubs," and steadied by "four angels, two on either hand." The place is so remote that Mass was rarely said there; but the country people, especially the women, went in to pray occasionally. "Lord bless their little hearts, they thinks it's all right, and don't know no better; but they're the victims o' gammon," to quote the words of Mr. Weller, senior.

One of these "victims" in Gozo, named Carmela Grima, was passing the sanctuary in June, 1883, "reciting certain favorite prayers," when she heard a voice saying, "Come! Come! Come! Come to-day, for you will not be able to come back for a whole year." She accordingly entered the chapel and knelt before the picture, from which the same voice spoke again, and said: "Say three Hail Marys in honor of the three days that my body remained in the tomb." The words do not seem remarkable, but it is presumption to judge a message from heaven. . . . . Carmela repeated the invocations, and, as no more was said, she departed, and, in obedience to the "heavenly vision," did not return for a year. What is more remarkable in a woman, she for two years kept silence about what she had heard.

This silence, which, as the writer in the *Month* remarks, "has something of the supernatural about it," she at last broke. "She was moved to open her heart to a youth of holy life, named Francesco Portelli, who shared her devotion to Our Lady. When she asked him whether he ever heard anything unusual while praying before her picture, during his frequent visits to the sanctuary, he told her in confidence that on six different occasions Our Lady had spoken to him from her picture, and had exhorted him to have great devotion to the 'wounds on our Lord's shoulder, caused by bearing the Cross.'"

Francesco was not able to keep a secret so well as Carmela. His hints concerning the loquacious picture, which, however, was somewhat monotonous in its communications (like the four beasts in the Apocalypse, Rev. iv. 8), caused "vague rumors to spread themselves abroad." "A spontaneous, irresistible burst of devotion ran over the whole island like wildfire . . . . the field adjoining the chapel was black with the kneeling multitude." It was now high time for the Church to "regulate the devotion"—*i.e.*, to secure its share of the spoil. Carmela and Francesco were examined before the Bishop. The woman readily told what she had heard or imagined. The youth was very reticent, "and confined himself to briefly answering the questions put to him on oath." The difference is significant. Carmela was a sincere fanatic, crazed with hard work, praying, and fasting. Francesco was a clever rogue, who knew that his testimony would be more valuable if reluctantly given. On a subsequent occasion, in 1890, Carmela disclosed to the Bishop further revelations, "several of which are reported to take the form of prophecies." These, however, "remain sealed and locked up from public view" (no doubt awaiting their fulfilment), like the utterances of the "Seven thunders" in the Revelation (Rev. x. 4).

"The graces, both spiritual and temporal," which, of course, have followed, "disprove the theory which may occur to the English reader that the story was a fabrication" (or a delusion?) of Carmela and Francesco. "Of these graces—the cures professedly miraculous—a register has been kept by order of the Bishop, after careful examination on oath." "Therein may be found many a beautiful story of faith and answer to prayer"—*e.g.* The first person cured was Francesco's mother, Vincenza Portelli, in November, 1886. She suffered from heart disease and dropsy in an aggravated form. The doctors pronounced her incurable (*cf.* Luke viii. 43). Her three pious sons—hers was a praying family—"recited the Rosary, and promised to light a lamp before the holy picture." The old lady was restored to health. It should be observed that this is one of the best authenticated miracles on record. It was deposed to on oath by Vincenza and her family. No doubt the doctors were questioned. The heart disease might be a nervous malady, curable by imagination; but what of the dropsy? Finally, it is published to the world within ten years, while all the parties, or at least most of them, are alive. Can we believe in the cures of Peter's wife's mother, and Publius's father (in the same neighborhood, Acts xxviii. 8), and deny that of Francesco's mother?

Somewhat less marvellous was the case of Maria Cutajar. She was in great grief because she could not nurse any of her children. She promised to offer her gold earrings at the shrine, and to visit it herself, fasting on bread and water. She felt an instantaneous change come over her, and clasped her infant to the breast. The milkman came no more to the Cutajar's door.

Our Lady of Gozo, like her son, could cure at a distance. "Some of the oil from the lamp, which was now always kept burning before the picture, has been the chief vehicle of Our Lady's healing power." An application of it to her teeth cured Maria Cefai of lockjaw. Carmela Sultana, whose hand was withered and paralysed, was cured by it. Saverio Busuttil regained the use of his limbs, Angela Borg of her eyes. Maria Caruana broke her hip; the doctors could not set it to rights on account of her age, but a prayer to a picture of Our Lady of Gozo cured her in a moment. Margherita Bartolo, a girl of twenty-seven, had suffered for eleven years from an internal complaint. The doctors despaired of curing her, and advised her to go to Valetta to undergo an operation. Margherita, however, like the anonymous woman in the Gospel, had spent her all on the physicians, and determined to try the Virgin, who was only five miles off. She had nothing to offer but "a Mass with a Sermon" (this does not seem a high bid), but it was enough; her cure was instantaneous.

"The number of *ex votos* (waxen effigies of arms, legs, eyes, babies, intermingled with crutches, surgical appliances, etc.) which cover the walls of the little chapel tell a tale of favors received, far more graphically than can any written record." (Where are the offerings of those who were not cured?) But the most pleasing signs of gratitude are the cases, in every part of the chapel, densely packed with gold earrings and other gold ornaments, "to be sold for the expense of building the new church which is soon to replace the present sanctuary." It was with such trinkets that Aaron, thirty-three centuries ago, constructed the Golden Calf. Has the world grown wiser in three millenniums? The delay in erecting the new church has been caused by the avarice of the owner of the land on which the old chapel stands, who thought he should share with Mother Church the "unearned increment" caused by Our Lady's communications. There is always a Judas or an Ananias in such cases. The law-courts, however, have decided for the bishop, and the only fear now is that the coming publicity may tarnish the isle "which is still radiant with the touch of Our Lady's choice." The footsteps of a Zola may one day pollute the sacred soil of Gozo.

One thought more, as the preachers say. Where does this record of folly, fraud, and fabrication appear? In a high-class monthly periodical sold at half-a-crown, and presumably read by the richer, if not the most intelligent, Catholics. Do the accomplished Jesuits who edit the *Month* believe in such stuff? I trow not. Why, then, do they publish it? I turn to the G. O. B., and find the answer in the words of an old Freethinker called Jeremiah, whom

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the authorities of his time disliked so much that they threw him into a dungeon: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land [Surely not wonderful, Jeremiah, however horrible]; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." So it is still. For one educated Catholic who would smile at the restored hip of Mrs. Ceruana, and the renewed lactation of Maria Cutajar, half-a-dozen "simple people" will be builded up in their most holy faith.

While supernatural religion exists there will always be fools who believe in miracles, and rogues to supply the demand. The wonders will be repeated which have occurred in Gozo, and Knock, and Lourdes, and Loretto, and Galilee, and Judea. JAMES A. RICHARDSON.

THE CONSOLATIONS OF BELIEF.

WE often hear the serene confidence of the believer contrasted with the anguish and doubt which are supposed to rack the mind of the sceptic. But what must be the thoughts of an earnest and honest Christian when he contemplates the fate of those near and dear to him in the light of the Christian doctrines of heaven and hell? Here is the testimony of one of the ablest commentators upon the New Testament, Albert Barnes. He says: "I confess, when I look on a world of sinners and of sufferers, upon death-beds and graveyards, upon the world of woe, filled with hosts to suffer for ever and ever, and see my friends, my parents, my family, my fellow citizens; when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and anger; when I see the great mass of them wholly unconverted, and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet he does not do it, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark, to my soul, and I cannot disguise it." As an honest man, Albert Barnes could not get away from the evidence that the doctrine of eternal torments was taught in the New Testament, as he believed, revealed by God; and he was equally unable to conceal that it was not in accordance with the dictates of his own reason and conscience. Where is the perfect serenity of such a faith? There was more serenity in those callous divines who frankly threw over all the humaner feelings of nature, and believed that with God they should rejoice in the torments of the non-elect. In Mr. Wheeler's *Christian Doctrine of Hell* there are many examples of such pious utterances, and I have culled a few more samples of Christian barbarity from the sound old orthodox sermons of the past:—

"When they (the saints) shall see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state and the state of others who were by nature, and perhaps by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than they, it will give them more a sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned it will excite in them a likely and admiring sense of the grace of God, in making them so to differ. The sight of hell's torments will exalt the happiness of the saints for ever."—*Rev. Nathanael Emmons' "Sermons," xi.*

"The happiness of the elect in heaven will, in part, consist in witnessing the torments of the damned in hell. And among these it may be their own children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends on earth. One part of the business of the blessed is to celebrate the doctrine of reprobation. While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking the part of those miserable objects, will say, 'Amen, hallelujah, praise the Lord.'"—*Rev. N. Emmons' "Sermons," xvi.*

"When the damned have drunken down whole draughts of brimstone one day, they must do the same another day. The eye shall be tormented with the sight of devils, the ears with the hideous yellings and outcries of the *damned* in flames, the nostrils shall be smothered, as it were, with brimstone; the tongue, the hand, the foot, and every part, shall *fry* in *flames*."—*Rev. I. Ambrose's Discourse on "Doomsday."*

"The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the judge in the condemnation of her ungodly husband. The godly husband shall say amen to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom. The godly parents shall say hallelujah at the passing of the sentence of their ungodly child. And the godly child shall from the heart approve the damnation of his wicked parents who begot him, and the mother who bore him."—*Rev. Thomas Boston's "Fourfold State," p. 333.*

What is this but saying that people in heaven will be a great deal worse than those on earth? Who can derive consolation from such a faith? The idea of a hereafter in which but one sentient being, and that the worst that ever lived, should be tortured without purpose, because, if "for ever," it must be purposeless, is repugnant to any humane mind.

The contemplation of hell for any we love is calculated to drive people mad. It has led many into asylums. If people honestly believed such a doctrine, they ought to go mad. But they never realise hell as for themselves, or for those they care for. Hell is always for the uncared for, for the sinners; while the believers are the saints. As long as the doctrine endures, it will be a proof of the essential barbarism of Christianity, and Christians will do well to be modest in dilating upon the consolations of their religion.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

GEMS FROM LICHTENBERG (1742-1799).

(Selected and translated from his works by F. MALIBRAN.)

The works of Lichtenberg can serve us as the most wonderful divining-rod; wherever he makes a jest, there lies hidden a problem.—*Goethe.*

MATERIALISM is the asymptote of psychology.

The wooden saints have done more than the living ones.

I have played at times the Atheist in Society merely: *exercitii gratia.*

God created man in his image, probably means that man created God after his image.

Doubt everything at least once, even if it were the proposition: 2 and 2 makes 4.

Is not our conception of God but merely personified incomprehensibility?

There are plenty of people who can believe everything they choose to believe; what happy creatures to be sure!

I would willingly sacrifice a part of my life in order to get to know what has been the average position of the barometer in Paradise.

The world will get to grow so acute that it will become as ridiculous to believe in God as to believe in ghosts.

. . . . he was a clever youth, he was hardly six years old, yet he could recite the Paternoster backwards.

The almighty must be very fond of us, indeed; see how often he visits us in the shape of rain!

It is to the thoughtless veneration which people have for old laws, old customs, and old religion that we owe every evil in this world.

The death of a gifted and talented man produces upon me the greatest sorrow, because the world has more need of such men than heaven.

Man is, perhaps, half spirit and half matter, just like the polypus is half plant and half animal; the strangest creatures are to be found there where extremes meet.

I think it will be hardly possible to prove that we are the work of a supreme being, rather than that of an imperfect one, who created us as a pastime.

Is it not strange that most people fight so willingly for a religion, and yet live so unwillingly after the precepts it teaches?

I have read Heydenreich's *Letters on Atheism*, and I must admit that, contrary to the author's intention, the letters written by the unbelievers appear more powerfully written than those of the believers.

Already, for many years, I have thought this world might be the production of a subordinate being, and I have not been able to shake off this idea.

The men who invented the absolution of sins through latin formulæ are responsible for the greatest part of the corruption in this world.

It is really astonishing how we have come to base our belief in God upon obscure conceptions of causes about which we know and can know nothing, because all conclusions based upon an originator of the universe will never be anything else but anthropomorphism.

Dialogue: A.—"The nuns have armed themselves against unchastity not only by a vow, but also by strong iron bars on their windows." B.—"Quite so; but there would be no difficulty in making them break their vow, provided we succeeded in breaking the iron bars."

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What I believe forms so many Deists among thoughtful and intellectual people is the unchangeable laws of nature. The more a man makes himself acquainted with these laws, the more evident it appears to him that what now takes place has always taken place, and that it has never been otherwise, and that miracles no more happen now-a-days than they did in the past.

POOR PRICE HUGHES!

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes was announced to preach at Holy Trinity Church, Rockferry, on Tuesday evening week. It also occurred to two waggish Secularists, of Liverpool and Birkenhead respectively, that that very evening would, to them, be a most opportune occasion for paying the aforementioned place a visit for the purpose of making a critical survey of its architecture as it presented itself to them exteriorly. So there they betook themselves, but not before it had dawned upon their economic minds of the advisability of killing as many birds as they could with the one shot. And, miraculously to relate, it crossed their mental horizon of the existence of four hundred odd pamphlets that were safely ensconced in a cupboard on the premises of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. Pamphlets not dealing with the various styles of architecture, by the by, but copies of the famous one written by the President of the N.S.S. on "The Atheist Shoemaker and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes," etc.

In due time they arrived at their destination, secured the assistance of some youths, and thereafter addressed themselves—one and all—to the distribution of the said pamphlets to those bent on listening to the flowery rhetoric of the rev. gentleman. The pamphlets were gracefully and, apparently, gratefully received, the men carefully lodging them in their inner pockets, and the ladies deftly folding and afterwards securely clutching them, after the manner they do their purses—of course, going to church, they had wisely left them at home. Consequently, the pamphlets were the sole occupants of that safe and enviable position.

During the distribution one noteworthy incident transpired. Two men in clerical garb approached the side entrance, one being no less a personage than the notorious reacher of the evening; and will it be credited that the distributor at that entrance, with a temerity worthy of the Victoria Cross, tendered *the* rev. gentleman himself a copy! Whereupon he—well, meekly declined with a doleful shake of the head. The gentleman accompanying him, unparson-like, *gracefully* accepted a copy with the query: "Is this from Foote?" "Yes." "Thank you; we expected this."

I have not heard how the rev. gentleman acquitted himself that evening; but it requires no extraordinary acquaintance with physio-psychological science to aver that the knowledge of the fact of the distribution of that pamphlet among his audience would unduly involve a tremendous expenditure of energy in the endeavor to keep it from occupying the focus of his consciousness, even in the delivery of a sermon. Imagine the poor man's case as from the pulpit he espies from the pockets of the men the edges of the pamphlet jeeringly peering at him, and, worst of all, in their entirety from the graceful grip of the ladies, loudly mocking him. For well he knoweth the contents thereof. The singing has ceased, and the last note of the organ has slowly faded away. The text he is giving out, and, while doing so, has a haunting fear that, as he proceeds with the delivery of his sermon, he will be disconcerted by that blessed pamphlet, twisting itself, as it were, from beneath his pressure of it to infraconsciousness. He makes a desperate effort, and, hurrah—succeeds; and joyously he dashes along with a sweep of perfervid pulpit palaver. But, alas! a reactionary moment is at hand, and with lightning rapidity that pamphlet has twisted itself and proudly soars on the crest of the uppermost wave; then, in consciousness, and as a consequence, disarranging all his oratorical toilette. Another supreme effort at pressing it down; but again it is quickly uppermost, until, in sheer desperation, he exclaims with Macbeth, "Take any shape but that." Let us commiserate the poor man, for, verily, the way of the transgressor is hard.

Notwithstanding their visit, my friends are unable to acquaint me of the style of architecture of Holy Trinity Church.

John Roberts.

The world has been soldier-ridden and priest-ridden to death—the soldier in the saddle, and Jack priest on the crupper.—*Puck.*

Whoever is afraid of submitting any question to the test of free discussion is more in love with his own opinion than with truth.—*J. S. Mill.*

ACID DROPS.

Religious nuisances are hard to suppress; witness the longevity of Salvation Army bands. At Bingera, in New South Wales, the Salvation Army bangers and tootlers were voted "the boss nuisance in the district," and the municipality instructed John Plunkett, their inspector of nuisances, to take action against them when they next made a row in the streets. He did so, and the Salvationists went to law and got big damages against him; but he wouldn't pay, and the municipality wouldn't pay for him, so he is in prison for contempt of court. Happy Salvationists! The world is all before them where to choose.

Mr. James Monro, late Commissioner of Police in London, is engaged as a medical missionary in Nuddea, Lower Bengal. His antecedents cause the natives to look upon him with suspicion. Some even regard him as a Government spy. Such is the reward of piety in Bengal!

Jesse Hitchcock, driver of the Post Office mailcart from Leicester to Loughborough, has been committed for trial on a charge of stealing packages. When arrested he had eaten two packets of bridecake, and was just reading a hymn-book. Jesse Hitchcock's literary tastes will be accommodated if he happens to reside for some time in prison.

Providence works with blind impartiality. During the recent earthquake in Sicily a church fell in while the people were worshipping, and a number of persons were buried in the ruins. We commend this incident to the attention of Christians.

The Faversham Guardians have unanimously requested Miss Burgess to resign. She is the matron's assistant, and she was requested to go to the Workhouse chapel one Sunday and take charge of the girls during service. This she refused to do, and she explained to the Guardians that she had not entered their service as a Churchwoman, and that she disliked the Church service. She declined to give any assurance that she would not make a similar refusal if occasion should arise again. She has therefore to look for another situation, and we hope she will find one where the employers do not hire their servants "body and soul."

That delightful *répertoire* of religious trash, the *Christian Herald and Signs of the Times* (March 28), makes the late F. Douglass out to have been a very good Christian. It also gives a story of "An Infidel's Death-bed." The nameless infidel, however, was not converted. "He had," says the writer, "found it hard work to stupefy conscience, but he persisted in his effort, and he did it; and, as far as is known, continued an infidel up to the time of his death, like Voltaire, Tom Paine, and Shelley; and in such a case he is now with them, crying out for a drop of water to cool the tip of his tongue, in the abode of eternal despair." Well, even the *Christian Herald* has learnt that not all infidels are converted. Some day it may find they are not crying out either in the abode of eternal despair.

The correspondence in the *Church Times* on "Why Working Men Don't Come to Church" has brought out a letter from W. Carlile, the head of the Church Army. He believes in street services, and, above all, in the power of the magic lantern, "summer as well as winter," as a means of arresting the sinner and instructing the saint. "Make religion an entertainment" seems to be the modern prescription.

The *Liverpool Post* is responsible for the statement that a boy who is a member of a church choir, and whose father is superintendent of a Sunday-school, gave the following account of the origin of the Catholic Church:—"The Catholic Church was established by Henry VIII., who started the Reformation against the Church of Rome. Henry did not really wish for a reformation, but only started it to frighten the Pope, with whom he had quarrelled."

Our Liverpool contemporary appears to see that a little profanity is relished by ordinary readers. We see put amongst a column of its "Facts and Fancies" a story of a village Sunday-school boy in a farming district, who was asked by the minister how Jacob knew it was Joseph sending for him from Egypt; whereupon the boy replied: "'Cause he see'd his name on the waggons."

Prebendary Reynolds might have cautioned teachers against reading to juveniles the savage details of the wars of the Israelites, and such statements as "the Lord is a man of war." The Peace Association has been seeking to substitute a manual of their own on peace and war for the worship of naval and military heroes cultivated in some school books,

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but they will hardly effect their object while the Old Testament fills juvenile minds with notions of blood and battle.

Dr. Bilsborrow, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford, has been replying to Dr. Moorhouse, the Anglican Bishop of Manchester, on the question, "Was St. Peter Bishop of Rome?" He adduces the usual questionable authorities, and reveals the weakness of his case by contending that "Indeed, St. Peter might have held the Roman Episcopate, and held it to his death, without residing in Rome for one hour." The spectacle of these rival bishops belaboring one another on behalf of the claims of their rival churches is, however, an exhilarating one, and some Freethinkers may be found to exclaim: "Go it, Bilsborrow! Pitch in, Moorhouse!"

One point insisted upon by the Bishop of Salford, in his controversy with the Bishop of Manchester, is that "no writer, Pagan or Christian, Rationalist or Infidel, Protestant or Catholic, can be quoted who ever denied that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, until the time of the Waldenses, in the thirteenth century." But what nonsense is this. The Bishop would find it a hard task to strictly prove that the legends are of much earlier date than their denial, and there is the undoubted fact that, when the Christian Church was triumphant, there was no criticism upon its pretensions, or the critics and their writings were ruthlessly put out of the way.

The *Huddersfield Examiner* reports a "powerful and impressive" sermon at the Buxton-road Wesleyan Chapel by the Rev. G. Talalun Newton, of London, on "Elijah, the National Reformer." This godly hero of the man of God invited 450 priests of Baal to an open-air exhibition of miracles, jeered at them because they had no petroleum to make their sacrifices blaze, and, not satisfied with his victory, pursued his defeated rivals, shouting, "Let not one of them escape"; and thus roused the mob to slaughter the whole 450 in cold blood. Truly a fine hero and "National Reformer" to extol in the nineteenth century!

Hugh Price Hughes had a paragraph in last week's *Methodist Times* on "The Genesis of Great Ideas." We wish he would explain the genesis of that great idea of the "Atheist Shoemaker."

Mr. Hughes announces that the High Church party has captured not only Mr. Tom Mann, but also "Nunquam" (Mr. R. Blatchford) of the *Clarion*. We regard this announcement with very great suspicion. Mr. Hughes's "trustworthy" sources of information are generally of the opposite character.

A Welsh correspondent of the *Daily News* says: "All sorts of dirty dodges are being resorted to in furtherance of the anti-Disestablishment crusade in Wales. The Nonconformists, it is represented by the sponsors to these memorials, are about (if they can) to pull down the churches; tithes are to be appropriated for the erection of theatres; and churchyards are to be 'destroyed.' One lady actually had the audacity to ask a parishioner to sign 'the petition' without reading it, and she naively checked any thirst for knowledge in this respect on the part of her victim by covering the text with her hand."

Religious people, who identify the cause of God with their own, are nearly always unscrupulous. The names of Sunday-school children and ignorant old women were largely used to hinder Charles Bradlaugh from taking his seat as representative of Northampton.

The special correspondent of the *Daily News* says a postmaster had been asking one woman why she had signed, and it seemed they had told her that, if this Bill passed, any husband leaving a little money to keep his widow could never be quite sure she would get it.

The special correspondent of the *Daily News* says: "'How are you getting on with the petition?' a young Churchman was asked here in Aberayron, a day or two ago. 'Oh, getting on well. Get a good haul every morning when the tramps turn out from the workhouse.'"

Mr. Howell is cited as saying: "I hear that the arguments used in urging the people to sign the petition are that the churches will be demolished, the graveyards ploughed up, and that Popery will establish itself throughout Wales."

"I wished to be buried by the side of my wife in the churchyard," said one man. Somebody had convinced him that, if Disestablishment really came about, church and churchyard, with all their solemn associations, would be swept away.

"I am told," says this special correspondent, "that Cardiganshire families are all expected to raise, at least, one pig and one parson. It is, no doubt, a tradition that ought to be rejected as out of keeping with the reverence due to the cloth. Nevertheless, it affords a piquant indication of the feeling between Wales and her parsons."

A Lyons Roman Catholic paper, called *La France Libre*, has had a series of violent clerical attacks on the Freemasons of that city. Lists of names have been given, and employers have been exhorted to have nothing to do with those who were thus denounced. Among the persons thus brought into prominence is an organist at one of the Lyons churches, and the result was that he was dismissed from his employment.

The organist brought an action for libel against the paper, claiming 3,000 francs damages. A printer who is also aggrieved in the same way has brought an action to recover 2,000 francs. The case, which attracted to the court a large gathering of priests and friends of the clerical party, resulted in a verdict for the plaintiffs for the amount claimed, but judgment was postponed.

The Rev. W. Gilby Smith, rector of Dorsington, near Alcester, Worcestershire, was missing from his home, and, as a result of a continued search, a note was found which, it is stated, shows that the rev. gentleman contemplated suicide by drowning himself in the Avon. Subsequently he was traced to the river, a considerable distance from the rectory, and footmarks were seen on the river bank. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane."

The Rev. W. Jackson, vicar of Monks Kirby, was fined the usual penalty of five shillings at Lutterworth Sessions for not sending his boy regularly to the elementary school, of which he is manager. He pleaded that his boy was so advanced that regular attendance was unnecessary; but the Bench held that he must obey the same rules and regulations as people of lower station so long as his son remained in an elementary school.

More mejums in trouble! A dispatch from Dora, Ind., to the *Chicago Record* says: "Jacob Garnett's residence was the scene of great excitement when 'Professor' Henderson, of Anderson, and 'Doctor' Small of this city, spirit mediums, were exposed, and a free fight ensued. Garnett is a Spiritualist, and had invited Henderson and Small to hold a circle. The audience was treated to various materialisations, while tables and chairs danced, and spirits addressed those present in poor English. The little town was interested, and last night the attendance was larger than ever. During a spirit conversation Wilbert Teagarten struck a match, disclosing Henderson talking through the large end of a tin horn ten feet long, while Small capered around the room. The circle broke up, furniture was overturned, and Small and Henderson were knocked down and the tables piled on them; but they finally escaped."

The *Rockford Register Gazette* reports that William Whipple, of Sycamore, one of the wealthiest farmers in that vicinity, recently became violently insane. He had been attending a series of revival meetings at the M. E. Church at Charter-grove, and became impressed with the idea that he was the prohibition candidate for president. He was adjudged insane, and taken to Elgin. Revivals are as dangerous as brandy for the manufacture of insanity.

The *Dundee Weekly News* reports that the Glasgow police have received information of the death of William Dobbie (62), missionary, which occurred a few days ago under tragic circumstances. While kneeling in prayer at a prayer meeting he suddenly expired.

The Wesleyan missionary of Colon, the Rev. C. M. Clark, sends out a circular asking for subscriptions and gifts to a Boys' Brigade, the object of which is the advancement of Christ's kingdom by means of military drill. It is a truly Christian method, and shows the skill of men of God in raking in the shekels.

A *Daily News* leader mentions that in the diary of a young lady who went to a course on Biblical criticism were found these words: "The Elohist says, 'Oh, how awfully dull this is! Do look at that girl's bonnet.'" The Elohist certainly never said such things, and the remarks apparently attributed to him are a nineteenth-century gloss.

The clericals continue active in their opposition to the Religious Freedom Bill in Hungary. In the debate in the Upper House the number of votes for and against the Bill was level. The President gave his casting vote with the Ayes, in order that the clauses of the Bill might be debated. The first two paragraphs of the Bill were accepted by small majorities. When it came, however, to the important chapter removing all disabilities from persons professing no religion, the old fight began over again, and this section of

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the Bill was rejected by a majority of eight votes, a fact which will, no doubt, lead to the Bill being thrown out. The Liberal party in Hungary are decided that, if Religious Freedom does not mean this, it has very little meaning.

The concern of the Church for the real elevation of the people was displayed by the attempt of the Archbishop of Canterbury to thwart the new Sunday Bill, brought before the House of Peers by Lord Hobhouse. This Bill did not propose to repeal the intolerant Act of George III., but only to amend it, so that lectures on science, ethics, or literature might be delivered if not for the pecuniary benefit of the promoters. To this modest amendment the Primate would not give his assent, and the probability is that Lord Hobhouse's well-meaning Bill, if it ever reaches the Lower House, will do so in a maimed and lamed condition. Meanwhile Secularists go on with lectures as usual.

The late gale was accompanied with much loss of life, and God's houses seem to have specially suffered. In London the cross on the top of St. Thomas's, at Shepherd's Bush, toppled over. At Wolverhampton four pinnacles of St. Peter's were blown down. At Peterborough two pinnacles of St. John's, and at Newport Pagnal three pinnacles of the parish church tower, were destroyed. At Cambridge one side of the Salvation Army barracks was blown in, and at Nuneaton the church was much damaged.

A portion of the roof of St. Michael's Church, Bath, was blown off, and the pinnacle of St. Bartholomew's Church was blown down, and the front part of the building was so much damaged that the service had to be discontinued. At Ironbridge, Shropshire, a portion of the Wesleyan chapel was wrecked, and the service had to be suspended. Stirchley Church was also seriously damaged.

The parishioners of St. Botolph have been much enraged because they are powerless to secure the appointment of the curate, the Rev. T. S. Henrey, as vicar. The right of appointment has been disposed of by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster to a speculator, and they have treated the claims of the parishioners with scant courtesy.

The Bible belief in witchcraft and possession by devils survives in Clonmel, co. Tipperary, Ireland. Michael Clery, a cooper, and a number of other men, stand charged with having caused the death of Clery's wife. It appears the poor woman was suffering from influenza, which her husband and others believed was the effect of being bewitched. To expel the evil spirit, she was forced to swallow a decoction obtained from a medicine-man, and then carried to a fire and held over it by the men until she was so terribly burnt that her death ensued.

From the *North Bay Times*, which is sent to us from Canada, we cut the following instance of the effects of overmuch religion: "D. J. McLure, a highly-respected farmer, about three miles from Brampton, and his two brothers, have gone insane. They are in jail. It is thought to be a religious craze, for only recently they killed all their hogs and threw them away, believing the end of the world was near, and that food would not be required long."

A paper on "Ancient Chaldean Temples," in the *Echo* (March 25), says that in the early sacrificial code there is no mention of the sacrifice of animals, but only of such things as wine, fruit, bread, etc. In this respect it contrasts advantageously with the code of Jehovah, which was a system of wholesale slaughter. Judaism has been described as a religion of blood and thunder, in which the devotee offered the one for the fear of the other.

Lord Halifax, the President of the English Church Union, has been to Rome to confer with the Pope on the subject of Reunion. The E.C.U. boasts of 34,876 members, of whom 4,262 are clergymen. But these do not represent the English people, or even the Anglican Church, and their adherence to any scheme of union means precious little. What is noticeable is that, as the Church gets more Papistical, while the State and people remain Protestant, the time for the separation of Church and State palpably draws nearer.

The widow of Father Butler, D.D., Roman Catholic chaplain to the forces at Devonport, claimed his pension for herself and two sons. As she produced proofs of legal marriage, her claim was allowed. The *English Churchman* remarks: "We wonder are there many Roman Catholic priests in England who have imitated Father Butler's example."

One Christopher Jabarra, of Damascus, a gentleman who has visited England, has started at Cairo an Arabic weekly, entitled *Shahadatul Hag* (the Evidence of Truth), designed to unite Christians and Mohammedans on common ground. Commenting on this, the *Crescent* remarks that almost all the existing Christian creeds and Islam are as far apart as the North and South Poles. The Unity of God is the central doctrine of Islam, while the Christians are Trinitarians. Islam teaches that every child born is innocent at its birth, though liable to err in after years; but Christianity teaches the innate depravity of the whole race at birth from "original sin." Islam teaches that faith and good deeds combined together merit salvation; while Christians believe all good actions to be "filthy rags," and that salvation can only be obtained through the vicarious atonement of Christ.

The *Crescent* concludes by asserting that Christianity and Islam can never become one until Christians recant their blasphemy upon the one and only God by giving him as partners in his inheritance "the man, Christ Jesus," and the mysterious "Holy Ghost."

People make the Bible teach anything they please. Here is Richard Nagel, M.D., saying in the *Vegetarian* (March 23): "Whilst in the Old Testament (the Jews' Bible) meat as food held dominion, the New Testament (the Bible of the Christian) teaches a non-flesh diet." To make out a case, he refers to the Essenes, who are not as much as mentioned in the New Testament, and omits all reference to Jesus taking fish, meat and lamb at Passover; or to his saying, in a vision to Peter, when all manner of animals were let down from heaven in a sheet, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

At the suggestion of the Bishop, Wednesday in Ember week was observed in the Truro district as a day for intercession for home missions. There was a special service in Truro Cathedral, when the Bishop himself preached. In the course of it he told how, on a recent visit to his university, he noticed a tutor returning the salute of various foreign undergraduates. He (the Bishop) asked, "Who are those?" and the answer was, "They are Chinese and Japanese and Indian gentlemen, who come to study and to take a degree here." "Are they clever?" he asked. "Yes," he said, "they are clever with our cleverest." He said, "Do they become Christians here?" "No," the tutor replied, and his voice was still sadly ringing in his (the Bishop's) ear; "No, they are less Christians when they leave than when they come. When they come, Christianity is with them an open question; it is shut for ever when they leave us, for they have seen the Christian life in England, and they say, 'God forbid that we should be Christians.'" Jesus is reported as saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Church buildings and sites, in London alone, are calculated to represent a monetary value of twenty millions. Yet all this property is not only untaxed, but is totally unavailable to the public, who pay for it, at any other time save on Sunday during the hours of "Divine service." Surely public churches should be open as places of rest at all hours, and public churchyards be universally turned into gardens or recreation grounds.

We regret to hear that Mr. J. M. Headley's shop, at 21 North Howard-street, Yarmouth, has been the scene of a destructive fire. Mr. Headley is a well-known purveyor of advanced literature, and a wag in the local *Independent* remarks that "the Socialist and Secularist literature, with which the shop was well stocked, was hot enough to cause spontaneous combustion." Mr. Headley informs us, however, that the fire really broke out in the part of the shop where he kept the Christian literature. He suggests that the hell-fire in that department caused the conflagration.

Christian meetings "for men only" are only too common, but the Rev. G. A. Wilson, of Fuel-lane Chapel, Sowerby Bridge, has hit upon the new idea of meetings "for women only." We are puzzled to understand, however, what claim he has to address such meetings. Sydney Smith said that there were three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. Mr. Wilson, perhaps, addresses the ladies as a member of the third sex.

The meeting "for women only" was held on Sunday afternoon. Mr. Wilson's address is not reported. Reporters are generally males, and they were excluded by the terms of the invitation. In the evening, however, when Mr. Wilson spoke to both sexes, he warned his hearers against "wolves in sheep's clothing," the chief of which, he said, was Agnosticism. Mr. Wilson appears to regard himself as a kind of sheep-dog. We hear his bark, but we have little dread of his bite.

Jesus Christ, by the way, did not include sceptics among the wolves in sheep's clothing. The parties he denounced were gentlemen who made long prayers and devoured widows' houses.

A few Sundays ago a clergyman in Ireland made the following announcement: "Next Sunday, in this church, the Rev. Mr. ——— will renounce the errors of Rome for those of Protestantism."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 31, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London :—7, "New Light on the Old Book."

April 7 and 14, Hall of Science; 17 and 18, debate at New Brompton with the Rev. A. J. Waldron (C.E.S.); 21, Glasgow.

May 8 and 9, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—March 30, Blyth; 31, Newcastle-on-Tyne. April 7, Sheffield; 14, Liverpool; 21 and 28, Hall of Science, London. May 5, Glasgow; 12, Dundee.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Quiz.—A report of Mr. Conway's discourse on St. Patrick appeared in the *Echo* of March 18.

A. Mitchell.—Shall appear. We are pleased to hear that you have gained us three new subscribers during the past month at Sheffield.

Vincit Veritas.—Sorry to hear the Reading Branch is so quiescent. We quite believe there is plenty of good material for a strong society there. With respect to the other matter, you will perhaps read what we may have to say in our next issue.

W. Lake.—Thanks for the reference, and for your expression of sympathy.

G. Cruddas.—The pamphlets you inquire about were destroyed in the fire at our premises some years ago.

E. P. Schofield.—The best edition of Mosheim is Murdock's translation, edited by Soames, in 4 vols. Maclaine's edition is untrustworthy; it is, indeed, a rhetorical paraphrase of Mosheim, who is nothing if not "judicious."

W. Manley.—Thanks for the remainder. The matter is attended to.

T. Ramsden.—See paragraph.

T. Wise.—(1) You misread our article. We did not say that Mr. Bradlaugh had never lectured on Freethought in Northampton, but only that he did not (and wisely) lecture on Freethought there while he represented the city in parliament. (2) Nor did we say that there were only three Freethought halls in this country. There are several besides those you mention. What we said was that there were only three Halls of Science. (3) Pleased to hear from such an old Freethinker as yourself.

J. M. Headley.—Glad to hear that the *Freethinker* "sells like wildfire in Yarmouth."

W. Finedon.—(1) Sorry to hear of your illness and other untoward circumstances. We believe the Secular Hymn Book published at Leicester is now out of print. You could learn for certain by applying to Mr. Holyoak, Bookstore, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester. (2) Mr. Foote has had too many worries of late to find time for literary work outside the *Freethinker*. He hopes to enjoy a little more freedom in the near future, and will then complete the *Bible Romances* and other writings on which he was engaged before the N.S.S. business made such terrible demands upon his time and energy. (3) The comic bill you enclose appeared in our columns many years ago. (4) We should like to see more Secular activity at Southampton. A visit from Mr. Foote would perhaps do some good. We wish a few friends there would see whether a decent hall is obtainable on a Sunday.

C. E. Smith.—Mr. Wheeler has shown us your note. We intend to deal with the Professor Romanes matter shortly. The sketch you refer to has not been overlooked. We are waiting for an opportunity.

O. N. Weld.—Dr. Allinson was a duly-qualified medical practitioner, and is so still as a matter of fact, though not so according to the medical register. The doctors' trade-union, which has a legal charter, struck his name off the list because his heresies made other members uncomfortable. He fought the question on principle, and at great expense, though he was foredoomed to lose. You should read his essays, to which you make reference, before you pronounce a judgment.

A. Hittite (Austria).—The Jews may be nefarious in your experience, but, after all, they are human, and largely what Christians have made them. In attacking their charter we seek to neutralise the danger of which you speak.

William Balck, 8 Celia-road, London, N., is very anxious to organise a Secular Band, which might be serviceable at Freethought gatherings in London. It is an excellent object, and we hope it will be successfully realised. Mr. Balck has heard from some Freethinkers, but he would like to hear from more. Correspondents should state what instrument they play.

G. C. Walker.—Victor Hugo was not an Atheist; he might rather be described as a Pantheist.

J. R. Carpendale, 24 Dundas-street, Bradford, supplies this journal and all other Secular publications.

F. Bull.—Taylor's *Diegesis* would be of assistance. You can obtain it of Mr. Forder at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote intends to develop his lecture on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" into a good-sized pamphlet.

C. Dodd.—Mr. Roberts had sent us an amusing account of the matter. The clergyman who asked for a second copy of our "Atheist Shoemaker" pamphlet has probably ceased to be an admirer (except in the old sense of admiration) of Mr. Hughes.

E. Smedley.—(1) Pleased to hear your friends were so delighted with Mr. Foote's lectures at Nottingham. (2) Mr. Foote will be happy to arrange for a publication of his debate with Mr. Lee. He has already written to that effect. (3) Members of the N.S.S. have a perfect right to sell books by authors whose opinions they dissent from. A Freethought bookseller would be considered a bigot if he would not sell the Bible. (4) We know nothing about the man Kesteren.

Papers Received.—The Faith—Two Worlds—Liberty—Open Court—Secular Thought—North Bay Times—Echo—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—Liberty—Illustrated Church News—Crescent—P. C. Supplement—Liberator—Truthseeker—Newcastle Chronicle—Nottingham Guardian—Boston Investigator—Daily News—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel.

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

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

Under this heading, I have first of all a word to say with respect to the late libel action. The defendants, Snow and Cook, against whom a verdict was obtained in the Court of Queen's Bench, appeared to think that the day of reckoning could be postponed until W. R. Bradlaugh had begged enough money to settle the bill. But in this they were mistaken. Messrs. Harper & Battcock, the solicitors for the plaintiff, after waiting longer than justice required, at length issued an execution against John Snow, and the whole of the damages and taxed costs, amounting to £150, was soon in the hands of the sheriff.

The action taken in this matter will probably damp the ardor of our calumniators. It appears to have struck consternation into the ranks of the more reckless missionaries of Christian Evidence. Some of these gentry report that I am asking for £300 to defray my own expenses. Of course I am doing nothing of the kind. I am sufficiently rewarded by the punishment of the malefactors.

. . . . . .

The Club at the Hall of Science has ceased to exist. The committee handed over the keys to the Board of Directors on Monday. Whatever social element is introduced, under a possible re-organisation, will be entirely confined to members of the National Secular Society, and will be under the direct control of the Executive.

Some unpleasantness occurred before the Club gave up possession, which occasioned me a good deal of trouble. The committee, however, were not responsible for it; and I hope I shall be spared the necessity of referring to it again.

. . . . . .

Mr. R. O. Smith has not favored me with any communication on the subject of my last week's announcement, but as I hear that he professes a willingness to bring the matter to a friendly settlement, I have had a meeting of the Board of Directors called for Thursday (March 28), at which he will have an opportunity of submitting an offer for consideration. On Sunday evening I lecture at the Hall of Science, after a considerable absence; and I shall make what will probably be an important announcement respecting the future of the institution. I invite the London members of our party to be present on this occasion.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Blow hurricanoes! Spout cataracts! cried old Lear out on that "blasted heath." The weather on that occasion must have been something like it was at Bristol on Sunday. A heavy storm raged for several hours, doing considerable damage in the city. Of course it had some effect, though not so great as was expected, upon Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon audiences. There was a capital audience in the evening, however; and a very respectable audience, too—not in the cant sense of the word. The lectures were all highly appreciated, and very warmly applauded. At the close of the day's proceedings a meeting of members and friends was held in the ante-room, and Mr. Foote talked over with them the condition and prospects of the Branch, with reference to a more vigorous propaganda in the immediate future.

Mr. Foote had the pleasure of speaking to several Freethinkers at Bristol who had been Christians before his debate with the Rev. J. M. Logan. That debate set them thinking, and thinking led to the usual conclusion. Those who see no use in public debates should ponder this fact. We can quite understand why Christians should regard discussion as unprofitable, but we cannot understand how any Freethinker can share that opinion.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (March 31) at the London Hall of Science, his subject being "New Light on the Old Book." Prior to the lecture Mr. Foote will have to make a very important announcement.

Mr. Charles Watts had an excellent audience at the Hall of Science, London, last Sunday evening. Mr. Rowney presided, and made a brief, but pleasant, speech. A short debate followed the lecture.

Mr. Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, March 31, morning and evening, in the Amphitheatre, Northumberland-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne. In the afternoon Mr. Watts will debate with Mr. M. Lynn, the official of the local Christian Evidence Society, upon the question, "Secularism: Is it an Adequate Philosophy for Mankind?" We are informed that Mr. Lynn is an able and gentlemanly opponent; our friends may therefore fairly expect a good debate. Mr. Watts will also lecture on Saturday night, March 30, at Blyth, his subject being, "The Bible in our Public Schools."

On another page our readers will find an announcement by Mr. Charles Watts with respect to Mr. Putnam's visit to England. We have not the pleasure of Mr. Putnam's personal acquaintance, though we look forward to it with much expectation; but we have no doubt that he is all Mr. Watts represents him to be, and we hope he will receive the warmest possible welcome from the Freethinkers of old England. Branches of the N.S.S. should communicate early with Mr. Watts in order to secure a visit from Mr. Putnam during his brief stay in this country.

Mr. C. Cohen concludes his six months' mission at South Shields on March 31, and will then be open for other engagements. He lectures at Newcastle during April. Circulars have been sent out by the Newcastle Branch for funds to carry on this month's mission with vigor and success. Friends who have received copies are invited to return them—with subscriptions or guarantees—to the Branch secretary as soon as possible. There may be other readers of the *Freethinker* in the district who would like to support this particular enterprise. Their donations will be very welcome, and will be expended judiciously.

Mr. Edward Truelove, the veteran Freethinker, is a little older than Mr. Gladstone, and still moves about with a freedom that might be envied by men who are ten years younger than himself. Mr. Truelove sends us a copy of the thirty-first edition of *The Elements of Social Science*, of which he has sold 79,000 copies since 1854; and with it he sends his best wishes for our health and happiness. It is the fashion of Christian apologists to talk as though the National Secular Society is somehow responsible for this book—which is a monstrous absurdity. There are opinions expressed in it, especially in regard to marriage, from which we strongly dissent; but the writer, whoever he is, writes with earnestness and sincerity as well as with knowledge and power, and his views must be attacked with the weapons of reason, not with denunciation and calumny.

The Nottingham Branch opens its new hall (situated at the corner of Woodland-place, Upper Parliament-street) to-day (March 31). The annual meeting will be held at 3.15 sharp. A tea will be provided (price 6d.) at 5, to which all members and friends are cordially invited. In the evening Mr. Hooper will lecture as announced. We hope there will be a good attendance.

The Battersea Branch holds its quarterly tea to-day (Sunday, March 31) at 5.30, followed by musical and dramatic entertainment and dancing. Strangers specially invited. Tickets are 6d. each, and can be obtained at the hall and at outdoor lecture. The general meeting for election of officers, etc., takes place on Thursday, April 4, at 8 sharp, when all members should attend. Those in arrears with their contribution should pay up at once, as the Branch requires funds for outdoor work.

George Macdonald, in his lively "Observations" in the *Truthseeker*, has the following: "Editor C. C. Moore sees things as through blue grass—darkly. Speaking in his paper, the *Blade*, of a book he wrote while (unjustly) in jail, he observes that, apart from *Flexta*, a law book, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, his is the only book composed under similar circumstances. So Mr. Moore, though a professed exponent of Rationalism, has not heard of Thomas Paine in the Luxembourg prison writing Part I. of *The Age of Reason*; of Robert Taylor in Oakham jail producing his *Diegesis* and *Syntagma*; of George William Foote in Holloway 'goal' engaged on *A Prisoner for Blasphemy*; nor of D. M. Bennett in the Albany penitentiary devoting his leisure hours to a series of letters entitled *Behind the Bars*, and composing the two-volume octavo, *The Gods and Religions of Ancient and Modern Times*." Editor Moore's advocacy of Rationalism might be rendered more coherent by familiarity with its history. He should add knowledge to his understanding, and mingle thought with his literary labors."

Mr. Macdonald is under a slight misapprehension. Unlike Paine, Taylor, Carlile, and Bennett, Mr. Foote had no opportunities of writing in prison. *A Prisoner for Blasphemy* was written after he emerged from Holloway.

A Brahmin, writing in the *Forum* on "Christian Missions," says: "Let the aim of the missionary be to civilise and educate the savages and barbarians. To India send machinery instead of missionaries. Millions of people are kept back for want of education owing to intense poverty. Send good schoolmasters, mechanics, and scientists, and teach your practical arts to our people. This will cost you less than the missionaries."

F. M. Holland, writing in the *Open Court* on Byron, mentions the poet's irreligion. He says: "For him the Church was only a Niobe, weeping over her perishing tithes. The main theme of 'Cain, a Mystery' is the difficulty of reconciling the sin and suffering in human life with the goodness of 'the prayer-exacting Lord.' The first draft of 'Childe Harold' denied the probability of immortality (see note on canto ii., stanza 8), and the poet's own philosophy, if he had any, may be detected in the speech ascribed to the demon in 'The Deformed Transformed':—

> This is the consequence of giving matter
> The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,
> And thinks chaotically, as it acts,
> Ever relapsing into its first elements.

Byron's irreligion was increased by indignation at the support of despotism everywhere in Europe by the clergy."

Mr. J. W. Beeton has a capital letter in the *Lynn News*, defending Mr. Robert Green, one of the local Guardians, who has been so vehemently denounced for lending a pauper a copy of the *Freethinker*. It is a well-written, outspoken letter, and should set some of the Lynn people thinking.

Another good letter on the "History of the Bible" appears in the *Kidderminster Times* from the pen of Mr. W. F. Griffiths, a local Secularist, who makes shoes and has time for thinking. Such letters in local newspapers must be beneficial to our movement.

Hudson Tuttle, one of the leading Spiritists in America, says in the *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago: "While Atheists are noted for upright lives, the most despicable criminals are superstitious believers in a personal God, and the most terrible crimes recorded in history have been committed in furtherance of God's worship."

The *Ironclad Age*, of Indianapolis, has entered on its fortieth year. This is a good age for a Freethought paper, and in this respect the *Ironclad Age* stands second only to the *Boston Investigator*. We congratulate Mrs. Monroe Power on the way in which she sustains her father's paper. The *Age* is always lively, though it does let the cranks meander somewhat freely through its pages.

To look for history in myths is like searching for solid ground while pursuing will-o'-the-wisps. One may stumble here and there on a firm footing, but swamps and fogs and darkness are what are met with for the most part.—*Dr. E. C. Maclagan, "Scottish Myths," p. 252.*

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AN AMERICAN VISITOR.

I AM pleased to inform the readers of the *Freethinker* that next month Mr. S. P. Putnam, the popular Freethought lecturer and writer of America, will visit England. He will sail from New York on April 24, and he comes as President of all the nationally-organised Freethought Societies of the United States. I have known Mr. Putnam for many years, and I have always found him as genial in private as he is able in public. Next to Colonel Ingersoll, Mr. Putnam is the most eloquent speaker upon the American Freethought platform; while, as a poet and writer, he has won a high reputation on the other side of the Atlantic. His last work, *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*, which I have on sale for him, is a proof of his literary skill and industry. I should like him to have a good reception from the Secularists of this country.

Mr. Putnam will remain with us about three months, and during that time he wishes to lecture in all our principal towns. I have undertaken to arrange his lecturing tour, and shall be glad, therefore, to hear from friends throughout the country who are desirous of having the services of our American visitor. All applications for lectures from Mr. Putnam must be addressed to me at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE BIBLE: GRAND, IF HUMAN; ABSURD, IF DIVINE.

If the English be in English saved or damned,
And the Dutch be lost or sanctified in Dutch,
It would seem—unless Jehovah's scheme is shammed—
That with ancient tongues we needn't bother much.

Is it likely that Jehovah had inspired
The original of what is called "His Word,"
And neglected all its copies, nor desired
That translators be inerrable? absurd!

But the Word's as full of errors as of speaks,
Whence conflicting, inter-damning creeds arise;
Hence, these parson-priest-and-god-degraded books
Are but *human*, therefore *precious in our eyes*.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—VI.

JUDGE STRANGE.

THOMAS LUMISDEN STRANGE was one of the most earnest of the band of Freethinkers who gathered round Thomas Scott. He was an illustration that a good Christian makes a good Freethinker. When a young man, he experienced "conversion," and, belonging to the straitest sect of religionists, the Plymouth Brethren, it is almost a wonder that he ever got outside the wall of that exclusive body. But he was ever an earnest truthseeker, and his very earnestness brought him to the light. Educated as a barrister, he threw himself into evangelical work, and so set was his mind to religious subjects that in 1852 he published a work entitled *The Light of Prophecy: Being an Attempt to Trace out thereby the Coming Judgments and the Promised Glory.* Only last year there were published extracts from this work, entitled *Light on the Future.* The publisher says that some time ago his brother gave him the work, printed at the Wesleyan Mission Press, Bangalore, 1852, and adds: "I cannot find out who T. L. Strange was, or if he is at present alive; but I have little doubt he would be well pleased to find in England an echo of his wonderful work." The curious thing is that the publisher lives at Malvern, where Judge Strange resided during the latter period of his life. He also wrote *Observations on Mr. Elliott's "Horæ Apocalypticæ,"* in which he sought to refute the historical system of interpreting the Apocalypse. Mr. Strange was in the Indian Civil Service, and was animated by a desire to bring the natives to his own faith. He obtained a judgeship in the High Court at Madras, which he occupied about thirty years, and he published a *Manual of Hindoo Law*, Madras, 1856 and 1863.

Among the natives of India he was bound to receive some impressions adverse to the exclusive claims of his own faith. He found a people essentially moral and religious, yet moved by an ancient faith entirely different from his own. In the preface to his work on *The Sources and Development of Christianity* he says: "At one time my duties in India involved the charge of a jail and attendance at the execution of criminals. Trials calling for the sentence of death had to be referred to the superior court at Madras, for whose benefit the whole of the examinations had to be translated. There was always thus in these cases a considerable interval between the trial and the sentence and its execution. I was then a devout Christian, and used to take advantages of my opportunities to 'bring' the prisoners who were in these risks 'to Jesus.' They were ordinarily of the uneducated class; but one was otherwise, having been a servitor in a pagoda. He had professed himself influenced by what I had put before him; but when we met at the gallows he proclaimed his trust to be in Ráma, and not in Christ. He died earnestly, calling upon his fancied mediator and savior." This set the judge thinking. He continues: "What are we to say to such a phenomenon? Ráma's character is painted in the most exalted colors, and is described in a history considered to be an embodiment of divine truth. Ráma was a god incarnate, devoting himself for the good of mankind. What is there to induce a follower of his to relinquish him for just such another form, presented to him from a foreign quarter? And do a man's eternal prospects depend upon his critical selection of the true history? Happily the means are ample for our extrication from any such dilemma, and, as I may acknowledge to have been the case in my own instance when I was involved in these meshes, it is simply ignorance of the true character of the materials before us, coupled with a vein of superstition, inherited, working round us, and cultivated in us from early youth, that forges those bonds in which mankind are held to the prevailing baseless expressions of belief."

The complete breakdown of Mr. Strange's faith occurred from reading, in an orthodox work, an attempt to reconcile the facts of palæontology with the Bible statement that death came into the world through the sin of Adam. Looking into the matter, he learnt that the earth's strata also contained evidences of man's existence for some immeasurable time before the period assigned to Adam. The fall of the first Adam necessarily shook the position attributed to the second Adam. He says, in his introduction to *Contributions to a Series of Controversial Writings issued by the Late Mr. Thomas Scott* (1881): "I proceeded to make as close and as full study as my opportunities gave me of the Biblical statements, and especially of the representations of Christ as a real personage; and, as I proceeded, every figuration broke down before me, and appeared even traceable to remote Oriental heathen sources." He closely examined the alleged evidences, and came to the conclusion that "there is a very decided gap between the occurrence of Christianity and the era asserted for the facts alleged as those on which the system has its foundations. It follows that the facts themselves, so bound in an historical expression of them at a particular period, cannot have been enacted, and that the creed has otherwise to be accounted for." Truth thus discovered, Judge Strange was not slow in communicating it to others. For Mr. Scott's series he wrote a number of tracts, afterwards collected as *Contributions to a Series of Controversial Writings.* This volume contains "How I Became, and Ceased to be, a Christian," "A Critical Catechism," "The Bennett Judgment," "Clerical Integrity," "Communion with God," "The Exercise of Prayer," "The Christian Evidence Society," "An Address to all Earnest Christians," "The Portraiture and Mission of Jesus," "The Christian Evidences," "The Pauline Epistles," "Scripture and Science," and "The Supreme Power in the Universe." His larger and more important works are *The Speaker's Commentary Reviewed*, a criticism of dishonest orthodox defences; *The Bible: Is it the Word of God?* a valuable and an extended examination of the fetish books in the form of a dialogue between a pundit and a student; *The Legends of the Old Testament*, in which their similarity to Hindu and other legends is pointed out; *The Sources and Development of Christianity*, in which he traces the era of Christianity, its constituents, its phases, the construction and integrity of the Christian records, and the Gentile moulds of Christianity; *The Development of Creation on the Earth*, in which the teachings of science are contrasted with those of Scripture; and *What is Christianity?* a historical sketch embellished with a chart illustrating the interval between the alleged time of Christ and that of the alleged evidence. His opposition was not only to the miracles and alleged facts of Christianity, but also to its principles. In regard to its central doctrine of atonement, he said: "It is impossible that the sin of one man can be imposed upon another. It is by a fiction, not to be realised by the mind, that the transference is to be. Can blood of any sort wipe away sin? Sin has to be repented of and turned from, and can be got rid of in no other manner." Judge Strange was a diligent student and writer, and ever an earnest advocate of practical piety in life and conduct. He died at Norwood on September 4, 1884, at the age of seventy-five. Major-General Forlong was appointed his literary executor.

J. M. WHEELER.

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THE MEANING OF ALL FOOLS' DAY.

A JEW—a real, live, wicked Jew—asked me yesterday the following innocent-looking question: "Why was the first day of the fourth month called April Fools' Day?" In the simplicity of my heart I imagined Abraham's descendant was thirsting for information, and I answered with all the glad fervor of one who hopes to add to a fellow-creature's stock of knowledge: "I have access to an encyclopædia; I will look up the subject, and let you know in a day or two." A wave of Hebraic hilarity dashed over the counters and shelves of the shop in which I stood, and intuitively I knew that the children of the circumcision were guying me, acting like the forty and two youths who made fun of a bald-headed old gentleman of ferocious proclivities; but I looked in vain for the two lady-bears to come to my rescue. Doubtless the ursine *bearers* of divine wrath were near by; but, as I did not by cursing invoke the merciful Jehovah's aid to avenge me of the Jews who were mocking me, the good little lady-bears went to bed supperless that eve. When the laughter at my expense subsided, I asked the Jew who had questioned me to answer his own conundrum.

Adjusting his toga with all the grace of a Roman orator, and inhaling with pardonable pride the aroma of admiration which floated from the eyes of his compatriots, my Jew thus delivered himself:—

"You Christians" (I did not like being called names, but I held my peace); "You Christians commemorate the 25th of December as the day upon which one-third of your God was born. You also assert that the mother of this fraction of a Deity was a holy virgin. A very large crowd of you profess to believe that this young lady of immaculate virtue, having been on somewhat intimate terms with another one-third of the Deity, possessed great influence over the mind of the one-third-in-chief of Deity, and every request made by her to this chief ever was and ever is granted. This is more or less the belief of you Christians. Now, let me tell you how we figure this thing out. Mary, *alias* Mrs. Joseph (Miriam the *lagchim*, as we call her), on the evening of March 31, nearly 2,000 years ago, compromised her character by a serious indiscretion. Fearful of consequences and to shield her good name, the prudent *virgin* gave out the next morning (April 1) that one-third of Deity, being a little less than kin, had been rather more than kind to her on the previous night. Many believed this absurd story; and Mary and her most intimate friends laughed at their folly, and among themselves called these credulous dupes April Fools. But some nine months later, towards the end of the year, when these believers came to do *poojee* (homage) to the 'Consequences,' the foresightful virgin-mother congratulated herself on having lied so sagely on the first day of the fourth month. Now you know why the gullible, who are ready to believe any cock-and-bull story told them, are, on a certain day, called April Fools." Another peal of mocking, Hebraic laughter was heard at the conclusion of the silly joke, and I walked away sore displeased. WINNIPEG.

—*Secular Thought.*

A gentleman was conversing with an Idaho minister whom he happened to meet on a railroad train. "You have been preaching in the West for several years?" he inquired. "Yes, for the last twenty years," replied the minister. "You know," continued the Eastern man, "how we sometimes read of ministers in your country frequently having to go into the pulpit with a revolver to use in maintaining order in a turbulent congregation. Is there anything in it?" "Oh, yes, I have known ministers to do it, but I consider it entirely unnecessary." "That was always my idea, too." "Oh, yes; yes, altogether unnecessary," returned the preacher. "Besides, it always seemed to me in very poor taste for a minister of the Gospel, preaching peace on earth and goodwill towards men, to go around tied to a hip cannon. Yes, a gun is wholly uncalled for," continued the good man, as he took the roll of sermons in his left hand and reached down with his right and extracted a 14 in. knife from his boot-leg; "yes, wholly uncalled for. Give me this bowie in my boot-leg and a good pair of brass knuckles and a hymn-book in my coat-tail pocket, and I will agree to carry the Gospel to any man that ever looked through a collar. The shooting-iron has had its day as a method of evangelisation."

A FEW QUESTIONS FOR THE GOSPEL TWISTERS.

SAY, if 'twas truly God's design
To keep men ignorant as swine,
  Not knowing good from evil,
Why didn't he just harm that tree
With spines as thick as bristles,
Then hedge it round upon the ground
  With cactus and bull-thistles?

Why plant that murderous tree at all,
So dangerous to the health of all,
  And to himself so galling?
And then, why give that fierce command
He knew they could not understand,
With all its mystic meanings, and
  So sure to cause their falling?

And what about the serpent wise—
Was he a god in that disguise,
  Or devil in a snake's skin,
Who dared dispute that threat of dying,
And charge his God with wilful lying,
And every word he said denying—
  Was it a scheme to make sin?

Why did not God that serpent choke,
Or was it but a funny joke?
  'Twould seem so in our version.
When neither right nor wrong they knew,
He wished to see what they would do,
And test his handiwork when new,
  All for his own diversion.

If God in justice judges sin,
Why did he not at once begin
  With his first pets in error;
First stand that serpent on his head,
His tail tied to a limb till dead,
For telling truth, must it be said,
  A monument of terror;

Then call his children to his knee,
And give them both a pardon free?
  It seems so very odd like,
When right from wrong they could not tell,
How was it that they could rebel,
And was it right to give them hell
  For trying to be God-like?

S. M. BAYARD.

Daniel Isaac Eaton in the Pillory.

We recently referred to the punishment of Eaton in the pillory for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*, a punishment which evoked Shelley's splendid *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*. In Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, under the date May 26, 1812, is the following: "Walked to the Old Bailey to see D. I. Eaton in the pillory. As I expected, his punishment of shame was his glory. The mob was not numerous, but decidedly friendly to him. His having published Paine's *Age of Reason* was not an intelligible offence to them. I heard such exclamations as the following: 'Pillory a man for publishing a book, shame!' 'Religious liberty!' 'Liberty of conscience!' Some avowed their willingness to stand in the pillory for a dollar. 'This a punishment? this is no disgrace!' As his position changed, and fresh partisans were blessed by a sight of his round, grinning face, shouts of 'Bravo!' arose from a new quarter. His trial was sold on the spot. The whole affair was an additional proof of the folly of the ministers, who ought to have known that such an exhibition would be a triumph of the cause they meant to render infamous."

Obituary.

IT is with sincere regret that I announce the death of Mary, the beloved wife of John Hume, of Willington, at the age of fifty-two, having been an invalid for a great number of years. She was laid in her last resting place at Willington Cemetery, March 20, 1895. As Mr. Hume is a Freethinker of a noble type, and greatly respected by all who have the pleasure of knowing him, it was his desire to have a Secular Burial Service over his lamented wife, which was ably and impressively conducted by our friend, Michael Stitt, of Crook. Many persons, having for the first time heard our Service, were greatly pleased by the beauty of expression it contained.—J. C.

The destroyers of the old are the creators of the new. As time sweeps on the old passes away, and the new in its turn becomes old.—*Ingersoll.*

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BOOK CHAT.

The reminiscences of the late well-known scientist and Freethinker, Jacob Moleschott, have been published by Emil Roth, of Giessen. The book is entitled *Für meine Freunde* (For my Friends), and concerns itself rather with his early life in Holland and Germany than with his later days in Italy. It gives interesting particulars of many noteworthy men, including Humboldt, Feuerbach, Gervinus, Strauss, Georg Forster, and Renan.

* * *

We have received some *Truth Seeker* pamphlets, which are issued under the auspices of the editor of the monthly bearing that name. One is on "Secularism," and is from the pen of the editor himself. Mr. Grange writes with force and ability, and his pamphlet deserves a wide circulation. Mr. C. Cohen writes on "The Decay of Belief." His pamphlet is full of good matter, presented with interest and perspicuity. Mr. Sam Standring chooses the curious title of "Christ and Ally Sloper." Each pamphlet has a recognisable portrait of the author. The price is one penny.

* * *

M. Tarde, who is already favorably known by his works on Criminology and Sociology, has issued, through Messrs. Alcan, a new work on *La Logique Sociale*. M. Tarde connects sociology with psychology, comparing society to the brain. He finds in the laws of imitation and invention, which, after all, are much like the biological laws of inheritance and variation, the threads of social logic.

* * *

Homœopathy: All About It, by John H. Clarke, M.D. (Homœopathic Publishing Co.), gives in short compass a number of arguments in favor of this treatment. Without entering into controversial matter, we can well believe that any treatment that minimises the action of drugs is likely often to be beneficial.

* * *

The third edition of Professor Geikie's *Great Ice Age* has just been issued. He does not give in to Sir William Dawson's labored attempt to reduce the antiquity of man, but contends that he lived in the interglacial epoch, and that there is a wide gap between palæolithic and neolithic man.

* * *

A biography of the late Rev. Dr. Crosskey, by the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A., will shortly be issued from Birmingham by Messrs. Cornish Brothers. Dr. Crosskey was a leading light among the Unitarians, and altogether a liberalising influence in Birmingham.

* * *

The Path I Took, and Where it Led Me, is an autobiography by a Monmouthshire farmer, who, it appears, is now over eighty years of age. Mr. G. J. Holyoake has revised the manuscript, which gives some interesting particulars of religious life in the early part of the century. The author, fully convinced of the unsuitability of the clergy as moral guides, exhorts his fellows to examine all they are taught by the light of reason.

* * *

Sir Arthur Helps once wrote a very able novel, entitled *Realmah*, in which he sought to depict primitive man. M. Armand Charpentier has gone a step farther, and in *Le Roman d'un Singe* describes the emotions of an anthropoid ape who is almost a man.

* * *

Mr. R. Bruce Boswell, in his interesting *Footprints of the Devil in Our Own Country* (which is not a religious production), shows the connection between the Devil and the old Pagan deities. Among places associated with the Devil in the British Isles he mentions the Devil's Island, which frowns over Muckross Lake, Killarney; a Devil's Glen in Wicklow, as well as in Wales; the Devil's Point at Plymouth; the Devil's Water, a tributary of the Tyne, near Hexham; the Cave of Devils at Little Orme's Head; the Devil's Pit, at Cadgewith, Cornwall; a Devil's Hole in Jersey, and another near Lough Erne, in Ireland. On Marlborough Downs there is a dolmen or cromlech known as the Devil's Den; and at Castleton, in Derbyshire, is a cavern called the Devil's Cellar. To find the Devil's Kitchen we must go to Llyn Idwal, in North Wales; to mount his Staircase one must visit Glencoe; and his Chimney is within an easy walk of Cheltenham.

* * *

A second and enlarged edition of *Speeches by Charles Bradlaugh* has just been published by A. & H. Bradlaugh Bonner (63 Fleet-street). The added matter includes a fine address on the Irish question, delivered at New York in 1873. Mr. J. M. Robertson has enriched the volume with some very useful annotations. The price is five shillings, and the book should have a place in the library of every Freethinker and Radical who can spare the money to purchase it. We ought not to close without a word of praise for the remarkably fine portrait which serves as frontispiece.

* * *

The posthumous works of the late Dr. Norman Pearson, author of *National Life and Character*, are being collected by Professor H. A. Strong. They consist of numerous essays on political and social subjects, and of poetry.

WHERE RIDICULE COMES IN.

You ask me why I ridicule the "holy name of God."
But what does "holy" mean, my friend, and who in heaven is God?
And where is heaven? and where is hell? and are they very far?
Until you answer me these things I "dunno where you are."

You say I ought to speak with awe on what the crowd believe;
That is, that I should "look respect" while laughing up my sleeve
At all the little legends which through age have won repute.
Why, really, friend, you'd have me act to earn a taste of boot.

You tell me that I ought to speak with awe and bated breath
About the Eden story and the origin of death,
And of the curse of sorrow which on mankind had been wrought,
While many men had lived and died in ages more remote.

You surely would not have me bolt the fairy Babel tale,
Nor that which tells how Jonah found a lodging in a whale,
Nor that of how Cap. Joshua made sun and moon stand still,
Nor yet that one where Moses struck a rock and struck a rill.

They all are fairy stories, and tho' millions may be gulled
Into belief that they are true, withal my doubt's unlulled,
For numbers of believers do not make a tale more true;
The tales are still ridiculous, whate'er they seem to you.

You never catch me laughing at the sayings pure and sage
Which shine like gems among the trash upon the sacred page
Of Bible or of Vedic hymn, of Sûtra or Shih-King;
But when it comes to rubbish—why, I'll laugh like anything.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

PROFANE JOKES.

Sunday-school Teacher—"What is faith?" First Pupil—"Faith is believing in the superintendent's stories." Second Pupil—"Believing what you know isn't true."

Grandpa—"Well, Willie, you have been to church, haven't you?" Willie—"Yes, sir." "Well, what can you tell us about it?" Willie—"Why, sir, the man that sat in front of us had ears that wasn't alike."

Minister—"So you say that you saw some boys out fishing Sunday, Bobbie? I hope you did something to discourage them." Bobbie—"Oh, yes, sir. I stole their bait."

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If this were not a folding-bed,
I'd take all risks myself," she said.

Aunt (poetically)—"Ah, what is more beautiful, more sublime, than the tolling of the church bells upon a Sabbath morning! What happy thoughts it brings us!" Nephew (practical)—"You bet it does, aunt! Just as soon as a fellow hears them he knows that it's Sunday, and he can turn over and sleep all day if he wants to."

Parson Whangdoodle Baxter, of the Thompson-street Blue Light Tabernacle, on arriving at his place of worship one Sunday morning, was surprised to find no one present but Sam Johnsing, the sexton. "What de debbil am de matter dat dar's nobody heah?" "Nobody heah bekase dar's a notice in the *Freeman's Journal* dat dar would be no sarvice bekase ob de disunwellness ob de pasture." "Did dat fool niggah editor put dat notice in his paper for a fac'?" "He did dat berry ting." "Wall, I declar'. I told him 'stinctly de notice of my disunwellness was intended for de Sunday arter nex'."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "New Light on the Old Book." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 5.30, tea, entertainment, and dance. (Tickets 6d.) Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, members' quarterly meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "The End of the Universe"—with lantern illustrations.

ISLINGTON (Liberal and Radical Association Committee Rooms, Upper-street, near the Vestry Hall): Thursday, at 8.30, F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist, and Why I Remain One." (Free.)

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, George Bernard Shaw, "Great Men—Are they Real?" (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Leslie Stephen, "The Vanity of Philosophising."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH (Mr. Stace's, 42 Vincent-street): 8, members' monthly meeting.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 6.15, discussion—"Self-Determinism"; 7.30, G. Carter, "The Unemployed Problem."

WOOD GREEN (Secretary's house, 71 Gladstone-avenue): 7, members' meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why Did Christ Die?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture; 3.30, a lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. R. Thompson will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Ellis, "Local Rome and its Remains."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, F. J. Boorman, "Is Jesus a Fact or Fable?"

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Sam Standring, "Great is Diana!"

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class; 6.30, Zoeimus, "Great French Freethinkers—V., Rousseau."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Monro, "The Ten Commandments."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Hill, "Eccentricities of the Law."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Wainscott, "The Labor Problem—A Reply to *Mercie England*." (Free.)

NOTTINGHAM (Woodland Hall, Woodland-place, N. Parliament-street): 3, annual meeting; 5, tea (6d. each); 7, James Hooper, "Moses, Huxley, and Tyndall."

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 3, A. B. Wakefield, "John Morley: A Study"; 6.30, "Secularism: Is it Successful?" For place, see *Observer*.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): a celebrated local Professor of Magic, etc., lectures, with practical illustrations.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "The Ethics of Evolution"; 7, "Scepticism, its Influence and Value."

SUNDERLAND (Co-operative Hall, Green-street): 3, C. Cohen, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "War."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 7, 14, 21, 28, Newcastle-on-Tyne. May 2, Wood Green; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 26, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—March 31, a. and e. Tottenham. April 7, m. and e. Wood Green; 14, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Cordon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 14, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, Clerkenwell.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—March 31, Failsworth.

FISH, FISH, FISH.—Basses of SELECTED FISH sent on receipt of P.O. 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d., and 5s., carriage paid. Premier Fish Supply Co., Fish Docks, Grimsby.

TO FREETHINKERS.—Ladies and Gentlemen requiring SUPERIOR CUT GARMENTS at moderate prices. First-class Style and Fit Guaranteed.—H. HAMPTON, Artiste Tailor, 14 Great Castle-street, W. (three doors from Regent-street). Patronised by leading Freethinkers.

NEW AND SECONDHAND FURNITURE, Sewing Machines, Pianos, Pictures, China, etc. Good and Cheap. Call and see stock. GEORGE SMITH, 15 Railton-road, Brixton, S.W.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Complete in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Works by G. W. Foote.

Flowers of Freethought. *First Series.* 221 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Flowers of Freethought. *Second Series.* 302 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series.* 128 pp., 1s.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Grand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Is Socialism Sound? Four Nights' Public Debate with Annie Besant. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 2s.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

A Defence of Free Speech. Three Hours' Address to the Jury before Lord Coleridge. With a Special Preface and many Footnotes. 4d.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

My Resurrection. A Missing Chapter from the Gospel of Matthew, discovered by G. W. Foote. 2d.

The Folly of Prayer. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

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What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

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Is the Bible Inspired? A Criticism on *Lux Mundi*. 1d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

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From the "Bradford Weekly Telegraph," Saturday, February 16, 1895.

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Early on Saturday a big fire took place in the warehouse, No. 2 Union-street, Bradford, occupied by Mr. R. Higgins, who occupies a large part of the ground floor, and numbers the following tenants occupying the other offices and rooms: Mr. Ernest Hahnel, Messrs. Schmidt & Co., Mr. J. W. Gott, Messrs. G. D. Wright & Co., and Mr. J. Pepper. The damage done is very extensive, and is roughly estimated at a figure between £8,000 to £10,000. It certainly cannot be less than £8,000, as many of the firms occupying the building had large and valuable stocks stored in the various rooms. Mr. R. Higgins had a big stock of woollens, stuffs and yarns, and estimates his loss at over £4,000. He is insured up to £4,000. Messrs. Wright & Co., stuff merchants, have had fully £1,000 damage done to their stock and premises, but it is completely covered by insurance. Mr. J. W. Gott, cloth and stuff merchant, had a stock valued at £1,500, and it is partially destroyed, chiefly by water. The other firms, with the exception of Mr. J. Pepper, have suffered in like manner, a lot of stock being destroyed by water. The cause of the fire is unknown, but, judging by appearances, it broke out in the packing-room of Mr. R. Higgins.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 14. SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH.

ACCORDING to the principles of the National Secular Society, Secularism seeks to disestablish religion—that is, to separate it from the State; and it urges the necessity of it being maintained (where the profession is thought desirable) from its own resources. Hence, one of our "Immediate Practical Objects" is, not only to secure the Disestablishment, but also the "Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales." This desirable work was really commenced by Mr. Gladstone at the time of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church; but the Bill of the present Government, in reference to the Church in Wales, is a more complete application of the principle, inasmuch as it provides that the funds which have hitherto been monopolised by the Church shall be used for useful secular purposes.

Personally, I am opposed to all Government interference with the advocacy of opinions, and also decidedly object to its giving any patronage to one form of speculative views in preference to others. Government should have no concern in any speculative scheme that refers to problematic issues which are apart from human life and human wants. Whether there be one or three Gods, or no God at all, mundane requirements should alone claim the attention of those who are appointed by the people to regulate national affairs. There ought to be no difficulty in learning from the history of the past that the government which is best calculated to administer to the welfare of the community is the one which devotes itself wholly to the affairs of this world.

In the struggle to obtain the separation of Church and State Secularists are not fighting alone, for many who profess Christianity are as much opposed to the union as we are. Still, the fact must not be overlooked that a large section of orthodox believers in this country hold the opinion that the Church of England should be protected by law. The reasons given for this desire are very fallacious. The defenders of Church and State must indeed have very peculiar notions of justice and equality. Supposing the National Secular Society claimed Government support in their propagandism, Churchmen would be horrified. But why? Is it because Secularists are in a minority? So are Churchmen; for it cannot, with any degree of truth, be alleged that the Establishment represents the opinions of the majority of the people. Is it because Secularists have not the means to do as much for the national good as the Church has at its command? If, however, there is any force in the plea for State aid, would not its support increase the means of the Secularists? Unfortunately, this Church has had the means, but it has failed to employ them usefully; hence, as a secular agency, it has proved a decided failure. Its power has been used not for, but against, the development of political and social reforms. It has, moreover, sadly neglected the education of the young, and the providing for the pauper population. Bishops and the clergy have had the control of funds that should have been devoted to the benefit of the poor and ignorant; but the poor have not been adequately provided for, and the ignorant have not been properly instructed by the representatives of our "National Religion." The consequence is that now these duties have to be performed by Poor Law Guardians and Board School teachers at the public expense, while the funds are going to the Church all the same.

In the face of these facts the Church Establishment is but a sham and a delusion. It is a sound principle upon which to rely, that when the opinions of a nation change it is only in accordance with equity that laws and institutions should be altered and made to harmonise with the new conditions. Whatever our forefathers might have been contented with, the fact is evident that to-day religion can only be accepted as a question of individual opinion; it cannot be enforced as a national injustice. This is the only view that can consistently be said to accord with that religious freedom of which we hear so much and see so little among orthodox Christians at the present time. If all the inhabitants of this country shared the religious views taught by the Established Church, the case would be different; but where there are so many different and conflicting sects of religionists, and so many that have no religion at all, it is manifestly unfair to "nationalise" one section of the community to the exclusion of all others.

One of the reasons given for the union of Church and State is, that it serves as a solid breakwater to keep back the flood of Romanism, which our forefathers so justly feared. This, however, is not so, for modern clerical engineers have invented a sort of Forth Bridge, which connects High Churchism with Roman Catholicism. But there is not much danger of the Pope exercising any civil power in the United Kingdom, since he has become practically a prisoner in the Vatican. The barrier to the encroachments of Catholicism is not the theology of the Church of England, but rather the spirit of scepticism, which so extensively prevails within its domain. Moreover, the lack of unity in the Establishment prevents it, as a religious institution, from being a formidable foe to Romish aggression. For, while one portion of the English Church is tending towards Romanism, another portion is drifting towards Rationalism. If there ever was a time when the Church could be defended as the representative of one doctrine and one faith, and when it was the visible emblem of the "unity of faith in the bond of peace," that time has past. England is probably the home of more divergent sects of religionists than any other country at the present day, and this fact alone affords a powerful argument against a State Church. Allied with Freethought propagandism, religious dissent has broken the political power of the Church; so much so that even in our rural districts, at the present time, its political power is openly defied, and its religious authority is persistently ignored.

It may be asked, Has the State no concern with the various religious views promulgated throughout the land? The answer is, None whatever. But it has something to do with the individuals who promulgate those views. It appears to me that the function of the Government in regard to this matter is simply to maintain order, and to secure the right of free discussion for the advocates of all opinions of a speculative character, which have divided, and probably always will divide, mankind. There is no more justification for placing persons at a disadvantage on account of the opinions they entertain than there would be for blaming them for their stature or the color of their hair. Men can no more help thinking than they can avoid breathing; therefore, freedom should be secured whereby all should be allowed to think and to speak freely, without dread of social or penal disabilities being the result. The world is slow in learning the lesson of political and religious freedom. Protestant Churchmen and dissenters alike object to subscribe to the Roman Church, but they complain of the Secularist when he objects to subscribe to either section of the Protestant Church.

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The aspect of this question in the early part of the present century was very different from what it is now. While at that period people did not openly advocate the rule of a religious minority because they held the true faith, the right of the majority to coerce the minority was questioned only by the few. To-day the opinion is rapidly extending that the State has no business to interfere with any but secular things. It is said that Christ neither established nor endowed any Church by the law of the land, and, therefore, such an institution is without the authority of the Founder of Christianity. Of course, it he had done so, the injustice would have been the same.

In reference to the cry of the bishops that the Disestablishment of the Church involves "the dethronement and robbery of God," it is only necessary to say that the right of kings and churches to rule is regarded in modern times in the same light as is the right of action conferred upon police constables, and that is the power given them by the law of the land, which is alterable and improvable at the pleasure of the electorate and Parliament. The right exists to elect or dismiss any branch of the Civil Service. To those clergymen who say they are not aided by the State the reply is: In that case they can suffer no loss from ceasing to be partners in a concern which yields them no profits.

CHARLES WATTS.

MR. BALFOUR'S "FOUNDATIONS."—III.

(Concluded from page 194.)

The Foundations of Belief. Being Notes Introductory to the Study of Theology. By the Right Hon. Arthur James Balfour. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co.)

MR. BALFOUR devotes a whole chapter to a "summary and conclusion" of his attack on Naturalism. He says he is anxious not to overstate his case, but we are accustomed to these mock-modest protestations; and, indeed, this particular one looks very curious in the light of the following passage:—

> "If naturalism be true, or, rather, if it be the whole truth, then is morality but a bare catalogue of utilitarian precepts; beauty but the chance occasion of a passing pleasure; reason but the dim passage from one set of unthinking habits to another. All that gives dignity to life, all that gives value to effort, shrinks and fades under the pitiless glare of a creed like this."

This may be forcible writing; it is just as certainly forcible folly. How on earth can morality, on the basis of naturalism or utilitarianism, or whatever other term you choose to substitute, be "a bare catalogue of precepts"? In the common language of mankind, have we not hearts as well as heads, however we came by them? Reason dictates the precepts of morality, but it can only do so under the impulsion of sympathy; and the genesis and development of that feeling is as clear as daylight on the principles of evolution. As for the second sentence in this passage, what is it but an absurd paradox? How can "reason" and "unthinking" be logically coupled together? And does it not strike Mr. Balfour, in his calmer moments, that the "dignity" of life can hardly depend upon the mass of wild, and often hideous, ideas men have entertained about the "supernatural"? This champion of the faith is not always consistent with himself. In addressing the Church Congress at Manchester, he said that Positivism—which is precisely what he now assails as Naturalism—might enable us to live with dignity, though it could not enable us to die with hope; but now the "dignity" is sacrificed in the interest of a fresh dialectic. With regard to the "value of effort," surely it depends upon its *success;* and we venture to tell Mr. Balfour that Naturalism, with the practical aid of science, has done more for what Bacon called "the relief of man's estate" in a single century than Supernaturalism has done from the beginning of history. Whether it has done as much for "the glory of God" is quite another matter, and one which, at present, we need not trouble to discuss. Finally, we must remark that Mr. Balfour is very unfortunate in his expression about the "pitiless glare" of a creed like Naturalism. It brings to our mind, at least, the Christian doctrine of Hell. How a man who believes (or does not repudiate belief) in such a terrible doctrine as that, can talk about the "pitiless glare" of any other creed, is like the peace of God—it passes all understanding.

Mr. Balfour first sets up a theory that certain feelings and opinions are inconsistent with Naturalism, and then argues that the triumph of Naturalism will banish all those feelings and opinions from the face of the earth. He is "wholly unable to understand" how Naturalism can do otherwise than "eat all nobility out of our conception of conduct, and all worth out of our conception of life." Mr. Balfour's ability to understand, however, is not the measure of natural possibility. This is particularly a case in which the investigator's "personal equation" throws the whole problem into disorder. With all his undeniable gifts, Mr. Balfour wants a little more imagination. He cannot place himself at his opponent's point of view. But even on grounds of common reason and general experience, he might see the futility of *this* diatribe against Naturalism. Christians have generally been unable to understand how nobility of conduct and worthiness of life could exist outside their own faith; yet both existed before Christianity was heard of, and they have always existed beyond its limits. Nor is this attitude confined to the Christian; it is common enough in all the faiths of the world. It is only the Naturalist who is really above this petty insularity. He feels the very beating of what Wordsworth called "the universal heart of man." *There* abides the eternal security for what Mr. Balfour fears will be lost. It cannot be destroyed, though it may be veiled, by the mists of superstition; and now and then it appears in its naked integrity, as Mont Blanc gleams serenely in sunshine and clear air.

Mr. Gladstone has declared that if he ever entertained the prejudice that unbelievers could not be men of high and noble character, it would have been banished by his experience of public life and his knowledge of public men. Mr. Balfour is also confronted with the fact that the devotees of Naturalism are not more wicked or grovelling than their neighbors. He protests that he does not desire to ignore or depreciate the "shining examples of virtue unsupported by religion." What he denies is that their virtue is any credit to their creed. What virtue you have, Mr. Balfour says to them, you derive from *us;* there are parasites in the physical world, and you are the parasites of the moral world.

> "Their spiritual life is parasitic: it is sheltered by convictions which belong, not to them, but to the society of which they form a part; it is nourished by processes in which they take no share. And when those convictions decay, and those processes come to an end, the alien life which they have maintained can scarce be expected to outlast them."

We have heard this before—at street corners, in churches and chapels, and from religious platforms. We have also read it in books on apologetics. It is variously expressed; sometimes vulgarly, and sometimes with an air of good breeding; but it is always the same thing at bottom. Religion fills the reservoir of virtue, and irreligious persons only draw off their convenient supply. But the curious thing is—and Mr. Balfour should note it—that the devotees of Naturalism assert the very opposite. They declare that Humanity fills the reservoir, at least by providing its contents; and that Religions are no more than chartered Water Companies, which call the water by their own names, arbitrarily regulate the supply, and always charge a heavy rate for their transcendent services.

Some defenders of "faith"—such, for instance, as Mr. Benjamin Kidd, the author of that extravagantly lauded book on *Social Evolution*—tell us that scepticism is declining; that Bradlaugh and Ingersoll are spent forces, and that Huxley's eloquence falls flat upon the public ear. Mr. Balfour, however, is not foolish enough to echo this premature pean of victory. He admits that the influence of Naturalism "has increased, is increasing, and as yet shows no signs of diminution." This admission has been ignored by the general body of reviewers, especially in the religious journals; but it should be noted in a journal like the *Freethinker*. Those who attended the funeral of scepticism forget that they walked behind an empty coffin. Mr. Balfour, at any rate, will not sign its death certificate.

Mr. Balfour agrees with Mr. Kidd, however, in snubbing Reason. She is useful in her way, but she is a menial, and must not obtrude in the drawing-room. The leader

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of the Tory party in the House of Commons naturally prefers Authority.

> "It is Authority rather than Reason to which, in the main, we owe, not religion only, but ethics and politics; it is Authority which supplies us with essential elements in the premises of science; it is Authority rather than Reason which lays deep the foundations of social life; it is Authority rather than Reason which cements its superstructure."

There is a certain truth in this statement if Authority means our inherited wisdom from the past; but in any other sense of the word, the statement is a plea for prejudice and irrationality. Mr. Balfour must be joking when he pretends to imagine that the advocates of Reason regard nothing as practically settled. He may rely upon it that they will not allow their children to experiment on prussic acid in their pursuit of dietary knowledge. Mr. Balfour is a clever man, but his book will only comfort and console his own party; it will not disturb the mental serenity of a single disciple of Naturalism.

G. W. FOOTE.

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

(Continued from p. 194.)

FROM 1858, when Daniel Dunglass Home, immortalised in Browning's "Sludge the Medium," was married in Russia to a sister of Count Koucheleff, one of the richest grandees in the country, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky had been a Spiritist medium. In that year Home met her in Paris, where she pretended to be a medium. It was, according to Olcott's account in his book entitled *People from the Other World*, at spirit *séances* at Chiltenden, Vermont, in October, 1874, that he first met H. P. B. Olcott (p. 453) calls her "one of the most remarkable mediums in the world," and gravely relates how numerous spirits came out of the cabinet. Dr. Elliott Coues, formerly president of the Washington Theosophical Society, says of Olcott's book:—

> "It is one of the best ghost books extant; full of spectral pictures, not a word of truth in the text, and redolent with the flavor of gullibility. Yet it is a thoroughly dishonest book, for Olcott knew perfectly well, before it came out in book form, that every phenomenon he described was fraudulent; and when somebody proposed to show up the Eddy tricks in their true light, Olcott begged for God's sake not to have it done, because 'it would injure the sale of his work.'"

The manifestations mentioned by Olcott in his book booming Blavataky having been attacked by Dr. G. M. Beard, H. P. Blavataky wrote to the New York *Graphic*, October 27, 1874, in defence of Spiritism. She says: "People that know me know I am far from being credulous. Though a Spiritualist of many years' standing, I am more sceptical in receiving evidence from paid mediums than many unbelievers." Again (New York *Graphic*, November 13, 1874): "I deem it my duty as a Spiritualist to," etc. In a letter to *Light* ten years later (October 11, 1884) she said: "I say again, I never was a Spiritualist." Hundreds in America are aware of the contrary. The "familiar spirit" of the lady medium was "John King," buccaneer, who is notable as the original Mahatma. In a letter to Aksákoff (April 12, 1875) she says: "The spirit, John King, is very fond of me, and I am fonder of him than of anything on earth." Colonel Olcott relates that the defunct pirate obligingly offered to commit forgery on any bank desired. This "John King" was such a success that he was patronised by many of the "mejums." The only thing necessary was a hoarse voice and coarse talk. If materialised, a heavy black horse hair beard and a white sheet were the only accessories needed. No wonder John was popular. "At this time," says Dr. Coues, "several of her letters to friends, which I have read, are curiously scribbled in red and blue pencils, with sentences and signatures of 'John King,' just as, later on, 'Koot Hoomi' used to miraculously precipitate himself upon her stationery in all sorts of colored crayons." W. E. Coleman, in his *Critical Historical Review of the Theosophical Society* (p. 3), says:—

> "Early in 1875 Madame Blavatsky sent to General F. J. Lippitt a picture, which she said had been painted for the General by the spirit John King himself. In *Mind and Matter*, Philadelphia, November 27, 1880, was published conclusive evidence, found in Madame B.'s room in Philadelphia, that she had herself painted this picture, except certain flowers, etc., which were already on the satin when she procured it. Madame B. is known to have fair skill as a painter. Further, Mrs. Hannah M. Wolff, of Washington, D.C., in a published account of her experience with Madame Blavatsky in 1874, has stated that, Madame B. having claimed that certain pictures were painted by spiritual power direct, she was watched by three journalists residing in the same house, and they saw Madame B. get up in the night and paint them herself."

V. S. Solovyoff, in his *Modern Priestess of Isis*, has explained from H. P. B.'s own letters to the Russian Spiritist, Aksákoff, how she was forced to find fresh fields and pastures new. D. D. Home had heard of her use of his name, and told the plain facts about her. She had previously dreaded that Aksákoff might reveal something. "To him," says Solovyoff (p. 236), "not foreseeing that she would soon need to play the part of the 'pure virgin,' she presented herself as the 'penitent Magdalen.'" When the blow came she wrote: "There is nothing left but to start for Australia, and change my name for ever." This was, however, not necessary for a woman of her resources, with Olcott to help her. First they started a Miracle Club, and then (Oct. 30, 1875) the Theosophical Society. The immediate cause was the alleged discoveries of a Mr. G. H. Felt, who was said to have found out the secret whereby the Egyptians evoked the spirits of the dead, and the geometric figures of the Egyptian Cabala. H. P. B., in her *Isis Unveiled* (p. 22), says: "He may one day be recognised as the greatest geometer of the age." Mr. H. J. Newton, the first treasurer of the Theosophical Society, tells how the geometer swindled him out of $75, which Olcott recommended should be given to him for promised lectures. He adds: "I was out over $200 before I got through with the society." As the testimony of the first treasurer is somewhat notable, and is referred to neither by Mr. Lillie nor by M. Solovyoff, I reprint some important statements from the *Progressive Thinker* of June 6, 1891:—

> "'In less than two years the society died a natural death. I resigned both my treasurership and membership towards the end of 1877. For months before my resignation, and up to the time Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott went to Europe in 1878, not more than three members could be got together, so it was impossible to have any legal business meetings. The society was practically dead and abandoned when I resigned. Nevertheless, on the eve of their departure from America, an article appeared in the *Sun* stating that Blavatsky and Olcott had been commissioned by the society to go to India and preach Theosophy to the Hindoos. This was not true, as there was no society then in existence, and no such action at any time appears on its records.' 'What was the object of publishing such a statement?' queried the reporter. 'I believe it emanated from Colonel Olcott, and was designed simply to screen the real nature of their visit to India. The Russians were then advancing on the Afghan frontier, and it was of great importance that they should have knowledge of the English position and preparations to resist their movement. Madame Blavatsky had twice visited India before, and was an experienced traveller, a clever talker, and an accomplished linguist, speaking ten or twelve languages. Only a short time before they decided on going, she spent the whole evening talking with a member of the Russian Legation here in this house [Mr. H. J. Newton's own house, 128 West Forty-Third-street, New York]. Colonel Olcott was also well fitted for a political mission of this kind. His appointment as Colonel in the United States army was given him by President Lincoln in recognition of his services as Chief of the United States Secret Service during the war. He was also a linguist of rare ability, speaking six or seven languages. It looks as if the religious or philosophical movement, intended at first only as a cloak to their real mission in India, proved such a success that, when their services were no longer needed by the Russian Government, they kept up Theosophy in India, and afterwards started it in England.'"

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, at whose house some of the early meetings of the society were held, in the *Two Worlds* (June 5, 1891) independently corroborated Mr. Newton's statement. She says:—

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> "Quite early in the movement one of the officers first appointed made a series of most damaging statements against the life, conduct, and character of the corresponding secretary, Madame Blavatsky; and as Madame Coulomb's tremendous exposures, Dr. Richard Hodgson's Psychical Research volume, and Professor Elliott Coues's New York *Sun* exposures were at that time things of the distant future, the chivalric feeling of the newly-formed society induced them to expel the too candid but offending member, swear fealty to the great Psychologist founder, and organise themselves into a *secret* society, with pass words, signs, and grips."

She notices that a library was formed, and remarks its utilisation in the composition of *Isis Unveiled*. This work, the plagiarisms of which, exposed by W. E. Coleman, are mentioned in the appendix to *The Modern Priestess of Isis*, was a composition founded on many works, and on MSS. left by the Baron de Palma, a gentleman who left also some property to the new society. Professor A. Wilder wrote the preface and supervised some part of the work. *Isis Unveiled* certainly shows talent of a peculiar kind, and some of its tall stories illustrate the imaginative power of its compiler.

Mr. Newton was, I believe, right in his surmise. The original idea in going to India was to rope in the leading native princes, rajahs, and maharajahs, prepare them in the esoteric section for the coming cataclysm, and, when all was ripe, have messages from the Mahatmas commanding revolt. Political designs in the East are usually worked in this way. The Indian Mutiny was by no means to be attributed solely to the use of greased cartridges, but to industriously-circulated prophecies that the rule of the English Feringees would come to an end in one hundred years from the date of the battle of Plassey, June, 1757. We shall see later on that Madame Blavatsky admitted having such a scheme.

J. M. Wheeler.

(To be continued).

DOES RELIGION TEACH MORALITY?

Not long ago, in conversation with one of my esteemed Christian friends, I asked him if a man could be moral without being religious? He at once replied that he could. Now, if that be true (it certainly is, and every Christian will say so), morality can form no part of religion, but must be an entirely separate and distinct quality in the character of men.

There can be only two answers to that question: they must either affirm or deny. If they affirm, the only conclusion is that morality is not a part of the Christian religion; if they deny, we must conclude that a man is religious to the extent that he is moral. Let them answer as they will, the case is equally against them. I have never met a Christian yet who was willing to admit either conclusion. They have a way of giving a common-sense answer to a simple question, and then denying every inference that can be had from it. When asked to explain their position, they resort to their ever available side-door subterfuge, and reply: "There are many things in religion we cannot understand."

Now, certainly, if the Christian religion be a thing that cannot be understood, it can be of no benefit to us in the end. It really does seem that Christians cannot explain their religion, for, after near nineteen centuries of almost frantic effort, even with the help of priests specially inspired for the purpose, they have made a most signal failure. But, while they have so faithfully been trying what they claim to be an impossibility—while they have endeavored to frame a definition of their religion as it is, and, at the same time, please their fancy as to what it should be, there has been a progressive element at work—a spirit of liberalism that has defined it for them. A jury has weighed the evidence of the case, both circumstantial and positive; its deliberate verdict is that the Christian religion is a delusion, a phantom, a fairy-like dream. The great judge, Human Reason, has passed the sentence of oblivion, and the great executive, Human Progress, is executing the decree. The Christian religion must finally take its proper rank in the category of mythology.

But back to the question: Can a man be moral without being religious? The affirmative answer is always given, and I like it better, for it suits both parties, and can be sustained by reason. Christians will not admit that a man is religious unless he believes in their angry God and good-natured, pleasure-giving Devil. Liberals see no necessity for any such absurdities. That answer meets the approval of all. It resolves itself, then, into two distinct questions, What is religion? and What is morality?

Religion, robbed of the usually associated idea of morality, cannot mean more than the belief in, and worship of, a Supreme Being. If we seek to include morality in a definition of religion, we leave the principle of religion, and infringe upon one equally sovereign with it. Religion has nothing to do with morality; neither has morality anything to do with religion. Morality has to do with man's intercourse with his fellow man; religion has to do with man's conception or omnipotence of his God.

It is curious to note what a radical change this God has undergone. At one time men must see their object of worship; they must have some visible form to make their sacrifices to—some visible form into whose insensible ears they could pour the torrent of their wants. They feared an evil nature working against them, and prayed for an escape from all its harm; they prayed for "blessings both spiritual and temporal"; they resigned themselves to the care of the object of their worship, as Christians now do; they felt that calmness and serenity of mind that Christians now feel; they voiced the emotional energy of the moment, and were satisfied. What more do Christians now? But from that invariable law, that all things must change, not even God could escape! and lo, we find him to-day "a spirit without body, parts, or passions"—in other words, absolutely nothing. So far as we know, or can know, he is totally imaginary. No living person has ever seen him, and of those who have passed beyond the veil none have returned to testify.

Christians say that God is omnipresent; but reason cannot conceive of omnipresence without a material body. They attribute to him the faculty of thought; but rationality cannot conceive of thought without a brain, and a brain would certainly be a part. They say he is jealous (Exodus xx. 5), and jealousy is only a passion. I am forced to conclude that the attributes Christians claim for their God absolutely contradict his very existence.

What definition, what description then, can I give for the Christian religion? Simply that it is the belief in and worship of an imaginary and impossible God. It is the religion of absurdity and ridiculousness, of crime and cruelty, of power and despotism. It is the shield of the tyrant, the sword of the oppressor. It is the enemy of liberty and of every manly sentiment.

Morality has for many ages been associated with some religious creed, and many have come to look upon it as a necessary part of religion. Christians even assert that the Bible contains every moral sentiment of which the human mind can conceive. I must take issue with them on that point. I must assert that the Bible does not teach morality, for it limits a person to certain set rules of action, and his every act must conform to them, regardless of what he may think himself. It takes away his manhood, and leaves him an imitator, a machine. It allows him no liberty of thought, and where there is no liberty there can be no morality.

Morality is conscientious action from a principle that the actor considers right. We must consider it as affecting individuals, and not society. We must regard it from an individual basis, for society is composed of individuals, and they must be affected before society possibly can be. Every idea, every movement, every revolution that has affected society in the least, was originally a mere thought in the mind of an individual, and could not possibly affect society before affecting him. Then, if morality be an individual qualification, the question arises, How came an individual to be moral?

The experience of every person teaches him that the standard of morality changes; that no system is permanent; that there is a continual, silent, majestic progression of ideas. The greatest lesson taught by all experience, individual and general, is that man has constantly before him an ideal existence; and as he gradually advances towards that existence his ideal has advanced. Then, if we assume that the human family sprung from a single pair, or that it evolved from a lower to a higher order of intellect, we must conclude that there was a time when the moral standard was limited, either by inexperience or

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a low degree of intellect. Morality is a kind of negative term—we recognise it only as we know immorality. Until we learn that a thing is immoral, either by our own experience or that of others, we can have no conception of that which is moral. Morality has its origin in the association of man with man; it implies a knowledge of the rights of others, and that can be had only by association with others. Unless we fully consider every probable consequence, and then act in a way that seems wisest to us, we cannot be said to be moral. The higher the appreciation of the needs and privileges of our fellow men we have, the higher may be our standard of morals. The more we allow to our fellow men those needs and privileges which experience has taught us are their right, the more moral we are. The more liberty we have, the more moral we can be. Absolute knowledge of the nature of men, and absolute liberty of conscience and of action, would permit men to be absolutely moral. That would be the highest ideal existence, the highest sphere of action in which man could move.

Has religion anything to do with this condition of things? Does Christianity teach morality? Does Christianity give to us one single progressive idea, one iota of tolerance? Does it teach, by precept or example, a single degree of conscience or action? Does it teach men to think for themselves, to judge for themselves, to act for themselves? Come, ye pioneers of science; ye thinkers of every age since Christendom was known; ye victims of the inquisition; ye peasants of France; ye poor, defenceless women and children, starved by the taxation of the Church, and left to die along the roads—come, all ye victims of Christian oppression, and array yourselves in solid phalanx before your persecutors, and be to all religious creeds a living accusation! Christians, followers of the Lamb, blessed of the Lord, witness. Listen! from Spain, from those dungeons of horror, comes the sound of clanking chains; hear the groans of anguish wrung from the victim by inconceivable torture; look on the haggard faces of women and children in the highways of France; hear their supplications as they beg for crumbs to fan again the spark of life! Look, and then answer: Does Christianity teach morality? Shame! Go break every tie that binds you to such a record; laugh at your system for its ridiculousness, spurn it for its intolerance and cruelty, bury your Bible under ten thousand curses, place yourself on the side of humanity, and henceforth be men. Let history raise a monument to Christianity that shall be a warning for all time to come, to every species of bigotry, intolerance, and oppression.

A. H. BURKE.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

THE NEW WOMAN.

My only objection to the New Woman is that she is too usually old. If she chooses to wear a divided skirt or "knicks," what is that to me? She has as much right to kick or "bike" as I. After all she is a biped, not a monopod. The New Woman goes in for her "rights," but she accepts her responsibilities. She does not wish to be treated like a wax doll, wrapped in cotton wool and lavender. She does not expect always to have chicken breast and ice cream, nor desire me to ride outside, for her convenience, on a cold night. She is self-reliant and self-sufficing. I prefer even my dog to be my companion and friend rather than my slave. *Ni Dieu, ni maître* either for me or my companion, *s'il-vous-plait.*

America is the land of the New Woman. You may find her dashing over Europe, too, going everywhere in easy self-reliance, no more needing a *chaperone* than a glass-case. I have before me a specimen of the American New Woman in the *World's Advance Thought* and the *Universal Republic*, two monthly papers in one, edited, printed, and published by Lucy A. Mallory, at Portland, Oregon. Lucy writes most of the articles and bits, picks up the type, carries the formes to press, and prints them herself. And she does all this on biscuit, cheese, and raisins, devoting her surplus income to feeding and teaching other folk's children. Lucy is, I fear, a bit of a crank, judging by the "Soul Communion Time Table" she places at the beginning of her journal, and which gives the corresponding times in various latitudes for entering into communion on the 27th day of each month "to invoke, through co-operation of thought and unity in spiritual aspiration, the blessings of universal peace and higher spiritual light." The time for London is from 8.11 to 8.41 p.m. But Lucy is a good sort, and her papers are full of bright bits, so at that time, if I don't forget, I'll drink your health Lucy—in orange-juice, of course, for tea and all intoxicants are tabooed by the *World's Advance Thought.*

The New Woman, for one thing, has got well away from St. Paul. That hot-headed old misogynist, it was said by the Ebionites, turned Christian because rejected by a Jewish rabbi's daughter. After that he wrote, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." What did the crusty old bachelor know about it, anyway? He declared the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man, and said, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." The New Woman could have taught him a thing or two that might have modified his opinions. Anyway, having tasted the sweets of a freer gospel, she will never go back to the bondage of Scripture texts. In this respect the New Woman, and she only I fear, is fit to be a companion for a Freethinker.

"*Les races se féminisent,*" said Buffon, the great naturalist, in the last century. The world is growing more feminine; woman is everywhere coming to the front. Happily so. It means the triumph of heart over stomach, nerve over muscle, of peace over war, of love and insight over brute strength and sheer stupidity. The poorest woman to-day is born to an inheritance her ancestors never dreamt of. Should she sigh for the fleshpots and bondage of Egypt, be a slave when she may be an equal, obey St. Paul rather than agree with Stuart Mill? Once deny Paul's dictum that she is to be subject in all things, and what shall you hinder her from doing and becoming? There is no logical *via media* between slavery and freedom. On this question the traditionary position of the sexes has been reversed. The New Woman has all the logic, and the Old Man all the prejudice.

Of course, the New Woman will cause trouble. The transition from feudalism was a flea-bite compared to the emancipation of an entire sex. Of course she will often go wrong, and conclusively demonstrate that she is indeed no angel. But Nature and sex—Nature's fundamental fact—will take care of itself. If the New Woman fancies she can do what she cannot, she will soon find out by experiment. Let her try. She may not prove a worse duffer at engineering than a man would be at millinery or minding a baby.

One thing is certain: the New Woman has come to stay. Had we not better make her feel at home? Robert Lowe said, in accents of despair, at the passing of the Reform Bill: "We must now educate our masters." Let us quickly educate our girls not to be our masters, but our equals. Teach them physiology, and they will never think it womanly, or possible, to unsex themselves.

The New Woman is popularly supposed to be, if not a free lover, at least not without considerable sympathy with *The Woman Who Did.* This is her worst offence. The male Turk can forgive anything but this. Polygamy is permissible; polyandry abominable. But the New Woman is not a polyandrist, any more than Herminia Barton. She merely is not ashamed of her sex, and holds that the same code of morality should apply to man and to woman. What right, she asks, has man to demand a fidelity he is not prepared to give himself? Why are his sexual derelictions venial, and hers mortal? "Oh," you say, "she has to bear the consequences, which he escapes." But let me tell you, the New Woman has studied physiology. She has learnt that indulgence need not be followed by "consequences." She is a Neo-Malthusian, and knows how over child-bearing leads to the degradation of her sex. How now, Captain Turk? Can she only be innocent when ignorant? or may she not, having your knowledge, fairly say, "Let us be on the same level—not by woman's descent to man's promiscuity, but by man's ascent to woman's fidelity"? For my part, I see the best hopes for human elevation in the New Woman placing a high price upon herself, and insisting on it too.

My conclusion is that the old woman was good—my own particular old woman emphatically so; but the New Woman is better. My own particular old woman is a New Woman. As I have said before, my only objection to the New Woman is that she is too usually old.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

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OUR AMERICAN VISITOR.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, the President of the American Secular Union, and the most popular speaker (after Colonel Ingersoll) on the trans-Atlantic platform, will soon be visiting England; and I am sure our party will give him a good old English welcome. Mr. Putnam will stay in the old country about three months, and during that time he ought to speak in most of our big towns. Branches of the N.S.S. who desire—and all *should* desire—to arrange for a visit from our distinguished visitor should lose no time in communicating with Mr. Charles Watts, who has undertaken to arrange his old friend's lecture-tours. Mr. Putnam has just written to me, and although his letter is not exactly intended for publication, I take the liberty of printing it here for the benefit of my readers:—

> "My Dear Mr. Foote,—I shall set sail for England April 24, in the 'City of Berlin.' It is with great pleasure that I anticipate this visit to England. It has been the dream of my life; and I feel sure that I shall receive a cordial welcome from English friends. It will be a delight to know personally those whom I have read so much about, and whose labors I have watched so closely, and who have carried on the fight so bravely, in which all American Liberals are deeply interested. You know I shall write up my experiences in England for the *Truthseeker* and *Investigator*, so that my friends who stay at home may see somewhat with my eyes the great work and progress in your land. I do think this better acquaintance will help us both. We in America need the knowledge of your methods and results. We need to be inspired by your success, which in many things is superior to ours. There are a thousand reasons why I should come to England, the land of my ancestry, with such a wonderful history, and such a wealth of literary and poetic memory, and such marvellous beauty of scenery; but I assure you, after all, the best of reasons with me is to greet the Freethought army, and to mingle with its ranks, to enjoy its comradeship around the camp-fires. I want to see you with all my heart, who have suffered in our cause, and the light of whose struggle has illuminated our battle-fields here. I am sure we shall strike hands with cordial goodwill; and I shall be proud to make known to my countrymen the soldiers of English liberty. Whatever you can do for me as a representative of American Freethinkers will be gladly welcomed, and I hope to serve you to the best of my ability. With kindest regards,—Yours truly,
>
> "Samuel P. Putnam."

Mr. Watts and I intend to meet Mr. Putnam at Southampton. We mean to board the "City of Berlin" and welcome him to the shores of old England. It is also my intention to arrange for Mr. Putnam's occupying the Hall of Science platform on the first Sunday in May, and to take the chair myself on that occasion. The President of the American Secular Union must have the welcome which the National Secular Society would like to see extended to its own President if he visited the New World.

G. W. FOOTE.

TO CHRIST.

Thou bad'st let children come to thee:
What children now but curses come?
What manhood in that God can be
Who sees their worship, and is dumb?
No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and died,
Is this their carrion crucified.

Nay, if their God and thou be one,
If thou and this thing be the same,
Thou shouldst not look upon the sun;
The sun grows haggard at thy name.
Come down, be done with, cease, give o'er;
Hide thyself, strive not, be no more.

—*A. C. Swinburne*, "*Before a Crucifix.*"

When men are destitute of the critical spirit, when the notion of uniform law is yet unborn, and when their imaginations are still incapable of rising to abstract ideas, histories of miracles are always formed and always believed; and they continue to flourish and to multiply until these conditions are altered. Miracles cease when men cease to believe and expect them.—*W. E. H. Lecky.*

ACID DROPS.

What a horrible story is that "witch-burning" at Clonmel! We commend it to the attention of Mr. Benjamin Kidd, Mr. A. J. Balfour, and other gentlemen who tell us that human conduct must be based upon "ultra-rational sanctions." There is something peculiarly sickening in all those men seizing hold of one poor woman and subjecting her to such tortures. Her own husband—nay, her own father—helped to hold her over the fire, in order to make her say whether she was a witch or not. "Are you," he asked, "the daughter of Patrick Boland, wife of Michael Cleary?" "I am, dada," the poor creature replied, as the room filled with the stench of her burning flesh. That father, tormenting his "own flesh and blood," called upon her to tell the truth "in the name of God."

When Judge North sentenced Mr. Foote to twelve months' imprisonment, there was a great row in the gallery, and one enraged Freethinker cried out "Damn religion!" What other exclamation is appropriate over this Irish witch case?

"Oh men," cried poor Mrs. Cleary as they took her to the fire, "give me a chance." That is what men have never done. The worst stress of superstition has always fallen upon the weak. A thousand women were burnt for every man during the acute stage of the witch-mania.

The Rev. Z. B. Woffendale is dreadfully annoyed at our "attacks" on the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Very likely. There are certain characteristics which these two "reverends" have in common; and was it not Shakespeare who said, "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind?"

Mr. Woffendale presumes to give us a "friendly hint." He is a hypocrite to use such an adjective. He states that Mr. Holyoake called Mr. Foote "a secular ruffian." He is a liar to say so. After denying us "a single gleam of wit," he perpetrates the miraculous joke that "Secularism is unfortunate in its foot." Mr. Woffendale is unfortunate in his head.

Jehovah is not half as sharp as Old Nick. When the severe earthquakes occurred some years ago in the South of Europe, several churches were destroyed or badly injured, and in some cases the worshippers were killed by the falling of the "sacred" edifices; but no damage whatever was done at Monte Carlo. During the recent hurricane in our own country an advertisement hoarding beside a Primitive Methodist Chapel at Swindon was blown down. It fell upon several people, one of whom was killed. He was a young man named Farr, a Wesleyan local preacher, who was on his way to conduct a Sunday service, six or seven miles distant, for another local preacher who had been taken ill. A boy of thirteen, who was severely injured, was also on his way to a Methodist Chapel at Gorse Hill. Providence acted on this occasion with its usual blindness.

In *The Faith*, a Christadelphian organ, E. N. Sheffield writes against the Advanced School. How much E. N. Sheffield knows about it may be judged by the statement: "Though Bradlaugh and Ingersoll without doubt attracted crowds, they were men who, in an unusual way, could make the worse appear the better reason, always an irresistible fascination to the vulgar mind; neither did they ever charge for being heard—a test perhaps that might have proved more crucial than they would have liked."

The *Presbyterian Observer* says: "The Sultan of Turkey is sending out Mohammedan missionaries to Africa, at his own expense, to check the Christian advance in that continent." The Christian advance, so far as the natives are concerned, has been chiefly an advance backwards. Islam has made ten times more converts among North Africans than has Christianity.

The Rev. C. Ferguson, an Episcopal clergyman of Cohasset, Massachusetts, has taken his stand against the American Bishop's Pastoral Letter. While not venturing to deny the virgin birth of the baby said to have been born in Palestine nearly 1,900 years ago, he declares he cannot teach it as an absolute essential of the Christian faith.

The Rev. C. Ferguson adds: "Nor is it possible for me to say that the Holy Scriptures are inspired of God in a peculiar and miraculous manner, distinguishing them from all other writings. The doctrine that the Bible alone is inspired is, I think, full of dishonor to the power of the Holy Spirit, and full of discouragement to the spirits of living men. And the teaching that it is miraculously and infallibly inspired has been, as an historical fact, the spring of endless sectarian discord and the source of the most deadly kind of intellectual pride—the pride which, exulting in its superior

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insight, masks under the guise of humble obedience to the Word." Mr. Ferguson will probably be called over the coals and asked either to recant or resign.

Lord Kelvin and Professor Perry differ slightly in regard to the age of the earth. His Lordship thinks it is 100,000,000 years old, while the Professor is of opinion that it is 400,000,000. Though it be as old as either says, it will probably last our time with a little repair.

The *Koelnisch Zeitung* says that Count Hoensbroech, who forsook the Jesuits and was converted to Protestantism, will enter the Prussian diplomatic service under the Emperor's special patronage. This will be a bitter pill for the clericals, to whom Hoensbroech is a constant thorn in the side.

The Rev. M. L. Gates, of Grace M. E. Church, in Jersey City, recently prayed to the Lord to give "the sense and intelligence needed in public affairs to the incoming Congress." In view of our recent experiences, the Rev. Mr. Gates would seem to be crowding the mourners somewhat.

Professor E. Johnson has made a convert of citizen George Francis Train. In the *Ironclad Age* (March 16), after citing the contradictory accounts of the death of Judas in Matthew and Acts, he says: "Each chapter calls next Liar! Thief! Boodler! Fact is, the Bible is not six centuries old! Born with invention of printing!"

A German statistician looked up the question whether Friday was really unlucky. He found that fewest accidents were recorded on Friday, and most on Monday. Monday's bad record probably follows from Sunday's superstitious sacredness and enforced idleness.

When the French Catholics find any of their old privileges in danger, they begin to call out "persecution." The religious communities have hitherto had their property exempt from taxation, and now that it is proposed that, like other bodies, they shall contribute their share to the support of the State, there is a great outcry. The spectacle of the most intolerant Church in the world declaiming against intolerance is a noteworthy one.

The New York *Sun* (March 17) has an amusing account of a clock invented by Mr. Vokey Chamberlain, a colored Bible student, to guide the owner to salvation. The clock has 72 minutes to the hour, "for the sufficient reason that twice 72 is 144, and that was the number of the cubits in the measure of the wall, the measure of a man which is an angel (Rev. xxi.)." It says: "The inventor's charts are even more symbolistic. Some of the decorations are of familiar scenes, as one which shows Wall-street, with Trinity Church in the distance. When asked the meaning of this, the inventor replied: 'If the Bridegroom should go into Wall-street, and I should appear before that minute, he might declare me to be an infidel; but my duty would be to love him none the less.' Any one tired of Ibsen and Maeterlinck, and having ten years to spare, might go further into this subject with interest, if not profit."

Mr. J. Keir Hardie, member of Parliament and Christian Socialist, has been holding forth in a Congregational church at Fulham on a far greater Scotsman—Robert Burns. It pleased Mr. Hardie to say that Burns was extremely religious. We know the writings of Robert Burns as well as Keir Hardie does, and perhaps better; but it never struck us that religion was his speciality. Keir Hardie admits that Burns laughed at "what passed for religion in those days," but contends that "he never scoffed at Christianity as taught in the New Testament." Didn't he though? Isn't hell fire taught in the New Testament? Isn't salvation by faith? Isn't predestination? Isn't free grace? And didn't Robert Burns laugh at these delicacies of the Christian *menu*? Why, his hearty laughter shook the religion of Scotland to its very foundations; and it was something like laughter to do that.

Mr. Keir Hardie went on, in his illogical, sentimental way, to talk of Freethinkers as the best Christians. "The men who were living nearest to the ideal life to-day," he observed, "were the men who spurned the very names of Church and Christianity; men who called themselves Atheists to repudiate their connection with professing Christians who were mere hypocrites." Mr. Hardie is really catching the twang of the "advanced" Nonconformist tabernacle. It doesn't occur to him that men do not merely *call* themselves Atheists, but *are* Atheists. This is a horrid thought to a man like Keir Hardie. When the Socialist millennium arrives, we shall all have plenty of leisure, perhaps two Sundays a week; and oh! what opportunities we shall enjoy of sitting for whole hours and listening to the addle-headed Christianity of the millennial preachers, of whom Keir Hardie will assuredly be Archbishop, unless Hugh Price Hughes—or even Tom Mann or Ben Tillett—cuts him out in the general election for that holy office.

Lady Herbert, of Lea, having done "Six Weeks in Russia," is, of course, competent to write on the subject in the Catholic *Dublin Review*. She finds Russia very religious, and thinks nothing of political prisoners in Siberia or the persecution of the Jews. "Certainly," she says, "our Lord *reigns* in Moscow, receiving there the homage due to his Divine majesty as in no other city in the world." "In no country in the world is there greater devotion to the Blessed Virgin than in Russia." "Our Lord reigns in Moscow" reminds us of Czar Nicolas's "Peace reigns in Warsaw," after ruthlessly suppressing an insurrection.

Lady Herbert, of Lea, finds that "every thinking man and woman in Russia desires a renewal of union with the Holy See." Perhaps, if she had stayed a little longer, she might have learnt a little better. She is disgusted with the fact that the ecclesiastical ruler of Russia, the Procurator, is a layman, but reflects with joy that even he is not immortal, and hopes that a change may soon come. She adds in a note the curious hope that the enormous number of requiem masses and prayers offered for the late Czar may "convince our Protestant country men and women of the necessity of such sacrifice for their beloved dead."

Amelia Payne, an elderly Clapham lady, is a fervent pietist, and indulges in loud interjections of "Amen" in the responses at St. Savior's, Cedars-road, Clapham. She is also alleged to sing louder than the rest of the congregation, and to have been the cause of its diminishing. She was brought up before the South-Western Police Court, and though she pleaded that she went to church to pray to God, and not to please men, she was fined forty shillings and costs for brawling.

The *School Board Chronicle* mentions a decree of the Catholic Bishop of Nottingham to the effect that a parent guilty of sending his children to a Board school imperilled the welfare of his soul in the life to come, and quotes Dr. Sparrow, of Liverpool, who says that to send children to a non-Catholic school is as great a sin as to send them to steal in the streets.

Francis Clark, the chief of the "Christian Endeavor" movement, writes to the American *Review of Reviews* that respect for America and Americans has sadly waned in Europe. Moreover, and worst of all, American Stock has gone down in European markets. Of course his remedy is "Christian Endeavor." We fancy the cause lies in the corrupt plutocracy of America, which can atone for anything by building churches and subscribing to religious societies. It is this kind of Christian endeavor that has helped to bring America into disrepute.

The Rev. H. R. Haweis, who gets a good living by subscribing to doctrines he does not preach, writes in the *North American Review* on "The New Pulpit." According to him, the new pulpiteer will preach anything and everything except the old book. He says: "If only the preacher knew it, the whole world belongs to him. The time is past when he need knot his discourse with texts. If he leaves a few out, no one will miss them, any more than Bible readers notice the entire omission of the word 'God' in the book of Esther."

The Ritualists complain much of the anti-Ritualists invoking the law against them; but it appears from *The History of the English Church Union*, by the Rev. G. Bayfield Roberts, that this High Church Union offered £500 to the Archbishop of York towards the expenses of the prosecution of the Rev. C. Voysey for heresy. They only object to law when invoked against themselves.

"Nunquam" of the *Clarion*, as we expected, pokes great fun at Price Hughes's important discovery that he has been "captured" by the High Church party. Mr. Blatchford says that he did dine with four parsons, and that he will be just as happy to dine with four Dissenting ministers, if they will give him a slice of good beef and listen to his talk about Socialism. It appears to "Nunquam" that the *Methodist Times* men are "amongst the funniest dogs that ever wagged a tail" (Ah, "Nunquam," they do worse than that!). Finally, the *Clarion* editor promises an early chapter on "Marc's Nests."

The *British Weekly* laments that since the *Saturday Review* has changed hands it is no longer a Christian paper. Under Mr. Beresford Hope it was sacerdotal. Now it has reverted to Freethought, which, to some extent, pervaded it when John Morley and Sir Fitzjames Stephen were contributors. The *B. W.* mentions with reprobation an article on Death, which concluded thusly: "Mortal man and the immortal protozoa have the same barren immortality;

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the individuals perish, living on only in their descendants, creatures of their body, separated pieces of their undying protoplasm; the type alone persists." This is flat Materialism.

St. Mary's Church, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, has been rendered a complete wreck by fire. The Lord took no care of his house, but his servants had it heavily insured.

Pierre Loti has been giving an account of a recent visit to Jerusalem in *La Nouvelle Revue*. He was mostly struck by the modernness and European hotel atmosphere of the holy city. He finds specially odious the hawkers who flooded the hotels with cheap "objects of piety" and so-called souvenirs of the holy places. The souvenirs are, after all, probably more genuine than the holy places themselves.

Rev. Dr. H. S. Lunn finds arranging for religious pilgrimages, picnics, and reunions more profitable than preaching the Word. He announces a lot of tours this summer, and is going to bring over to London a pilgrimage from the Women's Christian Temperance Union of America, an organisation which looks over Jesus turning water into wine at Cana, and seeks to bring God into the American constitution.

Secularism is triumphing all along the line. The Churches are infected with its spirit, and so are the religious newspapers. We take up the *Christian World*, for instance, and scan its front page. It contains eight leading articles, and every one of them is on a social or political topic. Religion is relegated to the inside of the paper, which doesn't meet the public eyes as it rests upon the counter or is displayed in the window.

The triumph of Secularism is shown in many other ways. We have always denounced the doctrine of hell-fire and everlasting burnings. Well, the clergy themselves are beginning to follow suit. A famous Nonconformist, the Rev. Silas Hocking, has been preaching at Southport from the text, "They limited the Holy One of Israel," and in the course of his sermon he said that "some people" talked as though Christ had been a failure, as though the world had been wrecked and the Lifeboat had just managed to save a few, and as though heaven was nearly empty and hell crowded. Mr. Hocking believes that God will gather his children home, and that the great majority will not be faggoted for the flames. So far, so good; but heaven and hell, except as they exist on earth, are only fancies after all.

Daniel Hall Western, a Croydon wine and spirit merchant, who suffered from religious mania, committed suicide by hanging himself in his loft. He left a letter in which he said, "Oh, God! why was I born? The Lord hath formed all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil." A text like this is well calculated to upset the mind of anyone who really believes it.

The power of the parson is breaking, and Dissenting ministers have to mind their p's and q's. Formerly they used to preach against sinners wholesale and retail; now they have to drop the retail department. Down at Southsea a publican named Pitts has recovered £75 damages against the Rev. Charles Joseph, a Baptist minister, for slander. Alas! how are the mighty fallen! Pity the sorrows of a poor man of God who can no longer mount the pulpit and give his free, unbiassed opinion of every man's character in the parish.

The Free Church Congress has been confabulating at Birmingham, and amongst the subjects discussed was "Modern Biblical Scholarship in its Bearing on Christian Thought and Faith." Dr. Agar Beet read a paper on this topic, in which he said that the Bible was not a revelation, but the record of a revelation. This is very much like a conundrum, and we give it up. We understand Dr. Beet better when he admits that the Bible contains mistakes. There he touches solid ground, and we can follow him with intelligence—and pleasure.

One of the Free Church Congress speakers, the Rev. H. T. Andrews (Swansea), boasted that Biblical research had "spiked the guns of the enemy," by having rendered obsolete and useless the old infidel attacks upon the Bible. This is a pretty way of putting it, but metaphors are proverbially dangerous. We should put it in this way: the infidels have battered down the fort of Bible infallibility, and the Christians have abandoned a ruined position. We have other batteries, quite up to date, for attacking other forts. Our guns are playing away merrily, and as we destroy fort after fort the Christian defenders, who retreat towards their citadel of "God," are entirely welcome to the comfort of boasting that we can't batter them *there* any more.

Count Tolstoi, the Russian novelist who has turned prophet, is in high favor with the "advanced" Christians in this country. Even the *Christian World* says that "between the Christianity of the Russian prophet and that of Rome and Canterbury lies the great fight of the future." We don't think so, but let us see what the statement implies. Count Tolstoi's latest work is upon the Four Gospels, which he "harmonises," like a good many previous writers, though the worst of it is that there is no harmony amongst the "harmonies." But the remarkable thing is that Tolstoi gives up all the miracles, including the Incarnation. He simply clings to the teaching of Jesus. What he has now to consider is that all Jesus taught was taught before he was born.

It is evident that the churches are getting shaky about the deity of Jesus Christ, and that Messrs. Diggle and Riley were correct in their suspicions of those who objected to the London School Board circular on religious education. Over in the United States the Bishops of the Episcopal Church had put forth a Pastoral Letter on the Incarnation and the Inerrancy of Scripture, in which the birth of J. C. from a virgin is insisted upon as of overwhelming importance to the human race. Whereupon our English *Christian World* points out that St. Paul never heard of the immaculate conception, and that if two chapters in Matthew and Luke were lost we should never have learnt anything about the immaculate conception from all the rest of the New Testament.

The *Open Court*, of Chicago (March 21), says: "The latest statistics of India show that among the inhabitants of the country there is one convicted criminal to every 274 European Christians, to every 509 Euro-Asiatics (the children of European fathers and native mothers), to every 709 native Christians, to every 1,361 Hindu Brahmans, and to every 3,787 Buddhists. Accordingly, as a matter of fact, European Christians furnish comparatively the greatest amount of criminals, and Buddhists the fewest.

Margaret Shiell, aged twenty-one, a machinist, of 83 Great Cambridge-street, Hackney-road, drowned herself in the Eagle Pond at Snaresbrook. The poor girl left a letter for her father, stating that she had been accused of unchastity with "three fellows." Her brain, she said, was on fire, and she hoped God would forgive her. At the coroner's inquest Dr. Collins, divisional surgeon of police, testified that the deceased could not have been guilty of unchastity. "My daughter," said her father, "has been attending the mission-room attached to the church, where a lot of backbiting, bickering old women attend." The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst insane," but the verdict should have been "Killed by Christian charity."

The organ of the Hall of Science libellers complains that the cruel Atheists put in an execution to recover the damages (with costs) awarded in the Court of Queen's Bench. Surely the whining of these fellows is most pitiable. The damages could have been recovered the next day after trial, and the costs as soon as taxed; yet they were allowed a month's grace, and the execution was only put in when their solicitors gave no answer to the Atheists' solicitors' application for a settlement. The execution cost the libellers about £12 in addition to the £145 of taxed costs and damages. All this is very sad. But those who publish atrocious libels, and glory in them, and express not a word of regret even when they are branded by a jury in a court of justice, are simply dastards to cry out for "mercy."

Let us take a few samples of these men's tender consideration for others. Their organ prints *as its own* a part of the verbatim report of the trial taken from the *Freethinker*. It gives all the filthy insinuations against the Secularists in Mr. Murphy's cross-examination, and then says that "the nature of the evidence" forbids it to give the rest. Next it hints that Mr. Smith committed perjury in the witness-box, and finally it informs the public—or rather its public, which is a more limited affair—that Mr. Foote receives "a big commission on the sale of atheistic felt hats." It is impossible to fathom the baseness or the folly of these Nazarenes. Nor do we intend to notice them any further unless they give us another opportunity of dragging them before the bar of justice.

Before leaving them on this occasion we may repeat that the fellow Powell, who first uttered that stinking libel on the Hall of Science, left the editor, printer, and publisher in the lurch, and the two cronies are now lying (or perhaps telling the truth) about each other in the most amusing fashion. The contemptible bearer of the great name of Bradlaugh actually states that the fellow Powell is a member of the National Secular Society. This is silly enough for anything, even for the libellers' own organ. We light a cigarette at this point, just to drown the smell.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 7, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London :—"The Death of God and the Life of Humanity."

April 14, Hall of Science, London ; 17 and 18, debate at New Brompton with the Rev. A. J. Waldron (C.E.S.) ; 21, Glasgow ; 28, Sunderland.

May 8 and 9, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—April 7, Sheffield ; 14, Liverpool ; 21, Hall of Science, London ; 28, Hall of Science, London. May 5, Glasgow ; 12, Dundee ; 19, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

L. Levine (Charleston).—Many thanks for your papers. See paragraphs.

C. Aarstad.—Papers always welcome.

C. B.—Luke xxiii. 56 indicates that the apostles, after Christ's death, kept the Jewish Sabbath. See, too, Acts xiii. 44, xvii. 2, xviii. 4.

E. W. Bhacey.—We lost the Spencer legacy of £500 that was left to Charles Bradlaugh and George Payne for the Manchester Secularists. Some years previously we lost some property at Bolton. Owing to the state of the law, which renders legacies for Freethought propaganda invalid, men of means are often afraid to make uncertain bequests ; the result is that we lose thousands of pounds, which would otherwise be promoting Secularism. Mr. Manfield, Member for Northampton, introduced a Bill to remedy this state of things, but it never reached the second reading. Mr. Bradlaugh introduced a Bill to abolish the Blasphemy Laws altogether, but it was only supported by forty-five members in the House of Commons. While opinions are held to be criminal, the judges are bound to treat legacies to promote them as invalid. If the end is illegal, the means are also illegal.

A. Brycerson.—General satisfaction is felt at the disappearance of the Club at the Hall of Science. We had anticipated your suggestion, and shall guard against the danger.

E. G. Watson.—Thanks for cutting.

W. H. Hollick.—Thanks. See paragraph. Mr. Foote is in first-rate health.

G. Gee.—Your verses are too pessimistic, and death is a hackneyed theme in versification. Try something a little more inspiriting.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—Balance Children's Party, £2 1s. 9d. ; Sale of Literature, per Mr. O. Dawson, 7s. 10d. ; Nottingham Branch, 5s. ; T. Carne, 6s.

E. D. H. Daly.—Cuttings always welcome.

J. Stacey.—Freethought institutions, as such, cannot be endowed, because the law holds their objects to be illegal. This follows from the Statute of William III. and the Common Law of Blasphemy. The *Buddhist Ray* was published at Colombo, Ceylon. We have not seen it for some time.

W. Scrivener.—Does it really matter whether he speaks every Sunday or not ?

Jas. Neate.—See paragraph. The policy of reconstruction will be very carefully considered.

A. G. Levett.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. W. Kennedy.—We may treat the subject at greater length by-and-by.

T. Ballam.—The Clonmel witch case is a good illustration of what would happen if the Bible were as influential as it was once.

W. M. Knox.—It is scarcely in the way of our special public. Is it ?

Papers Received.—Cape Argus—Eastern Province Herald—Port Elizabeth Gazette—Echo—Looker On—Clarion—Non-Sectarian—Illustrated American—Review of Reviews—New York Sun——Liberator—Calcutta Statesman—Two Worlds—Truthseeker—Crescent—Liberty—Open Court—Boston Investigator—Forum Library—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Independent Pulpit—Birmingham Daily Post—Torch—Freethinkers' Magazine—Church Reformer.

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

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One Year, 10s. 6d. ; Half Year, 5s. 3d. ; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d. ; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements* :—One inch, 4s. 6d. ; half column, £1 2s. 6d. ; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

Mr. R. O. Smith has at length sent me a definite answer, which will be considered by the Board of Directors at its next meeting, a few hours after this issue of the *Freethinker* goes to press. My anticipation is that the Directors will accept Mr. Smith's offer, which is identical with the one he made early in January and afterwards withdrew. I shall be in a position on Sunday evening to make a definite announcement at the Hall of Science, and I invite all who are interested in the maintenance of our headquarters to be present on that occasion.

Mr. Smith complained at the last meeting of the Board that my statement about the negotiations with him was incomplete and inaccurate. I should be very sorry to do him an injustice, but he did not convince us that his complaint was well-founded, and as he has not put it formally in writing I do not see that I can give him any satisfaction.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

There was a large and enthusiastic audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "New Light on the Old Book." Owing to the delay in the negotiations with Mr. Smith, Mr. Foote was unable to make a complete announcement as to the future of the institution, but he will certainly do so this evening (April 7) before or after his lecture on "The Death of God and the Life of Humanity."

Mr. Charles Watts had a most successful day last Sunday in Newcastle-on-Tyne. He had a particularly fine audience in the afternoon to listen to his debate with Mr. Lynn, the vice-president of the local Christian Evidence Society. Mr. Watts speaks very highly of the gentlemanly manner in which his opponent conducted his share of the debate. The audience warmly applauded both disputants. A lengthy discussion also followed the lectures in the morning and evening.

To-day, Sunday, April 7, Mr Watts lectures three times in Sheffield, when he will be glad to see friends from the surrounding districts.

At the last meeting of the National Secular Society's Executive, on Thursday, March 28, the place for holding the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday was under discussion. Nottingham and Bristol had the largest number of votes, the former being one ahead of the latter ; but, as Nottingham had not stated that it could positively secure a suitable hall for the evening meeting, the Executive unanimously decided that the Conference should be held at Bristol. The West of England has had but one Conference, that held at Plymouth in 1884, and such an important part of the country ought not to be neglected. In the circumstances, we hope the Nottingham friends will not be impatient. They had set their hearts on having this year's Conference in their city, but they will, in all probability, only have to wait until next year to have a great foregathering of the "saints" under their auspices.

The West of England has produced its share of front-rank men in the Freethought party. Richard Carlile, who suffered more than nine years' imprisonment, was a native of Devonshire ; G. W. Foote was born and bred in the same county ; and Charles Watts was born and bred at Bristol.

We earnestly appeal to the Secularists all over the kingdom to make the Whit-Sunday Conference a great success. Branches of the N.S.S. should begin immediately to arrange for their being represented by *bond fide* delegates. Bristol is a fine, busy city, and there is some splendid scenery in its neighborhood.

Freethinkers will all be glad to hear that Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, the oldest next to Mr. Truelove of our N.S.S. vice-presidents, is recovering from his recent severe attack of influenza. Mrs. Baker, who is still older than her husband, was down at the same time with this fell disorder, but she also is now on the road to recovery. We saw Mr. Baker in bed at his residence, as soon as he had taken a favorable turn, and we told him that we had booked him for the Annual Conference. All the delegates will be delighted to see him there.

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The Nottingham Branch sends us its report and balance-sheet for 1894–5. The committee seem full of zeal, and earnestly invite the support of all local Freethinkers. Reference is made to the courses of lectures by Messrs. Foote and Watts, and to the return of Mr. Snell to Nottingham. We have great hopes of Mr. Snell, and we shall be glad to hear that he is taking a leading part in the work of the Nottingham Branch.

In spite of repeated evictions, the Derby Branch of the N.S.S. has succeeded in securing another room for meetings, this time at Pollicott's (late Bocsey's) Dining Rooms, Market-place, where meetings will be held on the first Sunday in each month. The last meeting was a decided success, and, several strangers being present, it was felt to be a great encouragement to the members. A few more friends, a little heartier support, and Derby could be counted as a Secularist stronghold.

Mr. C. Cohen begins his month's mission at Newcastle to-day (April 7). His inaugural meeting is an open-air one on the Quayside at 11 in the forenoon. We strongly appeal to the local Secularists to rally round him on this occasion. They should protect him by their presence from the disorder that may be attempted by the baser sort of Christians.

The Bethnal Green Branch, at a special meeting last Sunday, congratulated Mr. Foote on the success of the Hall of Science libel action, which "must have a great effect on our propaganda." It also resolved to call upon all members of the Branch to do their utmost in spreading the report of the trial. Further, it expressed satisfaction at the closing of the late Hall of Science Club.

The Isle of Dogs is a very unromantic locality. But a Progresive Club is doing good work there, and it has invited the N.S.S. to send some Freethought lecturers down on Sunday mornings. Mr. Robert Forder opens the ball this morning (April 7) at 11.30, his subject being "Why I am Not a Christian." The Progressive Club is situated in Stebondale-road, Cubitt Town.

The Manchester Branch held its Annual Meeting on Sunday last, and it was satisfactory to find that the Branch is in a better condition, financially, than it was this time last year. This is mainly to be attributed to the hard and harmonious way in which the Committee, as a body, has worked. The outlook for the coming season is brighter, and shows every sign of being one of increased activity. Mr. Ring, the treasurer, has been very unwell for a considerable time now, but he was persuaded to again accept office, as were also all the other officials.

The seventh Annual Soiree and Ball of the Hull Branch was entirely successful, so far as the enjoyment of the company was concerned. About one hundred persons joined in the proceedings.

Freethinkers who wish to spend a jolly evening on Good Friday should visit the Battersea Secular Hall. There will be a musical and dramatic entertainment, and plenty of dancing. Tickets (3d. each) can be had at the hall. The services of vocalists or instrumentalists will be gladly accepted.

Mrs. Emily Adams, writing in *Secular Thought* (March 16) on "Equal Suffrage for Men and Women," points out that it was in the dark ages, when Christianity was triumphant, that woman's lot was worst, and that her emancipation has largely been achieved by Freethinkers. She mentions Frances Wright, Lucretia Mott, Ernestine L. Rose, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Matilda Joslin Gage, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Martineau, John Stuart Mill, and others, as deserving of honor for their work in the movement.

The same number of *Secular Thought* reprints the poem, "Down with the Barriers," by Mr. E. B. H. Stephenson, from our columns.

CHILDREN'S PARTY.

The following additional sums have been collected and paid to the Treasurer:—S. B., 3s.; per J. Fagan, 10s.; per Mr. Clifton, 3s.; B. Waterhouse, 5s. The balance-sheet, which has been audited and passed by the Committee, showed receipts £23 18s. 8½d., and after paying all expenses there remained £4 3s. 6d. This surplus has been divided between the Benevolent Fund and the London Secular Federation.

R. Forder *(Treasurer)*.

SOME OF THE DEVIL'S PROPERTY.

Far back in the history of our island, when life in the country districts was lonesome and monstrous and there existed but scanty communication with the outside world, when education was unknown and science unheard of, and at a time when every manifestation of Nature other than ordinary was ascribed to supernatural power, there were created what are now known as legends, traditions, and weird stories of immortals, both evil and good. Life in the rural parts of England has scarcely possessed great attractions for those whose tastes have been uncultivated and knowledge crude, and therefore the superstitious beliefs and practices of village communities may have been the means of affording some colour to their surroundings, relieving the dull progress of the weeks, months, and years, and of rendering existence, if not exactly romantic, at least tolerable. Many of these fairy stories, students of folk-lore tell us, can be traced back to pre-Christian times, while others have their birth in the days when England was kept ignorant and superstitious by the rule of Roman Catholicism. The duty of the antiquary is to discover from what circumstances these legends arose; this having been done, the moral and intellectual state of the country at any particular period can more easily be fairly determined. Of especial interest are the traditions respecting the Devil, his escapades, and the performances of his attendant demons; for at a time when his fiery majesty is being consigned to the background of theology, and his pretended existence ridiculed by the leading lights of the Church, it is both curious and instructive to learn what a very terrible reality he was to our ancestors, how the fear of his displeasure influenced their actions, making them pay as much deference to his supposed wishes as those of their Deity, and in what manner his records have been preserved and handed down from generation to generation with holy awe and a sense of religious duty.

If all the landmarks, freaks of nature, and other curiosities of the earth's surface in the United Kingdom with which the Devil's name is connected can be taken to imply that the fiend's ownership of them is established, then the question whether the Devil's domains extend outside the "lower regions" is definitely settled. At any rate, the naming of the places indicates the Devil's patronage, and, in many cases, his workmanship. Scarcely can the traveller visit the quietest little nook of the country without learning from the simple folk of the Devil's agency in the district, and many of the tales which are told him of the local operations of the Prince of Darkness are interesting as well as being highly amusing. In other instances the legendary accounts related are of an instructive character.

To the former category belongs the legend of the Devil's Dyke, near Brighton. From the top of the noble hill at the rear of the town, it will be remembered, a vast and beautiful expanse of country is witnessed, and it was here that the Devil, glancing over the fertile weald and noting the numerous church spires shooting skyward betwixt the trees, determined upon a base scheme of destruction. One night he commenced to carry into execution his terrible plan, which was to cut a channel through the downs and let in the sea on the level plain below. He toiled arduously at his task, and when completion was not far distant the noise of his gigantic labors awakened an old woman, who immediately guessed the design of the fiend. She lit a candle and placed it in her window, and the Devil, mistaking this for the rising sun, forsook his work and fled.

A deep "combe" in the hill represents the extent and nature of the Devil's nocturnal exertions. Unlike the dyke at Brighton, the Devil's Dyke (or ditch) on Newmarket Heath and the Devil's Dyke near Andover, in Hampshire, are ancient earthworks. Localities which the Devil was supposed to frequent, probably owing to their gloomy and weird appearance, include, according to Mr. R. Bruce Boswell, a writer on "Footprints of the Devil in Our Own Country" in a recent issue of the *Pall Mall Magazine*, "the Devil's Island, which frowns over Muckross Lake, Killarney; a Devil's Glen in Wicklow, as well as in Wales; the Devil's Point at Plymouth; the Devil's Water, a tributary of the Tyne, near Hexham; the Cave of Devil's at Little Orme's Head; the Devil's Pit at Cadgewith, Cornwall; a Devil's Hole in Jersey; and another near

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Lough Erne, in Ireland. On Marlborough Downs there is a dolmen, or cromlech, known as the Devil's Den; and at Castleton, in Derbyshire, is a cavern called the Devils Cellar. To find the Devil's Kitchen we must go to Llyn Idwal, in North Wales; to mount his Staircase one must visit Glencoe; and his Chimney is within an easy walk of Cheltenham." There is also a cavern in the north-western part of Derbyshire called Devil's-ass-o'-the-Peak.

Of Devil's bridges there are a number. A noted one is to be found in Cardiganshire, and is known as Pont-y-Mynoch; another can be traversed at Morben, also in Wales; while England has the privilege of the possession of one at Wensley Dale. The Devil's highway, tower, battery, cheesering, mill, pulpit, frying-pan, spoon, cauldron, punchbowl, lime-kiln, bellows, throat, head, elbow, and mouth are to be found in other parts of the country, thus showing that his person and his property are of a fragmentary character.

In a good many cases the legends which give the Devil a connection with the places indicated are not lacking of the comic element. The boulders which are found near Studland, in Dorsetshire, are supposed to have fallen out of the demon's possession under the following circumstances: The Devil was carrying an enormous rock through the air for the purpose of casting it at Salisbury Cathedral, against which he had his anger aroused on account of its great architectural grandeur. Unable to carry the weight to its destination, he was forced to let the huge mass fall on Studland Heath, where it remains to the present day a solid testimony against those who discredit the Devil's reality.

Another queer story comes from Cumberland. It is said that the Devil desired to build a bridge from the mouth of the river Irt to the Isle of Man. He carried a huge stone across the country to the coast in his apron, the string of which was tied round the burden as a security; but ere his purpose could be accomplished the wind arose and took the rock out of his grasp; the apron string was broken, but the mark of it can still be seen upon the stone. Another tale in which the Devil's apron plays a conspicuous part is connected with Wensleydale, aforementioned, where there is a wide chasm, near which are the remains of a structure representing yet another of the Devil's failures. While collecting stones wherewith to build a bridge, the unfortunate constructor lost the all-necessary apron, which apparel was carried away into the stream to the Kail Pot, a deep cauldron which has ever since continued to boil and bubble.

Apparently, the infernal king has a decided *penchant* for stones. The writer quoted from above says: "Zoit's mill, near Liebechwitz, Germany, was haunted at night by the Devil, who was in the habit of using one of the stones to grind down his hoofs. On one occasion a young fellow employed at the mill lay in wait for the fiend, and spied him at his work, but dearly paid for his pains, for the Devil seized him and held his hinder parts to the grind-stone till he had lost at least half of them. Another of the miller's men, however, who was older and wiser, came upon the intruder unawares, and this time it was the Devil himself whose posteriors suffered curtailment; while, later on, a clever lad tied him up in a sack, in spite of all his struggles, and threw him into the mill pond, which put an end to his pranks." After which who will henceforth deny those who proclaim "the Devil is dead"? Notwithstanding this legend, the generality of stories do not represent the Devil as half a bad fellow. His pranks were, at the most, innocent amusements, and if some of his designs were not carried into actual execution, who will say that we are not the sufferers? Our ancestors, seemingly, kept his majesty fully employed on the earth, with a view, perhaps, of prevention from torment in other quarters. Now-a-days his exact geographical location is impossible to determine, and men of knowledge have hitherto failed to apportion any part of the solar system for his realms. Anyhow, if only on account of the interesting traditions of his former exploits, a place should be carved for him in our memories, and his cloven foot, goat's beard, cock's feather, ox's tail, horned head, and pitchfork should ever be revered.

FRED WILSON.

I know no great men but those who have rendered great services to humanity.—*Voltaire.*

THE JEWS AND PROPHECY.

THE condition of the chosen race is often adduced as a proof of the truth of Bible prophecies. Are they not, indeed, a hissing and a bye-word? Is not the punishment for the rejection of their Messiah manifestly upon them? Well, we are not so sure of that. The Jews are, on the whole, healthier and wealthier than other races, and Christians have had a knack of fulfilling prophecy themselves, as far as persecution is concerned.

If we look at some of the plainest of the Bible prophecies regarding the Jews, we shall see that, manifestly, they are not fulfilled. Take the first: "And the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Genesis xiii. 14, 15). Do the seed of Abraham possess the whole of this land at present, or does for ever mean a very limited period?

The next prophecy is the following: "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that, if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." Are the chosen ones as numerous as the dust of the earth, or did Jehovah object to David taking a census because any census must disprove his promise?

In Genesis xv. 13 we find the next prophecy concerning the seed of Abraham: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." Doubtless this prophecy was written long after the sojourn in Egypt—if the Jews ever were there. Yet the prophecy cannot be made to tally with the story, which gives only two hundred and fifteen years for that sojourn; as, moreover, during the life of Joseph and of the Pharaoh that knew Joseph, the Jews were favored, the oppression of the Jews could not have extended to half the period named in the prophecy.

The next prophecy with regard to the Jews is to be found in Genesis xxii. 18: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Well, this is a whopper! The blessed Jews were commanded to slaughter and destroy other nations wholesale. Were the Canaanites blessed in the seed of Abraham, or are we to-day? Oh, it is said, we are blessed through Christ, who came of the seed of Abraham to save the world. We fancy history shows he brought not peace, but a sword; but, anyway, his coming did not bless those who died before him.

The curses against the Jews, on which Christians lay stress, are found in chapters xxviii. and xxix. of Deuteronomy. Let us see if they are, indeed, fulfilled. Take, for instance, the plain verse: "The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed" (Deut. xxviii. 27). Is it true that Jews all have these incurable complaints, or are they not healthier than Gentiles?

Perhaps the most ridiculously false of these prophecies is the prediction in verse 44: That the stranger "shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him." Whereas the very reverse is, and long has been, the case.

CELSUS.

Obituary.

WE have to record the death of Mr. Joseph Brown, one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, and secretary of the N. E. Secular Federation. Mr. Brown worked too hard for Freethought and all sorts of advanced movements. His health gave way, and finally he was stricken with brain-disease, which is incurable; and it is some consolation, therefore, to know that his troubles and sufferings are over. He was a man of lofty integrity, and full of devotion to his ideals; a brave volunteer in the army of progress.

DIED at Walsall, Mr. E. A. Scholey, well known for many years as an advanced Radical, a temperance reformer, and a Freethinker. He carried on the business of a second-hand bookseller, and, when no free library existed, established a sort of semi-public reading room, and placed his wide knowledge of books at the disposal of the young men who gathered round him. He had been a friend of Thomas Cooper, Ernest Jones, and the leading Chartists.

A VETERAN Freethinker and supporter of Mr. Bradlaugh has passed away in the person of Mr. George Priestley, of Rochdale, at one time president of the Rochdale Secular Society. He died on March 23, and was buried in Rochdale Cemetery on the 28th.

In Rome in 1849 I visited myself every convent. I was present at all the investigations. Without a single exception we found instruments of torture, and a cellar with the bodies of infant children.—*Guiseppe Garibaldi.*

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LECTURE BY MOSES.

(Delivered at the Convocation of Animals assembled outside the Ark on April 1, 4000 B.C.)

Now all you animals are about to start on a voyage of discovery, and there is a certain amount of uncertainty as to where you are going, how long you will be away, when you will start, and what will become of you generally. Now you will have the supreme advantage of sailing in an ark that is commanded by my most excellent friend, Mr. Noah. Probably no man living has had the experience in sailing one of these delightful pleasure boats possessed by my aged friend; for is it not an undisputed fact that he has worked the route between the "Cock," at Kilburn, and the Mansion House for the past four hundred years? (Hear, hear.) Now, one thing that I wish most particularly to impress upon you is that, if any of you should feel a kind of sinking sensation when you arrive in the middle of the Serpentine, be sure you immediately call for Shem, Ham, or the other son of my worthy friend, who will bring you with celerity the white china basin. (Loud cheers.) By paying attention to these instructions, you will obviate the necessity of frequently swabbing down the decks; and I might add in passing that a sea-sick elephant is no joke. Your meals will be served most regularly, and it is hoped that the lions and tigers will bear in mind that there are only two sheep on board, and will treat them with respect, for it is very much to be desired that so useful and intelligent a breed of animals should not be allowed to die out. (Hear, hear.) With regard to your luggage, the firm of Noah & Sons will take the greatest care of any articles of value deposited with them; but they give you most distinctly to understand that they will not hold themselves responsible for the negligence of any of their servants, or for the thieving propensities of Shem, Ham, and the other Johnnie. The elephant is expected to take care of his own trunk, and the male domestic fowl will look to his own comb; the robber of poultry yards is also expected to keep an eye on his brush, otherwise it may be used by the pelican for brushing the sand off his boots in the desert, or by the owl in the wilderness, or possibly by the common or garden sparrow to pick his teeth when engaged in relieving the monotony of sitting all alone upon a housetop. And now, as time is pressing, it behoves me to bring this short address to a close. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) I have only to wish you a long, happy, and prolonged voyage, a happy Christmas, and a glad New Year. May your shadows never grow less, and may the Lord look sideways upon you. Farewell, and mind the varnish. (Roaring, barking, trumpeting, etc.)

—*Fairplay.*

A BUDDHIST STORY.

In the first volume of the *Jataka; or, Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, edited by Professor E. B. Cowell, is one which illustrates the roguery practised under pretence of religion. One of the Buddhist brethren was found to be a hypocrite, and the Buddha told how he had a similar disposition in a former incarnation. Ages ago a certain rat was king of the rats in the forest. This rat was a Bodhisatta—this is, a being on the road to Buddhahood.

"Now, there was a roving jackal who espied this troop of rats, and fell to scheming how to beguile and eat them. And he took up his stand near their home with his face to the sun, snuffing up the wind, and standing on one leg. Seeing this, when out on his road in quest of food, the Bodhisatta conceived the jackal to be a saintly being, and went up and asked his name. '"Godly" is my name,' said the jackal. 'Why do you stand only on one leg?' 'Because if I stood on all four at once, the earth could not bear my weight. That is why I stand on one leg only.' 'And why do you keep your mouth open?' 'To take the air. I live on air; it is my only food.' 'And why do you face the sun?' 'To worship him.' 'What uprightness!' thought the Bodhisatta, and thenceforward he made a point of going, attended by the other rats, to pay his respects morning and evening to the saintly jackal. And when the rats were leaving, the jackal seized and devoured the hindermost one of them, wiped his lips, and looked as though nothing had happened. In consequence of this, the rats grew fewer and fewer, till they noticed the gaps in their ranks, and, wondering why this was so, asked the Bodhisatta the reason. He could not make it out, but, suspecting the jackal, resolved to put him to the test. So next day he let the other rats go out first, and himself brought up the rear. The jackal made a spring on the Bodhisatta, who, seeing him coming, faced round and cried, 'So this is your sainthness, you hypocrite and rascal.' . . . . The king of the rats sprang at the jackal's throat, and bit his windpipe asunder just under the jaw so that he died. Back trooped the other rats and gobbled up the body of the jackal with a 'crunch, crunch, crunch'—that is to say, the foremost of them did, for they say there was none left for the last comers. . . . This hypocritical Brother was the jackal of those days, and I the King of the rats."

It is noteworthy that, although bloodshed of any kind was a deterrent to the attainment of Buddhahood, nevertheless the Bodhisatta, or Buddha, in an earlier incarnation, deemed it right to destroy the hypocritical jackal who used piety as a pretence to gain his own ends.

WANTED—A FACT.

Ah, parsons are solemn, and grave, and wise!
But still, when I sit in some cushion'd pew,
My lashes *will* droop o'er my half-shut eyes,
And I can't help wishing the service thro'.

For they dish up miracles not a few—
With dogmas galore is the discourse pack'd;
But I long for talk that's a trifle new,
And I'd give all creeds for a single fact.

They ask me to swallow such ancient lies,
With fictions and stories each phase imbue;
They dwell on the gourd of stupendous size
That up over Jonah so quickly grew.

And by pictures the old-time prophets drew
My spirit is tortured, my brain is rack'd.
And I'm tired of their texts and tenets, too,
And I'd give all creeds for a single fact.

And so, when I listen, I can but rue
That rarely the preachers will seek to rise
Up into the heights of the brave and true,
Away from the darkness their faith implies.

But seldom they offer to serve in lieu
Real knowledge, the world has always lacked;
So when they hold forth I'm exceedingly blue,
And I'd give all creeds for a single fact.

ENVOI.

And silent they are when I humbly sue
For legends with proof and the vouchers back'd;
But still they must know it's my simple due,
And I'd give all creeds for a single fact.

—*Freethinkers' Magazine.* NELLY BOOTH SIMMONS.

Boys, Don't Copy David.

"All men are liars," said the sweet singer of Israel, otherwise the good David (Psalm cxvi. 11), and thus gave utterance to what he conceived a great truth. Knowing his character, he judged others by his own standard. David was consistent, even in his dying moments, with the vile conception he had formed of his fellows. At such a moment, the eyes dim, memory nearly gone, his hates should have been forgotten, in view of the awful change he knew was coming on him. He had called Solomon before him, whom he made his successor, and instructed him how to conduct himself towards God, so he should prosper in all he did. The death sweat on his brow, the heart beating languidly, he turned to his loving son: "Thou knowest Joab. . . . Let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." Scarcely able to speak, he stammered on: "When Shimei surrendered to me at Jordan, I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death by the sword . . . . but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood." These were David's last and dying words. The narrative continuing: "So David slept with his fathers" (1 Kings ii.).

We pray our youthful readers not to copy after this David, who was a man after God's own heart, for revenge and kindred passions should end at the grave at least. Those kings of Israel must have been a bad lot.—*Progressive Thinker.*

The Christian world has something to learn at this day, even from the Atheist; for he asks entire freedom for human nature; freedom to think, freedom to will, freedom to love, freedom to worship, if he may—not to worship, if he will not.—*Theodore Parker.*

The virtuous man is he whose actions tend uniformly to the welfare, constantly to the happiness of his fellow creatures. The vicious man is he whose conduct tends to the misery, whose propensities form the unhappiness of those with whom he lives, from whence his own peculiar misery most commonly results.—*D'Holbach.*

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BOOK CHAT.

Some of the poems by Mr. Lowell which are to appear in the forthcoming collection made by Professor Norton have never been printed. The editor has written an introduction for the volumes, and for a frontispiece it will have a new etched portrait of the poet.

* * *

Omar Khayyam, the Persian Freethinking poet, will ever be known to English lovers of literature by the incomparable translation of Edward Fitzgerald. There is, however, in addition to the scholarly translation by Mr. Whinfield and the pretentious one by Mr. J. H. McCarthy, an American translation by Mr. John Leslie Garner, published at Milwaukee. Mr. Garner is no poet, but his work is done with sympathy and scholarship. There is a French translation of Omar by M. Nicholas, and a German one by F. Bodenstedt. Some of the quatrains have been rendered into Dutch by one of our friends on the editorial staff of *De Dageraad*.

* * *

Shakespeare's plays have been translated into the Armenian language, and the translation will soon be published in Russia.

* * *

Messrs. Remington and Co. will begin, early in April, the publication of a new series of foreign classics, edited by Mr. Sonley Johnstone. The first issue will be volume one of Molière's Comedies, to be followed, at monthly intervals, by La Rochefoucauld's Maxims, Corneille, Boileau, Voltaire, Racine, etc. Each volume will contain a short history of the author's life and work.

* * *

That Monster, the Higher Critic, by Marvin R. Vincent, is a *brochure* showing the untenability of the old views of inspiration. The author gives an explanation of what the "Higher Criticism" really is, and offers a vigorous defence of its rights. "Let it be plainly understood—and the sooner it is understood the better for all parties—that criticism, Higher Criticism, has come to stay, and to fight if necessary."

* * *

We see announced as issued by the Industrial Publication Co., of New York, *The Natural History of Hell*, being a discussion of some of the relations of the Christian plan of salvation to modern science, by John Phillipson.

* * *

It is notable that the *Quarterly Review*, in noticing Mr. Froude's *Erasmus*, says that the three most notable men of letters during the Christian era were Augustine, Erasmus, and Voltaire. Of these the first may be said to have established Christian dogmas, the second to have diluted them with reason, and the third to have destroyed them.

* * *

Professor J. M. Baldwin, of Princeton College, has written a work on *Moral Development in the Child and the Race*. The book is published by Macmillan & Co.

* * *

The Familiar Letters of Thoreau, edited with an introduction and notes by Frank B. Sanborn, has been issued by Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., of Boston.

* * *

The third volume of the late Canon Liddon's *Life of E. B. Pusey* reveals the morbid asceticism of this devout religionist. He writes to Keble: "Amid special mercies and guardianship of God, I am scarred all over and seamed with sin, so that I am a monster to myself; I loathe myself; I can feel of myself only like one covered with leprosy from head to foot."

* * *

The *London Quarterly* is shocked at the disclosure: "Such highly-colored and self-loathing pictures of penitential experience, such confessions of inward sin and guiltiness, are not to be found, so far as we know, in any modern biography, scarcely even in the confessions of such penitents as Bunyan, John Nelson, or Newton of Olney. They are profoundly pathetic, but it almost makes one shudder to read them."

* * *

The *L. Q.* continues: "He regarded himself as a penitent who had greatly sinned after baptism, and who could only obtain peace through confession and absolution. His wife's death he regarded as a direct punishment for his sins, and his suspension as a preacher as a providential chastisement for his 'secret faults.' The death of his daughter also was a punishment for his sins. His illness was another stroke of punishment from the hand of God.

* * *

"One of Pusey's rules of discipline was not to smile. Among an infinite number of details, he resolved 'to wear haircloth always by day unless ill; to use a hard seat by day and a hard bed by night; not to wear gloves or protect his hands; to eat his food slowly and penitentially,' 'making a secret confession of unworthiness to use God's creatures before every meal.'" Jesus, we are told, was a man of sorrows, and most of his devoted followers have indeed been miserable creatures.

* * *

That ancient Rome was brought to a state of ruin rather by the Christians than by the Pagan barbarians was shown last year by Signor Lanciani, the eminent archæologist, in the *Strand Magazine*. The recently-published translation, by Annie Hamilton, of F. Gregorovius's *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages* shows that Gregorovius is of the same opinion; and no higher authority could be given. Goths are still blamed for what Roman Christians themselves did. The historian points out that the gradual process by which the city was stripped of its beauties and laid in ruins could not have been the result of disconnected wars. What really happened was that the people changed in their feeling towards the art and architecture which they beheld around them. They turned their backs upon Pagan civilisation, stripped the temples of the old gods, and used the materials for their own churches. When the noblest ceased to care for the rites and symbols of the old religion, it did not take the ignoble long to lay hands on ancient things for new uses. Many a priceless bronze was turned into old metal by those to whom sculptors were only objects of superstition.

* * *

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for April is an excellent number. The supplement is a summary of Graham's *Creed of Science*—a book which can hardly be called new, and which the summariser (who does *his* work well) praises far above its merits. The *Guide* attributes a volume of poems by George Anderson to a gentleman whose name is familiar in Freethought circles. This is a mistake. The poet is another George Anderson, and his verses are lauded extravagantly under a misapprehension.

* * *

Mr. A. B. Moss's *Christianity and Evolution* was noticed in our columns at the time of its first publication. His publishers (Watts & Co.) now issue a "cheap popular edition" at one shilling. We hope it will have a much wider circulation in the new form. Mr. Moss has put his best thought and knowledge into this volume.

PROFANE JOKES.

Aunt—"Don't you say your prayers at night?" Willie—"Nope! I ain't afraid with a light in the room."

Mr. Longtext—"Johnny, can you tell me where the bad little boys go?" Johnny—"Yes, sir; to Sunday-school, when there's going to be a picnic."

Two little children looking at the moon one evening, the younger asked: "Is the moon God's wife?" Older child (patronisingly)—"No, you silly child. God is a bachelor."

She—"I wonder why Eve was not created before Adam?" He—"Oh, that's simple. The Lord knew that, if he made woman first, he'd never be able to make a man to suit her."

Miss Dogood—"You are very active in charity work, Miss Slumly, but how is it you never visit Rat-alley or Tumble-down-lane?" Miss Slumly—"You know, my dear, I belong to St. Dives' Church, and it owns all that part of the town."

Parson (condoling with widower on death of his wife)—"The Lord has indeed seen fit to afflict you. The last time I saw you your cattle were dying of pleuro, and now I hear a more grievous calamity has befallen you." Widower—"Aye; there ain't even a hide to sell this time."

Farmer—"That new hand's a fraud. He's only ploughed one furrow, and then laid down and gone to sleep." Wife—"What excuse does he make?" Farmer—"He says he believes in going according to Scripture, and that when a man puts his hand to the plough he should never turn back."

First Beggar—"Where did you get that fine overcoat?" Second do—"At the big house at the corner." First do—"Why, I went there only this mornin' shiverin' with cold, and dey wouldn't gimme a rag." Second do—"Oh, ah! but I didn't ask for clothes for myself. I told 'em it was fur the pore heathen in darkest Africa."

Deacon Sassafras (a Hardshell Baptist)—"I have just been reading about a man who was killed by lightning while playing base-ball on Sunday in Kentucky. There's a jedgment for you!" Hiram Oatcake—"I don't know about its bein' a jedgment; a church near by was struck and destroyed at the same time." Deacon Sassafras—"That doesn't cut any figure. It was a Presbyterian church."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "The Death of God and the Life of Humanity." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Robert Shaw, "Radicalism *v.* Socialism." (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, committee. Good Friday, at 8, entertainment and dance. (Tickets 6d.)

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 4, members' general meeting; 6, tea and soirée.

FINSBURY BRANCH: 12, important members' meeting at 120 St. John-street, Clerkenwell.

ISLINGTON: 3, special business meeting at secretary's, 19 Alwyne-road, Canonbury.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Popular Belief in a Higher Power."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Yorkshire Stingo," Silver-street, Notting-hill-gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 6.15, discussion class; 7.15, J. Veitch, "That Man Survives Physical Death."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Mansions in the Sky."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, S. E. Easton, "Under which Flag?" Thursday, at 6.30, F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Under which Flag?" 3.30, "Some Bible Stories."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why we Do Not Believe in Christianity."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "History of Our Times."

VICTORIA PARK: 3, J. Marshall will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science"; 7, "The Origin of the Bible."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BLACKBURN: 3, members' meeting at secretary's house.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "The Life Growth of a Plant"; 7, "The Nervous System"—with lantern.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7.45, Mr. Wright, "God and the Devil."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class; 6.30, J. Ritchie, "Criticism and Gospel History."

IPSWICH (Co-operative Rooms, Cox-lane): 7, members' meeting.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11.30, quarterly meeting of Tontine Society; 7, Ernest Newman, "Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, C. Doeg, "The Best of all Possible Worlds." (Free.)

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, C. Cohen, "The Scientific Basis of Morals"; 7, "Religion or Freethought."

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, Sam Standring, "Bel and the Dragon"; 8, Branch meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 3, Religion with and without Theology"; 7, "Theism Tested and Found Wanting." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King-street): 7, important business meeting.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, Robert Weightman, "The Bible and Common Sense."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

DERBY (Market-place): 6.45, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11 C. Cohen, "Christianity."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, Sam Standring, "Some Events of the Week"; 3, "St. Matthew's Gospel."

Lecturers' Engagements.

STEPHEN H. ALLISON, Sunnyside, 72 Union-grove, Clapham, London, S.W.—April 28, Manchester. May 5, Sheffield.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 7, 14, 21, 28, Newcastle-on-Tyne. May 2, Wood Green; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 26, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—April 7, m. and e. Wood Green; 14, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell; 28, m. Battersea. May 5, e. Battersea.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 14, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, Clerkenwell.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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WAS HE CRUCIFIED?

EVERY one has heard of the sailor who was looking into a shop-window at a picture of Jesus Christ agonising upon the cross. As he was looking a Jew came up, and the sailor knocked him down. The son of Israel picked himself up, and inquired the reason of such treatment. "Didn't you damned Jews crucify him?" said the sailor. "Oh," said the smarting Hebrew, "that was a long time ago." "Never mind," replied Jack, "I only heard of it yesterday."

The story of the Crucifixion has been the making of Christianity. It is full of moving incident and thrilling pathos. Children, who knew nothing of tragedies and martyrdoms, have followed Jesus in imagination from Gethsemane to Calvary, and his sufferings have become associated with their earliest feelings of pity, and, through pity, of affection. Had the Prophet of Nazareth ascended to heaven like Elijah, without tasting a bitter death; had he even died of some disease, however terrible and excruciating, and risen from the dead after such a decease; he would never have become the object of such profound sympathy. Death from disease is common. It is a violent death that excites attention. And when the violence is inflicted on an innocent man, whose sufferings are depicted with considerable art and invested with awful mystery, it is no wonder that the story should gain a supreme hold upon the human mind—particularly when we remember that it is so carefully pressed upon every fresh generation, in its susceptible childhood, when the feelings are unblunted, and the imagination is at the mercy of accident or authority.

Considering the nature of this story, it is curious how its chief incident—the death of Jesus—is commemorated by millions of professed Christians. According to the Gospels there was a huge eclipse during the Crucifixion; or, as Christian poets have said, the sun veiled its face at the insult offered to its God. But other times bring other manners; and, as the Jew said, the Crucifixion was such a long time ago. Christians call the anniversary of their Savior's death *Good* Friday. No sign of sadness appears upon their countenances. They seem to say "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-day he died." And certainly they do *drink*. It is a glorious opportunity for the publicans as well as the sinners.

How few of these merry-making Christians ask themselves how it is that Good Friday is a shifting anniversary. Jesus Christ must have died (if he ever lived) on a particular day, and the day should be punctually celebrated. Shakespeare's death always occupies the same place in the calendar. Jesus Christ's death has to be fixed every year by astronomical calculations. Such a fact is enough to make us ask whether his death is really an historical fact.

It is no answer to this question to point to the circumstantial character of the Gospel narrative. Art is always more circumstantial than history. Look at the wonderful details of *Robinson Crusoe*. Observe the vivid portraiture of Hamlet and Othello. Does it not make them more real to us than many of the persons with whom we are intimately acquainted? Yet they are creatures of imagination. The highest art conceals the traces of art. In the language of paradox, its productions are more natural than nature itself.

The art of the Gospels is not so great as the art of Shakespeare. It does not satisfy the intellect and imagination that are fortified by experience. To the critical investigator it reveals grave flaws, wide discrepancies, and serious self-contradictions. One reason for these defects is, that the picture of Christ was not the work of a single master-hand. It was the work of many hands, in several generations. The first sketches, which seem for ever lost, grew into a finished design, not in a private studio, but in a public school. Fresh touches were constantly being given by daring artists, until orthodoxy checked any further development. The picture satisfied the simple and uncritical, but the keen-eyed and reflective see its composite character, and notice the botches of the original designers under the improvements of later and more finished artists.

We have no space to deal with the many self-contradictions of the Crucifixion story. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the task of pointing out some of its serious improbabilities.

Jesus had wrought many miracles. He had even raised the dead. What madness it was, then, on the part of his enemies to seek his life! He had the power of blasting them into nothingness, yet they compassed his death as though he were but an ordinary mortal, to be put out of the way as a nuisance or an inconvenience.

They paid Judas to betray him; that is, they gave Judas thirty half-crowns to identify the best-known man in Jerusalem. We cannot believe that Jews were ever such spendthrifts. Nor can we believe that they were ever so foolish. Suppose the London police had to arrest the late Charles Bradlaugh. Would they pay anyone £3 15s. to identify him?

Judas is the second figure in the Crucifixion story. We are told that he was smitten with remorse and committed suicide. Yet the earliest Christian writer who mentions a Gospel—namely, Papias—informs us that Judas lived on a great example of impiety, that he grew very corpulent, and was eventually crushed to death between a chariot and a wall. Evidently, therefore, the Judas episode had not been finally worked-up even in the days of Papias—that is, more than a hundred years after the date of the Crucifixion.

John, who gives Jesus a more ideal and mystical character than the Synoptics, states that Jesus advanced of his own accord to his arresters, saying, "I am he," and that the very sound of his voice threw them upon their backs. They got up, however, and completed the arrest; which is more than English policemen would do in such circumstances. A man who could floor you with a word would be too dangerous to apprehend.

Bringing Jesus before the High Priest for trial involves ignorance of both Jewish and Roman jurisprudence. The priests' court had no penal jurisdiction except in temple affairs, and only then over priests and Levites. It is also monstrous to suppose that the judges who were trying a prisoner would walk about the room, with the witnesses, the servants, and the crowd, and even spit upon and revile him. The writers of our Gospels were not Jews. They wrote long after the fall of Jerusalem, when there was no one to check their absurdities, and they also wrote for Gentiles.

Pilate, the Roman Governor at Jerusalem, is said to have sent Jesus to Herod, who ruled in Galilee, because Jesus was born there. Is not this ridiculous? Would a Frenchman who committed a murder in England be sent for trial to Paris?

Is it credible that the wife of a Roman governor should send him a message while he sat upon the judgment-seat, requesting him to acquit a prisoner because she knew he was innocent?

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Would a Roman governor—especially a proud one like Pilate—sentence a prisoner to execution, although knowing him to be innocent, and then exculpate himself by washing his hands in public? Such a thing was never heard of in the history of Roman jurisprudence. Washing the hands, indeed, was a purely Jewish symbolism. The idea could never have occurred to a Roman judge.

Pilate's whole conduct is opposed to all we know of the duties and responsibilities of a Roman governor. His going to and fro between the prisoner and his accusers was justly described as impossible by the Rev. Dr. Giles, who declared without hesitation that "no Roman governor ever condescended to an act which he would deem so derogatory to his rank and dignity."

The haste of the trial and execution, the miracles at the Crucifixion itself, and many incidents which we have no space to criticise—all show that we are not reading history, but romance; a romance in the interest of a Church which had the effrontery to assert that Pilate sent an account of the Crucifixion to Tiberius, and that Tiberius proposed the deification of Christ to the Roman Senate!

G. W. FOOTE.

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

(Continued from p. 212.)

BEFORE going to India, Olcott wrote to Swami Dyanand Saraswati, president of the Arya Samaj, that the title of the Theosophical Society should be changed to the Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj, acknowledging the Swami as chief. Early in 1882, however, he realised that he had been imposed upon, and publicly denounced them. In India, Theosophy assumed new features. Spiritism, with its threefold nature of man, was changed for Occultism, with its sevenfold nature. We now hear, for the first time, of the mysterious occult Brotherhood residing in that enlightened but inaccessible country, Thibet. Hindus had for ages believed that holy men called *yogis* could, by a course of meditation or asceticism, obtain magical powers, which placed them out of the category of ordinary mortals, and told wonderful stories of these Paramokshas or Mahatmas. The Theosophical adepts were modelled partly on the Indian *yogis*, partly on the mystical Mejnour, in Lytton's *Zanoni*. They could perceive occurrences and precipitate messages, despite any distance, and only used their powers for good. In short, they possessed all the qualifications requisite to make good Scotland Yard detectives.

The path to the possession of Mahatmaship was confessedly a hard one. Few members of the Theosophical Society could boast that their lives had been completely chaste, even in dreams, or that they had never taken alcoholic liquors, never touched animals, never partaken of animal food, and never worn the product of the sacred cow, all of which things, and far more, was necessary for the blossoming of this "efflorescence of the human race." No wonder gentlemen like Mr. Sinnett preferred the shorter cut of pumping the Hindu adepts, Madame Blavatsky being the channel of communication with the blessed occult brothers. The letters of the Mahatma, Koot Hoomi, were certified by experts as being in the handwriting of Madame Blavatsky. On many points an outsider could judge as well as an expert. Thus H. P. B. wrote: "Olcott says you speak very well English"; K. H. wrote: "One who understands tolerably well English." She wrote "thiefs," so did K. H.; "defense," so did K. H. She wrote: "So more the pity for those"; he: "So more the pity for him," etc. One of Koot Hoomi's letters, giving out original revelations, was almost word for word a plagiarism from a speech delivered by Mr. H. Kiddle, some months previously, at a spiritist camp meeting at Lake Pleasant, in America, and reported in the *Banner of Light*, which exchanged with H. P. B.'s *Theosophist*. Her explanation, that the astral spirit of Koot Hoomi had been at *Mount* Pleasant, only made matters worse.

To meet the demand for occult teaching, a new edition of *Isis Unveiled* was promised. I have before me the *Philosophic Inquirer*, Madras, February 17, 1884, in which is advertised "*The Secret Doctrine*, a new version of *Isis Unveiled*, with a new arrangement of the matter, large and important additions and copious notes and commentaries by H. P. Blavatsky, assisted by T. R. Subba Row Garu, B.A., B.L., F.T.S." Mr. Subba Row subsequently discovered H. P. B.'s fraud, and withdrew from the Society. *The Secret Doctrine* proved to contain a totally different doctrine from that in *Isis Unveiled*, and one which was even more a work of imagination.

The new religion was heralded by signs and wonders. The power of adepts to recreate matter was shown by the reproduction of broken saucers and vases in the occult shrine at the headquarters, Adyar. The shrine was simply that familiar device of conjurers, the "trick cabinet." It had three sliding panels in the back. This Madame admitted; they were "for convenience of packing in case of removal." It was fixed against the wall of her bedroom, and just behind it was a recess in the wall lightly boarded over, which had once been a window. On the other side, in Madame Blavatsky's room, was a sideboard with a false back. There was a hole in the boarding big enough to admit a person into the recess, and a hole in the boarding, on the shrine side, big enough to let an arm through to manipulate the sliding panels. All this, when discovered, it was said, was made after H. P. B. had left, in order to defame her. For the revelations of her fraud by an accomplice, Madame Coulomb, at length compelled her to leave India. These revelations were accompanied by proof in the shape of letters. The letters were afterwards denied as forgeries. If so, they were the most clever and purposeless forgeries ever perpetrated. But they, too, were certified by experts to be in H. P. B.'s writing, and they were corroborated by Mr. Hodgson, who was sent out by the Psychical Research Society, of London, to investigate the occult phenomena alleged to have taken place at Adyar. One instance must suffice.

On May 26, 1883, Colonel Olcott writes: "Fine phenomenon. Got pair of tortoise-shell and lacquer vases, with flowers, in a cabinet, a moment before empty." When the sorceress was confronted with the statement that Madame Coulomb had herself purchased these vases, and that the Mahatmas had nothing to do with sending them by occult agency, she replied that Madame Coulomb had tried to obtain vases like them, but failed; and that she (Madame C.) had purchased one pair of vases *afterwards*, and that they differed in shape, etc., from those received by Colonel Olcott. Mr. Hodgson, however, discovered who was lying by going to the establishment where Madame Coulomb said she had purchased them. He was shown the entries in the books of the firm, and writes: "Madame Coulomb therefore purchased the vases on May 25; Colonel Olcott received them on May 26." Comment is unnecessary.

Mr. Hodgson, who investigated the whole business in India with great care, came to the conclusion that "her real object had been the furtherance of Russian interests." He first noticed "her sudden and curious excitement at the news of the recent Russian movement upon the Afghan frontier," and he says: "Madame Blavatsky's momentary emotional betrayal of her sympathies in the onset of her excitement was not rendered less significant by the too strongly-impressed 'afterstroke' of a quite uncalled-for vituperation of the Russians, who, she said, would be the death-blow of the Society if they got into India." Mrs. Besant curiously defended H. P. B. from the charge of being a Russian agent by stating in the *Chronicle* of September 25, 1891, that "many Indian Theosophists, by Madame Blavatsky's advice, enrolled for service, if needed, to repel a Russian invasion during Afghan troubles." This was letting the cat out of the bag with a vengeance. The Russian lady used her secret society in Bombay and Madras to repel an invasion on the Afghan frontier. These were truly extraordinary precautions against Russian invasion. It was doubtless with a similar object Madame Blavatsky wrote continually to Russia. A *fac-simile* of a fragment which came into the hands of Mr. Hodgson is given in the third volume of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*. It reads as follows:—

> "Military men, more than any other, must remember that the approaching act of the Eastern drama is to be the last and the decisive one; that it will require all our efforts, every sacrifice on our part, and requires more careful preparation in every direction than did the last war. They must remember that to sit idle now, when everyone has to be busily preparing, is the highest of crimes, a treason to Rus, their country, and their Czar. He who hath ears to hear let him. . . .

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In the *fac-simile* it may be noticed that the word "Rus" is crossed out, and the word "Czar" written so that it might be taken for "God."

Mr. Hodgson quotes another letter, which begins: "Is our friend a Sikh? If so, the fact that he should be, as you say, very much pleased to learn the object of our Society is not at all strange. For his ancestors have for centuries been—until their efforts were paralysed by British domination, that curse of every land it fastens itself upon—battling for the divine truths against external theologies. . . . ." The letter concludes: "Could you not hook out for your Bombay Branch either Gwalior (Scindia) or the Holkar of Indore—those most faithful and loyal friends of the British (?)"

It was the discovery of her impostures, and not her political work, which forced Madame to fly from India. She had been watched in a most bungling fashion. Mr. Sinnett says he pitied the unhappy police-officer who was employed to watch her. He observes:—

> "She pursued this officer with sarcasms all the while that he, in the performance of his irksome duty, pursued her in her vague and erratic wanderings. She would offer him bags or letters to examine, and address him condolences on the miserable fate that condemned him to play the part of a *mouchard*. I suspect, from what I heard at Simla at the time, that the Bombay Government must have been treated by the superior authorities to remarks that were anything but complimentary on the manner in which they conducted this business."

No wonder this officer was ordered to be withdrawn; but we may be quite sure the Government fully appreciated her inducing Theosophists to enrol for service, if needed, to repel Russian invasion. J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

WHAT IS MEANT BY LAWS OF NATURE?

GREAT confusion and misapprehension exist in the theological mind in reference to the real meaning of the term, "laws of nature." The laws are regarded by most orthodox believers as commands given, and as arrangements made, by the "creator of the universe." They are of two kinds: those which prescribe men's religious and social duties, which are called moral; and the movements in the material world, which are termed physical. The incorrect use of the term "law" is so general among poets, statesmen, and philosophers that it is not surprising to find the general masses of the community entertaining the same erroneous ideas as to its true signification. We desire, therefore, to state what, in our opinion, is the correct meaning of the term "law" when it is applied to nature. This becomes the more necessary because theological disputants are continually propounding fallacies upon the subject.

"Law" is a Saxon word, but its interpretation is founded upon the Latin, to govern, which we call rule. In cases where it is applied to the general government of society it means something written, and it refers to conduct. Thus used, the term implies a command, or commands, from some superior power, whether it be the King or the State. Law, so defined, may be ignored, altered, or abrogated; or it may be interpreted in many different ways, according to the requirements of society. It may also vary at different times, and in different countries, according to the wishes and customs of the people where it is in force. But the same cannot be said of the laws of nature—a phrase which has quite another meaning. Fleming writes: "When a fact, frequently observed, recurs invariably under the same circumstances, we compare it to an act which has been prescribed, to an order which has been established, and say it occurs according to law." That is, the observed order, or continuity in nature, is what should be termed the law of nature. This does not mean that the law is a command given by some personal being, but simply that it represents the sequence we find in the universe. Law, applied to nature, is a formula used to express the mode, not the cause, of phenomena; it indicates the manner in which things act and are acted upon, and, therefore, it must not be regarded as an entity apart from, or added to, nature. Law does not make the needle point to the north, nor does it cause the leaves and fruit to fall from the trees; it is nothing more than a name for the conditions under which the forces of nature are manifested, and are recognised by the human mind. We perceive the regularity or invariability which characterises certain movements in nature, and to this uniformity of action we apply the term "law."

Some of the most advanced writers of the early part of the present century, who recognised the idea of law, interpreted it to mean that there were certain consequences which always followed causes that had been so pre-ordained by the creator. To them the order of nature was the will of God; hence they considered that any infractions, infringements, or breaking of the laws of nature were sins against the laws of God. But such an interpretation of the operations of nature involves some curious conclusions. It really amounts to ascribing a preconceived intention to every natural event that happens. Suppose a man is killed by lightning, and that a village is destroyed by an earthquake, there is no dispute but that both took place in accordance with the laws of nature. But, be it observed, it was nature, not the laws, that did the mischief. To say that these events were pre-ordained means that the man *was* to be killed, and the village *was* to be destroyed in any case. If this were true, what a reflection it would be upon the supposed law-maker! Such an assumption is as inhuman as it is unscientific. The death of the man and the destruction of the village can be accounted for by natural causes; and it is a wise axiom not to assume more causes than are sufficient to account for phenomena.

We allege that whatever happens occurs in accordance with what we call the laws or mode of nature, and is not produced by any external power. Against this position it is urged that, if it were so, no law of nature could be "broken," inasmuch as that would imply that nature could act against herself. Now the error of this objection is in supposing that, because the totality of all things is nature, therefore there can be no conflict in the various parts. Nature, as a whole, cannot of course be altered; but one portion may and does come into conflict with another. A man may use his physical powers, which are, of course, natural, to do that which produces injury on his bodily organisation, which is also quite natural, and we say he has "broken a law of nature." We do not, however, mean that he has done anything which nature did not give him the power to do, but that he has used his power to a disadvantage to himself, and, it may be, to others. The expression, therefore, is relative, not absolute. Of course, strictly speaking, the laws of nature cannot be broken.

It is further objected, as there are certain acts which we are in the habit of speaking of as being unnatural, that nothing can be unnatural if nature includes everything. Let us see what should be understood upon this point. We say of a man who treats his own kith and kin cruelly that he acts unnaturally, and we designate certain crimes as unnatural offences. But we do not mean by such phraseology that these acts are super-natural, but that they are infra-natural—that is, they are not higher, but lower, than nature. Further, a moment's reflection should show that, by the use of these terms, we do not intend to convey the idea that anything has been done outside of nature as a whole, for the very powers employed are natural, and the acts are no less so. What is meant is that a person who so acts has pursued a course of conduct which is not in harmony with our exalted conception of the sphere in nature to which he belongs. Measured by ordinary standards, one part of nature is higher than another. Man's sphere is the highest of all that we are acquainted with; he has intellect of a far superior degree to that of any other animal, and he has evolved a moral law by which he is supposed to regulate his conduct.

Now, if, instead of conforming to the laws of his own being, man descends to a lower platform, and acts in a way that is utterly out of harmony with his exalted functions, we say that he is unnatural, meaning thereby that he is descending to a lower sphere in nature than that which we have a right to expect him to occupy. The act that we call unnatural in him would probably be natural enough in a lower animal, and therefore cannot be outside nature, but is only out of accord with the requirements of that part of nature in which he plays his part. There is evidently a legitimate function for every passion and desire of which man finds himself possessed, and the proper use of these, according to the purpose of nature, we call natural; while to divert them from their proper object or end we say is

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unnatural. A man has an appetite for food, which is natural; but he can starve himself to death, which, in a sense, is natural too; and yet, in another sense, we should say it was unnatural, because it was a violation of an instinct common to us all. Suppose a starving man to be destitute of food, and his own child, who has plenty, refuses that aid to his parent that would save life, we should regard such a son as an unnatural monster; not meaning thereby that he had done anything that nature did not furnish the means of doing, but that he had not acted according to the higher laws of nature which appertain to all beings moving in his sphere. All, therefore, that can be done is accomplished by what we term the laws of nature.

It must not be overlooked, as J. S. Mill points out in his essay on *Nature*, that "the observed uniformities in the occurrence of phenomena, the uniformities of antecedence and sequence, are what in science are meant by the laws of nature." He also mentions that we should know what particular law to use in a particular case, so that we may "use one law to counteract another." This means that, by studying the various forces of nature, we can avail ourselves of one force to control the effect of another. For instance, if a building is saved from destruction by a lightning conductor, it simply means that another natural force protected the building from that of the lightning. Both are in strict keeping with the laws of nature.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE JERUSALEM GHOST.

AT this time of the year, when the Pagan world celebrated the uprising of vegetation from the underworld, the Christian world is edified with a very ancient ghost story of the rising of a man from the dead—a curious event to celebrate with a movable festival. For such a stupendous event no one pretends there is any other evidence than testimony transmitted down to us through a period of some eighteen hundred years. What is it worth on such a subject? Should we believe a man who told us such a ghost story to-day. Should we not think it far more probable that he was lying, or lying under a delusion, than that such an event really occurred? But what is the testimony? If we look into it a little, I think we may discover how it grew.

Mark, the shortest gospel, is now admitted to represent the oldest version. Yet it is certain from the testimony of all the best manuscripts that the early version of Mark had no story of the resurrection at all. Chapter xvi. ended with verse 8, and the remaining twelve verses have been added by another and a later hand. All the original Mark tells us is that Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus and laid it in a sepulchre; that early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene, Mary of James, and Salome went with spices and found the body gone; and that a young man told them he is risen. Thus the earliest account does not venture even to say that anybody saw Jesus alive after death. Three women found his body was not in the tomb—that was all. What had become of it? Common sense would say, Ask Joseph of Arimathea. But this is never done, and the excited reports of the women may have given rise to the cock-and-bull ghost story with which the other gospellers favor us.

Matthew, in giving a fuller story, betrays its legendary character. He makes the Jewish priests know that Jesus said he would rise again, though, according to John xx. 9, his disciples were ignorant of this. They bribe Roman soldiers to say they slept at their posts, the punishment of which was death, and to deny for cash the most stupendous miracle they had themselves witnessed!

Matthew tells us that the eleven disciples went to Galilee and met Jesus in a mountain; "but some doubted." Luke gives no time for this journey, but makes him ascend to heaven from Bethany, says that they stayed in Jerusalem, and were continually in the temple. Acts, however, makes him stay on earth forty days. John makes it necessary for him to work another miracle for them—a miraculous draught of fishes, such as they had had before. In 1 Corinthians xv. we are told the first appearance was to Peter. John and the addition to Mark say it was to Mary Magdalene. Matthew says it was to the two Marys. The Gospel according to the Hebrews says it was to James. According to Paul, the second appearance was to the twelve. Luke says the eleven. Judas, having repented, either returned the money and hanged himself, according to Matthew; or bought a field with the money, wherein he fell and burst asunder, according to Acts. John says the ten, Thomas being absent. Apparently, Paul had never heard of the doubting Thomas, or the defection of the much-killed Judas. But he goes on to tell us of a third appearance to five hundred brethren at once. How the story grows! According to Acts, there were only "about an hundred and twenty" disciples altogether.

From all this contradictory evidence, which would not bear ten minutes' cross-examination in a police court, the only thing plain is that a number of persons said that a number of other persons had seen the Jerusalem ghost. The only person who says "I saw him" was not near Jerusalem, and not a believer at the time. This was Paul, who, for a while, was an unbeliever and a persecutor. And how did Paul see him? Apparently he had a sunstroke on the Damascus road, and heard a voice from heaven, which he took to be that of Jesus. He says: "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time"; and we should say that those who credit such a ghost story on such evidence must be born out of due time also.

J. M. W.

A FURTHER WORD ON MR. KIDD.

IN the February number of the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Kidd has an article in which he defends himself, so to say, for not dealing with the critics of his *Social Evolution*, because, he thinks, his main positions have not been challenged, and the time has not yet come when any reply would be profitable. But he goes over and re-states some of his central arguments. And here let me say frankly that Mr. Kidd is in many ways a most admirable writer, at least in my humble opinion. He is modest, he writes with the force of a man who believes what he is writing, and he is extremely interesting. He boldly says, in the conclusion of his article, that the opinion of the multitude—mostly the religious multitude—which received his work with extravagant applause, is not particularly valuable. He writes, and the passage is a noble and a just one:—

"But I do not hide from myself that, from this class equally with the other, no searching criticism is to be expected. I have had no purpose to serve in the book except the statement of the truth as it presented itself to me. I have sought neither to oppose nor defend any party or opinion, and no preconceived conviction or opinion of my own has been allowed to stand in the way of the application of the principles of human development therein presented. Science is an exacting mistress, and it is in the belief that it is in this spirit alone that she accepts service that I have endeavored to do her work."

This passage, admirable as it is in tone, breathing as it does the true scientific spirit which seeks for the truth regardless of preconceived notions, yet exemplifies at the same time Mr. Kidd's radical inconsistency. For here is a writer, speaking in the name of science, and reverently declaring that to science alone he owes allegiance, who uses the language of science, and applies the methods of science, yet whose whole work is to laboriously show that science is not to be trusted, and that to keep the social organism intact it is necessary to appeal to moral sanctions which are not only outside or above, but are opposed to, scientific knowledge. Mr. Kidd seems to belong to that "self-drugged" school, of which Mr. Mallock is a leading type, who scientifically prove that science is valueless, and profoundly reason themselves into the position that reason is useless as a guide in the highest things of life.

Take, for instance, Mr. Kidd's main proposition, which he repeats in the *Nineteenth Century*. This is the kernel of Mr. Kidd's faith:—

"All religion is essentially ultra-rational. No form of belief is capable of functioning as a religion in the evolution of society which does not provide sanctions for conduct outside of, and superior to, reason."

Now let us examine this proposition for a moment. In the first place, of course, as to what constitutes a religion, or what forms of belief are "capable of functioning" as such,

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it is not relevant now to decide, though one might suggest that, historically, foolishness and falsehood have proved no bar to a belief "functioning" as a religion. At the same time, it seems to me that in the above proposition, as through his book, Mr. Kidd is rather begging the question. His logic amounts to this:—

"No belief is a religion which does not provide ultra-rational sanctions; these beliefs [Christianity, Mormonism, etc.] provide such sanctions; these beliefs are religions—*ergo*, only religions are capable of providing such sanctions as enable societies to exist."

In short, he attaches an arbitrary meaning to the term "religion"—an arbitrariness which was emphasised by his excluding Positivism from the designation, and then produces an arbitrary result.

But now let us come down from these vague "scientific" generalities to definite examples. Instead of dealing hazily with "ultra-rational sanctions," we will take one religious sanction. Take the belief in hell. That is decidedly a religious motive of conduct—at least it is intended to be such. And here I must say that I do not quite understand what Mr. Kidd means by sanctions "outside of, and superior to, reason." Religionists are often fond of talking in this strain about theological propositions being "beyond reason." Take hell. Now, the hell doctrine is not "ultra-rational," or "superior to reason," or "beyond reason." These are the old word-juggles. The proposition that two and two make five is not ultra-rational or ultra anything else; neither is the hell belief; neither is the belief in a fallen man, or a crucified man-god, or any other of the motley array of ridiculous propositions that go to make up the Christian religion. These doctrines are simply false. And really the time has come to cease playing with these high-sounding phrases over beliefs that no sane man now holds.

But I contend that, to the man who really does believe in hell, that belief is so far a *rational* factor in determining his conduct. In any case, it is difficult to see how a man can be influenced in his actions by beliefs—true or false—which he cannot comprehend. And this raises the question at the root of Mr. Kidd's special pleading. The distinction between "rational" and "ultra-rational" belief is a false one. If, for instance, hell be true, a man is justified in so regulating his conduct as to avoid hell; in fact, such a man would be acting in the most rational manner possible. The real distinction is between true and false beliefs, not between rational and supra-rational ones. Hence it is I would like Mr. Kidd to give a plain answer to a plain question. Will he say definitely that he thinks the hell-belief, for instance, has provided a useful sanction for conduct, and so facilitated the progress of the race? Will he distinctly tell us whether he thinks the belief in a savior crucified for the sins of others—in other words, the doctrine of vicarious atonement—will he tell us that *that* has been a beneficial "ultra-rational" sanction? For, after all, it is not quite satisfying to deal in vague general propositions about beliefs "capable of functioning as religions," and "ultra-rational sanctions," and all the rest. One likes a little definite details. But, naturally, Mr. Kidd does not push his theories so far, or pursue a "supra-rational belief" till he finds its logical end in the inhuman horrors of a Furniss or a Pinamonti. He merely concerns himself with daintily-worded abstractions—which is well for his theory. There is nothing more dangerous than to apply a general proposition to a particular case. And when you are so constituted as to be incapable of perceiving the necessity of the particular application, then so much the better for your peace of mind; but so much the worse for the value of your thinking.

The whole fact appears to be that Mr. Kidd does perceive a certain difficulty—the difficulty which was dealt with by Professor Huxley in his Romanes Lecture some time ago. The struggle for existence would lead individuals to fight for themselves regardless of others, and ruthlessly crush out those less able; the whole burden of ethical teaching is that such crushing out is wrong. How, then, are "ethics" and "evolution" to be reconciled? Mr. Kidd's reconciliation implies that the purely individual instinct is solely rational, and the ethical instinct, so to say, is simply a necessary piece of unreason which humanity carries with it to save itself from extinction. The explanation, which involves, as a corollary, the absurd proposition that, if the race were perfectly reasonable, it would die out, is surely condemned on its face. One might reply broadly that, since reason is human knowledge and experience, and since it embraces the whole field of human polity, whatever conduct helps and builds up the race, whatever conduces to human welfare, must have a sanction in human reason. The social instinct, then, the desire to succour others and help others, reacts on and modifies the purely individual instinct, and both are essentially part of human nature. That man in society subordinates his individual desires and ambitions to the welfare and happiness of others is a natural phenomenon; and it is a phenomenon which will remain after all the ultra-rational beliefs are swept away. If Mr. Kidd calls this social instinct in human nature the religious part, and if he imagines that it can only be kept alive and nurtured by false beliefs, he is in a curious intellectual *cul-de-sac*. The parental instinct is surely a social instinct as opposed to an individual one, yet assumedly in an Atheist or Positivist community, according to Mr. Kidd, the parental instinct would disappear. Does Mr. Kidd really think so? If he does, he has been imposed on by some of the worst nonsense of the lower-class aggressive religionist—nonsense which even less cultured and scientific writers on the Christian side than Mr. Kidd have been above accepting.

One must, finally, protest against the Kidd method—if the phrase be permissible—of taking beliefs and treating them as if they were objective entities, apart altogether from the question of their truth or falsehood. Suppose society could be saved if everyone believed that two straight lines could enclose a space, does Mr. Kidd think social salvation would be possible? And what, then, would we think of a sociologist who went about treating this proposition and its effect on those who did believe it, and its probable effects on those who might be induced to believe it, and never once touched on the vital fact of its falsehood? If society can only be saved or kept together by sanctions which, though they may be trebly ultra-supra-rational, are yet in plain English false, then society is in a bad way indeed. In sociology Mr. Kidd, in fact, is the greatest pessimist of our time.

FREDERICK RYAN.

THE "CHRISTIAN WORLD" NEWSPAPER AND FATHER IGNATIUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Allow me to thank you very sincerely for the short paragraph in your columns of March 24 upon the above. I hope that the *Christian*—it should be Rationalistic—*World* will answer your very sensible and practical question, "What on earth is an 'enlightened' view of the Atonement?' I, in common with all honest Christians, Catholic or Protestant, regard the *Christian World's* "enlightened" view of the Atonement as utterly and entirely *dishonest*.

You also speak of my denunciation of Archdeacon Farrar, as "that awful man," and then ask "what would I say of the editor of the *Freethinker*?" As you have *asked*, allow me to reply. I think that *you* are probably a gentleman and an honest man. But, Sir, if I heard to-morrow that you had allowed yourself to be made an Archdeacon in our Church, and were receiving the salary of one, I should change my opinion of you and think you a blackguard and a rogue. If Archdeacon Farrar would accept the sub-editorship (at your invitation, of course) of the *Freethinker*, I should similarly regard him—as I do you—as a gentleman and an honest man.

You have publicly asked me a question. I have answered it.—Yours faithfully, IGNATIUS, O.S.B., Monk.

There is the greatest difference between presuming an opinion to be true because, with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuring its truth for purposes of action; on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of right.—*J. S. Mill, "On Liberty," p. 36.*

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BLASPHEMY IN SWEDEN.

Captain Otto Thomson sends us a copy of the Stockholm *Dagens Nyheter (Daily News)*, which reports that Gustaf Thoren, the editor of the Söderköping *Posten* has been found guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to two months' imprisonment and a fine of twenty-five crowns, for this impossible "crime." Our readers may remember that it was for an article on "Schools and Religion" that this prosecution was commenced. This contemptible attempt to suppress free speech is as ridiculous as the attempt to mop out the Atlantic, and the prosecution will advertise Freethought views in places where they were unknown before.

Captain Thomson informs us that a new Freethought paper, *Nya Sanningar*, or *New Thoughts*, has been started in Stockholm. Captain Thomson has recently translated from our columns Colonel Ingersoll's lecture, "Which Way?" which he will shortly publish to see if they are as ready to prosecute for blasphemy in the capital as in a small provincial town like Söderköping.

NOAH'S SONG.

Tune: "I'm afloat, I'm afloat."

I'm afloat, I'm afloat on my three-storey'd bark,
Designed by Jehovah, my boat-house, *the Ark;*
She's built like a stable, and roofed like a shed,
With nought to distinguish her stern from her head;
She boasts no superfluous windows nor doors,
Of each she has one, and her triad of floors
Foreshadows, in some sort of mystical sense,
Some change in her *Ark*itect centuries hence.

The Lord, who designed this pestiferous tub—
My "second-sight" shows me—would suffer a snub
From people who know what a ship ought to be,
Like "Lloyd's"—which with optics prophetic I see—
Just think of it! cribbed in a three-storey'd Ark
With thousands of animals, all in the dark!
Of light not a ray, and of air scarce a breath,
A coffin of life on an ocean of death!

I'm afloat with earth's fauna, my children and wife,
Although we don't care for a seafaring life.
The fact is, Jehovah found out his mistake
In tempting young Eve with a logical snake;
And now, in his rage, he is drowning our race,
The living reminders of all his disgrace;
In short, all his creatures, save those on my barge,
Are drowning, in millions, this moment at large.

I'm afloat on an ocean where land used to be;
My body's afloat, and my mind's "all at sea,"
Dumbfounded in trying to fathom God's scheme;
For, surely, the notion quite foolish doth seem,
To save one or two of a core-tainted brood,
In hopes of a progeny wholesome and good!
I'm glad I am saved, but, between me and you,
He ought to drown *all*, and create life anew.

I'm afloat on the flood that's now destined to be
An ocean of corpses—a sepulchre sea;
A black heaving desert of water abhorred—
The grave of a world, the accurst of the Lord!
My bark is a *life*-boat to tigers and swine,
But also, through infinite mercy divine,
A *death*-boat to thousands of children that gasp
Whilst striving its black, mocking timbers to grasp.

I hear, high above my menagerie's din,
The shrieks of the doomed drowning children of sin,
And strive to extinguish my grief for their fate
In terror lest I the creator should hate!
'Tis sinful, as Ham was remarking to Shem,
To pity the folk whom the Lord doth condemn;
So, harden your hearts, all ye creatures on board;
We're bound to be right if we copy the Lord!

G. L. Mackenzie.

ACID DROPS.

The *Methodist Times* is "delighted" that a Wesleyan Methodist has induced "that enlightened body," the Nottingham Town Council, to pass a resolution in favor of abolishing the delivery of letters on Sunday. "If London, with all its millions," says our pious contemporary, "can live without a Sunday delivery, it is quite certain that any other city could." London, of course, could "live" without a good many things. It could even live without the *Methodist Times*. But it is simply ridiculous that London should be treated as it is by the Post Office. There is no delivery of letters on Sunday, nor is a single mail dispatched till after twelve o'clock at night. If you drop a letter in a London pillar-box after six o'clock on Saturday evening, it will not reach Manchester till midday on Monday. All this waste of public time, and interference with public convenience, is pretendedly in the interest of Sunday rest. It is really in the interest of a bastard economy. The Post Office will not employ enough hands to give them all one day's rest in seven, without giving them all the same day. It takes the easiest and cheapest course for itself; the hardest and dearest course for the public.

The *Methodist Times* is bitterly opposed to Established Churches, and quotes Mr. Bryce to the effect that Constantine "secularised the Church." Mr. Hughes's organ regards this as a calamity. So do we. But it was not a calamity to Christianity. It took Christianity three hundred years to convert one in twenty of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Nine-tenths of the rest were converted in the next century through the patronage of the emperors, who used every means—bribery, intimidation, and actual persecution—to make their subjects Christians. Constantine was a great rascal, but he was no fool; he knew that the Christian religion was a most convenient instrument of tyranny.

Mr. Hughes is, after all, a half-hearted Nonconformist. He objects to the State paying for religion in churches, but he wishes the State to pay for religion in schools. At the recent Free Churches Congress at Birmingham he spoke in opposition to the Rev. J. Hulme, a member of the Birmingham School Board. He declared that, "if any attempt were made to revive the system of Secular Education advocated by George Dawson and the late Dr. Dale, the whole of the Wesleyan Methodists of England would be forced into the opposite camp." That is, they would vote with the Church party rather than with the friends of Secular Education.

The Rev. J. Hulme replied "with considerable warmth." He said that Mr. Hughes was free to differ from him, but "no Nonconformist could be true to his principles who countenanced the payment for religious teaching out of the imperial revenue or out of the rates." This was received with "strong dissent." The fact is, the majority of the Nonconformist men of God want the help of the State as far as it serves their interest; their objection to it begins when it serves the interest of their opponents.

That Free Churches Congress discussed "The Church and Social Questions." Mr. George Cadbury, the cocoa man, presided at this sitting. He argued that the Churches must supply leaders to the great social revolution that was going forward; otherwise the consequences would be disastrous, as in France, where "such a revolution was led by non-Christian men." What this cunning Quaker really means is that the Churches, and especially (as he said) the Free Churches, should nobble the revolutionary movement. Men like George Cadbury don't want too great a change in the existing order of things. Nor do the Churches want such a change. It is so hard to get coppers from working men, and so convenient to fall back upon the capitalist Cadburys, who can write out big cheques for religious purposes.

Most of the men of God who took part in this discussion were very strongly in favor of a rigorous enforcement of the law against vice and immorality. That is all very well, gentlemen; but where the deuce do *you* come in? Why should you be paid so handsomely, merely to call in the police?

Under the heading of "Whispers," the *Birmingham Owl* finds: "That Mr. Hugh Price Hughes expresses himself as violently opposed to the Birmingham system of education. That the Reverend Hugh Price Hughes is always violently opposed to somebody or something. That if he would learn to think more and talk less he might yet live down his reputation for exaggeration, sensationalism, and cant."

One of our readers attended Mr. Keir Hardie's address on Burns, which was criticised in our last issue. When the

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address was over, this gentleman rose and asked the orator why he introduced religion and Jesus Christ in connection with the Independent Labor Party. Mr. Hardie gave an evasive reply. Discussion, he said, was a waste of time; the choir, therefore, would sing a hymn. Fancy a man like this leading the hosts of Labor out of the Wilderness into the Promised Land!

Lucy Garnett, writing in the *Athenæum* on "Other People's Superstitions," calls attention to the following passage from *The People of Turkey:* "Mohammedans execrate the Christian faith, and Christians the Mohammedan faith; but both, in cases of incurable disease, have recourse reciprocally to each other's holy wells, to the sacred tombs of the saints, and to the prayers of the clergy of both creeds. I have often seen sick Turkish children taken to the Armenian church at Brousa, and heard prayers read over them by Armenian priests. I have also seen Christian children taken to Hodjas to be blown or spat upon, or have the visitation of intermittent fever 'tied up' by means of a piece of cotton thread twisted round the wrist." Miss Garnett adds that Jews as well as Christians frequently have recourse to the good offices of Dervish sheikhs and Turkish witches.

It is reported that the Pope, in his brief on Christian reunion, will not refer to the validity of Anglican orders, but simply urge the Church of England to return to the fold. The Catholics are doing their best to see that the publication of the brief is followed by reports of converts, and it is said that some prominent members of the English Church Union will go to Rome, where they hope to be followed by some Welsh parsons if disestablished.

It is probably with a view to taking advantage of Disestablishment that the Papal Brief has been placed in the hands of Cardinal Vaughan, authorising the collection of eleven Welsh counties into an Apostolic Vicariate, to which a new Catholic bishop will shortly be appointed.

Saint Athanasius Riley, of the London School Board, is a High Churchman, and a patron of the old Sarum Missal, which of course is thoroughly popish. There are other High Churchmen who share the same predilection. At St. Mark's, Marylebone, last Sunday (being Palm Sunday), palms were blessed and censed and carried in procession round the church, the choir singing antiphons, responses, and versicles. Something was wanted, however, to perfect the function. Some one—say the parson—should have mounted a donkey and headed the procession.

H. K. Carroll says in the *Forum Library:* "The wealthiest denomination in the United States, if we estimate denominational wealth according to the average value of the church edifices and sites, is the Jewish. The next is the Unitarian, the third is the Reformed (Dutch), and the fourth the Protestant Episcopal. The average value of the churches of Reformed Jews is $38,839; of the Unitarian, $24,725; of the Reformed (Dutch), $19,227; and of the Protestant Episcopal, $16,182."

In America the sky-pilots usually get half fare on the railroads, as well as low rates for education and other services, and free tickets to concerts and entertainments. The subject has recently been publicly discussed at Chicago, divinity students themselves saying that "the day is past when the priesthood can claim special favors," and "society owes only one duty to the man who is always holding out his hand—to kick him."

But the Rev. Young said: "I have no scruples about taking a free ride, since I always remember the free journey Christ took on an ass when he entered Jerusalem." The ass was requisitioned without the leave of the owner. The Rev. Young, if he will take a "free ride" under similar circumstances which surrounded "Our Lord," will find himself in the penitentiary. Let him go in and win.

The Rev. Thomas Dixon has been forced to resign his connection with the Twenty-third-street Baptist Church, New York, many of his congregation objecting to his sensational preaching, which has been much discussed in the *Herald*. Mr. Dixon says: "I seek to be in the spectacular line." He succeeded first by a long series of sermons denouncing Ingersoll, and then by being arrested and fined for shooting robins on a "hunting expedition." His most recent sensation was a pulpit attack on Dr. Parkhurst.

There has been a row at St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, the fashionable colored church of that place. The Rev. F. F. Giles, the presiding elder, is accused of not believing in the Holy Ghost. He was impeached by Mrs. Hiram Worrell, a prominent travelling evangelist who believes in visions and manifestations of the Holy Ghost as in the days of Pentecost. The congregation is divided on the subject.

The American public, especially the Catholic section, are easily bamboozled. An Italian correspondent of the New York *Sun*, after hinting that the English press knows nothing about the matter, suggests that the late visit of Lord Halifax to Rome may bring about the end of the Anglican schism, and the reunion of the Church of England with her long-hated mother. If ever the Pope was foolish enough to expect such a reunion, Cardinal Vaughan and the English bishops have probably undeceived him.

Of course, as Christianity breaks up, there will be much talk of, and many attempts at, reunion; but such attempts may only precipitate the end. While the Catholic Church confines the drinking of the blood of the Savior to the priest, it will have little chance with the lay Anglican, who thinks he ought to have a regular supply of that fluid himself.

A writer in the New York *Sun* points out that, while they are appealing for more money for churches, there are within easy distance six churches whose entire congregations could easily be accommodated in one.

Mr. Joshua Nunn, of Maldon, has been sued by two parsons for tithe rent charge. The Rev. J. Coling demands £10 12s. 8d., and the Rev. Reginald Tavernor Love £11 13s. Mr. Nunn says there is nothing on the land wherewith to pay, and the tithe charge is ruinous; but the men of God have piled expenses against him to the tune of £24 18s. 8d., and the end is not yet.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Chronicle* gives an instance of gross superstition in Russia. A Jew farmer sold his wife (who was *enciente*) to some robbers for a large sum of money, the intention of the purchasers being to kill the woman and draw out her veins, from the superstitious belief that the veins of pregnant women render thieves invisible. Luckily for the intended victim, her little daughter, aged only four years, overheard the bargaining, and told her of it. She sought the protection of the landowner, and the husband and robbers were arrested.

The Emperor William's piety is of the royal diplomatic order. He thoroughly understands that a God is a useful article to a king. But he will also patronise a Pagan deity on occasion, as last week, when launching a new ironclad at Kiel, he is reported as saying: "Thou art now to be ranged among the armed vessels of the German navy. The names of the ships which belong to the same class are taken from the old Germanic legends. Therefore shalt thou also recall the grey ages of our ancestors, and the mighty god who was worshipped and feared by all our Germanic seafaring forefathers, whose mighty empire extended from the icy North Pole to the distant South Pole, on whose ocean waves were fought the northern fights, and death and destruction brought into the land. This great god's name shalt thou bear. Mayst thou prove thyself worthy of it. I christen thee with the name of 'Aegir.'"

The prisoners in the witch-burning case have been committed for trial. It appears that the husband, Cleary, was a regular member of the Roman Church, and mass was celebrated in the room where the crime was committed, though the priest pleaded ignorance of what was taking place.

One of the things which confirmed the belief that the poor woman was a witch was that when the sacred wafer was administered she spat it out. What became of the consecrated element which contains the body, blood, and bones of divinity? Were these sacred elements trodden upon on the floor, or did the priest, as in duty bound, take it up and eat it himself?

Belief in the Bible-warranted superstition of witchcraft lingers in some parts of England as well as in Ireland. The *Western Chronicle* of October 4, 1889, mentioned a case at Hornington, in the New Forest. The daughter of a local Primitive Methodist preacher was believed to have been bewitched by an old gipsy, and it was thought that to cut the witch's finger would break the charm.

As late as September 4, 1863, a poor old paralysed Frenchman died in consequence of having been ducked as a wizard at Castle Hedingham, Essex; and on September 17, 1875, an old woman was killed as a witch by a half-insane man at Long Compton, Warwickshire.

The *St. Louis Globe Democrat* says: "While the House of Congress was in session Sunday night, which by legislative fiction was called part of Saturday, Mr. Broderick, of Kansas, strolled over to the seat of Mr. Bailey, of Texas, who has a great reputation as a parliamentarian. 'Bailey,'

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queried the Kansan, 'do you suppose the LIIId Congress by calling this Saturday will be able to fool the Lord?' 'I don't know,' replied Mr. Bailey, doubtfully; 'perhaps it will. It has fooled everybody else.'"

Listening to a discussion among his officers as to the value of a name, Bonaparte once said: "It has much. Do you suppose that I could ever have become Emperor of France if my name had been Skaggs? No, no. The French will stand a great deal, but Emperor Skaggs would have aroused their deepest animosity." If Jesus had been known by his proper name of Joshua, all the gilt would have come off the gingerbread.

General Booth insulted the reporters at Sunderland, first turning them from their place, which he said was not for reporters, but a penitent form. He called them poor, dead, shrivelled-souled creatures, scribes who put questions, but nothing in the collection-boxes. When they rose and left, he said they were running from God. What have the reporters done to the "General"? Have they incurred his resentment by taking down and publishing his speeches exactly as delivered?

Lord Rosebery has at last given a Broad Churchman a turn by appointing Canon Fremantle as Dean of Ripon. We suppose he got his billet for his Liberal politics, not for his liberal theology.

Canon Barnett, who was formerly vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel, says that the Church schools in the East End are, "as a rule, inferior schools." He advises the Church to give up the existing schools and build a few model ones.

Before the St. Asaph Board of Guardians, the master of the workhouse admitted that a lady had received permission to visit the workhouse and collect signatures to a petition against the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church. Mr. Mostyn Williams inquired if any of the imbeciles signed. The master replied: "Yes; one or more; but, strictly speaking, one is not an imbecile." These admissions gave rise to an animated discussion.

At Barrow the parish council, in opposition both to the Home Office and the Bishop of Peterborough, have dedicated their cemetery without any consecration. They see that the only meaning of consecration now is extra fees for the clergy, and are right in standing out against the imposition.

At Chevill, Wilts, the first Nonconformist burial, under the Act of 1880, took place last week. An old man named Isaac Ealey was laid to rest by a minister of the Plymouth Brethren, of which he was a member. Some excitement and feeling shown on the occasion by the crowd of mourners were intensified by the action of the rector, who refused to allow the deceased to be buried with his wife, but ordered the grave to be dug in the remotest corner of the churchyard, behind the church. A most unseemly altercation also was raised at the grave by the sexton.

The name Easter is doubtless derived from Eoster, a Saxon goddess of light, whose festival was kept by our Pagan forefathers about this time of the year. In the East, Easter is called Bright Day; in Bohemia, the night and morning ushering it in are called "The Great Night." In the Middle Ages the poor at this season fed in churches, where there were passion plays on Good Friday, and sports, dances, and farcical exhibitions within the holy building. There is plenty of evidence that religion was essentially Pagan down to a period little prior to the Reformation.

The early Christian Church is said to have been rent by a violent dispute as to when Easter should be celebrated. The Eastern Christians kept it like the Jews kept Passover, from which, with them, it was a development, on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, which, of course, involved a constant variation in the day of the week. The Western Christians, with a truer appreciation of the meaning, declared it must always be kept on Sunday, and this view is said to have been adopted by the Council of Nice. But the question gave rise to much controversy, in which the rival churches and bishops damned each other, "quite persuaded all the apostles would have done as they did."

It is possible that the Motza cakes eaten by Jews at Passover may, like the Good Friday bun, be a survival of a sun-sacrament. They are always of a round shape, and the *Jewish Chronicle* says that when a baker tried to introduce square ones he did not sell a single pound.

On Seder night, at Pesach, the Jews say: "Next year in Jerusalem." But they do not wish to go there, for all that. Moses knows a trick worth two of that.

The *Jewish Chronicle* (April 5) says it is amusing to note how anxious the Temperance Societies are to prove the unprovable. "The late Dr. Edersheim was offered one hundred pounds by such a society to prove that the wine mentioned in the New Testament miracle at Cana was unfermented, and, therefore, non-intoxicating. But he refused."

It adds: "Dr. Erich Harnack has just given the same folly a knock-down blow in his pamphlet, *Die Bibel und die alkoholischen Getränke*" (Berlin: B. Hirschwald; 1895). Total abstinence may be a desirable thing, but it is the sheerest ignorance to argue that the wine of the Bible was non-alcoholic.

Samuel Fox has a follower in Edward Pickard, another Quaker, who was turned out of Truro Cathedral for keeping on his hat. He maintained that the building was national property, and that he was within his legal rights; but he was marched out by the wardens. There is a long report in *Lake's Falmouth Packet*. Pickard said: "The fact is you mustn't wear your own hat—that is, you mustn't possess your own head—on the priests' premises."

The *Philadelphia Times* (U.S.A.) reports the prosecution of Joseph and Elizabeth Copestake, of Fifty-Second and Wakefield-streets, by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. They had subjected their two boys, John and Joseph, aged respectively eight and eleven, to frightful tortures. Their hands were tied to the cellar water-pipe on cold days, and they were stripped naked and denied food. One time their feet were placed in a bucket of ice-cold water; another time they were compelled to place their hands on a red-hot stove. All this was done for the children's good. "All that we did," said Copestake, "was done in a Christian spirit." "Where did you get your idea of Christianity?" asked the magistrate. "From the Bible," was the reply.

An American committee of women is charged with the task of getting out a revision of the Bible which will show the mistranslations in other editions, so far as woman is concerned. It seems to be the notion of the committee that the "we" in Genesis includes the "motherhood of god," instead of the polytheism of the writer, as is undoubtedly the case. This is another instance of attempting to read into the Scriptures what the reader-in wants there.

A clergyman died in his pulpit at Dayton, Ohio, while delivering his sermon. This, of course, was in due process of nature; but had a Spiritualist or Agnostic lecturer died under similar circumstances, the religious press would have proclaimed it an act of God, to punish the offender for disbelief of his holy teaching.—*Progressive Thinker*.

Ingersoll once told a story of a Yankee who visited Mount Ararat and brought away a stone with him, which he exhibited at a Sunday-school in the United States as a proof of Noah's Flood. The Rev. James Gibson, Methodist New Connection minister, of Hucknall Torkard, is not quite so bad as that Yankee, but he is bad enough. Having recently visited Rome, he has much to say about the Catacombs, and he pretends to have found in them proofs that there were Christians in Rome at the time of the Ascension! Every scholar knows that this is utter nonsense. Mr. Gibson draws upon his imagination too largely. He says that "for 250 years it was death to confess Christianity." Of course the statement is ridiculously false.

At the recent County Council elections in London the following conversation took place between the wife of a Secularist and a canvasser on behalf of a sky-pilot: "Good morning, madam. Is Mr. R. in, please?" "No, he is not. I am Mrs. R." "When will it be convenient for me to see him?" "Any time after seven this evening." "Is your husband a Moderate or a Progressive?" "I don't know which he is." "What paper does he read?" "The *Freethinker*." "Um! Ah! Good day, madam."

Too Much for Poor Human Nature.

The Moravians, it is stated, send wives out to their missionaries, who are not allowed to choose for themselves, for the very proper reason that men who do this frequently fall in love with their wives, and love interferes with the true missionary spirit. A third wife was once sent to a twice-afflicted widower. He boarded the ship when she arrived. The bride came upon deck to meet her bridegroom. She advanced with downcast eyes and blushing cheeks. It was an anxious moment. The officers of the ship stood by. The sympathising passengers expected a meeting of real pathos and of edification. The bride raised her head and stood before her chosen. Alas, all he said, as he smote his brow, was, "Ach, Himmel, red hair again!"

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 14, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London :—7.30, "The Romance of the Resurrection."

Wednesday and *Thursday*, April 17 and 18, debate at the Public Hall, New Brompton, with Rev. A. J. Waldron, of the Christian Evidence Society, on "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"

April 21, Glasgow ; 28, Sunderland.

May 8 and 9, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—April 14, Liverpool ; 21, m. Walworth Radical Club, e. Hall of Science ; 28, Hall of Science. May 5, Glasgow ; 12, Dundee ; 19, Camberwell ; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Fair Play (Manchester).—We referred to the matter in last week's "Acid Drops." Powell as a member of the N.S.S. is ineffably ludicrous. Could you not see through such folly ?

Charles Harding, 2 Sydenham-terrace, Fratton, Portsmouth, is now secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch, in place of Mr. Hore, who has resigned. C. W. Loveridge, 200 Fawcett-road, Southsea, is corresponding secretary. The Branch will hold no regular meetings during the summer.

J. M. (Liverpool).—The quarrel between the two libellers is amusing, but we do not intend to notice either of them any further, unless we get an opportunity of making them suffer in purse or person for their sweet exhibitions of Christian charity. It is bad policy to give them the advertisement without the punishment.

T. Dunbar.—Thanks. See paragraph.

Mark Nixon.—Glad to have your cheerful letter. We remember your telling us personally about that Christmas Number.

A. Comley.—We are publishing the Hall of Science Libel Case in a separate form. It will be ready for circulation soon after this number of the *Freethinker* is published. What we said at Bristol is quite true. Every religious idea and moral maxim in the Gospels was common property before the Christian era. Jesus taught nothing, except belief in himself, with which the world was not already familiar.

J. G. Bastram.—Your letter is manly. You did quite right in leaving that braggart severely alone. A fellow who can advertise himself as "the most able champion of Christian Evidences ever head" should undergo medical treatment. It is amusing to hear that "the infidels dread him." We know the Debate is still sold, but it has been expurgated since the trial.

Anti-Cant.—Obliged. See paragraph.

T. Wise.—(1) Many thanks for your kind and interesting letter. It is pleasant to find so much life and love for Freethought in one so old as yourself. (2) Certainly the damages in the Hall of Science libel case were ridiculous, but it was something to get a verdict, when a Freethinker was suing Christians. (3) A Branch of the N.S.S. would doubtless do well at Paddington. We are giving the whole subject of organisation, especially in London, our serious attention. It is pretty clear that ordinary democratic methods fail in all militant enterprises.

E. Smedley.—Thanks for cutting. See paragraph. (1) Certainly the Bible is responsible for the superstition of witchcraft in Christian countries. It teaches demoniacal possession, even in the New Testament. Saul went to the Witch of Endor to raise the ghost of Samuel, and Exodus says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." That single text has shed innocent blood enough to dye all the Bibles that were ever printed. (2) Protestants did burn witches as well as Catholics. (3) We cannot say whether Allan Ramsey was a sincere Christian. Few poets have been, unless they had the blues. (4) We agree with you that Mr. Watts's new pamphlet on Christ as a Social Reformer deserves a wide circulation.

F. Carey.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks. We should like to see the whole Tyneside district the scene of an active propaganda.

W. Foster.—We did not recommend the lady because we were ignorant of her character and qualifications. Those who did recommend her now admit that they were grievously mistaken. Generous impulses are admirable, but they should only be gratified at one's own expense, not at the expense of others. It is dangerous, and even worse, to press untried and unknown persons upon the Secular platform, especially when it is complained that the lecturers already there are far too little employed.

Sunderland Reader.—We understood that the Branch enrolled some new members, but we were not apprised of the number.

J. T. Robson.—Commands to destroy the Canaanites are found in Deut. vii. 2, xx. 17. It was David who, when he took Rabbah, "brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kiln. And thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon" (2 Samuel xii. 31).

W. J. Gainer.—(1) The Garibaldi passage was from his *Rule of the Mind*. The Maudsley passage was from the Unitarian Society's publication on *Mockery and Immorality*. (2) We are obliged to you for the *N. R.* quotation. Bradlaugh's challenge of Price Hughes's story is dealt with in our exposure of it. (3) Delighted to hear that we helped to bring you to Freethought.

As we go to press we learn from Nottingham (not from Rochdale) that the Rochdale Branch "strongly protests" against what it is pleased to call "the unconstitutional action of the Executive in overriding the votes of the Branches in the matter of the place of the Annual Conference." It was distinctly stated that there was but one vote for Nottingham above Bristol, and this became a tie when the London Branches made up their votes on the Executive. It must also be remembered that the vice-presidents have a voice in this matter, according to the old rule of practice. The real ground, however, for deciding on Bristol was that the Nottingham Branch had not complied with the conditions by guaranteeing a suitable place for the evening meeting. The Executive was unanimous, and the President kept perfectly neutral. The Rochdale Branch should really make enquiries before passing votes of censure.

A. G. Levett.—Thanks.

Papers Received.—Stockholm Dagens Nyheter—Harbinger of Light—Echo—Blyth Bi-Weekly News—Clarion—Two Worlds—World's Advance Thought—Post—Universal Republic—Lake's Falmouth Packet—Crescent—Bradford Telegraph—Zoophilist—Huddersfield Examiner—Liberator—Financial Bulletin—Dawn of Day—Twentieth Century—Truthseeker—Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento—Newcastle Leader—Isle of Man Times—Cape Times—Review of Reviews—Forum Library—New York Sun—Non-Sectarian—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Chanter's Magazine.

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

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One Year, 10s. 6d. ; Half Year, 5s. 3d. ; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d. ; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements* :—One inch, 4s. 6d. ; half column, £1 2s. 6d. ; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

Mr. R. O. Smith offers to take £525 in cash, and £75 in paid-up shares, to satisfy his entire claim as vendor and mortgagee on the lease of the Hall of Science. The original purchase-money was to be £3,000 for the lease, fixtures, and furniture. Of this sum £1,400 has already been paid. It will be seen, therefore, that the new arrangement involves the considerable reduction of £1,000.

Mr. Smith stipulates that the matter shall be settled during the present month of April. The Board of Directors of the National Secular Hall Society, Limited, at a meeting in Mr. George Anderson's office, agreed to satisfy Mr. Smith's claim on this basis, if possible ; and authorised me to appeal to the Freethought party for its prompt and generous support.

Prospectively there can be no doubt as to the value of the lease. The neighborhood is a rapidly improving one, and in another ten or fifteen years the lease should be a first-rate marketable property.

Upon this site it is intended to erect new premises, which shall be suitable headquarters for the Secular party and a worthy memorial to Charles Bradlaugh.

To acquire the unencumbered lease is the first necessity, and I earnestly appeal to the Secular party for the means. Existing shareholders may increase the number of their shares. Non-shareholders may take shares immediately. They are £1 each, payable at once, or in instalments of 2s. 6d. on application, 2s. 6d. on allotment, and 2s. 6d. per call afterwards. Friends of the movement who do not wish to become shareholders can forward donations, which will be invested as shares in the name of any person they please, or in the name of the National Secular Society.

Intending shareholders may save time, which is very important in the circumstances, by filling in the application form which will be found in the *Freethinker* advertisement columns.

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This is a great opportunity, and every Freethinker should ask himself, "What can I do in this crisis?" and then do it. The law of the country is against us; it treats us with indignity and injustice; it deprives us of the proprietary rights which are enjoyed by all religious bodies; but this is a reason why we should tax ourselves all the more freely, and even severely, for the great cause for which some of us have suffered, and for which some of us would die.

No one can say that I have spared myself in this enterprise. A few intimate friends know what time and trouble it has cost me. And it may cost me even more in the future; for I am resolved that no more quarrels or disputes shall arise from divided responsibility. Still, fresh precept must be enforced by fresh example. I propose, therefore, by way of encouraging others, to give the whole proceeds that accrue to me from last Sunday's and this Sunday's lectures. I am only a poor man, with many claims and heavy obligations. There are many members of the Secular party who are more fortunately situated. I appeal to them to do their best in this emergency. And I also appeal to all others, even to the poorest, who can only take a share or give a shilling.

We have vindicated the reputation of the London Hall of Science, and indirectly the memory of Charles Bradlaugh, against infamous libellers. Let us now acquire and renovate the one, and do a still greater justice to the other. Let us build a Freethought temple on the spot which was consecrated by the eloquence of one of the noblest heroes who ever battled for truth and liberty.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was another capital audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Death of God and the Life of Humanity." His discourse was highly appreciated and rapturously applauded. Mr. Foote occupies the same platform again this evening (April 14), and will take a particularly seasonable subject—"The Romance of the Resurrection; or, Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" It should be noted that the Sunday evening lectures now commence at *half-past seven*.

Mr. Foote's debate with the Rev. A. J. Waldron on "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" takes place in the Public Hall, New Brompton, Kent, next Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Major Scott Moncrieff, R.E., and Mr. Charles Watts are to be chairmen. The joint-committee have made a curious arrangement. Both chairmen are to act each evening; the Major is to keep Mr. Foote in order, and Mr. Watts is to keep the reverend gentleman in order. We shudder to think what would happen if the chairmen differed. Perhaps the debaters would have to keep *them* in order.

There is sure to be a crowd to hear the debate. The Christians expect to see the infidel "wiped out." They generally do—and they are generally mistaken. If anything happens to Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts will be there to bring home the fragments.

Freethinkers or Secularists residing in or near New Brompton are requested to purchase their tickets for the debate in the Public Hall, on the 17th and 18th inst., *re* Rev. Waldron *v.* G. W. Foote, upon "Did Christ Rise?" on or before the 14th inst., after which date they will be sold to the public.

Mr. Charles Watts had three excellent audiences last Sunday at Sheffield. Friends from surrounding districts mustered in good force. Mr. Watts, we are informed, was in his best form, and he received hearty applause from his audiences, who were evidently pleased with what the chairman termed "an original and intellectual treat." All the *Freethinkers* on hand were sold by the close of the afternoon meeting.

Mr. Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, April 14, three times at Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam, the President of the American Secular Union, will arrive in England probably on May 1. As we announced last week, he will be met at Southampton by Messrs. Foote and Watts. His first lecture will be at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, May 5, when Mr. Foote will preside. Mr. Putnam's subsequent lectures in this country are being organised by Mr. Watts, to whom all applications should be made immediately.

Mr. Putnam will attend the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. at Bristol, and read a special letter to the English Freethinkers from Colonel Ingersoll. Out of respect to our American visitor, it is to be hoped that the chronic grumblers will take a holiday on that occasion.

The report of the Hall of Science libel case is being issued in pamphlet form by Mr. Foote. Besides the verbatim report, which appeared in the *Freethinker* after the trial, the pamphlet includes an historical and critical Introduction, and an account of the so-called "Leeds orgies," which have for so many years been the principal stock-in-trade of a certain class of Christian Evidencers. The delay in issuing the pamphlet has chiefly arisen from Mr. Foote's desire to be overwhelmingly accurate, so as to leave no possible room for further misrepresentation. We appeal to Freethinkers to spread this pamphlet broadcast. Whether they do so or not, we have incurred the expense of producing it as "a piece of justification"—to borrow a French phrase. It appears to us that a permanent account of the libel action is almost as necessary as the libel action was itself. To publish it is an act of policy, and to circulate it is an act of duty. The pamphlet runs to sixty-four close-printed pages, and the price is only threepence. The first edition will not, at this price, pay for the cost of production; but we shall be happy to reprint for a larger demand. It is our intention to send a copy to all the religious journals in the kingdom, and to the leading daily and weekly newspapers. The pamphlet will be on sale soon after the issue of this week's *Freethinker*.

The Newcastle papers report the funeral of Mr. Joseph Brown, late secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation, whose death was announced in our last issue. The *Daily Leader* notices that "there was no clergyman present, nor was there the usual tolling of the bell." Mr. C. Cohen spoke at the graveside "with solemn impressiveness." The *Evening Chronicle* calls his address "a neat and beautifully-worded oration."

We are pleased to note that Professor Huxley, who has passed through a severe attack of influenza, is much better. He is a fighter who could ill be spared.

At Rome the funeral of Signor Rosea, the founder of an anti-clerical club and a prominent Freemason, was made the occasion of an anti-clerical demonstration. No priest had been allowed to visit the dying Freethinker, who passed away quite serenely. But the hearse bore the emblem of the cross. This was at once objected to and covered over with the banner of the Giordano Bruno Association, "to the great satisfaction of the anti-clericals," says the paper. The body was cremated.

A new Freethought journal has appeared in the republic of Argentina. Its name is *Giordano Bruno*.

They had a religious census at Bulawayo, South Africa, the total population of the township being 1,537. Of these the Church of England numbered 974; Lutherans, 98; Roman Catholics, 95; Jews, 92; Presbyterians, 90; Dutch Reformed, 86; Wesleyans, 61; Baptists, 10; no religion, 7; Freethinkers, 4; Free Church, 3; Congregationalists, 3; Greek Church, 6; Agnostics, 2; Atheists, 2; Deists, 2; Pantheist, 1; Pagan, 1. Evidently there are a few heretics not afraid of declaring themselves so at Bulawayo.

Freethinkers owe a special debt of gratitude to Mr. Speaker Peel. When that masterful man got into the chair he speedily put an end to the baiting of Bradlaugh, which the Tories and bigots had indulged in for four years, and which neither Mr. Speaker Brand nor Mr. Gladstone had been able to stop. All that was really wanted was firmness, and that Mr. Speaker Peel brought to his new post. There was a stir among the young bloods of the "stupid party" as Bradlaugh approached the table to be sworn in, but the new Speaker would not tolerate any unconstitutional interference, and Bradlaugh took his seat and held it unchallenged. What a blessing it is to have a strong man in a responsible position!

The authorities at Dusseldorf, Heinrich Heine's birthplace, would not find a place for his statue, and it is now suggested that the monument should be sent to New York and placed in the Central Park there.

Mr. Walter R. Cassells, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, writes in this month's *Nineteenth Century* on the "Diatessaron of Tatian." He contends that, allowing everything that is claimed for the Diatessaron, it does not give us any

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earlier date than A.D. 140 for the Gospel of John, and leaves us without any proof of the apostolical authorship of that Gospel.

The South Shields Branch, which was very successful with its social gatherings at Christmas and New Year, announces a Soiree for Easter Monday. It is only necessary to mention that this will be under the able management of Messrs. White and Bow to ensure that all the arrangements will be satisfactory. To commence at 7.30. Double ticket, 2s. 6d. Refreshments; moderate prices.

The Chatham friends intend having a tea on Good Friday, at 4.30, price 6d. Social in the evening, price 1s. Tickets for Tea and Social, 1s. 3d. Just the place to go and spend a pleasant time; dancing till 2 a.m.

The Huddersfield Branch sends us its printed balance-sheet for the year ending March 31. There appears to have been very little lecturing done in that period, chiefly owing, we believe, to the difficulty in obtaining halls. Huddersfield contains some sturdy Freethinkers, and we should like to see them working under more favorable conditions.

We print in another column a characteristic letter from Father Ignatius. It is impossible not to feel a certain sympathy with him in his protest against "infidelity" in the Church. At the same time, we cannot help feeling that the necessity for his honest indignation only marks the irresistible progress of the spirit of Freethought.

The American press has unanimously condemned the New Jersey sky-pilots who sought to prevent Colonel Ingersoll from speaking at Hoboken. The New York *Commercial Advertiser* says: "It is humiliating and pitiful, the efforts of inefficient preachers to enforce by law the respect for the Bible which their feeble tongues are not able to inspire. They have had centuries in which to promulgate the faith they profess, and yet we find them returning once more to the methods of the Puritans, who, seeking religious freedom, persecuted the good Quakers and waged bloody war on poor old women accused of witchcraft."

The *Duluth News-Tribune* remarks: "It is absurd to say that Mr. Ingersoll may not entertain any views that please him, or that he may not expound his views, so that he keeps within the bounds, not of prejudice, but of decency and common morality. If Mr. Ingersoll takes Sunday as a day for argument and discussion, it is the Christian Church which has set him the example, and Mr. Ingersoll, it must be remembered, does not pretend to regard the day as sacred."

The *Christian Register* (Unitarian) says: "Col. Ingersoll's lectures, though they may offend good taste, are not any more blasphemous than a theology which made God a cruel Devil and the majority of mankind the victims of his unrighteous hatred. For ministers who preach such doctrines to accuse Colonel Ingersoll of blasphemy is a parody on reverence."

The *New York Morning Journal* devotes nearly a column to a description of the roof garden of 400 Fifth-avenue, New York, where the grandchildren of Colonel Ingersoll have their playground and a tobogan slide. It says: "They have just as much fun up there as the other little folks do, and ain't so likely to get run over, or to catch diphtheria, scarlet fever, mumps, bad manners, or bad English, as they would be on the street. Colonel Ingersoll goes up there to play with them. He has a good time with his grandchildren. In the drawing-room of the house is an enlarged photograph of the champion of Freethought, with his two little ones hanging about his neck."

De Dageraad opens its April number with a paper by F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, the leading Dutch Socialist, entitled "The Way to Canossa." Mr. Wheeler's account of "The Religion of the Bab" is also translated by J. van der Ende, for the benefit of the readers of *De Dageraad*.

Professor O. M. Marsh, the distinguished naturalist of Yale College, contributes a paper to the *American Journal of Science* on the discovery of a missing link in Java. He cautiously affirms that Dr. Dubois "has proved to science the existence of a new prehistoric form, not human indeed, but in size, brain power, and erect posture much nearer than any animal hitherto discovered, living or extinct." He, however, expresses without reservation the opinion that now, "when zeal for exploration is so great," the discovery of additional remains of "still other intermediate forms" "may be expected at no distant day." He indicates the tropical region of both Asia and Africa as the most inviting fields for such ambitious explorations.

"I may mention," writes a correspondent, "that it was one of your illustrations that first set me thinking about religion. General Booth was depicted on his knees, and another fellow was pouring poison down his gullet. Some verses from the last chapter of Mark were underneath. Your fine work, *Infidel Death Beds*, was advertised on the back of the paper. I looked through the list of names given, among them being Stuart Mill and Lord Amberley. I at once obtained their works from our Free Library, and read them with avidity. After obtaining and reading Bradlaugh's works and your own, I developed into an uncompromising Freethinker."

At a recent meeting of the Blyth Trades Council, Mr. Carey, the local secretary of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union, raised a protest against the reading of the Bible in the Board schools. Mr. Douglass, the chairman, put on his hat and retired, but Mr. Nuttall got into the chair, and the debate continued. There was some pretty plain speaking, though no resolution was voted upon. A resolution, however, will come by-and-by. What is needed at present is agitation, and Mr. Carey deserves thanks for starting it at the Blyth Trades Council, whose members ought to see that the workers will never gain their full rights while they are trained up as slaves to superstition.

The Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will be held at Bristol on Whit-Sunday. We hope there will be a large attendance of delegates and individual members. Bristol is easy enough of access, and there is some delightful scenery in its neighborhood for those who can stay to see it. All notices of motion for the Conference agenda must be forwarded to Miss Vance, at 28 Stonecutter-street, not later than May 4. The financial year closes on April 27.

MR. S. P. PUTNAM.

NEXT week we shall insert a list of the lecturing engagements that Mr. Watts has made for Mr. Putnam. In the meantime we give below the subjects upon which our American friend will speak during his visit. Societies who have engaged Mr. Putnam will please select the subjects they prefer from the following:—

1. The Bible and Modern Thought.
2. Christ and the Nineteenth Century.
3. Secularism and Christianity.
4. Freethought and Morality.
5. Evolution and Creation.
6. Christianity and Woman.

Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll says: "Mr. Putnam believes Freethought has a future; that the time is coming when the superstitions of this world will be forgotten or remembered —some of them with smiles, many of them with tears. His abilities are of the highest order. He compels the admiration of everyone who really loves the just and true."

THE HIGHER CRITICISM AND "THE AGE OF REASON."

THE New York *Truth* has the following description of a striking scene in a recent Baptist Congress in Detroit:—

"President Harper and President Andrews, of Brown University, with others, had been advocating the methods of modern Higher Criticism, and saying that the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah were written by some other man, when Professor Howard Osgood, of Rochester, arose to reply. He spoke briefly, completely answered the Higher Critics, and then said: 'I have here an article, written almost exactly one hundred years ago. I will read it, and then tell you the name of the author.' He read a criticism on the Bible, and especially on Isaiah, advocating a double authorship of the latter, in almost exactly the language of Harper and his friends. He made a few comments upon the clearness of the ideas of the author, and showed his teachings to be identical with modern Higher Criticism. He then exclaimed after a long pause, 'The author of this paper was Thomas Paine.' The effect was wonderful. There was a look of surprise on the faces of the critics, and then, as the applause rang out, they looked as though they would like to escape. . . . It was carefully kept out of the papers for some reason."

This evidence that the conclusions of the Higher Critics had been put before the world a hundred years ago was looked upon as a great triumph of orthodoxy. It really is a proof of the unblushing effrontery of the Christians who reviled, tabooed, and persecuted the works of men whose conclusions were in advance of their time, but are now adopted by the most competent in the Church.

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RELIGION AND CRIME.

Ellen Dietrick, writing in the *Twentieth Century*, cites Dr. Buckley, editor of the *Methodist Advocate*, as saying that 90 per cent. of the criminals imprisoned at Sing-Sing had been Sunday-school scholars in their youth. Dr. Buckley, she says, was unable to find the real significance of his discovery. He seemed to see in it only another proof that "the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and to take it for granted that there could have been no defect in the early education of those criminals, for are not Sunday-schools absolutely devoted to good teaching?

But what does it mean when we find that any one set of criminals in our midst have had "orthodox" religious teaching in their youth; that the vast majority of the criminals in our prisons to-day are orthodox believers in dogmas of ecclesiasticism, and that only a very small proportion of Freethinkers are to be found among the prison population? What is the real significance embodied in the fact that 90 per cent. of those Sing-Sing criminals were unquestioning believers, and that Freethinkers contributed only 10 per cent. of evil-doers?

Arthur Macdonald, a profound and dispassionate student of and writer on "Criminology," admits that, "while some of the chiefs of the bands (of criminals) ridicule religion, the majority of criminals believe in it," and he quotes the testimony of European authorities on Criminology to the same effect. According to Lombroso, "61 per cent. of the violators and 56 per cent. of the assassins frequent the church." Out of two hundred assassins Ferri (another authority on Criminology) found only one who professed to be an Atheist, seven of the others showed an exaggerated religious devotion, five were strong in the faith, and the rest, while scoffing at the priests, affirmed that they believed in God. One said, "It does not depend upon me to be a good man; it is God who gives this sentiment."

Macdonald says that "a criminal, having killed twelve soldiers and a priest, believed himself invulnerable because he kept on his breast a consecrated offering. . . . A criminal, after strangling three women, was said to be the most assiduous and sincere at church and the confessional. . . . A woman criminal, who had strangled a little girl, on hearing her death sentence, turned and said, 'Death is nothing, the essential is to save the soul; as I have saved mine, I mock at the rest,' and so on, in innumerable cases."

Thus scientific students of Criminology agree that religious dogmas do not prevent vice and crime. They point out the characteristics of criminals as "much credulity," superficial cleverness, superstition, violent passions, bigotry, hypocrisy, and benevolence combined with vanity. "The great criminals," says Macdonald, "never foresee the possibility of their being discovered, and when they are they are astonished that they could have made such a 'great mistake!'" Swindlers are characteristically "lavish with their money." But while religion does not seem to have a restraining effect on those inclined to crime, scientific cultivation of the intelligence does decrease the tendency to wrong-doing. "Crime is very rare among mathematicians and natural scientists. Men of science in general find their investigations a pleasure in themselves; their work requires them to hold rigidly to the criticisms of the true. This training enables them to overcome their passions easier, and to see clearer how a criminal action is not only unjust, but illogical and of no profit, because the reaction comes back with full force upon the author of the crime."

A NICE PARSON.

The Rev. Henry Treweeke Biscoe, M.A., rector of Great Greenford, Middlesex, and formerly chaplain of King's College, Cambridge, appeared at Brentford yesterday for his public examination in bankruptcy. The debtor's statement of affairs showed liabilities, £2,470; assets, £8 6s. Mr. Biscoe said that, with the exception of a few tradesmen's debts and two sums owing to parish charities, his liabilities consisted wholly on amounts owing to money-lenders. He was instituted to the living of Great Greenford in 1890. Its annual net value was about £380, and there was a rectory house. He had had dealings with various money-lenders for twenty years, and lately the interest on the various loans had swallowed up pretty nearly the whole income of his living.

Questioned as to his connection with certain parish charities, the debtor said he was the acting trustee of Betham's Charity, which was left for the maintenance of a school at Greenford, and from which there was an annual income of about £210. He was the only person authorised to draw cheques on the school account, which was kept at the Fleet-street branch of Lloyds Bank. From 1892 to 1894 he drew £120 from the account, and he had not paid it in again.

Official Receiver: You mean that you received the money and have appropriated it to your own purposes?

Debtor: Am I bound to answer that question?

Official Receiver: Certainly; but I will put it in this way—Was any part of that money used for the purposes for which the charity was founded?

Debtor: No.

The Official Receiver next examined Mr. Biscoe as to an amount of £462, which he had stated that he owed to another parochial charity—Bennett's. Mr. Biscoe said that when he came to the parish there was an amount of £462 invested in consols. The interest amounted to about £12 a year, and the founder of the charity provided that a grant of £1 annually should be made to each of twelve poor parishioners of Greenford. The money was invested in his name and that of a Mr. Dix Perkin, who was now dead. After Mr. Perkin's death he sold out the stock.

What did you do with the money?—It was paid into my bank at Cambridge.

Used for your own purposes?—Yes.

Whose duty was it to investigate the accounts of the charity?—The vestry, I believe.

How do you justify these transactions?—I cannot attempt to justify them.

I should think not!

The examination was then adjourned, and the debtor was ordered to prepare a statement showing how he had disposed of the amounts received from Betham's and Bennett's Charities, and hand over to the Official Receiver all his books and papers.—"*Morning Leader*," *April 3, 1895.*

IMPLORA PACE.

When I lie cauld beneath the mool,
My death will gie but sma' concern;
The railway trains will still be full,
And steamboats crammed frae stem to stern.

When I lie cauld beneath the mool
Others will stand in dead men's shoes,
Wee rosy bairns will gang to school,
And newspapers be fu' o' news.

But years tak' aff the gladsome zest,
And a' grows wearisome and dull;
There's naething after a' like rest
For weary banes and aching skull;

Rest from the joys and pains o' sense,
Rest from the east wind and the snaw,
Rest from a wrangle about pence;
Rest from divinity and law.

—*Henry Glassford Bell.*

Obituary.

It is my painful duty to record the death of one of the oldest members of the Newcastle Branch. Mr. W. Bell died from bronchitis, at his residence, on Saturday, March 30, aged fifty-three years, and was buried at St. Andrew's Cemetery on Tuesday, April 2. Mr. C. Cohen read the burial service by Austin Holyoake in an impressive manner to a large number of friends. Deceased had been connected with the Secular movement for over twenty years, and, right up to his last illness, took a prominent part in the Sunday Music Society. Needless to add, he died as he lived, an earnest Freethinker. He leaves a widow and family of four to mourn his loss.

Mr. Joseph Brown, late Secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation, whose death was announced last week, was interred at Elswick Cemetery. On this occasion Mr. C. Cohen gave a beautifully-worded and impressive extempore address, which won the admiration of all present. The South Shields Branch was represented by Messrs. Peacock, Chapman, White, and Thompson; Sunderland, by Messrs. Duncan and Robert Tate; Newcastle, by Messrs. Cresswell, Summerfield, Sturt, Mein, Richardson, Bennett, Bartram, and others. Mr. Brown also leaves a widow and son to lament their loss. A brief sketch of Mr. Brown's career appeared in the *Freethinker* of May 7, 1893.—J. G. Bartram.

Professor Peter H. Vander Weyde, a distinguished man of science, died at his home in New York on March 18. He was born in Nymegen, Holland, eighty-two years ago. The chair of Industrial Science was expressly created for him at Girard College in 1864. He was one of the editors of Appleton's American Cyclopedia; editor of the *Manufacturer and Builder;* took out over two hundred patents on inventions of his own, mostly electrical; was noted as a musician and composer, and was a painter of no mean merit. He wrote much for the scientific press, completing only a week before his death an article on modern electricity. Professor Vander Weyde was a radical Freethinker, and for some years a prominent member of the Manhattan Liberal Club.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

AN APPEAL TO THE DEVOTEES OF THE THREE F's.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I think myself that all persons should be vegetarians, and when it is objected that such and such a one has tried vegetarianism and failed, and therefore it does not suit him, I answer, the trial has not been of the right sort—not the proper food, or not long enough taken. I am afraid that want of success lies in the ever-recurring craving for the "too too solid flesh," dread of ridicule, or of the defection of friends. Nevertheless, I say that, as there are far more momentous interests at issue than the above (hard nuts as they appear to be), these should not be allowed to stand in the way of our ultimate self-conversion.

There is, we know, very little new that can be written in support of the system, which to me simply spells *right* or *normal*, in the same way as the eating of an animal brought into being solely to be murdered (whether "humanely," "scientifically," or what not, matters nothing) for our tables, would mean all which is *wrong*. That a man "gets his bob'sworth," and with it conveys to his body material which keeps the machinery in the best repair; that neither his muscles nor his mind are one whit the worse off; and that he might count on a long life of happiness by being a vegetarian, is no news to most.

As a Secularist—that is, in the sense of not being a religionist, having no sympathy with Church or Bible cant—I earnestly ask all Secularists to give vegetarianism a patient, thorough trial, and not be beaten back by the banter of the unco' clever ones, nor be allured by odors of the only too-welcome roast beef or mutton, and then they will discover what is doubtless news to the many—that life has undergone a metamorphosis of so satisfactory a character, the wonder will be that of not having become a vegetarian long ago. It will be discovered that things difficult or impossible of accomplishment upon a flesh diet are got through with the greatest ease when living upon a wisely-chosen vegetarian diet. In like manner, losses, disappointments, and sorrows, which upon the artificial mode of living cause the most poignant suffering, lose their sting by virtue of vegetarianism.

In urging people on to the adoption of our diet, I must be understood to include women. I think it necessary to mention this, the inference almost invariably being that vegetarians are of the male gender. Pleasant for the human species ultimately if such were the fact. If it is proper for the "stemer sex" to banquet without slaughter, how much more appropriate is it to the "gentler sex." Women, by the way, make a rare fuss over their offspring, and are in a frenzy of fear lest any hurt should befall them. It would be but natural and fair if they could let their thoughts dwell occasionally upon the like solicitude of other animals for their young. High time is it that this matter was pondered seriously by both sexes. Save for the possession of a more articulate voice, and the capacity for doing more harm in general, by what right are we to be considered before those species which are doomed for the roasting-jack or the skillet? Why are these goodly-shaped, inoffensive ones to be so slighted?

As all Secularists aim at the attainment of *morality*, what could tend more to that consummation than the endeavor—per vegetarianism—to save from murder and its attendant cruelties the less formidably-equipped species? Surely it is something highly laudable and consolatory to be one of those who not only cannot endure the thought of, but actually help to do away with, the daily barbarities inseparable from making ready animals for the table. Those who touch no "animal food" eat but their legitimate provender, and cannot consequently be robbing anyone else of his or hers.

Again, having regard to the vital subject of population, vegetarians, for two cogent reasons at least, will never overstock the world with children. Finding his all-sufficient, no vegetarian covets the goods of another, nor does anyone suffer by the non-payment of his just debts, because a vegetarian never lives beyond his means. Looking at the matter in this light, it is clear that, in proportion as all become non-flesheaters, less emigration from one's own native country on the risk of earning a livelihood elsewhere is an inevitable consequence.

To sum up, the full benefits can only be acquired by total renunciation of flesh-meat (harsh condition as that may seem), for there is no comparison between the results obtained from "little meat eating" and those obtained from no meat eating. The latter is a *sine qua non*. Speaking for my wife as well as myself, it is perhaps worthy of remark that we look upon our non-flesheating as a matter of course, and prove our right to such by the fact that we never require the aid of doctor or physic, and that we literally live and let live. P. H. ECHLIN.

VEGETARIAN RECIPES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—From time to time I read with interest your kindly notice of the question of vegetarianism in the columns of your paper, and have ventured to hope you would allow me to express my willingness to send *free*, to any of your readers, recipes for the preparation of cheap, simple, and nourishing vegetarian dishes, along with a few recipes which will, I am sure, be found most useful by housewives and all interested in this question. ALBERT BROADBENT.

9 Peter-street, Manchester.

THE FAITH THAT IS LOST.

NAY, nay, I do not seek again
The faith of childhood lost to me—
The legend of the holy tree;
The legend of a savior slain.

Nay, nay! I do not wish to live
Through bitter restlessness and pain
To struggle with the Truth again,
And seek the joy Faith could not give.

For now my fight with Faith is done,
And thought is free as earth is wide
To seek the Truth Faith fain would hide
Until my fight with Life is done.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

From the North.

The South Shields Branch, after a long absence, last Sunday returned to its old retreat, Captain Duncan's Navigation School. There was a very good attendance. The president, Mr. J. M. Peacock, occupied the chair. The evening was chiefly spent in reviewing Mr. Cohen's mission and its results. Mr. White, the treasurer, reported that there was a small deficit on the six months, but it was generally agreed that, everything—especially bad weather—considered, the course had been very successful. The lectures had included, besides anti-theological, ethical, biographical, and historical discourses, both interesting and instructive to old Freethinkers as well as our younger friends. The gratifying result was largely due to the marked ability of our lecturer, who has made many new and sincere friends during his stay in the district. It was decided to ask him to visit South Shields when he comes North in June. It was also decided to communicate with Mr. Watts in reference to Mr. Putnam. A vote of condolence with the widow of Mr. Joseph Brown, of Newcastle, who was well known to the South Shields friends, was passed unanimously.—R. CHAPMAN.

PROFANE JOKES.

It is a theological error to suppose that Adam lost anything by exchanging the Garden of Eden for the whole wide world. He "gained ground" by the operation.

"Is your rector High Church?" "Oh, yes." "I suppose he calls sin, then, a moral obliquity?" "Higher than that. He calls it a psychological eccentricity."

Scene—Country House. Host—"Why, you're surely not going to bed yet, Captain? We're going to have prayers, presently." Captain—"Aw, yes, thanks very much. I never take anything after dinner."

A little girl in a western town, after studying for some time a picture of the Magdalen reclining on her face and weeping, suddenly turned to her mother, and exclaimed: "Mamma, I know why Mrs. Magdalen is crying. It is because Mr. Magdalen does not buy her clothes enough."

An old-fashioned cathedral verger, "lord of the aisles," saw a pious visitor on his knees. The verger hastened up to him and said, in a tone of indignant excitement: "The services in this cathedral are at ten in the morning and at four in the afternoon, and we don't have no fancy prayers."

A preacher at an open-air meeting was holding forth on temperance. "When Dives was in h—— what did he call for? Did he call for stout? No. Did he ask for bitter? No. Did he ask for brandy or champagne? No. He asked for water. What does that prove, dear friends?" and he paused, when a toper in the crowd called out, "It proves where all you blooming teetotalers go to!"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Romance of the Resurrection; or Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, L. Hewitt, "Pompeii: Past and Present"—lantern illustrations. (Free.) Easter Monday and Tuesday, at 8, social gatherings for N.S.S. members and friends.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road, E.): 8, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Does Evolution Justify the Ways of God to Man?"

OPEN AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Christianity or Civilisation."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "The Brain or the Bible."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, a lecture. Thursday, at 8.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Resurrection."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed"; 3.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

MILE END WASTE: 11.15, A. B. Moss, "Ancient Saints and Modern Sinners."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

VICTORIA PARK: 11.15, St. John will lecture; 3, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-told"; 7, "Under which Flag?"

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, social gathering.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, S. J. Boorman will lecture; 7, dramatic entertainment.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class; 6.30, J. Cowie, "Our Currency: Its Imperfections, and a Remedy."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 2.30, Hunter Watts, "A Mad World"; 7, "A Glad World."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 3, "Theism Tried and Found Wanting"; 7, "Christianity: Its Birth, Reign, and Death."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): See Friday's *Evening News* for announcement.

NOTTINGHAM (Woodland Hall, Woodland-place, N. Parliament-street): 7, James Hooper will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, C. Cohen, "The Dream of Immortality"; 7, "Christianity and Morality."

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, Sam Standring, "Mrs. Besant on Re-incarnation."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, musical and other recitals.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Baring-street Board Schools): Easter Monday, at 7.30, soirée.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6, G. Wallace, "Was Jesus Christ a Social Reformer?"

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "The Folly of Prayer."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

DERBY (Market-place): 6.45, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, C. Cohen will lecture.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, Sam Standring. "Some Events of the Week"; 3, "The Resurrection."

Lecturers' Engagements.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Sunnyside, 72 Union-grove, Clapham, London, S.W.—April 21, West Ham; 28, Manchester. May 5, Sheffield.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 14, 21, 28, Newcastle-on-Tyne. May 2, Wood Green; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 23, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—April 14, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell; 21, m. Victoria Park, a. Tottenham, e. Deptford; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park. May 5, m. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea; 12, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Ordon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 14, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 21, m and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, Clerkenwell.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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THAT ATHEIST!

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a paper called the *Liverpool Pulpit*. It is issued monthly, and appears to have existed about three years. Its editors are R. A. Armstrong, C. F. Aked, and Robert Veitch. We believe these gentlemen belong to different Nonconformist denominations We also believe that they have been very active in "putting down" the "social evil" in Liverpool—that is, in harrying prostitutes and crusading against brothels. This is not, in our opinion, an ideal way of warring against lust. Certainly it is not a way which should be patronised by the "spiritual" leaders of mankind. It seems to us a business for the police, if for anyone; but Christian teachers, ever since the days of Constantine, have shown a wonderful tendency to rely upon "the arm of flesh."

These three Nonconformist preachers are regarded—and probably regard themselves—as "advanced." One of them, we believe, is a Unitarian, and another is a friend of the "Higher Criticism." Naturally, therefore, the *Liverpool Pulpit* is of highly superior tone. And this high superiority is specially manifest in its review of Mrs. Bonner's biography of her father. The said review is headed "The Iconoclast"—a personage whom the writer holds in ill-concealed detestation. Bradlaugh is lauded for his political and social work. The oil of praise is poured out copiously in this direction; the vinegar of detraction being reserved for the Bradlaugh who battled against Theism and Christianity. That he was a great man is indisputable. He *was* great, says the Liverpool Pulpiteer—very great; but his greatness was all displayed in the political and social arenas; in the aren aof religion he was simply farcical. Which is surely a most cheerful theory—for Christians.

For the sake of fairness, even at the risk of boring our readers, we reproduce the whole portion of the article which deals with

"ICONOCLAST."

"It is possible now to be grateful for the services which Bradlaugh-materialism rendered to the cause of Christianity. Of course, Bradlaughism, as represented by his popular lectures against the Bible, and against what he was so fond of calling 'the God of the Bible,' is as dead as Pharaoh's Egyptians. The lectures, as lectures, as reasoned statements against religion, were simply beneath contempt. The one puzzle in Bradlaugh's life is how so clever a man could be such a fool as to talk as he did, how so great a mind could bring itself to such puerility, or how, on another and not pleasing hypothesis, so honest a soul could degrade himself by 'playing it low down' to the ignoramuses from the taproom for the sake of their pence. With one's whole heart going out to this man in affection and in gratitude and in reverence for his great fight for freedom and humanity, one has taken a friend to hear him, and been disgusted and shamed by the spectacle of the lion of a man braying from beneath his ass's skin. Balaam's donkey, Jonah's whale, the Tower of Babel, the Resurrection, are all themes which will recur to the memory of men who heard him and who grieved over his buffooneries. However Mr. Bradlaugh could bring himself to repeat, in the large towns of England, that wretched witticism about the difficulty which would arise when a woman was taking her husband's dinner to a man employed as bricklayer on the Tower of Babel, and was three days on the way from the earth to the height which the man had reached; however he could bring himself to make merry over the man whose leg had been taken off on a battlefield or in a sawmill, and had to come flying through the air to meet the body on the Judgment day; however he could condescend to address these mountebank jokes to his audience, was then, and is now, an insoluble mystery. He did not act in this way in his debates. How could he do it in his threepenny lectures?

"But, the setting of his views ignored, there can, we repeat be little doubt that those views and the enforcement of them have been of service to the Church. He popularised doubt legitimate doubt, necessary doubt, healthy doubt, whose existence was amongst the first conditions of growth. That which had grown unthinkable to the scholar and incredible to the mass of the people he forced the untrained amongst the religious public of the working and lower middle classes to reconsider, and eventually to abandon in favor of that which was more tenable and enduring. His work was destructive; he was an iconoclast in very truth; but the work of the destroyer is good work very often, and the waster, though not in this case the builder, too, nevertheless, made the work of the builder at once more necessary and more possible. Many uneducated teachers and preachers in the churches, and many people of the same class in the different denominations, have abandoned silly and dishonoring notions about God and about religion and about the Bible because of Bradlaugh's work; and after he had helped to clear the rubbish away other men have been able to get to work on the erection of a larger and more surely founded temple of the living God.

"Charles Bradlaugh's work did not die with himself. It lives in the direction just indicated, in its service to unthoughtful popular religion. But his army of followers has dwindled, we will not say to a regiment, but to a corporal's guard. His 'school' does not exist. 'Secularism,' as he defined it, is no more. A 'Society' exists; there are some meetings held, some papers published; but to all practical purposes Bradlaugh-materialism has disappeared from our midst. But for the unwise efforts of narrow-minded religionists in Bradlaugh's day, his atheistic doctrines would never have had the vogue which they came to enjoy. And if it were not for foolish and incompetent people who try to set forth the evidences of Christianity to-day, it is probable that the few people who still seek to propagate Charles Bradlaugh's negations would fail to obtain sufficient gate money to pay for the hire of a hall in any town in Britain. His weaknesses and his abuse of strength are gone; his courage, his sympathy, his goodness, live on. He was a great, heroic man, who contended valiantly for the faith which had been delivered to him; who suffered for his faith, who poured out his life in the cause of truth and for love of the right, and who must be numbered amongst the true worshippers of the Crucified if there be any reality in the saying of his friend, Mazzini, 'We worship God by serving Man.'"

OUR REPLY.

Bradlaugh's "services to Christianity" were not always regarded as such. Ardent and sincere Christians used to detest his iconoclasm. And they were right. He rendered no service to Christianity—but he did render service to Christians. He made them ashamed of the worst parts of their creed. That is, he helped to extinguish Christianity. For a religion does not die like a man, all at once; it disappears gradually, and the worst parts go first. The "service" which Bradlaugh rendered to Christianity, therefore, was the service of destroying as much of it as he could. The rest will go in time.

It is amusing to read that Bradlaugh's lectures against the Bible were "beneath contempt." We always hear that from Christians when they are beaten. Nor will it make a Freethinker wild to be told that Bradlaugh was "a fool to talk as he did," especially when his folly came out in laughing at Balaam's donkey and Jonah's whale—which, of course, are profoundly serious subjects. As for that "wretched witticism" about the confusion at Babel, some-

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thing similar occurs in grave old Bishop Hall's *Meditations*. The "mountebank joke" about the joining of corporeal pieces at the Resurrection seems fair enough in the light of the historic doctrine, still held by most of the Churches, of the actual resurrection of the human body. The "insoluble mystery" is not in Bradlaugh's joking, but in grave divines teaching the nonsense he ridiculed.

The gentlemen of the pulpit should not set up as critics of wit. They read the Bible too much to be good judges. They catch its portentous solemnity, and come to regard a joke as buffoonery if cracked within a mile of a tabernacle.

Bradlaugh's work was "destructive." Indeed! Is it destructive work to pull down fetid slums in great cities? Is it destructive work to fight disease? Is it destructive work to fell forests and make room for happy homesteads? Is it destructive work to purge the human mind of evil superstitions? Is it destructive work to kill lies? "Destructive" is a canting expression. In the eternal processes of Nature, destruction and construction are interdependent. To rail at the one is to undervalue the other.

It is something, however, to learn that Bradlaugh induced many people to "abandon silly and dishonoring notions about God and about religion." What the superior persons at Liverpool overlook is the fact that these silly and dishonoring notions were established and inculcated by their own Church. It was reserved for the Atheist to remove the rubbish set in Man's path by the friends of God.

The reviewer is mistaken (perhaps he is *not* mistaken, but worse) as to the dwindling of Bradlaugh's "followers." It is ridiculous to say that "some" meetings are held, and "some" papers published. Meetings are held all over the country, and the *Freethinker*, at any rate, though increased in price, has a considerably larger circulation than the *National Reformer* had at the time of Bradlaugh's death. Of course we miss Bradlaugh. He was a giant, and giants are not easily replaced. But we always knew he was mortal, and it is only Christians who are silly enough to believe that his "party"—that is, the Freethought movement—merely existed on his tenure of life.

There is no need to say much about that "gate money." It is simply *too* ridiculous to suppose that our foremost lecturers could not take money enough to pay for the hire of a hall "in any town in Britain" unless they were advertised by Christian Evidencers. If the test is to be payment, Secularism simply takes the cake. How many people, we should like to know, would pay money at the door, even to hear the gentlemen who run the *Liverpool Pulpit*?

It only remains for us to observe that there is something peculiarly nauseous in the closing sentences of this reviewer. It is positively indecent to take a great man who fought all his lifetime against you, and to pretend that he was on your side without knowing it; and it is doubly indecent when the imbecility is clinched with the dictum of a great Freethinker like Mazzini. If there be a God, it may be true that he is best worshipped by serving Man. But what has this to do with "the Crucified"? We tell the reviewer and his friends that Bradlaugh had no sort of respect for the Jesus Christ of the Gospels, and that he had nothing but contempt for the sentimentalists who claim every good man, even though he be a convinced Atheist, as a sound and "true" Christian. Bradlaugh held aloof from them in his lifetime, and they only dishonor themselves by shedding maudlin tears over his grave. G. W. FOOTE.

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

(Continued from p. 227.)

PROFESSOR COUES gives the following description of Madame Blavatsky as she appeared on her return from Europe: "Except for being immensely obese, in consequence of her gross habits, she was not a particularly ill-favored old witch when I met her in 1884. Remarkably small, pretty hands and feet for such a corporosity, though with long, dirty nails; suspicion of pug in the saucy nose; pale, restless eyes; flossy, yellow hair, tending to kink; Tartar face with high cheek bones, fat chops, and a dewlap, the latter always hid by hand or fan in her photographs; stature medium; weight, perhaps, 250 pounds; harsh, strident voice; conversation profane and witty; temper abominable; odor of tobacco abiding; dress, a sort of a compromise between the robes of a Norma and a *robe de nuit*. Such is the general impression she made upon me in 1884, when she was about fifty-three."

The same writer goes on to say: "The ingredients of a successful charlatan are: no conscience, some brains, much courage, great industry, the corrosive sublimate of selfishness, vainglorious ambition, vivid imagination, good address, ready resources, monumental mendacity, and a pious, living faith in the love of mankind for being humbugged."

H. P. B. was a born romancer, and delighted in fooling the "flapdoodles," as she called those she swindled and despised. Mabel Collins, who for over a year co-edited *Lucifer* with her, said: "She taught me one great lesson: I learned from her how foolish, how 'gullible,' how easily flattered human beings are, taken *en masse*. Her contempt for her kind was on the same gigantic scale as everything else about her, except her marvellously delicate taper fingers. In all else she was a big woman; she had a greater power over the weak and credulous, a greater capacity for making black appear white, a larger waist, a more voracious appetite, a more confirmed passion for tobacco, a more ceaseless and insatiable hatred for those whom she thought to be her enemies, a greater disrespect for *les convenances*, a worse temper, a greater command of bad language, and a greater contempt for the intelligence of her fellow beings than I had ever supposed possible to be contained in one person."

Her lies were incessant. Thus she wrote in the New York *Graphic*, November 13, 1874: "When I was sixteen years of age they married me to M. Blavatsky. Fancy! He was seventy-three, and I sixteen." She died at the age of sixty in 1891, and M. Blavatsky survives her. She says she lived with him three years at Tiflis, about 1863. As M. Solovyoff says: "It was always very easy to catch her lying, as she used constantly to forget her own words, assertions, and depositions" (*Modern Priestess*, p. 110). With this gentleman, who, as her countryman, she said was sacred to her, and who, as a journalist, she was desirous to spread her fame in Russia, she appears to have been particularly unfortunate. Some clumsy tricks made him watchful of phenomena. Bavaji, her Hindu attendant, who knew no Russian, confessed that, at her instigation, he *drew* for his edification the words in Russian: "Blessed are they that believe, as said the Great Adept." But, omitting some letters, it read: "Blessed are they that lie."* One day her famous "silver bell" was heard, when suddenly something fell beside her on the ground. He says: "I hurried to pick it up, and found in my hands a pretty little piece of silver, delicately worked and strangely shaped. Helena Petrovna changed countenance, and snatched the object from me. I coughed significantly, smiled, and turned the conversation to indifferent matters.

> "Another time I said that I should like to have some of the real essence of roses made in India.
>
> "'I am so sorry,' she said, 'I have none with me. I do not like strong scents in general, and do not keep them. But I will not guarantee that you may not receive some essence of roses from India, such as you speak of, and that very soon.'
>
> "Watching her from this moment, I distinctly saw her open one of the drawers of her table and take something out. Then, some half-hour later, after having walked round me, she very gently and cautiously slipped some little object into my pocket. If I had not watched her every movement, and had not guessed why it was that she kept passing round me, I should probably not have noticed anything.
>
> "However, I immediately produced from my pocket a little flat flask, opened it, smelt, and said: 'This is not essence of roses, Helena Petrovna, but oil of oranges; your "master" has made a mistake.'
>
> "'Eh, devil take it!' she exclaimed, unable to restrain herself."

She even permitted him to discover the Chinese envelopes, in which the elect used to receive the letters of the Mahatmas by "astral post." Taxed with it, he says: "She tried in vain to speak; she could only writhe helplessly in her great arm-chair." Asked to put an end to the comedy, she exclaimed: "But, then, if you think I do nothing but take in all the world, you must despise me!" "Why so?" he replied. "There is deceit and deceit, and there is trickery and trickery! To play the part you play,

* This Bavaji was the Babajee said by Sinnett to have been ten years with the Mahatmas.

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to make crowds follow you, to interest the learned, to found societies in distant lands, to start an entire movement—good gracious! Why, it is so out of the common that I am enraptured at you against my will. In all my life I have never met so extraordinary a woman as you, and I am sure I shall never meet another." In great excitement she exclaimed: "Yes, you have a very warm heart, and a very cool head; it was not for nothing that we met"; and, after calling Olcott an ass and a blockhead, "If you will only come to my aid, we will astonish the world between us; we shall have everything in our hands."

> "What is one to do," she said, "when in order to rule men it is necessary to deceive them, when in order to persuade them to let themselves be driven where you will you must promise them and show them playthings? Why, suppose my books and the *Theosophist* had been a thousand times more interesting and more serious, do you imagine I should have had any sort of success anywhere, if behind all that there had not been the 'phenomena'? I should have done simply nothing. I should have long ago starved to death. They would have crushed me, and it would never have even occurred to anyone to think that I too was a living creature, that I too must eat and drink. But I have long, long since learnt to understand these dear people, and their stupidity sometimes affords me unbounded satisfaction. Why, you are 'not satisfied' with my phenomena; but do you know that almost invariably the more simple, the more silly, and the more gross the 'phenomenon,' the more likely it is to succeed? I may tell you such stories about this some day as will split your sides with laughter, indeed they will. The vast majority of people who are reckoned clever by themselves and others are inconceivably silly. If you only knew how many lions and eagles in every quarter of the globe have turned into asses at my whistle, and obediently wagged their great ears in time as I piped the tune!"

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

WHAT IS MEANT BY LAWS OF NATURE?

(Concluded from page 228.)

IT is, we think, rather unfortunate that we have no other term to take the place of "law" as describing the operations of nature. The word is so generally associated with a "lawgiver" that its true meaning, when applied to nature, is misunderstood. The late G. H. Lewes suggested the phrase, "The methods of nature," as that would "express the paths along which the activities of nature travelled to results (phenomena)." The Duke of Argyll, who is, of course, rather orthodox upon this subject, admits, in his *Reign of Law*, that the word "law," in many cases, means nothing more than "an observed order of facts" (p. 66).

Professor Huxley, in his *Essays on Controverted Questions*, writes: "A law of nature, in the scientific sense, is the product of a mental operation upon the facts of nature which come under our observation, and has no more existence outside the mind than colour has. . . . . Scientifically speaking, it is the acme of absurdity to talk of a man defying the law of gravitation when he lifts his arm. The general store of energy in the universe working through terrestrial matter is, doubtless, tending to bring the man's arm down; but the particular fraction of that energy which is working through certain of his nervous and muscular organs is tending to drive it up, and, more energy being expended on the arm in the upward than in the downward direction, the arm goes up accordingly" (pp. 252 and 253). The Professor points out with great clearness that law is not a cause. He says: "Law is often inadvertently employed in the sense of cause, just as in common life a man will say that he is compelled by the law to do so and so, when, in point of fact, all he means is that the law orders him to do it, and tells him what will happen if he does not do it. We commonly hear of bodies falling to the ground by reason of the laws of gravitation, whereas that law is simply the record of the fact that, according to all experience, they have so fallen (when free to move), and on the grounds of a reasonable expectation that they will so fall. . . . . The habitual use of the word 'law,' in the sense of an active thing, is almost a mark of pseudo-science; it characterises the writings of those who have appropriated the forms of science without knowing anything of its substance" (pp. 254 and 255).

To make the true meaning of natural law clear, we give the words of Mr. M. J. Savage, who, in his *Morals of Evolution*, says: "Natural law is simply a phrase that we use to express *the relations in which persons, things, forces stand to each other, or the mutual influences which they exert upon each other, by virtue of what they are.* It means the constant universal relations between persons, things, and forces. Take, for example, ourselves as members of society. Certain men, women, and children are what they are; and they are together, in certain relations in society. What we mean by the natural law of society, then, are the duties and responsibilities that spring out of these natural and necessary relations. Take it into the region of things to make it clearer. Suppose I have here, in some jar or vessel, the chemical ingredients which, brought together in certain proportions, will result in forming a crystal. What I mean by the natural law of crystallisation is that, if I bring these chemical ingredients together after this fashion, a crystal will always be the result. They stand in such a relation to each other that, being what they are, they must crystallise. They cannot help doing so. . . . . It is a law of my body that, if I am to live, I must keep my body at a certain temperature. It must have food; it must be preserved from hurtful influences of all kinds. The laws of life, in other words, must be obeyed. If I break these laws and become diseased, that is the first step towards death. If I carry the breach of these laws beyond a certain point, death itself ensues, and must ensue. Take it in regard to intelligence; for it holds true in these higher realms of life, just as well as in the lower. If a man is to grow up an intelligent, instructed, educated being, there must be a certain amount of development of his brain; if that fails, he is an idiot. If, after he has become an intelligent being, these laws of the brain are broken, he is insane. There are laws of thought, of study, of the pursuit of intelligence in this department of the world or that; and if a man fails to keep these, his brain as a physical organ may be perfect, but he will be ignorant. There are vast realms of truth and beauty, the threshold of which his foot will never cross. Bring it up into the realm of the moral nature. Precisely the same thing holds true. There are moral laws that a man, if he is to be a moral being, must keep. If he ceases to keep these, he ceases to be a moral being; his moral nature is dead; he is an immoral man" (pp. 165–167).

We presume it will now be seen, even by the most superficial reader, that what is meant by law (when the term is used in its proper sense) is not that it is a command from some being "who rules and regulates the destinies of men," but that it refers to the order of natural operations, the method of cause and effect. Theologians have corrupted the correct signification of this, as they have of many other words; and one of the many useful services now being rendered by science and secular philosophy is that of rescuing language from the misinterpretation so often given to it by theology. The old notion, that events are produced by some power higher than the ordinary law of cause and effect, is being rapidly given up by men of science. The self-potency of nature is becoming more and more recognised as our knowledge of its power increases. There is less inclination to-day than there was to rob nature of those capabilities to which it is justly entitled. As Mr. Moncure D. Conway observes: "What we need is harmony with nature—harmony with its laws, that we may have health; sympathy with its beauty, that we may be pure; obedience to its conditions, that we may command its forces and inspire them with human purpose. In nature is the constancy which is our dependence and our development; in it the potentiality, reason, which is our only source of wisdom; in it the love which attends the living from the cradle to the grave. Ignorance can see it only as chaos in one age, accursed in another; superstition can find but terror in its laws, and hope only in their fancied overthrow by arbitrary thaumaturgy of omnipotence; but wherever the mind of man flowers, nature flowers in response, filling every sense with beauty, giving mind and heart their deeper satisfaction, steadily incarnating every pure ideal."

Among the less informed believers in theology two conceptions of law and nature still obtain. The one is, that the universe was created by a supreme being, who, having made it, set it going, and keeps it in order, like a

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watchmaker does a watch that he has manufactured. The other conception is that God, having made the world and set it in motion, leaves it to regulate itself by general laws, which he has endowed nature with. The latter view is taken even by some men of science who belong to the old school; they think this idea of Providence enables them to get over the difficulties attending the belief in God's special interference with the operations of nature. Thus they jump at the conclusion that there is a law-maker, and an intelligent producer of life. They further assume that intelligence can only come from intelligence, and that life can only proceed from life. This is about as scientific a statement as that of the man who is reported to have said that he who drives fat oxen must himself be fat. Scientifically, when we speak of life, motion, and intelligence, we do not mean that they are things, any more than the laws are which record their action. What might have existed before, or what may exist beyond nature, it is not the function of science to attempt to determine. The laws of nature are not in any way affected by what may or may not be exterior to nature. At the same time, to us it appears obvious that science, as a foreteller of events, would be impossible if there existed any power outside nature that could interfere with the operations upon which the calculations are based. If God constantly interfered in nature, nothing would be certain; and if the speculations of theology could be verified, science would be impossible.

We believe, then, to use Tyndall's phrase, in the "stability of natural law," and we learn that incessant change is the "order" of nature; and as these changes are interminable, so likewise are cause and effect, which are names that record the operations of all existing things.

CHARLES WATTS.

A MISSIONARY DISGRACE.

(From the "New York Post.")

MR. THOMAS G. SHEARMAN made the result of missionary work in Hawaii the subject of some remarks at the last Friday night's prayer-meeting in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. He began by saying that more than a year ago he told Dr. Abbott that, in his opinion, the proceedings in Hawaii reflected great discredit, not only upon the American name generally, but especially upon our American missionaries and the Congregational Church which had sent them there, and seemed generally disposed to sustain the actions of the missionaries' sons, and that, "had Mr. Becker been still alive, I felt perfectly certain that he would long ago have expressed from Plymouth pulpit most emphatic opinions upon this subject; that he would never have allowed a weaker race to be practically enslaved by white Americans—especially Congregationalists and sons of Congregational missionaries—without making a protest which would have been heard all over the land."

Mr. Shearman continued: "I then said in substance that seventy years ago the American Board of Foreign Missions sent a few Congregational missionaries to the Sandwich Islands, who were received by the people with enthusiasm. They did not really have to convert the people, for they were all ready for conversion. The chiefs and the people threw away their idols, and embraced Christianity with all their hearts. So complete was their trust in the missionaries that, practically, all government was placed under missionary control, and the missionaries and their sons or their nephews had ever since had the practical government of the islands.

"What had been the result? They found 130,000 people there, and now they report that there are only 34,000. But of these 34,000 they recently reported that 18,000 were members of the Congregational Churches—a larger proportion of Church members than can be found in any other Protestant country in the world. The missionaries boasted that those natives were better educated, better behaved, and more peaceable, orderly, and religious, in proportion to their numbers, than the people of many parts of the United States. The triumph of religion, and especially of Congregationalism, in Hawaii, was made the subject of endless boasts by missionaries and managers of missions, and was made the ground of appeals to American Christians for fresh subscriptions and aid for missionary work.

"Suddenly their whole tone changed. The missionaries' sons and some returned missionaries vehemently asserted that the native Hawaiians were filthy and ignorant, and a debased, licentious, and idolatrous race, utterly unfit to be trusted with liberty, but must be kept under the control of a firm and unscrupulous, but pious, Congregational despotism.

"Assuming this to be true, then, the result of between fifty and sixty years' unbroken missionary government in these islands has been that the population has been reduced in numbers by three-quarters, and that these three-quarters are as debased, licentious, and brutal as they were when the missionaries began their labors, and that the whole missionary enterprise has been a disgraceful failure.

"Meanwhile, there are some other facts which the missionaries do not mention, but which cannot be disputed. During the fifty years the government of these islands was under missionary influence most of the natives were deprived of their rights in the land, excepting about 27,000 acres, and all the rest was divided among the king, the chiefs, and the families and friends of the missionaries.

"The missionaries' sons and their associates boast that they own four-fifths of all the property of the islands. Nearly all the rest is owned by the descendants of the former chiefs. The great mass of the people own nothing. The missionary government, finding that the natives would not work for less than 25 cents a day, complained of the want of labor, and insisted on the importation of scores of thousands of the scum of the human race, including Chinese and what are called Portuguese, a mongrel race, who never saw Portugal, but who speak something resembling the language of that country. In this manner the missionaries' sons cut down the wages of the native Hawaiians, and compelled them to work on their sugar plantations at such rates as seemed good to their masters.

"Before the missionaries gained control of the islands leprosy was unknown. But with the introduction of strange races leprosy established itself and rapidly increased. An entire island was very properly devoted to the lepers. No Protestant missionary would venture among them. For this I do not blame them, as, no doubt, I should not have had the courage to go myself. But a noble Catholic priest consecrated his life to the service of the lepers, lived among them, baptised them, educated them, and brought some light and happiness into their wretched lives.

"Stung by the contrast of his example, the one remaining missionary, a recognised and paid agent of the American Board, spread broadcast the vilest slanders against Father Damien. He said that Father Damien was dirty. Much good missionaries can do among a wretched and degraded people if they hold themselves aloof from those who are dirty! Did the apostles take care never to touch the dirty hands or sit against the dirty clothes of their early converts? He accused the good father of vile practices. But the vileness was in the Congregational missionary's mouth, not in the Catholic missionary's life; and under threats of exposure and legal punishment the Congregational missionary sneaked out of the accusation. Yet, after he had degraded himself in the eyes of every decent man, he remains, if I am correctly informed, still a well-paid, well-housed, comfortably-cared-for agent of the American Board in Hawaii. Of course, he is an ardent annexationist.

"And now the very same men who by hundreds and thousands have protested with pious indignation against the Southern States for their practical disfranchisement of the Southern negroes, who are, by the confession of their own best men, vastly below the moral standard which the Hawaiian missionaries have, until lately, boasted as the peculiar attribute of the converts, are full of enthusiasm over what, with bitter irony, is called the Hawaiian Republic. A Republic, forsooth, in which no man can vote unless he has property which would be equivalent to the possession of $5,000 in Brooklyn, and in which no one can vote for senator who is not worth $3,000, which is equivalent to $20,000 in Brooklyn.

"But even with this restriction of the suffrage our Republican missionaries are afraid to trust their Republican voters. Accordingly they did not dare to allow the people, under any limitations whatever, to elect the president; but, having got possession of the constitutional convention, they appointed Mr. Dole president, to hold office for six years, and just so much longer as the senate and assembly should

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fail to agree on a successor; restricting the choice, even then, to such persons as should be agreeable to a majority of the senate, which will be elected by about two hundred of the richest men on the island.

"Nor do they stop here. They passed laws, severely punishing anyone who dares to speak disrespectfully of any of their High Mightinesses. Anyone, whether a native or an American, who dares to say that this Republican Government is not Republican, or that any of the missionaries' sons who deign to govern the barbarous Christians of Hawaii are not well fitted for the post, is liable to a long term of imprisonment and a heavy fine.

"And yet, after all, though they have the government and the laws and the courts and the juries all in their own hands, they are afraid to trust any of them, and on the first sign of alarm, and before a blow was struck, they shut up all the courts and proclaimed martial law. And this is our pious Congregational missionary Republic. This is the fruit of seventy years of Congregational teaching and missionary government.

"And now it is proposed to annex this island, with its barbarous, idolatrous, dirty, debased Congregational heathen, Christian idolaters, and the one hundred thousand Mongolians and half-bred Portuguese to boot, and to bring it into our Republic as one of the States of our union to help govern us. Already one branch of Congress has voted to expend $500,000 in beginning to lay a cable for this purpose, which, of course, will involve us in about $3,000,000 more, in addition to that already incurred to enable Hawaiians to plant sugar at a cost to this country of $50,000,000, taken out of the public treasury and put into the pockets of the planters to enable them to employ Mongolians and half-bred Portuguese."

FREE WILL.

ASSERTIONS are ever made by Christians to the effect that we have a free will to believe or disbelieve as we please, and that that is the chief reason why we actually deserve eternal damnation if we do not accept the Gospels as the truth. So that the question of free will is, so to speak, the foundation of Christianity; for, if we have no free will to choose, a just and a good God will not punish us with everlasting torment for rejecting it. If, then, there be no hell, we need no Savior to save us from it, and Christianity is gone. To illustrate their theory, however, the religionists instance our power of reflection and capability of choosing in every-day life.

Now, it will not be denied that we, in common with the lower animals, have a will; without it we could not perform a single conscious action. But is it free? In other words, is there nothing stronger? It is the will which bids me take up my pen and write. But behind the will is the feeling, whether it be ambition, desire for remuneration, or love to my fellow men. It is the will that bids me fetch water, but behind the will is the feeling of thirst. The will bids my tongue to speak, but behind is the desire or necessity, as the case may be, to impart my thoughts to others. The will is not the cause of all causes, but only an effect of a cause. It is not the primary and predominating, but the secondary and executive, force of our mind.

We have the power of reflection. But have you not been out with a dog, in company with a friend, and observed how, as you part with your companion, the animal will remain on the spot for several minutes, looking from one to the other, and finally take his choice, and follow one of you? Is the dog not reflecting? At the time his will is suspended; at last it yields to the greatest influence, and bids his legs carry him in the direction he has decided to take.

It is precisely the same with the will of man. It submits to the strongest influence. For instance, I am sitting in my room reading. I begin to feel fidgety, and the more I try to control my feelings the more my uneasiness increases, and at last I make up my mind to go for a walk. Still I hesitate. There are two contending forces in my mind. One strives to bind me to the book, the other seeks to beckon me out into the free air. Finally the latter, at the moment being the stronger thought, conquers. Having got outside, another mental struggle begins as to which road to take. At first I think of road No. 1, but another influence steps in and reminds me of the fact that it is full of people, and therefore affords an unpleasant walk. Accordingly I select another and more quiet route. But presently I remember that this road is blocked on account of a fire. I walk towards a third direction; but all at once another objection enters my mind. I see a person whom I know standing at the corner; I know that he is a talkative man, I am in a thoughtful mood, and I don't wish to be disturbed nor detained. I stop and consider about another route, when suddenly it begins to rain, which circumstance results in a final turn of mind and prevents me from going altogether.

Thoughts originate like the seeds of a flower. They are formed of nature; appear and disappear. Whence they come and whither they go, we know not. They arise, like bubbles of the sea, linger for a time, struggle and conquer, or submit to others, and the final victor we superficial-mindedly term "the will," although, had the ensuing action been delayed, and the fight been prolonged for another second, perchance a final shock of thought-electricity might have weighed down the scale; then that would have been called "the will," the reasoner would have been judged differently, and the act would have been omitted or have been a different one. And, moreover, it is the grossest violation of logic to say that man *has* a free will, for "will" is thought, and thought is the man himself. Without it he is a dead lump of flesh, on a level with other "dead" matter. How can the will be free when it is subjected to natural laws in the moral, intellectual, and material spheres, of which we know nothing? To my mind, it is as clear as daylight that it is nothing of the kind, and it is well nigh time that this nonsensical talk about free will ceased.

If the will of man is psychologically not the strongest power, still less has it the supreme control over the mind at the time the character is being moulded. Every Christian knows—although few will admit it—if not steeped in ignorance or entirely spell-bound with the lies of prejudice, that the origin of man's character can be traced back to certain causes—viz., heredity, education, environment, and circumstances in later life; and I shall not here take the trouble to analyse it in its details: partly because the space is valuable, and partly because anyone can select piles of verification thereof for himself, if he will take pains to think and look around.

It is useless to point out men who have risen above their surroundings, and say: "Lo, it can be done!" Perhaps they have had more favorable opportunities; maybe even that they have been furnished by nature with a stronger will. The utterance itself is an admission of the fact that what I have stated is the rule. Rules which always will follow the same order we have accustomed ourselves to consider as laws of nature, and as such they cannot be broken. When I hold up my hand the law of gravitation is not broken, only other forces are in operation as well. When a man here and there rises above his environment or education a "law" is not broken, but other circumstances counteract it. But these circumstances rarely step in.

Now, we are told that, when we reach the age of maturity, a free will is developed, which we are to exercise to discriminate between good and evil. But the same folks who tell us this admit that they continually sin every day, despite that they will not, and St. Paul himself says: "The good which I will, I do not, and the evil which I will not, that I do." Further, if you inquire into the life of the blackest criminal, behind whom the doors of the prison have closed, or whose neck has been stretched by the hangman's rope, you will always find natural causes in his nature, environment, or surroundings that drove him to be what he became.

The process of rejecting Christianity is regarded by Christians as the act of a man who voluntarily stands up to defy a God whom he believes in. A more silly idea cannot be conceived. The process of thinking is no subject of volition at all. The belief that it was has, for centuries, been the cause of much persecution, massacre, and bloodshed. It was the father of the rack, the stake, the thumbscrew, and all the other terrible instruments of the Inquisition. None but the man who has undergone the change of passing from faith to reason can realise what a heartrending and prolonged struggle it is. None but he who has passed from Christianity to scepticism can com-

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prehend how many tears it costs, how many sleepless nights it claims, and how much courage is required, before all the prejudices, which have been implanted into the pliable, juvenile mind, are worn off, before all the fondly-cherished illusions are broken, before all the ghastly fears of eternal torment as a punishment for doubt are expelled, and before all the long-nourished errors are exploded. Bit by bit they go, impelled by the light of reason, or, if you will, the thoughts continually force their way irresistibly into one direction, volition being entirely out of the question. The thinker thinks himself into Freethought, but he cannot think himself out of it again.

It is true that some persons pass through the ordeal of scepticism, but return to the old faith; and they will tell you that it was through exercising the will to pray, and that the prayer helped them. This is untrue. It is because prejudice and fear ultimately proved to be stronger than the element of originality, reason, and mental independence. Nay, more; what shall we say about the many millions who are born, live, and die in non-Christian countries, and who never hear, through no fault of their own, of the Christian religion? Are they, too, to be judged according to the Biblical injunction: "He who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned"? Have they a will of their own to accept or reject Christianity without being introduced to it? What about the little innocent children who die before they are baptised, and before they are capable of believing anything? Will an all-good God turn his back upon them? Are they also to be subjected to eternal damnation? Have we not heard enough of this fiendish and monstrous doctrine to be sick and tired to the very core of our hearts?

J. K. Maagaard.

(To be concluded.)

ACID DROPS.

The Rev. J. Moffat Logan gained a good deal of local notoriety by his debate with Mr. Foote. It was a fantastic debate from one point of view, for Mr. Logan would not discuss whether Jesus Christ *did* rise from the dead, but only how the Christians came to *believe* he did. Mr. Logan said he would be a child of folly—that is, a fool—if he discussed the *fact* of the Resurrection; and we quite agreed with him.

Since that debate Mr. Logan has been holding "popular" meetings, with a certain allowance of discussion, in his chapel. By this means, without knowing it, he is undermining the faith of a good many young people.

Mr. Logan makes a great pretence of fairness, but we are afraid that this quality in his case is but superficial. We remember the satisfied smile upon his face, during the debate, when his followers brutally interrupted Mr. Foote. We also remember some other things that need not be mentioned. And it does not surprise us to learn that Mr. Logan has taken advantage of the Oscar Wilde case to strike an unfair blow at Secularism.

This is what we are informed Mr. Logan said from his pulpit on Sunday, April 8: "Oscar Wilde! . . . . I wonder the fire of Sodom and Gomorrah did not fall and devour him! . . . . There's a specimen of Secular culture! . . . . Only Christianity can keep us moral."

Now we have to remark, first of all, that this is a damnable thing to say about a man who is awaiting his trial. It is a plain statement, though in indirect language, that the man is guilty. Mr. Logan plays the part of judge and jury in anticipation, and almost calls upon God Almighty to execute the sinner.

Only Christianity can make us moral! Well, it takes something more than Christianity to make us just.

Mr. Logan assumes that Oscar Wilde is an Agnostic. Many of his poems, however, display an opposite tendency. We do not say he is a Christian, we only say that we should like to have Mr. Logan's reason for assuming him to be a Freethinker.

But the Marquis of Queensberry *is* an Agnostic. He was actually excluded from the House of Lords on that account. Mr. Logan should therefore explain whether it was Agnosticism or Christianity that made Lord Queensberry so honorably anxious about the morality of his son.

Oscar Wilde is not yet proved guilty of the charges brought against him. Mr. De Cobain, however, ex-member for Belfast, *was* found guilty of unnatural offences and sentenced to imprisonment. He was a shining light in Belfast religious circles, and actually held a young men's Bible Class at his own house. Was *this* man "a specimen of Secular culture"?

Mr. Logan would do well to reflect that most young people in this country first learn of the crime committed by De Cobain *from the Bible*. Some of the references to it in Scripture are unspeakably disgusting. What an irony! The very book which *alone* can make children grow up virtuous is the book which too often gives them their first suggestions of beastliness.

Only Christianity can keep us moral! Why the biggest rogues in this country are all Christians. The great "Liberator" fraud was perpetrated by pious scoundrels, with the active assistance of hundreds of Christian ministers in all parts of the kingdom. "Jabez" himself is a Christian.

The *Parnellite* speaks out on the witch-burning case at Clonmell in a way which the priests will little relish. It asks: "What has Christianity accomplished when cruel superstition can stalk abroad like this, and when a revolting crime can be perpetrated upon a sick woman by those who, by all the laws of God and nature, were most bound to love and cherish her? Are the priests too busy looking after the registration of votes and the collection of Whig Funds to stamp out such barbarous ignorance?" We would tell the *Parnellite* that Christianity, by its doctrine of possession of devils, distinctly countenances the barbarous ignorance and cruel superstition that led to Bridget Cleary's death.

During the last four years the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has added 2,000 churches to her number, and increased her communicants by 1,243,568. Irish and South German emigration only partly account for this. The Church preaches in the confessional and in public, "Increase and multiply," as a means of eventually attaining to power.

The Rev. Mr. Jessop, a Baptist minister at Mobile, in Alabama, fell to the floor in spasms, while in the midst of his sermon, and died in a few minutes. He had in one pocket bread poisoned with strychnine, to destroy the sparrows in his garden, and in the other sugar with which he cleared his throat during the sermon. By mistake he swallowed the poisoned bread instead of the sugar.

Prince Kropotkin points out in the *Times* that Jew-baiting is as severe in Russia as ever. Not only are the Jews not allowed to attend the public hospitals, but a recent decree prohibits them resorting to the provinces of Don, Kuban, and Terek to use the mineral waters there.

In the January number of the *Theosophist* a writer argues that Mrs. Besant is a reincarnation of Hypatia. The similarities in the two characters, it is sagely asserted, are too striking to belong to two different personages. Hypatia was beautiful, and so is Mrs. Besant; Hypatia was eloquent, and so is Mrs. Besant; Hypatia was persecuted by her enemies, and so has been Mrs. Besant; what more, it is triumphantly asked, can be wanted to complete the identification? There is, however, one small hitch that appears to have given a little trouble to the complacent writer. Hypatia was unmarried, while Mrs. Besant, unfortunately, is not. But this is easily and gracefully explained away; for Mrs. Besant, on the same authority, though she allowed herself to be led to the matrimonial altar, and to pronounce the sacred formula, never loved her husband. The lady will surely cry, "Save me from my friends."

H. B. Foulke, who claims that Blavatsky made him her successor, calls W. Q. Judge "an exposed fraud," and says Mrs. Besant has been in delusion and error.

An American paper says: "Mrs. Jessie Timko, who recently threw herself upon a railroad track, and, with a Bible clutched in each hand, called upon God to take her to heaven, has been adjudged insane, and will be taken to an asylum." If orthodoxy be true, and the Christian at death goes to a heaven of bliss, we can't see why the above should be an evidence of insanity. It only shows she was a real believer in the creed.

Ananias has been caught again. A writer in *Christian Life* reports him as saying the old English Universities were "so slow and bigoted that they never conferred a degree upon a Nonconformist." The writer points out that the Rev. Gwenogfryn Evans, a Unitarian minister, received from the University the honorary degree of M.A. in recognition of his eminent services to Welsh literature. And the Rev. James Martineau, the veteran leader of

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advanced thought among the Unitarians, received some years back the complimentary degree of D.C.L. from the same University. A long list may be drawn up of eminent Nonconformists whom the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have delighted to honor."

Emory Boyd, in the New York *Truthseeker*, gives a translation of the first chapter of Genesis, rendering the word Elohim by "the gods." He says: "The Bible is full of polytheism, in spite of the efforts of ancient and modern priests to establish monotheism."

The Bishop of Worcester has found out that the proper method of marking the Easter season is the ancient practice of making offerings to the clergy. The bishops, of course, have no duties towards their poorer brethren, but they are always calling on the laity to shell out.

Bishop Potter has advised young men who would succeed in business to be regular at church. In that way, according to this New York ecclesiastic, they can win the favor of their employers and expect to outstrip, in the race for wealth, those who are irregular at church or regular in absenting themselves. This is a very lofty motive indeed for going to church. It is, moreover, we fancy, very similar to the motives that do animate attendants.

In the *Two Worlds* Mr. A. F. Colborne trots out "The Strange Story of Mrs. Veal" as a proof of Spiritism. Now this strange story was written by that eminent romancer, Daniel Defoe, as a preface to, and in order to sell, a number of copies of *Drelincourt on Death*, which the publisher could not get off his hands. One would think bogus stories of apparitions were scarce to fall back on this old stuff, whereas the Spookical Society offers an abundant supply.

Dr. and Mrs. Halten, Christian scientists, have been arrested at Dayton, Ohio, on a charge of manslaughter in connection with the death of Lila Mead, granddaughter of Congressman Honk. They pretended, and the parents believed, that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick."

The Bishop of London has been called upon to uphold the law of God, and prevent the re-marriage of a divorced person which takes place on April 27. The minister of St. Mark's, North Audley-street, refused to perform the ceremony, but the bishop has advised him to lend the church to the Rev. G. H. Smith, who is willing to do so.

The *Record of Christian Work* (New York) says: "Forty cents was all that the average church member in the United States could spare last year out of his abundance to send the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth! It took 7,862 church members to support one ordained foreign missionary last year!" Yet the heathen are going to hell headlong for want of a chance of rejecting the gospel.

The *Baptist Journal*, of Cincinnati, says: "For each convert made in the foreign field during the past year it has cost the American Board (Congregational) $290; the Baptist Union, $85; the M. E. Church, $235; the Protestant Episcopal Church, $1,834; and the Presbyterian Board, $278." It is a question if the converts are worth it.

The *Truth*, of New York, asks: "What is Higher Criticism?" and answers, "Baptised Infidelity."

In 1890 the Legislature of the province of Manitoba, Canada, ordered that no public support should be given to sectarian schools. All the Catholics of Canada have been kicking up a dust ever since, and at length they have induced the Dominion Government to declare that the school law must be modified in favor of Catholic schools. The Catholics, not satisfied with ruling the roost in Quebec, are thus fighting for, and determined to have, the control of education in the entire Dominion. The Manitobians refuse to obey the Dominion order, and an interesting conflict of powers is the result.

Talmage says that three-fourths of the population of heaven are women. Of course he has been there and knows. Our information, derived from an old fetish book, is quite different. That book represents all the angels as males. When the sons of God wanted children, they came to earth for females, and when they did come, children generally followed. This old book says nothing about heaven being made for women, or women for heaven; but it has a significant passage that "there was silence in heaven" for half-an-hour, whence also conclusions may be drawn unfavorable to the contention of Dr. Talmage.

An attempt was made on March 19, at the Baltimore Methodist Conference, to prohibit the use of "individual cups" when sipping, or bibbing, or drinking wine in church. A very heated wrangle occurred, and Dr. Harcourt was prevented by the Methodist "Bishop" who presided from reading medical testimony on the subject, but he said: "There was a time when it was said that everybody should go clean-shaven, like the bishop of this Conference—when there was no dipping of the moustache into the cup, with perhaps tobacco-juice on it; when there was no offensive suffering from the grip after having left the handkerchief at home. (Groans.) I tell you, Mr. President, that from these causes, at the table of the Lord and at his communion, I have administered slops!" A regular tumult now ensued, Dr. Harcourt was cautioned, and at last he said he would refrain on account of the presence of ladies from giving further unpleasant facts. A non-committal resolution was finally passed.—*Secular Thought.*

"Peter Lombard" tells in the *Church Times* how it was the custom in the good old days, in the Cathedral of Toulouse, to whip a Jew on Good Friday round the interior of the building. Of course Mrs. Glasse's principle had to be carried out, "First catch your Jew," and every poor Israelite made haste to hide himself from the searchers. The hunt for a victim, therefore, must have been on one side an exhibition of uproarious savagery, on the other of terror and despair.

The Rev. James Clark writes a tract to show that vegetarianism is taught in the Bible. Will he tell us what God wanted with the holocausts of burnt-offerings of oxen, rams, lambs, and does, whose sacrifices were required in the Bible? We should also like to know if Jesus took vegetarian lamb at Passover, and what he meant by saying to Peter from heaven, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

The tender sensibilities of sweet Jesus for animal life are hardly displayed in the last chapter of John. Jesus, after his resurrection, and presumably in his glorified body, asks his disciples, "Children, have ye any meat?" They answered him, No." He causes a miraculous draught of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three; and when the disciples came to him they saw a fire of coals there and fish laid thereon, in true savage-Indian style. After eating, they left the fish to fry further, and went on talking of love and feeding sheep.

An enterprising Italian purveyor advertises "Sardines from the Lake of Galilee." Perhaps they are some of the original miraculous draught of fishes.

No wonder Italy is poor. It has 77,128 priests, not to mention monks and nuns—also, for the most part, non-producers—who bring the number up to 100,000. As the intelligent Italians of the towns are Freethinkers, the priests have for the most part to get their living out of the ignorant peasant. The majority of Italian priests come from South Italy. Piedmont, with 3,700,000 inhabitants, has only 6,842 priests. Sicily has no fewer than 8,415.

Since Mormonism has been compelled to resign its Bible institution of polygamy it has lost its chief attraction, and the Mormon Church is now said to be in debt to upwards of one million dollars. The "tithes" are the Church's only source of revenue, and orthodox Christians are looking forward to the sale of the big temple in the sweet by and bye.

Our readers will remember what a fuss was made because Mr. Foote branded Price Hughes's story of the converted Atheist Shoemaker as "a lie." The man of God put on airs of dignity, and declined even the arbitration of a Committee of Honor. No one, he said in substance, has the right to question my veracity; and on this paltry plea, such as every thief in the dock puts in when he pleads "Not Guilty," the man of God evaded the full measure of his retribution. He had the discretion, though, to discontinue the sale of his lying story, which is no longer to be obtained for love or money. And as he pretended that the story of "Herbert's" conversion was powerful in the saving of souls, the withdrawal of the book is an admission that Hughes doesn't care whether souls are saved or not, or else that he knows the story is false and wants to let it die out of the public recollection.

Considering this man of God's objection to any doubt being thrown upon his veracity, it is amusing to open the *Methodist Times* and read what he has to say about the statement in the *New Age* that he will not accept a certain secretaryship unless he has Dr. Lunn for his colleague. "It is an absolute falsehood," cries Mr. Hughes. He complains that the metropolitan press is constantly printing "mischievous falsehoods" about him, that these falsehoods are dictated by "vicious spite," and that they are "not really believed even by the writers." And the worst of it is, as Moody said—though it was said before him—that "a lie rushes round the world before the contradicting truth has time to put its shoes on."

This language shows how much real sincerity there was in Hughes's evading his responsibility because Mr. Foote

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called his story "a lie." He employs the very same word himself, and employs it in reference to a fellow Christian.

Mr. Holyoake, who came to Hughes's rescue, and without whom he would have been absolutely lost, stated that the man who used the word "lie" in America would probably be shot at sight. Mr. Holyoake has also expressed his high opinion of Colonel Ingersoll, not only as an orator, but as a gentleman. Well, what does Colonel Ingersoll say about the story that he funked in a storm on board the "Servia"? He calls it "an orthodox lie." How shocking! Mr. Holyoake should send the Colonel a letter of admonition, and would do well to get it endorsed by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

Does the *Daily Chronicle*, like the Hindus, believe in the power of ascetic austerities to move God? Reviewing the Rev. E. J. Newell's *History of the Welsh Church*, it mentions how Kentigern, at St. Asaph, would recite the Psalms standing naked in cold water, even in time of frost. Illtyd, at Llanwit, bathed at midnight before matins, staying in the cold water as long as it took him to say the Lord's Prayer thrice. The Irish monks went further. One would sleep with corpses and hang himself up on sickles placed under his armpits; another would keep a stone in his mouth during the whole of Lent; a third mixed his bread with sand; and a female saint, named Ite, let a stag-beetle eat away her side. St. Patrick himself is related by Tirechan to have fasted for forty days and forty nights on Cruachan Aigle.

The *Chronicle* says on this: "All highly irrational, of course, to a solid, sensible, English prelate in his palace; but somehow these devotees gained a spiritual power which is sorely needed in our flabby age." To suppose these are the means of gaining spiritual power is worthy of a Theosophist.

A young Anglo-Indian lady, Miss Oliva Francis, aged 23, has formally renounced Christianity and become a Muslim, adopting the Islamic name of Habiba, at Mozuffurpore, India.

'Rev." Henry Powers addressed his Unitarian brethren, the other day, on "What do we Really Know about Jesus?" This is easy—simply nothing.

Mr. Joseph Dyson, the Labor representative on the Huddersfield School Board, seems very familiar with God's intentions. At the Fields Congregational Chapel, P.S.A., he said, "God never intended that there should be so much poverty," etc. Now, a truly pious Theist would hold that God intended whatever is, and take care he did not thwart these intentions, as, we are glad to say, Mr. Dyson wishes people to do.

Jesus Christ, it is said, washed his disciples' feet, and Simon Peter objected to the performance. Perhaps his feet wouldn't bear inspection.

Like another Jesus Christ, the Emperor of Austria washes the feet of twelve poor old men during "Holy Week." These old men are carefully selected, and no doubt their pedal extremities are well attended to before the Emperor goes to work upon them. The water is carried by a priest in a golden basin. After this ceremony, which is witnessed by a crowded Court, the Emperor places round each old man's neck a chain, to which is attached a little bag containing thirty pieces of silver—the number of coins received by Judas for "selling" his master. Then the twelve old men go home and have a good feed, which is sent on before them, and is some consolation for having their feet messed about in public.

Japan is on the winning side in the present quarrel with China, and the Christian proselytisers are naturally trying to convert the upper dog in the fight. The Bible and Tract Societies, aided by private donors, are distributing 12,000 New Testaments amongst the Japanese soldiers at Hiroshima, and twenty-six special missionaries are at work there. An urgent appeal is made in England for £200 at once, and one of the religious journals in this country hopes the appeal will be promptly responded to, as the "authorities" over there are watching to see "whether Christianity or Buddhism is doing more in the interests of higher morality during the present war." In other words, there is a brisk competition between rival religions, and the Christians are asked to back their own side. Such is the "higher morality" of this business.

Northern Gossip, of Newcastle, in its "Dramatic Notes," gives some attention to the performance of a Christian Evidence lecturer at the Olympia, whom "the Sightseer" says has "a marked genius for representing lunacy," and is unrivalled "for speaking bad English and sending his fellow creatures to hell." This is the fellow who wrote to Mr. Holyoake concerning the Atheist Shoemaker.

Buena, Vista, Ga., March 14.—While C. S. Crawford, an Atheist, was denouncing God and the Bible yesterday, lightning struck his house. Several members of the household were *stunned!—Buffalo Courier.*

Here is another case of "bad marksmanship," as Colonel Ingersoll said when a bolt of lightning struck the Y.M.C.A.'s office and destroyed it, adjoining the Colonel's office in Washington, D.C., and did not injure his office in the least.—*Freethought Magazine.*

Christians, who boast that their religion abolished the old gladiatorial shows, should explain why it has not abolished the Spanish bull-fights. Men went into the arena for the most part of their own free will, but the bulls are unwilling combatants, and are literally butchered to make a holiday. In this respect, a bull-fight is worse than a gladiatorial show.

There are people silly enough to imagine that cruelty fosters courage. This is a great mistake. Cruelty is more often allied with cowardice. When, at a bull-fight in Barcelona last Sunday afternoon, the third bull jumped over the barriers, the whole crowd was thrown into a panic. One of the civil guards shot the bull dead, and the bullet, passing through its body, also killed a spectator; in which accident there is a sort of poetical justice.

A VISIT TO DARWIN.

Professor Haeckel has given the following charming description of Darwin and his home surroundings in his later years:—

"In Darwin's own carriage, which he had thoughtfully sent for my convenience to the railway station, I drove, one sunny morning in October, through the graceful, hilly landscape of Kent, that, with the chequered foliage of its woods, with its stretches of purple heath, yellow broom, and evergreen oaks, was arrayed in its fairest autumnal dress. As the carriage drew up in front of Darwin's pleasant country house, clad in a vesture of ivy and embowered in elms, there stepped out to meet me from the shady porch, overgrown with creeping plants, the great naturalist himself; a tall and venerable figure, with the broad shoulders of an Atlas supporting a world of thought; his Jupiter-like forehead highly and broadly arched, as in the case of Goethe, and deeply furrowed with the plough of mental labor; his kindly, mild eyes looking forth under the shadow of prominent brows; his amiable mouth surrounded by a copious silver-white beard. The cordial prepossessing expression of the whole face, the gentle, mild voice, the slow, deliberate utterance, the natural and naive train of ideas which marked his conversation, captivated my whole heart in the first hour of our meeting, just as his great work had formerly, on my first reading it, taken my whole understanding by storm. I fancied a lofty world sage out of Hellenic antiquity—a Socrates or Aristotle—stood before me."

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

May 5, Hall of Science, London; 12, Camberwell; 19, Bradford; 26, Liverpool.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 30, Sheffield.

July 7, South Shields; 14, Bristol.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York in August, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Arrangements are being made for him to speak in Derby and Stockton-on-Tees during the weeks following his being at Manchester and South Shields. Dundee should be visited when he lectures in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The Republic of Man is the outcome of the logic of history; and to foresee that Republic, to begin to set in order, to live it beforehand, is the highest object of life, and the surest passport to all the heaven there can be on this earth or elsewhere.—*T. B. Wakeman.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 21, Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, Glasgow:—11.30, "The Romance of the Resurrection"; 2.30, "New Light on the Old Book"; 6.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

April 28, Sunderland.

May 8 and 9, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—April 21, m. Walworth Radical Club, e. Hall of Science, London; 28, Hall of Science, London. May 5, Glasgow; 6, 7, 8, and 9, debate at Glasgow with Dr. Jamieson; 12, Dundee; 19, Camberwell; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. T. (Bristol).—It is impossible to insert such an article while the case is *sub judice*. We hope our comment in "Acid Drops" will meet with your approval.

E. Shedley.—(1) The "Goddess of Reason" was not a prostitute, and she was not naked. These are Christian inventions. She was a respectable woman, and she was decently clothed. Nor was she *worshipped*. She was only an emblematic figure. For our part, however, we would sooner worship a beautiful woman than an ugly old god. (2) Undoubtedly there are traces of sexual mutilation in the Bible—amongst them the passages to which you refer. (3) Christians don't know that witchcraft is a Bible doctrine simply because they don't read the Bible. We have often dealt with the subject in this journal.

J. Hughes.—Thanks.

F. Shepherd.—By no means without merit, but hardly up to our mark.

E. L. Garbett.—Such a discussion is more fit for a Christian than for a Freethought journal. We inserted Father Ignatius's letter in common fairness, because he had been mentioned in our paragraph to which he replied.

A. Anderson.—All right. Thanks.

W. O. Hawes.—Received. Next week.

A. Hindley.—We have not forgotten it. We took it as the subject of a Sunday morning lecture at the Hall of Science some months ago, but we have not yet found time to write upon it adequately in the *Freethinker*.

S. Small.—Thanks. Next week.

P. Shaughnessy.—Shall appear.

Papers Received.—Northern Gossip—Crescent—Islamic World—Christian Life—Freethought Magazine—Two Worlds—Chatham Observer—Church Reformer—Progressive Thinker—Liberator—Echo—Freidenker—Fur Unser Jugend—Monist—Open Court—Truthseeker—Blyth News—Twentieth Century—Liberty—Isle of Man Times.

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

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL APPEAL.

I announced in last week's *Freethinker* that the sum of £600 was required during the present month of April, in order to clear off, at a greatly-reduced figure, the mortgage upon the London Hall of Science.

I appealed to the Secular party to provide this amount, either by taking shares in the National Secular Hall Society, Limited, or by giving donations which will be invested in shares to be held by the N.S.S. Executive, or in the name of any person who may be indicated by the donor.

Probably in consequence of the holidays, the response up to the time of going to press has been extremely moderate. The remittances that have reached me will therefore be held over for acknowledgment until next week, when I hope I shall be able to publish an encouraging list.

One or two friends, who may do something handsome, are waiting to see what the general body of Secularists are going to do before coming to a definite decision.

A subscriber, who sends me a cheque for £1, expresses a hope that 1,000 others will send the same amount.

Perhaps there are not a thousand of my readers who can afford to give as much *immediately*. But a great many can do something, and I beg them to do it at once. Any sum, however small, will be acceptable.

My own subscription will amount to (say) £5, and there should be a hundred friends who can cover that.

If the Secular party in general, and the London Secularists in particular, do not want good headquarters, and are indifferent about a worthy memorial to Charles Bradlaugh, I must wash my hands of this affair, and go to work in another direction. It would be far more profitable to me to take life a little easier, and to attend to my own affairs, which have suffered from my devotion to the interests of the Society.

In any case I am resolved that *this* effort shall not be *wasted*. Shares will not be allotted unless the response is adequate, and donations will all be returned to the subscribers if there is not enough to meet the emergency. This will be a satisfaction to those who, like myself, have put down their mite at a venture.

I now wait to see what the Secular party will do.

G. W. FOOTE.

(Chairman, Board of Directors, National Secular Hall Society, Limited.)
(President, National Secular Society.)

SUGAR PLUMS.

There was a surprisingly good Easter Sunday audience at the London Hall of Science. Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Romance of the Resurrection" was followed with profound attention, and very warmly applauded, especially at the close, when the cheering amounted to an ovation. Mr. James Rowney, who makes a first-rate chairman, strongly invited questions and discussion; but the invitation met with no response, although one clerical gentleman had been industriously taking notes in the gallery.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (April 21) at Glasgow, and the following Sunday at Sunderland. It was his intention to take a little rest and change during the interval, but he finds himself obliged to return to London on Monday to attend to important business.

Mr. Watts occupies the London Hall of Science platform to-day (April 21), and will doubtless be welcomed by a capital audience after his absence in the country. His subject is an interesting one, and he himself is always interesting.

Easter Monday's *Pall Mall Gazette* contained a letter from Mr. Mortimer Granville, pointing out that the "hot cross bun" has really nothing to do with Christianity, the "cross" being "a symbol of the faith which existed long before Judaism." Mr. Granville also points out that Easter is a very ancient festival, and has nothing whatever to do with the Resurrection. Of course this information is no novelty to the readers of the *Freethinker*. We only mention Mr. Granville's letter to show how scepticism is invading the daily press.

Mr. W. Fraser Rae has unearthed a fresh "Junius" letter from the *London Evening Post* for August 24, 1773. It contains a caustic attack on priestcraft, and refers to the clergy as "that *immaculate* class" who receive such a "*scanty* allowance of tithes, which they possess in lieu of that 'daily bread' for which the most devout among them so *fervently* pray." With respect to their character, he asks: "To what regions of the habitable globe shall we go to find a set of men *so detestable* as *our* clergy, for their

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pride, haughtiness, covetousness, voluptuousness, indolence, and self-conceit?" "Such are the men," he continues, "who claim the distinguished name of *Ministers of the Gospel of Christ;* and take upon them to direct us in our way to heaven, in order to get from us the fruits of our labor on earth; but who, instead of having rendered any real service to mankind, have been a plague to human society from generation to generation." Those who would like to see the rest of this letter will find it in last week's *Athenæum*.

In Turin has recently been published some letters from Cavour in 1857 calling Mazzini "an infamous conspirator who has become the regular head of a band of murderers." Thirty years later the Italian Parliament decreed that a monument should be erected to Mazzini, and King Humbert gave one hundred thousand lire towards it. The "head of a band of murderers" has become recognised as a noble-minded patriot.

Captain Otto Thomsen sends us his Swedish translation to Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on "The Old and the New Religion." We hope it will have a good circulation, for it is well calculated to spread Freethought wherever it is read.

Soon after this number of the *Freethinker* goes to press Mr. Foote will be debating at New Brompton, Kent, with the Rev. A. J. Waldron. This gentleman, in a recent lecture at New Brompton, is reported in the local *News* to have said that "Mr. Foote had stated that he (Mr. Waldron) was the fairest and frankest opponent he had had to deal with." No doubt Mr. Waldron is reported inaccurately. Mr. Foote cordially admits the fairness and frankness displayed in the negotiations for the debate by Mr. Waldron, but he found perfect fairness and frankness years ago in Dr. A. J. Harrison and Dr. James McCann. There *are* gentlemen on the Christian side, though unfortunately Freethinkers see too much of the other sort.

On Sunday, the 14th inst., the discussion class of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. held their annual social meeting. Considering the early hour (12 a.m.) at which the proceedings began, there was a good attendance. After a short address by Mr. W. Gilmour anent the work of the class, a varied musical program was submitted. Messrs. Turnbull and Gilmour rendered some violin duets in a tasteful manner, followed by songs from Miss Reid and Mr. Crawford, which were much appreciated. After tea was served the second part of the program was gone through, and the proceedings terminated by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

Mr. Symes, in reprinting "Some Little-Known Freethinkers," says: "I am right glad my friend Wheeler is disinterring some of the obscure heroes of our movement. What a book a record of them would make! The heroes who do battle in private, with no public applause or notoriety to encourage them, are the greatest and truest heroes in most cases." Mr. Wheeler will continue these articles shortly. He has recently been engaged on a new pamphlet dealing with Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible.

Mrs. Katie Kelum Smith, Miss Nettie Olds, and Mrs. Barker, of the Oregon Secular Union, have established Freethought Churches, with large Sunday-schools, with kindergarten classes, in Portland, Forest Grove, and McMillville.

The *Freethought Magazine* gives three portraits in its April number. As frontispiece appears Mr. C. C. Moore, editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, who was threatened with a prosecution for blasphemy. The other portraits are of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who writes on "The Woman's Bible Revised by Woman," and of Miss Mary Proctor, daughter of the late Richard A. Proctor, who follows her father's work in popularising astronomy.

The Camberwell Branch held its quarterly general meeting on Sunday, and decided to hold such a meeting once a year in future, in October. Mr. P. Sabine was elected president, and Mr. Egan vice-president. Other officers remain as before. After the meeting came a tea and soiree, which was attended by Secularists from distant parts of London.

The Bristol Branch has appointed a strong committee to look after the arrangements for the N.S.S. Conference on Whit-Sunday. The membership of this Branch is increasing, the accessories consisting principally of young men and women who are sick and tired of Christianity. It has been decided to carry on a Sunday evening open-air propaganda in Eastville Park during the summer.

Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Brutal Atheists" has been reprinted from our columns into the *Independent Pulpit* of Waco, Texas, and also into the *Liberator* of Melbourne.

A student at Beuchtel College attended a revival effort, and the preacher took it upon himself to show how inadequate everything short of orthodox religion is in times of trouble and emergency. It was shortly after the "Servia" came so near going down. He said that "Bob" Ingersoll was aboard her in that hour of perilous extremity, and that he fell on his knees and implored God to save him. The student thought the story improbable, and wrote to the great infidel about it, receiving the following reply:—"Dear Sir,—I was not on the 'Servia.' I have not crossed the ocean in twelve years, and the whole story is an orthodox lie.—Yours truly, ROBERT G. INGERSOLL."

THE DYING INFIDEL.

ANYONE who walks through the ethnographic gallery of the British Museum, or any similar institution, will notice how frequent a feature in the collections illustrating the manners and customs of savage life are masks. These masks are to represent bogies—gods or devils; for, philosophically and ethnographically, as well as etymologically, bogies, gods, and devils are of the same species. The earliest gods are all ugly devils. The uglier the bogies, and the more hideous the masks used to represent them, the better, for they are used by the medicine men to frighten away the profane from penetrating the secrets of the godly. They have only a faint semblance to humanity; for the more horrible and unnatural the mask the better it fulfils its purpose.

A similar dreadful bogie stalks through the pages of religious magazines, pious tracts, pulpit sermons, and Sunday-school stories. He also occasionally turns up in goody-goody novels. It is the horrid "infidel." The "infidel" is unlike any being on earth. He is an impossible villain, ready to sharpen a knife on his mother's grave to cut his father's throat, and revels in the wildest rascality; or else a maundering imbecile or nincompoop like *Paul Negent, Materialist*. Such beings were never met in real life. They are masks to frighten people from thinking for themselves in religion.

If the living "infidel" is strange, the dying infidel is a still greater wonder. The Atheist is terrified by a God whose existence he does not believe in. The unbeliever cries out for mercy, sees hell before him, and rends the sky with shrieks of despair. To those who know what infidel death-beds really are, such bugaboos are as impudent impostures as the painted devils of the savage medicine man.

A pair of pictures, well known in all Catholic countries, represent the imaginary death-beds of saint and sinner. The former, attended by his family, the priest, and all signs of religion, clasps a crucifix and looks ceilingwards, where angels are floating, and the Holy Family, in gorgeously colored garments, beam down benignantly. The "infidel," writhing on his bed, turns from priest and crucifix and gazes fondly at a girl's picture held before him by a devil with horns and tail. Other demons are in attendance, and Satan, surrounded by the flames of hell, is prepared to give the sinner a warm reception.

The wide circulation of these pictures shows they are excellent weapons in the hands of the priests. The Protestants are giving up such pictures, and here is our old friend, the *Christian Herald and Signs of the Times*, on which we relied for a continuance of these stories, actually, in its issue for March 28, sending an infidel off to hell without first making him shriek with despair, or having any foretaste of the horrors of his final doom. It will be a thousand pities if, after all, we lose our old friend, the dying infidel. We like these stories. They show what a sickly, debilitated thing religion is, and how, at bottom, it depends on fear. A man in vigorous health and robust intellect becomes a sceptic. In sickness, when the physical powers are declining, he sees what he could never discover when in health. What better illustration could we have that faith depends on malady, and that, as Pascal said, "sickness is the natural state of a Christian." TOLANDUS.

J. K. Fowler, in his *Recollections of Old Country Life*, tells a story of an aspirant to holy orders who was plucked at college in divinity. On being asked, "Who was the mediator between God and man?" he replied at once, with much complacency, "The Archbishop of Canterbury."

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THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE.

Dr. Parkhurst has been saying: "The intention of Scripture (concerning women) is clear, also, from the method in which it handles representatives of the womanly sex. Those women upon whom it put the stamp of divine distinction and approval are women, with scarcely an exception, whose womanhood is realised to be a pervasive ingredient, entering into all their capacities, faculties, experiences, and activities."

To this Ellen Battelle Dietrick retorts in the *Twentieth Century*: "Wonderful! wonderful! Now, here I, a poor, weak female being, have been grinding away in the study of the Scriptures for thirty-five years (having begun when I was twelve), and I have never been able even to guess what women of the Bible do have 'the stamp of divine distinction and approval.' . . . ."

She looks them over a little, continuing: "I have always found that one of the most important duties of a human being is *the duty of doubting*. First let us consider Sarah, a woman who does seem to bear a special stamp of Scriptural distinction, for we are told by the Scriptures that God himself commanded Abraham, the husband, to render unquestioning obedience to Sarah, the wife (Genesis xxi. 12). What evidence of intrinsic superiority does Sarah present in contrast with Abraham? I confess I can discern not a jot or tittle of superior fineness of texture, or of superior refinement of organisation, in either of that precious pair; and yet there is no room to doubt the 'pervasive ingredient' of Sarah's womanhood, any more than of Abraham's manhood. Speaking dispassionately, I should pronounce their moral fibre pretty much of a muchness.

"Then take Rebekah, another of Dr. Parkhurst's heroines. Where is there any proof of her 'intrinsic superiority'? Or Rachel—where is her moral superiority? She seemed to find thieving and lying quite as easy as Jacob did cheating. Or reflect upon the character of Deborah, a woman upon whom the Scriptures undoubtedly put the stamp of divine distinction and approval, for they tell us that she was an inspired prophetess, speaking authoritatively as to the Lord's commands. Was Deborah less ready to lead her troops to battle than Barak? What peculiarity of moral power, of tenderness, gentleness, or 'intrinsic superiority' of womanly fibre do we find in that Great Mother of Israel? Read her war-song—the poem composed when intoxicated with the sight of the blood of her dead enemies. Who is that other womanly woman whom she pronounces 'Blessed above all women'? It is Jael; and here is the reason why Jael is exalted in that Scriptural song: 'She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera; she smote off his head when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he laid down; where he bowed, there he fell down dead. The mother of Sisera looked out at a window and cried through the lattice, "Why is his chariot so long in coming?"' And the womanly Deborah exults, 'So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord.'

"Then there is Ruth, the gentle Ruth, whose song is sung by sweet choristers in all our modern churches. Does Dr. Parkhurst mean to intimate that he considers Ruth an example in morality for young women of the present day? In what does her intrinsic superiority over man's refinement consist? How does the womanly fibre of Ruth surpass that of those New York sisters of hers whom Dr. Parkhurst has just scattered? Ruth stood high in Scriptural times, however.

"Another Scriptural favorite is Esther. We are told in these days that Esther is womanly *par excellence*, for the reason that she submitted to the will of her uncle, Mordecai, who made her one of the inmates of a harem, with beneficial results to the Jews. Esther used her power to defeat the man who contemplated the death of her uncle, and had him put to death. On the next day, after five hundred of the dead man's followers and his ten sons had been murdered in cold blood, the king asked the womanly Esther what further he could do to please her, and she replied: 'Let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow, also, according unto this day's decree (to bring the slain into the palace), and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.'

"Now, as we review those 'womanly' women of the Old Testament, does it not become very clear that if women have now developed a higher morality, a gentler, sweeter spirit than men, it is indubitably not due to any intrinsic superiority at the outset? I find this conclusion very encouraging to men, for it is evident that, with a little perseverance, they may attain to every present moral excellence that they find admirable in women."

"SLUDGE THE MEDIUM."

Mr. Frederick Greenwood, in his personal recollections written for the *Realm*, tells the following story: "Everybody who lives with books has heard that Robert Browning's 'Sludge the Medium' reflected upon Home; and most people have also heard that the celebrated creature succeeded in bringing Mrs. Browning under his influence completely. But the trick that undeceived her (we must suppose) is not so well known. It may have got into print, but, if so, I for one have never seen it, and tell the story as it was told by Browning himself. Home had been about the Browning's a good deal; knew many people known to them; was in his tea-party way an agreeable sort of person; and there were *séances* here and *séances* there; 'and,' said the poet, casting a vague look about the room to express his bewilderment, 'I don't know how it was, I did my best, but little by little he gained her over to believing in him; how much to my distress, imagine?' After a while Home found a yet more excellent way of working on the poor lady's mind. She had lost a little child by death, and, her own wishes running out to embrace the promise, he began to hint that some day he would bring the little one's spirit into her presence. But he was slow in performing this promise—naturally; for otherwise he would have lost the advantage of an excited expectation, often stimulated and as often baffled. At last an evening was named when the mother's yearning should be satisfied. In the customary way, light was shut out of the room when the three sat down, and the usual rappings, and questionings, and invocations went on for a time, and then—then the child's spirit was to appear. And sure enough there did arise above the edge of the table something that was whiter than the dark, that seemed to have a motion of its own and the luminousness of a living thing, and that might veritably be what poor Mrs. Browning fancied it. But, conscious of her trembling state of mind, her husband was in another guess sort of passion. 'I suddenly sprang up, dashed my arm across the table, and took hold of—what do you think? The scoundrel's obscene foot!—naked!' The flaming anger in which Browning finished the story—after so many years, too—left no doubt about what happened next to the celebrated medium—Home. He was instantly and literally kicked out of the house, his shoe and stocking after him no doubt."

Greek Atheists.

Thales and the other Ionics are, as Hylo-zoists, nothing but Atheists; while to call the Eleatus and Heraclitus pantheists is tantamount for all that to an admission, as their doctrines were, that they were Atheists. Empedocles was no better. Democritus could point to the superhuman powers he believed in, as it were, in the air; but still a nature built up of atoms was his god. Then Anaxagoras, with the principal Sophists, even Socrates himself, had been publicly arraigned as Atheists. Diagoras, in the time of Aristotle, became an Atheist in consequence of a real or supposed wrong unretributed by the gods, and was known and named, and is still familiar to us in our books, as Diagoras the Atheist. Aristotle himself hardly escaped a similar imputation; which, besides, his own school in the end would only have justified; for almost every member of it, at least in the second generation, gave more and more breadth to what naturalistic doctrine had taken birth in it. Aristoxenus, for example, held that "the soul was but a certain tension or intension of the body itself, like what is called music on the part of string cords." While Dicæarchus, another Aristotelian, declared the soul to be "only an idle name, and nothing but the body, which one, single and simple, acts and feels by organisation of nature."—*Dr. J. H. Stirling, "Philosophy and Theology," pp. 219–220.*

Obituary.

Professor George von Gizycki, one of the most prominent leaders of the Ethical Culture movement in Germany, died from influenza in Berlin last month.

Mr. W. F. Jamieson, one of the veteran American Freethought advocates, has lost his wife, with whom he had lived nearly forty years.

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BOOK CHAT.

An interview with Mr. John Davidson, whose Ballads and Poems were recently noticed, appears in the New York *Bookman*. Mr. Davidson was born at Barrhead, Renfrewshire, April 11, 1857. He became a pupil teacher, and came to London in 1890. Asked if any one has a right to claim that he "discovered" him, he said: "Well, no. I discovered myself; but I may say that I have never met a more sympathetic and appreciative man than Mr. Grant Allen. He has an open mind for everything new, and does not, like some critics, keep back his kind words till an author no longer requires them."

* * *

We are pleased to notice in *De Dageraad* that the works of Spinoza are very appropriately published in Dutch, edited by Dr. J. P. N. Land, who has already brought out an edition of the great Pantheist philosopher's Latin works, in conjunction with J. van Vloten.

* * *

A German translation of Giordano Bruno's *Io Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante* has been published at Brunswick, edited by Dr. L. Kuhlenbeck.

* * *

The following story is cited from a book on Rural Bengal: "In a Mussulman village, whose inhabitants nearly all made a living as pedlars, there was faction. The leader of one faction was given to the use of ganja, an intoxicating drug. So the leaders of the other faction decided to lay a trap for him. They called a meeting of the village together, and said: 'Let us all become very holy. Let us all sign a covenant that we will keep the Koran, and use no intoxicating drugs.' They hoped that the ganja-eater would refuse to sign, and lose influence in the village. But he met them on their ground, and said: 'I am ready to sign, but let us, in our covenant, include the whole Koran, and not a part only. Let us enter a clause that we will take no interest on money.' 'But that is what we live by; how can we do that?' said the others. 'I can't help that. It is forbidden by the Koran, as well as the use of intoxicating drugs,' said he. So there was a good deal of discussion and bargaining, and, as a result, a covenant was drawn up, which contained no mention of intoxicating drugs or of interest on money, and which all were able cheerfully to sign." These Mohammedans used the Koran pretty much as Christians use the Bible. Everywhere we find that religionists, in the words of Butler,

> Compound for sins they are inclined to
> By damning those they have no mind to.

* * *

Appropriately to the Easter season comes *Our Sun God; or, Christianity before Christ*, written and published by Mr. J. D. Parsons, 7 Crawshay-road, S.E. (3s. 6d.). The work is announced as the first of a contemplated series of six, each to be complete in itself. We shall give Mr. Parsons's work a fuller examination shortly.

* * *

The Norwegian author and Freethinker, Kristofer Janson, has published four new Freethought lectures, which are said to be among the best extant. Freethought literature is certainly needed in both Norway and Denmark, and we hope that Mr. Janson's latest book will have a sale equal to his other works—but not as a certain one which was bought up, plates and all, by the pious Danish Government, so that it should not destroy the innocence of the Danish people.

* * *

Mr. F. Espinasse, who has a life of Voltaire in the "Great Writers" series, has prepared a life of Renan which is announced as "in the press." It is said that he will lay particular emphasis upon Renan's love of truth.

* * *

The *Daily Chronicle*, in noticing *Gain or Loss* by the Rev. Bernard J. Snell, of Brixton, cites the following as an instance of how far Congregationalists have got: "I do not consider that I am bound, as minister of Christ, to defend Abram's cruel treatment of Hagar, the duplicity of Jacob, or the treachery of Jael; it is not my duty to apologise for the sins of the 'man after God's own heart'; I do not hold a brief for Elisha, who called out bears to devour the children who gave him a nickname; I have nothing to say in favor of the making of a woman from a man's rib, or the abnormally low specific gravity of iron axes, or the temporary stoppage of the sun in the heavens, or any other miracles to which neither my intellect nor my conscience responds. Neither you nor I are bound to acquiesce in all the sentiments of Ecclesiastes, or to believe Micaiah when he said, 'The Lord sent a lying spirit.' What do we lose by relegating to legendary folklore Samson's slaying of thousands with the jaw of an ass, or his tying brands to the tails of three hundred foxes?" Mr. Snell is, we hear, one of the writers on the *Christian World* who helps to liberalise that journal.

Comte, Mill, and Spencer, an outline of philosophy, by John Watson, LL.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Queen's College, Kingston, Canada, has just been published by Maclehose, of Glasgow.

* * *

The *Harbinger of Light*, a Spiritist paper published at Melbourne, in its March number, under "Occasional Notes," by X., notices the *Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh*. It says: "It is now nearly four years since death seemingly closed the all-too-short life, which was an all-too-long fight, of this tribune of the plebs; Atheist, Materialist, Radical, Republican, yet one of the greatest Englishmen since Cromwell, and one of Nature's realest gentlemen." It continues: "As regards Spiritualism, Mr. Bradlaugh had devoted some attention to the subject, reading its literature and investigating its phenomena. He attended *séances* held by Mrs. Marshall, by the Davenport Brothers, and by D. D. Home. He was one of the committee appointed by the Dialectical Society to inquire into the phenomena, and he publicly debated Spiritualism with the late Mr. James Burns, editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*. Nothing, however, that he read, saw, or heard sufficed to satisfy his sceptical mind that the 'phenomena' were of other than mundane origin. But Charles Bradlaugh knows to-day." The efforts of the Spiritists to make Bradlaugh a Spiritist after his death have been among the most ridiculous of their proceedings. The spirit of Voltaire unable to speak French has been paralleled by the "spirit" of Charles Bradlaugh drivelling pitiable rubbish.

* * *

Mr. L. C. Smithers, of Effingham House, sends us a book catalogue in which the complete works of Voltaire, in seventy volumes, is marked at £300. It is, of course, a special copy. The edition is that of Kehl, 1784-1785, for which the types of the Freethinker Baskerville were used. There are inserted a large number of illustrations and portraits, over five hundred plates, and the whole magnificently bound in blue morocco. This copy was collected together and bound by Prince Jerome Napoleon, who, it is well known, was a Freethinker.

THE RELIGION OF BLOOD.

Hush, Christian! speak in bated tones
Of Druids' worship round their gory stones!
The founder of thy creed
Died with despairing groans.
Within thy book we read
God bade his own Son bleed—
A human sacrifice! But blood might plead
With the Omnipotent for sinners' need.

Years rolled away; again the pious priest
Spread for his Moloch the Satanic feast;
Fires mantled round the quailing, quivering frame,
Fierce scorching God's true Son e'en in his Father's name!
Christian, thine idol 'twas whose fêted fane
Reeked with the blood of innocents; their pain
Gave a fresh thrill of rapture to the hells
Where, bloated with his bliss, thy brain-born image dwells.

Come, brother men, together let us weep
That men can be so cruel to their kin;
Love gives all vengeance an eternal sleep,
And damns not erring as a mortal sin.

—*Robert B. Holt.*

A Christian Method to Get at Truth.

The Rev. Lem Penrod, who preaches at Vanceburgh, Ky., has decided opinions on infant baptism, and one of his church members, John Slate, has opinions equally decided. Unfortunately their opinions are diametrically opposed, and the Bible, to which they appealed, deals a flush hand of texts for both. The other day they met and waxed hot and furious in argument, and the layman got the better of Preacher Penrod, whereupon the spirit of the old church fathers, and of Calvin, came to the latter's rescue, and inflamed him until he drew a revolver and put a bullet through Slate's bootleg. Thereupon Slate rushed upon him, and the preacher drew a butcher's knife and slashed away at him. But the layman had the reverend in the dust, and, although his clothes were cut, received no wound. How it would have been decided, whether infants are damned if baptised or not, is difficult to tell, for the Church militant were parted by bystanders. Thereby Rev. Penrod will be taught a lesson, and that is to be silent, except when behind his pulpit, when no one dare to dispute him.

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THE DOCTRINE OF HELL.

The Christian priest and preacher have but little or anything to say about hell or a place of endless future punishment for the wicked of this world. Their sermons, like much of their religion, are becoming greatly modified on all such subjects, and are much more in line with common sense and rational ideas than they once were. Even hell, with a cooling apparatus attached to keep down its hot temperature, has been abandoned as a pulpit theme by a majority of Christian ministers. In fact, a place of torment, eternal, and where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, is seldom, if ever, heard of any more in a Christian sermon. Thanks to science and human progress, all such doctrines as that of a hell, even for the vilest sinner, after death, have been about relegated to the dead past.

How long, may we ask, would any Christian minister in either Boston, New York City, or Chicago hold sway as a popular pulpit orator to-day who should follow in the footsteps of a John Wesley, a Richard Baxter, or a Jonathan Edwards, by reiterating and preaching the doctrines they advocated and proclaimed in favor of a hell? The answer is plain why ministers no longer now preach and promulgate the doctrine. It is because even the pulpit, as well as the majority of Christians, have at last evoluted out of it.

But who, we ask, have been the great instruments, more than all others, in forcing the pulpit to abandon teaching and preaching this damnable doctrine of a hell? We answer, most emphatically, Infidels. It has been the Voltaires, the Paines, and the Volneys, together with the Spencers, the Darwins, and the Huxleys, who have stood as valiant soldiers upon the ramparts of Freethought and proclaimed boldly and fearlessly another and a more rational doctrine. Such gallant souls as these—heralds of a new religion and a better gospel—are the ones who have driven gradually and slowly, but yet surely, much, if not about all, the belief in a hell out of the minds of millions in the world. All praise to them for their great and noble labors.

The words, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," as a text, are no longer heard from the lips of the advanced and educated Christian minister. The things of this life, the subjects of this world, the ones of beauty and grandeur, as well as those of pain and sorrow found here and now, are more, in this age of human investigation and progress, engaging the thoughts of Christian ministers than is the question of an endless hell of torment, or even the one of an everlasting heaven of fruition and joy.

Christian priests and ministers are beginning to study the wants and the desires of their patrons. A religious doctrine, like everything else in the world, in order that it may be acceptable and relished, craved and paid for, must be not only up to date, but a staple article in the market. Therefore, it is not a matter of wonder that Christian ministers are ceasing to burden their hearers' ears with the meaningless and unsavory admonition to "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do, but fear him who, after he hath killed, hath the power to cast into hell."—"*Boston Investigator.*"

An Unexpected Solution.

At a Sunday-school service a clergyman was explaining to a number of smart little urchins the necessity of Christian profession in order properly to enjoy the blessings of Providence in this world, and to make it apparent to the youthful mind he said:—

"For instance, I want to introduce water into my house. I turn it on. The pipes and every convenience are in good order, but I get no water. Can any of you tell me why I don't get any water?"

He expected the children to see that it was because he had not made a connection with the main in the street. The boys looked perplexed. They could not see why the water should refuse to run into his premises after such faultless plumbing.

"Can no one tell me what I have neglected?" reiterated the good man, looking at the many wondering faces bowed down by the weight of the problem.

"I know," squeaked a little five-year-old. "You don't pay up!"

We still pray for a fine harvest, but we really consult the barometer, and believe more in the prophecies of meteorologists than in an answer to our prayers. *Te Deums* for victories excite more ridicule than sympathy, and we encounter the cholera by improved systems of drainage without attributing much value to fastings and processions. In other words, the old belief in the supernatural is so far extinct that it could not be restored without encountering some of the most vigorous beliefs of the time.—*Leslie Stephen.*

A COMMON MAN'S CONCLUSION.

He's a wonderfu', wonderfu' body, the Lord,
If what the Claith tell us be true;
But auld Nicky Ben is his maister whan dune—
To him the maist honor is due.
It's said that the wonderfu' Jahveh, the Lord,
Kens aforehand ilk' thing that's to be;
But he fairly was diddled whan Adam an' Eve
Took a taste o' the wisdom-fruit tree.

Of course, Nicky Ben got the blame o' the ploy—
E'en till noo he is blamed for the deed;
Still, I'm thinkin' he did the best thing for the race,
Tho' o' praise he gets mair than his meed.
Gif the michty Jehovah had gotten his will,
We'd ha'e been little ither than brutes;
Eatin' roots like the swine, wi' a cockle at times—
We'd ha'e scarcely haen sense to catch troots.

We wadna haen bogus directors nor priests,
Nor wad we haen shoddy for breeks;
We wadna haen mansions wi' muckle deer-parks,
Nor slums whar the very air reeks
Wi' disease an' the vilest o' stinks bred frae dirt;
Whar despair clinks alang beside want;
Whar maudlin hymn-ranters deliver their tracts,
An' yowl oot their havers an' cant.

An' we'd maybe been best, for tho' auld Nicky Ben
Has been banned wi' fu' mony a curse,
Still, they only are wirds; the folks praise him wi' deeds,
An' the deeds are a michty piece worse
Than the warst o' ill wirds. But juist crack as ye will,
This warl' is a heaven an' a hell
Whar man is baith blessed an' tortured by turns:
Whar his god an' his deevil's himsel'.

The Gaberlunzie.

PROFANE JOKES.

Good Man—"My son, is your father a professional man?" Boy—"Yes'r; professes conversion at every revival."

"Do you know much about that horse you bought from the deacon?" "I know more about the deacon than I did."

A clergyman looked in at a Salvationist meeting just as the captain bawled out: "Who is present? who is not among the saved?" and a voice was heard, "Our vicar is here."

The following notice was read from a country pulpit on a recent Sunday: "The pastor will preach his last sermon this evening, and the choir have arranged a special praise service for the occasion."

Fond Mother—"Clarence, didn't I overhear you praying at bed-time for God to keep Willie Wiggles from harm during the night?' Little Clarence—"Yep! I wanted him spared, so's I could lick the stuffin' out of him to-day."

"Just my blame luck," ssdly soliloquised Noah, looking out o'er the vast waste of mud that spread as far as the eye could reach, "Here I've gone and got together the greatest animal show on earth, and there isn't a soul left to come and see it." No wonder Noah got drunk.

"John," said Mrs. Hawkins, as they were going home from church, "why did the minister call the dove that brought back a green twig to the ark 'he'?" "I don't know," replied John, "unless it was that if the dove had been a female she couldn't have kept her mouth closed long enough to get the bough to the ark"; and there was ill-feeling in that household all the rest of the day.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30 Charles Watts, "The Theological Free-Will Puzzle." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, J. H. Woods, "The Independent Labor Party." (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-told."

ISLINGTON: 3, Special business meeting at secretary's, 19 Alwyne-road, Canonbury.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Moncure D. Conway, "The Gardens of the Gods under the Culture of Science."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Stephen H. Alison, "The Soul and Anthropology."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. Guest, "The Infinite."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "What Must I Do to be Saved?"

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "The Ascent of Man." Thursday, at 8.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "What do Christians Believe?" 3.30, "Two Revelations."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Secularism and Social Problems."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "God and the Problem of Evil."

VICTORIA PARK: 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3, W. Heaford will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, C. James, "Buddha, Confucius, and Christ"; 7, "Still it Moves."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8 papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, social gathering.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, F. Swan will lecture.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, G. W. Foote, "The Romance of the Resurrection"; 2.30, "New Light on the Old Book"; 6.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 2.30, Greevz Fisher, "Law in a Free State"; 7, "Evolution *v.* Creation."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Hill, "Some Eccentricities of the Law." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. Hammond, "Spiritualism and its Claims." (Free.)

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, C. Cohen, "Why are Men Religious?" 7, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, Sam Standring, "How Margaret Marie Saw the Blessed Virgin."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Robert Law, F.G.S., "The Wonders of the Sun"; 7, "Is the Interior of the Earth Red-hot? If yes, whence did it Derive its Heat?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street) 7, Social evening.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, Robert Weightman, "What is Infidelity, and who are the Infidels?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

DERBY (Market-place): 6.45, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, C. Cohen will lecture.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, Sam Standring, "Some Events of the Week"; 3, "The Pagan Origin of Sunday."

Lecturers' Engagements.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Sunnyside, 72 Union-grove, Clapham, London, S.W.—April 21, West Ham; 28, Manchester. May 5, Sheffield.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 21, 28, Newcastle-on-Tyne. May 2, Wood Green; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 23, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—April 21, m. Victoria Park, a. Tottenham, e. Deptford; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park. May 5, m. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea; 12, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, Clerkenwell.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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GOD AND THE ANT.

God and the Ant. By Coulson Kernahan. (London: Ward, Lock, & Bowden.)

MR. COULSON KERNAHAN is the author of two volumes of highly-praised fiction and one volume of highly-praised criticism. When we heard, therefore, that he was engaged on a kind of theological treatise, we looked forward to its publication with considerable interest. But now the much-heralded volume is before us we confess to a feeling of disappointment. To begin with, there is very little for the money. Sixty little rivulets of type flow through broad meadows of margin, and the price is one shilling. A vivacious reader could easily get to the end in ten minutes; a dull one could hardly need more than a quarter of an hour. In the next place—and this is far more serious—the booklet is an utter mistake. The problem of evil has exercised the keenest intellects and the greatest wits; it has also occasioned the writing of a multitude of treatises, which test the strength of the stoutest library-shelves. Little that is new can possibly remain to be said upon this theme. Yet, in reading Mr. Kernahan, one would think that the world was waiting for a word of reassurance, and that the problem was as virginal as the blank leaves before Mr. Kernahan's title-page.

Although his space is so limited, Mr. Kernahan goes to work very leisurely. He gives us two pages of Dedication to a friend and benefactor with whose name he begs to associate his "little booklet"—which is a nasty tautology; and to whom he expresses his "thanks *and* gratitude"—which is nearly as bad. Then comes a three-page Apologia, in which we hear of "the form *and* shape" of something, as though they were different. Such marks of carelessness are regrettable in a writer like Mr. Kernahan. For the rest, the Apologia is an absurdity. Mr. Kernahan says he dreamed what he relates; and he informs us, as though he were one of the prophets, that he "did not set to work to write it: it came." This is pretty enough, in its way; but, as a proem to an attempt to justify the ways of Providence, it is almost ludicrous.

Mr. Kernahan starts with the End of the World—just at the point where Prophet Baxter leaves off. The sea gives up its dead, and the graves discharge their occupants; who, by the way, would (most of them) *not be there*—as the Irishman said. Men were all ready for judgment, but God and the angels did not put in an appearance. The last day had indeed come, but "it was God and not man who was bidden to the bar of heaven," and the people called upon him to "Come forth," as though he were another Lazarus, and make answer for the wrongs he had done to man. But the boss of the universe was in no hurry, and the millions of millions of resurrected ones begged to know why he had "awakened" them—which, again, is bad grammar. Then a woman has a go at him. She had worked hard for a little bread, and she was having a good rest in the grave, and why was *she* disturbed? Next a man wants to know whether the Great Derider is preparing a fresh diversion for himself. He is followed by another woman, who had been born amongst thieves and prostitutes; she inquires why God made any creature to perish everlastingly. Finally "one" spoke, who wanted to know why God makes the innocent suffer for the guilty, and visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. And once more all the people call upon God to stand in the dock and answer his indictment. Evidently he has a lot to answer for, though it is all very familiar to Freethinkers; but he is still in no hurry, and keeps the court waiting.

In his absence, a woman attempts to justify the ways of God to man. Children suffer for their parents' sins; but they also profit by their parents' virtues; and six balances half-a-dozen. Besides, if misery did not overtake ill-doing, man had soon made a hell of earth. On the whole, life is good, not evil; and if there were no misery, and all were plain, where would then be "the test of our faith in God"? This lady barrister, pleading for the Almighty, reminds men that they cannot understand God, though *she* appears to be well up in the subject. "Can the ant," she asks, "crawl up into the brain of man to see man's world as man sees it? Yet has man, whose whole world is, in the eyes of God, but as one ant in a universe, thought to creep into God's brain, to think as He thinks, to see as He sees, and to judge the Omnipotent by man's little laws."

With some rather mixed imagery, this is an old story retold. Those who set out to explain evil always end by giving it up, and tell us not to criticise, but adore; which we might do before the argument as well as after it—perhaps a little better.

Mr. Kernahan imagines that God is exculpated because it was *man* who tempted the woman, seduced her, and brought her to prostitution. He forgets that God made the man to tempt, and the woman to be tempted; and that an omniscient creator is responsible to the uttermost for the faults of his creatures.

The impenitent thief upon the cross is the next person who addresses the multitude:—

> "I am he who, when in like straits to yours, did blaspheme as you, O my brothers and sisters, have blasphemed; I am he who hung by the dying Savior—he who in the hour of death and judgment did revile that Divine Sufferer, even as you in your hour of judgment have blasphemed the most Holy Name of God. I am he whom, these many a hundred years, ye have called the 'impenitent thief,' knowing not the infinite mercy and power of God.
>
> "For, be it known to you that, as I hung in that Sacred Presence, I saw, ere my spirit fled, the people mocking and reviling Him, even as I—foul sinner that I am—had mocked and reviled Him. And I saw that, even as He had answered me not, so He answered them never a word, but, lifting His eyes to heaven, He prayed to His God and theirs, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'
>
> "And as He thus prayed, He turned and bent on me—me, the outcast, the blasphemer, the vilest and most impenitent of all that vile and impenitent throng—such look of Divine dignity, such look of infinitely pitying and pardoning love, that, though my anguish-racked body, heavy with approaching death, hung, dragging its dead weight from the cross, I forgot the straining of my torn and quivering hands against the cruel nails, forgot the thousand tortures which each heart-throb sent through every nerve and limb; forgot shame and death and judgment, in wonder and worship and love.
>
> "To your knees, O brothers and sisters, and sue for pardon, that even as I—outcast and blasphemer—obtained mercy at that last moment of my life, so may ye, blasphemers and impenitent, be forgiven by the intercession of the same Savior who laid down His life for us all!"

Finally, after a blasphemer has had an innings, ONE [thus, please] appeared with the features of a man and the face of a God. This is Jesus Christ himself, who harangues the people as follows:—

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"Did you indeed think, beloved, that while you were suffering and sorrowing on earth, I, your elder Brother and Savior, could rest content in the bliss of heaven?—that I ceased to share your sorrows when my earthly life was at end?

"O mothers, who mourned for your children, it was my heart that brake when you fell sobbing by that tiny bed! O little children! every hair of whose head is sacred unto me, to spare whose little feet one step on a thorny road, I would endure and gladly a Calvary of woes! O weary men! O lonely women! whose every sorrow I have known, at whose every tear this heart of mine has bled—think you that any nail which wounded these hands, these feet, on Calvary's Cross, stabbed me with so cruel a pang as that which pierces my soul at any sin or sorrow of thine?

"You have suffered for a lifetime, but I, until time shall be no more; and even as every sorrow of yours has entered into my heart, so has every sorrow of mine entered into the heart of the Father.

"Said I not unto you that, 'Lo, I am with you always, *even unto the end of the world*'? and thought you, that I could be with you, and not feel with you, sorrow with you, suffer with you?

"But now is that end indeed accomplished; now are the powers of darkness for ever overcome; now is death, the last enemy, destroyed; and now render I up the Kingdom to my Father, that God may be All, and in All."

This kind of eloquence is about fit for a Sunday-school. What a grotesque notion underlies the pathetic phraseology! One is inclined to pity this Christ until one reflects that he is playing the fool. All the world suffered, and he suffered, and his Father suffered. And what for? Alas! we are not informed; the problem of evil is left where it was, and where it will always be while men personify the universe, make a deity of their own ignorance, and prate about "God."

Mr. Kernahan winds up with a *waking* dream. Looking out of his window in the early morning, he sees haggard men and careworn women hurrying to their work; but in every face he saw the sorrowful face of Christ, and over the great city of London he seemed to see resting THE SHADOW OF A CROSS. We also have seemed to see that shadow; but to us it was terrible—the shadow of priestly fraud over human misery.

G. W. FOOTE.

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

(Concluded from page 248.)

REMINDED that she had been caught sometimes, and of her own carelessness and inattention, Helena Petrovna said:—

"Yes, I certainly am careless and inattentive; but others, with very, very rare exceptions, are far more inattentive than I am; they are just so many sleepy owls, so many blind men, and never observe anything at all. Would you believe that all this time, before and after the Theosophical Society's foundation, I have not met more than two or three men who knew how to observe and see and remark what was going on around them? It is simply amazing. At least nine out of ten people are entirely devoid of the capacity of observation, and of the power of remembering accurately what took place even a few hours before. How often it has happened that, under my direction and revision, minutes of various occurrences and phenomena have been drawn up; lo, the most innocent and conscientious people, even sceptics, even those who actually suspected me, have signed *en toutes lettres* as witnesses at the foot of the minutes. And all the time I knew that what had happened was not in the least what was stated in the minutes. Yes, my dear sir, I venture to assure you that in history, even the best attested, there is far more fancy than truth."

In such observations we may see not only the woman of the world, but the thinker, who was able to dupe even those with pretensions to culture and science.

Solovyoff asked her: "Are you alone the author of Koot Hoomi's letters, philosophical and otherwise?" "No; chelas used sometimes to help me—Damodar and Subba Rao and Mohini." "And Sinnett?" "Sinnett won't invent gunpowder; but he has a beautiful style, he is splendid at editing." "And Olcott?" "Olcott is not bad at editing either, when he understands what he is talking about. But one has always to chew everything for him till one is sick."

She showed Solovyoff the magic bell which he had already discovered. "Yes," she confessed, "that is my occult telegraph, through which I communicate with the 'master.'" She then asked him to prepare the ground for her to work in Russia. "Write more, louder, about the Theosophical Society; rouse their interest, and 'create' Koot Hoomi Russian letters. I will give you all the materials for them." Instead of answering, Solovyoff fairly ran away. She immediately sent Bavaji after him with a note, in which she showed her whole hand, telling him that, if he would only trust her, and see in her a *résumé* of all the so-called, imaginary, many masters, "then you, as a patriot, would perform an immense service to Russia also." Solovyoff interpreted this as an attempt to cover up her self-revealed exposure of fraud with a new mystification. He had previously deprecated the view of Mr. R. Hodgson that she was a Russian spy, "not," he is careful to say, "because I believe her incapable of playing such a part, but because, in the autumn of 1885, she was extremely anxious to become a secret agent of the Russian Government in India." "If she wished to become," he says, "it is plain that, up to that time, she was not." How naive! Had M. Solovyoff known her American and Indian career, he might have seen a little further. Of course, having had to fly from India, Helena Petrovna was in disgrace with the controllers of the Secret Service, and wished to utilise Solovyoff to get reinstated.

This is how he reports what she said:—

"Look here, this is what it is," she began; "you are soon going to St. Petersburg; now do undertake a very important business of the greatest benefit to Russia. I wish to propose myself as a secret agent of the Russian Government in India. To promote the triumph of my country over those vile English I am capable of anything. I hate the English Government in India, with its missionaries; they are all my personal enemies, thirsting for my destruction. That alone is reason enough why I should throw my whole soul into the struggle with them. And that I can do them immense harm in India is certain; and I alone can do it, no one else is capable of the task. My influence on the Hindus is enormous; of that I can easily produce as much evidence as you will. At a sign from me, millions of Hindus would follow me. I can easily organise a gigantic rebellion. I will guarantee that in a year's time the whole of India would be in Russian hands. Only they must give me the pecuniary means—I don't want much. You know how I am in this respect. And they must put it in my power to penetrate into India through Russia—for I can't go back there any other way since this affair of the Coulombs and the missionaries—and I will bring about one of the greatest events in history. I proposed the same thing before, some years ago, when Timasheff was still minister; but I did not receive any answer. But now, now it is much easier for me; I can arrange the whole thing in a year."

She thus confessed that she had years before offered her services as a secret agent to the Russian Government. It would have been unlike herself had she betrayed that the real purpose of the society was to spread in India a secret society with signs and pass words, and with the exoteric doctrine of the brotherhood of man, and the esoteric teaching, as expounded in the Introduction to the *Secret Doctrine*, p. xliv.: "We have not long to wait, and many of us will witness the Dawn of the New Cycle, at the end of which not a few accounts will be settled and squared between the races."

When the right moment came messages from the Mahatmas would have appeared, proclaiming a general rising. This is the established way in which political movements have been carried on in the East from time immemorial. Those have at best an imperfect comprehension of the Bible who do not recognise how much its prophecies were intended to bring about their own fulfilment.

M. Solovyoff admits that, in some respects, Madame Blavatsky appeared to be a subordinate. From his own book an impression is derived that she was something beyond the lying, fraudulent impostor which he nonetheless thoroughly proves her to have been. Despite her woeful failings, she was a woman of Titanic power, whose contempt for the mass of mankind was equalled by her own determination to make history. She has achieved a place beside her occult heroes, Cagliostro and St. Germain, and we can leave her with the charitable hope that, if her life could be seen from start to finish, she would be found more sinned against than sinning.

J. M. WHEELER.

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THE VALUE OF DOUBT.

Religious people of the present time are no more disposed to give doubt and scepticism credit for any power for good than were those persons who two thousand years ago were said to have questioned that any good thing could come out of Nazareth. There is, however, much truth in Coleridge's remark that "the road to belief is through the portals of doubt"; and yet this word is dreaded by many individuals, not so much upon its own account as in consequence of what it may lead to. Doubt is known to be the innovator, the turbulent element, that disturbs the deep slumber in which faith, superstition, and despotism repose. As it is the parent of the changes and improvements that take place in long-standing institutions, those people who are wedded to things as they are are adverse to its advent among them. The worldly interests of men are bound up with the established order of things; hence, instead of doubting the wisdom of maintaining an unalterable state of affairs, the interested ones are opposed to whatever is likely to produce a change. This is particularly manifest in discussions upon questions of law, government, and religion. The retention upon our statute book of those laws which are a disgrace to the age is vehemently defended, old forms of government that are quite incompatible with the spirit of the times are tenaciously clung to, and orthodox views of religion are credulously adhered to by a large section of the religious world. So far as progress has been effected in reference to each and all of these subjects, it has been the result of doubt, and therefore to this force must we look for further advancement.

In the popular theological mind there is a much stronger feeling against doubt than there is against the acceptance and retention of the most glaring superstition. Notwithstanding this deplorable fact, men of thought know and acknowledge that there is no condition of mind so appropriate and useful, in a state of society like ours, as that of doubt. We are inundated with all sorts of theories and doctrines, and to implicitly accept all as being right would be impossible. So doubt affords time for investigation, whereby the true may be detected from the false. Of course, it does not follow that this result will always happen where examination takes place; still, it is more likely to occur in the region of doubt than under the influence of "blind belief." People who decline inquiry lack either adequate mental capacity, or that spirit of fairness which is so essential in the pursuit of truth. Why should any man fear to examine the foundation of his beliefs unless he be apprehensive that it may give way? No one whose opinions are based upon matured thought should object to submit them to the force of argument. As Bishop Watson aptly remarked: "Whoever is afraid of submitting any question, civil or religious, to the test of free discussion seems to me to be more in love with his own opinions than with truth." Yet this aversion to debating religious questions is very extensive among theologians and their supporters. If all that is new is not true, it is equally certain that much that is old is manifestly false. Many of the views held by our ancestors were founded upon insufficient data, and the chief reason given why such views should be received to-day is not their truth or utility, but their antiquity.

This theological dislike to doubt and free inquiry can be readily explained. As already intimated, fearless investigation tends to expose any unsound point in the armor that is supposed to shield orthodoxy from the attacks of its opponents. Moreover, there is the common habit of regarding some beliefs as if they were beyond the reach of the critical faculty, and of adhering to certain opinions because they are pleasant and consoling. To discover that such beliefs and opinions are false would be to destroy the tranquility in the minds of those persons who too often "purchase intellectual peace at the price of intellectual death." Let it once appear that certain views must be true, because they harmonise with one's cherished convictions; let it be thought that to learn that such views were false would cause an unhappy state of mind, then the desire to find and to adhere to truth for its own sake would never be fostered. It is this "base repose" and this preference for "the stillness of the swamp" that produce what Buckle calls the "protective spirit." It was this very intellectual subjection that in times past created a state of society in which the greatest absurdities and the most palpable errors were believed to be solemn truths. It is only about two hundred years ago that such silly and preposterous notions as the existence of giants of enormous height, of devils and witches, of ghosts and of flying dragons, etc., began to be discarded. The drowning of so-called witches, the burning of heretics, and a host of other cruelties, were among the approved methods of our ancestors when doubt was condemned by "the powers that be," both temporal and spiritual. And to-day, in countries where doubt is prohibited, similar crude notions exist, and the same kind of mental stagnation and degradation obtains. Buckle truly observes: "It is necessary that men should learn to doubt before they begin to tolerate; and that they should recognise the fallibility of their own opinions before they respect the opinions of their opponents. This great process is far from being yet completed in any country; and the European mind, barely emerged from its early credulity, and from an over-weening confidence in its own belief, is still in a middle, and, so to say, a probationary, state. When that stage shall be finally passed, when we shall have learned to estimate men solely by their character and acts, and not at all by their theological dogmas, we shall then be able to form our religious opinions by that purely transcendental process of which in every age glimpses have been granted to a few gifted minds."

In considering the causes of the progress of nations, we recognise the vast importance of the acquirement and diffusion of that knowledge which is seminal and fruitful—a knowledge that results from the exercise of doubt and the carrying out of the principle of free inquiry. It is now granted that to most questions there are two sides; but in former times only one side, as a rule, was allowed to be published, and to doubt the truth of the popular side of the question was looked upon as a sin. It is only the antipathy produced by ignorance that causes an aversion to the investigation of every phase of a subject. No truth can be lessened in value, or lose any of its lustre, by repeatedly passing it through the ordeal of honest criticism. The spirit of doubt that has seized the minds of men in modern days has not only increased our general knowledge, but it has led to the adoption of new methods of inquiry that were only dimly seen by Aristotle, revived by Bacon, and matured by observation and experiment within the memory of living men. Those persons who are burdened with ancient prejudices are constantly dwelling upon the evils that doubt produces, and warning others against its dangers. It is, however, overlooked by these self-satisfied believers that stagnant ideas are useless; that a passive state of mind can give no security for the correctness of its opinions; and that, without change, no new truths can be established. People who passively submit to things as they are are not the promoters of commercial progress, or the guides in fresh enterprises. It is those who aim at improvement and advancement that should be looked upon as the real pioneers of the civilisation of the human race.

Men who feel sure that they have inherited the truth from their forefathers, who could not err, are not the persons upon whom we should rely for an increase in knowledge and the development of mental freedom. We prefer depending upon the heroes of doubt, men who are willing to grapple with the *pros* and *cons* of all subjects brought under their notice. Not to doubt is to ignore the advantages to be derived from the continual conflict going on between truth and error, and to lose the incalculable benefits arising from free and open discussion. As J. S. Mill, in his work *On Liberty* (p. 12), wrote: "Man is capable of rectifying his mistakes by discussion and experience. Not by experience alone. There must be discussion, to show how experience is to be interpreted. Wrong opinions and practices gradually yield to fact and argument; but facts and arguments, to produce any effect on the mind, must be brought before it." To aid in this work is one of the functions of doubt, and herein lies its value.

Charles Watts.

(To be concluded.)

After a long drought there came a heavy rain, during which one farmer observed to another: "This is a providential rain. I hope it will bring up everything out of the ground." To this the other replied, with a dubious shake of the head: "I can't say as I agree with you there, neighbor. I've buried three wives in the ground, and I should mortally hate to see them all come up again."

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MAY DAY.

THE decoration of horses with rosettes, and an occasional "Jack in the Green," and girls with paper feathers dancing round a barrel organ, are all that remain to remind the Londoner of the old festival of May Day. When I was a youth it was still the custom to trip out early in the country to get the May dew and gather hawthorn. This interesting survival of an old Pagan practice is not quite extinct. Shakespeare, in his *Henry the Eighth*, alludes to it, saying it is impossible to make people sleep on May morning. And who does not remember that passage in *Midsummer Night's Dream* where Lysander appoints to meet Hermia

> —In that wood, a league without the town,
> Where I did meet thee once with Helena
> To do observance to a morn of May?

Chaucer, in his "Court of Love," tells us that early on May morning "forth goeth all the court to fetch the flowers fresh, and branch, and bloom."

To this custom of early rising Herrick alludes, in his fine pastoral on "Corinna's Going a Maying":—

> Get up, get up, for shame; the blooming morn
> Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
> See how Aurora throws her fair,
> Fresh-quilted colors through the air;
> Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
> The dew-bespangling herb and tree.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> There's not a budding boy or girl, this day,
> But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
> A deal of youth, ere this, is come
> Back, and with white-thorn, laden home.

And in Tennyson's "May Queen":—

> You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear.

This early rising itself was but a survival of a vigil in which the fun was kept up through the night. Stubbes, a Puritan writer of Queen Elizabeth's time, in his *Anatomie of Abuses*, published in 1585, says:—

> "Against May, Whit-Sonday, or other time, all the yung men and maides, old men and wives, run gadding about over night to the woods, groves, hils, and mountains, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes; and in the morning they return, bringing with them birch and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withall; and no merualle for there is a great Lord present amongst them as superintendent and Lord of their sports—namely, Sathan, prince of hel. But the chiefest jewel they bring from thence is their May-pole (say rather their stinking poole), which they bring home with great veneration."

This interesting passage lets us know that the old Pagan rites were confounded with witchcraft, and confirms the evidence that the persecution of witches was the last act in the tragic suppression of Paganism. Stubbes remarks that, when the Maypole was reared, "they fall to banquet and feast, to leape and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idolles, whereof this is a perfect pattern, or, rather, the thing itself." The acrid old Puritan was quite right. The Maypole was a phallic emblem of the life and generation manifest in the flowering of vegetation. It was the symbol of the renewal of life, as was also Flora, or our Maid Marian, or the Queen of the May; while Jack-i'-the-Green represents the tree spirit, whose *rôle* Mr. J. G. Frazer, in his *Golden Bough*, has shown to be so important in all the old religions.

Had the Puritans known the *Pervigilium Veneris*, a Latin poem ascribed by Erasmus to Catullus, but certainly later, it would have afforded them an additional text for invective against the Pagan superstitions which the May games were denounced as representing. The poem shows that the Romans, like our English ancestors, celebrated the season by betaking themselves to the woods for three nights, where they kept vigil in honor of Venus, to whom the month of April was dedicated, as being the universal generating and producing power. The poem seems to have been composed with a view to its being sung by a choir of maidens in their nocturnal rambles beneath the soft light of an Italian moon. All the signs of spring whisper of love, and the constant refrain comes in, *Cras amet, qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.*

Students of peasant customs and mythology—above all, students of the *Golden Bough*—will not be astonished at the suggestion that the three nights of vigil may have some connection with the legend of Jesus being three days and nights in the heart of the earth.

Mr. Douce, in his *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, observes that, during the reign of Elizabeth, the Puritans made considerable havoc among the May games, by their preachings and invectives, and at length put Maypole and all to the rout. King James's *Book of Sports* restored some, but by an ordinance of the Long Parliament in April, 1644, all Maypoles were taken down, and the games suppressed. This, and the prohibition of Christmas festivities, contributed largely to bring the Puritans into disrepute, and at the Restoration the Maypoles were restored, and even the most complained of licentiousness returned, as may be guessed from Herrick's lines:—

> Many a green-gown has been given;
> Many a kiss both odd and even;
> Many a glance, too, has been sent
> From out the eye, love's firmament;
> Many a jest told of the key's betraying
> This night, and locks picked; yet we're not a-Maying.

The May festival is usually referred to the Floralia of the Romans, which commenced on April 27, and ended on the first of May. The people decked themselves with trees and flowers, and licentious dancing went on in the streets. But, in truth, festivals at the first risings of plant life, after the death of winter, and also when flowers open their buds, are natural everywhere and world wide. When nature assumes her bridal robes is a proper time for rejoicing. If Easter celebrates the resurrection of life from the underworld, Whitsuntide announces the coming of the Holy Spirit of Love. The Pagan observances still remaining in all Christian festivals sufficiently show how deeply rooted they were in nature worship.

The last Maypole in London was taken down in 1718. It was set up in Wansted Park, Essex, as a support to Sir Isaac Newton's large telescope. Pope thus perpetuates its remembrance:—

> Amidst the area wide they took their stand,
> Where the tall Maypole o'erlook'd the Strand.

"The Mayings," says Strutt, in his *Sports and Pastimes*, 1801, "are in some sort yet kept up by the milkmaids at London, who go about the streets with their garlands and music, dancing." But the milkmaids gave place to the chimney-sweeps, as Maid Marian had to Malkin, a clown dressed in woman's clothes; and even the sooty sweeps have almost entirely abandoned the festival. Our country largely owed its title of "Merrie England" to its remnants of Paganism. Puritanism did much towards stamping these out, but Puritanism has in turn itself become almost as effete as Paganism.

J. M. WHEELER.

INGERSOLL ON SHAKESPEARE.

IF Shakespeare knew one fact, he knew its kindred and its neighbors. Looking at a coat of mail, he instantly imagined the society, the conditions that produced it, and what it in turn produced. He saw the castle, the moat, the drawbridge, the lady in the tower, and the knightly lover spurring across the plain. He saw the bold baron and the rude retainer, the trampled serf, and all the glory and grief of feudal life. He was a man of imagination.

He lived the life of all.

He was a citizen of Athens in the days of Pericles. He listened to the eager eloquence of the great orators, and sat upon the cliffs, and with the tragic poet heard "the multitudinous laughter of the sea." He saw Socrates thrust the spear of question through the shield and heart of falsehood. He was present when the great man drank hemlock, and met the night of death, tranquil as a star meets morning. He listened to the peripatetic philosophers, and was unpuzzled by the sophists. He watched Phidias as he chiselled shapeless stone to forms of love and awe.

He lived by the mysterious Nile, amid the vast and monstrous. He knew the very thought that wrought the form and features of the Sphinx. He heard great Memnon's morning song when marble lips were smitten by the sun. He laid him down with the embalmed and waiting dead, and felt within their dust the expectation of another life, mingled with cold and suffocating doubts—the children born of long delay.

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He walked the ways of mighty Rome, and saw great Cæsar with his legions in the field. He stood with vast and motley throngs, and watched the triumphs given to victorious men, followed by uncrowned kings, the captured hosts, and all the spoils of ruthless war. He heard the shout that shook the Coliseum's roofless walls, when from the reeling gladiator's hand the short sword fell, while from his bosom gushed the stream of wasted life.

He lived the life of savage men. He trod the forest's silent depths, and in the desperate game of life or death he matched his thought against the instinct of the beast.

He knew all crimes and all regrets, all virtues and their rewards. He was victim and victor, pursuer and pursued, outcast and king. He heard the applause and curses of the world, and on his heart had fallen all the nights and noons of failure and success.

He knew the unspoken thoughts, the dumb desires, the wants and ways of beasts. He felt the crouching tiger's thrill, the terror of the ambushed prey, and with the eagles he had shared the ecstacy of flight and poise and swoop, and he had lain with sluggish serpents on the barren rocks uncoiling slowly in the heart of noon.

He sat beneath the bo-tree's contemplative shade, wrapped in Buddha's mighty thought, and dreamed all dreams that light, the alchemist, has wrought from dust and dew, and stored within the slumbrous poppy's subtle blood.

He knelt with awe and dread at every shrine; he offered every sacrifice and every prayer; felt the consolation and the shuddering fear; mocked and worshipped all the gods; enjoyed all heavens, and felt the pangs of every hell.

He lived all lives, and through his blood and brain there crept the shadow and the chill of every death; and his soul, like Mazeppa, was lashed naked to the wild horse of every fear and love and hate.

The imagination had a stage in Shakespeare's brain, whereon were set all scenes that lie between the morn of laughter and the night of tears, and where his players bodied forth the false and true, the joys and griefs, the careless shallows and the tragic deeps of universal life.

From Shakespeare's brain there poured a Niagara of gems spanned by fancy's seven-hued arch. He was as many-sided as clouds are many-formed. To him giving was hoarding—sowing was harvest—and waste itself the source of wealth. Within his marvellous mind were the fruits of all thought past, the seeds of all to be. As a drop of dew contains the image of the earth and sky, so all there is of life was mirrored forth in Shakespeare's brain.

Shakespeare was an intellectual ocean, whose waves touched all the shores of thought; within which were all the tides and waves of destiny and will; over which swept all the storms of fate, ambition, and revenge; upon which fell the gloom and darkness of despair and death, and all the sunlight of content and love; and within was the inverted sky, lit with the eternal stars. Shakespeare was an intellectual ocean, towards which all rivers ran, and from which now the isles and continents of thought receive their dew and rain.

DID CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

A PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

Being exceedingly fond of intellectual encounters upon the platform when they are conducted by gentlemen, I accompanied Mr. Foote last week to Kent, to listen to his debate, upon the above question, with the Rev. A. J. Waldron. It was the first time that I had heard my colleague in a regular set discussion; the event was therefore anticipated by me with great interest; and, to be frank, I may at once say that my anticipations, in some particulars, were more than realised. The local excitement was intense—the debate had been *the* talk among all sections of the neighborhood for weeks past; for a controversy upon such a subject as "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?" was an incident new to the majority of those who listened to it.

The discussion took place on the evenings of Wednesday and Thursday, April 17 and 18, in the Public Hall, New Brompton, before crowded audiences, the building being packed each night in every part, including platform and an ante-room. Complete order was maintained throughout, and it was manifest that all present desired to hear both sides with patience and fairness. This is a striking indication of the progress of Freethought. Ten years ago Mr. Foote, or any other Secular advocate, would not have been listened to while boldly assailing orthodox pretensions. In my judgment, two-thirds of the audience were in favor of the Christian position, and one-third were Freethinkers and Secularists. I have faced many audiences in my time, but never more impartial ones than those at New Brompton. Both gentlemen were warmly received and enthusiastically applauded at the various points they made. Mr. A. J. Waldron won respect from our party for his earnestness and gentlemanly behavior; while Mr. Foote—in addition to these qualities—by his dialectical skill and his analytical reasoning, commanded the admiration of many who were opposed to him. Major Scott Moncrieff presided the first night, and I the second.

Personally, I did not regard the encounter as being a great one. The cause of this was to me obvious. The rev. gentleman was no match, intellectually, for Mr. Foote. Debate is an art, and, in addition to a person having the gift to master it, practice is required. Now, it appeared to me that Mr. Waldron was deficient in each of these requisites. He possesses, no doubt, many qualifications as a speaker, and probably as a preacher he is above the average; but as a philosophical debater he is not great. He seemed not only to fail to grasp the nature of his opponent's arguments, but also to possess a very limited supply of his own. Hence he too frequently resorted to preaching, and to introducing matter that had nothing to do with the question in debate. Of course, this at the moment captivated the thoughtless believer; but it could not convince the judicious inquirer.

The rev. gentleman's contentions were practically three—namely, (1) That Christ must have arisen, because St. Paul and "others" saw him after he rose from the dead; (2) that the New Testament records the event as a fact; and (3) that the early Church was founded upon the belief that the Resurrection really took place.

It will be seen, by those who understand the subject, what an opportunity was here given to Mr. Foote to show his debating power, and to expose the fallacies thus expounded. And he was not slow to avail himself of the chance thus given. A more crushing reply I have never heard. He showed (1) The utter absence of any adequate evidence that Christ rose from the dead. (2) That, if Paul "saw" Jesus at all, it was subjectively, not objectively—that is, while Paul was suffering from a sunstroke, or some other mental derangement. (3) That no other writer in the New Testament says, "I saw the risen Christ"; it is only alleged that "he was seen," but there is not a particle of first-hand testimony. (4) That the documents which relate the story of the Resurrection are so contradictory that they would not be accepted as evidence in any court of law. (5) That many sections of the early Church did not believe in the Resurrection.

Upon all these points Mr. Foote dwelt with a precision and force which must have greatly surprised some of the audience who differed from him. His exposition and *exposé* were couched in language so pertinent, and delivered with such force, that even Mr. Waldron referred more than once to the eloquence of his opponent. To me it appears marvellous how independent thinkers can believe in the story of the resurrection of Christ; for, as Mr. Foote demonstrated, the Christian version of the delusion is only a reproduction of older legends. We are not surprised, however, that the multitude, who have been trained from their infancy to regard the myth as a fact, still cling to the error. It would be well if a verbatim report of what Mr. Foote said upon this point could be published. It would be an "eye-opener" to many of the faithful.

There is no doubt that the debate will prove a great advantage to the cause of Freethought in New Brompton. I noticed how elated the Secular friends were at the result of the discussion, and how many congratulations Mr. Foote received from them. I am pleased to be able to sincerely join in the general verdict, that he did his work well.

Charles Watts.

The human race, in all countries, has become the prey of the priests.—*D'Holbach.*

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FREE WILL.

Now, what does the Bible teach? Does it endorse the doctrine of the free will, or is it opposed to it? If the Bible teaches anything, it is that man is the subject of an eternal strife between God and the Devil, and whoever happens to be the stronger wins the game, and poor, suffering man has to put up with the consequences. If Christ taught anything at all, he taught the doctrine of predestination. He speaks of the elect, and compares them with a fold of sheep which knows its shepherd's voice, and which cannot be taken from him. Again, "None can come to the Father but by me, and none can come to me except the Father draw him." What, I ask, if Christians believe their own doctrine, has become of the free will?—Nil. But do the Christians really believe that the will is the predominant power of the human min? Have you not heard them comment as follows, criticising other people's morality: "O, one can easily understand his being a bad fellow, for I have known his father and grandfather, and they were both like it"? Or: "One can't expect him to be better, for he has never seen any good in his home." Or: "Don't expect too much of him, poor fellow; the world has been against him." I have repeatedly heard these remarks from exponents of the "free-will" theory; nay, I have actually heard exclamations of surprise at an isolated individual who has deviated from the rule. Does not this show that they know better than they will admit, and that the Christians are practically Freethinkers, not knowing it in their ignorance? Further, why are the clerical shepherds so anxious to seize hold of the children, and cram their religion down their throats, while they are yet young? Is it not because the cunning are Freethinkers, though they will not admit it? Is it not all admission of the truth of my argument that atavism, education, and environment mould our character and build up our lives?

I am well aware that the champions of religion make a laughing-stock of this view. The thief will say: "I could not help stealing the watch," and the policeman replies: "I cannot help locking you up"; and the thief gets punished for not helping his action, and so forth. These ridiculous fools have not ascended high enough in the scale of development to understand that it is not for the sake of revenge and punishment that the criminal is punished. They have still the brute-passion of revenge in them, and cannot comprehend that the idea of punishment is to reform and to deter from repetition of the act, thus counteracting the causes which stimulate to crime. They forget that society imposed responsibility upon its members by submitting them to certain restrictions long before they invented their God to give his ten commandments. If not, why was it that Moses fled when he had killed the Egyptian? Was it not because he knew that the law, "Thou shalt not kill," was already in force?

Responsibility between man and man we do not deny. The feeling of this responsibility is heightened, and our sympathy towards our fellow beings is intensified, in proportion as we realise that what we are we have been made through causes which are too strong for the individual, but which can be counteracted by mutual aid and combined effort. In proportion as he realises that what we are we have been made by causes which we do not know, so will man begin to investigate into the conditions of his fellow men, be kind, generous, and ready to forgive his brothers, and reach the weaker a helping hand. But what we will not recognise is the responsibility to God. As the chief duty lies with the parents towards their offspring, so lies the duty with him towards us. He has called us into being without consulting us. He has, if he exists and is all-powerful, made us as we are, created the causes and circumstances which constitute our misfortunes and shortcomings. Consequently, he has no right to inflict eternal suffering upon us for being as he created us, and as an all-good God he will not do so. Therefore, we say hell is a cruel, malicious invention, a scarecrow invented by a tyrannical clergy, imposed upon the ignorant in an age of superstition, for the purpose of forcing them into mental submission. Finally, when hell is gone, we have no use for the Christ to save us from it, and Christianity is exploded. Up to the present, mankind has worked out its own salvation step by step. What it has gained it has gained without any supernatural intervention. This is an established fact, which ought to be an inducement to self-reliance, and to refrain from cherishing any vain illusions about any kind of superhuman assistance.

J. K. Maagaard.

ACID DROPS.

Mrs. Besant is home in London again, and is going to enlighten (or darken) the world on the subject of Mahatmas. She will first have to satisfy the world that she acted squarely in regard to the Judge forgeries. Before she left for Australia she made it up with Judge, and accepted a resolution of the Theosophical Society expressing "pleasure" that the matter had been finally settled. But during her absence Mr. Garrett published his crushing exposure in the *Westminster Gazette*, which gave Mrs. Besant to see that the hushing-up game was no longer playable. Accordingly she finds it prudent to go upon the war-path again after Judge's blood. She informs the *Chronicle* interviewer that three out of the four "sections," into which the handful of Theosophists in the world are divided, will vote for Judge's expulsion.

Mrs. Besant doesn't want Judge now. She did at first, for he had a Mahatma in tow; but she has since found one of her own, and with that fine imagination which is characteristic of mystery-mongers, she locates her first acquaintance with him before she so much as knew Judge. Of course she adduces no corroborative evidence. We have only her word for it; and, unfortunately, her word is contradicted by the facts.

"I got my first absolute proof of the existence of Mahatmas," she says, "in 1889, before I had met Mr. Judge at all. From 1889 onward I both saw the master and he talked to me, taught me, and told me what was to happen. By him I was forewarned of Mr. Bradlaugh's death, which, occurring somewhat suddenly, would otherwise have come to me as a great shock."

It is easy enough to talk in this fashion. Anybody can wait until an event has happened, and then say "I knew it beforehand." Unless it is *said* beforehand, the statement is incapable of proof or disproof. It is only another form of the old confidence trick.

We never saw a Mahatma, and no Mahatma told us that Bradlaugh was going to die. Yet we knew it. He was a broken man before he went to India, he presumed upon his strength when he returned, and it required no "supernormal" wisdom to see that he would in all probability succumb to the next attack of his malady, especially if it happened in the depth of the winter. To talk of his death as "sudden" is an abuse of the English language, or an abuse of something still more universal.

Mrs. Besant did not know a Mahatma in 1889. At least, we assume that she is mistaken; otherwise we should have to say that she was juggling when she delivered her farewell address at the London Hall of Science in 1891. On that occasion she said nothing about *knowing* a Mahatma. She declared that, since Madame Blavatsky's death, she had received "letters in the same writing and from the same person." Nay, more; she said that her knowledge of Mahatmas had been secondhand during Madame Blavatsky's life; but, she added, "it is not so now, and it has not been *so for many months*." This chronology quite excludes her personal acquaintance with a Mahatma in 1889. As a matter of fact, she did not leave the National Secular Society until Bradlaugh resigned the presidency in 1890.

Mrs. Besant played those mysterious Mahatma letters ("on my honor as a lady") for all they were worth. Her announcement about them was the sensation of the day. Since then she has had to admit—under pressure—that the letters she trumpeted in this style were forgeries; and now she says that her reference to them was "altogether incidental."

The High Priestess of Theosophy does not wait till she has been in Devachan for a fresh incarnation. She has lots of new avatars on this side of the tomb. Having played out the old drama, she has started a new one, to fill up the empty benches. First, she played Madame Blavatsky and her Mahatmas; then she played Judge's forged Mahatma letters; and now she is playing a Mahatma of her own. It has taken her just four years to appropriate the Blavatsky's mantle.

Mrs. Besant will never equal that clever charlatan. She has not the necessary gifts for the part. Still, she is making

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as much progress as can be expected; and there is every likelihood of her drinking the cup of imposture to the very dregs.

A few months back the Australian press teemed with Theosophic and Spiritualistic rubbish. Mrs. Besant, who had been despised and hated most bitterly while she followed an honest and useful course of life, was now praised up and paraded before the public as an Eighth Wonder of the world, for no other reason than that she had made herself respectable by allying herself with a most transparent humbug—and humbug is the only respectable thing, as our readers know. She gave her sanction to one of Mrs. Mellon's open tricks, in Sydney; and a little later that dealer in spooks was most thoroughly exposed. A month or two passed, and Mrs. Besant was compelled to expose herself, and to inform the world that the stuff she had staked everything upon, stuff she had been as confident of as of her own existence, was—what? forgery! Still Theosophists and Spiritualists, like Adam and Eve, are "not ashamed." They brazen it out with a boldness worthy of a Catholic priest or a Salvationist. And the Ghosts and Mahatmas, like God and Christ, and the other Saints and Bugbears, decline to come to the rescue! This is extremely unkind of them. And it must be admitted that "Geordie" and "Koot Hoomi" are anything but gentlemen so to leave their lady friends in the lurch.—*Liberator.*

Archdeacon Farrar has had a plum from Lord Rosebery. He is appointed Dean of Canterbury. "In my Father's house are many mansions." Dr. Farrar is on the road to one of them—as a Bishop.

Dr. Farrar has made a lot of money by supplementing Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. His *Life of Christ* is said to have brought him over £2,000. Lucky man! Judas Iscariot, the cashier of the J. C. company, sold the entire business for £3 15s. There's more money in it now.

The following answer is said to have been given to a Cambridge Examiner: "We know little of the childhood of Christ; what knowledge we have we derive from Archdeacon Farrar."

The merry May Meetings, the *Christian World* list of which extends from April 1 to July 16, are now on, and parsons are almost as plentiful in the Strand as ballet girls. It gives them a nice outing, and all the religious societies an opportunity for crying out for funds, even while they proclaim the condition of London rivals that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The small hall at St. Martin's Town Hall more than sufficed for the very small meeting of old ladies and young workers of the Christian Evidence Society. The report was rather doleful. Though the income, thanks to "the fact that the money contributed for the Special Provincial Lecturers' Fund has been temporarily appropriated to other departments," reached a total of £1,472 3s. 3½d., yet of this the secretaries and clerk took £519, besides office-rent and other expenses.

In the items for Secretaries there follows the words for "Administration, Correspondence, and Interviews with Sceptics, Examinations, etc." We fancy the interviews with sceptics must be most trying, and well worth all the money they receive, for we note that they do not report a single case of their having converted a recognisable sceptic.

The Report says: "The very heavy losses and depreciation of investments, the general tendency to give to the relief of physical necessities, and the large multiplication of new organisations of different kinds, will account for the straitness in finances of almost all religious societies." If the public know what return they get for their money, there would probably be further straitness. We note that the C. E. S. Committee "constantly and earnestly urge their agents to maintain a Christian spirit and bearing." The reports from our outdoor stations elucidate what sort of spirit and bearing this is.

The Protestant Church of Ireland has sat upon the Rev. James Hunt, rector of Donegore, for having taught doctrines contrary to the Articles in the Prayer Book. Mr. Hunt has signed a recantation. Three hundred years ago he would have been burnt first, and allowed time for recantation afterwards.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the veteran associate of Ernestine Rose in the advocacy of woman's rights, says: "During the fifty years since I went before the Legislature of New York to urge the rights of women, I have seen that the greatest trouble was that women believe themselves cursed of God, that they were the origin of sin, and that maternity is a curse, marriage a condition of slavery." These ideas are Bible sanctioned. Mrs. Stanton thought a remedy might be found in a revision of the Bible.

Had Mrs. Stanton tackled this business herself, giving her own comments on passages of the Bible affecting women, the probability is her work would have been a real instrument of woman's emancipation. But she formed a committee, associating with herself such persons as the Rev. Olympia Brown, Rev. Phœbe Hanaford, Mrs. Lord, Frances Ellen Burr, and Lady Somerset. The result appears mainly to be that these ladies revise the Bible to say what they wish it to say. They point to the first chapter of Genesis as showing the equal creation of man and woman, while dismissing the rib story in the second chapter as contradictory and belittling the story of the first chapter. On the third chapter they point out "the worthy ambition of the first woman for knowledge." Altogether the woman's revision of the Bible is likely to be a curiosity.

The inhabitants of Rockford, Illinois, are still concerned about Christ Schweinfurth, who is said to have over forty young women in his "Heaven" adjacent to their city. These "handmaidens of the Lord," as Christ Schweinfurth calls them, are said to occasionally have children by the Holy Ghost, for the followers of Schweinfurth hold that the age of miracles is not past, the arm of the Lord is not shortened, neither is his power less than in the days of the Apostles.

A new Messiah, or rather a new deity, has arisen in America. Of course the new deity is feminine; Mrs. Eddy is her name. She is said to be a manifestation of the feminine deity, the only begotten daughter of the bi-sexual He-She. It is said that the Christian scientists have put up for her a church in Boston, having stained-glass windows with portraits of the lady with a halo, and representing her in conversation with God.

Matthew Arnold said: "There is nothing one would more desire for a person or a document one greatly values than to make them independent of miracles." In pursuance of this idea, "advanced" men of God talk much of the natural foundations of Christianity. They either discard or slur over the miraculous, evidently thinking their faith will float more buoyantly were the supernatural element thrown overboard. But to do this consistently, it must be done wholesale. If, for instance, the temptation by the devil and perching on the pinnacle of the temple is only an allegory, may not the resurrection be an allegory? The Gospels without the miraculous would be more barren than the play of *Hamlet* with the character of the Prince of Denmark omitted.

The story of Saul and his *séance* with the witch of Endor has often been cited as confirmatory of Spiritism. But R. Phillips, writing in the Spiritist *Two Worlds*, rejects it as unhistorical. He says: "Now, we do not believe that the spirit world is a subterranean one, or that the departed exist in a state of drowsy oblivion. The very opposite is the truth, and, so far from regarding intercourse with us as an operation which disturbs and annoys them, our spirit friends unanimously tell us that it is one of their greatest pleasures, and we have no reason to doubt it."

If the greatest pleasure of the spirit world is to turn earthly tables and play the banjo in dark cabinets, all we can say is that we sympathise with the ghost of Samuel, who asked, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" The poor old prophet had been buried at Ramah, forty miles distant, and was calmly snoozing in Sheol when the witch trotted him out to meet Saul. He did not like it, though his visitor was a king. Yet the Spiritists want us to credit that the greatest pleasure of the defunct Shakespeare is to come back and talk through a medium to John Snooks!

American cities have been deluged with tracts with such taking titles as "Flee from the Wrath to Come," "The Terrors of an Endless Hell," "The Misery of the Damned," "The Eternity of Punishment," "A Lost Soul," "Do You Love Jesus?" and so on. "These tracts," says the *Progressive Thinker*, "were bought in immense quantities by religious fanatics, and were freely distributed among the people, with the avowed purpose to save poor, lost souls from endless woe. A recent trial at law in New York court has taken us behind the curtains. A party testified that he made a fortune in the manufacture and sale of these frightful tracts; that he engaged with another party in a speculative project purchasing whiskey; that his partner had diverted a portion of the money from its intended use; and that the action was brought to right the grievance." The union of hell-fire with the whiskey business has occasioned much comment; but, after all, it is a natural affinity.

Professor Flinders Petrie, on taking the honorary degree of LL.D. at Edinburgh, told of a new race he had

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discovered as living in Egypt, thirty miles North of Thebes, on the western side of the Nile. They had a custom of cutting off the head at burial. The race knew and venerated the dog. He believed the race existed 3000 B.C., or before the time of Noah's deluge, which evidently did not affect Egypt.

Max O'Rell says that in France there are many men who can swear and many who can sing hymns; but the Anglo-Saxon seems to have developed a capacity for doing both.

The Rev. George W. West, of the Episcopal Church of Manville, Rhode Island, has been forced to resign. This is not a case of heresy, for Mr. West is said to have an excellent reputation as a preacher and worker; but he was too fond of whist, tennis, and tobacco to please the candidates for white shirts, wings, and golden harps and crowns. The Chicago *Tribune* says this West case reminds it of the more pronounced weakness of the Kansas preacher, who was forced to resign because, while he was a strong exhorter, an eloquent preacher, and a man of great gifts in prayer, he was "apt to be quarrelsome when he was drunk!"

William Purkis, a Truro "Court Hairdresser," who was superintendent of the Congregational Church Sunday-school, has been arrested for selling bicycles, which he had never paid for, at less than cost price.

In Oklahoma there is a town called Tipperusalem. One founder wanted it called "Jerusalem," and the other "Tipperary," and in order to avoid a row they compromised.

It is recorded that, once upon a time, the parish minister of Lochnaben prayed for the Town Council, "such as they are." Last Sunday another minister, preaching in the same place upon Peter's denial of Christ, said: "He cursed and swore just like one of your Commissioners." That is bringing the Gospels up to date.

The clergyman at Barrow-on-Soar will not officiate at the new cemetery because it has not been consecrated, and the Home Secretary also will not permit its being simply dedicated. The consecration is only a pretext for getting more clerical fees. Can any superstition be more foolish than that of fancying that the earth in which one is buried needs holy water or prayers?

A Wesleyan trustee writes to the *Times* urging that Wesleyans should oppose the disestablishment of the Welsh Church, because otherwise the principle of secular application may some day be applied to Wesleyan trust property, which, he shows, is often held as a public charitable trust.

The Opium Commission has at last issued its report, which quite goes against the missionary view of the drug. The Commissioners say that it is considered the common domestic medicine of the people of India; that, taken in moderation, it is not attended with ill effects, and that excess is exceptional.

The Girls' Friendly Society is a philanthropic institution, receiving subscriptions from all quarters; but it appears that Nonconformists are debarred from all share in the management. If run on sectarian lines, it should appeal for support only to those in the Church of England.

The bubonic plague at Hong Kong has been followed by a similar or worse outbreak at the Portuguese settlement in Macao. Truly, the tender mercies of the Lord are manifold.

A Russian journal reports that the town of Kutschan, in Khorasan, has been swallowed up by an earthquake. It is said that, at a second shock, the already shattered town disappeared into an immense chasm in the earth. The number of victims of this visitation of God must be many thousands.

Further shocks of earthquake in Central Europe killed a good number, and drove many fairly out of their minds. At Laibach more than 20,000 persons camped out. There was a severe frost, and the women and children suffered greatly from the cold. Any human person guilty of such wanton destruction and cruelty would be considered a monster unfit to live. Yet we are told to credit everything to an all-good God.

An Ohio preacher said, "Chicago is the nearest approach to hell we have upon this earth." He got a call from the pork city at a larger salary, and made haste to go to the terrestrial Sheol.

The Archbishop of Paris has given the blessing of the Church upon the French invasion of Madagascar. He says the mission of France is that of Christianity and civilisation. Probably some of his hearers do not know that the Hovas, against whom the expedition is directed, are much better Christians than the majority of Frenchmen are.

Is fetishism extinct in the Church of England? Some people see distinct traces of fetishism in the rite of Holy Communion. Idolatry is yet more evident in the "Adoration of the Cross," which was performed at various Ritualistic churches on Good Friday. At St. Margaret's, Anfield, Liverpool, there was a procession of the cross. The hymn sung was the Christian version of the old phallikon:—

> Faithful Cross! above all other
> One and only noble Tree!
> None in foliage, none in blossom,
> None in fruit thy peers may be.
> Sweetest wood and sweetest iron,
> Sweetest weight is hung on thee.

The physicians of a new hospital erected in Brunswick are said to have been much vexed by the Minister of the Interior, a very High Churchman, having ordered that religious mottoes should be painted on the walls. They say that patients who see such mottoes constantly before them are easily excited, and their cure is hindered. They have had such mottoes banished at least from the operation-room. Fancy sick people being greeted with "Prepare to meet thy God," or "Where will you spend Eternity?"

Religion crystallises even commendable principles into a narrow and irrational form. Thus Dr. Hendley says that Jains of the strictest kind will not even drink water from the spring, because it contains life, but use that which has been drawn by other people from the wells, as the sin of destroying life then falls on the latter instead of on themselves. The idea of passing on sins and disorders to others is common to all Hindus.

Dr. F. Peake, the secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society, has been going out of his way, or perhaps all bigotry is in his way, in urging people to write to members of Parliament in opposition to the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill, which is set down for second reading on the 26th instant.

The first day of April was appropriately chosen by the Rev. Jacob Primmer, the Dunfermline anti-Romanist prophet, for a visit to the Vatican. He did not see the Scarlet Woman, but her influence was there; for while denouncing "a glaring imposture" placarded on the wall of the Mamertine Prison, which says that Paul was immured there, his feet slipped, and he fell headlong into the dungeon. Doubtless the monkish guide regarded this as a judgment on his unbelief, and will henceforth hold up the reverend anti-Romanist as a warning to sceptics. The *Aberdeen Evening Express*, which tells the tale with wicked glee, says: "The sooner that Jacob scuttles beyond the precincts of Rome and its sphere of influence the better, and he would be wisely advised were he to become of the same mind as Baillie Nicol Jarvie regarding his Hielan' kinsfolk, that his 'buits might be foo o' boilin' het parritch ere he again sets foot in such a —— country.'"

There have been a lot of disturbances at the Vestry meetings this Easter. The laity are not so subservient to the men of God as in days of yore. In some cases they objected to their ritualism; in others to high-handed proceedings in other directions; and at the parish church of Ogley Hay, Brownhills, they passed a resolution unanimously protesting against the attitude of the vicar (the Rev. S. F. Arrowsmith) in stifling discussion, and also "against the un-Christianlike and ungentlemanly conduct shown by him at the funeral of the late Mr. J. Poole, who had resided in the parish for thirty years, and was highly respected."

Mr. A. E. Fletcher, who retired from the editorial conduct of the *Daily Chronicle*, and is seeking the suffrages of the electors of Greenock, says he wants Government to be carried on "in accordance with the Ten Commandments and the doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount." We could understand this if he were an Anarchist, desiring no Government at all, for the doctrines he esteems would certainly reduce it to a minimum. Army and navy, judges, magistrates, and policemen would be abolished, and, with these gone, people might find out they could even, at a pinch, dispense with members of Parliament.

Talking about religious folks, we are reminded that "knee drill," which is supposed to be a very cheerful and elevating form of devotional exercise, much appreciated by members of the Salvation Army, has led to the suppression of the Army in Toulon, the Sub-Prefect of that particular French town having issued an order in which he says "knee drills" are manifestations of a religion which is not recognised by the State. Perhaps the "General" will find a more commonplace and sensible description of this especial form of religious evolution.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 28, Victoria Hall, Toward-road, Sunderland: 11, "The Shadow of the Sword"; 3, "Was Shakespeare a Christian?" 7, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

Tuesday, April 30, Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Goldhawk-road, Shepherd's Bush, W.: 8.30, "How the Bible Stands Now."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—April 28, Hall of Science, London. May 5, Glasgow; 6, 7, 8, and 9, debate at Glasgow with Dr. Jamieson; 12, Dundee; 19, Camberwell; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. Broadbent, 9 Peter-street, Manchester, repeats his offer to send vegetarian recipes free to any reader of the *Freethinker*.

A. G. Levett.—Thanks for your batches of cuttings.

Well Wishes.—Mr. Foote could not allow Mr. Watts to bear the responsibility of any deficit arising from his School Board contest in Finsbury, which was undertaken at the desire of the N.S.S. Executive. He has just paid the balance of £11 and closed the account.

W. H. Spivey.—Thanks for your encouraging letter. It is pleasant to find the Huddersfield friends keep a warm place in their hearts for Mr. Foote, who wishes he could visit them more frequently.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Blackburn Branch, 3s. 6d.

W. Clogg.—Your suggestion shall be considered.

P. Braham.—Your friend is about right.

J. Hayes.—It is enough if all assist to the extent of their power.

Ingersoll Admirer.—Colonel Ingersoll is under no obligation to reply to any and every Christian who likes to attack him. He has replied to Judge Black, Dr. Field, Talmage, Mr. Gladstone, and Cardinal Manning. He has not replied to Father Lambert, and no doubt for very good reasons.

R. J. Murray.—Thanks for your letter. Mr. Foote did mention the matter to your Committee when he was with you, and said there was no time to lose. If Nottingham is nominated next year, we shall feel bound to use our influence on its behalf.

W. Simons.—Glad to see the Kingsland open-air work is to be continued.

Liverpool Atheist.—We value your appreciation of our treatment of the *Liverpool Pulpit* attack on Bradlaugh.

E. Smedley.—(1) We did not preserve the report, and cannot now check the references. Of course we should be sorry to do the reverend gentleman an injustice. (2) There was certainly no ban upon the Christian religion for 250 years. The story of the Christian persecutions is, for the most part, a monstrous mass of falsehood. (3) The savage act of Nero, if it really happened, was confined to Rome. There was no general persecution of Christians at that time, as Gibbon clearly shows.

Newo.—Send the Freethought literature to Mr. Forder. He will see to its judicious distribution. Thanks for the cutting. Glad to hear you will send what you can in answer to our appeal.

Isolated Freethinker.—Pleased to hear we have aided in your mental emancipation. We do not know whether there are Freethinkers enough at Worcester to form and maintain a Branch. The Leicester Secular Society does not send us a lecture notice; of course we should gladly insert it. Any Freethinker can attend the Bristol Conference, sitting behind the N.S.S. members, and taking no part in discussing the Society's business. Why not join before then?

Papers Received.—New York Herald—Literary Digest—Clarion—Two Worlds—British Temperance Advocate—Darwen News—Isle of Man Times—Liberty—Lucifer—Nya Sanningar—Open Court—Liberator—Royal Cornwall Gazette—Huddersfield Daily Examiner—Echo—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Solidarity—Aberdeen Express—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—Blue Grass Blade—Sporting Chronicle—Birmingham Daily Post—Financial Weekly Bulletin—Northern Gossip.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

HALL OF SCIENCE.

I do not know whether I shall be able to raise the £600 necessary to extinguish Mr. R. O. Smith's mortgage (as vendor) upon the London Hall of Science; but if I do not succeed it will not be my fault.

Very little time remains, and those who mean to help must do so by next Tuesday.

None of the money sent in will be lost. Not a single share will be allotted unless we are in a position to settle with Mr. Smith. If we have to say to him: "Well, you must exercise your rights as mortgagee"—every penny of share-application money, and every penny of donation, will be returned.

Applications have been received, either by the National Secular Hall Society's secretary or by myself, for about 120 fresh shares. I cannot print a complete list of these applications. The best plan is to give a few items from the correspondence.

Mr. Samuel Seal sends me a cheque for £30 for as many shares, which is a sufficient pledge of his sympathy. I know some other Freethinkers who could easily spare as much. Will they send it?

Mr. William Clarkson sends me a cheque for £15; £10 for as many shares in his own name, and £5 as a donation. "The necessity of having headquarters," he says, "must be apparent to every member of the Secular Society." This gentleman lives in Scotland, and his example should stimulate the Londoners, who have hardly done their duty in this matter.

Mr. C. J. Pottage, who *is* a Londoner, sends me £5 for five shares in my own name.

G. R., another Londoner, who was such a good friend of our cause in the old Bradlaugh days, sends £2 as a donation, and writes: "I hope you will soon be able to collect the necessary amount for such a very important object."

A sailor on board a steamship, just about to sail, having seen our appeal, sends a donation of 10s. before leaving old England's shores. He thinks that if the Secularists are in earnest about the honor of Charles Bradlaugh they will find the money for a splendid memorial in London.

A Cheltenham friend applies for a share in token of "my esteem for you and our late leader."

A Torquay friend applies for four shares, and wishes he could take more. He is in a priest-ridden place, but he is glad to help Freethought where it has a better chance.

Mr. W. H. Spivey, of Huddersfield, thinks the party ought to seize this opportunity. He applies for two new shares, and says that other Huddersfield friends will do something. He wants to know why every Freethinker cannot take at least one share. We should then have splendid headquarters in the metropolis.

Mr. J. Partridge, secretary of the Birmingham Branch, applies for four more shares; another friend will apply for five, and the members are to see what can be done at their meeting on Thursday (April 25).

Mr. C. Heaton, a working man at Woodville, Burton-on-Trent, applies for one share, and calls upon five hundred working men to do the same "as a proof of gratitude to Charles Bradlaugh and our present leader."

Mr. John Hughes, whose donation of £1 was the first received, trusts that "one thousand others will do likewise."

Mr. G. F. Wenborn, a Londoner, takes five shares, and says he will take twenty, or even a hundred.

The donations I have to acknowledge are as follows: G. W. Foote, £5; C. J. Pottage, £5; G. R., £2; J. Hayes, 1s.; John Hughes, £1; W. O. Hawes, £2; J. Bevins, 5s.; John and James McGlashan, £2; Isolated Freethinker, 1s.; T. H. Elwen, £1; Old Shellback, 10s.; William Clarkson, £5.

I have now to make a final appeal. Those who can take shares, even if they cannot pay up at once, should do so immediately. Those who prefer to send donations, to be invested in shares in the name of the N.S.S., or in that of any person they indicate, should send their cheques or postal orders without a moment's delay. Those who prefer to make a promise, on condition that the attempt is successful, are invited to communicate with me. Even the "rank and file"—and there are thousands of them—might bestir themselves. Every one who reads this should decide at once what he can afford to give, however small the sum may be, even if only a shilling; then he (or she) should go to the post-office, obtain an order for the amount, and forward it to me. I will acknowledge every penny in next week's *Freethinker*. G. W. FOOTE.

The *Buffalo Express* gives the following as the subjects of Sunday pulpit discourses in that city: "Is the Trilby Craze Dying Out?"; "Fitzsimmons *v.* Corbett;" "How the Parson Spends his Vocation;" "Should our Daughters Marry Foreign Noblemen?"; and "High Sleeves and Theatre Hats." It wants to know if the Gospel and the old scheme of salvation have clean gone out of fashion.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon audiences at Glasgow on Sunday were (for him) only fair; partly, perhaps, owing to the number of friends who were finishing a holiday at the seaside. In the evening, however, the hall was crowded, many persons even standing in the lower passages. The third lecture was much applauded. Mr. Gilmour, who was in the chair, strongly invited discussion, but no one responded to the invitation. "General" Evans, late of the Salvation Army, but now on his own account, was present in the afternoon taking notes, but he did not raise any opposition. A collection was taken for the N.S.S. General Fund.

The Glasgow Branch, we are glad to hear, is stronger than ever in its membership. This is very gratifying and encouraging after such a long spell of hard weather and commercial adversity.

Mr. Gilmour will be known to the N.S.S. delegates and members who attended the Newcastle and Hanley Conferences. We are much pleased to hear that he thinks of travelling south in July or August. He will have three or four Sundays to spare, which should be greedily snapped up by Branches between Glasgow and London. We shall see, if he does come south, that our London friends have an opportunity of hearing him. Mr. Gilmour is a man of high ability and many accomplishments; he is also a capital speaker.

Mr. Foote lectures at Sunderland again to-day (April 28). Since his previous visit the proprietors and lessees of halls have been more or less intimidated by the bigots. One refused to let unless the police guaranteed the lectures as "all right." Even the lessee of the hall which is engaged stipulated for the mildest subjects. The Victoria Hall is the largest in Sunderland, seating about 4,000 people. It is to be hoped that every local Freethinker will do his best to secure large meetings.

On Tuesday evening (April 30) Mr. Foote lectures for the West London Branch in the Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherd's Bush, on "How the Bible Stands Now." Complimentary tickets have been sent to many of the local clergy.

Last Sunday morning Mr. Charles Watts lectured, to a crowded audience, for the Walworth Liberal and Radical Club, taking for his subject "The French Revolution." Mr. W. M. Thompson, L.C.C., editor of *Reynolds's Newspaper*, presided. Several questions were asked and answered at the close of the lecture, and a hearty vote of thanks was given to the lecturer.

In the evening Mr. Watts had a capital audience at the Hall of Science. Mr. Rowney, as usual, made an excellent chairman. Unfortunately, soon after Mr. Watts's arrival at the Hall he was suddenly seized with a most severe attack of cramp in his left leg. He had, in consequence, to abbreviate his lecture to three-quarters of an hour. The audience deeply sympathised with him, and two medical gentlemen present rendered valuable aid. It is the first attack of the kind our colleague has had, and we hope it will be the last. We are glad to report his entire recovery.

This Sunday evening (April 28) Mr. Watts will again occupy the platform at the Hall of Science, taking for his subject "Man and the Universe, from a Christian and Secular Standpoint."

Mr. S. P. Putnam's engagements are completed for his Sunday evening lectures during his coming visit to this country. There are, however, several week-nights for which arrangements can be made for a visit from him. Applications should be made at once to Mr. Charles Watts for vacant dates. In all cases a stamped and directed envelope must be enclosed for a reply.

"Nunquam" devotes another pretty column to the *Methodist Times*, which started the rumor that the editor of the *Clarion* had been captured by the High Church party. After some excellent chaff, Mr. Blatchford says frankly: "My religion is the religion of humanity. God has never revealed himself to me. Perhaps because I am too small for his notice; perhaps because he is too great for my understanding."

"Nunquam" says he doesn't know the difference between High Church and Low Church. He doesn't even know what Evangelical Christianity is. "Because," he adds, "I never thought it worth while to inquire." His conclusion is as follows: "Let the *Methodist Times* go on its way rejoicing: the *Clarion* is not to be caught with chaff."

The *Nya Sanningar*, the new organ of the Swedish Freethinkers, presents a very creditable appearance, and shows its decided character by reproducing a number of sketches from the French Comic Bible. Petrus Asplund is the editor, and we wish him all success in his venture.

Mr. Symes, noticing the *Literary World* review of our book on Voltaire, says: "Could we have better signs and proofs that Secularism, as the antithesis of Christianity, is gaining the ascendancy than these two facts—namely, that our universities are adopting the very views which Voltaire and Paine promulgated, and that these two men are now honored by Christians, after the churches have heaped upon them unlimited and horrible abuse for more than one hundred years? So bitterly and terribly were Voltaire and Paine abused, in my hearing, by parsons, by Sunday-school bosses, by pious tract writers and others, in my early days, that I felt a perfect horror of them; and long after I became un-Christianised I found it impossible to quell the old prejudice against those good and most useful men. Now we find Christians speaking in decent terms of them, and even hinting at an admiration for them which they can hardly venture to express just yet. To me nothing can be more encouraging than these facts, for they show the trend of modern thought and sentiment to be directly away from Christianity, and in favor of the forces which have rendered that superstition effete."

Secular Thought, of Toronto, devotes nearly the whole of its issue of April 6 to the Manitoba School Question, which is creating great excitement throughout the Dominion. It is felt that if the Catholics carry their point and compel the Manitobans to support their schools, they will virtually be masters of Canada. It is likely, however, that their claims will give an impetus in the direction of secular education. Messrs. Ellis, Adams, & Pringle have very good articles on the subject.

In Scranton, Pennsylvania, Judge Gunster decided that Bible reading and exposition in the public schools was in contravention of the law of the State.

Mr. Forder will lecture at Camberwell on Sunday evening, the lecture arranged for having fallen through. His subject will be "Science and Christianity."

The secretary of the Wood Green Branch asks us to announce that they begin their course of week-night lectures on Thursday, May 2. Mr. Cohen is to be the speaker, and as this is his first lecture after his absence in the north, we hope he will be well supported. The secretary does not inform us of the exact time and place of the meetings, but we presume those in the district will know.

The Finsbury Park Branch will hold a meeting at 91 Mildmay-park, N., on Sunday, at 3 p.m., when matters for the Conference Agenda will be considered. A full attendance of members is particularly requested.

Kingsland Freethinkers are requested to meet at Mr. Davey's, 21 Castle-street, to-day (April 28) at 12 noon, to make final arrangements for the open-air lectures at Ridley-road. The first lecture will be delivered on the following Sunday morning by Mr. P. H. Snelling, on "Secularism and Citizenship."

The Edmonton Branch begins open-air work to-day (April 28) at 7 o'clock, when Mr. James will lecture on "Still It Moves." Local Freethinkers should attend and support the speaker.

Mr. A. B. Moss, who is a member of the new Camberwell Vestry, was actually proposed as a churchwarden. Angels and ministers of grace defend us! The clergymen on the Board were smitten with amazement. There was some humorous speechifying, in which Mr. Moss took part. He said he felt quite qualified for that high function, but on the whole he would rather not stand. Mr. Moss, therefore, is *not* a churchwarden.

Mr. C. Cohen completes his month's mission at Newcastle-on-Tyne to-day (April 28). We hope the local Freethinkers will rally round him in strong force on this occasion. After the evening lecture he will address the Branch members on a matter of great importance to them.

The Committee of the West Ham Public Libraries send us "sincere thanks" for our donation of the *Freethinker*. We hope it will do good in Mr. Keir Hardie's constituency.

Crowded meetings listened to the debate at New Brompton between Mr. Foote and the Rev. A. J. Waldron. There were two chairmen, but not work enough for one, as the debaters kept the peace, and the audience was most orderly. Major Scott Moncrieff presided the first evening, and Mr. Charles Watts the second. The major, of course,

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was well known already; Mr. Watts was a stranger, but his appearance was a good enough introduction. Mr. Waldron is popular among the Christians at New Brompton. He is certainly a fluent and capable speaker. Of course he had the last speech; Christians generally manage to get that, and they generally abuse the opportunity. Mr. Waldron's last speech was a long way off the Resurrection. It was a general panegyric on Christianity, supported by recitations from Browning, Tennyson, and Newman. Still, it satisfied the Christians, and the Freethinkers did not care to interrupt.

A MINISTER'S FUNCTIONS.

THE Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott, a Broad Church minister, who is said to be the most popular reverend in America since the death of Henry Ward Beecher, writes in the *Forum Library* on "What are a Christian Preacher's Functions?" He notices that the preacher is getting to be looked on mainly as an entertainer, and he does not like it. "The preacher's function," he says, "is not that of a play actor or orator, or even a moral reformer, but that of a messenger of God." He justifies denominationalism on the ground that "experience has proved the truth of Christ's prophecy, that each shepherd would have his own flock, who would hear his voice, but would not hear the voice of a stranger." This citation shows Mr. Abbott's own methods of dealing with the Bible. There is no such prophecy as Mr. Abbott speaks of, but in the very same chapter where Jesus is made to say, "The sheep follow their own shepherd, for they know his voice," he says, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd," which Catholics rightly cite as a condemnation of denominationalism.

Dr. Lyman Abbott wants to sell a new article under the old label, to offer evolutionism under the guise of Christianity. He says: "It is useless for the ministry to go on preaching a catastrophic theology to an age which has adopted an evolutionary philosophy; and it is a great deal worse than useless for the ministry to identify religion with a catastrophic philosophy, and so incite the thoughtful men and women of the age to relegate religion with that philosophy to the lumber room where old and cast-off furniture is kept." "Religion," he virtually says, "must follow science. Formerly science was catastrophic; it is now evolutionary. The change began, at least it was emphasised, in geology, which half a century or more ago taught that the world was brought into its present shape by forces now operative, and through phenomena akin to those of comparatively recent history. The nebular hypothesis carried back this evolutionary theory of world-building to very remote ages. Philology undertook to account for the difference of tongues by an analogous, natural, and long-continued process. Historical science was re-created on a new basis, upon the hypothesis that epochs created men rather than men epochs. Anthropology traced all variations of race upon the earth back to a single pair, denying the theory of special creations. Zoology and embryology carried the process further back, claiming to explain the differentiation of the different animal species, and then the difference between men and the other animals, and, finally, the difference between the animal and the vegetable, as due, in a similar manner, to gradual growth, not to sudden and divine interventions. The scientific thought of the present age is as truly constructed on this evolutionary theory of change by growth as the astronomical thought is on the Copernican theory."

Religion formerly taught a God who came from nowhere, who at some moment of time made all things out of nothing, man from dust and woman from his rib. The function of the modern messenger of God is to give a totally different message, but one in which the difference is wrapped up in a mass of verbiage and duplicity. After this, we are not surprised that Dr. Abbott concludes by saying: "I add, to any young man who may read these pages, and who is deliberating the question of his profession, that never was 'the cloth' or 'the pulpit' less venerated than now, never was so scant respect paid to the mere vestment and standing place; but never did an age or a nation so greatly need the prophet as this age and this American people, and never was age or nation more ready to hear and heed the prophet, if he comes to it inspired by the consciousness of a divine message." Since, evidently, the men of God are not inspired by the consciousness of a divine message, but palpably eager to put new wine into old bottles and palm it off as the original article, we do not wonder that the cloth has fallen into disrespect.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

THE French writer who laid it down that *science is bankrupt*, probably only meant to express his own inaptitude for, and indifference to, the serious investigation of facts, and his preference for the realm of imagination, wherein he can build what castles in the air he pleases. If he came calmly to consider matters, he might find that it is science, or systematised knowledge, which has given him the possibility of leisure to indulge his fancy. Nay, he might discover that the actual facts of science—the ascertained distance of the stars, for instance—are so stupendous as not only to outsoar his imagination, but absolutely to pass beyond his conception. Religion has myriads of ministers who every week extol its triumphs, yet the fact remains that all we call civilisation is due, not to religion, but to science. There is plenty of religion among savages; indeed, it may be said the more barbarous a nation is, the more attention it will bestow on religion; but not until it has some systematised knowledge will it make progress. Abyssinia is a Christian country, as much as, or more so, than England. What makes the difference but the acquisitions of science? All the preaching in the world has not done so much in the interests of peace and civilisation as the mere intercommunication of peoples, brought about by science. And there is this difference between science and religion: the one is constantly expanding, the other constantly contracting. Religion was first in the field, and claimed all the ground. It pretended to settle every question in regard to world-making and man- and woman-making. It laid down the laws for human life here, and pretended to tell our destiny hereafter. But exactly as science has extended, as knowledge of nature has increased, so have religious pretensions been forced to retire. Religious teachings have been found to be in contradiction to the conclusions of geology, of astronomy, and of biology. The religious account of the origin of the world and of man is found to be incorrect; and, now being found in error upon things upon which we are capable of judging, it asks to be credited unreservedly upon things which no human person can possibly decide.

The men of God now speak of the reconciliation of science and religion. They are like the Chinese saying to the Japanese, "Let us be at peace," since they have found themselves beaten at every encounter. But they cry "peace, peace," where there is no peace. The basis and method of science is entirely different from that of religion. Religion rests on authority; science on investigation. Religion is stationary; science progressive. The one starts with *a priori* assumption of a God; the other works inductively, and questions all assumptions. Religion is based on some supposed revelation, either universal or special; science upon reason. Religion pre-supposes the inefficiency of the human faculties; science their relative sufficiency. The only peace possible is by the constant surrender of religion to science, and the accommodation of the theories of the former to those of the latter. The surrender may make for a time a *modus vivendi*; but science as it advances soon makes fresh demands, and religion again has to retire.

To reserve some territory to itself, religion has now to live entirely in castles in the air. It rests not on verifiable facts, but on an assumption of supernatural existences and an after-life altogether too nebulous to be brought within the domain of science. In plain terms, it has to do with fictions, while reason has to do with facts. The one points to an imaginary cloudland hereafter; the other deals with the actualities of the present world. Religion gives no guarantee for human progress, for, if evil and misery were once compatible with the existence of God, they may be so for ever; but science, by the gradual accumulation of knowledge, and consequently of power, gives assurance of the amelioration of human destiny. It is science which has taught us to manfully grapple with the evils that surround us, and to overcome them, instead of prostrating ourselves

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before them in a spirit of prayer and abject submission. It substitutes work for prayer, conduct for creed, and the service of man for the vain worship of God.

LUCIANUS.

BOOK CHAT.

MR. KENNETH FEARINGTON BELLAIRS, who has published a pamphlet entitled *Is Christianity a Forgery? Is English History a Fraud?* is a thorough-going disciple of Professor Edwin Johnson. He holds that all Church history prior to the invention of printing is forged; that the painted missals are no earlier than oil paintings; that the oldest abbeys and churches are but between 400 and 500 years old, as proved by the age of the trees around them; and that the whole pretence of antiquity was part of a scheme to despoil the people.

* * *

Mr. Bellairs further holds that the Romans were not long in Britain, and that when they left they were followed by gangs of continental adventurers and monks, who subdued the barbarous people and backed up their pretensions by fraud. He discredits the story of the battle of Hastings, no bodies ever having been recovered there. Battle Abbey—dated nearly three hundred years after the battle it was to commemorate—he dates about 1600. Domesday Book, which, everyone knows, is written in an Italian hand, he says is in Dog Latin of the Tudor period; and, in short, he regards all history prior to the invention of printing as legendary.

* * *

Mr. Bellairs has visited a number of places of alleged antiquity, whose pretensions he finds break down under scrutiny. His conclusions are given in a rough and ready style, and are none the less likely to be acceptable to those who only know the facts that the Church somehow got possession of the best lands, and has ever since battened on the tithes. If Bishop Stubbs is too busy to refute Mr. Bellairs, perhaps some antiquarian like the Rev. Augustus Jessop will come forward and do so, for he professes himself only anxious to arrive at the truth.

* * *

Dr. P. S. George, of Lincoln, Nebraska, proposes to compile and publish a book detailing accounts of the religious insanity of the present time. It is likely to be a big work. The superintendents of lunatic asylums could give much information on the pernicious character of the vaunted faith in another world, though too often cases of religious insanity are registered as simply melancholia with delusions.

* * *

Messrs. George Bell & Sons propose to add to "Bohn's Library" an illustrated edition of Motley's *History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic*, with an introduction by Moncure D. Conway; and Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, as translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau, with an introduction by Mr. Frederic Harrison. Each of these will be in three volumes.

* * *

A new English Dialect Dictionary is announced. It is to be a complete vocabulary of all dialect words still in use, or known to have been in use during the last two hundred years. It will be edited by Professor Joseph Wright, and issued to subscribers only. Subscription of a guinea a year to be remitted to the Rev. Prof. Skeat, 2 Salisbury-villas, Cambridge.

* * *

The catalogues of Mr. Bertram Dobell, of 75 Charing Cross-road, the publisher of the complete poetical works of James Thomson, are always interesting. The one just issued, besides having many interesting and special items, such as first editions of Fielding, Swinburne, Landor, etc., has some interesting notes, one given to *An Essay on Government*, the now scarce work of Mrs. Lee, the Female Infidel, of whom a sketch is given in the *Secular Almanack* of this year.

* * *

The *Daily News*, reviewing Madame du Hausset's *Private Memoirs of Louis XV.*, says: "In that Court of King Louis all is corruption. The palace is a moral posthouse under the thinnest varnish. Take away one or two honest people—such as Dr. Quesnay and M. de Morigny, the Pompadour's brother—and the brilliant swarms of courtiers are for the most part pimps, panders, procuresses, adulterers, spies, intriguers, liars, swindlers. One of their most curious characteristics is their combination of a scrupulous regard for the forms of religion, with an utter indifference to its spirit." From the king downward they were childishly superstitious, and also selfish and sensual. They were all horrified at Frederick the Great's "irreligion."

In these memoirs of Madame de Pompadour's lady's maid, says the *Daily News*, "the arch-impostor, the Count de St. Germain, is pretty fully described. A Cagliostro of an earlier time, the Count had, according to his own account, already lived two thousand years. He expected to live five hundred more. He laid claim to the power of conferring long life. He resisted the temptation of living five years longer and seeing the Revolution. He died in 1784, 'in the midst of his enthusiastic disciples, and to their infinite astonishment at his sharing the common lot.' As a miracle worker he could have put the Blavatskyite congregation to shame. But there was this difference between him and the thaumaturgists of our own day—he was clever, amusing and accomplished."

TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO.

"According to Luke, Jesus, having been born in Bethlehem, was taken, after forty days, to Jerusalem, and there publicly presented in the temple; after which his parents returned with him to Nazareth. On the other hand, according to Matthew, after the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, his parents were warned to flee with him into Egypt, since Herod, at Jerusalem, would be lying in wait for the child to destroy him. This warning was obeyed; hence, according to Luke, Jesus was publicly presented in Jerusalem at the very time when, according to Matthew, he was carried to Egypt to avoid being seen in Jerusalem."—*Judge C. B. Waite, in the "Investigator."*

THE Judge, perhaps from weariness, has not disclosed all the strange things that crowded themselves into the little space covered by his remarks. Not only was the youngster in two or three places at once, but he was there for as many different reasons. Of course he went to Egypt to escape the slaughter of innocents, and he had to be in Jerusalem for presentation at the altar (circumcision?); but the Egyptian excursion was for still another purpose—namely, that of fulfilling prophecy—"Out of Egypt have I called my son"—though no such prophecy had ever been made about him; neither does it fit the case, as Jesus was not called out of Egypt, but out of Galilee into Egypt. Incidentally, he must be conveyed to Nazareth to verify another prophecy—"He shall be called a Nazarene"—though the prophets never spoke these words of anybody. Matthew, who makes this queer break, appears not to have been aware that Nazareth was the habitat of Joseph; that an angel had visited Mary there; and that when Joseph, with his female and young, "turned aside into Galilee," and "came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth," he was merely going home. Matthew and Luke should have "got together." Some of our Irish citizens who, two weeks ago, celebrated Sunday and Monday, March 17 and 18, to the glory of their patron saint, explain that St. Patrick had two birthdays "because he was twins." In view of the variety of localities occupied simultaneously by the subject of these remarks, there seems to be no escape from the conclusion that he was triplets. I charge the Christian world nothing for this prop to the doctrine of the Trinity.

GEO. E. MACDONALD.

Belief Not of the Will.

Said Sir Thomas More, in his *Utopia*, three and a half centuries ago: "I am fully persuaded it is not in man's power to believe what he list."

Go to the jury room, where a dozen men are collected to render a verdict on important issues. They are honest, conscientious men, who have been selected with greatest care from the people, men of character and probity which the tongue of slander cannot assail. They are under oath to render an honest verdict. They have already heard the evidence, the arguments of counsel, the instructions of the judge. But note their variant opinions, as revealed in their first ballot. They may agree in the end; but each must surrender somewhat his own convictions.

More was the oldest jurist of his day on the King's Bench of England. It was his special duty to know of these conflicting views of persons whose opinions were based on the same facts. He knew it was impossible for a man to believe as he wished, contrary to evidence, or in the absence of evidence. But the Son of God, yea, God himself, according to orthodoxy, demands the world to believe in him or be damned, and this on conflicting hearsay evidence only. Is there not some mistake about it?—*Progressive Thinker.*

I am quite sure, from my own experience of children who have been allowed to learn penitential psalms and hymns, that they think of wickedness as a sort of thing which gives them self-importance.—*Mrs. Jameson, "Commonplace Book," p. 223.*

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BIBLE GOD PUZZLED.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Yesterday (April 21st, not the *first, bien entendu*) Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, caused prayers to be offered up in the principal churches for the success of the French forces in Madagascar, where they have embarked upon a policy of spoliation and plunder. The pious Cardinal is not ashamed to say that "by a secret instinct (*sic*) France, in going to Madagascar, is accomplishing one of the acts of the providential mission (*sic*) with which she was entrusted (*sic*) at her baptism [oh !]—to spread Christian civilisation [with syphilis to boot, till then unknown] throughout the world!" What would Arouet de Voltaire say to this impudent lie? "*O, grand homme, tu dois rougir dans ton tombeau!*" The Queen of Madagascar, *per contra*, has also solicited prayers in England and elsewhere for the success of her soldiers, who not only fight *pro aris et focis*, but for a hybrid *Christian* religion, very much in vogue among the canting, ranting, hypocritical humbugs of dear old England. *Voyez la galère!*

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

A STRAIGHT LETTER.

35a Great George Street, Westminster, S.W.,
London, April 18, 1895.

The Assistant Secretary, Railway Department,
Board of Trade, Whitehall, S.W.

SUNDAY PHILHARMONIC UNION.

SIR,—I am informed that the Department has received numerous petitions from many distant towns against the application of the above for a licence to give performances on Sunday.

I am seventy-three years of age, have travelled a good deal on the European Continent, have noticed the behavior of Continentals on Sunday where museums and music are to be had. I am also well acquainted with the behavior of our own people both in England and Scotland, and I unhesitatingly give superiority to the Continentals.

I consider it grossly impertinent for provincials to interfere in the matter of how Londoners shall spend Sunday, and I trust your Board will be of a similar opinion.

The above Union desires to elevate the tastes of the people. Our lower classes are far from green lanes and shady walks, and have only the churches and the public-houses to resort to. Many of them would prefer music or lectures to elevate the taste and the understanding, and the "Union" desires to give the opportunity.

The sanctioning the application of the Union will interfere with the rights of no one, while it will supply a want felt by many who are, in my opinion, better subjects of her Majesty than those who, seemingly having what they want, are intolerant enough not to grant a similar boon to others.

Trusting that the application of the Sunday Philharmonic Union will be granted by your Department,—I am, Sir,
Yours,

GEORGE ANDERSON.

Causes and Effects.

Dr. Hutchinson Stirling, following Hegel, seeks to overthrow Hume by asserting the identity of cause and effect. Does he not see that this overthrows his own argument for a deity? If the universe is material, then must God be material. If it is conditioned, then must he be conditioned. If there is evil in the world, then first must there be evil in the cause of the world. The deity must be in essence just such a compound as is the universe. Is it not, then, easier to suppose, as Hume pointed out, that the universe itself is the one necessary existence than to hunt outside the universe for a cause that is as difficult to explain as the universe itself?—*Bion.*

Michael Angelo as a Rationalist.

Scarcely any other great painter so completely eliminated the religious sentiment from art, and it was reserved for him to destroy the most fearful of all the conceptions by which the early painters had thrilled the people. By making the Last Judgment a study of naked figures, and by introducing into it Charon and his boat, he most effectually destroyed all sense of its reality, and reduced it to the province of artistic criticism.—*W. E. H. Lecky, "Rationalism in Europe," vol. i., p. 277.*

RELIGION AND COMMON SENSE

WE hear a great deal about "pure religion," and the phrase seems to be an admission that all religion is not pure, which is no doubt the fact; but what quality of religion is genuine, or who possess it, may be difficult to decide. And even if we knew, how much better off should we be? For what is religion, in itself considered, and separate from morality, to which it has no just or proper claim? It is a system of faith in, and worship of, supernatural agencies and beings. That is about all there is of it, when summed up in brief. It may exist, no doubt, in the character of a good man, but it is no proof of goodness in the individual, nor that he is laboring for the welfare of humanity. It is only, as we have said, a system of faith and worship having reference to the supernatural. That is religion, and all that rightly belongs to it. We fail to see wherein it can be of any benefit to this world, and as for another, it is not settled yet whether there is one.

Now, in order to have a system that is useful and practical it ought not to consist in unmeaning phrases, forms, and ceremonies, but in the unceasing practice of promoting the happiness of every human being, without regard to sex, party, country, or color, and confine its labors entirely to this world, depending on knowledge rather than faith, and human efforts instead of prayers to a supernatural deity. This is a common-sense system or philosophy, and one in which there are no metaphysical difficulties or mystery, and which every child even, who is properly educated, will be taught to practise through life, and which he will necessarily practise, as no incentive to injure his fellow-man will then exist, such as forms an inherent and essential part of the present order of society. Under the common-sense system to which we allude, there would not be the slightest pretext for keeping up those holy bugbears which are supposed by many Christians to be so indispensable at present to control the vicious inclinations of human beings, such as avenging Gods, devils, priestly prayers, and denunciations; but mankind will be governed by reason, and learn their duty by obeying the laws of nature, which are the only true guides.
—*Horace Seaver, "Occasional Thoughts."*

RECOMPENSE.

THE wine-flushed monarch slept; but in his ear
An angel breathed, "Repent; or choose the flame
Quenchless." In dread he woke, but not in shame,
Deep musing, "Sin I love, yet Hell I fear."
Wherefore he left his feasts, and minions dear,
And justly ruled, and died a saint in name.
But when his hasting spirit heavenward came
A stern Voice cried, "Oh Soul! what dost thou here?"

"Love I forswore, and wine, and kept my vow
To live a just and joyless life, and now
I crave reward." The Voice came like a knell,
"Fool! dost thou hope to find again thy mirth,
And those foul joys thou didst renounce on earth?
Yea, enter in! My Heaven shall be thy Hell!"

—*Constance Naden.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Alice (to her sweetheart)—"How did you like the vicar's sermon, Will?" Will—"Excellent! Why, it sent me off to sleep in less than five minutes."

An Italian priest, reading the passage of Scripture, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord," commented, "Yes, to be sure; it is too sweet for any mortal."

Professor Von Gookhenheimer, they say, is a marvellous mind-reader and hypnotist. Yes; he claims he can attract the attention of a restaurant waiter by merely looking at him steadily for half-an-hour.

"The timprance man had a wondherful glass that made iverything a thousand million times as big. What's this he called it? Ye're right, 'twas a my-cross-scrope; ye hit it to a pop; bedad 'tis yerself has the larnin'; an' the people looked through it at the wather he put in a glass, an' they seen the wather all swimmin' wid snakes an' scorpions; 'twas enough to terrify the mortial sowl out o' ye. An' so Sheela looked in an' saw them. An' the man put in the wather a good dhrop o' whiskey, an' he says, says he, 'Now ye'll see the effect on animal life,' says he. An' Sheela looked in again, an' she seen the snakes all doubled up, an' kilt, an' murthered, an' says Sheela, says she: 'May the Divil fly away wid me (says she) if I ever touch wather agin till I first put in whiskey to kill them fellows!'"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "Man and the Universe, from a Christian and Secular Standpoint." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Musical and dramatic entertainment. (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, R. Forder, "Science and Christianity."

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH: 3, members' meeting at 91 Mildmay-park.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Rights of Animals."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Goldhawk-road, Shepherd's Bush): Tuesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "How the Bible Stands Now."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, A Member, "Is Life an Entity?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Bible."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "Man and Evolution."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "A New Gospel Harmony."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Lucretius Keen, "Atheism and the Hour of Death"; concluding with an original Romance. Thursday, at 8.30, St. John will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Atheism and the Hour of Death"; concluding with an original Romance; 3.30, "What Must I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?" Wednesday, at 8, S. E. Easton will lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.15, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Where will you Spend Your Eternity?"

VICTORIA PARK: 11.15, W. Heaford will lecture; 3, Stanley Jones will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. Lewis will lecture; 7, S. R. Thompson, "Christianity and Slavery." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, J. Kenat, "Saviors of Mankind."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, C. James, "The Star of Science in the Night of Faith."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class; 6.30, Neuron, "Bible Fictions and Malay Archipelago Facts."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Sketchley, "Rome and the Revolution."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, John Walter, B.A., "Herbert Spencer" (II.). Adjourned committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, S. H. Alison, "The Gospel of Socialism"; 3, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 6.30, "The Evolution of Theology." (Admission 3d. and 6d.)

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, C. Cohen, "The Origin of Species"; 7, "Science and Supernaturalism."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, special meeting, social, and business.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, Sam Standring, "How they Make Priests"; 8, Branch meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, musical and other recitals.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

SUNDERLAND (Victoria Hall, Toward-road): 11, G. W. Foote, "The Shadow of the Sword"; 3, "Was Shakespeare a Christian?" 7, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

DERBY (Market-place): 6.45, Mr. Brigge will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, C. Cohen will lecture.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, Sam Standring, "The Temptation"; 3, "The Four Gospels, their Dates and Authors."

Lecturers' Engagements.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Sunnyside, 72 Union-grove, Clapham, London, S.W.—April 28, Manchester. May 5, Sheffield.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 28, Newcastle-on-Tyne. May 2, Wood Green; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 26, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—April 28, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park. May 5, m. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea; 12, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—NO. 18. SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

SUNDAY CRANKS.

CHRISTIANS, or at least orthodox Christians, are evidently going to make a determined stand against Sunday freedom. The Lord's Day Society has half, if not wholly, captured Mr. Gladstone, and its cause has naturally received a fresh fillip. It is to the credit of the ordinary, or profane, press that it takes up, on the whole, a sensible and tolerant attitude on this question. But the religious press, with the exception of a few journals like the *Christian World*, opposes Sunday freedom out of the mere instinct of self-preservation. Churches of all kinds depend upon privilege. They detest every sort of competition. Their trade is largely supported by Protection. Free Trade would annihilate their artificial advantages. And one of the greatest of these advantages is having Sunday almost entirely for their own business. When they take their shutters down they have the pleasure of seeing everybody else's shutters up; everybody's, that is, with the exception of the publican; and they are beginning to cast an evil eye upon him; indeed, they will never be satisfied until he also is compelled to close his establishment from Saturday night till Monday morning, so that it shall be "Church or nothing" for everybody who wants to go anywhere on what is facetiously called the Lord's Day, but is in reality the Priest's Day.

Our readers will not be surprised to learn that the Methodists are on the side of Sunday tyranny; but they may be interested to learn, as a matter of psychology, what the Methodists have to say for themselves in pursuing a policy which is so alien to their boasted principles of "civil and religious liberty."

There were several paragraphs in last week's *Methodist Times* on the Sunday question. The Lord's Day Society is highly complimented, with the qualification that in view is perhaps "too Jewish." This is followed by an attack on the Leeds Sunday Lecture Society, which was recently the object of an abortive prosecution. "It is quite evident," we are told, "that some of the lectures given by the Leeds Society were anything but instructive and elevating." Well now, that is a matter of taste. Max O'Rell mingles wit with sense, and sometimes makes people laugh; and anything that provokes laughter, especially on Sunday, is naturally not "instructive and elevating" to a devotee of the Bible. But the Methodists might recollect that tastes—ay, and opinions—have always differed, do still differ, and probably ever will differ. There are people quite fit to be at large who do not care for sermons, and some of them (alas!) are unable to find anything "instructive and elevating" even in the discourses of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Still, they do not want to close his mouth on Sunday; they only want to open their own.

Our Methodist contemporary proceeds to state, in its usual dogmatic way, that "It should be distinctly understood that the Act of Parliament under which that particular course of lectures was arrested simply forbids a pecuniary charge for admission to any lecture or entertainment provided on Sunday." Now, when the *Methodist Times* says that anything must be "distinctly understood," it is pretty certain to be wrong; and it is certainly wrong in this particular instance. The Act contains nothing about *lectures*. Its preamble states that working people had met to discuss religious questions which were beyond their competence—that is, they were poaching on the preserves of the clergy. This was what Bishop Porteus, who instigated the Act, wished to put down. Meetings for *discussing religion* were therefore prohibited, and *entertainments* were included just to make the Act look a little less intolerant. Nor is it exactly true that *only a charge for admission* to such assemblies is made illegal by the Act. In our opinion—and it is endorsed by our solicitors—the *taking of money at all* is prohibited; and, if the Act were strictly and impartially enforced, not only a charge at the doors, or an admission by saleable tickets, but even a collection, would render the responsible persons liable to penalties.

Mr. Hughes's organ thinks it "significant" that "without enforcing the illegal charge for admission these entertainments cannot be made to pay." But, in the first place, is it not hypocrisy to call Sunday lectures "entertainments," merely because the lecturer happens to have a broad face, instead of a long one? The object of this designation is simply to bring "lectures" within the scope of the Act. And, in the next place, we should like to know why a lecture should not be paid for by the people who hear it? What is the essential difference between hiring a pew quarterly, and paying for your seat when you attend? Ministers of religion depend, at least to some extent, upon the seat-money of their congregations. What impudent hypocrisy they display, therefore, when they turn up the whites of their eyes against Sunday lecturers who tap the same source of income!

"These lectures," the *Methodist Times* says, "are exceedingly profitable to professional lecturers." Well, why should they not be? Is not a lecturer as good as a preacher? Why should not Sir Robert Ball be paid ten or fifteen pounds for teaching the truths of astronomy, when clergymen get hundreds a year, and sometimes thousands, for preaching the inspiration of a book which represents the earth as flat, and relates a cock-and-bull story of the sun and moon being stopped while the Jews went on with a massacre? Really, it is the clergy, and not the lecturers, who ought to be ashamed of themselves.

In the Leeds case it is admitted that "the immediate promoters do not seek pecuniary gain." What is their crime then? The *Methodist Times* says they are "extremely blatant and self-righteous." But this offence is not punishable at law; otherwise, it would go hard with a good many Methodists, and Mr. Hughes himself would be in serious danger of fine or imprisonment.

Our contemporary, in its beautiful, urbane fashion, speaks of the "yells of delight" with which the lovers of Sunday freedom greeted a pronouncement by a Committee of Convocation in favor of the Sunday opening of museums, picture-galleries, and libraries. It rejoices that the Committee's report was rejected; and then announces, with a final blast of the Methodist trumpet, that "the demand for the Sunday opening of such institutions is a mere fad of a handful of benevolent cranks who live in an imaginary world of their own."

Let us see who are these Sunday cranks. They include the most illustrious names in science, literature, and art. What sort of a philosophy is it which regards Mr. Price Hughes as the standard of sanity, and sets down as cranks such men as Mr. Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, Sir Robert Ball, Sir Frederic Leighton, and Mr. Burne Jones? And what is it that these "cranks" demand? They do not want to close the Gospel-shops and make the men of God rest themselves on the day when they condemn others to inaction? They simply say that the Church should not be allowed to play the part of the dog in the manger. Let

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those who like go to church; let those who like go to a museum, a library, an art gallery, or a lecture hall. Do not let those who prefer one place say to their fellow citizens, "You shall go there or nowhere." Let us have fair play all round.

Such is the demand of the Sunday cranks. And they will win. It is only a question of time. They are "cranks" to the Sunday bigots, who understand by "liberty" the right to do as they please, and to make other people do as they do. But they are really the champions of justice, liberality, and enlightenment; and they may well despise the railing of their adversaries, in the sure faith that history will ratify the verdict of their own consciences.

G. W. FOOTE.

WHEN CHRIST RULED.

It is useful to look back and observe what Christianity actually was in the days of its power. Now-a-days it poses as everything that is gentle, benign, and helping to civilisation. Yet it cannot get rid of the damning fact that war, slavery, oppression, and persecution accompanied its career during the days of its supremacy. It has the blood of myriads of heretics and Jews and of millions of so-called witches on its track. In its palmy days the Christian Church literally revelled in cruelty. Punishments by torture and death by fire were the natural results of a creed which taught that God needed a blood atonement, and would punish the immense majority of his creatures in ever-burning hell. Mr. Lecky says of these dogmas: "We can never conceive the intense vividness with which these conceptions were realised, or the madness and misery they produced. For those were ages of implicit and unfaltering credulity; they were ages when none of the distractions of the present day divided the intellect, and when theology was the single focus upon which the imagination was concentrated. They were ages, too, when the modern tendency to soften or avoid repulsive images was altogether unknown." What must have been the feelings of those who believed in diabolical possession, a doctrine distinctly taught in the New Testament, as fully shown in *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible;* and who believed that they themselves or those they held dear were the victims of the wiles of the devil?

Christianity tended from the first to withdraw men's minds from the concerns of this world, and to concentrate them upon another life; and no fact in history is more patent than that the triumph of Christianity was followed by the decline of Pagan civilisation. Literature passed from the hands of poets, philosophers, and historians to those of monks and theologians, and then almost totally declined. Bury, in his history of *The Later Roman Empire* (i. 311), says: "The spirit of early Christianity was a most favorable atmosphere for the stifling of humane literature; and as Christian theology became current, and Christian ideas penetrated the minds of men, little breathing-space was left for the faint life of that humane literature which had already travelled so far from its former heights." From the first ages a dislike of Pagan learning was general among Christians.

Warned by the apostles to beware of philosophy and the knowledge which puffeth up, they despised the vain science and learning of a world they expected soon to pass away. Those only of the Fathers who were converted from Paganism retained somewhat of the philosophic temper, like Origen, Clement, and Augustine. But once Christianity had obtained complete victory, and its effects were seen in the destruction of libraries, the decline of learning, and the long night of the Dark Ages.

In Pagan Rome books were common, and sold at comparatively low prices. When Christ ruled books were so scarce that none but the wealthiest could purchase them. Charles V., who began to reign 1365, formed the first royal library, and when the English took Paris in 1425 the collection only amounted to about 853 volumes. When, in 1471, Louis XI. borrowed the works of Averroes, the Arabian, from the faculty of medicine in Paris, he had to deposit in pledge a considerable quantity of plate, and to procure a nobleman to join with him as surety in a deed binding himself under a great forfeiture to restore them.

Buckle declares that such learning as there was in the days when Christ ruled, only ministered to ignorance. He says:—

> "From the sixth to the tenth century there was not in all Europe more than three or four men who dared to think for themselves; and even they were obliged to veil their meaning in obscure and mystical language. The remaining part of society was, during these four centuries, sunk in the most degraded ignorance. Under these circumstances, the few who were able to read confined their studies to works which encouraged and strengthened their superstition, such as the legends of the saints and the homilies of the Fathers. From these sources they drew those lying and impudent fables of which the theology of the time is principally composed."

The ages that were pre-eminently Christian were pre-eminently dark. Violence, tyranny, spoliation, and pestilence characterised them. The people were serfs; the nobles, robbers. The ages of faith, as Mr. J. C. Morison has shown in his *Service of Man*, were ages of immorality. He says with truth and force: "The temperature of faith rises steadily, as we penetrate into the past, almost with the regularity which marks the rise of the physical temperature of the air as we descend into a deep mine; but a neglect and defiance of morality are found to ascend in a corresponding ratio." Faith abounded, all scepticism being stamped out; but it was powerless to prevent the brutality of the Middle Ages seen in the records of the Crusades and of the Inquisition.

But it may be said all this was Catholic Christianity. Christ was not really ruling, but under a cloud, overshadowed by the head of the Church. Well, I admit that Protestantism was an improvement, so far as it asserted the right of private judgment; but what little good it did was largely mitigated by its substitution of the Bible as an infallible fetish book for the infallible authority of the Church. The publication of the Bible with its inspired text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," led to renewed persecutions of witches. Protestants were just as persecuting as Catholics. Men were still burnt, tortured, and imprisoned for their opinions. In England Dissenters were long treated almost as outlaws. That pious monarch, James I., not only wrote against and persecuted witches, but burnt two Unitarians, himself kicking one previously to burning him, because he would not be convinced by the king's arguments. His sacred majesty, as the translators of the Bible called him, decorated Temple Bar and London Bridge with human heads and trunks from which the limbs were severed. The head of the noble Raleigh, who gave us tobacco and the potato, would have been with the number had not influential friends carried it away. So Christian was this savage custom that his sacred majesty got himself painted on his war horse, with the gate of London Bridge, decorated with the heads of traitors, in the background. So much had Christian civilisation done for the world up till the seventeenth century.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE VALUE OF DOUBT.

(Concluded from page 259.)

When professed Christians have a firm conviction that to doubt in matters of religion is a sin, there is no degrading superstition to which they may not fall victims. If such unfortunate persons could only be induced to seriously reflect, apart from all prejudice, they would undoubtedly experience the humiliating thought that they would have been just as violent upholders of any other faith than their own, if such faith had been that of their parents or their country. It is the tendency of orthodoxy to produce intellectual apathy, and to cause its adherents to allow others to think for them, instead of exercising their mental powers themselves. Until men acquire the habit of independent thought they will be influenced more by the prevailing ideas of their time than by their own reason. Now, doubt is valuable, inasmuch as it tends to destroy this condition of mental torpor, and to remove that unfruitful uniformity of acceptance upon trust which has so long prevailed throughout Christendom.

In the absence of all doubt a state of intellectual indolence must appear, to those who encourage it, as profitable as a state of activity. If this were not so, it

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would be difficult to account for the human mind being dazzled by certain creeds and dogmas which are being constantly repeated as if they were self-evident truths. Not the slightest suspicion is entertained that such theological figments may be false; they are, as a rule, believed without any examination, and defended at the sacrifice of reason and mental dignity. It is a serious drawback of that too-confiding spirit engendered by the popular religion that it induces its lethargic devotees to placidly listen to the incoherent statements made in the pulpits, which are the stock-in-trade of the clergy in their efforts to endeavor to stifle free inquiry, and to suppress that doubt which has proved the great enemy to priestly supremacy. Christians, of course, claim that they are not opposed to free inquiry; judging, however, from their actions, such is far from being the case. They tell us to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good"; but they take upon themselves to decide what is good. This is an orthodox notion of freedom with a vengeance! What stimulant did Christ give to free thought when he said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me; . . . if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"? Is there any incentive to impartial investigation in the gloomy words, "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"? Once establish among mankind the erroneous notion that truth is confined to one particular channel, and that the man who does not go in that direction is to be cast forth as a "withered branch," and the impossibility of unfettered thought will be immediately apparent. Induce a man to examine a subject, and tell him that, regardless of evidence, he must arrive at one conclusion or be damned, the pursuit of truth is then made a hypocritical farce, rather than a noble and useful reality.

The encouragement which free inquiry received from Christians when they had undisputed power was that they not only tortured and imprisoned those who opposed their faith, but they committed to the flames those works which demonstrated the fallacy and absurdity of their system. Their desire to promote free inquiry during their early history is exemplified in the memorable proclamation of the Christian Emperor, Theodosius, in which he ordered that the whole of the writings of Porphyry, and all others who had written against the Christian religion, should be committed to the fire. The writings of Celsus met with an equally *warm* reception, and for a proof that the same desire has existed in modern times it is necessary, not only to read the history of those Freethought pioneers of the last and of the early part of the present century, but also to remember that now, whenever Christians have the power, they exercise it in order that we may not have the opportunity to promulgate those principles that stimulate free inquiry. Fortunately, man is a progressive being, having within him an inherent love of freedom; he cannot, therefore, long tolerate anything which cramps his mind or fetters his thought. Truth may be crushed, but it cannot be annihilated; it is as permanent as the earth which contains it. The fact is being more and more acknowledged that opinion is the result of organisation and evidence. And, instead of inflicting punishment for the imperfections of the one or the limitation of the other, it is now recognised by advanced minds that the true policy is to recognise the widest and most diversified thoughts, seeking to correct those which are erroneous by unfettered inquiry and honest criticism.

There are two methods by which opinions are formed: (1) the impressions made upon our senses; and (2) the testimony of others. If people would but study this fact, they would probably understand why so many different views are held upon the subject of religion, and how impossible it is to prevent doubt in a progressive state of society. It is to be regretted that the majority of believers in theology rely principally upon the second method. It is found by some persons to be much easier to depend upon others than to investigate for themselves. This is one reason why the Church has so many adherents who have no solid reason for the hope or the faith within them. The great majority of professed Christians are such more from a desire to be fashionable than in consequence of a calm investigation into the credentials of their faith. They too often accept belief passively from their parents, instead of testing its nature and value. Now, doubt has the immense advantage of being the means of securing a justification for the reception and the retention of any given opinions.

It is well known that in England the acquirement of useful knowledge and the reform of our penal laws may be traced to the time when doubts as to the validity of certain Bible teachings began. It was through doubt that the old Mosaic idea of creation was exploded, and to the same cause are we indebted for the abolition of capital punishment, which was once inflicted for many trivial offences. So long as men believed in the infallibility of Moses and the divine sanction of the prediction, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," scientific progress and humane legislation upon these questions were unknown. The price paid by the English people for their adherence to the advice of Bible interpreters was a high one. It deprived them of the advantages that result from a rational view of nature, and from conforming to the laws that govern human actions; and, moreover, it inaugurated and maintained a relentless persecution towards those who dared to seek emancipation from the yoke of the Bible and the priest. In proportion as doubt has been fostered, progress has followed, and mental liberty has been vindicated.

CHARLES WATTS.

BEATING THE RELIGIOUS DRUM.

IT is to be presumed that the lengthy notices of books under the title "Book of the Month," in the *Review of Reviews*, when unsigned, are by Mr. Stead himself. If, then, Mr. Stead be responsible for the compilation in the March number, introducing Mr. Balfour's book on *The Foundations of Belief*, it is to be regretted; for he has been guilty of some language of which one need say no more than that its more fitting place would be the columns of some of the lower-class Christian-Evidence journals.

Every now and then we are startled by great drum-beating in the religious camp; we are told that religion is "on the boom," or, as Mr. Gladstone's curious phrase puts it, "creation is gathering itself together for a great recovery." Now it is the Pope who is issuing one of his innumerable encyclicals that is to do something wonderful; then it is Mr. Gladstone writing one of his innumerable articles to some magazine or other. Here it is a scientist dropping some stray phrase about science having limitations; there it is a book by a Tory statesman arguing that, if there be no god, it is necessary, in order to keep things from going to wreck, to persuade ourselves that there is. And, singularly enough, these people, who are always telling us that religion is recovering, are the people who could never be got to admit that it had suffered any reverses.

Mr. Stead, however, makes the publication of Mr. Balfour's book the occasion for a great whoop about the revival of religion. For the last half-century, at least, he says, "a science that was nescience, as far as the soul of man was concerned, has been swaggering in the foretop of civilisation." This is a sample of the choice language which it seems the religious revival will bring with it. But there is even more choice language still. Here are some specimens of it which must be transcribed:—

> "The intolerance of the bigot of the Churches was succeeded by the even more detestable superciliousness of the Brahmin of science. . . . . The doctrine that no man of ordinary intelligence could be a Christian, and that all who held on to the old faith were old women or cowards, has been thundered *ex cathedra* from the pontifical chairs of Unbelief, and complacently repeated by simpering nincompoops, who were delighted to be assured on such unexceptionable authority that there was no Being in the universe superior to their own noble selves, and, what was still more important, no Taskmaster or Judge who would ever call them to account for frivolling away their existence."

Now, when we hear this sort of thing from the reckless street-corner evangelist, or read it in those gutter journals that make a business of combatting "infidelity," we do not marvel greatly. Long suffering has produced indifference, and, besides, one reflects that, after all, it is only the language that is to be expected from ignorant and intolerant persons incapable of thinking, with no leisure or incentive to acquire knowledge; reared, as most of them

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have been, in a creed which cramps and starves the intellect. But when the language and the methods of the street-corner are transferred to the pages of a serious magazine with a great circulation and greater pretensions, by an editor who is oppressively godly, and who evidently believes that there are not many saintly enough to touch the hem of his garment, then it is difficult to know quite how to characterise his conduct. The insinuation about it being "important" to Freethinkers that there was no "Taskmaster or Judge who would ever call them to account for frivolling away their existence"—the old, old bracketing of moral guilt with intellectual difference of opinion—is peculiarly contemptible, coming from a man who would be denounced as a heretic himself by any of the great Churches, and a man too who, whenever there was any journalistic capital to be made out of praising and writing up representative Freethinkers like Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, was never behindhand in the work. Mr. Stead, in fact, is a journalist first, and anything else in the world afterwards.

But I must confess I do not know what is meant by the reference to Freethinkers "frivolling away their existence." Do all Freethinkers "frivol," and does no Christian "frivol"? Or does the Freethinker's frivolling consist in the very fact of his Freethought? And, if so, are all Christians stolid and sedate "by the grace of God," who look with disdain and pity on the gambols and frolics of the giddy Freethinker, who buzzes about, heedless of the flame? I would humbly ask a little enlightenment. At the same time, I frankly think myself that Freethinkers are neither serious nor moral. For seriousness evidently means rushing after every passing sensation in literature or politics, and writing columns about it as if it were the final end of all things; whilst obviously no man can claim to be moral who does not go into hysterics at the sight of a petticoat. I agree Freethinkers are frivollers. Balls, receptions, theatres, concerts, clubs, levées, and Monte Carlo make up the story of their wasted lives. Take a census of the N.S.S., and you will find that ninety per cent. of the members winter in the Riviera; whilst the humble, serious, hardworking Christian, who is perforce compelled to take a few months' well-earned holiday in Grindelwald or elsewhere, attempts to stem the tide of frivolity with telepathic interviews and blazing placards.

Let the nincompoop, however, return to his frivol. One sign of the times, showing the way things are going, the recovery religion is making, is an article by M. Brunetière on "The Bankruptcy of Science." Mr. Stead publishes a summary of the article taken from the *Spectator*. I am unable to vouch for the accuracy of the summary, but, presuming it to fairly represent M. Brunetière's statement, it is certainly curious, inasmuch as it contains nothing but what has been said many times over by Christian apologists. The sole "importance" of the article—to judge from this *précis*—presumably consists in the fact that it was written by M. Brunetière. Take, for instance, these passages:—

> "The Hellenists, it is true, have discovered the scattered fragments of the Sermon on the Mount in the *Manual of Epictetus* or the *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*; but they have never explained why the Sermon on the Mount has conquered the world, while the Manual and the Thoughts have remained mere barren pieces of literature. . . . . But after all their labors there remains something in the Bible which is found in no other book and in no other history—something which resists exegesis as it resisted philology."

Had this passage occurred—as it very well might—in one of Archdeacon Farrar's or Mr. Price Hughes's discourses, it would have attracted little or no attention. Its curiosity, like its importance, is bound up solely in its authorship. For the rest, it is no more than you could find scores of parallels to in the sermons of professional Bible-boomers. It is probably what the average Mohammedan thinks of the Koran; what every believer, in fact, thinks of his fetish book. It may also be remarked that if Marcus Aurelius were taught to little children as a divinely-inspired author; if his work were pushed and extolled for centuries by as powerful an organisation as has pushed the Bible; if, through the aid of this powerful organisation and the hold which its officials obtained over the young, Marcus Aurelius had become woven into the art and literature of generations; and if, furthermore, a man of science could be got occasionally to furnish a testimonial to the wonderful power and the unique nature of Marcus Aurelius's work, then, I suppose, Marcus Aurelius would resist exegesis and resist philology, and all the rest. That, it seems to me, is, in outline, the natural explanation of the position and *prestige* of the Bible. Can M. Brunetière suggest a more rational one?

There is one passage in M. Brunetière's statement, however, that is extraordinary. He says, or is represented by the *Spectator* as saying: "It [science] has made an enemy instead of a friend of religion; it has insisted on seeing an opposition where, in fact, none exists." It is certainly difficult to believe that this even approximately conveys the sense of the original. It may be presumptuous to say so, for M. Brunetière is a very eminent gentleman, is one of the editors of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and is worthy of respect; but the above is the language of one who is completely ignorant of the most common facts of history. Professor Huxley has told us that along every path of scientific inquiry Theology has erected its notice-boards, "No thoroughfare. By order.—Moses." And most people with any historical knowledge will agree that Professor Huxley is as right as M. Brunetière is wrong. Science simply went on its way, and it was stopped by Theology; a conflict was, therefore, inevitable. It was Theology which was the aggressor always until Science was provoked into an aggressive attitude itself towards the system which hampered and thwarted it.

If, as M. Brunetière says, there is no opposition really between religion and science, why did the Church heap indignities on Galileo? Why did it burn Bruno? Why did it anathematise Darwin? Why, in short, has it thrown every obstacle in the way of scientific advance? It was only in the early part of the present century that the Church removed from the *Index* a simple manual* teaching the Copernican astronomy. It does not even yet accept Darwinism, or allow the doctrine of evolution to be taught. Whilst, if anyone wishes to know how the Church guarded liberty of thought, let him study the blood-red page of history; let him read the records of the Inquisition; let him examine the life of the saintly Torquemada, under whom thousands of human beings were burned at the stake; let him dive into the history of the debauchery and corruption which polluted Europe during the Dark Ages, and which revolved around Rome as its centre. It may not be an edifying study, I admit, but it will throw a great light on the Church's claim to be considered the friend of science and culture. It may be remarked that all this belongs to the past, that the Church has "reformed." Well, I have instanced the case of Darwin, which is modern. But I would recommend anyone who considers things have changed to peruse an important article which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for August last, entitled "Intellectual Liberty and Contemporary Catholicism," by the Catholic writer who discussed in that magazine the policy of the Papacy. And he will find that, in spirit and method and purpose, the Catholic Church—and it was of the Catholic Church particularly that M. Brunetière was writing—stands precisely where it did. It has moved just so far as the pressure of the scientific spirit of the age has absolutely forced it. And what is true of the Catholic Church is true, in greater or less degree, of every organised hierarchy in the world.

But the hierarchies are doomed. Not even the fact that Christianity, according to Mr. Gladstone, "commands the largest number of *professing* adherents" will save it from extinction. Of course its spokesmen and penmen will beat the drum as loudly as they can; it is natural that they should make much of every little back-eddy, while ignoring the stream that flows steadily the other way. It is natural, perhaps, also that, in the very act of dogmatising themselves, they should accuse science of dogmatism, and, while violently abusing Freethinkers in offensive language, invite them to deal *reverently* with the shibboleths of the abusers. There is generally a tendency on the part of the conquered to lose their tempers. And religionists—with

* The author of the article in the *Contemporary Review* which has been referred to says: "As late as the Pontificate of Leo XII. (1823-29) Professor Setele's book on astronomy was forbidden to be printed by the ecclesiastical censor in Rome (Magister Sacri Palatii), because the motion of the earth round the sun was described therein as a fact. Professor Setele appealed to the reigning Pope who authorised the publication, and for the first time removed Galileo's works from the Index of forbidden books." I instance this as one example merely of that overwhelming friendship for science on the part of the Church to which M. Brunetière refers.

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all their meekness and humility, and with all the consciousness of fighting on the side of omnipotence, to aid them—form no exception to the rule. But bad temper even does not save a lost cause. Religions always die hard. But they die all the same. FREDERICK RYAN.

JESUS AND THE COLT.

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to steal a hoss,
Or blush to ride the same?

IT may seem strange that one living in a land where Jesus is worshipped as a God should ask the question, "Did Jesus steal a colt?" and were it not for his own testimony (Luke xix. 29–31) probably no one ever would have accused him of such an act. His teaching and precepts in general are good, and but little, if any, inferior to those of Buddha or Confucius, from whom he possibly copied them; yet I have never read a word charging that either Buddha or Confucius was a thief, and I cannot for a moment believe that Jesus ever converted to his own use property belonging to another, or sent his disciples to steal a colt. Furthermore, I would not repeat the story were it not that nearly every family in Christendom has, at some time, either bought or had given them a Bible in which the story appears. It is as follows: "Go ye into the village over against you; in the which, at your entering, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat; loose him and bring him hither; and if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him."

If the record is true, and Jesus actually did order his disciples to so purloin a colt, I have no plea to make for the man-god, for all criminal law would hold him equally guilty with his deluded disciples who "led the hoss away." We have no evidence of any kind to show that the colt belonged to Jesus, in fee simple, or that he had a mortgage lien on the animal; to the contrary, his own words condemn him when he says: "If any man asks you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, *Because the Lord hath need of him.*"

I can see no reason why a god should need a colt in such a hurry that he would have to steal one, when we are told there is nothing impossible with God, and he could have made a two-year-old colt in a minute (though he would not have been two years old), and had him ready broke to carry double, if necessary, without extra expense; and why Jesus set such a bad example before his disciples (which many of them still follow) I cannot understand. From a general digest of the matter, I judge that the end justified the means, and that it was all for the glory of God. This being true, why should we condemn the Jesuits for doing anything and everything they choose, when "the end justifies the means" and "for the glory of God"?

Whether the Lord had need of heretical ashes (for Christian lye) in the Dark Ages, I know not; but the end must have justified the means when, between the years 1600 and 1630, the Christians burned at the stake over 270,000 human beings as heretics to the Roman faith. Otherwise the omnipresent Lord would not have been lounging around without calling a policeman. To say the least, it looks rather bewildering to read that Jesus commands us not to steal, and then commands his disciples to borrow a rope that he knew had a colt on the other end of it. Perhaps this is why his vicegerents preach one thing and practise another, and why, like a guide-board, they point the way, but never go themselves. They teach what to do to go to heaven, but they cannot indicate the direction of either heaven or hell, and

Had I the colt that Jesus stole,
I should not know, 'tis pity,
Which road to take to land my soul
Within the golden city.

If the olden saying is true that "what is bred in the bone cannot be whipped from the body," Jesus must have been "a chip from the old block," for Jehovah is credited with saying to his chosen people (Exodus iii. 21, 22), "When ye go ye shall not go empty; but every woman shall borrow of her neighbor and of her that sojourns in her house jewels of gold and raiment; and ye shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians." This is theft of the meanest kind, and no other god but Jehovah would ever have risked his reputation by ordering it in writing.

Mine eyes are dim; I cannot see
The great Jehovah's plan.
Did God—will you enlighten me?
Wish for the fall of man?
Pray tell me, if you will and can,
Did God, in thunderbolt,
Bid Moses slay the Egyptian,
Or Christ to steal that colt?

It's no go, my Christian friend. You never can make thinking people believe that any god ever stole a colt or cut up such capers as you say Jehovah did; or that any real, sure-enough god ever cursed the world because Eve ate an apple. You can fool our unsophisticated women and artless children, make them believe that the Lord of this universe was so put to it for a colt that he had to steal one; but intelligent people who have no bread and butter depending on the issue will swallow no such truck.
—*Truthseeker.* A. D. SWAN.

FROST, THE FRIEND AND FOE.

SING ho! for the Frost, for the keen, sharp Frost,
With its bracing and biting breath!
With health that is won, with health that is lost,
And the poor ragged weakling's death.

Sing ho! for the Frost, and the rosy crowds
With their sports, and their health and wealth!
For icicle shuttles that weave the shrouds
Of the bankrupt in wealth and health.

Sing ho! for the Frost, with its dainty hand,
As it decks ev'ry branch and leaf
With glittering jewels of fairy land,
Whilst it mocks at the starveling's grief.

Sing ho! for the Frost, as its sculptured jests
And pictorial pranks appear;
That playfully shatters the mountain's crests,
And disports with the outcast's tear.

"Sing ho! for the Frost," say the clothed and fed,
"On a heavenly earth we dwell!"
Whilst those that are starved cry: "Would we were dead!
For there's comfort in thoughts of hell!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

THE MAHATMAS.

THE only evidence of Mahatmic agency adduced by Mrs. Besant at her recent lecture was the fact that Madame Blavatsky, whom she chose to describe as an uneducated woman—though she was evidently, like Mrs. Besant herself, a woman with a very large power of assimilating other people's thoughts—had written, as if by inspiration, *The Voice of the Silence.* Now, Mr. W. E. Coleman has examined all the works published with the name of H. P. Blavatsky, and finds throughout that they are plagiarisms from other writings. He says of the book in question:—

> "The *Voice of the Silence*, published in 1889, purports to be a translation by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky from a Thibetan work. It is said to belong to the same series as the *Book of Dzyan*, which is true, as, like that work, it is a compilation of ideas and terminology, from various nineteenth-century books, the diction and phraseology being those of Madame Blavatsky. I have traced the sources whence it was taken, and it is a hotch-potch from Brahmanical books on Yoga and other Hindu writings; Southern Buddhistic books, from the Pâli and Sinhalese; and Northern Buddhistic writings, from the Chinese and Thibetan—the whole having been taken by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky from translations by, and the writings of, European and other Orientalists of to-day. In this work are intermingled Sanskrit, Pâli, Thibetan, Chinese, and Sinhalese terms—a manifest absurdity in a Thibetan work. I

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have traced the books from which each of these terms was taken. I find embedded in the text of this alleged ancient Thibetan work quotations, phrases, and terms copied from current Oriental literature. The books most utilised in its compilation are these: Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Thibet*, Edkins's *Chinese Buddhism*, Hardy's *Eastern Monarchism*, Rhys Davids's *Buddhism*, Dvivedi's *Raja Yoga*, and *Raja Yoga Philosophy* (1888); also an article, 'The Dream of Ravan,' published in the *Dublin University Magazine*, January, 1854, extracts from which appeared in the *Theosophist* of January, 1880. Passages from this article, and from the books named above, are scattered about in the text of the *Voice of the Silence*, as well as in the annotations thereon, which latter are admitted to be the work of Blavatsky. Full proofs of this, including the parallel passages, will be given in my work on Theosophy; including evidence that this old Thibetan book contains not only passages from the Hindu books quoted in the article in the *Dublin Magazine*, but also ideas and phrases stolen from the nineteenth-century writer of said article."

MORE LYING FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

When the American carrion crows leave off raking over the long dead body of Thomas Paine, they usually, without approaching too close, try to leave some of their foul odors near the door of Pagan Bob. The Rev. Robert F. True, whose name belies his nature, is one of this breed. He is secretary of the Evangelistic Association of New England, and at a meeting of that society made the remark "that Colonel Ingersoll's own daughters do not believe his doctrine, and one of them has recently joined the Presbyterian Church in Albany." A representative of the *Boston Investigator*, who occasionally wanders into such gatherings, moved by curiosity or by purposes of criticism, happened to be present. At the close of the meeting he went forward and asked Mr. True for his authority for the statement he had just made. The gentleman, evidently somewhat taken aback by this bold challenge, replied that he had been so informed by several pastors (a very uncertain source of information, by the way). He was then asked if he would retract that statement as publicly as he had made it, provided he was convinced that he was in error, and he replied that he would do so. With the remark that the matter would be thoroughly investigated, and that he would be put in possession of the fact, the *Investigator* representative left the church.

Mr. Ernest Mendum, the editor of the *Investigator*, at once wrote and received answers from the two daughters of Colonel Ingersoll, *fac-similes* of which are given in the *Investigator*. They both emphatically deny having for a moment thought of joining any church. Colonel Ingersoll also wrote: "Ernest Mendum, Esq. My Dear Friend,—I have two daughters, and neither of them ever joined any church. On the subject of religion both of them agree with me, or I agree with them. My wife and I are of the same opinion as to the supernatural. We both believe in the natural, and in what I have done against what is called religion I have always had her support and sympathy. So, you may say from me that the reverend gentleman was entirely mistaken, and in what he said there is not the slightest truth.—Yours always, R. G. Ingersoll."

Armed with these letters, Mr. True was waited on. He was true to his word, and withdrew the statement publicly in his own church.

Did God Die?

In the *Colloquia* of Martin Luther (p. 114; 1652) we read that on June 18, 1538, Luther received letters from Vienna, out of which he understood that there was one who denied that the Godhead in Christ did not suffer, but only his humanity. Luther said: "That cannot be, for it is written 'God who hath purchased the Church with his blood.'" At the same time this question was put to Luther: "If it were justly and right spoken like a Christian to say Christ did suffer and die according to his Godhead or divine nature, seeing the Godhead is not subject to death, neither can suffer nor die; for St. Peter saith: 'Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit.'" Whereupon Luther answered and said: "All true and upright Christians fearing God and the whole Christian Church and Communion do believe, undoubtedly, that which in the Children's Creed is spoken—namely, that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, in one divine substance and nature with the Father, is true man, born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost, did suffer, was crucified, died, and was buried. Therefore we must believe that not only the nature of His Humanity, *but also of His Deity, or the right, true God did suffer and die for us.*" The italics are in the original.

ACID DROPS.

Mrs. Besant has lectured at St. James's Hall, London, on Mahatmas. She was eloquent as usual, but quite unconvincing. "Plenty of eloquence, but not a shred of evidence," cried out one of her auditors when it was all over; and this seemed to be the general feeling amongst all but the Theosophists. Another auditor wanted to know whether Mrs. Besant had ever seen a Mahatma, and the faithful cried "Shame!" at that grovelling materialist. Mrs. Besant did not answer questions or take discussion. She has got past that stage. The High Priestess of Theosophy only delivers oracles.

Mrs. Besant told a *Westminster Gazette* interviewer that she first saw her Mahatma in France in 1889. He revealed himself to her in the night, and we presume the door was locked. Mrs. Besant saw him and smelt him; in fact, it was the odor that clinched the demonstration. Mahatmas bear a peculiar aroma, something like sandal wood. By this sign ye shall know them. Good old Mahatmas.

No wonder the *Westminster* hopes that Mrs. Besant will drop this wretched business and "save the wreck of her reputation." It is a charitable hope, but we fear it will not be realised. While the world talks about her Mrs. Besant is in her element.

An appeal for £20,000 for the East London Church Fund speaks of "the growing opportunities of the Church," because "Secularism seems played out." Our friends the enemy may delude themselves with the belief in our non-existence as long as they please, but the time may come when they will have a rude awakening.

What is the calibre of minds that revel in missionary reports? A Christian paper relates the case of Chung-Te, the only convert in Ohyo, a village in Fuh-Kien. A great fire broke out in this village, although the people tried, without success, to stop the flames with a row of their household gods. Chung-Te, however, knelt down and prayed, and his house was saved; which made the people admit that his God was the strong God. But, after all, Chung-Te was as big a fool as the rest, though a bit luckier. It would be better to improve the antiquated Chinese fire-engines, and let all the gods alone.

What a funny thing it is that the Christian God protects a Chinaman, but does not lift a finger to protect an American evangelist. At one of Moody's recent meetings at Fort Worth, Texas, the roof suddenly fell, killing one person and injuring forty-six others. Providence, sir, Providence!

A drowning person, it is said, will grasp at a straw, and we are reminded of the saying by the avidity with which the religious world has hailed Mr. Balfour's book. Mr. Stead's gush is dealt with by Mr. Ryan in another column. Mr. Balfour's argument is an argument for authority, and therefore an argument for Rome. It is amusing to notice the Protestant Mr. Stead saying: "After this no one will contest with Mr. Balfour the right to Mr. Gladstone's mantle."

Diderot said: "Bewildered in an immense forest in the night time, I have only a feeble lantern to light my path. Comes a stranger, who says to me, 'Blow out thy candle to better find thy way.' This stranger is the theologian." Had he lived now, he might have applied this to the author of *The Foundations of Belief*.

By arrangement, Father Black, the Duke of Newcastle, and a number of members of the English Church Union went to St. Mark's, North Audley-street, W., on April 27, to protest against the marriage of Mr. Brinckman to Miss Linton. Mrs. Brinckman having obtained a divorce was the ground on which Father Black continually protested against the ceremony; but the Rev. Gray refused to listen to him, and he and his fellow protesters were loudly hissed by the crowd.

Not content with this, Father Black (a Father of the Church of England) writes to the *Church Times*, reminding the Bishop of London "how, a few weeks ago, he deprived Mr. Briggs of his licence and daily bread for an offence which in every way falls short of his own."

The *Church Times*, which devotes an article to the subject, declares that the provisions of the Divorce Act of 1857 "are in open defiance of Holy Scripture, of the express words of Christ in our own Prayer-Book Marriage Service, and of the Canon of 1604," for which, we suppose, the twentieth century will be expected to have revived reverence. The *C. T.* excitedly asks: "How long are Christians of the

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Church of England going to stand this kind of thing? Are the parishioners of St. Mark's going to allow their church to be thus desecrated?"

Durant, the Sunday-school superintendent who stands charged with having outraged and murdered a little girl whose mutilated body was found in the Emanuel Baptist Chapel, San Francisco, has been identified by a microscopic examination of horsehair. He had a key of the side door of the church which was found unlocked.

At the further hearing of this case the evidence pointed very strongly to the guilt of Mr. Gibson, the pastor of that church, who is a native of Edinburgh. The examination by experts of the handwriting of Mr. Gibson revealed an extraordinary resemblance existing between the written characters and those in the slip of writing sent to the murdered girl's aunt, together with a couple of her rings taken from her fingers before the murder, of which the police now affirm that Gibson and Durant were jointly guilty.

The New York *Tribune* said on Easter Sunday: "In the churches this morning there will be much said about 'the blessed hope of immortality'; but we doubt if a single preacher will declare that the atoms of the identical physical body that was laid in the grave will be brought together again and dowered with an immortal existence. It is a conception entirely foreign to the spirit of the age; and, in the long run, the Church must always take account of the spirit of the age." The *Tribune* professes to discern in this a sign of drift from Materialism. To us it indicates a drift from the Bible, for the doctrine of the New Testament is distinctly that of the resurrection of the body. Nothing is said about an immortal, immaterial soul. Christians recite in church the old creed, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," but they attach to it a new and totally different signification from that of the authors.

Talmage has furbished up an old argument for the resurrection. He says: "If, out of ordinary dust of the earth, and without a model, God could make Adam, a perfect man, surely out of the extraordinary dust of mortal body, and with millions of models, God can make each one of us a perfect being in the resurrection." With improved materials and models, of course, the deity ought to turn out something better than his "perfect man," who fell at the first temptation.

In the *Cosmopolitan* Mr. J. T. Van Gestel gives a vivid account of the eruption of the Krakatoa volcano, which, in May, 1893, overtook the islands of Java and Sumatra, and brought to a horrible death no less than two hundred thousand people. Mr. Van Gestel himself saw the city of Anjer, with its sixty thousand inhabitants, engulphed and blotted out. Believers in Providence must find it hard to reconcile a sudden terrible calamity like this with their fanciful theory.

Catholic Opinion has had its feelings outraged by the fact that eighty French Freethinkers sat down to dine together on Good Friday. It suggests they must have been instigated by the devil to thus outrage the feelings of good Catholics, who were fasting, and were not even obliged to smell the offensive dinner.

A church dispute reached an acute stage in Nebraska a few weeks ago. The affairs of the Polish Roman Catholic Church at Sheelytown, near Omaha, have been in the law courts for over a year, and a deadly hatred has existed between the factions, resulting in a bloody riot a month ago. On March 27, just after the evening service, the church was burned, and it is alleged that the faction of Father Kominski destroyed the church rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the bishop. Fighting is going on, and another riot is feared. Christianity has seldom brought anything more nearly approaching the popular idea of the millennium than this state of things; but perhaps these rioting and bloodthirsty Polish Catholics are not Christians? Who shall decide?

The Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth, who writes the sermon in the *New York Herald*, Sunday, March 31, says: "We shall, undoubtedly, experience a great many surprises when we get to heaven. The heaven depicted by the popular theology is a place very undesirable to go to, because death, we are told, will make such changes in us that we shall lose all of our personal peculiarities, and perhaps our personality itself." Well might the man of God question if such an immortality would be worth having.

Mr. Carroll Everett, of Harvard University, in a paper on "The Devil," in the *New World*, points out that Old Nick could always be trusted to keep a bargain. He says: "In all the stories that I recall in which a pact was made with the Devil, it was not he who tried to squirm out of it. We all remember the many questionable methods which have been adopted by those who had sold themselves, or others, to him to escape making the delivery by some technical subterfuge, even after they had received the price. In all these transactions it has not been the Devil that has appeared at the greatest disadvantage. So far as I can recall the various narratives, if the Devil makes a promise he always keeps it, even to his own loss." The Bible stories bear this out. When the serpent says, "Ye shall not surely die," he is literally correct. On the other hand Jehovah sends lying spirits into the mouths of Ahab's prophets to lure him to destruction.

God's mercies have been magnificently displayed in the terrible French disaster, sweeping away whole villages, destroying over a hundred lives, and rendering hundreds of others homeless. In Hungary, too, four market towns, with thousands of houses, have been destroyed by the floods, and a great many persons and large numbers of cattle have been drowned.

Again the cholera has broken out at Mecca, and is reported as spreading rapidly from that pilgrim centre. Here religion, instead of coping with disease, rather tends to its diffusion.

According to the *Dover Observer* (April 27), an abominable case of cruelty has been perpetrated at one of the religious Homes of that city. The Institution has associated with it people who believe that faith and prayer will accomplish everything. A young woman was admitted into the Institution who had run a needle into her foot, which, together with the leg, became greatly inflamed, keeping her in an agony of pain. Orders were given that she should not be allowed any surgical assistance, but that, instead, prayers should be said over her for two hours daily, and that she should wait till it should please her Maker to release her from the tormenting pain which had driven her well-nigh mad. If the *Observer's* statement is correct, the directors of the Institution in question should not only be named, but prosecuted for their pious inhumanity.

The South Shields *Free Press* is printing a discussion on "Theosophy," which is rendered amusing by bogus Mahatma letters. The matter advanced by the Theosophists is hardly worth anything better, though Mr. Gordon Scott puts his pin into their air-bladders very seriously.

The Bolton School Board spent three hours arguing whether they should petition for rates to be applied to voluntary schools. Mr. Cooper told them plainly that, if the clerical resolution passed, the minority would present a counter petition.

Walter Condy Parsons, a lad of seventeen, who lived at Small Heath, Birmingham, blew out his brains with a revolver. His mother had committed suicide some months previous, and he brooded over the catastrophe until his own mind became unhinged. According to some letters he left at his lodgings, he was an Agnostic without belief in a future life. Whereupon the Coroner—Mr. Oliver Pemberton—was silly enough to tell the jury that "If a man can neither find a deity in theological teaching nor in nature, he must be mad." Fancy an obscure official talking in this way of his intellectual superiors—such as Darwin, Clifford, Spencer, Huxley, and Bradlaugh! We should like to feel that coroner's bumps.

The Christian, who is ever ready with a defence for his fetish book, is sometimes amusing. One who was asked how, after all the cattle had died by one of the plagues of Egypt, they were nevertheless afflicted with boils, said the Egyptians had bought fresh cattle in the meantime. He might as well have said that the Lord created fresh cattle for them.

"General" Booth has been occupying the Colston Hall, Bristol, which would not be available for a Freethought meeting. His advertised program was "Two Days with God." It doesn't follow, though, that God has had two days with Booth.

Charles Dickens used to tell the following story about a Methodist preacher: "This preacher had been called to officiate at the funeral of a relative of a Conservative editor, and as the preacher himself aimed to be a Liberal leader in the district, he and the editor had often crossed swords. This time the chance came to deliver a home thrust without a chance for either parry or reply. At the coffin of the deceased, beside which the editor and other mourners knelt together, the preacher made this appeal: 'Lord, overrule this affliction to the welfare of all assembled, including the reptile now sprawling in Thy presence, who has frequently abused Thy servant in the columns of his beastly publication.'"

According to the special commissioner of the *Boston Herald*, who visited all the principal towns in the State of

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Maine to observe the working of the Maine Liquor Law, which has been for many years in force in that State, Prohibition does not prohibit. The law is violated with impunity. Portland is said to have "about four hundred rum-shops" and from four to five hundred liquor-sellers live in Lewiston. The commissioner observed that the police can resolutely "put down" whiskey when it is offered them to drink, and one beside him at an hotel bar insisted on the commissioner taking a drink at his expense.

An Austrian has invented a rapping and talking table *Der Stein der Weisen* describes this ingenious electrical apparatus, which is intended for conjurers, "mejums," and private parties entertaining their friends.

Mr. Disraeli and Dean Stanley were once staying in the same house, and it fell to the statesman's lot to listen to a sermon from the Broad Church divine. As was his wont, Dean Stanley indulged in an eloquent denunciation of dogmatism. When next they met, Mr. Disraeli remarked: "We have to thank you for a most eloquent sermon, Mr. Dean, and I must say, from your own point of view, for a most disinterested one. No dogmas, no deans."

The *Monist*, of Chicago, opens with an account of "The World's Parliament of Religions," by the President, the Hon. C. C. Bonney. It is proposed to commemorate and follow up the work of that Parliament with "The World's Religious Parliament Extension." This may be taken as one sign of the break up of Christianity. For Christianity is nothing if not exclusive in its pretensions. It proclaims there is no salvation under heaven save in the name of Jesus Christ, and "he that believeth not shall be damned." At the Parliament the only voice of narrowness and bigotry came from Christians. When once Christians resign their pretensions to having an infallible divine revelation, and admit that there is truth in other religions besides their own, they virtually admit that their own faith may be criticised and rejected as much as Buddhism or Brahmanism.

The Rev. W. D. P. Bliss calls Mr. Kidd's *Social Evolution* "one of the most dangerous productions of recent years." He regards it as a trap for the orthodox. The cheese that baits it is the laudation of religion and Christianity, but the hidden barb is that Christianity is only pretended to be useful, not true. "Evolution is the main thing. God and Christianity are incidentals. What of it? They are useful as characteristic social factors, such as slavery, for example, was." This, says Mr. Bliss, is the real position of the book, and he asks: "Does it really make no difference whether Christianity be true or not?"

At the same time, Dr. F. Lees, the veteran temperance advocate, declares he regards Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* as most pernicious, anti-rational, and Romanising. He intends to devote his remaining days to a refutation.

The *English Mechanic*, writing on "Examinations," says: "We remember at the London University matriculation examination that one of the questions in English literature, set, by the bye, by the Rev. Dr. Angus, now member of our London School Board, was, 'Write out the Lord's Prayer, and underline the words in it of classical origin.' Immediately in front of us sat a Hindoo student, and we were curious to know his reply. He told us afterwards, outside the examination-room, that he had written: 'Not being a Christian, I do not know the Lord's Prayer.' But that two average sane men should have propounded such a question at an examination which it was known would be attended by Hindoos, Jews, Mohammedans, 'barbarians, Scythians, bond and free,' is significant of the bad side of the system."

The Vicar of St. Pancras is one of those numerous men of God who collect their Easter offerings under false pretences. He issued a formal notice, like a taxgatherer, stating that the collector will call on the parishioners for the purpose of collecting the Easter Dues. There is not a hint in it to ill-informed people that this is a voluntary contribution, while a reference to seeing that they get "a receipt" for the "payment" rather suggests the contrary.

The Fulham Vestry have directed their Law and Parliamentary Committee to consider and report on the recent action of the Rev. C. W. Muriel, the vicar of the parish. The man of God at the Easter vestry meeting took the chair without being elected, and the people's warder was appointed by his casting vote. The vicar's action was absolutely illegal, the law having distinctly abolished the old privilege of vicars. Vestries are foolish if they longer stand the usurpation of non-elected persons, and the sooner the men of God are made to feel they are no longer in their old position of privilege, the sooner they will be on good behavior.

The introduction of separate Communion cups into the fashionable churches in America has occasioned considerable commotion. Many doctors advocate it as a necessary sanitary precaution. Many theologians, however, denounce the practice as not in accordance with the example of Christ, who passed around the one common cup. Dr. Rainsford denounces it as "fake and fudge." The Rev. C. W. Millard says: "Take away the common cup, and the tendency to divide the worshippers is felt. The natural trend is bad. One man may have a better cup than another. This may cause jealousy or envy. Then the more fortunate may clamor for a separate altar, where they can be divided from their poorer neighbors."

Dr. J. M. Buckley, the editor of the New York *Christian Advocate*, says: "The emergency is grave; for the holy communion, the most sacred symbol of the Church, the most tender and pathetic ceremonial of all history, the source of the most blessed influences, the nucleus of the most spiritual associations, the elixir of life to the penitent, the renewer of hope in the self-distrustful, the vivifier of faith, the foretoken of immortality, the antetype of the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the unifier of believers in heaven and in earth, is contemplated and approached by many with a divided mind." The alarm of the ministers at the division of their congregation on this point will not count for much in face of the published report of Dr. Forbes, professor of chemistry in Rochester University, who says: "We have found in the communion cup the undeveloped germs of twenty-two diseases." Few love their Jesus so much as to be regardless whether they imbibe bacteria with him or not.

The *Sporting Chronicle* gives insertion to the following lines on L:—

Hell's played out! no matter what the preacher folks may say,
Though they may try to keep it hot, it's dying every day;
The place where sinners sizzled in the tortures of the cursed
Has somehow cooled its fires since our water pipes all burst.

The pit of burning sulphur o'er which they used to shake
A fellow every Sunday, just to keep him wide awake,
And the awful smell of brimstone, and the imps that shrieked with glee,
They aren't one-half so terrible as what they used to be.

Some people say it isn't right to let the fires die;
They'd rather keep them going, just to hear the sinners fry;
"What good is heaven going to prove," they ask, "for me and you,
If everybody else gets in to share the glory, too?"

Lord Oxford mentions having seen for sale at a small town in Italy, among other relics, a finger-nail from the hand of St. Peter, a bit of a never-dying worm preserved in spirits, a quill from a cock that crowed at the crucifixion, and the chemise of the Holy Virgin! "The good man that showed me all these commodities had got into such a habit of calling them 'the blessed' this and 'the blessed' that, that at last he showed me 'a bit of the blessed fig-tree that Christ cursed.'"

Mr. J. B. Wookey—we believe he is an "evangelist"—held forth at Nottingham lately, in connection with the P.S.A. movement, on "The Woman Who Did." It was a meeting for "men only," with "no youths under eighteen years of age admitted." Perhaps the precaution was necessary. We dare say Mr. Wookey was equal to the suggestiveness of his advertisement. But would it not be as well to fix the same age-limit for Bible reading? Mr. Wookey's address could hardly have been blacker or bluer than Holy Writ.

Hugh Price Hughes has been to Derby—not the Derby, but the city of that name. Of course he was haunted by that Atheist Shoemaker exposure. Some of our friends sent him one of our pamphlets in an envelope marked "urgent," while he sat upon the platform. They caught him as he was leaving the building, and asked him why his book was withdrawn. He replied: "Rubbish, nonsense, it's a lie." Afterwards he actually denied that the Gibsons were the right people, forgetting that Mr. Holyoake admitted "Gibson" to be the name which was given to him in confidence. What a brazen liar, to be sure!

Professor Drummond is getting into trouble over his Lowell Lectures on "The Ascent of Man." The Free Synod of Argyll has asked the General Assembly to "take the matter into consideration, and to give such judgment as shall conserve the interests alike of faith and science." No judgment can conserve *both*.

There must be something wrong about the family government when a four-year-old boy is heard praying: "Oh, Lord, take all the naughty out of Johnny, and all the scold out of papa, and all the punish out of mamma. Amen."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 15 and 16, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—May 5, Glasgow; 6, 7, 8, and 9, debate at Glasgow with Dr. Jamieson; 12, Dundee; 19, Camberwell; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

E. Mendum.—We send you our paper as soon as issued. Will you oblige by doing the same? Yours is usually six weeks old ere it reaches us.

H. Organ.—"Acid Drops" are all written by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler. Glad to hear you are so fond of them.

J. Fletcher.—We hope we have your initial properly. The Derby debate is now fixed for May 15 and 16. Mr. Foote is in first-rate health, but often a little weary from over-work.

S. Holmes.—Thanks for your good wishes.

The Secretaries of London Branches whose lectures are announced in the London Secular Federation list need not send notices to us, except in case of any alteration.

S. P. (Manchester).—Delighted to learn that your affection for Charles Bradlaugh is consistent with a "robust admiration" for his successor in the Presidency. Swift said of Queen Anne that her heart was not large enough for more than one friendship at a time; and there are a few Bradlaughites who seem nearly as narrow. Happily it is only a few.

W. C. (Dorking).—Many thanks. We always look for your name among subscribers. We shall resume the Christmas and Midsummer appeals for the N.S.S. when we have done with these special appeals.

W. Stuart.—Thanks for your offer of £10 if the project is brought to a successful termination.

H. A. Cumber.—It may be true that if we advocated Christianity with what you are pleased to call our "eloquence and wit" we should be "swamped with donations," but we could hardly become a Christian without softening of the brain, and the "wit," at any rate, would then have disappeared.

E. H.—(1) Begging your pardon, Judas was paid to identify Jesus; which is a great joke, seeing how well he must have been known, if there is any truth in the Gospel. Judas says to the apprehenders, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he." (2) Sunday—that is, the Sun's Day—was observed by the Gentiles; and when the Christians broke away from Judaism and its forms, and gave up the Sabbath, they just took Sunday instead of it, as the only day open to them. That is the whole secret of the "first day."

T. Wilmot.—We must speak of a man as we find him. Mr. Foote will publish a little volume on the question you refer to as soon as he finds time for its composition.

Nemo.—Your letter is flattering; but this is certain, that we give our whole life (body and soul, as the saying is) to the cause of Freethought.

F. W. Thorrington.—Thanks for your Unitarian friend's comments on that Christian lecturer, who is not worth an advertisement in our columns.

J. M. R. B.—Mr. Foote missed you at Glasgow. Thanks for cutting.

R. Brown.—We have Palmer's *Principles of Nature*. He was, as you say, an able writer. Shall be pleased to hear from you at any time.

T. Fisher.—Thanks for the promise.

Two Macs.—We wish you success.

J. Hill.—The Chatham Branch did noble work in raising its pretty little hall at New Brompton. We are not surprised to learn that working men and women members subscribed as much as £7 or £8 each.

Papers Received.—Dover Observer—Two Worlds—New York Review of Reviews—Newcastle Daily Leader—New York Tribune—Blue Grass Blade—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Boston Sunday Globe—Boston Journal—Isle of Man Times—Middlesex County Times—Freeman's Journal—Bon Accord—Open Court—Melbourne Argus—Chatham and Rochester News—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Dublin Evening Herald—Der Arme Teufel—Twentieth Century—Boston Investigator—South Shields Free Press—Kansas Lucifer—Freidenker.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

HALL OF SCIENCE.

A considerable number of shares in the National Secular Hall Society (Limited) have been applied for, and fresh applications are coming in daily. But we are still a good way off realising the £600 necessary to clear off Mr. R. O. Smith's mortgage. It will be remembered that he gave us till the end of April to raise the amount, but the time is insufficient, and I have requested him to let his offer stand until the end of May. Unfortunately his answer has not arrived yet (I am writing on Wednesday morning), but I presume it will be favorable.

This fact need not deter any friend from applying for shares, or sending donations, in response to my appeal; for I promise that all their money shall be returned if the project is not carried to a successful issue.

There are several interesting letters amongst my mass of correspondence, but I have only room to mention a few of them.

Mr. John Umpleby, of Blackburn—one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents—says that if five friends will subscribe £100 each, or ten friends £50 each, he will do the same. Mr. Umpleby says he is not a wealthy man, but he would strain a point in this instance, as he thinks there should be "no apathy shown in the matter."

Mr. R. S. Smith, a veteran Freethinker, of Devonport, sends up applications for five shares. Mr. Boorman, of the Chatham Branch, states that twelve shares will be taken up by some of his members; which is a brave example to other Branches, especially as the Chatham friends are maintaining a hall of their own. The Barnsley Branch, which has had some reverses, also applies for four shares.

Mr. W. H. Morrish, a fine old veteran, of Bristol, who took some shares a few months ago, offers to take more if there is a prospect of success. Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, who has recently been laid low with a severe illness, is now well enough to write me a letter with his own hand. Unfortunately he is still confined to his bed, but he will help when he is able to get about.

Responding to my appeal to "those who prefer to make a promise, on condition that the attempt is successful," a city friend offers £10 as a donation for shares in my name or that of the N.S.S.

Mr. Martin Weatherburn, of Cramlington, whose support I am always proud of, applies for two shares. Another veteran, and the oldest of them all—a Londoner—offers his subscription.

A London friend, already a shareholder, will take any number of shares up to a hundred. Mr. J. H. Ridgway, one of our quiet "always there" London workers, takes another twenty shares. Mr. G. F. Wenborn, another Londoner, takes fifteen more. Mr. A. Tripp, a Brighton veteran, takes another five. The Birmingham Branch and the Finsbury Park Branch take five shares each.

Mr. G. Nidd, a London friend, is one of twelve, who hope soon to be twenty, or even forty. They are to subscribe sixpence each weekly, and to take a share in the name of one of them for every pound thus accumulated. Which is a very happy idea.

I wish I had room for bits from the letters of donors, some of which have brought the moisture to my eyes. I greatly value their expressions of affection and confidence.

I have received the following fresh donations:—J. D., £2; W. Baxter, 5s.; D. F. Gloak, 2s. 6d.; T. Dobson, 5s.; W. S. M., 10s.; H. A. S., 10s.; C. North, 1s.; E. F. B., 10s.; F. Holland, 2s. 6d.; W. B., 2s. 6d.; W. Hyde, 2s. 6d.; Rubber Stamp Flexible Type Co. (Manchester), £5; One of the Girls, 2s.; C. Mallinson, 2s.; T. Hopkins, 1s.; A few non-members, 5s.; Two Macs, 2s.; M. Bell, £3; T. E. M., 1s.; Nemo, 2s. 6d.; Alpha, 1s.; H. A. Cumber, 5s.; Shop Assistants, 4s. 6d.; F. B., 2s. 6d.; T. Dunbar, 1s. 6d.; W. C. (Dorking), £1; J. Hayes, 1s.; S. Holmes, £1; Fletcher (Derby), 5s.; H. Organ, 1s.; W. Lamb, £1; B. D., £1.

In continuing this appeal I do so in the hope that it will soon be entirely successful. Those who cannot take shares, or prefer not to do so, are earnestly invited to send me any donation they can afford, no matter how small it may be. Many littles make much, and in the union of numbers is strength.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Putnam, the President of the American Secular Union, and an intimate personal friend of Colonel Ingersoll, is on the Atlantic while we are penning this paragraph. The ship he is voyaging in is timed to arrive at Southampton early on Friday morning, and Messrs. Foote and Watts will be there to meet her as she steams into dock. They will welcome Mr. Putnam in the name of the Secular party, and travel up with him to London, where they will see to his comfort and make him feel as much at home as possible in a new land.

Mr. Putnam is to deliver his first lecture at the London Hall of Science this evening (May 5). Mr. Foote gives up his Sunday in order to take the chair and introduce our distinguished visitor. We hope the Freethinkers of the metropolis will muster in strong force on this occasion, and pack the hall in every corner. Mr. Putnam ought to have a big meeting and a grand reception. He represents the American Secular Union officially, and in giving him an enthusiastic welcome our friends will be honoring the Freethought party in the land of Ingersoll. Mr. Putnam has a reputation for eloquence upon the platform, and we know he is an eloquent writer. N.B.—The free admission will be suspended on this occasion.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place at Bristol on Whit-Sunday. Mr. Putnam will attend it and speak at the evening meeting as President of the American Secular Union. He will also read a special letter from Colonel Ingersoll to the Freethinkers of Great Britain. Mr. Putnam will send an account of the Conference to the New York *Truthseeker*, and we hope he will have plenty of good material for his article. Branches of the N.S.S. should lose no time in making arrangements to be represented at this Conference. We believe there will be a strong gathering of our party's lecturers.

The report of the Hall of Science Libel Case is now on sale in pamphlet form, with a sixteen-page Introduction by Mr. Foote, giving a history of the case before trial and a full and true account of "The Leeds Orgies," which the Christian Evidence people have made such sinister use of for nearly twenty years. This Introduction has given Mr. Foote a great deal of trouble, partly owing to the difficulty of obtaining all the facts relating to the Leeds affair. But the thing is done at last, and done once for all; so that this pamphlet should stand for a long while as a thorough vindication of Secularism against its most malignant calumniators.

The pamphlet is well printed on good paper, and is published at the low price of threepence. Of course there will be a considerable loss on this edition. Should it turn out that there is a wide demand for the publication—and there *should* be, for Secularists ought to circulate it as extensively as possible—Mr. Foote will issue a bigger edition on cheaper paper and at a lower price—say twopence, or even a penny. It could not be produced at that price, but the great thing is to get it widely distributed.

There was a capital audience at the Hall of Science last Sunday evening, when Mr. Charles Watts lectured on "Man and the Universe." The applause was very enthusiastic, and at the conclusion of the lecture it was repeated again and again.

To-day, Sunday, May 5, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Glasgow, and on Monday evening he commences a four nights' debate in the Glasgow City Hall with Dr. Jamieson.

The annual meeting of the Liverpool Branch takes place this Sunday evening at the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne's-street. A good attendance of members is desired.

At the Finsbury Park Branch meeting, last Sunday, motions for the Conference Agenda were passed, and delegates appointed. It was unanimously resolved to take up five fully-paid-up shares in the National Secular Hall Society as an inducement to other N.S.S. Branches to go and do likewise.

The Report of the Humanitarian League, read at its annual meeting on April 25, showed a greatly extended amount of work during the past year. The energetic workers on the H. L., with but a small income, can fairly claim that they are helping to leaven the public mind with humanitarian principles.

Mr. C. Cohen lectures in Victoria Park, for the first time this season, on Sunday afternoon. Freethinkers in the neighborhood are asked to attend and support the meetings against the attacks of Christian rowdies.

The *Rochester and Chatham Standard* devotes several paragraphs of "Chit-Chat" to the recent Foote-Waldron debate at New Brompton. The writer doubts whether any good comes of such intellectual encounters, but he compliments Mr. Waldron as a speaker, and says that "Mr. Foote is an able and eloquent debater, and friends and foes joined in acknowledging his power and ability."

The Islington Branch opens its *al fresco* lecturing season to-day (May 5) at its station in Prebend-street, Packington-street. During May the experiment of lectures in Finsbury Park on Sunday evenings is to be tried, and they will be continued if the Branch finds them successful.

The West London Branch having decided to reopen the outdoor propaganda in Kilburn, local Freethinkers are earnestly requested to attend and support the platform to-day (May 5), when Mr. F. Haslam will lecture, his subject being, "Bible Stories: Are they True?" Time, 7 p.m.

The Bristol Branch commences its open-air propaganda this Sunday evening, at 7, in the lower end of Eastville Park, when Mr. J. Keast will give an address on Christian Evidence. Friends in the neighborhood are requested to attend and support the meeting.

Mr. William Heaford lectures at the Failsworth Secular Schools on Sunday afternoon and evening, his subjects being "Secularism Expounded and Vindicated," and "The Bible, the School, and Morality." Hymns and choruses will be sung by the choir, assisted by the Failsworth string band, and tea will be provided for friends from a distance.

Dr. Lyman Abbott writes in the *Century* on "Religious Teaching in the Public Schools." He argues in favor of moral teaching, and against the State conducting religious exercises. "Settlement," he says, "will not be reached by contriving some simple theology which can be taught in the public school, on the theory that a theology can be found so broad and simple that Agnostics, Jews, Protestants, and Roman Catholics will agree upon it. Theology is the philosophy of religion, and the philosophy of religion is not necessary to good citizenship." His paper is an attempt to find a basis acceptable to all reasonable parties.

There was a capital audience at Mr. Foote's lecture for the West London Branch on Tuesday evening. The Athenæum was well filled, and the lecture was followed with close attention. Mr. Touzeau Parris took the chair and kept questioners to the point, much to the disgust of one or two of them who wanted to put questions several yards long. Four Christians offered opposition, and were listened to courteously. Mr. Foote's reply aroused great enthusiasm.

Mr. A. B. Moss will be forty years old on May 8. People used to think about their funerals at that age, but the world has altered, and Mr. Moss is still a "young man," though it is just twenty years this month since he delivered his first Freethought lecture. Mr. Moss's last lecture (that is, his last up to date) was delivered on Sunday morning to a big open-air audience at Camberwell. We hope he will keep on the war-path for another twenty years at least.

Mr. J. M. Wheeler has taken the witch-burning case at Clonmel as the text for a terrible sermon, which he preaches in a pamphlet entitled *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*. Readers of the *Freethinker* know how thoroughly our colleague always does his work. He proves conclusively, by a multitude of references, that the Clonmel witch-burners were good Bible Christians. The pamphlet, which is published at twopence by Mr. Forder, should be widely circulated while the Irish tragedy is fresh in the public mind.

Obituary.

Last Sunday, the 28 ult., we consigned to the tomb, in Sunderland Cemetery, the remains of a sturdy Freethinker, Thomas Cussins, who died at the age of fifty-one on the previous Thursday. Though not taking any official part in the business of the N.S.S., our late friend had for many years maintained in private discussion the truth of Secular principles, both here and in the South of England. As a young man he had fought for liberty in the American War. Though earnestly adjured to seek the services of a clergyman in the last days of his illness, he resolutely held to his opinions, contemplating the end with calmness, and even with pleasure. Austin Holyoake's service was read at the graveside by W. R. Stansell to an attendance composed chiefly of the deceased's Catholic friends, upon whom it appeared to have much effect. Few Freethinkers assembled, they being mostly occupied in listening to Mr. Foote's grand lecture in the Victoria Hall.—W. R. Stansell.

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BOOK CHAT.

In the April *Monist* the editor, Dr. Paul Carus, criticises the late Professor Romanes's *Thoughts on Religion*; and, having been a correspondent of the Professor, throws some light on his "conversion." Romanes never got away from the sentiments in which he was trained. In his *Candid Examination of Theism* he says: "I feel it is desirable to state that any antecedent bias with regard to Theism which I individually possess is unquestionably on the side of traditional belief." It was "with the utmost sorrow" he found his intellect in opposition to it. When his health broke down, he "rummages his brain for arguments to silence the voice of reason!" "What tortures," exclaims his friend, "must this man have suffered in his eagerness not to think, but to believe! His religious struggle may have been the physical cause of his premature death; for distraction of mind is more injurious than overwork. And, after all, he was anxious to attempt the impossible." The case of Professor Romanes seems to be the painful, but not unusual, one of a long struggle of reason against preconceived ideas and dogmas inculcated in youth, which only triumph, if triumph it can be called, when ill-health prostrates the faculties. The incoherent and unfinished state of the notes left by Professor Romanes sufficiently indicates that their author, when he penned them, was no longer at his best. Canon Gore would probably have done better for his friend's reputation, and his own, by suppressing them.

* * *

Mr. Edward Douglas Fawcett, author of *A Key to the Riddle of the Universe*, contributes an article to the *Monist* on "The Well-Springs of Reality." He says: "Monads, human, subhuman, superhuman, are the well-springs of reality." This key to the riddle is an old one, which even in the hands of Leibnitz did not prove very useful. Mr. Fawcett, who makes "metaconsciousness" and "idealist monadology" solve all sorts of difficulties, complains of the "word-spinning" of Hegelianism!

* * *

It is pleasant to find that our old friend, the *English Mechanic*, keeps up its high standard of excellence, and provides thought as well as information for its *clientele*. It was this combination which, in the days of R. A. Proctor, made the *E. M.* a welcome visitor in other places beside the workshop. In the monthly part for May, which lies before us, we note that "A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society," and other writers, ably maintain the reputation of the paper; while the leading articles embrace such popular topics as Eastertide, Witches, and Witchcraft, and a large number of correspondents seem to delight in answering every conceivable question bearing on science, mechanics, and the arts.

* * *

During the Franco-Prussian War the name of M. Albert Collignon, "the man on the white horse," who stirred up the people of Metz against Marshal Bazaine, was familiar. He is now about to publish two volumes on two Freethinkers, one dealing with the life and work of Diderot, and the other on Gustave Flaubert.

* * *

Messrs. Luzac & Co. have issued a translation of Dr. Wildeboer's *Origin of the Canon of the Old Testament*, which gives the present aspect of "higher criticism."

* * *

D. Appleton & Co., of New York, are issuing an "Anthropological Series." The initial volume is Dr. Mason's *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*, which share is proved to have been a very considerable one. The second volume is by the late A. D. Quatrefages, on *The Pygmies*. The author, who was of the old school of anthropologists, believed in the great antiquity of the human race, and never fully accepted evolution. He tries to show that the pygmies offer no support to the hope of finding a missing link. The last chapter, on "The Religious Belief of the Hottentots and Bushmen," is of great interest.

* * *

English versions of a number of the late M. Darmesteter's essays have been included in a volume which Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. are to publish. The subjects of the essays are: "The Religions of the Future," "The Prophets of Israel," "Afghan Life in Afghan Songs," "Race and Tradition," "Ernest Renan," "An Essay on the History of the Jews," and "The Supreme God in the Indo-European Mythology."

* * *

The *Melbourne Argus* (March 23) has a very ill-natured notice of *Charles Bradlaugh: His Life and Works*, which it calls "pious, but a little preposterous, and altogether out of proportion." It says: "Bradlaugh or no Bradlaugh, the oath would have been abolished in good time." The "good time" of the *Argus*, like that of the song, is always "coming." To go on, as it does, to speak of "Bradlaugh's brutal and foolish attempt to force his way into the House of Commons" may be pious, but is certainly preposterous. Bradlaugh only persisted to his utmost in doing what his constituents had sent him to do. Had he not done so, the "good time" might have been deferred to the Greek calends.

A KIND OF PREACHER.

"Volumes might be written on the impiety of the pious."
—*Herbert Spencer.*

A MIGHTY moral leader this,
Who deals with finely-flourished arms,
Now in damnation, now in bliss,
Now sweetly comforts, now alarms;
And skilled to clothe each view intense
With pulpit-shaking eloquence!

Nothing too vague or too sublime
Transcends his confident surmise;
The awful ambuscades of time
Conceal no secrets from his eyes;
The deeps of space he coolly sounds,
He gives eternity its bounds.

On Nature's plan his looks are bent,
And lo! she teems, we straightway learn,
With special providences meant
For his rare wisdom to discern.
He scorns what Science may disclose,
For she but talks of what she knows.

He lifts aloft his pious gaze;
In holy wrath his features glow;
For all dark sinning souls he prays;
His congregation weeps below.
He sees destruction's giddy brink
Thronged with these rogues who dare to think.

But once beneath his throne we sat;
We heard his outflow, word for word:
And God was this, and God was that,
And God was thus and thus, we heard;
Till we, who merely mope and plod,
Envied this bosom-friend of God!

—*Bloom and Brambles.* EDGAR FAWCETT.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

May 5, Hall of Science, London; 12, Camberwell; 19, Bradford; 26, Liverpool.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 30, Sheffield.

July 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 21, Birmingham.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York in August, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Arrangements are being made for him to speak in Derby and Stockton-on-Tees during the weeks following his being at Manchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Dundee should be visited when he lectures in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Christianity is to be regarded as a system rather than as a doctrine, for, like Proteus, it changes its form, and, whenever defeated in attack, if policy so dictates, it adopts the proved ideas of its assailants, and thus preserves its organisation, which is more essential to its official supporters than are its dogmas. These are abandoned or changed whenever expediency dictates, making aggressive effort very difficult; for whenever a point is successfully assailed it is declared to be "unessential," or else not to belong to *true* Christianity. Everything is abandoned but natural morality, and still men call themselves Christians and support the system which has no excuse for continuance unless miracle and revelation are facts. When Rationalists see the duty of consistency, they will cease to uphold a system which has no logical existence apart from supernaturalism.—*Robert C. Adams.*

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SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—VII.

Major Evans Bell.

Major Thomas Evans Bell was chiefly known by his works on Indian affairs. He entered the army in 1842, and was employed in the suppression of Thugee. He served his country well in India, and probably in nothing better than in his continued advocacy in books and pamphlets of the just claims of the natives. But this independent attitude did not commend him to the authorities, and stood in the way of justly-earned promotion. As a Freethinker, he is to be remembered by his concise little book entitled *The Task of To-day*, in which, taking up Carlyle's injunction to do the duty nearest hand, he examines the religion in which he had been reared. During the early days of the *Reasoner* Major Bell supported that paper with both purse and pen, writing many Freethought articles under the signature of "Undecimus." He, indeed, contemplated selling his commission to devote himself to Freethought, but, by the advice of friends, was deterred. He returned to India at the outbreak of the mutiny, and became Deputy Commissioner of Police at Madras. He probably had some share in leading Judge Strange on the road to Freethought.

The influence of Carlyle is notable in *The Task of To-day*, which was published by James Watson in 1852, and is dedicated to G. J. Holyoake. He says in his preface: "Life is a very serious thing; every gleam of truth reveals to us more of the laws of absolute fact, inexorable and eternal, which make up the inscrutable Future and Invisible, as they do the visible and mysterious Present. Shall we raise our puny hands or voices and fight against those laws? Shall we lie against eternal truth, or shut our eyes and ears against it? I dare do none of these things deliberately. My share in the work of the world is doubtless of the minutest consequence, but to *me* it is of infinite consequence. To me it is of infinite consequence whether I live a traitor and a coward, or a true man. Good or bad, this is my work; I found I had it to do, and I have done it. May I ever do so."

The *Task* examines the Christian evidences with the result of showing that they were accepted in days of gross credulity, and have been largely maintained by pious frauds. Thus he says: "There was exactly the same evidence, and no more, in the third and fourth centuries that there is now—namely, certain narratives, the earliest of which was certainly not written sooner than thirty years after the death of Christ; but the superstition and ignorance of those times were such that accounts of supernatural events met with easy credit, and were attributed by some to divine, and by others to diabolical agency, according as they approved or disliked the character of the miracle-worker, or the tendency of his doctrines."

"Hardly two centuries ago a man in England was considered, even by the educated, as little better than an Atheist if he doubted that many old women were endowed by the Devil with the power of working miracles without number." The frauds, he shows, were not confined to Catholics. "Although modern Protestantism has never pretended to miraculous powers, yet Protestant pious frauds have always abounded, and abound in the present day. It is a gross fraud to gloss over and conceal the infamous characters and obviously interested motives of many of the principal actors in the Reformation, in England particularly, as Protestant writers have done. Awful interpositions of Providence, exaggerated and fictitious accounts of death-bed scenes, both of believers and infidels, the lying reports of missionaries, and, in particular, the long evangelical speeches they are so fond of putting into the mouths of their converts, are instances of Protestant pious frauds."

The alleged evidences of prophecy are equally examined, and paralleled by the evidence for Mohammedanism. The Bible is shown to bear many traces of superstition and savagery, and he proceeds to examine the evidence for an alleged Great First Cause. He concludes this section with the words: "To act this life well it is not necessary to know the secrets of the Invisible, the destinies of worlds and systems, or the life beyond the grave, if a life there be. That is the department of speculation and poetry, and not of knowledge or of action. We owe no service to the Invisible and Unknown; our work is here before us."

The little book concludes with the contention that morality must be independent of speculation, and an exhortation to mutual help and frankness in proclaiming unbelief in dogmas which have only cursed mankind. "How long," he asks, "could the present social ostracism be pursued against avowed unbelievers if the words, 'I am not a Christian,' were calmly and gently, but firmly, pronounced, not obtrusively paraded, in the drawing-room, the court of justice, and the senate, whenever passing event called for such an expression of opinion from a candid and honest man? How long could the Christian superstition enjoy its galvanic life in England if every man whose heart and intellect revolted from it were henceforward to raise his voice and pen to denounce and to abolish it? And in the speedy destruction and abolition of its influence lies our only hope of peaceable and harmonious progress."

Major Bell retired from India in 1865, but continued to largely interest himself in Indian affairs. He died September 12, 1887. The *Illustrated London News* shortly afterwards gave his portrait, which is that of a remarkably fine-looking man. J. M. W.

JONAH OUTDONE.

An American paper publishes the following, which bears internal evidence of being as true as Gospel: "Many years ago a ship had made its way around Cape Horn, and had entered the Gulf Stream. On this trip many of the passengers sickened and died. When they died it was the usual custom to read over the dead the burial service, attach a weight to the bodies, and cast them overboard. Among the passengers were an old man and his boy. The old gentleman had been out as a missionary to some island. At last he sickened, and it was supposed he had died. The usual service was read over his body, a carpenter's axe and grindstone were attached to it, and it was cast overboard into the sea and passed out of sight. This crazed the boy, and in a paroxysm of grief he leaped overboard and disappeared also. It was discovered that many sharks were following the vessel, and the sailors baited a hook, threw it overboard, and caught one of the monsters, and, with the aid of a windlass, they drew it on board. When the creature was dissected the sailors found the old man and boy in its stomach. By chance, or by the power of God, they had both been swallowed by the same shark. The old missionary was not dead, as supposed, but only in a religious trance. The warm atmosphere inside the shark had revived him. They had set up the grindstone, the boy was turning it, and the old man was grinding the axe preparatory to cutting their way out. As they had been working a'l-fired lively to prevent the gastric juices from taking hold of them and digesting them, and the atmosphere being quite warm, and the air rather impure, they both sweated tremendously. But after using two or three bottles of 'Orthodox Stomach Bitters,' the old man seemed better than he had been for some years, and entirely recovered."

Witchcraft.

Two hundred and fifty years ago it was moral in England to believe in witches, and it was a moral act to kill a witch. To-day it is held immoral to believe in witchcraft; to kill a witch would now be at law a criminal act. Witchcraft is so admittedly false that palmistry, conjuring, and fortune-telling are treated as punishable frauds. Yet from the supernatural point of view the reality of witchcraft is unquestionable, and the praiseworthiness of witch-killing is indisputable (*vide* Exodus xxii. 18, Leviticus xix. 26-31, xx. 27, Deut. xviii. 10, 11, I Samuel xxviii.). And in some of the districts of England where school boards are yet without influence, and where godless education has been prevented, the pious ignorant folk still believe in charms, wise women, and white and black magic.—*C. Bradlaugh*, "*Supernatural and Rational Morality.*"

Real Beliefs.

I remember reading some time ago a suggestion, I think it was by a man of God, that every one should write down, in his own words, what he really believes. Having some leisure and a stock of paper, I thought of doing so. But the more I pondered the matter, the less paper seemed necessary, and I found that the document would not only omit every particular of the Athanasian Creed, but even of the Creed ascribed to the Apostles. I found that my real creed was a very meagre one, and entirely secular. If I wrote down "I believe in God," it would have no more real meaning than "I believe in ghosts." In my own existence and that of my fellows, and in my consequent relations to them, my real belief was included. Of course one could expand the beliefs arising out of our relations to other beings to considerable dimensions; but between this and the theological dogmas for which faith is demanded there is a great gulf fixed. People say they believe in them, but what they mean is that they assent to, without ever realising them.—*Carpe Diem.*

What strange rage possesses some people to insist on our all being miserable! They are like a quack, who would fain have us believe we are ill, in order to sell us his pills. Keep thy drugs, my friend, and leave me my health.—*Voltaire.*

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MOSES AND SARGON.

STUDENTS of legendary lore are aware that one of the most widely extended of myths is that of the miraculously-preserved child. The Roman story of Romulus and Remus is strikingly similar to that told of the Trojan Paris and the Persian Cyrus. The story of Herod seeking to slay the child Christ is similar to that of Kansa seeking to destroy the infant man-god, Krishna. The oldest known of these stories is that of Sargon, whose reign is fixed by Assyriologists at about 3800 B.C., or some fifteen hundred years earlier than the date ascribed to Moses. Yet the story of Moses in the bullrushes is almost identical with that of Sargon.

As rendered by George Smith, Sargon's birth was in a grove, and the child's mother placed him in a cradle of wicker and launched it on the river. Fox Talbot renders it: "In a secret place she brought me forth; she placed me in an ark of bullrushes; with bitumen my door she closed up; she threw me into the river, which did not enter the ark to me; the river carried me; to the dwelling of Akki, the water-carrier, it brought me. Akki, the water-carrier, in his goodness of heart, lifted me up from the river. Akki, the water-carrier, brought me up as his own son" (*Records of the Past*, vol. v., p. 1).

Before the birth of Cyrus it was foretold that he would overthrow the Median kingdom of his grandfather, Astyages, and conquer Asia, and it was to ward off this calamity that the child was abandoned. Hecuba, wife of Priam, king of Troy, before the birth of Paris, dreamed that she brought forth a firebrand which caused the destruction of the city. To prevent it, the king ordered the destruction of the child. A tale of the Midrash tells us that, before the birth of Moses, Pharaoh dreamed that as he sat upon his throne an old man stood before him holding a balance, into one side of which he put all the princes and elders and nobles of Egypt, and all its inhabitants, and into the other side he put a young babe which outweighed them all. As Balaam interpreted the dream, a child was to be born to the Hebrews that threatened great danger to all Egypt; and he advised the decree that all their new-born sons should be thrown into the river.

In Chilperic Edwards' admirable little book, *The Witness of Assyria; or, the Bible Contrasted with the Monuments*, he gives not only the legends concerning Sargon and the proof of what an important part he played in Babylonian history and literature, but evidence of the improbability of the story of Moses. He says: "Commentators and apologists have long seen the absurdity of representing Pharaoh's daughter as giving a purely Hebrew name to her foundling." He shows how far-fetched are their conjectures, and remarks: "The whole story was written in Hebrew, by Hebrews, as part of the history of a Hebrew nation; therefore, the name of the hero must be taken as Hebrew until we have very strong evidence to the contrary. The probability is that the Jews borrowed the legend of Moses from their Babylonian conquerors."

CELSUS.

Known by their Fruits.

The Freethinkers of Oregon celebrated the birthday of Thomas Paine, and some of the orthodox people of the same State hanged him in effigy. With these specimen products of Liberalism and of religion before him, the Rev. Mr. Locke, of Portland, was moved to deliver a sermon on the "Fruits of Infidelity." No pomological expert can censure him for the choice he made, for the fruit of Infidelity, as illustrated in the present case, is good, being nothing less than a display of gratitude for services rendered and the paying of honor where honor has been long overdue. The fruit of religion, on the other hand, ripened under a hundred years of freedom, is the hanging in effigy of the foremost of the patriots who provided that freedom a home. The one fruit improves under liberty; the other decays. The one, grown on the tree planted by Paine, it is worth our trouble to pick; the other, dropping rotten from the gallows-tree, is enjoyed by no animal that I know of, except the religious hog, whose taste is not sufficiently cultivated to relish humpy salmon.—*G. Macdonald, in "Truthseeker."*

Whence the influence of our churches? By what agency have they awed the masses into silence, and even thrones into obedience? By what means have they succeeded in sowing sectarianism, setting man against his fellow, and threatening eternal infamy to all who would not kneel at their dark and dominant shrine? The Bible! Faith in the supernatural origin of that book is the secret source of priestly ascendency throughout Christendom. While *that* delusion prevails there is no hope for freedom in Europe.—*Robert Cooper.*

SCIENCE AND SUPERSTITION.

As crumble custom's mouldering chains away,
Power's gilded idol turns to common clay.
Heart flies to heart; no longer reason heeds
The weak resistance of established creeds;
Tradition totters from her misty throne,
And all the impostures of the past are known.
Hardly can we lend credence to the tale
Of their long woes who first rent error's veil;
What royal spite, what curses from the church
Scared the pale scholar in his cloistered search;
How many from themselves their visions hid,
Or, friendless, exiled, outcast and forbid,
Like Dante, scaling with dejected tread
A tyrant's staircase, broke a tyrant's bread!

. . . . . .

But now the soul, from ancient falsehoods woke,
Abjures old Superstition's rotten yoke;
No wrathful threat in Nature's thunder fears,
No fate foreboded in the falling spheres.
All fables, Fancy's fond impertinence,
Fade from the cold arithmetic of Sense.
Now to Truth's courts a never-faltering throng,
Thy torch, O Science! lights and leads along;
No sluggard sons this age of labor owns,
In earth's great workshop solitary drones,
But every mind the general task must share,
Brave the long toil, and mingle in the care;
In love with knowledge, that alone can be
Our country's hope—sole safeguard of the free.

T. W. PARSONS.

"General" Booth and the Angels.

While in Scotland last week "General" Booth, the Pope of the Salvation Army, in one of his addresses, remarked that he was particularly satisfied with the conduct of the angels who had warned Lot and his family of their danger, and helped them to flee from the doomed city. "I do like these angels," he added. "When I go to heaven, and have got over the first surprise at all I shall see there, I'll go and have a cup of tea with them."

For writing an infinitely more decorous yet scathing denouncement of the follies of Christianity, G. W. Foote, the Freethinker, was a few years ago sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in Holloway Gaol. "General" Booth's coarse vulgarity was received with acclamation and loud cries of "Amen" and "Hallelujah" by thousands of excitable Salvationists "who had been washed in the blood of the Lamb."

What in one man was considered as the "rankest blasphemy," in another is regarded as "pious jocularity." But then the one man was an "Infidel," and the other is a pious Christian.

That accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut.—*The Crescent.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Son—"And the missionary was eaten by the cannibal? Will the missionary go to heaven?" Father—"Oh, yes!" Son—"Will the cannibal?" Father—"Of course not." Son—"He'll not! Why, how can the missionary go to heaven if the cannibal doesn't, when the missionary's inside him?"

Dr. P—— took his son for a drive the other day, and stopped at a tavern to water his horse. After watching the operation, Bobby blurted out, "Papa, why don't the horse take the pail up with his feet and drink?" "Why, he isn't made that way," replied Dr. P——. "Why didn't God make him so?" next asked Bobby. "Ah! that beats me. How should I know?" The youngster's reverence for his father fell fifty per cent., and he replied: "I'll ask grandma. She knows God."

A well-known divinity professor, a grave and learned man, had five daughters, whom his students irreverently named "Genesis," "Exodus," "Numbers," "Leviticus," and "Deuteronomy." Beginning his lecture, one day, the professor said: "Gentlemen, I wish to speak to you about the age of Genesis." Roars of laughter came from the students. "Genesis is not so old as you suppose," continued the professor. More roars—so long continued, indeed, that the worthy man had time to think before he made the next remark. He said timidly—and he managed to hit the mark this time—"I may not be thinking of the same Genesis as you are!"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, S. P. Putnam will lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science." Tuesday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "God at the Bar of Humanity."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Thomas à Kempis and the Inner Life."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, E. E. Sims, "The Need of an Aggressive Policy."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Mansions in the Sky."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, G. Standring will lecture.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science"; 3.15, A. B. Moss, "The Ascent of Man"; 6.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, St. John will lecture. Thursday, at 8, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, St. John will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?"

KILBURN (High-road): 6.30, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are they True?"

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, F. Harold Snelling, "Secularism and Citizenship."

MILE END WASTE: 11.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Bible at the Bar of Reason."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. J. Ramsey, "Salvation by Proxy"—Part I.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Marshall will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-told"; 7, "Under Which Flag?" Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Fruits of Christianity."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, J. J. Taylor will lecture.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7.45, members' meeting to appoint Conference delegates, etc.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 2.30, William Heaford, "Secularism Expounded and Vindicated"; 6.30, "The Bible, the School, and Morality."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 2.30, "Theology at the Bar of History"; 6.30, "The Drawbacks of Theism; or, Dr. Jamieson's Fallacies Exposed."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, C. Doeg, "The Best of All Possible Worlds." Annual meeting of members after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Laurance Small, B.Sc., "Darwinism and Socialism."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Members'-meeting—important business.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, S. H. Alison, "The Gospel of Socialism"; 3, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 7, "His Satanic Majesty" (preceded by recital). Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7.30, Business meeting.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "Royal Paupers."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "The Single Tax a Solution of Poverty"; 6.30, "The Problem of Evil—Theism's Latest Defence."

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, J. Keast, "Christian Evidence."

DERBY (Market-place): 6.45, Mr. Whitney, "The Bible Up to Date."

HULL (Corporation Field): 2.30 and 7, "What Socialism will Do." [If wet, Cobden Hall, Storey-street.]

Lecturers' Engagements.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Sunnyside, 72 Union-grove, Clapham, London, S.W.—May 5, Sheffield.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—May 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 26, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—May 5, m. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea; 12, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, m. Clerkenwell.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—May 19, m. Kingsland. June 2, m. Finsbury Park; 19, m. Kingsland. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—NO. 19. SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

OUR AMERICAN VISITOR.

MR. S. P. PUTNAM, the President of the American Secular Union, set foot on the shores of Albion on Friday morning, May 2. It was the dream of his life to visit this old country; the land of his forefathers, the land of Shakespeare and Shelley, and of Scott and Burns, the land of Thomas Paine and Charles Bradlaugh. He longed to see the Freethinkers of Britain, and to clasp hands with the men he had read of, who were over there—across the wide Atlantic—fighting the great battle of liberty. So one day he made up his mind to go, and now he is here in wonderland. It is not the vastness of our country that rouses his enthusiasm; for our island is ridiculously small to Americans, who say that we have to be careful after dark lest we should fall off it into the water. The only big thing here is London, and that *is* big; colossal, stupendous, overpowering. No, it is the great historic memories that appeal to a man like Mr. Putnam; not only what is, but what has been; the long past of a great present, and (let us hope) a mightier future.

When I heard that Mr. Putnam was coming I resolved that he should have a hearty welcome. Mr. Watts told me that he was a genial, earnest, hard-working "Liberal"—as they call Freethinkers in America; I knew myself that he was an able writer; and, beyond all that, he was the elected chief officer of the American Secularists. Apart, therefore, from any promptings of my own heart, I was bound to hold out the right hand of good fellowship.

Mr. Putnam came over on the "City of Berlin." She was due at Southampton some time on Friday morning; and as she might be in early in such fine weather, and we did not like the thought of his waiting on board the ship, with no one to greet him as she touched the shore, Mr. Watts and I ran down from London on the Thursday evening, so as to be in readiness at the moment of her arrival. It was lovely weather when we walked down to the dock, and we rejoiced that our American visitor would have a good introduction to our climate. When the "Berlin" arrived we were soon on board, and I welcomed Mr. Putnam in the name of the Secularists of this country.

There is nothing of the legendary Yankee—long, thin, and taciturn—about Mr. Putnam. Were it not for his moustache, he might be taken for a jolly little Irish priest. He positively bubbles over with geniality. Of course he does a little "guessing," but his American accent is not aggressive. It is just enough to give spice to his speech in the ears of an Englishman.

Yankees are somehow thought to be boastful. Why, I could never understand. Perhaps I have met with picked specimens, but I have always found them at least as modest as Englishmen. I remember the late Dr. Garrison, of Chicago, and how fine, manly, and unassuming he was. And there is really not the slightest flavor of "uppishness" about Mr. Putnam. He is sincere, open, and unaffected; and I was thoroughly at home with him in a few minutes.

We were a merry trio as we sped along to London by the boat train. We chatted about English and American Freethought, and I was surprised to see how well Mr. Putnam was posted up in the history of our movement on this side of the Atlantic. Every now and then, as he caught sight of an idyllic landscape in the Lotos-land we were passing through, he exclaimed, "That's fine!" America was younger and more unkempt; here the hand of man had been at work for ever so many centuries, giving the land an air of orderliness and good breeding.

From Waterloo station we drove to Charing-Cross over Westminster-bridge, giving our American visitor a view of the Thames, St. Thomas's Hospital, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, and Trafalgar-square. After a good dinner—for all three of us were in excellent health and appetite—we parted; Mr. Putnam going home with Mr. Watts for a day or two, before taking up quarters at an hotel. The next day I saw Mr. Watts off to Glasgow, and took Mr. Putnam in charge until dusk. We visited the Zoological Gardens, which he much enjoyed; and he was much struck with Regent's-park.

I was able to show our American visitor the front of Holloway Gaol, where I spent a year of my life in a brick vault. Naturally he was much interested in that establishment. I was sorry I could not take him inside, and show him the apartment that was provided me, rent free, by generous Christians.

The Hall of Science was crowded on Sunday evening, when Mr. Putnam stood for the first time on an English platform, and heard for the first time in his life a ringing English cheer. Several ladies were upon the platform, including Mrs. Foote and Mrs. Watts. Among the more ungainly sex I noted Messrs. Wheeler, Forder, Parris, Moss, Samson, and Roger. Miss Vance and Miss Brown were busy, and alas! perspiring, over their work in the hall. I had given up my own Sunday to do our visitor honor, and through him the whole Secular party in America. My words as chairman were few. Mr. Putnam's rising was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm that fairly startled him, and for a few minutes he was a little nervous. But he soon warmed to his work, and carried the audience with him to the end of his lecture. Mr. Putnam's style is what the Americans most appreciate; easy, colloquial, and abounding in anecdotes, which are always telling and illuminative. His spring-chicken story fairly convulsed the house. Of course it was at the expense of a minister. Mr. Engström, one of the secretaries of the Christian Evidence Society, who was busy taking notes, could hardly have relished this sally.

Mr. Putnam resumed his seat amidst a tempest of applause. One gentleman asked a question and offered a little opposition, which was well answered. Then an irrepressible lady took an innings. What she said was mostly unintelligible. But two points were clear enough. First, she said she was not religious; afterwards, she said she was a Catholic. This was too rich for anything. The audience exploded, and lecturer and chairman joined in the merriment.

Colonel Ingersoll had sent Mr. Putnam a brief letter before the latter left America. It was short and sharp; a kind of telegram from the front; for the Colonel is on a very active lecturing tour, with little time for correspondence. Mr. Putnam read this letter, and it immensely delighted the audience. After a handsome compliment to the English Freethinkers, who were described as honest, brave, tenacious, lovers of truth and haters of cant and hypocrisy; the Colonel told Mr. Putnam to "be a good boy," to "enjoy himself," and to "tell the truth and shame the clergy." Mr. Putnam will read a longer letter from Colonel Ingersoll at the National Secular Society's Conference.

Mr. Putnam was delighted with his reception, which, he says, far exceeded all his anticipations; and no doubt he

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has sent a glowing report to the New York *Truthseeker*, for which he is to write descriptive articles during his stay in England.

Mr. Putnam will be made as happy as possible while he is in London. When he goes into the provinces, I have no doubt he will meet with similar treatment. It should be a point of honor to give him large meetings as well as a hearty welcome. Mr. Putnam is a soldier of Freethought. His life is dedicated to her service. He subsists on soldier's wages—when there are any. We must see that he goes back to America with good reason to say that British Freethinkers are cordial, brotherly, and generous. And we want him to say all this, and as much more as his heart may prompt, to Colonel Ingersoll. We want him to tell the Colonel that the Freethinkers of this country are dying to see him, and that if he will only come he may be sure of a grand and loving reception.

G. W. FOOTE.

CRUELTY: HUMAN AND DIVINE.

HUMANITY is the measure of civilisation. If we wish to judge how far a nation or an epoch can be considered civilised, we should inquire its attitude with regard to women, to children, slaves, serfs, or underlings, to criminals, and to animals. We may adopt a similar standard in judging men. I know no better test of character than behavior to subordinates. "Power will show the man," said the early Greek sage, Bias, and the longer I live the more I see how few are fit to have power over their fellow beings. Professor F. W. Newman, a fervent Theist, confessed that his greatest difficulty was in God having created a being at once so powerful and so malignant as man.

Theologians ascribe cruelty to "our fallen nature." It would be more correct to say that it is an evidence of our brutish ancestry. And it is fearfully deep-seated. If any doubt this, let them watch the sports of boys, or read the reports of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. General Hamley, an observant writer as well as a brilliant soldier, noticed the ferocity engendered by war, and the absolute thirst for blood and slaughter which, in the heat of battle, came over even cultured soldiers. He did not doubt the stories of Chengis Khan delighting in pyramids of skulls, ninety thousand of which he is said to have had piled together on the ruins of Bagdad. The records of war, of slavery, and of insatiable "sport" are woeful reading to the tender-hearted. Human history is a long, red record of blood and tears.

Man's inhumanity to man must, on the Theistic hypothesis, be referred to his Maker. He has made him as he is. Nay, the cruelty of man is insignificant to that of his Creator. No tyrant would torture his enemy for ever. And human cruelty finds its defence in the remorseless cruelty which it sees everywhere in nature, from the tiger to the tapeworm.*

Herbert Spencer remarks: "Throughout the animal kingdom high organisations habitually serve to aid destruction or to escape destruction." The wasp has its sting, as man has his dynamite, his ironclads, and Krupp guns. What sign of benevolence can there be in one animal having been designed to eat another? Will you say that the pleasure of the one eater compensates the pain of the many eaten? What possible pleasure or profit can a deity derive from this world-wide and incessant slaughter? Darwin might well ask: "Did He cause the frame and mental quality of the dog to vary that a breed might be formed of indomitable ferocity, with jaws fitted to pin down the bull for man's brutal sport?" Professor H. D. Garrison says: "Every second of time records the dying agonies of thousands of animals to whom life was, apparently, as sweet as it is to us. Indeed, this universal butchery and murder seen on every hand throughout the animal kingdom is one of the chief hindrances to the refinement of men. It is impossible to learn mercy from nature, and yet without mercy man is a brutal savage." As John Stuart Mill remarks: "In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's every-day performances." If nature is ascribed to a deity, then is he responsible for the recklessness and cruelty exhibited in his handiwork. If, indeed, God is credited with omnipotence, then the slightest pang that is suffered by any animal is wanton cruelty, since omnipotence could have achieved its purposes otherwise.

The late Professor Romanes felt this difficulty. In his essay on "The Influence of Science upon Religion," after speaking of the agonies of a rabbit panting in the iron jaws of a spring trap, he says: "What are we to think of a Being who, with yet higher faculties of thought and knowledge, and with an unlimited choice of means to secure His ends, has contrived untold thousands of mechanisms no less diabolical?" What instances of "providential design" are the serrated jaws of the shark, the talons of the tiger, and the fangs of the rattlesnake? Mr. A. R. Wallace, in his work on Darwinism, has sought to mitigate this objection by representing deaths, however apparently cruel, as usually sudden and unconscious. But is this always so? The abominable barbarity of the "sportsman," who shoots birds and lets the wounded ones flutter away to a lingering death, is paralleled by the wolf, who will rend more sheep than he can possibly eat, and the cat, who, having disabled the mouse, will delight in apparently giving it a chance of escape that it may once more have the pleasure of pouncing upon it. Even monkeys have been noticed at the Zoological Gardens to sport with spiders before swallowing them, allowing them to descend by a thread attached to their fingers, and then suddenly jerking them back into their hands.

Professor Henry Drummond, in his *Ascent of Man*, has an even jauntier way of dealing with the long, remorseless process of the struggle for existence, a struggle in which the many are absolutely crushed out for the benefit of the few. Because the unprotected infancy of man has necessitated the evolution of love for the preservation of the race, he calls the story of evolution "a love story."

Belief in Evolution, coupled with Theism, is responsible for one of the most immoral theories ever put forward in the guise of a philosophy. Those who accept evolution, and at the same time seek to justify the ways of God to man, say that the remorseless crushing out of the unfit made room for the fit. The countless species that have passed away since "dragons in their prime tore each other in their slime," all prepared the earth for man, the heir of all the ages and crown of creation. What of the misery of the many when it results in the benefit of the few? It is notable that optimist defenders of Theism and advocates of vivisection take the same ground. The sufferings of A, B, and C are to be compensated by the happiness of X, Y, and Z. This cheerful optimism I characterise as villainously immoral. Logically carried out, it would justify any crime. Who shall estimate whether the happiness of Jack the Ripper in putting unfortunates out of their misery is a compensation for the brief agony of finding a knife at their throats? The view that the suffering of one living creature is compensated for by the delight of another is as immoral as the police-magistrate's theory of God's government, which represents all suffering as punishment for sin, and which, consequently, makes all efforts to relieve suffering but attempts to thwart the purposes of deity.

J. M. WHEELER.

* Sir John Lubbock, in his *Prehistoric Times*, relates that E'honqui (a New Zealander) evidently considered that the whole analogy of nature was in favor of cannibalism. He was surprised at the horror of it felt by D'Urville. "Big fish," he said, "eat little fish; insects devour insects; large birds feed on small ones; it is in accordance with the whole analogy of nature that men should eat their enemies."

"I went to Sunday-school yesterday," said a little girl to her aunt, "and the teacher asked me who made me. So I just told her nobody made me. I wonder if she thought I was a rag doll?"

Miss Kitty—"Mamma, will we know folks in heaven, same as we do here?" Mamma—"I think there is no doubt of that, my dear." "Will I know Jane Gopplins?" "Who is Jane Gopplins?" "She's the big freckled girl that lives over the grocery store down the street." "If you are both good enough to go to heaven, my dear, you will certainly know her." (After some moments of profound cogitation)—"I won't have to speak to her, will I, mamma?"

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TACTICS OF SOME CHRISTIAN DISPUTANTS.

DURING the past thirty years I have met in public discussion many Christian disputants who were fair in controversy; such as the Rev. A. J. Harrison, Dr. McCann, and Dr. Sexton. But I have also met opponents who appeared to have peculiar views as to what is right and honorable in their dealings with Secularists. In 1872 I held a four nights' debate with the Rev. A. Stewart, of Aberdeen, who, not content with publishing the debate as it was taken down, added to the printed report a long list of notes, either explaining his own statements which he had made during the discussion, or answering points that I had urged upon the platform, and which the rev. gentleman had failed to answer. On ascertaining that he was doing this, I requested the same privilege for myself; but it was not granted, upon the ground that the Christian Committee, who were issuing the debate, could not "publish *new* sceptical matter." The result was that the readers of the debate had a one-sided report presented to them. Such is the love of justice and fair play that is sometimes inspired by Christianity. Truly, "the tree is known by its fruits." Mr. Foote was treated in the same dishonest manner by the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, who adopted similar tactics in reporting a debate he had with my colleague. Such Christian disputants evidently recognise, after the debate is over, their controversial shortcomings, and then they try to cover their defects by replying to their opponents when no rejoinder is allowed.

The same kind of tactics has been resorted to by Dr. A. Jamieson, of Glasgow, with whom I debated last year. Several months after the discussion took place the Doctor published a report of it, accompanied by an Appendix of sixteen pages, wherein he manifests a sad bitterness of temper, and indicates his disappointment at the part he played upon the platform. In the Appendix he urges several petty charges against me, and adds considerable matter to his side of the discussion. His foolish personal attacks upon me I shall deal with elsewhere; but his supplementary replies to the positions I laid down in the debate, and his boasted "new argument" for the existence of God, are given with such an air of confidence and defiance that readers of the *Freethinker* will no doubt be interested in seeing the Doctor's fallacies exposed. Here are a few specimens of how he deals with my arguments after having had months of study to consider what he should say.

In reply to my statement, that I believed in one existence which I called the universe, the Doctor says: "The universe is not one, but is composed of a multiplicity of *different* existences, as the sun, moon, stars, animals, plants, gold, silver, etc., each of which *has an existence of its own*." Now, the Doctor must be reminded that the composition does not affect the unity. Its forms and appearances—in other words, its phenomena—are numerous; but its noumenon, which underlies all external aspects, is one, hence its name. Why is it called the universe? Surely every one knows that this name is derived from *unus*, one. The very word itself, therefore, implies all that I contend for. The separate existences referred to by Dr. Jamieson, such as suns, stars, animals, plants, etc., are simply different modes of the one existence. They are all phenomenal, and will pass away by changing their forms; but the one existence, of which all things are simply modes, must remain to all eternity, as it has been from all eternity. Besides this there can be no other. This is the doctrine of Monism, which is now every day becoming more and more widely accepted by men of the profoundest intellect. His quibble about the impossibility of an infinite whole being made up of finite parts just goes to show what Sir William Hamilton so clearly pointed out, that no human conception can be formed of the infinite at all, and hence any attempt to theorise about it will involve one in a contradiction.

During the debate I used the following argument, which the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh frequently employed, with the view of showing that the universe could not have been created by an intelligent power extraneous to itself:—

> "The fact I start from is the fact that something exists Now, this existence is either infinite in duration—that is, unlimited in duration; that is, eternal—or else it has been created or brought into existence. If created, then it must have been by some existence the same as itself, or different from it; but it cannot have been created by any existence the same as itself, because that would have been but a continuation of the same existence; and it cannot have been created by any existence differing from itself, because things which have nothing in common with each other cannot be conceived in relation to each other, and cannot be the cause of or affect one another."

Not once throughout the discussion did Dr. Jamieson notice this, but in his Appendix he elegantly remarks:—

> "This argument (?) is not only *weak*, but it is *supremely silly*, and by it it could be easily proved that Mr. Watts himself is infinite, both in extent and duration, and, consequently, that *he himself* is the 'one existence.' If we substitute the words, *Mr. Watts exists*, for the phrase '*something exists*,' throughout the argument, we will at once see the absurdity of which both Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Watts are guilty. The argument would then read thus: The fact I start from is, that Mr. Watts exists. This existence (Mr. Watts) is either infinite in duration, which is unlimited in duration—that is, eternal—or else he has been created or brought into existence. If created, then it must have been by some existence the same as himself, or different from himself; but he cannot have been created by an existence the same as himself, because that would have been but a continuation of the same existence; and he cannot have been created by any existence different from himself, because things which have nothing in common with each other cannot be conceived as having any relation to each other, and cannot be either the cause or effect of each other. The argument carried out in the same way with regard to *extent* would prove Mr. Watts to be infinite in that respect as well. An argument that leads to such an absurdity must itself be the very essence of absurdity. In face of the statement quoted, I think I may safely say that Mr. Watts's position is 'gone.'"

This is another of those sophisms which play so conspicuous a part in the Doctor's reasoning. Can he not see that Mr. Watts was not, and does not pretend to have been, "created," but to have been formed out of pre-existent material of the same nature as himself? What possible analogy is there between this process of moulding or forming and the calling into existence of a material universe from nothing? Mr. Watts was formed out of an existence the same as himself, and which existence, in one of its phases, is continued in him. The argument which I employed is irrefutable when applied to a supposed creation as I applied it; but, of course, it has no bearing upon the mere modification of things out of pre-existent material. It remains, therefore, in full force, and will remain until a better reason than Dr. Jamieson has furnished is forthcoming to set it aside.

Dr. Jamieson prides himself on having produced a "new argument," and no doubt he hopes to attain to a sort of immortality as its inventor. Strange that so many centuries should have passed before this marvellous proof of God's existence was made known to the benighted world. Paley may now hide his diminished head, and all the Bridgewater Treatises be consigned to oblivion, since a new natural theologian has arisen with a brand new argument, which must silence all Atheists, Agnostics, and doubters of the Divine. Here is this wonderful argument (?): "It is admitted that the universe in whole or in part is *cooling*. It is also admitted that *cooling* bodies *contract*. That which has *contracted* occupies *less space* than it once did. The material universe, in whole or in part, has contracted, consequently it *now* occupies *less* space than it *once* did. It must then be *finite* in *extent*. If finite in *one* way, it must be finite in *all* ways, and, consequently, in *duration*. If finite in *duration*, it must have had a *beginning*, and consequently a *Cause*. There must, then, be a Powerful Being distinct from the material universe upon whom it depends for its existence."

Such is this new argument (?), which the Doctor invites me to answer. I do so by pronouncing it as being the very essence of sophistry. The whole "argument" is based upon a mistake, and, upon this mistake, certain "ifs" are stated, and then the imperative there "must" have been "a powerful Being," etc., is *assumed*. This is a fair sample of the Doctor's metaphysics. Now, what are the facts? It is not true that cooling bodies *always* contract, for snow and ice occupy more space than water, although the temperature of the former is much lower than that of the latter. Cooling in this case expands, instead of contracting. Here is another sophism of the Doctor's. Thus it is

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stated, says he, "the material universe in whole or in part has contracted; consequently it [what?—the whole or the part?] occupies less space than it once did." If the whole has contracted, no doubt that is so. But the Doctor does not venture to assert that the whole has contracted, but that the contraction may have been in part only. Yet the conclusion drawn is on the supposition that there has been contraction of the entire mass. This is manifestly illogical. What do we know of distant parts of the universe as to whether the matter in existence there is cooling or not? In one part the temperature falls, and in another it rises, leaving probably the same amount of heat on the whole. No one can assert that the entire universe is cooling, and, therefore, undergoing contraction; hence the "new argument" that was to revolutionise the Theistic philosophy is not worth the paper it is written on.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

BIBLE FICTIONS.

THAT the Hebrew scriptures contain some small amount of historical matter cannot now be denied. The cuneiform inscriptions place this fact beyond a doubt. We know, for instance, from the latter source, that there were kings of Israel named Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Pekah, and Hosea; that Azariah, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh were kings of Judah; and that these sovereigns reigned in the order in which they are placed in the book of Kings. It is unquestionable, then, that some very ancient historical records have been preserved in the Hebrew books. But we have at the same time proof that the stories of supernatural interposition of the Jewish God on behalf of his people—such as the destruction of the army of Sennacherib and the preservation of the three men in a furnace, as recorded in the Hebrew writings—are pure fiction. All the stories of Yahveh directing or controlling the affairs of the Jewish nation are, wherever it is possible to test them, found to be fabrications. In fact, the early history of the Israelites before the period of the kings, and much in later times, is, for the most part, nothing but fable. Many of the stories are, on the face of them, fictitious. No unprejudiced person who allows himself to be guided by reason can read the Biblical accounts of the Fall, the Deluge, or the Exodus without experiencing a feeling that these stories are mythical.

Many Christian apologists have expended a considerable amount of ingenuity in endeavoring to reconcile Bible contradictions, and only succeed in doing so by twisting the passages into meaning something which the context plainly shows was not that intended by the writer. But even with the advantage of this mode of treatment we find that only some oft-cited and comparatively insignificant passages are selected for reconcilement. The most incredible stories—those which most clearly prove the Biblical narratives to be fictitious—are ignored.

I will now briefly examine some of these stories, which show, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the narratives composing the early history of the Israelites are fabrications.

I.—THE PATRIARCH JACOB.

On the temple walls of Karmak is inscribed a list of towns in Syria and Palestine which submitted to the arms of Thothmes III. Among these we find *Jacob-el* ("the god Jacob") and *Joseph-el* ("the god Joseph"). The first of these also appears on the inscriptions of Ramses II. and Ramses III. In the latter reign we also find the record of a Canaanitish town named *Levi-el*. In other words, we learn from these ancient monuments that between B.C. 1600 and B.C. 1200 there were cities in Canaan in which Jacob, Joseph, and Levi were worshipped as gods. In this fact we have a clear intimation that the Biblical account of the reputed ancestors of the Jews is not history, but mythology. To obtain confirmatory evidence of this, we have but to examine the Bible stories for any indications which show them to be of a mythical character. These we find in plenty.

Now, with regard to the city *Jacob-el*, it is significant that, though this was undoubtedly a town in Canaan, the name is nowhere mentioned in the Hebrew books. Yet, strangely, the name of Jacob is associated with a city having the same termination, whose name he is represented as changing. This is the city of *Bethel* ("the house of God").

In Genesis xxviii. it is related that Jacob, when a single man and on his way to Padan-aram, "lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night. . . . and he took of the stones of that place, and set them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep." Here, it is stated, he had a dream, in which he saw a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven, with Yahveh on the top, and angels ascending and descending. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place. . . . *and he called the name of that place Bethel*; but the name of that city was called Luz at the first." Here it is to be noted that it is plainly implied in the narrative that Jacob slept in the open air in some uninhabited place; yet this place is (probably by inadvertence) called a *city*. It was, of course, a city when the account was written.

Twenty years later, so runs the story, Jacob returned to Canaan a married man with four wives and eleven children. Upon entering the land, we are told, "Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. . . . And God appeared unto Jacob again when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. . . . And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him. . . . *and Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him Bethel*" (Genesis xxxv. 6–13).

Here we have two contradictory versions of the naming of Bethel. According to one account, Jacob called the place "Bethel" when unmarried and on his way to his uncle Laban's; according to the other, he so named it twenty years later when he returned with wives, children, and large flocks and herds. According to the first account, he called the place "the house of God" because he saw in a dream angels going up and down a gigantic ladder; according to the other, he named it "the house of God" because there "the Lord" appeared to him, blessed him, and conversed with him (of course in the form of a man) face to face. Which version are we to receive?

But both stories are, on the face of them, unhistorical. Jacob was but a stranger and a sojourner in the land, and had no power or authority to change the name of any place in it; neither would his saying, "Such a place shall henceforth be called so-and-so," effect any change in the name. We know from the Tell-el-Amarna and other inscriptions that the inhabitants of Canaan were both numerous and warlike. They would not be likely to alter the ancient names of places because a stranger chose to call them by another name. There is, however, evidence in the Hebrew books themselves that Jacob did not change the name "Luz" into "Bethel."

Two or three centuries after the time of Jacob, Joshua, we are told, divided the land among the twelve tribes. Now, the boundaries of one of the allotments is described as "going up from Jericho through the hill country to Bethel; and it went *from Bethel to Luz*, and passed along unto the border of the Archites to Ataroth" (Joshua xvi. 1, 2). Bethel and Luz were, therefore, separate places, and were doubtless in existence when the book of Joshua was written—viz., some time after the exile. We have also in the Book of Judges (i. 22, 23) a story to account for the fact that, notwithstanding Jacob's changing the name Luz into Bethel, a city named Luz still existed. According to this veracious account, when the Israelites captured Bethel a man who escaped from the city built another, and named it Luz.

Thus far we have evidence only of fiction. I turn now to another event in the life of Jacob. In order to account for the reputed descendants of this patriarch being called "Israelites," a story is invented of the name "Jacob" being changed into "Israel."

In Genesis xxxii. 27, 28, we have an account of a wrestling match between Jacob and an angel. This interesting event took place at night, on the eastern side of Jordan, near the river Jabbok. When day was about to break the angel desired to get away, but Jacob held him fast, and refused to let him go until the latter had blessed him. "And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said Jacob. And he said, *Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel*; for thou hast striven with God and men, and hast prevailed."

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After this change of name Jacob crossed the Jordan, and took up his residence at Succoth and Shalem; then, some years later, came to the place which he is said to have renamed. Here an incident occurred which is thus described: "So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (the same is Bethel). . . . . And God appeared unto Jacob again . . . . and God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: *thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name:* and he called his name Israel" (Genesis xxxv. 6–10).

Thus, again, we have two versions of the same story, each independent of the other, in which the change of name is stated to have taken place at two different times, and in two places many miles apart. Both stories were, of course, invented to account for the name. As a matter of fact, we know from critical examination that the book of Genesis is composed of a number of stories, by at least three different hands, which a later editor has pieced together. This fact adds nothing to the credibility of the narratives. It must, at any rate, be obvious to the reader that the stories we have examined are pure fictions.

VERITAS.

(To be continued.)

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

HUMAN life cannot be occupied with a more important contemplation than the meaning of the universe. Recognising that human existence is but a tiny point, on each side of which stretch out immeasurable ages, it may well be doubted whether the longest life would suffice for a bare presentment, much less a solution of the enigma of the cosmos. But man is an inquiring animal. We are so constituted that our knowledge and our inquiries are never equal.

Knowledge solves a question only to give birth to another. In a certain sense it may be said that knowledge as well as ignorance prompts inquiry. But knowledge does not affect the primary question of the origin of the universe. The ever-abiding presence of nature, its continual persistence in human consciousness, compels the scientific and the ignorant alike to seek an explanation of its being. Science may widen the sphere to be explained, but it does not *shift* it. Methodised observation may dispel the crude and erroneous ideas of the ignorant man as to the *vastness* of the universe, but the universe *is still* the problem to be solved.

We are born into this world, and live a few short years without being able to realise our surroundings; but when we come to the use of reason, human science and philosophy claim our attention. Some men are born into conditions where everything is present that ministers to their mental and moral development. Other less fortunate individuals are placed in surroundings where they know nothing but filth, disease, and crime. But still, it does not matter whether we are born in the palace of a king or the hovel of a peasant, it is our duty to examine the ideas which we have been taught, and to see if they have any foundation in fact.

The vast majority of mankind feel in no way disposed to question the theory of things which they have imbibed "with their mother's milk." This is why Theism is so widely accepted in the present age.

That hypothesis conceives the universe as the production of an "Infinite Mind." Theistic philosophers have studied the various departments of nature, and have endeavored to extract from them the evidence of a "Creator." Theologians have accepted these hazy conjectures, and have pretended that their clearness and force compel every honest mind to acknowledge an "Infinite, Intelligent Being" as the "Author" of the universe.

But what are the evidences upon which this theory rests? The variegated beauties which adorn the face of nature, though they fill the mind with a strange sense of wonder, do not reveal any other forces at work than material ones. When I throw my mind back upon itself, and contemplate the inscrutable modes of my own consciousness, I am unable to perceive any evidence that there is a God. Granted that we cannot give an ultimate explanation of the phenomena of matter and mind, does it necessarily follow from this that we are bound to accept Theism?

All the arguments which have hitherto been brought forward in favor of that hypothesis have not been able to stand the test of science and criticism. Many modern Theistic advocates recognise this. Dr. W. L. Davidson's *Burnett Lectures* and Professor Knight's *Aspects of Theism* are conclusive on this point. These writers have perceived the fallacies of the *à priori* and *à posteriori* arguments. Much discussion has taken place among theologians as to what position these two methods ought to occupy. The consequence has been that the "Design Argument," as presented by such apologists as Ray, Derhem, and Paley, has been completely ruled out of court. It will not do to say that the exquisite adaptations which we observe in nature indicate the existence of a deity.

The Materialistic explanation of the harmonious manner in which our earth revolves round the sun satisfies the mind equally as well as the Theistic view does. Nay, it is far more intelligible; for we can comprehend what is meant when it is said that the rotation of the earth is the necessary result of the action of two antagonistic forces; but we cannot grasp what is meant by saying it is the "handiwork of God." It is a scientific canon that any explanation of phenomena must be couched in terms of the known. The forces of attraction and repulsion are known, but "God," if he exist, is absolutely *unknown*. There is no analogy between the adaptation seen in man's works and that we observe in nature. In the one case we see the adaptation and its author, but it is not so in the other case.

It is quite true that the adaptation in man's works is the only proof we have of his intelligence. But it does not follow from this that adaptation is *always* proof of intelligence. A river always adapts itself to its bed; but this is the result of the law that water always seeks its own level, and not the contrivance of any intelligence.

I cannot agree with the late Dr. Romanes when he writes that with the "negation of God" "the universe has lost its soul of loveliness." On the contrary, viewing the universe from an Atheistic standpoint, its "loveliness" is increased a hundred fold. Though the universe be godless, the Atheist is not impervious to its beauties. While it is true that the rolling orbs which bespangle the boundless sky are subject to the same mechanical law as the swing of a pendulum, their grandeur is none the less for that. Born on a twinkling point called earth, Atheism enables me to realise the fulness of life; therefore, the theological assertion that God is necessary in order to retain the beauties of nature is untrue.

In dealing with the question of design, Theists have been extremely shortsighted. They select all the good and beneficial arrangements of nature as proofs of the intelligence and goodness of the deity. The Atheist does not deny that certain conditions are good and beautiful. Water is beneficial for man, but it was not made for him. If it was, how do Theists account for the sad fact that millions have died of thirst? It is the same with every other thing in nature. Man makes use of many things because experience has taught him that they are useful; but where is the proof that they were designed for the uses they are put to? Theism cannot give any rational explanation of the moral and physical evil which everywhere abounds. If there be "a something not ourselves that makes for righteousness," there is also a something not ourselves that makes for unrighteousness. How can the Theist explain that fact? How account for the unqualified indifference of nature? The earth cares as much for a parasite as it does for a Newton or a Darwin. In the physical world pain and suffering are often visited upon the innocent. In the moral world things seem chance directed. Honesty and truthfulness often go to the wall in the struggle for existence, while the sneakish and unscrupulous live in luxury. How can these things be harmonised with the belief in an almighty God who carefully governs the world? The state of the moral and physical worlds to-day does not speak of an "Infinite, Intelligent Mind" ruling all. Such is the argument of experience against Theism.

P. SHAUGHNESSY.

(To be concluded.)

Freddy—"Why do they have those big eagles in the church?" Tom—"'Cause they're birds of pray, of course."

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ACID DROPS.

Mrs. Besant has given the faithful Theosophists a full, and of course true, account of her experience of Mahatmas. Some extracts from this curious address were printed in the London *Star*. As luck (or the printer's devil) would have it, the extracts were interrupted by the space reserved for the "Latest" sporting news; so that in the very middle of the sublime Mahatma business there was a list of horses running at Warwick races. And some of the names were devilishly *apropos*. There were Mother Shipton, and May Mischief, and Conjuror, and Sophism. Really the imps of laughter were on Mrs. Besant's track that day.

Madame Blavatsky's successor states that her experience of the Mahatma world began in 1889, early in the year, before she joined the Theosophical Society. Mrs. Besant may believe this. There is no limit to some people's self-delusion. But it is utterly irreconcilable with her former accounts of how she became a Theosophist.

It appears that she was "making desperate efforts to pierce the darkness," and "seeking with passionate earnestness to obtain some direct evidence of the existence of the soul and of the superphysical world." Here again she may believe she is telling the truth—"Such tricks hath strong imagination." All we can say is that she was then writing every week in the *National Reformer*, and her readers were not vouchsafed a single hint of all that "passionate earnestness" and all those "desperate efforts."

One evening Mrs. Besant was sitting alone, concentrating her mind on this longing, when she "heard the Master's voice," telling her that she should soon find the light. She did not know Who spoke to her (the printer must please mind the capitals), but it was something to go on with.

This sort of thing is familiar to the students of superstition. Enthusiasts, whether Catholics or Methodists, have always been prone to hear voices. Ears, and especially long ones (no offence to the lady), are handy organs for superstition to play upon. They are generally abused first, and the eyes afterwards; the hearing of voices being followed, unless the patient gets better, by the seeing of visions.

Mrs. Besant did not get better. She got worse. And in due course she had her vision. It appeared to her at Fontainebleau in the summer of 1889. She was sleeping in a small room "by herself" (why, of course!), and the Master paid her a visit, just as J. C. visited the eleven in that upper chamber in Jerusalem. "I was waked suddenly," says Mrs. Besant, in defiance of grammar. And then, she says, the "air of the room was thrown into pulsing electrical waves"—which is very curious physics; and there "appeared the radiant astral Figure of the Master (capitals, please), visible to my physical eyes." And after that she often saw the Master. Why, certainly.

"Sight, hearing, and touch," all shared in these "experiences"; so we assume that Mrs. Besant shook hands with the Master, unless he gave her a "superphysical" embrace. Nor was this all. A fourth sense gave its attestation. Mrs. Besant speaks of "the exquisite fragrance" which generally accompanies such manifestations. So that the Master is something like old Polonius: "You shall nose him as you go."

Now, it is noteworthy that the Catholic and Methodist enthusiasts not only heard voices and saw visions, but smelt an exquisite fragrance. Many instances are given by Bishop Lavington in his minute and racy study of these wondermongers; and some day or other we may give our readers a few samples in this line of delusion. Let it suffice for the present to say that Mrs. Besant is suffering from an ancient malady. It doesn't matter whether the enthusiasts are Pagans, Catholics, or Methodists; they all go through the same experiences, for they all suffer from the same disease. And when they are skilful and fluent of speech they all go the same way to work in practising upon the credulity of others. They trade under different names, but they are all in the same business, and their wares are all alike, though bearing a variety of labels.

Our readers will note Mrs. Besant's use of capitals. The Master has one, and his very pronoun takes one too, just as the Christians print "Him" and "He" of Jesus Christ. It is a common trick to impose upon the groundlings, and we recollect the rage the pious got into when the late Professor Clifford took to writing "god" with a small g.

But the funniest part of the affair is, that the Mahatmas are quarreling amongst themselves. Mrs. Besant has her Mahatma, and Mr. Judge has his. Mrs. Besant's "Master" tells her to turn out Mr. Judge. Mr. Judge's "Master" tells him to cut off Mrs. Besant. As the Irishman said, 'tis a pretty quarrel as it stands, and a pity to spoil it.

Paul's "Master," in the same way, was in opposition to Peter's "Master," and the two inspired Apostles had an open quarrel. There is no "unity of spirit" even in the realm of inspiration.

For our part, we have not the slightest doubt that Mrs. Besant will go on with this business, and get convenient tips from her Mahatma, to serve her own interest and frustrate the designs of her enemies. When you dabble in mystery, unless you are a born fool, you soon come to this alternative: you must either denounce the swindle or take a part in it. Mrs. Besant has not chosen the better part.

The Italian poet, Olindo Guerrini, who writes with the pseudonym of "Lorenzo Stecchetti," has written his Creed, which he begins with the words, *Primo di tutto non Credo in Dio*—"First of all, I do not believe in God." Had he lived a century ago, the creed would have brought him trouble. In the last century an Italian musician named Porpora was brought before the Inquisition for having composed a Credo, the beginning of which he was alleged to have lengthened, in order to suit his measure, by adding a "non." He was only let off on proving that he did not understand Latin.

The *Railway Signal*, "A Journal of Evangelistic and Temperance Work on all Railways," has a choice story about a nameless "Stratford infidel" who was ill and visited by the writer. He was converted by the evangelist taking him a basket of strawberries, which he had wished for on the morning of that day. The infidel said it was the hand of God, and burnt all his infidel books and papers. "A few weeks later he passed peacefully away." The hand of God, it appears, brought him strawberries, but did not preserve him to tell his conversion, or even his name, to any fellow "infidels."

In the case of Mr. J. B. Wise, of Kansas, prosecuted for obscenity for writing the words of Isaiah xxxvi. 12 on a postcard addressed to the Rev. Mr. Veumum, Judge Foster has reserved his decision, which will be made known some time during the present term. Should it be adverse to Mr. Wise, an appeal will be entered, so that the United States Supreme Court shall also have an opportunity of declaring that the Bible is obscene. The case will act as a rare eye-opener, and we are glad to see that our American friends are fully alive to its importance.

The Bible Society report having given a copy of their fetish book to every officer in the Japanese army and navy, "a better bound edition being at the same time handed to the Royal Body Guard." We should like to hear the opinions of the Japanese upon their reading.

A Shanghai correspondent of *Modern Society* has a tale to tell of missionaries in China. He says: "I have taken a great interest in mission work, and have made many inquiries, having asked the people engaged in that work to take me to the meeting places of their Chinese converts: the answer has been, 'Oh, we have no converts here, they are inland; only a few rice Christians, who say they are converted for their food.' I have been up the Yang-tsi Kiang River as far as Tchang, which is approximately 1,300 miles; the same tale is told at every place: it is only labor in vain to try and convert these people in large towns. I would like to ask why it requires fifty people of different denominations engaged in mission work in a place like Hankow."

The missionaries, says this correspondent, live in luxury and almost idleness. "Nearly all these gentlemen holding these splendid appointments are related to the headquarter staff in London." He says in conclusion: "I would advise all poor men who have an ambition to become gentlemen to come to China as missionaries. I think it is a cruel shame that there are thousands of children in a state of semi-starvation who, when they go to Sunday-school, have to squeeze out their pence for the missionary box, which helps to support these people in idleness and luxury. I strongly condemn the practice of sending young girls out here on mission work. The result of such has lately developed in Shanghai. The defendant was tried and acquitted; he objected to marry her on the ground that the poor girl was a loose character. When this good man saw her weakness would it not have been more to his credit to protect her than to take advantage?"

The London Aquarium people have got hold of a clock "made by a pious Scotchman." The peculiarity of the timepiece is that at midnight on Saturday it stops short, never to go again till Monday morning. In the old days the

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maker would have been held inspired, if not burnt for witchcraft.

This clock is as nothing to the famous Sabbatic river, which, according to the veracious Jewish historian, Josephus, flowed six days, and entirely ceased to run on the Sabbath.

The London City Mission Meeting passed a resolution of regret at the neglect of public worship of the majority of the working classes in London. Resolutions are of little avail now; the days are gone when the injunction could be followed, "Compel them to come in."

The Governors of the Worcester Infirmary would make fit denizens of heaven. They declined to receive the proceeds of a cricket match played on Good Friday. Of course the governors did not themselves suffer by this display of piety. Had the offer been made to the inmates of the infirmary, it would probably have been accepted gratefully.

The Hungarian Government has demanded explanations from the Vatican on account of Mgr. Agliardi, the Papal Nuncio, having exceeded his functions by going on tour denouncing the Civil Marriage Bill. This statement, made to the Lower House of the Hungarian Diet by Baron Banffy, the Premier, was greeted with enthusiastic cheers by the Liberals, while the Clericals loudly expressed their indignation.

The twentieth-century woman is a girl to-day. She will be pretty sceptical if like a four-year-old girl of whom we read lately. After saying her evening prayer, she added: "Now, God, I have talked to you often enough. If you hear me, why don't you talk back?" Her question was to the point, and all the men of God in the world could not explain why, if God was so familiar and communicative two thousand years ago, he is not equally so to-day.

A church in course of repair in the little mountainous town of Buonalberger partly fell in the other day. The people who ran to ascertain what had happened found the statue of St. Donato intact and erect on the causeway of the street, with its face turned to the ruins. The glass case under which the figure had stood was smashed to pieces. Immediately the people cried out that a miracle had happened, and the day after the saint was carried in procession through the streets.

According to a report of the Kasan Consistorium just issued at St. Petersburg, no fewer than 11,034 heathens, among whom were 5,690 women, last year relapsed from the orthodox faith into their original idolatrous beliefs and practices. During the same period, and in the same government of Kasan, 12,188 Tartars, including 5,767 women, abandoned the State Church for Islam. These are official figures. The Eparchial authorities further state that a large section of the proselytised orthodox Christians are at heart either Mohammedans or heathens.

All Christians are called on at their baptism and confirmation to renounce the devil and all his works. They have done so most effectually, for they keep him and all pertaining to him most carefully out of sight. Satan is superannuated or looked on as an allegory, even while his divine antagonist and the nebulous Holy Ghost are warranted to be persons. "We cannot so much as believe in a devil," says Thomas Carlyle. Mr. Wheeler, in his pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*, shows that Christians cannot so easily escape from the evil one. To get rid of the devil is to pull down the whole fabric of Christian theology.

Light, the "journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research," remarks that "the truly awful case of 'witch-burning' in Ireland will do some good if it helps to still further open the eyes of people to the possible effects of pinning their faith to the past and its so-called 'revelations.' It is time for plain speaking about this matter. The Bible explicitly says (Exodus xxii. 18), 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch (or sorceress) to live'; and that atrocious command has been responsible for thousands—perhaps millions—of cruel murders. Will the good people who quote the Bible against Spiritualists look this matter squarely in the face? *Are* they prepared to put into practice the supposed divine commands they so glibly quote?"

The sainted Jabez has returned just in time for the May meetings. At Bow-street he must remember the good old times in the nearly adjacent and more congenial building of Exeter Hall.

The Dean of Norwich, speaking at the Exeter Hall meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, said: "We are asked now to think of the possibility of the first chapter of Genesis being mythical. My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, I cannot regard as mythical what Christ regarded as fact." So we must credit that Moses wrote the account of his own death, the story of Jonah and the whale, and the possession of devils, because they were believed in by a Jew of a long bygone generation.

The Pioneer of Wisdom is "a newspaper devoted to the Ingathering of Israel." Its conductors believe in the revelation of the Flying Roll made to James White, otherwise known as Jezreel. They also hold, if we apprehend rightly, that the English are Jews and should be circumcised, and that God is feminine, and about to put in a speedy reappearance to gather the faithful circumcised ones together. A number of the *Pioneer* sent to us has "A Message to the Welsh," printed in the Welsh language. We found this portion almost as intelligible as the rest of the paper.

Christian apologists often tell us that evil exists in the world because man is a sinner. If he were not infected with original sin, he would be perfectly happy, and the world would be a paradise. Reason, however, shows it would be nothing of the kind, unless nature were altered as well as human nature. Volcanoes would still belch their fires, earthquakes would shake and shatter cities, storms would destroy ships and men, disease would bring agony, and death inflict sorrow. Even the pests of life would remain. Snakes would bite and mosquitoes sting, and fleas would worry saints as well as sinners.

What do our Christian friends make of a cyclone such as the recent one at West Sioux Falls? How do they reconcile it with Providence? Houses and trees were whirled about like straws; men were lifted off the ground and carried for half a mile; and little children, hurled against wire fences, were reduced to bloody masses of dead flesh. There are millions of men on this planet who would have risked their own lives to save those little ones. Providence did not save them; in fact, Providence murdered them; that is, if there be a Providence—which we very much doubt.

The Rev. Llewellyn Howard Davies, Vicar of Steeple Claydon, Bucks, was brought before the Chancellor of the Diocese of Oxford, at Aylesbury, charged with acts of incontinence with his female servant, and other offences. He was found guilty of four out of five counts, and the case, in accordance with the Clergy Discipline Act, will be reported to the Bishop, who may or may not suspend him.

An article on "Chaldean Magic" in the *Echo* strongly suggests that baptism was originally a form of exorcising devils. It says: "We find the phrase, 'The witchcraft of the witch may it not approach, may it disappear before the lustrous water from my hands.' This expression would almost point to the ceremony of sprinkling, a custom which we know was in use in Assyria at a very early date."

A spring van proprietor in Kentish Town has painted up the inscription: "Gods removed in town or country." We hope this iconoclast will soon cart away all the defunct deities whose putrefaction has become offensive.

The Bolton dissenters have been much enraged at the Rev. T. T. Verger, vicar of St. James's Church, and with some cause. The scholars of the Primitive Methodist Church were on their annual procession, when the man of God drove up in his carriage. He could easily have taken another road, but drove through the crowd, which opened to let his vehicle pass. When among the children they were alarmed, and two young men sprang at the horse's head and swerved it out of the way. The man of God lashed out with his whip, and struck several of the children. A *mêlée* ensued. The whip was taken from the reverend gentleman, while some attempted to drag him from the vehicle. He has since been hissed all over the town.

The Spiritists do not agree in their descriptions of the world of spirits. Swedenborg tells one tale, Allan Kardec an entirely different one; while A. J. Davis and Hudson Tuttle differ from both, and from one another. This difference is not on trivialities, but on such root questions as Is there sex among spirits? Are they re-incarnated or not? etc.

There is as much difference among them religiously. Some believe in Satan, a personal chief of evil spirits. The majority do not. A writer in *Light* declares a high spirit says: "Christ is your Savior. He gave himself a ransom for many." Most American Spiritists consider Christ a myth, and regard the doctrine of the Atonement as immoral. This *Light* writer contradicts Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, who says: "The Evangelical Dissenter, who died in the firm conviction that he should certainly 'go to Jesus,' never describes himself as being with Christ or having seen him." He declares: "My guide says: 'Jesus is always present; I long for you to be here, and to feel that you are with Jesus.'" He says: "As a rule, the Roman Catholic is a

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Roman Catholic still, and the Unitarian and the Churchman retain the same views they held on earth." We have even heard of some spirits who are Atheists. But these are very advanced spirits. Quite in the seventh sphere, we should say.

Of course these differences as to the spirit world come from having different "mejums." And the trouble is, that no information comes except through the "mejums," who are usually such a shady lot that they attract all kinds of lying spirits, who delight in befooling their dupes. The person who looks to Spiritism for a solution of all mysteries finds he has "got no forrader."

The Royal Academy Banquet omitted "Literature" from the toast-list. However, the Duke of Cambridge spoke for the Army—the umbrella speaking for the sword; and the Archbishops of York and Canterbury took a turn on behalf of the Church. We did not know these gentlemen had anything to do with Art, in the ordinary sense of the term. They practise an art, but it is the art of hamboozling.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw was one of the speakers at the May Day Demonstration in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon. As usual, he indulged in some plain speaking. For instance, he said that the average working man cared for little else beyond party politics and religion. There is too much truth in the observation; but that is partly Mr. Shaw's own fault. He confesses himself an Atheist, but his brilliant powers are not at the service of Freethought. Surely it would be possible for him, without deserting his social propaganda, to do a little towards extirpating that "religion" with which so many of the workers are besotted.

The *Boston Sunday Globe* has had a symposium on the subject, "Is Christianity Practicable To-day?" A lot of sky-pilots contribute. The Rev. John Cuckson says: "It is practicable, but not practised." Father Bodfish says it is a strange question to put before a Catholic. The Rev. Septimus Hanna, a Christian scientist, says Christianity is practicable, but requires to be studied in the light of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy's *Key to the Scriptures*. The Rev. C. Eliot says Christianity is an ideal, and an ideal should not be called impracticable because unrealised. The only discordant voice is that of C. W. Mowbray, the Anarchist, who says: "Let us have done with cant and hypocrisy; let us recognise that, if mankind are to fill their proper places in human society, we shall have to rely, not upon Christianity, but on changing the whole basis of society, by abolishing private ownership in the means of life, together with the abolition of government of man by man."

The Rev. I. J. Lansing, D.D., pastor of the Park-street Congregational Church, Boston, has drawn upon himself the odium of all parties in America by falsely charging President Cleveland with having been intoxicated at the Naval Review in New York. A lying spirit from the Lord seems to have afflicted the man of God, who is an intemperate temperance fanatic.

The *Boston Transcript*, an Independent Republican paper, opposed to Cleveland in politics, says: "Deplorable as is the passionate prejudice which blurts out such charges as the Rev. Mr. Lansing's, it is infinitely less degrading and less pernicious than is the whispering of scandals concerning domestic life at the White House, such as have been at times circulated by clergymen behind the back of the hand with express instructions to the listener to avoid getting them into the newspapers, where they might be run to earth and refuted."

Catholics call May the month of Mary. They do not tell the reason. May was by the old Pagans consecrated to Cybele, the mother of the gods. When Pope Boniface IV. dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the martyrs the Pantheon at Rome, which had previously been dedicated to Cybele and the gods, he held the feast of All Saints in May, as of old; but Gregory IV. transferred this feast to the first of November, because its celebration was so similar to that of the Pagans. May Day festivals, however, preserved the ancient Floralia of the Romans, and the month of the Mother of God has appropriately taken the place of that of the Mother of the gods.

Pope Sixtus V. built a superb chapel in honor of the cradle of J. C. in the Church of St. Marie Maggiore at Rome. The historian who relates this says it was for the honor the Pope had for this cradle, which has been preserved for ages in a spot adjacent to the chapel. Jerome says he saw it at Bethlehem, but how it got to Rome is a mystery.

In Ontario, Canada, there were committed to the various prisons in 1891: Catholics, 3,744; Episcopalians, 3,134; Presbyterians, 1,368; Methodists, 1,413; other denominations, 770; Infidels, 0. In 1892 the figures were: Roman Catholics, 4,359; Church of England, 3,631; Methodists, 1,624; Presbyterians, 1,498; other denominations, 698; Infidels, 0.

At Lavant, near Chichester, Charles Richard Lever was found in his bedroom with his throat cut. He had been regularly attending chapel, and reading the Bible and religious works. Just before his suicide he said: "I have found the Light, and was never happier." A verdict of suicide during temporary insanity was recorded.

When a Bishop has £4,500 a year, he ought not to grasp at perquisites. So thought the Wigton Burial Board, which entered a protest on its minutes against the Bishop's exacting £12 15s. 10d. for consecrating the new cemetery. We would undertake a job like that for a guinea when we happened to be in the neighborhood. We would also give a written guarantee that the corpses would never detect the difference. No extra charge for that.

Dean Farrar has "gone up higher." The Holy Ghost has called him to Canterbury. Somebody else will have to say prayers in the House of Commons, but we dare say it will be all the same. One humbug will procure the House as great a blessing as another.

At a recent Exeter Hall missionary meeting Dean Farrar remarked (unless the *Christian World* misreports him) that "three centuries after Christ only one in every 150 of the world's population were nominally Christian; now they were one in three." And this was "a complete answer to those who affirmed that missions had been a failure." Well, it may be a complete answer at Exeter Hall, but it is no answer anywhere else. Christianity converted one in 150 in three hundred years by the power of the Holy Ghost; it has converted all the others in its fold by the unscrupulous use of authority and oppression. "Missions" have had no practical effect upon its statistics.

Dean Farrar should explain why the Holy Ghost is such a bad missionary. Even at the very best, it is a poor achievement for God Almighty to spend nearly two thousand years in converting a third of the world's inhabitants. If conversion is any good to them, he should convert them all immediately; if it is no good to them, he should stop the missionary business altogether.

The secretary of the Printers' Laborers' Union calls attention in another column to some of the methods of that great trading establishment of which William Booth is proprietor. We understand that it is not compositors that Booth wants, but workers of the Linotype machine, which is displacing "compositing" in his establishment.

Booth now sells everything, from bicycles to biscuits, and, moreover, pressure is put on all converts to buy all their goods only from the Army.

The Rev. H. T. Briscoe, formerly chaplain of King's College, Cambridge, has been remanded on a charge of appropriating to his own use £493, charity money, of which he was trustee.

The Rev. Walter Hind, of St. Peter's Clergy House, London Docks, is also remanded on a charge of indecent behavior with two little girls in the recreation ground, Stepney Green.

The wanderings of Mrs. Besant's daughter, Mabel Besant Scott, appear to have been early ended, for it is announced that she has been baptised and received into the Roman Catholic Church. Oh, the pity of it!

The Archbishop of Canterbury recommends a general prayer for the unity of Christendom to all the members of the Church of England on Whit-Sunday. This is the official answer to the Pope's letter, *ad Anglos*, asking them to pray to the Virgin for re-union. Mr. Athelstan Riley also writes to the *Church Times* urging associated prayer for reunion. In the good old days the Church obtained unity by crushing out all dissentients. When it only relies on prayer, verily its days of power are over. Could its prayer be answered, it would doubtless, as of old, maintain unity by other means than prayer.

Dr. John Clifford's sermon on the Bible was reported at some length in Monday's *Daily Chronicle*. The sum of it all may be expressed in a quotation from Hamlet—"Words, words, words." There is the "infinite" this, and the "infinite" that; in short, the infinite slush of modern Christianity. Dr. Clifford says that "the Bible survives." Of course it does. And why? Simply because you force it into the hands of little children, and tell them lies about it before they are able to think for themselves. Dr. Clifford is as keen on this imposition as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Wednesday and *Thursday*, May 15 and 16, Temperance Hall, Derby: Debate with Mr. W. T. Lee, of the Christian Evidence Society, on "Atheism or Theism: Which is the More Reasonable?"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—May 12, Dundee; 19, Camberwell; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Elfra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

T. E. M.—Received.

Alpha.—You are quite right; it has been a hard time with many.

J. M. Jones.—Balance paid to Mr. Forder. Glad to have your sympathy. We tender you ours in return. It is unpleasant to be cut off from contact with persons of similar views and sentiments.

J. H. W.—Cannot see what your note refers to.

T. Hopkins.—We never "lose heart." If one street is closed to us, we walk down another.

S. E. Easton has removed to 49 Walterton-road, Harrow-road, W.

J. Oram.—Many thanks. See paragraph.

H. Hughes.—Never believe what Christian Evidence lecturers say about Colonel Ingersoll or any other leader of Freethought. We really cannot stoop to contradict such rubbish. The reverend gentleman who would like to hear Moses on the mistakes of Ingersoll has an easy way of gratifying his desire. Let him go off to kingdom-come and hunt up that ancient Jew. We don't suppose the world at large has any great objection to his going. We haven't, anyhow.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Chatham Branch, 7s. 2d.; East London Branch, 3s.; T. Carne, 6s.; F. Sanatts, 1s. 6d.; Henley Branch, 2s. 6d.

E. H.—(1) You are quite wrong about Calvin. He hunted Servetus down; went out of his way to do so, out of sheer malignity; and had him handed over to his enemies, to be burnt to death at a slow fire. (2) You are wasting your time over that metaphysical juggle about "finite" parts of an "infinite" universe. To man, at any rate, *infinite* is not a positive, but a negative term; simply meaning without known bounds. As a poetical expression it may pass; as an assertion, in theology or metaphysics, it is simply irrealisable. When a man asserts that there cannot be finite parts of an infinite whole, he asserts what, from the very nature of the case, he cannot *know*; and what wise man will argue about conjectures?

Mr. Sam Standring, who writes from a hydropathic establishment in Yorkshire, informs us that his health has completely broken down, after five months' lingering illness. His doctor orders him to cancel all engagements, and neither to study nor write letters for some time. Mr. Standring adds that his brain and heart are both affected. We hope he will obey his doctor's orders, and give himself a thorough rest for several months.

S. Lebson.—Duly received. Only holding to see the issue.

A. Hubben.—Miss Vance showed us your letter. Pleased to hear that you are helping, though farming prospects are so bad.

C. H.—The secretary has received your application.

V. Roger.—See paragraph. Delighted to see you are going to resume the outdoor propaganda in Kennington-park.

Observer.—We have not yet published an Index to the *Freethinker*. Thanks for the cutting.

M. Christopher.—Acknowledged this week.

Papers Received.—Derbyshire Courier—Remarks—De Dageraad—South Shields Free Press—Western Mail—Der Lichtfreund—Church Reformer—Two Worlds—Islamic World—Crescent—Post—Reading Observer—Light—Public Opinion—Literary Digest—Morning Leader—Railway Signal—Pioneer of Wisdom—Hobart Mercury—Gravesend Reporter—Boston Guardian—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Ironclad Age—Secular Thought—Twentieth Century—Open Court—Liberty—Liberator—Pearson's Weekly—Progressive Thinker.

Friends who send us newspapers would echance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Sale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

Mr. R. O. Smith did not think it worth while to answer my letter, asking whether the time of his offer could be extended to the end of May, by which time there was a reasonable prospect of raising the £600. I was therefore obliged to wire him on Monday that if I did not hear from him on Tuesday I should regard his answer as a negative. This brought me a reply. "When you have the money," Mr. Smith says, "I am willing to consider your offer. I do not intend to bind myself again after the two failures."

I once waited twelve months for a door to open, and I have been patient ever since; so I refrain from saying what I think of Mr. Smith's communication. It is quite possible, however, that I may have a good deal to say in next week's *Freethinker*. There comes a time when the only wise method is one of open publicity. When I disclose all, it will be seen what a trouble I have had in this matter.

Meanwhile I have to say that I (at any rate) do not "intend"—that is Mr. Smith's word—to go on indefinitely without an understanding. I will keep this matter open, so far as I am concerned, until next Tuesday, and not a minute longer. The *Freethinker* goes to press on Wednesday, and on that morning I will write what I may think necessary. I will only add that I am prepared for whatever can happen, and am remaining in London so as to be ready to deal with any emergency.

Apart from conditional promises, which are considerable, applications and donations have been received for about 330 shares. Those who intend to help in this crisis must do so, if at all, by next Tuesday. I have already stated that all money received will be returned unless the matter is carried to a successful issue.

The South Shields Branch writes that it will take ten shares on condition that the other shares are taken up. I shall be glad to hear from other Branches, or from individual friends, to a similar effect.

I have received the following fresh donations: R. Richards, £3 3s.; T. E. M., 1s.; Alpha, 1s. 6d.; J. M. Jones, 2s.; T. Hopkins, 1s.; T. Almond, 1s.; A. W. Marks, £1; Mrs. B. E. Marks, £1; Edaw, 5s.

The following subscriptions have been received by Miss E. M. Vance: B., 5s.; M. Christopher, 10s.; Mrs. Penny, 10s.; E. Self, 2s. 6d.; G. Tabum, 2s. 6d.; E. H., 1s.; E. Brighten, 5s.; Bath Friend, 2s. 6d.; Annie Embleton, 2s. 6d.; Florence Embleton, 4s.; G. B., 7s.; Collection at the Hall of Science, 10s. Shares for N.S.S.: Le Diable, £1; J. Proctor, £1.

There is no need to dwell any longer upon the general subject of this appeal. I have said all that I wish, and all that is necessary. The Secular party are in possession of the facts; I must leave them to decide what they will do, and to decide it by next Tuesday.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Bible God.

"Moreh Nebuchim," whose name shows he is a Hebrew scholar, if not a Hebrew, has the following in the *Truthseeker*: "Can I worship him? No! They have made a God who is less good, less moral, and less intelligent than the average man. Can I love him? No! They have a God who likes blood, who incited a pack of brickmakers to plunder and rob nations on whom they had not the least claim, to kill the men, slaughter their innocent babes, and take the surviving wives home—a God who favored the bad and condemned the good. He despised the innocent offering of Cain, fruits of the earth, and respected that of Abel because there was blood! A God who made a patriarch of that tricky, defrauding, cheating, rascally Jacob, and ignored the manly, generous, and forgiving Esau! A God who punished the gentle and noble King Saul, and chose that adulterer, murderer, and hypocritical fiddler, David, the son of Boaz and Ruth, of cornfield fame, descendant of Judah and Tamar, who struck a bargain on the road to Timnath. He is the David who begot Solomon, the licentious, both masters of the art, and the God of the Bible set them aside for the purpose of making himself a son! This is the Bible's God, who is father of Jeshu ben Joseph Pandra, the carpenter, fool and knave of Jerusalem, redeemer of the world. Selah."

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SUGAR PLUMS.

WHIT-SUNDAY is drawing near, and Freethinkers all over the kingdom should be making preparations for the Bristol Conference. We hope the Branches—even the smallest and poorest of them—will make an effort to be represented this year. Individual members, too, will find Bristol a nice city to visit. There is some fine scenery in the neighborhood. Our next issue will contain the Conference Agenda.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, the President of the American Secular Union, who is now on a visit to England, lectures this evening (May 12) at the Secular Hall, Camberwell. Mr. Robert Forder will preside. South London friends, who could not hear Mr. Putnam at the Hall of Science, should make a strong rally on this occasion. They should also tell their Christian friends, who might be tempted to see a wild Atheist from America.

The Hall of Science Libel pamphlet is now on sale at threepence. When the present edition is exhausted, it may be issued in a cheaper form for more general distribution. Several friends have expressed a wish that it could be circulated like the Atheist Shoemaker pamphlet. Mr. Foote will be glad to hear from Branches and individual Freethinkers on this point. He is prepared to spend some money on a cheap edition if it is really desirable.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Glasgow last Sunday. He had good audiences, although the Labor Demonstrations were held on that day. In the evening eight professors from the University attended to hear Mr. Watts, whom they highly complimented at the close of the meeting. This week our colleague is busy debating in Glasgow with Dr. Jamieson.

To-day, Sunday, May 12, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Dundee.

An article on Charles Bradlaugh in the May *Westminster Review*, by Clarence Waterer, opens by saying: "For Charles Bradlaugh the Atheist every one who values religious equality and liberty of conscience must feel that gratitude and admiration which are due to the man who, casting himself into the breach, bears the brunt of the struggle, and leaves the path clearer and easier for those who follow." A sympathetic account of his life is given, and Mr. Waterer concludes with the remark: "Whatever his contempararies may have thought of him, posterity will assuredly recognise in Charles Bradlaugh one of the foremost champions of liberty, and his life will ever remain a sad object-lesson of the evils that spring from bigotry, intolerance, and injustice."

We notice in the *Hobart Mercury* that at the Tasmanian International Exhibition the "Artisans' Section" contains a "Charles Bradlaugh" musical cabinet, contributed by Mr. James Hall.

We commented in "Acid Drops" last week on the Birmingham coroner who remarked that a man who could not find God must be mad. Mr. Stephen Urquhart writes a letter, to much the same effect as our paragraph, in the *Daily Gazette*. It is well to see this foolish coroner rapped over the knuckles in his own city.

Imitation is the sincerest flattery. The title of Mr. Foote's essay on war, "The Shadow of the Sword," is borrowed by Mr. W. Evans Derby, LL.D., secretary of the Peace Society, who has been advertising "a popular and striking lecture" under that heading at Spitalfields. Mr. Foote's essay, which has been revised, is now in the hands of the Humanitarian League, and will shortly be issued as one of the League's propagandist pamphlets.

Mr. C. Cohen had a warm experience before leaving Newcastle-on-Tyne. He was announced to give an outdoor address on the Quayside, and a whip-up was made for opposition by the blackguard who uttered that filthy libel at Leeds upon the London Hall of Science. This fellow and his supporters had a van of their own, and finding that Mr. Cohen had a better meeting than theirs, they deliberately pushed their vehicle right into the Secularists' meeting. This caused a serious disturbance, and at one moment it looked as though the Christian Evidence van would go over into the liquid that engulphed the Gadarene swine. Mr. Cohen was invited to ascend that van, but he replied that he would not stand amidst filth. He went on with his lecture, and held the field long after the aforesaid blackguard had bawled himself hoarse. The Newcastle friends are delighted with the way in which Mr. Cohen acquitted himself on this occasion.

The *Christian World* devotes an article to Canon Cheyne's new work on Isaiah. Our contemporary says that his conclusions "will be sufficiently startling to the average reader." Hitherto the Higher Criticism has taught that two writers were concerned in the book of Isaiah, but Canon Cheyne declares it to be the work of several hands in collaboration, and that the original writing of the real Isaiah is not larger than that of Haggai. Much of the contents of the book is post-exilic, and it received its final form in the second half of the third century before Christ.

The Presbyterian Synod at Newcastle-on-Tyne listened to a committee report, which was read by the Rev. W. Hutton, of Birkenhead, on the State of Religion and Morals. This document confesses that "the tone of religious life is at present very low, that there is a painful lack of interest in ordinances, and a general feeling of weariness and languor pervading the Church." It is also admitted that "the numbers outside of the Church are on the increase," that "our young men are not being drawn to the fellowship of the Church," and that political movements and popular sports are playing the very devil with religion. All which is excellent good news. There is real hope for the world when Presbyterianism is dying.

In the *Islamic World* Salah-ud-Deen, writing on "Mosawish and His Conquests," says that the early Kaliphs of Islam always inculcated toleration. He declares: "No dogma was enforced, no edicts prohibiting religious practices were issued, no church or synagogue was demolished, but throughout freedom and liberty were in eminence. Mr. Buckle lays great stress on the word 'scepticism' in his *History of Civilisation*, and remarks that it was the chief and vital agent which overthrew the miserable fetters of religious fanaticism, and which taught the people to march a little way out from the camp of old and antiquated ideas which for a long time dwarfed into insignificance the growth of civilisation. Assuredly such has been the case, and both the European and Mohammedan histories amply testify its truth. In the golden period of Mohammedan history the society was infected with scepticism."

The *Islamic World* will do a real service to literature if it induces competent Arabic scholars to give us Arabian accounts of history which may be compared with the Christian accounts, mostly derived from ignorant or unscrupulous monkish chroniclers.

Mr. Frederic Harrison severely criticises Mr. A. J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* in the May *Positivist Review*. He complains of misconceptions and ambiguity, and he declares that, as far as Positivism is concerned, Mr. Balfour's criticism of Naturalism, which he says is another term for Positivism, "has not the slightest application or meaning, because his so-called Naturalism and true Positivism have not a single belief in common." He describes Mr. Balfour's book as pervaded with the spirit of universal scepticism, a kind of despairing quietism. "It is a prose and *fin de siècle* version of Omar Khayyam, that all we do and think vanishes into air like the wind. And so, since Man is a bubble and Life a jest, let us—doubtingly and mockingly—put up with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Thirty-nine Articles; for these can hardly be greater shams and fallacies than anything else in heaven and earth."

The Humanitarian League has issued a telling leaflet by Edward Carpenter on the humanising of our prisons. The present system of treating criminals is simply damnable, and Edward Carpenter's burning words ought to be widely circulated. Copies of the leaflet can be obtained of the Humanitarian League at its new office, 79a Great Queen-street, London, W.C.

Through the efforts of Mr. A. F. Bullock, the *Freethinker* is now included in the literature taken by the Tiverton Liberal Club. At a recent meeting the Committee decided by 14 to 2 to place it in the reading-room. Mr. Orsa, the Bath Branch secretary, informs us that efforts will now be made to get the *Freethinker* introduced in the Walcot and Larkhall Liberal Clubs.

The Bristol Branch opened its outdoor lecture campaign on Sunday evening in Eastville Park. Mr. Treasure presided, and the lecture was delivered by Mr. Keast. There was an excellent meeting, but no discussion, though it was strongly invited. Several lady members were present, and busied themselves in distributing copies of the *Freethinker* and other literature.

Lambeth Freethinkers willing to assist in conducting an open-air lecture-station in Kennington Park on Sunday evenings during the summer are invited to meet at Mr. Victor Roger's, 114 Kennington-road, to-day (May 12) at 4 o'clock.

Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, noticing in *Science* the paper of Dr. Eugene Dubois describing his discovery in Java of three skeletons which form missing links between man and the

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higher apes, says: "The material is sufficient for a close osteological comparison. The cubical capacity of the skull is about two-thirds that of the human average. It is distinctly dolichocephalic—about 70°—and its *norma verticalis* astonishingly like that of the famous Neanderthal skull. The dental apparatus is still of the simian type, but less markedly so than in other apes. The femora are singularly human. They prove beyond doubt that this creature walked constantly on two legs, and when erect was quite equal in height to the average human male. Of the various differences which separate it from the highest apes and the lowest men, it may be said that they bring it closer to the latter than to the former."

When Christ Ruled.

The literature of Europe, shortly before the final dissolution of the Roman Empire, fell entirely into the hands of the clergy, who were long venerated as the sole instructors of mankind. For several centuries it was extremely rare to meet with a layman who could read or write; and, of course, it was still rarer to meet with one able to compose a work. Literature, being thus monopolised by a single class, assumed the peculiarities natural to its new masters. And as the clergy, taken as a body, looked on it as their business to enforce belief rather than to encourage inquiry, it is no wonder that they displayed in their writings the spirit incidental to the habits of their profession. Hence literature, during many ages, instead of benefiting society, injured it by increasing credulity, and thus stopping the progress of knowledge. Indeed, the aptitude for falsehood became so great that there was nothing men were unwilling to believe. Nothing came amiss to their greedy and credulous ears. Histories of omens, prodigies, apparitions, strange portents, monstrous appearances in the heavens, the wildest and most incoherent absurdities, were repeated from mouth to mouth, and copied from book to book, with as much care as if they were the choicest treasures of human wisdom. That Europe should have ever emerged from such a state is the most decisive proof of the extraordinary energy of man, since we cannot even conceive a condition of society more unfavorable to his progress.—*Buckle, "History of Civilisation," i. 221.*

The Ritualistic disturbance at the re-marriage of a divorced person is likely to have several good results. It is accentuating the differences of opinion among Churchmen themselves on a most important point. It has shown the secular world how priests will brawl in church and interfere scandalously to prevent people doing what they have a legal right to do. It shows that the Canon law of the Church is in conflict with the State, and emphasises the fact that what "God" has joined together Sir Francis Jeune can, and does, put asunder. It will probably lead to the repeal of the Canon law, and possibly to the general rule of civil marriage for all, and extra Church ceremonies for those who want them, which is already the practice of most civilised States.

Viscount Halifax, the head of the English Church Union, has already brought a Bill into the House of Lords to repeal clause 58 of the Divorce Act, and not allow any marriage for divorced persons, innocent or otherwise, except by the civil registrar. The Duke of Newcastle also has written to the *Church Times* announcing, like a monarch, that, if the bishops do not support the Canon law of marriage, "I shall change my attitude towards Disestablishment."

The bishops, however, know on which side their bread is buttered. They may brag about the authority of the Church, but when it comes to a real conflict with the State they will quietly give in. The Church has only to consent to Disendowment, and, of course, it can do as it pleases about marriage; but while it is a State institution it must do as the State orders. The Ritualistic clergy all want the wages without acknowledging the mastership of the State.

It is not generally known that, by the Church Building Acts, it is illegal to let pews in churches to other than parishioners. In London, however, this very often is done, and the churches derive funds absolutely prohibited by law.

The Reports of the Commissioners on the subject of the Aged Poor show that the Commissioners were all at loggerheads for want of a workable scheme of pensions. It looks as if the question would remain in abeyance until some statesman discovers that tithes appropriated to this purpose will be fulfilling the most important of their original functions.

BOOK CHAT.

Those who regard the Puritans as pioneers of liberty should read *The Emancipation of Massachusetts*, by Brooks Adams. The book is one long indictment of the bigotry and barbarism of the early settlers who sought to found a kingdom of God near Massachusetts Bay. Mr. Adams shows that their men of God were responsible for persecutions, punishments, and executions as iniquitous and abominable as those of the Inquisition. Under the reign of Christ, free thought of any kind had no chance. Antinomians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and alleged witches were ruthlessly crushed by imprisonment, scourgings, tortures, and hangings. Mr. Adams quotes some of the contemporary denunciations of the Quakers. Thus the Rev. John Wilson said he "would carry fire in one hand and faggots in the other to burn all the Quakers in the world." These Puritan protesters against Popery and Church of England tyranny would have made model Popes and tyrants themselves.

* * *

The account of Robert Owen in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 42, is written by Leslie Stephen, who carefully digests the chief sources of information. He says: "His system at New Lanark showed much sense and benevolence. . . . . His infant school was imitated by Lord Lansdowne, Brougham, and others." He thus relates Owen's famous declaration at the City of London Tavern, August 21, 1817: "Owen had been challenged to give his religious views. He had discovered that the religions of the world were the great obstacle to progress, and he resolved to announce this piece of news to the meeting, though expecting to be 'torn in pieces.' He made the statement in the most dramatic fashion, and thereby, he thought, struck the death-blow of bigotry and superstition. A pause was followed by a few hisses, when an 'electric shock' seemed to pass through the audience, and a burst of 'heartfelt applause' drowned all dissent."

* * *

Mr. Stephen makes the following remarks on Owen's social experiments: "Owen's schemes had failed, as might have been expected, even upon his own principles. He had laid the greatest stress at New Lanark upon the necessity of 'forming character' in infancy, and he might have inferred that miscellaneous collections of unprepared people would not have the necessary qualities for success in new undertakings."

* * *

Mr. Stephen smartly describes Owen as "one of those intolerable bores who are the salt of the earth." . . . . "Personally, according to Robert Dale Owen, who no doubt speaks the truth, he was most amiable. His ruling passion was benevolence; he was exceedingly fond of children; spent a fortune to promote the welfare of his race, and had a command of temper which enabled him to conciliate opponents. He had, apparently, all the obstinacy without the irritability generally attributed to his countrymen."

* * *

The *Westminster Review*, noticing Dr. Wildeboer's *Origins of the Canon of the Old Testament*, regards it as "finally disposing of the traditional theory of the supernatural origin and unity of the Old Testament."

* * *

The Life of Adam Smith, by John Rae, published by Macmillan, is got up with a care and minuteness which will probably render it the standard biography of that great political economist and moralist, the friend of Hume and one of the most typical Scotsmen that ever lived.

* * *

M. Alfred Fouillée, the distinguished French exponent of the philosophy of *idées-forces*, has selected extensive extracts from the writings of his able nephew, J. M. Guyau, the author of *The Irreligion of the Future*, whose early death in 1889 was a loss to philosophy and Freethought. They are issued in a volume entitled *Pages Choisies de J. M. Guyau*. The volume forms part of a collection of "Choice Pages from Great French Authors." It will add to the fame and influence of a noble writer, who is too little known in England.

Sir Henry Tyler, the pious "guinea pig" and instigator of the prosecution of the *Freethinker*, has resigned, or, it would be more correct to say, been kicked out of, his presidency of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada.

The *Western Mail* gives an illustration of the Nonconformist Conscience in the fact that the "Lucky Sportsman" at Neath who netted £4,000 at a *coup* has been solicited for donations and investments by various chapels in his vicinity.

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MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

May 12, Camberwell, 19, Bradford; 26, Liverpool.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 30, Sheffield.

July 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York in August, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Arrangements are being made for him to speak in Derby and Stockton-on-Tees during the weeks following his being at Manchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Dundee should be visited when he lectures in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

AN INTERVIEW WITH INGERSOLL.

These are a few among a list of questions submitted to Colonel Ingersoll by a recent interviewer, with the Colonel's answers:—

Q. Considering Sunday simply as a day of rest and quiet, aside from its religious significance, do you think the saloons should be open all that day, part of that day, or not at all that day?

A. I do not think that Sunday is better than the other days. I do not believe in prohibition. Lots of reformers in New York care but little about murder and crimes of that kind, provided no beer is sold on Sunday. All the temperance legislation has done harm.

Q. Granting that the Christian religion is faulty and deficient, is not the world indebted to it for much of the enlightenment and beneficence which characterise the nineteenth century?

A. No. Orthodox Christianity has done harm, and only harm. It has poisoned the foundation of learning, and misdirected the energies of the world.

Q. In your estimation, what percentage of Christians are, or try to be, good for the sake of reward in the next world?

A. I have never known one.

Q. What percentage because of fear of punishment in the next world?

A. I have never known one.

Q. And what percentage are good for the sake of being good?

A. All that are really good are so without the hope of heaven or the fear of hell.

THE TRUE RELIGION.

"Religion is not of the brain."—"*General*" *Booth, speaking at Boston, U.S.A.*

Down on your marrows and pray to the Lord;
Whoop hallelujah and glory;
Bang with your Bible and call it the Word;
Rave on the old-fashioned story;

Out with your banjoes, and tambos, and bones;
Don your red jerseys and bonnets;
Flout the philosophers living and dead;
Damn every writer of sonnets.

Down on your marrows, and do a knee drill;
Crawl up the stairs into glory,
For if you do not you'll land on the grill,
In spite of the gentle Lamb gory.

Blow like the Devil through brassy trombones;
Skip like a lunatic raving;
March with a dozen of Janets and Johns
If your ha'penny soul you'd be saving.

You ask why you should, for it goes 'gainst your grain.
Why, the "General's" just been a-saying
That his blessed "religion is not of the brain,"
So start to the whooping and praying.

The Gaberlunzie.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

The Council met at the Hall of Science, May 2; Mr. G. Ward in the chair. Present: R. Forder, G. Standring, J. Neate, F. Schaller, M. Loafer, A. Wheeler, W. Clogg, W. H. Baker, W. G. Renn, C. Durant, Miss Vance, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Treasurer's report received.

Grants were made to the Battersea and Westminster Branches, and a further payment made to Mr. G. Standring off the outstanding printing account. The date of the Annual Excursion was fixed for Sunday, July 14, and the hope expressed that all Branches will this year co-operate with the Federation. Clacton-on-Sea, Littlehampton, and Southend were each suggested, and the Secretary was instructed to make the necessary inquiries.

Branch secretaries are reminded that delegates' fees are much overdue, and that all matter for the monthly list must reach the undersigned not later that May 20.

Annie Brown (*Hon. Sec.*).

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that we learn of the sudden death, on April 21, of Lulie Monroe Power, the editress of the *Ironclad Age*, at her residence, 50 Fayette-street, Indianapolis. The *Indianapolis Sentinel* recently spoke of her as "the only woman in the world who edits a paper which has for its mission the denial of God's or a future existence." A daughter of Dr. Jasper Roland Monroe, the founder of the *Ironclad Age*, she worked at the case in her father's office, setting in type his Freethought articles, and sharing his opinions. Upon his death she bravely determined to carry on the paper, keeping its old proclamation of "Goodness without God," and the motto: "In the brief time of life, love; in the long night of death, oblivion." The *Freethinkers' Magazine* said of her: "She loves humanity, even of the most degraded character. She goes further than that. She loves even the dumb animals. No horse, cat, or dog ever suffers at her hands, but she treats them with the greatest kindness. She abhors cruelty in gods or men, and, if she could have her way, no child would ever receive a blow, but would be governed by love. She is a worthy wife, an affectionate mother, a noble woman in all the relations of life, was the tenderest and kindest of daughters to her parents when they were living, and nothing gives her so much pleasure as to say or do something that will honor their memory. She loves the flowers and the birds, and worships nature, and, above all else, loves the truth 'wherever found, on heathen or on Christian ground.'" Her portrait shows a woman of fine appearance, sharp-cut features, square chin, high forehead, and bright eyes. Her loss will be greatly felt by all the readers of the *Ironclad Age*.

Leontine Nicolle, who died last week at Brévannes, was a Freethinking woman who devoted her life to the idiot children at the Salpétrière Hospital. The Paris correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* says: "She retired four years ago at the age of sixty-eight, and was given an asylum for the rest of her days at Brévannes. She brought hundreds of her charges to health and relative intelligence. The Academy in 1887 gave her the Montyon prize and the palms of the Academy. President Carnot went to the idiots' hospital to fasten the Cross of the Legion of Honor on her breast in the presence of the whole of the staff. She was obliged by broken health to leave her idiots, but she had shown younger women how to treat them. Mademoiselle Nicolle was a Freethinker and an Altruist."

A distinguished Italian Freethinker has passed away in the person of Professor Luigi Ferri, editor of the *Revista Italiana di Filosofia*, and author of *The Psychology of Pomponazzi* and a *History of Philosophy in Italy*.

Excommunicating Insects.

In 1479 the inhabitants of Lausane were much vexed by the number of insects who completely spoiled their crops. The matter was brought before the bishop, Benedict de Montferrand, who solemnly issued a writ that they should appear before him and answer for their trespasses. He gave them an advocate to plead their cause, and, after hearing his plea, gravely pronounced anathema and sentence of excommunication against the insects. It is a pity that M. A. Ruchat, who, in his *Abregé de l'Histoire Ecclesiastique du Puis de Vaud*, p. 87, relates this interesting survival of an old superstition, did not also record what the advocate had to plead for the insects. Certainly he might have said that God, having given them life, also allowed them to sustain it, though at the expense of human kind.

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THE JEW'S CONVERSION.

A jeu d'esprit.

(*Founded, like Tennyson's "Voyage of Maeldune," on an Irish legend.*)

A sailor at the hour of death
  At last repented of his sins.
A priest is called, and in his ear
  A long confession Jack begins.

A grievous tale it was to hear—
  The priest he listened to the end.
"If one good deed thou hast done," he said,
  "Perhaps the Church may still befriend."

"I have," said Jack. "My sins are great;
  My righteous acts are very few.
But once, my father, grace I had
  To make a convert of a Jew.

"This cheating knave and usurer
  Had plundered Christians many a year.
One day, when none beheld but I,
  By chance he tumbled from a pier.

"I seized an oar, put off a boat,
  And close beside old Moses brought her;
Stretched out my hand, caught his grey hair,
  And held his head above the water.

"'I'll save your life! O Jew,' I cried,
  'If your false creed you will forego;
Become a Christian, be baptised.'
  He shook his head; I let him go.

"Twice he sank and rose again.
  At length my argument prevailed—
The truth had dawned upon his mind,
  Or else the rascal's courage failed.

"'I am a Christian, Jack!' he cried;
  'My evil creed I have forsaken;
Henceforth I'll feed on pork and ham,
  Except in Lent. Pray save my bacon!'

"In name of Father and of Son,
  And Holy Ghost, I—by immersion—
Baptised that wretch, who, but for me,
  Had lived and died without conversion.

"Thus did I force an infidel
  To take a pious resolution;
And for this righteous deed I pray
  That you will grant me absolution."

"How fared the Jew?" inquired the priest.
  "O, holy father, do not frown;
I feared, if saved, he might relapse;
  To save his soul I let him drown."

The priest has issued from the door,
  And Jack, with all his sins forgiven,
First drank a dram, next sang a psalm;
  Then quickly died and went to heaven.

J. A. Richardson.

WHAT IS BLASPHEMY?

What is blasphemy according to the latest authorities? We do not know. It used to be blasphemy to question the inspiration of any part of the Bible; now you can question the inspiration or godly origin of the entire book, and not blaspheme. To doubt if Moses and others named in the Bible wrote as per appearances there was once blasphemy; but it is nothing of the sort now. To call the prophecies in question was awful blasphemy in former days, and how many immortal souls were damned on that count it is impossible to tell; now it is almost blasphemy to believe the prophecies. In former times he who doubted Hell and questioned the reality of Satan was not far from blazes, and within arm's length of the Devil; but now it is a positive sign of grace to laugh at both Nick and his den.

When we were young it was rank blasphemy to deny the Trinity in Unity or the eternal sonship of Jesus; but now the blasphemy is all on the other side, and people are growing ashamed of what was formerly most necessary to salvation.

The divine and adulterous birth of Jesus was once insisted upon with an unction not to be described; now an ancient Syriac Gospel comes to light and tells us Jesus was begotten by his mother's husband!—the most terrible calamity that ever befel the Church. Now, which is blasphemy, to say Jesus was the son of Mary by the Holy Ghost, who was *not* her husband, or to say he was her son by Joseph, who was her husband? We wish divines would answer us that question, for we have no wish to misrepresent anybody's family affairs.

And here another question starteth up. Only twenty-five years ago the unchangeable Church of Rome dogmatically affirmed the Immaculate conception; and now this ancient Syriac Gospel comes to confound them. The Syriac Gospel, we presume, must go to the Index—that is, the Popish hell for honest books. But still the question is, Who is the blasphemer—he who says Mary was an honest woman, or he who says the contrary?

What is blasphemy? A cowardly cry raised by cowardly priests to frighten people away from their consecrated trumpery, to keep the public from investigating the holy mysteries and tricks of their trade; a cry raised in defence of the most rascally conduct, the most rascally imposture and tyranny that could be conceived.—*Liberator.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

METHODS OF SALVATION.

To the Editor of "The Freethinker."

Sir,—Many of your readers have doubtless seen the advertisement in various papers for printers' laborers and other workmen, with a condition attached that "applicants must be Salvationists or willing to become such." On behalf of the organised printers' laborers, I recently interviewed Colonel Bremner, of the Salvation Army printing department, and learned from him that their printing office was not a business house, but a "religious" undertaking, and that it was their intention to discharge such hands as were not Salvationists.

That a wholesale reduction of wages is the real object sought appears to be established by the fact that a number of half-trained compositors, gathered from provincial towns, are at present engaged in the Army's packing warehouse awaiting the discharge of the present staff, who, to quote from Colonel Bremner, "will be got rid of one at a time."

There are, too, in the warehouse department men taken from the "Social Wing." For the heavy work of packing these men receive but 2s. 6d. per day. Cases where men profess Salvation at the behest of Colonel Bremner are frequent—its refusal means the loss of their bread.

One objection raised by Colonel Bremner was that the non-Salvationist laborers were apt to go into public-houses when their work was done—a thing he would not tolerate. Now, sir, these men frequently work forty-one hours at a stretch, from 6 a.m. on Monday morning till 11 o'clock on Tuesday evening. After that time their liberty to have a glass of beer is not admitted by Colonel Bremner, who, by-the-bye, does not perform the work of a printers' laborer.

Those workmen who have recently been discharged to make room for inexperienced Salvationists have, for the most part, been in the Army employ for periods ranging from seven to thirteen years. Altogether, the present management of the Salvation Army printing office ill accords with the past traditions of the Army or the present professions of its founder.—Yours, etc.

T. O'Grady
(Secretary, Printers' Laborers' Union.)

PROFANE JOKES.

A clergyman at a wedding addressed the congregation—"If any here present can show just cause why this man and this woman may not lawfully be joined together in holy wedlock, let him now speak, or for ever after hold his peace." The groom casually laid a pair of revolvers on the railing in front of him, and the ceremony proceeded.

One Saturday morning two little boys were playing marbles on the steps of Trinity Church. The pastor, coming out and seeing them, said: "My little men, don't you know it is wrong to play marbles on the steps of the house of God?" One of the little fellows answered: "Oh, God isn't here to-day. He's over the way at the Jewish synagogue."

Dimbleby—"So you believe in the efficacy of prayer uncle. But suppose a neighbor's chicken should hop by your kitchen door, and you should get down on your knees and pray for that chicken to enter; do you think your prayer would be granted?" Uncle Elson—"I mos' sartinly do, sah. But, o' course, I'd have to sprinkle a few grains o' co'n on de step, sah."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Resurrection: Fact and Fiction."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Harry Barnes, "The Independent Labor Party." Tuesday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, S. P. Putnam, "The Bible and Modern Thought."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road, E.): 8, Dr. C. R. Drysdale, "Low Wages, Want of Work, and the Population Question."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Ball's Rhymes and Fourteenth-Century Socialism."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Aims and Claims of the Ethical Movement."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Son in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Monday, at 8.30, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, a lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James will lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, F. Haslam, "How I became a Secularist."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Science."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, E. Calvert, "Christianity and Secularism: which is the Savior of Man?" 3.15, E. Calvert, "Religious and Scientific Hypotheses"; 6.30, A. Guest, "A Freethought Sermon from a Pious Text."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, W. Heaford, "God and the Problem of Evil." Thursday, at 8, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-told."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "God and the Problem of Evil"; 3.30, W. Heaford, "Why we do Not Believe in Christianity." Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "A Freethought Sermon from a Pious Text."

KILBURN (High-road): 6.30, S. E. Easton, "Under which Flag?"

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Brain and the Bible."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. J. Ramsey, "Salvation by Proxy"—Part II.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, a lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 7, S. R. Thompson, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?"

COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN: 3, members' meeting at secretary's house.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Children's entertainment.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Business meeting; 6.30, social re-union.

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, A. Monro, "Christ and Ally Sloper."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Darwinism and Socialism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Leonard Hall, "Trade Unionism and Socialism"; 3, "The Irish Question and the I.L.P."; 6.30, "The Case for the I.L.P."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 3, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?" 7, "Scepticism: its Meaning and its Value." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, An address.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (82 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Mr. Yates, "God and the Bible."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Librarian, "The Delusion of Prayer."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, J. W. Treasure, "Christianity and Labor."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, C. Aarstadt will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—May 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 23, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—May 12, m. Wood Green, a. Tottenham, e. Edmonton; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park; 26, m. Wood Green, a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 30, Hammersmith.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, m. Clerkenwell.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—May 19, m. Kingsland. June 2, m. Finsbury Park; 19, m. Kingsland. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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A JOLLY JAPANESE RELIGION.

INTEREST in Japan and things Japanese has grown immensely since the war, and occidentals are beginning to discover that they may perhaps learn something, if not in science, at any rate in art and the arts of life, from the land of the Rising Sun. Possibly it may be so in religion. I, at any rate, have been much interested in Shintoism, the old religion of Japan, ever since I visited M. Guimet's "Musée des Religions" at Paris, and Monsieur Guimet pointed out that a piece of white shaving or paper was their symbol of deity. That, I thought, will just express my creed. Keep it white. Others may write on it what they like and call it God, which is what those who utilise deity always do.

Everybody knows that Shintoism is older than Buddhism in Japan. The Japanese call Buddhism "the way of the Buddhas," but Shinto means "the way of the gods." At the best, Buddhisatvas are only godlings or god-germs on their way, after long processes of reincarnation, to become Buddhas, merely maintaining a vague kind of personality by manifesting themselves for the redemption of inferiors ere evaporating into everlasting Nirvana. The process is wearisome, and the result disappointing. Buddhism attracted me once. But charlatan Theosophists, with their esoteric nonsense, have discounted its attractions. It is too like Christianity to retain permanent interest. Doubtless it is more philosophical than Christianity in taking account of other manifestations of animal life besides the human. But it is, after all, like Christianity, a miserable sort of faith, and devils as naturally belong to both as fairies to Paganism. Like Christianity, Buddhism grew up among outcasts, and is founded on a sort of despair of this world. The vaunted morality of both these systems is essentially self-effacement. Both Christianity and Buddhism look down on women and marriage, for both are monkish in their origin, and are better fitted for emasculated monks than for men.

But Shintoism, "the way of the gods," is a creed of jollity, a system of health and happiness for life here and now. It believes, says Mr. Nobuta Kishimoto, M.A., who describes his faith in the *Popular Science Monthly*, in "enjoying this life to the utmost extent." He defines it, indeed, as "a religion of merry-making." In this it resembles Paganism ere the man of sorrows brought the worship of agony into fashion among women and slaves, already too acquainted with grief. In the Bible records we can see that the Jews were a jollier race when they were polytheists, and, prophetically, danced round the Golden Calf. Austere Phariseeism followed in the wake of dogmatic Monotheism. Yet is there a secular make-the-best-of-this-world element in Judaism entirely wanting in the genuine old brands of Christianity, though since the advent of Secularism the school of Kingsley has tried pouring the new wine into the old theological bottles.

Shintoism is not altogether a do-as-you-like religion. It utters the supreme mandate, "Be happy"; but it also says, "Obey the conditions of happiness." Chief among these it places purity—physical and intellectual. The pure, white paper shaving, or white mark, is its symbol. It urges the utmost physical purity and cleanliness upon its adherents. The dirt no less that the cant of a Christian always disgusts a Japanese, who has learnt to be scrupulously clean. This regard for purity has led to a number of superstitions, very similar to those among the Jews, as, for instance, the uncleanness of blood, of touching a dead body, etc. No doubt the idea of danger originally led to a *taboo*, which has got to be considered, as with the Jews, a main point of religion. So, too, purifications with water, salt, or fire are held to be of religious efficacy. But the main thing is health as a means of happiness, and rites and ceremonies are subordinate thereto. This elevation of the secular side of conduct above creed is well expressed in some lines of a Shinto poet, who is now, indeed, one of the Shinto gods:—

> Only if our inner heart is
> In harmony with the true way,
> The gods will protect us,
> Even though we do not pray.

These lines are as well known among the Japanese as "He that believeth not shall be damned" are among the Christians.

The Shintos, says Mr. Nobuta Kishimoto, strive to be happy with gods and men, by eating, drinking, singing, and dancing, and cherishing cheerfulness and courtesy. The Japanese *sake*, or rice beer, that cheereth the hearts of gods and men, flows at their religious festivals as wine evidently did at those held at Shiloh (1 Samuel i. 14). Music, too, is religious. They say the gods or spirits are fond of music, and even delight in wrestling matches. This is not curious, when we remember their gods are much like Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, Caractacus, King Alfred, Robin Hood, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Shakespeare are to us.

Just as monkish Christianity, in displacing Paganism, had to keep up some of the old merry festivals like Christmas and Easter, so monkish Buddhism has not been able to displace the rites and festivals of the old Shinto nature worship. Shintoism and Buddhism, being both tolerant, exist side by side, members of the same household being often of various creeds, in which temperament probably counts for something; optimists naturally turning to Shintoism, while pessimists gravitate towards Buddhism. The joyous faith of old Japan has always held its own as the national religion, though Buddhism is allowed to be more philosophical; and when the Mikado, or Spiritual Emperor, was restored to temporal power in 1865 Buddhism was practically "disestablished," and Shinto worship reinstated as the State religion.

Shintoism has over 3,700 gods with shrines, and each of these gods or saints has an annual festival or merry-making. These gods are not reverenced like Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but are regarded as national heroes. Indeed, for the most part, they are deified men. The Mikado pretends descent from the gods. Some, however, are nature gods, the chief being Amaterasse, the "sun goddess," in whose worship flowers abound. A round steel mirror, the only object in some temples, is her symbol, or rather the emblem of nature herself deified and personified in the sun-goddess.

There are about a hundred thousand Shinto shrines in Japan. The priests are married, and do not shave their heads like the Buddhists. The traveller in Japan meets continually bands of pilgrims on their way to Isé, the centre of Shinto worship. Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop says: "Dismiss from your minds the idea of austerity, penance, privation, worship, sanctity, and vows which the word pilgrimage conjures up. 'A pilgrimage' to Isé is the greatest frolic and holiday of the year or the lifetime, a prolonged picnic, a vast merry-making. In spring the roads are thronged with bands of girls and companies of

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men in holiday costume, singing and laughing; bowing to every high hill and every large tree, visiting theatres and shows; and, after throwing their coins on the white cloth in front of the Isé temples, surrendering themselves to the pleasures of Jamada, a city abounding in vicious attractions."

Shintoism is less a religion than a bundle of old customs. But in the East ancient custom is religion. Though it has a Valhalla of deified heroes, it has, properly speaking, no heaven, no hell, no purgatory, no organised worship, no sacrifices, and no priestcraft. No doubt it has faults like other faiths; but in its cardinal doctrine it hits the bull's eye. It recognises that joy is the magnet to which human lives naturally turn. Perhaps, when we have got rid of a religion which has for its basis human depravity, bloody atonement, and infernal damnation, we shall recognise this also. J. M. WHEELER.

TACTICS OF SOME CHRISTIAN DISPUTANTS.

(Concluded from page 292.)

DR. JAMIESON persists in his contention that "the effect can never be superior to the cause," and upon this assumption he gives what he terms "a fatal blow to the Atheistic hypothesis." In the debate I quoted J. S. Mill, who said: "How vastly nobler and more precious, for instance, are the vegetables and animals than the soil and manure out of which they are raised up." "But," says the Doctor, "the soil and the manure are not the cause either of vegetables or animals," but the cause is "a living germ" which is there. Granted; yet surely it will not be urged that this simple unicellular germ is greater than the oak tree which springs from it, or the animal—perhaps man—into which it developes. That germ has no intelligence, yet from it comes a Milton, a Bacon, or a Shakespeare. Was not the effect greater than the cause in such a case? A man and woman are surely the cause of their offspring, yet the parents may both be ignorant blockheads, and the child an embryonic genius. What about the effect always being superior to the cause here? Or take another case of an opposite character. A baccilus, almost inconceivable in its minuteness, several millions of which could pass at the same time through the eye of an ordinary sewing-needle, enters the body of a strong man and sets up an action which stops all the vital forces of the powerful and well-knit organism. The cause here was this tiny thing, composed of just a single cell; the result, the death of a man of great vigor of body and strength of mind. Surely no one out of a lunatic asylum will maintain in such a case as this that the effect was inferior to the cause.

Dr. Jamieson's statement, that life precedes organisation, is so startling that one can hardly imagine it possible for anyone to make it who is acquainted with the merest rudiments of biology. Can we even imagine life apart from organisation? Will the Doctor tell us where it is to be found, and what it is like? That organisation and life are always found associated no one, we presume, will deny, just as force is always found in connection with matter. But it would be no less absurd to say that force was the cause of matter than that life was the cause of organisation. Most of the quotations given by Dr. Jamieson from men of science are quite beside the question, and only show that the writers held life to be something distinct from organisation, which no more proves life to have been the cause of organisation than the holding that electricity is something distinct from the battery proves it to have been the cause of the combination of metals and acids employed. However, the quotations themselves are from books written long ago. The one most in harmony with the views under consideration is that from the "Reign of Law" by the Duke of Argyll. And this book was written nearly thirty years since, and its author was certainly never considered an authority upon questions of biology. Huxley most assuredly holds a view diametrically opposed to this, as anyone can see who will take the trouble to read his "Physical Basis of Life." In that discourse he ridicules the notion that life is anything more than a result of organisation, by comparing it with the old theory that aquaosity was something added to the hydrogen and oxygen in the formation of water. For instance, the Professor says: "It will be observed that the existence of the matter of life depends on the pre-existence of certain compounds—namely, carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. Withdraw any one of these three from the world, and all vital phenomena come to an end. They are related to the protoplasm of the plant, as the protoplasm of the plant is to that of the animal. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen are all lifeless bodies. Of these, carbon and oxygen unite in certain proportions, and under certain conditions, to give rise to carbonic acid; hydrogen and oxygen produce water; nitrogen and hydrogen give rise to ammonia. These new compounds, like the elementary bodies of which they are composed, are lifeless. But when they are brought together under certain conditions they give rise to the still more complex body, protoplasm, and this protoplasm exhibits the phenomena of life" ("Physical Basis of Life," *Lay Sermons*, p. 135).

In my debate with Dr. Jamieson upon the soul question I said, "Diseased brain impaired thought." In reply to this the Doctor, in his Appendix, gives a long string of authorities to prove the contrary. But they do nothing of the kind. I am reminded that Professor Ferrier said that "the half of the brain has been diseased, and that the intellectual powers of the patient have not been interfered with." Well, what of it? So a man may have a disease in one eye or one ear, and yet see or hear very well with the other. The brain is double, like the eye or the ear. There are two hemispheres, and if one is affected with disease the other can act healthily. And it was to illustrate this very fact that Dr. Ferrier introduced the case. Then there is a reference to cases in which mental derangement has occurred, and after death no lesion of the brain has been found. Doubtless; yet I suppose there is no physiologist who does not believe but that there was some brain disease which escaped detection, in consequence probably of its minute character. But if the Doctor thinks differently, will he kindly inform us what was diseased if the brain was not? Can the immortal soul suffer from derangement? Is the immaterial spirit liable to disease and decay? For, if so, would it not be a fair deduction that death also might be the culminating point of such an abnormal condition? Then, what would become of the supposed immortality?

Dr. T. Cromwell, in his work upon *The Soul and a Future Life*, says: "Immaterialists have dwelt much on cases of considerable, though always partial, injury to the brain, with which no perceptible mental disorder was associated. But to this there are adequate replies. 'Many instances are on record in which extensive disease has occurred in *one* hemisphere (of the cerebrum) so as almost entirely to destroy it, without any obvious injury to the mental powers, or any interruption of the influence of the mind upon the body. But there is no case on record of any severe lesion of *both* hemispheres, in which morbid phenomena were not evident during life' (Carpenter's *Human Physiology*, p. 775). 'In every instance where there exists any corresponding lesion or disease on *each* side of the brain, there we are sure to find some express injury or impairment of the mental functions' (Sir H. Holland's *Chapters on Mental Physiology*, p. 184). 'There are no cases on record in which the mental faculties have remained undisturbed when the disorganisation has extended to *both* sides of the brain' (Sully on *The Human Brain*, p. 349; 1836). Dr. Maudsley, in his *Physiology of Mind*, p. 126, observes that he has come to the assured conviction that mind does not exist in nature apart from brain; all his experience of it is in connection with brain. Lawrence, in his *Lectures on Comparative Anatomy*, p. 112, says: 'I firmly believe that the various forms of insanity, that all the affections comprehended under the general term of mental derangement, are only evidences of cerebral affections, disordered manifestations of those organs whose healthy action produces the phenomena called mental—in short, symptoms of diseased brain'" (quoted by Cromwell, p. 97).

The Doctor accuses me of ignorance because I spoke of scars in connection with anatomy, which, he says, belong to the province of physiology. Let me tell my *learned* opponent, who informs me that he has "successfully passed examinations in two universities," that it would have been still more correct to have relegated scars to the region of pathology, or the wound which caused the scar to the domain of surgery. Anatomy is a general term applied to the human body, and is not always limited to a cut-and-dried description of the bones, muscles, nerves, etc.

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Strictly speaking, the word anatomy is derived from a Greek word which signifies to cut up; but it is used by all persons—except, perhaps, first-year students in a medical school—in a much broader sense. And no man who is not bent on hair-splitting would have accused me of ignorance in consequence of my applying it to scars. Then we are told that sometimes scars disappear. That is true, but not always, for I have now a scar upon my forehead that has been visible for over forty years. In my debate with the Doctor I gave scientific reasons why scars could remain, notwithstanding the many changes the body undergoes. But the disappearance of some scars does not in any way prove the Doctor's contention. Ideas sometimes disappear, especially late in life. Memory fails almost invariably at advanced age, and even childishness supervenes. If that be not due to brain decay, then to what is it due?

CHARLES WATTS.

LYING FOR JESUS.

"Blessed are ye when all men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."—*Jesus.*

If Jesus had the gift of prophecy, no doubt this blessing was intended for the infidels, who for Jesus' sake have been reviled, persecuted, and had all manner of evil said against them falsely, by Christian ministers, who do it all for Christ's sake, as they say, though it is evident that their main motive is the money they can make by it. Jesus must have foreseen that this class of preachers would arise, that they would have no scruples about making false assertions for his sake; and, being an infidel himself to the religion of his country, he knew how it was: he knew that the scribes and pharisees were a class that belonged to no time or people, but sprung like weeds from the soil, the natural product of human creeds and human selfishness.

One of this class of preachers lately held forth in a Christian church—commonly called Campbellite—in Austin, as the star evangelist of a week's revival meeting. I know an infidel who attended that meeting. As he is sufficiently ashamed of the act, I will not mention his name; but he was persuaded to attend by a pious brother of the church, who assured him that he would hear a very able preacher, one of the ablest in that church, and that he would consider it a personal favor to him if the said infidel would go.

The sermon was largely devoted to infidelity, but there was no statement of the infidel's argument, nor was there argument on the other side. It was just another case of reviling and saying all manner of evil against the infidel, falsely, for Jesus' sake. There was a rehash of all the old lies about the horrors of the infidel's death-bed, and a story about an infidel who carried a rabbit's foot in his pocket for luck. The story may or may not be true—most likely the latter; but the superstitious infidel had, at least, a tangible object upon which to hang his superstition, while the preacher hung his upon spooks that have no existence whatever. I never knew an infidel who believed in the occult virtue of a rabbit's foot, but when I look around the world and see the crowds of people who give credence to the silly stories of the Bible, and the efficacy of lamb's blood to wash out the stain of evil deeds, I can easily conceive it possible that there may be a man who has outgrown the latter superstition, but has not yet evoluted so far as to give up his rabbit's foot. The last seems to be only a silly superstition, harmless, at least; but the Christian religion is not only as silly as the other, but it is also the most malignant scourge that has ever afflicted mankind.

The preacher declared that he could tell an infidel as far as he could see him, that he could go through the audience and pick out any infidel that might be there, by the droop of his lip, and the drawing down of the corners of his mouth; he could walk the streets of Austin and tell every man he met, whether he was an infidel, by the same signs.

The infidel looked around the audience, and mentally concluded that, if that sign was true, he must have gotten into an infidel meeting. Four-fifths of the crowd bore the marks, and those in the amen corner all had it in what might be called an excessive degree. "It may be true," he said, "and these people are just ready to weep over the ignorance and folly of the preacher, as exhibited in his speech. I can imagine a sensible, level-headed infidel feeling very sad over such an exhibition, though ordinarily a cheerful man with a smile upon his face."

When the infidel got home from the meeting, the corners of his mouth were all right, as usual; but there was a mild look of disgust on his face, and when asked by his friends about the meeting his answer was: "Sold again!"

Anybody may be fooled once, but he is a fool, indeed, if he allows himself to be taken in the second time by the same trick; what, then, shall I think of myself when I have been fooled over and over again, at least half-a-dozen times, by itinerant, mountebank evangelists, who come to town, advertising that they have a special mission to convert infidels, who are specially invited to attend their meetings. Then comes some pious, calf-faced youth—who knows no more about infidelity than my puppy does about conic sections—with an urgent personal appeal to attend the meeting. Remembering former experiences, I mildly suggest to the young man that he is deluded by the blustering advertisement of the evangelist; that he don't want any real infidels at his meetings; that he is only talking for the effect it may have upon green Christians, who swallow it all, fully believing that he will convert all the infidels in the world if they will only listen to him. But, the young man says, this preacher is not an ordinary man. His fame is as wide as the country, as an eloquent speaker, a deeply learned man, and a profound reasoner.

It is not necessary to repeat the whole of the conversation. Having no engagement for the evening, I allow myself to be led "like a lamb to the slaughter," and placed in a conspicuous place among the sheep in the pews. I hear the same old whining prayers, and the same out-of-tune-and-time singing that I can remember so well in the days of my childhood, that even then, when my ears were uncultivated, used to grate harshly upon them. And then I heard the same old pulpit lies over again that I had heard so many times before: the awful deaths of infidels; the despair of Voltaire, and his declaration that he was going to hell; though, if there is any truth in the Christian religion, he needn't go there without he wanted to—a few words of assent to the hocus-pocus of the priest and a little holy water would have atoned for all the wit and wisdom he had uttered for the benefit of poor, abused humanity. But, perhaps, he meant to say it was his choice to go to hell; many a wise man would make that choice, rather than go with the crowd of rascals and imbeciles that are wearing crowns of glory in "Kingdom Come."

It is not necessary to repeat the whole nauseous dose of ignorance and superstition; suffice it to say, it was the regular stereotyped display of malice and mendacity. Everybody who has gone to church half-a-dozen times has heard it. It is not intended for infidels, but for those Christians who do not know what infidelity is. It is to show them how easy it is to demolish infidels when they are not allowed to reply to the dunderhead preacher who abuses them.

I noticed in the newspaper this morning that a certain preacher in Houston was going to preach upon the subject of "Lying, in all its Varieties." I do not know the preacher, nor what are his particular hobbies; but it is safe to say that his sermon will contain no reference to pulpit lies about infidels. It would be worth a trip to Houston to hear him, if he would tell the truth about his professional brethren. Upon that subject he might preach for a week without exhausting the subject. A full account of the lies of the clergy about infidelity would make a work as voluminous as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or the *Lives of the Saints*—which last work might, perhaps, be largely included in it.

The more I think of it the larger grows the subject that the Rev. ———, Houston gentleman, has taken to preach upon—"Lying, in all its Varieties." Surely the one variety of lies, those that are told for Jesus' sake, would be enough to occupy all his time. St. Paul congratulated himself that the grace of God abounded through his lies; and he thought nobody had any right to call him a sinner on account of his lies. This example of the great founder of Christianity has been followed by the clergy from his day to the present time, and every little whipper-snapper of

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a preacher seems to think he is making the grace of God to abound by lying about infidels. Lying comes easy and natural to him, but whether the grace of God abounds in consequence of it is problematical; the grace of God cannot be a very desirable thing to have if it is promoted by such means.

What a blessing it would be if the grace of God would only make ministers truthful, honest, and chaste; if it would so fill their hearts as to crowd the Devil out of them; but, unfortunately, such is not the case. To a worldly man it would seem that as soon as a person gets the grace of God in him he begins to act like the devil; and this leads one to suspect that either God and the Devil are acting in co-partnership, or that the Christians have, by mistake, substituted one for the other. The co-partnership would seem to be the most probable, otherwise why should God tell us that we might serve the Devil all our lives, and then, by believing and being baptised, make ourselves acceptable to God, who would give the saints a special holiday in heaven in honor of our arrival in that blessed mansion in the sky? Jesus tells us that there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

But, seriously, why don't these ministers of grace try to find out something about Infidelity? Why don't theological institutes teach something of the scientific discoveries of the last two hundred years? Why don't Christians study geography, geology, astronomy, physiology, and all the modern sciences, and thoughtfully compare all they find in them with the Bible and the teachings of the old dogmatists of the dark ages of the world? Why don't they read what the Infidels have to say for themselves, and the reasons they have to give for the faith that is not in them? But no; they are afraid to do anything of that sort. They confess that they are afraid it may "weaken their faith" (and bless their souls, so it will), and they have been taught that their faith is to be kept as much more precious than the truth, and shut their eyes to all the evidences of it, as the ostrich hides his head in the sand so that he may not be convinced that the hunter is after him.

The greatest sin a Christian can commit—in the estimation of the priests—is to examine candidly the grounds of his faith, with a conscientious desire to know the truth. The saddest thing that can be said of human nature is, that so many people do not see the absurdity of priestly imposition.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

(Concluded from page 293.)

THE "design argument" fails also when we examine it in the light of reason. The fundamental axiom of Theism is that the universe is finite. If this be so, the existence of God cannot be established. For the universe is finite, and from a finite we cannot deduce an "Infinite." If God exists, why did he create the universe? Why did the unchangeable God change his mind and become a "creator" six thousand years ago? If the existence of the universe was necessary, why was it created so recently? If it was unnecessary, why was it created at all? The creation of the universe either added to goodness or it did not. If it added to goodness, then God could not be all-good before he created it. If it did not add to goodness, then God could not be all-wise in creating that which did not add to goodness. The very manner in which the "design argument" is often stated clearly shows its fallacy. It is said that God "adapts means to an end." But this is a sign of weakness, not of power. Why do we use means to an end? The answer is, Because we cannot accomplish the end without the means. If we could, we would not be troubled with them. Will any Theist say this of God? If God be all-powerful, he could have realised his ends without the means. If this be so, where was the wisdom in employing them?

The metaphysical arguments in favor of Theism are almost as various as the minds of theologians. This fact alone is a sufficient reason for doubting their validity. It is argued that the universe is composed of parts; and as "composition is limitation," therefore the universe is limited in extent. It is further maintained that, if the universe be finite in extent, it must also be finite in duration, and therefore must have had a beginning, and, consequently, a "Creator." This argument, under the garb of logical precision, does nothing more than fill the ears with words for which the mind has no corresponding ideas. It proceeds upon the assumption that a finite mind can know the infinite. It also assumes that the mind can form an idea of infinite duration. The infinite, if it exist, cannot be an object of thought. A fundamental law of all thought is distinction. Whatever we think of we distinguish from ourselves. If this be true, the "Infinite" is beyond the sphere of human cognition. For, if we distinguish the "Infinite," we limit it, and it consequently ceases to exist.

The creation of the universe is unthinkable. Something originating out of nothing is beyond our grasping-power. If the universe was created out of something, then that something must have been material, else it could not give rise to a material existence like the universe. How could a *spiritual* God create a *material* universe? The more closely Theism is examined, the more difficult becomes its defence. Theism obliges us to believe that a deity existed everywhere before he created anywhere; that this deity eternally knew all things, which things only began to exist recently; that he occupied all space, and yet found room for the universe when he created it; that, being omnipotent, he can do all things, and that, being all-good, he can do no evil; that, being an intelligent existence, he possesses judgment, and that, being eternally all-wise, he does not require that faculty; that, being infinitely merciful, God must always forgive; and that, being infinitely just, he will always punish, and never forgive.

In conclusion, a philosophy the teachings of which this is a sample ought to be dismissed from men's minds as a rational solution of the material cosmos. The Atheist starts from the undeniable fact that the universe is. He believes that it is eternal in substance, varying in mode. He seeks to discover the laws of that nature of which he is a part. By investigating natural phenomena he knows that he will gain knowledge, the application of which to the affairs of life will make brighter, happier, and nobler men than all the inane speculations of theology, from St. Paul to Cardinal Newman, have succeeded in doing. Theism is chargeable with having darkened men's minds with the monstrous error that everything happens for the best. No statement could be more untrue or more dangerous. If God exists, the present condition of the world must be in accordance with his will; for, if he desired to alter it, nothing could withstand his omnipotence. It follows from this that every reformer who endeavors to change the unfair conditions of life is doing so in opposition to the will of the alleged deity. Every man who desires to clear the world of pain, misery, and crime gives the lie to the Theistic assertion that all things happen for the best. Though Atheism does not teach men to look beyond the skies for the abode of their future happiness, it takes their heaven from the clouds and places it in their midst, and says unto them: "The time to be happy is now, the place to be happy is here." Not believing in God, what has the Atheist to fear at death? Instead of making men fear death, Atheism gives men a courage that even annihilation cannot rob them of. Nothing is surer than that all human kind are visited by death. The only manly course, then, is to submit to the inevitable. Far better at death to be resolved into the various chemical elements of which we are composed, and to mingle with the rippling waters, the tinted flowers, and the golden sunshine, than to twang a harp in praise of a being who has created a hell for the vast majority of our brothers.

P. SHAUGHNESSY.

This is philosophy: to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary for the last.—*W. S. Landor.*

Physics and metaphysics are the natural enemies of religion, and therefore she is the enemy of those sciences, always trying to suppress them, as they are ever trying to undermine her. It is ridiculous to talk of peace and concord between them; it is a *bellum ad internecionem*. Religions are children of ignorance, and do not long survive their mother.—*Schopenhauer.*

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BIBLE FICTIONS.

II.—Abraham and Abimelech.

In Genesis xx. we have a story of Abraham denying his wife. According to his account, that patriarch came to live in Gerar, where Abimelech was king, and, fearing that men might slay him in order to take his beloved Sarah, he asked that lady to call him her brother, and he himself spoke of her as his sister. The result was that Abimelech, believing Sarah to be an unmarried woman, sent and had her brought into his house. Abraham's God, however, watched over her, and warned Abimelech that night in a dream that the woman he had taken was another man's wife, and commanded him to restore her to her husband. Fortunately for Abimelech, though the lovely Sarah was sleeping under his roof, he had not come near her, so no harm was done. In the morning the king sent for Abraham, and reproved him for his lying and deceit, whereupon the latter, to justify his conduct, said that Sarah was his half-sister. Abimelech then, after restoring the wife, presented Abraham with sheep, oxen, men-servants, maid-servants, and a thousand pieces of silver.

Now, this occurrence is stated to have taken place after "the Lord" had promised a son to Abraham, on which occasion Sarah was ninety years of age (Genesis xvii. 17). Yet the writer of this veracious history represents this woman of ninety as so attractive in appearance that men who saw her were likely to be ensnared by her beauty, and he actually makes a king place her in his harem.

But we have not yet got to the end of the story. After receiving Abimelech's presents, Abraham, it is said, "prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maid-servants, and they bare children" (xx. 17). From this we are to understand that up to that time all the women-folk of Abimelech's household had been barren, and that Abraham, in gratitude for the return of his wife and the king's substantial gifts, prayed for the removal of this barrenness. The next verse, however, damns the whole story. Abraham prayed for the women of Abimelech's household, we are told, because "the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech *because of Sarah, Abraham's wife*" (xx. 18). Now, Sarah was only in Abimelech's house for one night, and was restored to her husband the next morning. Yet in these few hours all the women of Abimelech's house are represented as having become barren. It would seem that the writer of this narrative thought that women were in the habit of giving birth to children every hour, and that Sarah's coming into the house caused these interesting labors to cease. The inspired writer does not appear to have had the sense of a child. The writer also, it would seem, saw no injustice in punishing the females of Abimelech's house for what happened through Abraham's own falsehood.

The whole story, then, amounts to this: That in a country and climate where women reach maturity at an early age, and appear old and faded at middle age, the King of Gerar, who, if he desired another wife, had only to choose from amongst the most comely young women in his kingdom, was fascinated by the charms of a wrinkled old woman of ninety, and so sent and took her away from her so-called brother. The story was probably invented in order to show that the Jewish God protected Abraham in all his acts, however foolish or insane.

The conduct of Abraham in this affair does not, however, come out well. Both he and his wife knew perfectly well for what purpose Sarah was wanted; yet he allowed her to be conducted to Abimelech's house without speaking a single word to prevent what seemed certain dishonor. Sarah, too, does not appear to have been much concerned. She could not know that the king would keep aloof from her, or that he should be warned concerning her in a dream. She herself gave him no intimation that she was another man's wife. The author of the story evidently gave no thought to these matters. To him all was well that ended well.

Shortly after this occurrence Sarah gave birth to a son, and the day upon which the child was weaned was celebrated by a feast. Just after this feast, we are told, Abimelech came to Abraham to make a covenant with him. "And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech *and Phicol, the captain of his host*, spake unto Abraham saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: now, therefore, swear unto me by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me . . . . . but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee. . . . . And Abraham said, I will swear . . . . . and they two made a covenant" (Genesis xxi. 22–27). Thus, instead of Abraham, who was a stranger in a strange land (inhabited by a fierce and warlike people), being in need of the protection of Abimelech, the writer represents the latter as believing that his welfare and prosperity were dependent upon his being on friendly terms with Abraham.

Time went on, and Abraham's son Isaac grew to manhood. When forty years of age, Isaac became the husband of Rebekah, and when he reached sixty his two sons, Esau and Jacob, were born (Genesis xxv. 20–26). In process of time these sons also grew to manhood, and shortly after the affair of the birth-right an event happened which is thus recorded: "And there was a famine in the land . . . . . and Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, unto Gerar. . . . . And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: and the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister; for he feared to say 'My wife,' lest, he said, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah: because she was fair to look upon" (Genesis xxvi. 1–7).

In this case Abimelech did not take Rebekah into his house, as he discovered in time that she was Isaac's wife. But he sent for her husband, and rebuked him in the same way as he did Abraham some ninety years before. Rebekah at this time had been a wife for half a century or more, and must have reached the allotted age of three-score and ten. There was, therefore, no occasion for fear that men who saw her might fall in love with her. But, as must be obvious to all, this story was suggested to the writer by that of Abraham's denial of his wife in the same place. The writer varies the narrative a little, that is all.

Thus, if we believe the inspired writers, Abraham, when at Gerar, called his ninety-years-old wife his sister because he feared her beauty might endanger his life. Nearly a century later his son Isaac visited the same place and did the same thing. Both were reproved for their falsehood by the same king, Abimelech, who thus enjoyed an extraordinarily long reign. Of course, Christian commentators and apologists tell us that there were two Abimelechs, one probably the son or grandson of the other. This, however, according to the Bible narrative, was not the case. The author of the history of Isaac copied not only the story of Abraham's denial of his wife, but also that of Abimelech making a covenant with that patriarch.

Says this veracious writer: "Then Abimelech went to him [*i.e.*, Isaac] from Gerar, and Ahuzzath his friend, *and Phicol, the captain of his host*. . . . . And they said, We saw plainly that the Lord was with thee. . . . . Let there be now an oath betwixt us. . . . . and let us make a covenant with thee; that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good. . . . . And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another" (Genesis xxvi. 26–31).

There cannot be the smallest doubt that this event in the "history" of Isaac was taken from that already noticed in the life of Abraham, or *vice versa*. In both accounts Abimelech, king of Gerar, comes of his own accord to make a covenant. His reason for doing so is the same in both cases—"God is with thee in all that thou doest," "We saw plainly that the Lord was with thee." Abimelech is on both occasions *accompanied by the same man*—Phicol, the captain of his army. That there was nearly a century between the time of Abimelech's covenant with Abraham and that of his league with Isaac did not apparently occur to the writer of the second story, or, if it did, the fact did not trouble him. People were not critical in those days; they readily believed anything—as many Christians do now. In this narrative, as in that relating to Jacob, it will, I think, be admitted, we have had to do, not with history, but fable.

Veritas.

Tommy—"Paw, is worms worth more than sparrows?" Paw—"I guess not. Why?" Tommy—"Then what makes the Sunday-school teacher tell us that man was worth more than a hundred sparrows, and the preacher tell us that we was nothing but worms?"

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VANINI IN ENGLAND.

THOUGH decidedly inferior to Giordano Bruno, Giulio Cesare Vanini resembles that great hero and martyr in representing the spirit of revolt against Christian theology, in the wandering life he led, and in his tragic martyrdom. Their lives and deaths alike display the attitude of the Church to Freethought. Born at Taurisano, South-Eastern Italy, in 1585, he attended the University of Naples, and took a doctor's degree in 1606. Philosophy and the physical sciences were his favorite studies, and he acknowledged as his masters Baconthorpe and Pomponazzi, probably coming under the influence of these philosophers at Padua, where he graduated in theology. He became a Carmelite friar, but, like Bruno, soon outgrew the cloister, and entered on a wandering life, visiting Switzerland, France, Holland, and Germany. Father Garasse* declared Vanini set out to convert the world to Atheism. But this is pure nonsense. He returned to Italy in 1611, but the Inquisition was on his track, and he took refuge at Venice, whence he came to England with a friend and an introduction from our Ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton, to Archbishop Abbot, as two Carmelite friars, whom, he understood, wished to be Protestants.

The visit of Vanini to England, mentioned in Vanini's works, was in 1878 elucidated by Signor Raffaele Palumbo† from State papers in our Record Office. Mr. Richard Copley Christie, whose work on *Etienne Dolet, the Martyr of the Renaissance*, is the standard biography of that great Freethinker, in the current number of the *English Historical Review* gives a fuller account of Vanini's English visit, from the correspondence between Sir Dudley Carleton and John Chamberlain, found in the *Court and Times of James I.*, and the correspondence of Archbishop Abbot.‡ It appears that Vanini and his friend were induced to publicly abjure Catholicism, and they were received into the Reformed Italian Church in the chapels of Mercers' Hall on July 5, 1612. The proceedings made some stir, and we may be sure were very distasteful to the authorities at Rome. Their movements were henceforth carefully watched. Vanini at first was located at Lambeth Palace, while his friend, Giovanni Maria de Franchis, was sent to York. Like Bruno, who visited England twenty-eight years previously, Vanini visited Oxford. Mr. Christie surmises that, had he obtained a benefice instead of perishing at the stake at Toulouse "he might have lived and died a member of the Church of England"! But he soon outgrew his welcome. The narrow-minded Archbishop discovered that Vanini read Aretin and Macchiavelli, and was considerably scandalised thereby. Both considered themselves deceived. Vanini discovered that the freedom he expected was not to be had in the Church of England. It was in the very year of his visit that Bartholomew Legate was burnt at Smithfield, and Edward Wightman at Lichfield, for anti-Trinitarianism. Vanini was kept an entire dependent, in very straitened circumstances. Small wonder if he desired to return, and accepted the offer of Catholics to obtain his pardon from Rome; and it was said of him, "The dog has returned to his vomit." The Archbishop not only withdrew his protection, but proceeded to deal with him after the methods of the English Inquisition, the Court of High Commission, in which Abbot presided, *ex officio*.

He was imprisoned in the Gatehouse at Lambeth for a fortnight, and then brought before the Ecclesiastical Commission. There he was censured, excommunicated, and sentenced to imprisonment during the King's pleasure; and the help of the temporal sword was implored "that he might be banished to the Bermudas, there to dig for his living." Fortunately for Vanini, or perhaps unfortunately, for the Bermudas might have been better than the flames at Toulouse, he made his escape, probably through the good offices of Morari, chaplain to the Venice Ambassador.

Mr. Christie says: "He was certainly disappointed with the result of his visit to England, but in neither of his printed works is there an unfriendly word relating to this country, or to those with whom he came in contact here. On the few occasions that he mentions England in his writings it is always with goodwill, and sometimes with admiration. . . . Even when he speaks of his imprisonment he utters no word of complaint." Vanini went from England to France, where he published the works which drew attention to his heresy, and led to his martyrdom at Toulouse in his thirty-fourth year.

J. M. W.

(To be concluded.)

* In *La Doctrine Curieuse*, 1623.

† *Giulio Cesare Vanini e i suoi Tempi*. Napoli, 1878. My copy is inscribed: "To Charles Bradlaugh, with the author's kind regards."

‡ Nineteen letters in the Record Office refer to Vanini's visit, of which Signor Palumbo only refers to ten.

WHERE IS GOD?

WHEN early man, impelled by fate,
Pursued his kind with savage hate,
Made slaves of some, and others ate,
Where wert thou, O God?

When devastating robber bands
Invaded peaceful, fruitful lands,
And steeped in blood their ruthless hands,
Where wert thou, O God?

When priests and kings and other knaves
Made human minds and bodies slaves,
And gloated o'er their victims' graves,
Where wert thou, O God?

When humbugs quote from lying books
By Moses and by other "crooks,"
And trade on fools' belief in spooks,
Where art thou, O God?

When pious preachers loudly yell
Of endless fires and tortures fell,
And frighten feeble folk with hell,
Where art thou, O God?

When British bullies send their might
To foreign lands to steal and fight,
And make their strength their only right,
Where art thou, O God?

When starving children vainly cry
Beneath a helpless mother's eye;
When foodless sparrows fall and die,
Where art thou, O God?

Though smiling fields and flow'rs are bright,
And sunlit eyes express delight,
If one poor wretch has lost his sight,
Where art thou, O God?

Though hills and dales are decked in spring,
And sighing woods prepare to sing,
If pain has reached one living thing,
Where art thou, O God?

When feathered songsters eat their fill
And voice their joy with silv'ry trill,
We ask, in name of those they kill,
Where art thou, O God?

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Obituary.

IT is my painful duty to record the death of an old Bilston Freethinker, Charles Prince, who died on May 8, and was interred in Bilston Cemetery on May 11, in his 68th year. Knowing some days before of his certain death, he calmly awaited its arrival. Asked if he was afraid to die, he smilingly answered: "No, I have lived a man." The Secular Burial Service was well read by Mr. A. Holland. It caused two gentlemen to ask me for information about a party owning such a Service.—S. WALKER.

IT is with deep sorrow that I record the death on Wednesday, the 8th inst., of my little son, Harold Ingersoll, at the age of one year and four months. The funeral, which took place on Saturday last, was attended, at my request, by Mr. C. Cohen, who delivered at the graveside an address remarkable for its quiet and unaffected eloquence.—W. PAYNE (Manchester).

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ACID DROPS.

Dr. R. F. Horton is one of the big wigs of Nonconformity in London. He preaches at Hampstead to what we understand is a well-to-do congregation; and of course he preaches without any liability to correction. In the course of his sermon on Sunday, May 5, he delivered himself as follows: "The love of money is the cause of Atheism. Atheism has never been accepted as a creed except in great wealthy societies, where men have allowed the love of money to be the rule of life—accepting it as a motive, praising it as a virtue. It is the love of money in England to-day which feeds all the unbelief."

Dr. Horton deserves a medal for this discovery. We see it all now. Wright and Hobbs and Jabez Balfour, and that sort of people, are Atheists. They would have been members of the National Secular Society, only they joined the Church by mistake. On the other hand, the poor men who labor at Freethought propaganda are really Christians, only they have somehow got on the wrong label. We thank Dr. Horton for this luminous explanation. Yes, it is all clear now.

God is no respecter of persons, and Providence is no respecter of buildings. The beautiful chapel attached to All Hallowes College, near Dublin, has just been completely destroyed by fire. The city fire brigade fought against the flames, but Providence was too many for them. The chapel's days were numbered, and it had to go. In future it would save fire brigades some trouble if Providence would furnish a list of places it is absolutely bent on destroying.

"General" Booth appeared at the annual May meeting of the Salvation Army and held forth on his Social Scheme, which he grandiloquently called "the most gigantic success of any voluntary beneficent scheme that had ever been propounded to the British public." There was no more likelihood of his Social Scheme stopping than there was of the Bank of England. Still, we guess the Bank of England won't stop first.

The great boss and the little bosses of the Salvation Army don't explain why they are so persistently accused of "sweating." Booth says it is the fundamental principle of his Social Scheme that those it is designed to benefit should earn the larger part of the cost of their own regeneration. But it is alleged that the Army often makes an unfair profit out of the labor of men in its Shelters; that they are kept working long hours for common food, poor accommodation, and the veriest trifle of pocket money. This allegation, of course, may be perfectly untrue; but, considering the frequency with which it is made, it deserves some other answer than absolute silence.

Robert Westguard, a painter, gives, in *London* for May 9, his experience at Booth's Farm Colony. He says: "I was there sixteen weeks, and worked for a fortnight for no wages at all. Then I received a grant of 1s. 6d. per week; two weeks after that I had my grant raised to 2s. per week; six weeks after this my grant was raised again to 2s. 6d. per week, and of this sum I received one-third in cash weekly, the other being placed to my account. I think this proves that I am not a lazy man. If I had worked for a man outside, I should have earned about £20; but at Hadleigh Colony I only earned £1 10s., and out of that I had to pay 1d. weekly out of every shilling I earned; for washing and for soap ½d. per week, whether I got the soap or not, and for the sixteen weeks I was there I only received 2½d. worth of soap, and 1½d. worth of blacking, although I was stopped a ½d. each week for the sixteen weeks."

All this time the Guardians of Camberwell were paying Booth 5s. a week for him. Thus Booth had £4 down, out of which he paid less than £1 10s., getting for it £20 worth of work. William Booth is as much entitled to the designation, Napoleon of Finance, as Jabez Balfour.

This farm colonist also complains that he had to sleep in a dirty bed, and was compelled to leave through vermin. And this is the scheme that was to redeem darkest England. It looks more like a contrivance to further exploit the workers for the benefit of Booth.

The dangers of Spiritualistic *séances* to weak-minded people have been shown by a sad occurrence at Gubbio, in Italy. A lady named Manolava, the wife of a professor in a public school in the town, was persuaded that she could, by attending a *séance*, communicate with the spirit of her deceased son. The "medium" made certain preparations, and when the moment came for the spirit to appear flames and sulphurous fumes were seen issuing from a black cabinet. The lady felt so persuaded that her son was suffering for his sins in the lower regions that she became stark, staring mad, and it is thought she will not recover. The medium is to be prosecuted.—*Daily News* (May 10).

The Hindoos of Poona have petitioned the Government against the prohibition of music in the streets of that city after certain hours. Noticing the immunity of the Salvation Army, they say that theirs is religious music, and ordinary rules should not apply to them.

Mrs. Besant, like Mr. Judge, has a Mahatma of her own, called "Master Morya." A gentleman writes to the *Westminster Gazette* from Dublin, under the appropriate signature of "Fudge," stating that "Morya" is an Irish word, meaning something like "Tell that to the marines."

The *Rangoon Times* appears to be a very liberal paper. It inserts freethinking articles on such subjects as Christianity in Japan, the Revolt of Christian Karens in Burmah, Religious Revivals, Religious Lunacy, etc., and it even copies from our paper—it says "from a London weekly"—some lines on Mrs. Besant's transformations, entitled "Transmigration Up to Date."

One writer in the *Rangoon Times* calls attention to the fact that the pastor of one church could get no congregation because the curate's wife organised a picnic to a pagoda to witness the heathen festivities of a Burmese feast.

Another writer, commenting on this, says: "Why, Mr. Editor, on a certain Friday in Advent, the very Venerable Archdeacon Chard himself was among the audience at the Assembly Rooms to witness the high kicking and listen to the comic song-singing of the Snow White Minstrels. This, doubtless, was the lady's precedent."

Yet another writer in the *Rangoon Times* declares "that the Church of England clergy will not sit at the same table with Eurasians. The natives they cherish; they are our 'brothers.' It is the poor *Cousins* whom they will not see as fellow men. Why not? Because they themselves would lose caste with the high and mighty few who, under no circumstances whatever, would associate with Eurasians though these few have, as regards their men, no objection to keeping up the supply of that much-abused community."

The Rev. H. T. Biscoe, rector of Great Greenford, Middlesex, has been charged at the Brentford Police-court with having appropriated to his own use £493, being charity money of which he was trustee. The money was left by Mr. S. Bennett, of Ealing, in 1856, and invested in consols, the dividends of which were to be distributed every Christmas among twelve poor families. It is alleged that Parson Biscoe, who became sole trustee in 1892, regarded himself as twelve poor families rolled into one, and sold the stock and paid the proceeds into his own bank account, which is now overdrawn. Prisoner was undefended, but the case was adjourned, as the prosecutor on behalf of the Treasury stated that other charges might be preferred. The case will be tried at the June Sessions at the Central Criminal Court.

The Rev. Dr. A. G. McAuley, Presbyterian pastor at Philadelphia for forty-one years, has been proved to have been living a double life, visiting resorts of an unsavory character in disguise.

At the Liverpool Assizes William Browne, described as a Baptist minister, was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for bigamy. Browne pleaded guilty to two charges. In one case prisoner married a Miss Marchant at Acton, on the representation that he was a clergyman of the Church of England. She had £500, with which they went to New York, where prisoner abandoned her, taking the bulk of the money. She had since become insane in consequence.

The Rev. H. G. B. Lemoine has been committed to prison, in default of bail, on a charge of obtaining fish and game under false pretences from dealers at Norwich.

The girl Emma Hall, who belonged to Birmingham, and disappeared in company with the Rev. Jonathan Bell of the Blackheath district, Worcestershire, has come to a mysterious death, and the persons arrested in connection therewith have a number of letters signed "Jon."

The Rockford court has given judgment against Christ Schweinfurth in favor of G. W. Coudrey, who pursued the prophet and imitator of Jesus for alienation of his wife's affections. No defence was made, the reason given being, "Christians should not defend the attacks of men, but should go like the lamb to the slaughter." This, without doubt, will be followed by a long term of imprisonment, and the probable closing of the Rockford religious harem forever.

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Converting the Jews appears to be a very good line of business. We believe there are several Societies on the job. One of them held its annual meeting on Monday evening. Its name is the Barbican Mission to the Jews, and its secretary is Mr. Christlieb T. Lipshytz. Its income was reported to have increased, and there was much blowing of trumpets by Archdeacon Sinclair, who presided, and who made the funny observation that "Jews already went two-thirds of the way with Christians." But what we do not see anything about in the report is the number of converts. The money is spent, the secretary is satisfied, the trumpets are blown, but where are the converted Jews?

The Church claims that its opposition to divorce is all on account of its *protégés*, the women. But, despite the difficulty of having to prove cruelty as well as adultery, the majority of cases for divorce are brought by women; and in America, where divorce is easier, 65·8 per cent. of all the divorces in the United States during twenty years were asked for by women who found their husbands unendurable. Thus women's interests appear to lie in the direction of easier, freer divorce. If the Church really holds otherwise, let the women themselves have a voice in the matter.

The Rev. Mr. Matley, a Brooklyn Baptist, is reported as asking: "Did you ever read in the Bible of a woman being in heaven?" Certainly the angels were all males. But Mr. Matley must have forgotten Rev. xii. 1: "There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun." She must have been a mighty woman, and warmly clad. Yet we grant that, according to the account, the appearance of this solitary big woman was a great wonder.

Mr. Matley went on to say: "I don't believe there is a woman there now, or ever shall be. They will go back into their original state, whence they were taken by the Creator. When Christ said that there were no marriages in heaven, but that all should be as the angels, I believe he meant that there were no such creatures as women in that world of blessedness and song. Women are made for the glory of man, and man for the glory of God." Mr. Matley seems to suppose that women will all become spare ribs again. His heaven crowded with male murderers and no women must be a delightful place.

An Australian poet, who has been pondering the proceedings of Providence, bursts out as under:—

> God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders none can tell;
> Sometimes he makes a silent move,
> Sometimes he raises hell.

The Lord has been again riding on a storm in South Dakota, with the result of destroying three schools, at each of which a number of children were killed and injured. Two of the children, just as they left the school-house, were caught by the wind and dashed with such violence against a wire fence that they were killed on the spot. Fifty-two persons are now known to have been killed in Iowa alone, and the loss of life is estimated by some to be far greater.

Thirteen hundred Japanese were swept off by the outbreak of cholera at the Pescadores Islands. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

The Puritans have long quoted against fashionable ladies the text in that dirty old prophet, Ezekiel, xiii. 18: "Thus saith the Lord, woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes." Ladies, however, do not sew their own sleeves, and they are as wide as ever. They are not new, however, and in 1639 the authorities of the town of Dedham, Massachusetts, enacted that no one should wear sleeves more than half an ell in the widest part.

The Rev. Father Stick, of Pana, Illinois, is reported as saying: "There are members of my congregation who allow their daughters to go to high-toned balls and dance in full dress—no dress at all. Only indecent Roman Catholics, Protestants, and heretics go to such places. . . . . I wish from the bottom of my heart that the girls who attend these places may be ruined. I hope that every boy and man who attends them will become diseased and rot, and that the generation will soon be exterminated." Who says the pulpit has lost its vigor, the old serpent its venom?

A Fort Worth telegram says that Moody's congregation were singing "All hail the power of Jesu's name!" when the roof crashed down upon them. They had prayed for rain, and were rejoicing over its coming. Only one woman is dead so far as the result of the accident, but a large number are seriously injured.

Mr. Symes wants to know why the Jews do not unite with Freethinkers in the work of exposing Christian superstition. He says: "The Jews do not need to be told that they never got the least justice from Christians so long as Christians could refuse it. No, nor will their brethren in Russia and other lands. It is impossible for a Christian to grant justice to an opponent. It must be wrung out of him. And the Jews in free countries are very remiss in their duty not to help to break up the horrible superstition which persecutes their race wherever that is possible. The only cure for persecution is the exposure of religion and the destruction of its social and political power. True, many Jews are as superstitious as their neighbors; and thousands who are as free from superstition as I am keep up the form of religion and fall in with the old senseless practices, just as if they believed in them. How is it enlightened Jews fail to see that by keeping up their old superstitions they encourage Christians to continue theirs? If they properly respected their own race, they would openly renounce all superstition, make war upon the monster that persecutes and insults them, and help to destroy all persecution by destroying the root of it—religion."

In *Light* Mr. Arthur Lillie really does throw light on the proceedings of the Luciferans of France by showing that it represents a remnant of Manicheism. The parody of Catholic rites he compares to the "Feast of Fools," which in the old days was carried on even with episcopal sanction.

Count Paul von Hoensbronck, the Prussian Jesuit, who has been converted to Lutheranism, writes in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, of Berlin, to show that Catholicism is unable to stem the tide against Socialism and Atheistic Liberalism. He points to Belgium, "the land of cloister and the clergy," as an instance that where Catholicism has had most play there the forces of social revolution are also most rampant.

Colonel Olcott, in the current *Theosophist*, unequivocally gives up, not only the infallibility, but the credibility, of "H. P. B." He says that it is a "monstrous pretence" to say that she was "the transmitter of only genuine messages from the Masters." On the contrary, she was "as human and fallible as either one of us." Of course, he goes on to say, "it does not follow that H. P. B. consciously falsified." Such a statement might involve Colonel Olcott himself in a graver charge than that of credulity. He falls back on "evil influences" and "hypnotic science." For Theosophists to write like this of H. P. B. is like Christians admitting the charge of the Jews, that Jesus had a devil.

An evangelist was at Hucknall Torkard on a mission. He came from London. Speaking at an open-air meeting, he said he had been on the road to heaven for twenty years. A voice was heard to say: "Good God! and only got as far as Hucknall!"

According to the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* (May 11), the mind of the Free Presbytery of Inverness is sorely exercised by a relapse into Paganism which is apparent within their bounds. Last Sunday—the first Sunday of May—three thousand persons visited a well on Culloden field, threw a coin into the water, took a drink, and then hung a bit of rag to a tree!

The writer of "Chit Chat," in the same paper, says: "A London correspondent tells me that a Scotch divine, who is up for the 'May meetings,' having got tired of what Macaulay named the 'bray' of Exeter Hall, turned into the Empire Theatre one night about half-past ten, and, whilst walking in the swell promenade, stumbled against his ruling elder. After the first shock of embarrassment, the minister said: 'It's no' for the sake o' the entertainment I've come, or to look at the women, but just to see what this Chant business really means.' 'That's exactly my case,' replied the elder. They adjourned to Gatti's, and were mutually sympathetic on the way."

Sabbath desecration has extended as far north as the Granite City, and the Aberdeen *Evening Gazette* gives a cut representing the astonishment of the Links overseer at an enthusiastic golfer daring to play on Sunday.

Joseph Canning, who murdered Jane Youall in Bermondsey, in his statement made in the dock said: "God is good and merciful, and perhaps I will meet her in the next world, and may the Lord in heaven have mercy on her soul."

The blackguard who uttered that filthy libel on the London Hall of Science, for which the printer and publisher have had to pay damages and costs amounting to £250—of which *he* has not paid a single *halfpenny*—is circulating a leaflet which states that he has "heard and read much of Atheistic boulasat, and their challenges to Almighty God to strike them dead in a given time." This, of course, is another lie. The fellow has never read any such "challenges" in his life. It is really not a case of bad memory; the fellow is simply an unscrupulous liar.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 19, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C.: 7.30, "Riddles of the Sphinx."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—May 19, Camberwell; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. Dempster (Glasgow).—The man is an inveterate and reckless liar. It is utterly untrue that he asked Mr. Foote what was the origin of life, and that Mr. Foote said it probably came from some other planet. Mr. Foote has always declared that this idea, which was mooted by a well-known scientist, only puts the problem a step further back.

A. Adams (Hull).—Lecture notices should be addressed to the editor.

Albert Broadbent, 9 Peter-street, Manchester, will send our readers vegetarian recipes and literature upon application.

T. G. (Carlisle).—Mr. Forder will attend to your letter. It is annoying, and often disgusting, to see how certain newsagents try to damn the circulation of the *Freethinker*. At one time they objected to our illustrations. We have not printed any for several months, yet they still do us every possible injury. It is nonsense to say they cannot obtain it. What they mean is that they won't supply it. Customers who are treated in this way should change their newsagents. What right has a paltry little ignorant tradesman to set up as a censor of the press? If he does so, he should (if possible) be taught a salutary lesson, in the only way that reaches his feelings.

A. J. Marriott.—Duly to hand. We note your instruction, and thank you for your expression of confidence.

J. F.—We have not printed a list of applications for shares. It would have taken too much of our space. We saw your name in the secretary's list, and were glad to observe it there. Mr. Foote will write to you shortly.

F. Jones.—Pleased to learn that you were so delighted with Mr. Putnam's lecture at Camberwell, and that you thought it worth double the cost of your journey of seventy miles to hear him. We note your reference to a certain enterprise. It is easy to do nothing successfully.

T. E. M.—Canon Wilberforce's *Trinity of Evil* is not a new book. We criticised it on its first appearance, several years ago. It is hardly worth a second criticism.

E. T. B.—Thanks for your offer to take up five shares if the effort is successful.

Dublin friends, or others who happen to be visiting that city, can obtain the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature at Mrs. Kavanagh's, 1 Cottage-place, Belvedere-avenue, North Circular-road.

P. Kavanagh.—Glad to hear from you again, and hope your prospects will soon improve. If all did their fair share, our movement would make more headway.

G. Dixon.—Kindly fill in an application form, which you will find in our advertisement columns, for the two shares you will take.

Recruit.—Thanks for cuttings. No one knows who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Assertions on this point are all guesswork. Egyptian records do not corroborate any part of the Exodus story. There is really no historical trace of the Jews, as a separate people, ever inhabiting any part of the Nile valley.

T. Clark.—There is no Branch near South Streatham. Certainly there should be one at Croydon. Mr. Foote will soon make an important announcement concerning the whole matter of propaganda. Thanks for your appreciation and good wishes. The verses shall appear.

H. Fleming would like to know if there are any Freethinkers in Barnstaple, North Devon; if so, will they communicate with him at 23 Alsen-road, Holloway, London, N.?

W. Payne.—All communications for the *Freethinker* should be sent to Mr. Foote, not to Mr. Forder. There is no charge for such insertions. We much regret to hear of your loss.

J. G. Bartram.—We do not see that the corrections amount to much. Still, we note what you say as to the Newcastle rumpus—namely, (1) that Mr. Cohen had not the larger meeting, but it was rapidly increasing by desertions from the other side; (2) that it was not the libeller who made the whip up, but his satellites, who pressed him to come.—Thanks for the leaflet. We have seen it before. The fellow has not a gleam of humor. He even lies with solemnity.

J. G. Dobson.—Your letter is melancholy reading. Glad to see, however, that you retain all your old interest in the movement. We note your promise to take two more shares on the same conditions as the South Shields Branch.

W. J. Heath.—We never saw or heard of the pamphlet you mention. Those who have read Mrs. Bonner's "Life" of her father, and the Hall of Science Libel case, will naturally disbelieve anything that W. R. Bradlaugh says about his dead brother. In any case, we are unable to say what it has to do with Robert Cooper's pamphlet on the Soul. Arguments are independent of personalities. They stand or fall on grounds of fact and reason.

A. French.—The article on "The Inimitable" in the *Secularist* was *not* written by James Thomson, but by another regular contributor, whose name cannot be mentioned without his consent. The writer is still living.

Papers Received.—Vegetarian Messenger—Liberty—Solidarity—Light—Progressive Thinker—Land and Labor—Freidenker—World's Advance Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Two Worlds—Rangoon Times—Homœopathic Review—Homœopathic World—Newcastle Daily Leader—Pearson's Weekly—Public Opinion—Church Monthly—St. George's Parish Magazine—Ironclad Age—Isle of Man Times—Liverpool Weekly Post——Twentieth Century—London—Echo—Secular Thought—Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Open Court.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

I am writing this on Wednesday morning, in a brief time snatched from other business; and in an hour or so I shall be off to Derby to debate with Mr. W. T. Lee.

The sudden hot weather, on the top of too much work and anxiety, has somewhat impaired my general elasticity of mind and body; and I take this as a warning that I had better be careful for a few days. I shall therefore leave what I have to say about the *history* of this Hall of Science affair until next week. There is really no desperate hurry, and I want to be perfectly accurate.

Mr. R. O. Smith's answer to my further query, whether he would extend the time of his offer to the end of May, reached me this morning. "I adhere," he says, "to the terms of my last letter published by you in the *Freethinker*." I think I know what Mr. Smith has in his mind, and I will deal with the situation accordingly.

Meanwhile I have to thank the few friends who have applied for fresh shares during the past week. Mr. S. Seal, who early sent me a cheque for thirty shares, writes that he will increase the number to one hundred if the full amount can be made up. Mr. George Anderson, who has been waiting to see what the party in general were prepared to do, writes that he is not inclined to assist unless there is a complete revolution in our policy at the Hall. "If the management," he says, "were in your own hands, you employing your assistants, I would be inclined to help, but under committee management I fear it is too cumbersome." With regard to this, I may say that it is my intention to take all power and responsibility—at least for a considerable time—or else to have nothing to do with the enterprise; and I intend to pursue this policy whether we settle down at the Hall of Science or have to go elsewhere.

I have received the following fresh subscriptions: J. Hayes, 1s.; Dundee Friend, per C. Watts, 10s.; J. Hume 2s. 6d.; J. Close, 2s. 6d.; T. E. M., 1s.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote is overwhelmed with other work, and is unable to write his usual article for this week's *Freethinker*. Fortunately there is a good supply of interesting matter from other pens.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (May 19) at the London Hall of Science, from which he has been absent for some time, except on the occasion of his taking the chair for Mr. Putnam. His subject will be "Riddles of the Sphinx." After the lecture Mr. Foote will have something to say of great importance to London Secularists.

Mr. Charles Watts has held another four nights' debate with Dr. Jamieson at Glasgow. We hear that the Christians became fewer at each meeting, which is a poor compliment to their champion, who seems to have more self-conceit than capacity. Mr. J. P. Gilmour sends us a long report of this debate, but it did not arrive until our arrangements for this week's *Freethinker* were completed. It will appear in our next issue. Mr. Watts lectures this evening (May 19) at Camberwell.

Mr. Touzeau Parris, who has for some time been absent from the platform through illness, lectured at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. There was an excellent audience for the time of the year, and Mr. Parris delivered a fine discourse, which was much applauded.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, our American visitor, lectured on Sunday evening at Camberwell. Mr. R. Forder presided, and there was a large attendance. Of course the lecturer had an enthusiastic reception. He was opposed by the Rev. C. L. Engstrom, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. Mr. Putnam lectures three times to-day (May 19) at Bradford, in the Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road. We hope there will be a strong rally of Leeds, Huddersfield, Halifax, and Bingley friends on this occasion.

The Rev. C. Lloyd Engstrom, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, was present at Mr. Putnam's lecture at the Hall of Science. He did not, however, offer any opposition; and he appears to have been under the impression that Mr. Foote "deprecated" discussion. Mr. Engstrom has just sent us a long letter in reply to Mr. Putnam. We are unable to find room for it this week, but it will appear in full in our next issue. Mr. Engstrom is going to reprint the letter in pamphlet form, and distribute it in places visited by leading Freethought lecturers. We are glad to hear it.

Our friends in London have prosecuted certain nasty Christians for an extremely nasty libel, and won, the defendants being fined £30 and costs. The latter will amount to over £250, it appears. Christians are extremely nasty and violent just now in England. Probably they have received a fresh assignment of Holy Ghost—the genuine, fiery, furious article. Just as the Catholics cover Luther and Co. with loads of their own filth, so do the Christians endeavor to cover Freethinkers with their garbage. My own experience tells me that nothing can beat a genuine Christian for nastiness and undiluted spite. I have the right to say that—a right arising from over eighteen years' experience—an experience that must have been bitter indeed if my own nature and employments had not made me more than oblivious to most of it. A man who is going to attack the popular superstition needs to be of a philosophic turn of mind, and of a capacity to enjoy life in spite of its awful drawbacks. We congratulate our friends on their victory.—*Liberator.*

We publish in another column the business Agenda of the National Secular Society's annual Conference, which takes place at Bristol on Whit-Sunday. A special item, which is not included, is the letter which Mr. S. P. Putnam will read from Colonel Ingersoll. This will be taken at some stage of the proceedings, where it will be most refreshing. A Conference gets jaded occasionally, and at such a moment a message from Ingersoll will be like an Atlantic breeze blowing in upon a crowded assembly.

Mr. Foote has put nothing upon the Agenda himself this year. Should he be re-elected as President, he will take the opportunity of having a straight talk on some matters of considerable interest to the movement, which have been occupying a good deal of his attention.

We hope the N.S.S. Branches will all do their best to be represented at this Conference. Mr. J. P. Gilmour is coming all the way from Glasgow to represent the premier Scottish Branch of our Society, and this should put the English Branches upon their mettle. Individual members will also be very welcome at the Conference. We should like to see two or three hundred, at least. They are just as much entitled as delegates to take part in the discussions. The difference between an individual member and a delegate comes in only on the question of voting. A delegate, of course, votes for all the members in his Branch.

Branches that positively cannot send delegates are at liberty to entrust their votes to any member of the Society in whom they have confidence. The President does not hold any proxies, but other persons are available. Mr. Charles Watts will attend the Conference. We understand, also, that Messrs. A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, and C. Cohen will be present. There is some doubt about Mr. Touzeau Parris. He has not yet fully recovered from a severe illness, and the sight of one of his eyes is still affected.

The Manchester Branch commences its open-air propaganda in Stevenson-square this afternoon at 3 o'clock, when Mr. C. Cohen will lecture on "Why are Men Religious?" The local Branch of the C.E.S. has recently occupied the Square on Sunday afternoons, and it is requested that as many of our friends as possible will make it convenient to attend. Mr. Cohen will lecture in the hall morning and evening.

The German Parliament has thrown out the Government Coercion Bill, one clause of which provided that any person who attacked "religion" should be liable to fine and imprisonment. "King-deluded Germany" has taught pious Emperor William a much-needed lesson. It will probably not make him less of a religious bigot, but it will show him the unwisdom of expecting the people's representatives to join him in a crusade against Freethought.

Dr. Martineau, replying to the congratulations from South Place on his ninetieth birthday, made the following very just observations upon orthodox religion: "The attempt to find infallible records in canonical books, and permanent standards of truth in ecclesiastical votes, has so hopelessly failed that honest persistence in it has become impossible to instructed persons; and, therefore, in all competent guides and teachers of men a continual sanction and profession of it is not simply an intellectual error, but a breach of veracity. And this tampering with sincerity on the part of instructors who know better than they choose to say, not only arrests the advance to higher truth, but eats, like a canker, into the morals of our time."

The *Freethought Magazine* for May gives a portrait of Mrs. Josephine K. Henry, a leading Freethinker and woman's advocate, who is known as the "woman Henry Clay of the South." Mrs. Henry is a granddaughter of John Kirby, of Leeds, who, with James Watson, became a salesman in the shop of Richard Carlile when the English Government tried to suppress the sale of Paine's *Age of Reason*.

The *Boston Investigator* for March 16, which only now reaches us, has a symposium on the Bible, to which Judge Waite, Lucy Colman, Rabbi Schindler, J. R. Charlesworth, E. J. Bowtell, J. H. Cook, and other writers, contribute.

The question of the mythical character of the Jewish patriarchs, which is being ably dealt with by "Veritas" in another column, is exciting much attention in Germany, where theologians feel themselves somewhat more free in dealing with the myths of the Old Testament than with those of the New. The recent work of Professor Stade, who questions all the early Jewish stories and doubts if ever the Jews were in Egypt, has been followed by the publication of a lecture to his students, by Professor Meinhold, on *The Origin of Israel's History of Religion*. He declares that, "In order to furnish an historical sketch of the beginning of Israel's religion and history, we must discard the age of the patriarchs altogether." That age merely represents "Ideal Israel."

Professor Meinhold says: "It is beyond belief that we can give a picture of the religious development of Israel in a period the documentary evidences for which are removed at least one thousand years from the events they profess to record. What would we say of an historian who would give a picture of Charlemagne on the basis of a document on that ruler written in our own age, and would know nothing of the contemporaneous sources? Still more out of place is it to base a history on a mosaic of contradictory sources such as we have in the records of the Patriarchs."

"Nobody among scientific scholars now-a-days ventures to assert that we have any literary remains from the period before Moses; and between Abraham and Moses, according to the statements of the Pentateuch, there is a chasm of 400 years, a period which, even for the most determined prominence given to oral tradition, does not suffice to awaken a spark of confidence in these reports."

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Professor Meinhold also argues, while the neighboring peoples in Babylonia, Syria, and Assyria, at this period, 2200 B.C., already exhibited a marked degree of culture, Canaan, "the bridge between Egypt and Babylonia," could not have been, with its many cities and settled population, open for a nomadic family or tribe, as is claimed in Patriarchal history.

Again, he argues that the names of the Patriarchs are not those of individuals, but collective terms for tribes. He says: "If we must, as is done in the case of Ishmael, the collective name for the different Arabic tribes, take 'Edom' collectively, why must we not do so in the case of his brother Jacob?"

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE AT BRISTOL.

JUNE 2, 1895.

AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.

   Notice of Motion by Finsbury Park Branch: "That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President for 1895-6."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.

   (*a*) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: Dr. T. R. Allinson, G. Anderson, D. Baker, N. B. Billany, J. E. Brumage, Prof. L. Büchner, M.D., W. W. Collins, R. Forder, S. Hartmann, Wm. Heaford, G. J. Holyoake, P. A. V. Le Lubez, A. B. Moss, T. Parris, S. M. Peacock, W. Pratt, J. H. Ridgway, V. Roger, J. Samson, Dr. E. Schlaeger, Robert Owen Smith, Mrs. T. Smith, J. Swaagmann, J. Symes, E. Truelove, J. Umpleby, Miss E. M. Vance, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler.

   (*b*) The following are nominated by the Executive for election: E. Bater (London); J. F. Dewar (Edinburgh); J. P. Gilmour (Glasgow); S. P. Putnam (America).
7. Election of Honorary Secretary.

   (*a*) Motion by Rochdale Branch: "That the office of Honorary Secretary be abolished."

   (*b*) Motion by Executive: "That Mr. Robert Forder be re-elected Honorary Secretary."
8. Election of Auditors.
9. Motion by Rochdale Branch *re* Presidency:—

   "That on and after Whit-Sunday, 1896, no member shall be eligible for re-election as President until three years have elapsed from his vacating such office, provided always that in the event of the office becoming vacant at any period between two Conferences the member chosen to fill that office for the remainder of the year shall be deemed eligible for re-election at the Conference next ensuing."
10. Motion by West London Branch:—

    "That no person be eligible as Vice-President who has not been a member for five years."
11. Motion by Rochdale Branch:—

    "That from this date no member shall be permitted to take part in and vote at the meetings of the Executive Council but the properly-appointed delegates from the Branches, the President, Treasurer, and Secretary alone excepted."
12. Motion by Rochdale Branch:—

    "That this Conference instructs the Secretary to issue monthly to the Branches an official document stating the numerical and financial position of the Society, full details of all resolutions carried by the Organisation and other Committees, a nominal roll of persons receiving grants from the Benevolent Fund, with the amount granted, and all other matters concerning the Society; such paper to be issued during the first week of each month."
13. Motion by Finsbury Branch:—

    "That no Vice-President shall henceforth hold any paid office in the Society."
14. Motion by Finsbury Park Branch:—

    "That an Organising Secretary be appointed by the Society, who shall devote his time to interviewing persons known to be in sympathy with Secular principles, with a view to securing their adhesion to the Society or their financial support, obtaining, as far as possible, the renewed support of lapsed members, and furthering the interests of the Society in any other manner the Executive may deem expedient."
15. Motion by Mr. C. Cohen:—

    "That properly-qualified speakers be sent by the Council of the N.S.S. into different districts for organising and lecturing purposes, and that a Committee be appointed by this Conference to draw up a scheme to that end, and submit the same to the Executive Council."
16. Motion by Islington Branch:—

    "That a Total Abstinence section be formed in connection with the Society."
17. Motion by Nottingham Branch:—

    "To add the following to the Society's 'Immediate Practical Objects':—(*a*) The promotion of the fullest inquiry into all matters affecting the well-being of Humanity, especially in regard to topics (*e.g.*, the Population Question) which it may commonly be the fashion to evade or suppress. (*b*) The encouragement of a more general interest in social and political problems."
18. Motion by Battersea Branch:—

    "That the N.S.S. shall engage in real Secular work by advocating political and social reforms, with a special view to ameliorating the wretched condition of our fellow men."
19. Motion by the Executive:—

    "That in all elections to public bodies Secularists should endeavor to put forward candidates in distinct sympathy with Secular principles."
20. Motion by Mr. A. B. Moss:—

    "That strenuous efforts be made to get the Education Department to change the code so that the three quarters of an hour now devoted to Scripture instruction in Board schools be utilised in teaching elementary science."
21. Motions by Manchester Branch:—

    (*a*) "That this Conference take energetic measures for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws."

    (*b*) "That this Society cease to issue members' certificates."

    (*c*) "That no place for the holding of the Annual Conference be included in the list sent round to the Branches for voting upon, unless it first complies with all the necessary conditions."

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

May 19, Bradford; 26, Liverpool.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 10 and 11, Aberdeen; 13 and 14, Dundee; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street; 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York in August, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Arrangements are being made for him to speak in Derby and Stockton-on-Tees during the weeks following his being at Manchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Sceptic—"You have given me many messages from departed friends, but not one of them has told me anything I didn't know." Medium (with dignity)—"I would have you understand, sir, that the spirits of the dead have something better to do than to come back to earth and teach school."—*New York Weekly.*

An old negro minister was preaching from the text that "the Lord Jesus Christ walked abroad, curing *divers* diseases." In the course of his sermon he said: "Yes, bretheren and sisteren, you git sick and you send for Dr. Whitehead or Dr. Wilson, and they can cure 'most any disease that flesh is heir to, but when it comes to these here *divers*, 'tain't nobody but God a'mighty hisself kin cure 'em."

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INGERSOLL AND SAM JONES.

THE visit of Colonel Ingersoll to St. Louis on the concluding day of the Sam Jones revival was a coincidence which suggested to the *Globe-Democrat* the interest which would attach to an interchange of views as to the motives and influences of the two men, each of whom possesses in so marked a degree the power of attracting and interesting large crowds. That each is sincere in his belief is generally admitted, and it is worthy of note that, while each criticises the other freely, neither attributes to the other any but the best of motives. The idea was to present both sides of the question fairly, and to reflect the opinions of the exponents of theories so diametrically opposed; and this has been accomplished with the co-operation of the two gentlemen. Mr. Jones was seen first. He was unwilling to say anything calculated to hurt the feelings of a man against whom, personally, he had no grievance. When it was explained that the *Globe-Democrat* wanted a review of Colonel Ingersoll's lectures and their influence on the community, rather than the lecturer himself, Mr. Jones submitted cheerfully, leant back in his chair, and told the reporter to "fire away." His argument that Ingersoll's teachings are calamitous because they are apt to encourage utter recklessness is given in his own words, some few of which were subsequently quoted to the lecturer whose reply was desired.

To interview Colonel Ingersoll at length was less easy. The Colonel is known to have an occasional antipathy to interviewers, claiming that in more than one instance he has been incorrectly reported. It was also ascertained that he would not reach St. Louis before Sunday morning. He has so many old friends in St. Louis that he holds a series of receptions all day when in the city, and it would obviously be impossible to secure his undivided attention for an hour. Hence it was resolved to intercept him on the way to St. Louis, and a telegram was sent to Cincinnati as to his route, it being his custom to visit that city when on a lecturing tour and map out his route from that point. The only reply was a reference to New York, and from the lecturer's home it was learned that he was due at Springfield, Ill., Saturday evening. A reporter was accordingly sent on to the Illinois State capital to await Colonel Ingersoll's arrival and obtain the desired interview.

JONES ON INGERSOLL.

"What do you think of Ingersoll and of the influence of his lectures?" asked a reporter of the Rev. Sam Jones as he sat in his room at the Southern Hotel, evidently only partially recovered from the exertions of preaching to 6,000 people the preceding evening.

Mr. Jones thought for a moment and then said: "The question is a very broad one, and cannot be answered in two or three words. Personally, Mr. Ingersoll is no doubt a genial gentleman. Physically he is fat, intellectually he is bright, morally there may be worse men; but theologically he is a bad egg."

"You have seen the picture of Ingersoll nursing his grandchild?"

"Yes, and I could not help feeling mighty sorry for the grandchild."

"Apart from his personality, what do you think is the moral influence of Mr. Ingersoll's lectures?"

"That is very easily answered. A visit of Mr. Ingersoll to any community is calamitous to all whom he reaches, and the worst of it is he generally reaches the very class of people upon whom his teachings have the most baneful effect. No God, no Bible, no heaven, no hell, catches the masses of non-church-goers, and turns them over to recklessness. The lecturer forgets that they were not all reared in Christian homes, and brought up under the cultivating influences which he himself enjoyed. They were not trained up in the virtues as he was by his godly father and mother. Whatever virtues Mr. Ingersoll possesses is a gift of grace or Christianity. Many parade his charity, his liberality, and his love for home. He never got these elements as the gift of Infidelity. They are but the expressions of Christian elements that live in his character in spite of his Infidelity, and when he throws his teaching of no God, no Bible, no heaven, and no hell into the hearts and lives of others who have not been blessed by the help which Christianity gives us, he turns the whole human life into utter rot."

"How do you account for Mr. Ingersoll's power to attract large audiences?" was a question which the above criticism naturally suggested.

"His power to attract lies in his ability to shock," replied Mr. Jones, with more force and earnestness than he had hitherto displayed. "He is the devil's dynamo, and when a man stands upon the damp soil of a sinful life old Bob can turn a current on him that will almost make him leap out of his hide. Men love to be shocked. I have often thought of Colonel Ingersoll in his disclaimer of Christian virtues and his disbelief in God, and the Bible as putting him pretty much in the attitude of a drummer's little girl, of whom a commercial traveller once told me. He said he found his little girl, on one of his visits home, sitting on the floor playing with her kitten. While loving and caressing it she said: 'Kitty, you are a sweet little kitty. I love you, and I know who your mommer is. Old pussy is your mommer. She's a good old cat, and I love her too. But, kitty, I don't know who your popper is, 'cause I never saw him. I 'spect your popper is a travelling man.' We all know from Mr. Ingersoll's doctrine who his mother is, morally speaking. Earth is his mother. I expect his father is a travelling man. Certainly nobody has ever seen him in these parts. They all say that Colonel Ingersoll is a jolly fellow. I don't know him personally, but I don't doubt that he is."

"How about Mr. Ingersoll's arguments?"

"He hasn't any. He is an orator of the first water. I know no man alive to-day who can put English together like he can. His words put into sentences look like streams of pearls; but they are merely bracelets and necklaces for swine. His philosophy and his religion do not build colleges, almshouses, or asylums. Neither do they take care of the poor, the maimed, and the halt. They are powerless to reform the drunkard and the outlaw. They do not make a man more kind in his home, or more respected in the community where he lives. He clamors for free thought and moral liberty. Establish the fact that men can think as they please, and with that you establish the fact that they can act as they please. There are boundary lines to thought, just as there are boundary lines to actions. With his wit and intellectual cunning, aided by his illogical reasoning, he may play upon the weaknesses of religion, and by his flights of eloquence upon the duties of life which he steals from Christianity; but, after all, a thoughtful, substantial man sees the cunning of his method and detects the direful effect his words have upon the gang that flock to hear him. Lord Salisbury said that, but for the Salvation Army in the streets of London, the police force would have to be increased four thousand in number in a single day. Remove Infidelity from the world, and you lessen the police force by one-half. Christianity is the great conserving and preserving force of the age. Anarchism and outlawism are legitimate children of Infidelity, and whatever and whoever contributes to these dangerous elements in society should be fought and outlawed by every true American citizen, whatever his creed may be."

"In other words, you mean that the influence of Mr. Ingersoll's lectures is, from your standpoint, entirely bad?"

"I see no good that can possibly come from his lectures on Infidelity. I see much harm that may result from them. I also see why Mr. Ingersoll delivers his lectures. There may be $1,000 a night to him in the job; but why a Christian community will suffer such a thing, and why men will pay for the privilege of hearing him abuse their mother's God and their father's Bible at a dollar a head, and then turn out and be Infidels like him for nothing, and board themselves, is one of the mysteries I never could solve. Personally, I have never met Colonel Ingersoll. He may have many charming characteristics; in fact, he must have. Reared, as he was, in a Christian home, he cannot be utterly depraved. The question is often asked as to whether Ingersoll is sincere in his denials, and in his negations, and in his Infidelity. Suppose we give him credit for all sincerity; he may be in that class of whom the Bible speaks when it says: 'Given over to a delusion that he may believe a lie and be damned.'

"I believe a man can reach such a condition and attitude that, in the moral world, a lie is to him the truth, and the truth a lie. As to whether Colonel Ingersoll is sincere or not makes no difference when you look at the tendencies of his lecture. I see no reason why a profane swearer, or a liar, or a drunkard, or a whoremonger, or a voluptuary should find fault with Mr. Ingersoll, just as I see no reason why the good and true and beautiful and noble should champion his cause or approve his lectures. A man who starts out from the storm centres of Infidelity would become a cyclone in the moral world. The orator we are talking about is a cyclone, funnel-shaped and full of wind. I suppose he will die as he lived. But after death he will no longer be a disbeliever or an unbeliever. My Bible tells me that the devils believe and tremble."

"Do I understand you to say that Colonel Ingersoll really uses no argument?"

Mr. Jones tilted his chair back, deliberated longer than is usual with such a remarkably good conversationalist as he is known to be, and finally said: "That is about so. I have never thought that Mr. Ingersoll treats the subject in hand fairly. He starts in by making his own statement as to what Christianity is, and he then proceeds to demolish the man of straw which he himself has set up. He would burn down my cabin, and then offer me no shelter for myself and wife and children. He would destroy the old ford and build no bridge in its place. He would extinguish what he calls my tallow candle of hope, and leave me in despair and darkness. He would make me what he calls a free man by giving me licence of thought and action, when any sensible man knows that licence is simply power to do wrong. True liberty, on the other hand, is simply the privilege of doing right. The Ten Commandments make the boundary lines

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within which liberty is given. Infidelity would change these so that they would read: 'Thou shalt not steal—if there is any probability of being caught.' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery—but you may find two or three wives more convenient than one.' 'Thou shalt not break the Sabbath—but bend it double as occasion offers.' 'Thou shalt not covet—but get all you can and keep all you get.' 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me—but if you don't like the God of heaven, be one yourself and run things to suit yourself.' What a man does is at least a test of what he is. Will Mr. Ingersoll show us what he has done to make the world better or happier; where he has reformed a single drunkard, reclaimed a single reprobate, purified a single life, or elevated a single community? Mr. Ingersoll seems to be the product of hyper-Calvinism, for Infidelity is nothing more nor less than hyper-Calvinism gone to seed. God will reign, heaven will endure, the ministry will live, the churches will flourish, morality will be taught and practised, and Christian virtues will be embodied in men long after Mr. Ingersoll and his company have passed from earth, and received the reward of their doing."

(Next week we shall give Colonel Ingersoll's opinion of Sam Jones.)

HOW TO USE THE BIBLE.

To prove a given thesis on the lines of Holy Writ
You've but to search the Scriptures till you find a text to fit;
A very little practice will enable you to quote
A verse or two for any view you're anxious to promote.
But bear in mind this golden rule—if you a text descry
That proves the very opposite, then quietly pass it by
And choose another.

To take a few examples: If to children you would give
Advice to love their parents all the days that they may live,
To honor and to trust them, be submissive to their will,
To cite the Great Authority requires but little skill.
But if you stumble on the place where Jesus says to win
The title of disciple we must hate our nearest kin—
Why, choose another.

Suppose, again, you wish to show that slavery is wrong,
And want a godly platitude to help your case along,
You easily may find one that will suit you to a *t*,
And may freely quote the Scriptures, but you mustn't be too free.
So if you find the verse in which God let his people know
That they might beat a slave to death if but his death were slow—
Why, choose another.

Perhaps you are opposed to war, and hold that strife should cease;
You can work the Holy Bible in the interests of peace,
But be careful how you do it, or you'll carry it too far.
So when you find Jehovah boast himself a man of war,
Or come across a passage where the offspring of the Lord
Avows he came on earth to send division or a sword,
Why, choose another.

If with cruelty to animals you fain would do away
By claiming God for patron of the R.S.P.C.A.,
You've a choice of pretty sentiments that never seem to pall,
Say the eight-a-penny sparrow that he watches in its fall.
But if you strike a chapter that refers to Pharaoh's cattle,
Or God's command to Joshua to hough the horse in battle—
Why, choose another.

If you'd proselyte a little in the theologic line,
And want to prove conclusively that Jesus was divine,
You readily can manage it; but if you chance to see
A narrative relating to an isolated tree
On which in vain he sought for figs, and cursed it for that reason,
Since, being God, he didn't know that figs were not in season—
Why, choose another.

If at cruel vivisection you would have a pious prod,
By maintaining that the practice is detestable to God,
There are many charming verses you may turn to good account—
E.g., a gentle precept from the Sermon on the Mount.
But if you meet the doctrine as to God Almighty's hell
And its everlasting torments, it perhaps would be as well
To choose another.

E. H. B. Stephenson.

A country churchwarden, on wishing to inform a visitor that the vicar was a loving shepherd, only succeeded in saying that he was "a shoving leopard."

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DEVIL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I have read Mr. J. M. Wheeler's interesting pamphlet entitled *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*. I believe in a personal devil and witches. The belief in a devil not only prevails among orthodox Christians, taught by a pious and *disinterested* clergy, but also exists among savages at the present day. When travelling in Western Equatorial Africa, I received an invitation from a trader to spend a few days with him up the river Rokelle, where, beyond the pale of civilisation, he occupied an advanced station, *in partibus infidelium*—the only white man among sable heathens. I arrived in my six-oared gig just before midnight. The moon shone bright, and several negroes, who greeted my kroomen, caught a glimpse of me, dressed in a blue serge suit and wearing a tropical felt helmet. After a smoke and a glass of grog I retired to rest in a humble negro cottage which my friend occupied in the small village. I rose at daybreak and strolled towards a well, where two negro women were about to fill their gourds. As soon as they perceived me they yelled and fled into the bush, followed by several men. My friend came up and asked what had happened. I could not tell. He went in search of the fugitives, and, after a long palaver, gave the following explanation: "One of the head men who saw you arrive last night says that you are the Devil (*sic*). Asked for his reason, he said that you were like him.* In a dream he saw you walk to the well, lie down on your belly, and drink all the water. *A la bonne heure!*" "What did you say?" "Oh, you damned fool, this is the only white man I know, who *never* drinks water." True, the water in West Africa contains the *tænia solium*, or tapeworm—a nice devil that to have in one's entrails. That is one of my devils. I have been frequently called the Devil, and begin to fancy that I am a relative; but I do not go about roaring and devouring. I leave that to my Christian *confrères*, who often prey upon their fellows. Among my French acquaintances I was generally addressed as "Diable de Laporte," and I dare say they were quite right. My belief in witches is restricted to Lancashire witches, one of whom I married. I have never regretted it, for she made me very comfortable.

Charles Kroll Laporte.

PROFANE JOKES.

Evangelist—"Young man, do you really want to go to hell?" Hardened Sinner—"Why, do you want me to go with you?"

Rhoades (as he and Mrs. Rhoades are leaving church)—"What a refreshing sermon that was, wasn't it?" Mrs. Rhoades (sharply)—"I don't know; I didn't get to sleep."

Millicent—"Did you enjoy the services to-day?" Mildred—"Immensely! The minister wore a new lace surplice, with the most stylish puffed sleeves I have ever seen."

Nurse—"Bertie, you naughty boy, leave off playing with your soldiers directly! Haven't I told you that you mustn't play with them on Sunday?" Bertie—"Yes, nurse, but this is a religious war."

"Madam, would you kindly subscribe something for the missions in Africa? The money will be used for the conversion of heathen children." "Very well; you may have a few Christian children converted, and send the bill to me."

Tommy—"Do you say your prayers every night?" Jimmy—"Yep." Tommy—"And does your maw say hers?" Jimmy—"Yep." Tommy—"And does your paw?" Jimmy—"Naw. Paw don't need to. It's almost daylight when he gets to bed."

Little Jack prays every night for all the different members of his family. His father had been away at one time for a short journey, and that night Jack was praying for him as usual. "Bless papa and take care of him," he was beginning as usual, when suddenly he raised his head and listened. "Never mind about it now, Lord," ended the little fellow; "I hear him down in the hall."

New York *Life* gives the following: The deacon (to the cowboy, who has just dropped in to see what a revival was like)—"Young man, have you made your peace with your Creator?" The Cowboy—"I ain't never had no trouble with him." This is another version of the true story told of Thoreau, who, when asked if he had made his peace with God, replied: "I did not know that we had quarrelled."

* The black man's devil is white. How true! Have we not reduced the negroes to bondage and cruelly tortured them?

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Riddles of the Sphinx."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, debate between B. Shaw and E. Smith, "The Liberal Party *versus* the Independent Labor Party." Monday, at 8, entertainment and dance. Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, members' meeting to discuss Conference agenda and elect delegates.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Theism Tested and Found Wanting."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Sir Thomas More and the New Spirit."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Secularism and Social Problems."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. G. Herzfeldt, "The Holy Book Dissected."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed." Members' meeting after lecture to consider Conference agenda, etc.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, C. James, "The Brain or the Bible"; 3.15, "God at the Bar of Humanity."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Arthur B. Moss, "Two Revelations." Thursday, at 8, W. J. Ramsey, "Our Home Above."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "Ancient Saints and Modern Sinners"; 3.30, "Ancient and Modern Prophets." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible."

KILBURN (High-road): 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Where Angels Dwell."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Curse of the Cross."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Social Implication of Secularism."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, S. E. Easton will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, St. John will lecture; 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, George Standring, "Christianity *versus* Humanity"; 7, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Sixty Minutes with the Devil."

COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road): 11, S. P. Putnam, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century"; 3, "Evolution and Creation"; 7, "Freethought and Morality."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, A Guest, "The Attitude of the Bible towards Woman"; 7, "Prayer: What and Why?"

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Gustav Smith, "How the Workers are Slandered, Fooled, Robbed, and Murdered."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Miller, "The Sun." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Science and Man"; 3, "Why are Men Religious?" (Stevenson-square—if weather unfavorable, in the hall); 6.30, "Scepticism: Its Meaning and Value."

NOTTINGHAM (Woodland Hall, Woodland-place, Parliament-street): 7, Robert J. Murray will lecture; committee meeting after lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "The New Secularism: A Defence of the Old."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, W. Cook, "The History of Rationalism—A Review."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, J. Kent, "Was Christ a Reformer?"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, C. Aarstadt will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—May 19, Manchester; 25, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—May 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park; 26, m. Wood Green, a. Hyde Park e. Hammersmith; 30, Hammersmith.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, m. Clerkenwell.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—May 19, m. Kingsland. June 2, m. Finsbury Park; 16, m Kingsland. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

In another part of this week's *Freethinker* our readers will find a long letter from the Rev. C. L. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. Very few Christian journals, if any, would have inserted such a letter from a Secularist; and in this respect, at any rate, we think we have an advantage over orthodox parties. We even go to the length of asking our readers to break off at this point. Let them peruse Mr. Engström's letter carefully, and then return to our reply.

Our first intention was to let Mr. Putnam reply to Mr. Engström, and to leave the matter with the two disputants. But many of the points raised are such as Mr. Putnam cannot deal with, as they relate especially to Secularism in England. We shall therefore answer Mr. Engström at once, as far as seems necessary; leaving Mr. Putnam to supplement our reply from his own standpoint.

The secretary of the Christian Evidence Society rather parades his generosity towards Freethinkers, but we do not feel particularly grateful. He does not sin himself against the laws of good-breeding, but his underlings in London—**whom he hires and pays—are notorious for their** ghastly ill-manners, and their addiction to the worst vices of controversy, including reckless lying and unscrupulous slander. Mr. Engström has often denied this impeachment; but as he has never restrained his underlings, nor even taken the trouble to ascertain what they *do* say in public, it is impossible to hold him guiltless.

We have another complaint against Mr. Engström. He is constitutionally inaccurate. It is not true that we "discouraged" discussion after Mr. Putnam's lecture. We distinctly said that our American visitor was "yearning" for debate. It is true that we rebuked an auditor who called out Mr. Engström's name, but it was on the express ground that gentlemen should be able to visit the Hall of Science without being "spotted." There was absolutely no reason, so far as we are concerned, why Mr. Engström should not have mounted the platform and battled for his faith.

What we may call the American part of Mr. Engström's letter will be answered by Mr. Putnam. But we must say, in passing, that the lecturer did *not* affirm bluntly that "faith was, for Christians, everything, and conduct and character nothing." He admitted that plenty of Christians were good men, and said he rejoiced to find the Churches engaging in secular work. What he asserted was, that Christianity, as such, was a creed, and not an ethical system; that morality was only "tacked on to it" because no creed could get along without something of that kind; and that, under the disguise of morality, Christianity carried on an infamous war against the rights of reason, beginning at the cradle and ending at the deathbed.

Mr. Putnam is well able to answer Mr. Engström with respect to Christianity in America. With regard to England, it is beyond dispute that the leading divines and the Church standards have, with the rarest exceptions, taught the very doctrines which Mr. Putnam called the essence of Christianity. No doubt they are growing ashamed of those doctrines, but it is too transparent a trick to repudiate them and then to reaffirm them in different language. For instance, the difference between "total depravity" and a "universal Fall" is the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. Mr. Engström admits the vicarious atonement, and he admits eternal damnation, subject to his interpretation of "what the New Testament says."

What the New Testament says on hell and damnation was never much in dispute among Christians until they felt the necessity of making their creed presentable to the enlightened morality of the present age. Even now they cling to "eternal punishment," only they contend that it is not so long as we are apt to imagine. This is the contention of Dean Farrar, but it was *not* the contention of Dr. Pusey. Mr. Engström must surely know that Dr. Pusey's book, to which he refers, was written expressly in reply to Dean Farrar. It was only with respect to whether the fire of hell is literal or metaphorical that Dr. Pusey allowed any latitude of opinion. He concluded his preface by declaring that "if we know anything at all, we know that the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment was taught by Him Who died to save us from it."

Mr. Engström turns good Atheists into Christians in spite of themselves. It is kind of him, no doubt; but the good Atheists will prefer to wear their own ticket. And, after all, Mr. Engström does not hold the keys of heaven.

We put this question to the secretary of the Christian Evidence Society: If an honest unbeliever may go to heaven, what is the use of taking the trouble to be a Christian? It will not do to reply that there is *no* trouble. Christians must believe mysteries, and reconcile contradictions; and that is a lot of trouble to a man of common sense.

Mr. Engström is but superficially charitable in his observations on the Hall of Science. He is well aware—or, if he is not, his ignorance is inexcusable—that the Christian law of England is dead against the natural rights of Freethinkers. They may dodge the law to some extent, but this is not very satisfactory. The time comes, sooner or later, when the dodge fails. Money can be devoted to Christian purposes without any fear of alienation. It cannot be so devoted to Secular purposes. And this is a tremendous hindrance to our movement, which has lost thousands of pounds in this way during the last four or five years.

It is not true that the Churches subsist on the funds they raise annually. They flourish largely on endowments. They have their roots in graves. They live on dead men's money. But they deny us the same advantages, and after robbing us by their own law, which they refuse to alter, they sneeringly ask us why we do not spend as handsomely as themselves.

Architecture and decoration are simply questions of money. Christianity does not produce genius. Nature does that. Christianity merely employs it. How many fine churches could Christianity boast in the first two hundred and fifty years of its existence? When it became respectable and wealthy, mainly through the patronage of the State, it was able to employ architects, sculptors, and painters. Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism did the same thing. And when Secularism is respectable and wealthy—or at least when it no longer suffers from legal stigma and robbery—it will be able to erect large, noble, and splendid buildings.

Mr. Engström flaunts the ten to fifteen thousand places of worship of the Church of England. How rational! How considerate! Is not the Church of England established and endowed? Does it not subsist on the revenues of national property? Are not the very Freethinkers taxed to support it? Even the Nonconformist places of worship are recipients of a State subvention. Secular halls have to pay rates and taxes; churches and chapels pay none.

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It will be time enough for Christians to boast of their "charities" when they relinquish all their privileges and accept an equality of opportunity with Secularists. Let them give up State endowments; let them forego State subventions; let them enjoy no more right than the Secularists to legacies and trusts; and then let us see what they will have to spare for their much-trumpeted work amongst "the poor."

Mr. Engström plays the Pharisee in asking to how many mourners we speak words of comfort. We do not keep a register of these little kindnesses. Our own poor we relieve; we do not send them to Mr. Engström. We do not build hospitals, but probably we subscribe to them, without bawling it from the housetops. Certainly we do not try, as the Christians do, to make the hospitals sectarian institutions. We have no special agencies for reclaiming drunkards and prostitutes. We are laboring to bring about a state of society in which drunkenness and prostitution will die a natural death.

Mr. Engström winds up with an inaccuracy. He speaks of "the Secular Cromwell Club" at Plaistow. The Cromwell Club was not "Secular." It was a political Club. The Secularists engaged its lecture-room occasionally for a meeting. But suppose it had been a "Secular" Club. What is proved by stating that the building is now used by the Christian Evidence Society? Two chapels, at Manchester and Portsmouth, have been turned into Secular halls.

G. W. FOOTE.

VANINI'S MARTYRDOM.

(Concluded from p. 306.)

THE story of Vanini in England ends with his escape from the tender mercies of Archbishop Abbot. His subsequent short career and tragic fate must be briefly sketched in illustration of the way in which free inquiry was welcomed by the Church in the seventeenth century of the teachings of the one divine religion.

At Paris Vanini set to work on a book probably designed to promote inquiry, while removing suspicions of his own orthodoxy.* It was magniloquently entitled *Amphitheatrum Æternæ Providentiæ divino-magicum Christiano-physicum, nec non Astrologo-Catholicum, adversus veteres Philosophos, Atheos, Epicureos, Peripatheticos et Stoicos, Lugduni, 1615.* This defence of Eternal Providence Durand regards as ironical, and Cousin as suspicious. Although usually set down as an Atheist, and burnt as one, Vanini's mind may have been only partly emancipated on the God question. In setting forth the various opinions of philosophers on the subject, he probably designed to induce doubt and inquiry, though it must be remembered that he wrote with the fear of the Sorbonne and the Inquisition before his eyes.

His next work, *De Admirandis Naturæ, Reginæ Deæque Mortalium, Arcanis: Dialogbi, 1616*, showed a bolder front in its very title of The Admirable Secrets of Nature, the Queen and Goddess of Mortals. He had now obtained a patron, the Marshal Bassompierre, to whom this book of dialogues is dedicated. It purports to be the record by his disciples of conversations with Vanini. Whomever written by, it certainly had his revision; and this form of writing enables him to put heretical questions and sentiments into the mouth of the interlocutor, "Alexander"; while "Julius Cæsar," the teacher, remains comparatively orthodox. His doctrine essentially is Pantheism, which, as Earl Beaconsfield said, is "Atheism in *domino*," while in ethics it is Epicurean. Vanini, in short, teaches Naturalism, and he says plainly that there were things in the *Amphitheatre* he no longer believed, and that "infants born with weak minds are so much the fitter to become good Christians." Asked his opinion of the immortality of the soul, he says: "I have sworn to my God not to treat of that question till I am old, rich, and a German." The work was certified by two doctors of the Sorbonne, but it is said to have been, soon after publication, re-examined, and condemned to be burnt by that body.

Vanini removed to Toulouse, where he lived by teaching. It was not long ere he roused the clergy against him, and in August, 1618, he was arrested for Atheism and blasphemy.* Vanini was then only thirty-three years old. The chief evidence against him was "a pious gentleman"—one de Francon, who played the same Judas-like part that Mocenigo did towards Giordano Bruno. We have no particulars of the trial, but it is said that, in answer to the charge of Atheism, he took up a straw and said that would suffice to prove the existence of God. Gramond makes out that he argued for Theism from fear, not from conscience. The judges preferred the testimony of de Francon that Vanini had, in the intimacy of friendship, admitted to him his utter disbelief in the being of a God, asserting that Nature was the sole ruler of the universe, and her laws the supreme standards of action, to which all things must conform. He was found guilty, and condemned as an Atheist to have his blaspheming tongue cut out, to be strangled at the stake, his body afterwards to be burnt and scattered to the winds. This truly Christian sentence was duly executed before the Church of St. Stephen—Mr. Owen says on the same day, February 9; but Signor Palumbo and other authorities say the 19th. That Vanini died heroically is certain. *Le Mercure François* said "he died with as much constancy, patience, and fortitude as any other man ever seen." He said in Italian: "Come, let us die cheerfully like a philosopher." It adds that he declared, in the presence of thousands, that there was neither God nor Devil.

The pious Gramond writes: "I saw him in the tumbril as they led him to execution, mocking the Cordelier who had been sent to exhort him to repentance, and insulting our Savior by these impious words: '*He* sweated with fear and weakness, and I, I die undaunted.'" Gramond relates, with evident approval, the brutal operation which forced a shriek of pain from the poor martyr to Free-thought. "Before putting fire to the stake," he says, "Vanini was ordered to put forth his sacrilegious tongue for the knife. He refused. It was necessary to employ pincers to draw it forth, and when the executioner's instrument seized and cut it off, never was heard a more horrible cry. One might have thought he heard the bellowing of an ox which was being slaughtered."†

The abbé Ladvocat, the learned librarian to the Sorbonne, in his biographical and historical dictionary, issued in the middle of last century, says that Vanini was burnt alive,‡ and adds: "Were justice equally severe at present, many persons would have met with Vanini's fate." Oh, these good Christians, how merciful they have been made by their beautiful creed!

J. M. WHEELER.

DEBATE IN DERBY.

UP to last week many of the good people of Derby had been for some considerable time in a high state of excitement, through the announcement of a public discussion which was to take place between Mr. G. W Foote and Mr. T. W. Lee, of the Christian Evidence Society, upon the question, "Atheism or Theism: Which is the More Reasonable?" The anticipations thus raised were realised on the evenings of Wednesday and Thursday, May 15 and 16, when the debate was held in the Temperance Hall, a fine building capable of holding a thousand persons. On this occasion it was crowded. Of course by far the great majority of the audiences were Christians; still, upon the whole, they listened fairly well to Mr. Foote. At times, when heavy and well-aimed blows were dealt at the popular faith, the more orthodox present manifested signs of uneasiness; but Mr. Foote's tact and the Chairman's kindly admonitions speedily allayed the theological irritation.

* Gramond, in his *History of France from the Death of Henry IV.*, says: "He pretended to teach medicine; in reality he was a misleader of youth. He made a mockery of sacred things. He blasphemed the incarnation of Christ. He did not acknowledge the existence of God. He attributed everything to chance. He worshipped Nature as the excellent mother and source of all beings. This was the chief of all his errors, and he had the audacity to teach it in Toulouse, that holy city."

† Calvin similarly wrote of the cries of Servetus as "stupid bellowing."

‡ In the Abbé Migné's Catholic *Dictionnaire de Biographie* it is also said, "*Il fut livré aux flammes.*" The *Mercure François* heads its account, "*Un Athée Italien brulé vif à Thoulouse.*"

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Mr. Piper, editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*, presided on both evenings, and an excellent chairman he made. His brief addresses at the commencement and at the close of the debate were models of concise and appropriate comment upon the proceedings. He spoke of the ability of the disputants, and of the attention paid by the crowded audiences to statements which, to many of them, were no doubt new and startling. This, he remarked, was a striking contrast to what had happened under similar circumstances in that town ten years ago. He thought this pleasant change was an encouraging proof of the progress of liberal ideas upon theological questions. It occurred to me whether the Christians present understood to what we are indebted for this improvement. Certainly it could not be to the influence of Theism, for that was more powerful in the past than it is at present. In my opinion, this advancement is the legitimate result of the Secular tendencies of the age. The spirit of inquiry is abroad, bigotry has more than ever to yield to fair play, and the tempest of theological passion is supplanted by the influence of calm reasoning.

As to the ability of the disputants as debaters, I desire to express my opinion frankly and honestly. Of Mr. Foote I need say but little, inasmuch as his polemical skill is well known. Personally, I was exceedingly pleased with his methodical and dignified mode of conducting his side of the controversy. His thorough examination of, and effective replies to, all that was relevant in his opponent's plea on the first night were, to my mind, grand specimens of perceptive power and readiness of argumentative resort. On the second night, when Mr. Foote led the debate, he, avoiding the puzzle of metaphysics, made a brilliant attack upon the Theistic position, showing how the misery, the suffering, and the inequalities of existence, together with the sadness, cruelties, and injustice recorded in history, contradict the theory that the universe is governed by a God who has unlimited power, wisdom, and goodness. Mr. Foote was in splendid form, and his earnest and eloquent expositions were frequently so powerful and commanding that he won the enthusiastic applause even of a large portion of the Christian audience, including the Chairman.

Mr. W. T. Lee is a good debater and a gentlemanly opponent, judging from his manner in the Derby debate. I regard him, apart from Dr. Harrison and Dr. McCann, as being by far the best advocate the Christian Evidence Society have on their staff. A less able debater than Mr. Foote would find in Mr. Lee a difficult opponent. He knows much of the art of debate, and he has sufficient tact to overlook the strong points against him, and to make much of minor features that seem to tell in his favor. Before an audience mainly in agreement with him, he spoke with a confidence that, probably, would be wanting were he addressing a hostile assembly. While not wishing to deprive him of any credit to which he is entitled, I would, in all kindness, suggest that he should not assume, as he did throughout the debate, that he has all the truth on his side, and that those who differ from him are necessarily in error. If that were so, all debating would be useless. Still, it appeared to me that, as a rule, Mr. Lee managed his difficult task much better than others on his side would have done.

I am pleased to know that the discussion is to be printed verbatim, and it is to be hoped that it will have a large sale, as the reading of it cannot but prove of great benefit to the Secular party. I shall be much disappointed if the local society does not increase its members in consequence of the discussion.

After the conclusion of the debate on the second night a large deputation, composed of Secular friends, waited upon Mr. Foote to thank him for the admirable fight he had made. Mr. Whitney delivered a neat little speech, in which, on behalf of the Derby Branch of the N.S.S., he assured Mr. Foote that all the members felt proud of their President, and congratulated him upon "the efficient and dignified manner" in which he had defended their position in the debate which had just finished. They were, indeed, more than satisfied; they were "delighted." Mr. Foote made an appropriate reply.

Mr. S. P. Putnam and myself accompanied Mr. Foote to Derby, and our American visitor was delighted. In America they seldom have such debates, and, therefore, to Mr. Putnam it was a treat which he fully appreciated.

CHARLES WATTS.

SECULARISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

THE GLASGOW DEBATE.

On the evenings of May 6, 7, 8, and 9, in the North Saloon of the City Hall, Mr. Charles Watts debated with Dr. A. Jamieson, Glasgow, the proposition for the first two nights being, "That Secularism is Superior to Christianity," and on the following nights the converse of this. Owing to the lateness of the season, the attendance suffered somewhat, although the meetings were fair throughout, and the audiences behaved with exemplary patience and decorum.

At the outset of his opening speech Mr. WATTS warned his hearers against confounding what was loosely called "Infidelity" with Secularism. By the first term was generally understood any form of revolt against the authority of theology; but Secularism was something more, inasmuch as it represented a body of ethical truths, and so claimed to set up a new discipline of life. As most of them knew, the word "Secularism" was first used, in its specific sense, as a doctrine-name by G. J. Holyoake; and both he and those who co-operated with him in establishing Secularism were constrained to that course alike by a lively belief in the soundness and salutariness of Secularist principles, and by a clear recognition of the fact that as Christianity, after nineteen centuries of power, had not only failed to better, but had positively worsened, the world, it was high time some different plan should be tried. It was a common idea among religious people that belief was voluntary, and that, therefore, anyone who disowned all religion must do so through sheer wantonness. But it was now an axiom in psychology that the act of belief in itself was purely automatic. Men did not command their convictions, but were commanded by them. Did any sane person imagine that, if the individual could persuade himself of the truth of anything, he would deliberately elect to become an outcast for opinion's sake. Yet that was what many Secularists had reluctantly done. It went without saying, then, that, conviction being determined, it was monstrously unjust to penalise the opinions of minorities. So much for the intellectual and moral prerequisites of Secularism. Members of all schools of thought were at one as to the need for some authoritative rule of life; but there the agreement ended, for every school has a different standard. The Secularist alone proclaims the supremacy of reason, overtly and unreservedly; for, while some Christian divines like Hooker, Chillingworth, and Butler feel themselves logically bound to own the sovereignty of reason, the vast majority of Christians assign it an inferior place, setting the authority of the Church or the Bible above it, although, by an unconscious yet whimsical inconsistency, it is actually by an exercise of their reason that they discover what seems to them to be the true Church or revelation. He would now proceed to recite the articles of the N.S.S.—Declaration of Principles and Objects, defining all the capital terms, like "reason," "happiness," "duty," "utility," etc. Having gone over the various items of the Declaration, and enlarged upon the practical bearings of the principles there set forth, Mr. Watts concluded with a quotation from Mr. Holyoake, vividly contrasting Christianity with Secularism, with especial reference to the absence from the latter of the detestable dogma of exclusive salvation, with all its inevitable horrors of religious strife, social confusion, and moral suffering.

Dr. JAMIESON complained that his opponent had not instituted any real comparison between Secularism and Christianity. To do so, they must be brought into opposition; but Mr. Watts had kept strictly to Secularism, and as long as he did so there could be no valid application of the comparative method, and consequently no settlement of the question of relative merit. What he proposed to do was to go through the N.S.S. principles one by one, and demonstrate that they were all anticipated in the New Testament. They had heard from Mr. Watts that he approved of some phases of theology, while condemning theology as a whole. What a shocking example of stultification! Then it appeared that Secularism only came into existence with Mr. Holyoake. But what did he find in one of Mr. Watts's own pamphlets? That Secular principles existed long before Christ. Yet in all these centuries Secularism had been dormant or obscure, while Christianity spread and flourished. And to-day, when Secularism was pining away, the banner of the Cross was being planted everywhere. If the principles of Secularism were so far above those of Christianity, how did it come that Christians won all the prizes in the race of life? Even Charles Bradlaugh himself once admitted that they had all the wealth, talent, and power. Where were the Atheistic men of science, of letters, of genius? His opponent could not give a solitary name of a man of the first rank in these walks who was an Atheist—not one. Mr. Watts emphasised the Secularist doctrine of the equality of the sexes, and notably of husband and wife; but the New Testament

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nowhere declared the inferiority of women. The injunction, "Wives, be subject to your husbands," meant no more than did the subjection of himself and Mr. Watts to their present chairman. Surely no one in his senses would argue that they, as disputants, were necessarily inferior to the chairman, because they were subject to him for the time being. Similarly, the Pauline prescription implied subordination in function merely—not degradation. They had been told that the only sanction requisite for truthfulness, etc., was that the practice of lying, and vice or crime generally, militated against social stability and well-being. In other words, the Secularist set the observance of good morals on the low ground of expediency; and, as an illustration of the practical outcome of this grovelling opportunism, he would prove to them that Mr. Watts himself would permit lying and hypocrisy in certain circumstances. Concerning the dogma of exclusive salvation, over which Mr. Watts waxed so indignant, Christianity did not create hell. It simply warned men of the existence of a place of punishment for sinners beyond the grave, and since it pointed them the way of escape from that doom, Christianity was really man's best friend. Mr. Watts evinced great anxiety to dissociate Secularism from "Infidelity"; but, after all, they were one at bottom. Holyoake (quotation from *Reasoner*, vol. vi., p. 270), Bradlaugh, and Mrs. Besant, all contended for the substantial identity of the two; and Dr. Sexton, who knew more about the secret history of Secularism than anyone living, asserted positively that "Secularism begins and ends in Atheism." Now, what is Atheism?—a blank negation, an intellectual nihilism. And yet, forsooth, we are told that Secularism is a philosophy of life. As if any philosophy deserving of the name could be based on zero. He would now, by an appeal to the New Testament, make it clear that all the principles of Secularism were derived thence. The remainder of Dr. Jamieson's speech consisted of the reading of a series of texts from the Gospels and the so-called Pauline Epistles, to show that these authorities enjoin the free exercise of Reason, the diligent pursuit of knowledge, the doing of good works, the aspiration to happiness—recognise the legitimacy of utility as a test of principles and conduct, and the necessity of liberty as the concomitant of progress. While the Christian view of the interdependence of liberty and progress is rational, the Secularist tenet is absurd; for the Christian is a libertarian, but the Secularist is a necessitarian, who, in Mr. Watts's own words, regards "virtue and vice as being as much the consequence of natural laws as the fall of a stone." What has Secularism done for progress? If it boasts of martyrs, it will be a necessary, if painful, task to say plainly why they were put in prison or buffeted. Then Secularists pride themselves on their freedom from superstition, but "Saladin" actually wrote a poem in which he deified the late Charles Bradlaugh. Finally, what had Secularism done for education, and where was its Bible?

In his second speech Mr. WATTS traversed most of the topics introduced by Dr. Jamieson. So far from having omitted to systematically contrast Secularism with Christianity, that was the last thing he did in his first speech. The poem of "Saladin's," which had been quoted as a proof of Secularist superstition, was plainly ironical; but, to remove all possible doubt, he had "Saladin's" own assurance to that effect. Dr. Jamieson had labored to make out that Secularism was a poor imitation of Christianity, but his citations were lopsided. What of the numerous passages putting the alternative of belief or damnation, of those setting a premium upon improvidence, or of those expressly disparaging and anathematising knowledge? When he said that Secular principles existed before Christ, that was a widely different thing from saying that Secularism itself was pre-Christian. The taunt that Secularism had achieved nothing came with ill grace from those who supported Christian-made laws that robbed Secularists of dead men's money, interfered with their meetings, and intimidated public opinion. Besides, it would be time enough to reproach Secularism with failure when it had enjoyed the same terms of existence and opportunity as Christianity. It might be true that most men of science were nominally Christians, considering the political and social power of Christianity that was to be expected; but what of men like Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, and others?—no one dare claim them as Christians.

In his subsequent speeches Dr. JAMIESON reverted repeatedly to the subject-matter of his previous ones. Secularism begins and ends in Atheism. It encourages dissimulation by admitting "passive members," who may at the same time continue to masquerade as believers. It never does more than prate about science and education; for they had it on the authority of Dr. Sexton that the so-called "Halls of Science" were no better than drinking and dancing clubs, and Secularist lectures were as ignorant of science as their hearers were indifferent to it. If Secularists could not bequeath their money at death, let them hand it over to their Societies during life. Secularism struck at the very root of marriage. Mr. Bradlaugh had expressly laid it down in the King debate that if a woman lived with a man and bore children to him she was his wife; and he had also practically countenanced polygamy when he addressed as Mrs. Sharples Carlile the woman with whom, while his legal wife was still living, Richard Carlile consorted. Secularism pretended to have as one of its objects the promotion of peace; yet representative Secularists were at continual strife with one another. The truth about Secularism is that it is all talk, talk, and nothing but talk.

On Tuesday evening Mr. WATTS opened by reaffirming and reinforcing the case for Secularism, recapitulated the points of contrast between Christianity and Secularism, and enumerated the six articles in the Secularist Bill of Rights, summing up the whole in the aphorism that Secularism proclaims freedom for all and persecution for none. Having completed this work of exposition, he would now assume the defensive. The night before his opponent had frequently quoted from "Saladin's" writings, describing him as a Secularist. He (Mr. Watts) had denied the accuracy of that description, but Dr. Jamieson seemed to doubt his word. He now read "Saladin's" answer to a correspondent from a number of the *Agnostic Journal* for 1894, in which "Saladin" states: "We are *not* a Secularist." He had thus vindicated his veracity.

Dr. JAMIESON'S contribution to this evening's debate was such skimble-skamble stuff that, in mercy to him, the most of it is better left unrecorded. There was the old fatuous insistence on trivialities, the almost monomaniacal harping on the sterility of Secularism in the matter of education, benevolent institutions, etc., on its demoralising doctrine of marriage, copious quotations from old journals like the *Shield of Faith* and the *Secular Review* to prove that Secularists are all that is vile and contemptible, the reading of a sentence from a correspondent warning Dr. Jamieson to watch Mr. Watts's quotations narrowly, with general observations, drawn chiefly from Dr. Sexton's *Fallacies of Secularism*, to show that Secularism is entirely destructive in its propaganda, and that, in fine, it is a godless, bibleless, unethical, and anti-social abortion. The overwhelming dreariness of this wilderness of drivel was only relieved by one or two far-sundered spots of green, and these patches were verdant with a vengeance. Referring to Mr. Watts's strictures upon the doctrine of eternal punishment, Dr. Jamieson exclaimed that, although it suited Secularists to raise a *bruntum fulmen* against it in public, they sometimes admitted *sub rosa* that that doctrine had its uses. For example, in an old *N.S.S. Almanack* he found, under the date of the anniversary of the Great Comet, "Populace panic-stricken. Seven hundred kept mistresses married." Here the fear of divine vengeance prompted seven hundred men to make reparation for the wrong inflicted on as many women. Surely this was a moral gain. Then, too, in appealing to Christians to be just to Secularists, Charles Bradlaugh sometimes urged: "If you believe that the heretic is doomed to everlasting misery hereafter, surely the thought of his awful fate should move you to tenderness towards him here." That is to say, Bradlaugh saw clearly that the logical consequence of a belief in eternal punishment ought to be that of awaking pity, and even love, for those in danger of it.

It was in vain that Mr. Watts struggled manfully to redeem the debate from utter frustration, by an eloquent appeal to his opponent to abstain from personalities, and a studied avoidance of all causes of digression. The spirit of divergation had smitten the protagonist of Christianity, and the voice of reason fell on unheeding ears. Whenever any scrap of argument did come his way Mr. Watts made short work of it. This was conspicuously the case with Dr. Jamieson's attack on the teaching of Secularism as to marriage.

Having first of all cleared Mr. Bradlaugh's memory from the charge that he sponsored Free Love, Mr. WATTS affirmed the Secularist view of marriage as essentially one of monogamic union, in which one man lived with one woman in true and lasting affection. But what of the Christian theory of marriage? There was not one word in the Bible which forbade polygamy, and Luther himself, in the case of the Landgrave of Hesse, authoritatively sanctioned that prince's bigamy. As for Dr. Jamieson's diatribes upon the characters of prominent Secularists, his rule seemed to be: If Secularists are bad men, Secularism is to blame; but if Christians misbehave, they cannot be Christians at all. However, what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, and he could easily and abundantly prove that in all ages professing Christians had not only been accused, but had been convicted, of every imaginable vice and crime. Mr. Watts illustrated and enforced this indictment by conclusive quotations from Mosheim, Miall, Dick, Wesley, etc. J. P. GILMOUR.

(To be concluded.)

"I wonder why people persist in wearing squeaking shoes on Sunday?" "That is the day set apart for manifestations of the sole."

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INGERSOLL AND SAM JONES.

(Continued from p. 317.)

INGERSOLL ON JONES.

AFTER obtaining the views of Rev. Sam Jones on Colonel Ingersoll and the influence of his lectures and teachings, the *Globe-Democrat* sent a stenographer to the latter, as already explained, with instructions to ask questions as nearly identical as possible with reference to views entertained as to the Georgia revivalist and his methods. It was impossible to carry out the instructions literally, as Mr. Ingersoll, after a little hesitancy, finally warmed to the subject, anticipated queries, and really delivered a very forcible lecture on the question of revivals past and present, with a very lucid definition of Agnosticism as compared with Atheism, and more especially immorality, or indifference as to right and wrong. The Colonel was in the best of humors, told each friend who was admitted to the room that he was in perfect health and was carrying his sixty-one years without an effort, and assured the interviewer that he had nothing of any particular interest to say about Sam Jones or any other religious enthusiast. When pressed for an answer to the question, "What do you think of Mr. Jones and of the influence of his preaching?" he at length said:—

"Assuming that the gentleman's sermons are correctly reported, and basing my opinion on what little of them I have read, I cannot say that I particularly admire the style, though the argument does not appear to differ very much from that which revivalists have used ever since I can remember. When I was a boy the people had very few amusements. There were no theatres in the smaller towns, no museums, and nothing in the way of entertainment except the travelling circus which came round once a year. This circus generally carried a few mangy-looking animals, so that religious people could have a satisfactory excuse for going. In the winter the little towns were cut off from the rest of the world. There were no railroads, the rivers were frozen, and the mail arrived about once in every week. As a result, the people amused themselves every winter in 'getting religion.' The towns would be invaded by two or three evangelists, who derived great pleasure from exciting their audiences by vivid descriptions of the future home of the unconverted. They would describe the caverns of hell into which rolled and dashed the waves of brimstone, and also the tortures and agonies inflicted by the worm that never dies. These meetings were held every evening, and the people were invited to come forward to the 'anxious-seat,' very much as they have been asked every evening for the last two or three weeks in St. Louis.

"I remember that the first to come forward were generally the little girls, who, recalling that they had pilfered a little sugar, or, perhaps, a piece of cake, felt conscience-smitten, and were hence the first to respond. Then some of the men would join in the procession, and some few would be converted every evening amidst great rejoicing. This thing would last about a month, and nothing was talked about except religion. The majority of the people were about half-crazy—the preachers altogether so. They would convert from fifty to one hundred, and then, when business brisked up in the spring and people began to resume their usual vocations, most of the converts would backslide. But, in justice to them, I must add that the following winter they would be on hand again, ready to reoccupy the anxious-seat. Nearly every town had what you might call a stock company of periodical converts, who went through the same experience every winter, told how wicked they had been, how happy they were, how ashamed they were of having backslidden, and how gratified they were to be again redeemed."

"Did they become better citizens?"

"I never knew anybody to become better by being what Mr. Jones and other orthodox preachers call 'converted.' On the contrary, I have known many young generous fellows who got religion, and immediately became sour, unsociable, and mean. There is a conversion, if I may use the word, which comes in the nature of things. There is a time in the life of a young man when he feels responsibility touching him, when he makes up his mind to leave the follies of youth and become a man, with a goal fixed in his mind. This often comes when he falls in love, and feels that he wishes to do something for somebody else. This is what I call genuine conversion, not born of excitement, or bad air, or an overheated room, or an idiotic impulse. We may go a step farther, and say that the same thing happens with animals. There comes a time when the colt quits kicking over the traces and goes to pulling and eating his oats like a well-regulated horse, and when the dog quits chasing his tail, begins to look dignified, and assumes an air of partnership with the proprietor."

"Do you think the influence of Mr. Jones's revivals is injurious?"

"Yes, I think the so-called religious revival is hurtful as well as useless. The methods used are calculated to excite, not to enlighten. There is no appeal to the judgment; the reasoning faculties are not called into play. The passions are aroused, and especially the fear of punishment and the hope of reward. Thousands and thousands of men and women have been excited to such a degree that they have become partially insane—many wholly so. Religious excitement has unsettled as many minds as any other cause, and the asylums to-day are filled with men and women who have lost their reason in consequence of these foolish revivals, conducted by orthodox ministers. Men and women are made to believe that they have offended an infinite God; that they have hurt the feelings of the Holy Ghost; that their actions here, and especially their beliefs, are to have eternal consequences; that they deserve to be eternally damned for what they have done, and that God is anxious to damn them, but is held back by his son, who seems to have a little more mercy than is credited to the old gentleman himself.

"They are also told that they can have an eternal reward of infinite joy if they only repent and believe in this son. In the conflict of emotions produced by these idiotic sermons many, as I said before, have lost their reason. If the sermons of Mr. Jones, or any other revivalist, could be answered from the same platform by a philosopher, by a humanitarian, or by a man of sense, no human being would ever be 'converted.' Such a proceeding would end forever the revival system.

"Another great fault of these revivals is, that people are told that those who do right have to carry a cross, while those who do wrong have the benefit of the pleasures of this world—that the wicked have their good time here, while the good suffer on account of their goodness and self-denial, but will be rewarded in another world. All this is not only idiotic, but it is positively immoral. The facts are exactly the reverse. Only those carry a cross who do wrong. On the shoulders of those who do right the cross changes, and the man is borne upward and onward.

"That is the true philosophy of life. Men should act right because right action pays; men should shun wrong because wrong inflicts and produce suffering. Everything is moral that tends to increase or to preserve human happiness and human well-being; everything is immoral that decreases or puts in peril human well-being. In other words, all that preserves or increases happiness is right. There is no necessity for being miserable here in order to secure happiness in this world; and if you are really happy in this life, happy by virtue of living consistently and doing right, there is no danger of being damned in another world. I know of no form of orthodox religion that contains any philosophy, and I never knew of a philosopher occupying a pulpit."

"In one of his recent sermons Sam Jones said that the terms 'Agnostic' and 'fool' were synonymous. What is your reply to that criticism or statement?"

Mr. Ingersoll laughed good-humoredly, and said: "Coming from the Georgia evangelist, I think the remark calls for no reply, and it is certainly no argument. It is a curious fact that the savages are perfectly certain about things that philosophers admit are beyond the limitations of the human mind. The savage of Central Africa knows all about his god or gods. He knows just how the world was made, and how the human race was started. He knows exactly where we are all going after death. He doesn't know anything about this world, but he does know all about the other two worlds. He doesn't know anything about man, but he knows all about the gods. Now, if the Rev. Sam Jones would just think for a few moments, he would probably admit that he doesn't know that any God exists at all. No doubt he believes it, but he certainly does not know it; and if he is honest enough to admit the truth, he admits that he is an Agnostic, or, to use the word he seems to prefer, a fool.

"I confess that I don't know whether a God exists or not. This is the only world I have ever lived in or have any memory of, so that I might be called a provincialist. That there may be other worlds, I don't deny. There may be a God. There may be many. If there is one, I hope there are more, for one would be so lonesome. I don't know the origin of the universe, having no evidence on the subject. It is beyond my mind. I cannot conceive of the creation of something from nothing, nor can I conceive of something being changed back again to nothing. In other words, I cannot conceive creation, and consequently cannot conceive a creator. I don't say there is no God—I simply say I don't know. So far as my acquaintance extends, I can truthfully say I never met a minister who did. Mr. Jones may be in the possession of facts of which I am ignorant, but if he knows there is a God I would like to have him tell his next congregation how he knows, and what his evidence is.

"Mr. Jones says an Agnostic is the same as a fool. The difference between an Agnostic and a fool is about this: The Agnostic doesn't know. He has sense enough to know he doesn't know, and honesty enough to admit it. A fool, on the other hand, says he knows, whether he really thinks he does or not. Now, I am not prepared to admit that Humboldt was a fool, yet he said he didn't know whether

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there was a God or not. Few men would call Louis Agassiz a fool, yet he said that science had not advanced far enough to say with any certainty whether God exists or not. I don't think Darwin was a fool, yet he stated distinctly that the questions of God and immortality were beyond the limits of his powers of reasoning. Ernst Haeckel, the greatest naturalist in the world, is no fool, yet he says he doesn't know. Does Mr. Jones suggest that Huxley was ever a fool? As a matter of fact, he is the man who invented this definition of Agnosticism as representing this certain stage of thought. As a matter of fact, the greatest thinkers and scientists of this century have adopted this position, and I don't think that the fact of the Rev. Sam Jones denouncing them as fools will have even a tendency towards dimming the splendor of their reputation."

The next question put to Colonel Ingersoll was the following: "What have you to say in answer to the contention of Mr. Jones, that the moral influence of your lectures is calamitous, especially among those who have not had the benefit of being reared in a Christian home, as you were?"

Without hesitating a moment longer than was necessary to shake hands with an old friend who entered the room while the question was being asked, the Colonel replied: "Mr. Jones evidently doesn't possess a clear conception of morality, or he would not insinuate that what I say has an immoral tendency. He seems to think that certain beliefs are essential to morality, that it is moral to believe in the supernatural, in the inspiration of the Bible, in the atonement, and in the scheme of redemption; and immoral to believe in absolute liberty of thought—immoral to advocate investigation and the use of the natural reasoning power that we possess. He seems to regard blind credulity as moral, and intellectual courage of thought as immoral. I, on the other hand, think morality lives in the domain of action rather than in the realm of belief. A man may accept a creed blindly and at the same time be a very immoral person; while, on the other hand, if a man is really moral, it makes but little difference what creed he may accept or deny. Every religion preaches ordinary morality, and, in addition to this, the necessity of belief in certain supernatural things and the observance of certain ceremonies. Now, if you were to take morality from religion, nothing of any value would be left: whereas, if you take from morality itself its religion, it would remain just as valuable as ever, and even more valuable.

"I deny having said anything in my lectures that is calculated to make people immoral. I have told them that the Bible is not inspired, but that what is true in it is just as good as if it had been; while the bad in it could not be made good by being inspired. I have told people that men wrote the book called the Bible, and that it is full of the ignorance of the times in which it was written. Also, that some of the things in it are noble and lofty, while it also contains things that are cruel, heartless, and even infamous. I have said that we should throw away the bad and preserve the good. I have told everyone to be honest with himself, and to express his opinions honestly. I have warned my hearers against being controlled by prejudice or educational influences, and I have also said that the world was for the living and not for the dead, but that each one should live in accordance with his ideal. I have said all in my power in favor of intellectual liberty; I have spoken in favor of all that is good and just and generous and noble. I deny that I have ever uttered a word calculated to make anyone immoral.

"I have not been guilty of the inconsistency of telling people they can act like devils for seventy years, and then be forgiven in a moment, and be carried up to heaven by hosts of angels. Such a doctrine is immoral. I don't tell the cashier of a bank that it is wrong to steal, and then add that if he steals every dollar in the vault he can repent and be forgiven as well in Canada as in the United States; neither do I tell him that when he repents there will be more joy in heaven than over ninety and nine honest cashiers who never stole a dollar. That doctrine is immoral, but it is not mine. Neither do I tell people that they are accountable for the sins of a couple of people who lived 6,000 years ago, and that they can be justly punished for offences they never committed. That would be immoral. Nor have I told people that they can get to heaven by the virtues of another man, or that another man or god can be good and they can get the credit for it. That, too, would be immoral.

"I have not told people that they ought to become heavenly paupers and enjoy the glories of another world purchased for them by another person. That would be immoral. But I have told them that if they would be happy they must earn happiness; that happiness cannot be received as alms; that, as a fact, happiness is the interest which decent actions draw; that they must be good for themselves. I have also told people that there is no such thing as forgiveness; that everybody has to bear the consequences of his own acts, and that these consequences are a universal police, whom nobody can bribe and no one avoid. That is moral, and in addition to being moral it is true.

"I have never told any one that a God of infinite wisdom and goodness could make hundreds of millions of people, knowing that they would be eternally damned. That would be immoral, because it makes the God revivalists talk about a monster. A God of infinite wisdom and power has no right to make a failure, and certainly a man who is born to eternal damnation can hardly be called a success.

"If I could change a stone into a human being, knowing that he would be a murderer and be hanged before he could get religion, and hence, according to orthodoxy, go to hell, I think I might far better leave the stone alone. If God makes people out of dust and knows they will be damned, he had far better leave the dust alone. I don't think that any God has a right to add to the misery of mankind. To think otherwise seems to me to amount to an insinuation that God is a monster and a savage."

"In other words, Colonel Ingersoll, while Sam Jones thinks the tendency of your lectures is immoral, you think the criticism applies more accurately to his preaching?"

"I don't want to criticise any one man in particular," was the reply. "The religion of our day is immoral. Most of the sermons preached are immoral, and, as a rule, they are subversive of the aims and ends of justice. I do honestly think that if we had a few less sermons and a few more lectures of a sensible kind, the world would actually grow better, brighter, and happier."

"Do you think the revivals of to-day are as useless and hurtful as those you have described as being held when you were a boy?"

"In answer to that I would say we are passing through a change. People are slowly becoming more and more thoughtful, and I think the evangelist will, in consequence, soon become a thing of the past. The preacher of the future will be a teacher. He will be one of the high priests of nature, and he will tell people how to live in this world, and how to enjoy the sunshine of this life. The sensational exhorters will have to go to the rear. They are no longer useful, if they were ever so. They are, indeed, a hindrance. Only a little while ago, in Spain, the people who were afflicted with cholera mobbed the doctors, looted the drug stores, and relied upon religious processions to stay the pestilence. They were behind the times, just as is the revivalist who tries to stay the onward march of crime by appealing to heavens or hells. He is pursuing the same course, with a certainty of achieving the same results. The world is beginning to see that people act and think for themselves under the circumstances of the hour, and to realise that to improve people their condition must be changed. This can be done only by developing the brain and civilising the heart. We must convince the people that wrong-doing is an ignorant blunder, that to get right is an effort of intelligence, and when these thoughts are firmly embodied in the minds of the people there will be no further use for medicine men, for augurs, or for evangelists. To appeal to the supernatural will be useless.

"When that time comes man will cease to think that a God controls the forces of this world, and man will become the providence of man."

—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

May 26, Liverpool.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 10 and 11, Aberdeen; 13 and 14, Dundee; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 24, Derby; 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street; 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York in August, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

In the *Revue Scientifique* (May 11) there is an interesting article by M. J. V. Laborde on "Microcephales and the Descent of Man." It is accompanied by portraits of microcephales and a chimpanzee. M. Laborde holds it as a biological law that the brain cannot be reduced below a certain weight and size without the intellectual functions being reduced. The microcephales mentioned approach in intellectual status to the chimpanzee. M. Laborde, however, repeats the saying of M. Broca: "I would rather pass for an intelligent ape than an imbecile man."

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ACID DROPS.

FLORENCE was shaken by an earthquake on Saturday night, May 18. Bells were set ringing in many houses, and people ran in crowds into the streets. Of course the performances were at once stopped at the theatres. Some persons were killed and a great many injured. At Grassina forty houses were laid in ruins; at Lapaggi several buildings fell in, burying some persons who were unable to escape. At San Martino the church was destroyed, the congregation being overwhelmed by the falling masonry. Several were crushed to death, and a large number badly injured. Believers in "Providence" should ask themselves why the worst mischief was wrought in a place of worship.

Thirty persons have been burnt to death in the Russian town of Brest-Litewski, which has been destroyed by fire. This, however, is a trifle to eternal hell hereafter. The buildings destroyed included three Russian churches and one Catholic church.

Our readers will probably remember our review of Mr. Kernahan's *God and the Ant*. It appears to us a worthless book, but the *Methodist Times* calls it "a very fine study." "It is really an apology for God," says the Methodist organ, "and the solution is that he suffers more than we do." Poor God! It is sad to know that he suffers so much, and all for nothing; but the saddest thought is that he has to leave his "apology" in the hands of little people who, on their own showing, are relatively like maggots crawling about in a mouldy cheese.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children held a meeting recently at the Mansion House. One of the speakers was Lady Ancaster, who stated that the Queen had said to her: "Oh, dear! to think that it should be necessary to have such a society in this country." It was a very natural exclamation. England often boasts of being the most Christian country in the world, yet savages would be ashamed to treat their children as thousands treat theirs in this Bible-reading land.

Mr. Price Hughes wants the Wesleyan Methodists to raise £100,000 for "missionary" purposes. One of these days the people to whom missionaries are sent will learn of our brutality, and send over some of their own missionaries to teach us the error and wickedness of our ways.

Mr. Waugh, secretary of the Cruelty Society, has never apologised for the monstrous lie he once uttered, that Secularists were the worst ill-users of children. He may choose to forget it, but we shall remember it against him. Unfortunately, from his point of view, some of the very worst cases his Society has taken in hand have disproved his lying assertion. The culprits have been Christians, and occasionally very pious Christians. Not one of them has been a Secularist.

We like to acknowledge any good work that Christians are engaged in, and we congratulate the Rev. W. Douglas Morrison, the chaplain of Wandsworth Prison, on the partial success of his efforts to improve our penal system, which is a scandal to our civilisation. We had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Morrison at a recent Conference of the Humanitarian League, and he was certainly far more sensible and humane than another prison chaplain who talked nonsense with a God Almighty air.

Mr. Morrison is justly praised in the *Methodist Times*, which rather naively remarks that his "principles are all laid down by that great jurist, Jeremy Bentham, but have hitherto been disregarded." Our contemporary forgets that Jeremy Bentham was an Atheist.

The Methodist writer rebukes Lombroso, the great criminologist, for his low estimate of human nature. A little further on the Methodist writer states that "Christians believe that the image of God is even in a man or a woman predisposed to vice and crime." This is going a great deal beyond Lombroso, who regards the criminal as an abnormal specimen of humanity. According to the Methodist writer, we are *all* afflicted with the same evil predisposition; so that Christianity is more pessimistic than Science.

Talmage says that sceptics are always asking, Why? This is how he answers them: "There are so many things they cannot get explained. They cannot understand the Trinity, or how God can be sovereign and yet man a free agent. Neither can I. They say: 'I don't understand why a good God should let sin come into the world.' Neither do I. You say: 'Why was that child started in life with such disadvantages, while others have physical and mental equipment?' I cannot tell. They get out of church on Easter morning and say: 'That doctrine of the resurrection confounded me.' So it is to me a mystery beyond unravelment."

It is foolish to let the cat out of the bag in this fashion. Still, the folly has its compensations. For one thing, it saves Talmage the trouble of discussion. Why should he debate the Resurrection? It is a mystery. The sceptic who wants to discuss it mustn't apply to Talmage. He must apply to someone who is a *little more* foolish; someone who doesn't see that discussing Christianity only demonstrates its utter irrationality.

The New York *Sun* suggests that Talmage should get stereopticon views to illustrate his realistic sermons. It says that his verbal descriptions of the scenes in the skies of the New Jerusalem and those down in limbo, or deeper still, really ought to be translated from language into stereopticon pictures, which would have a hundred times the potency of his words, even with his widest mouth and wildest gestures.

Dr. Heber Newton, of New York, gave a sermon on the resurrection of Jesus, which he declared was spiritual, though his disciples mistakenly supposed it to be material. He has been denounced by many of his fellow sky-pilots, Dr. Tyler declaring that he denied in his sermon what he teaches in the service, for he repeats every Sunday the Apostles' Creed, which declared "the resurrection of the body." The Rev. Mr. Harsha accuses Dr. Newton of striking a blow at the Christian faith. He says, if the disciples were mistaken, all the Christian Church is, and has been, at sea. The Rev. I. M. Haldeman declares that Dr. Newton is a traitor to the Christian cause and worse than an infidel.

The Roman Catholic clergy are expressly forbidden to conduct the funeral service of any one who dies in the Orthodox Greek faith, so that Russian sailors, who happen to die in France, run a considerable risk, in spite of French enthusiasm for Russia, of being refused Christian burial.

The Abbé Lemire reports from Rome that the Pope was so painfully affected by the new tax on the religious orders in France as to shed tears. He would not counsel resistance, but says he was only prevented from breaking off diplomatic relations with the Republic because it might be detrimental to the Catholic schools and other missionary enterprises in the East. The pocket seems to be the vital point in all religions.

Apropos of the reception given by the Pope to the ex-Duke of Parma, the following anecdote is told: The Pope, wishing to console his deposed and melancholy visitor, said: "Never mind, one must be resigned to the decrees of heaven, which prove to us the iniquity of the world. I also, as you know, am the victim of the evils of the time." "Your Holiness," interrupted the ex-Duke, "is not so badly off, being in your own house, while I must seek for hospitality far away." The Pope changed the subject.

Mr. Carvell Williams asked a question in the House of Commons relative to the teaching of "The Children's Hymn Book," which is a Church of England production, "arranged in the order of the Church's year," by the School Board of Hambledon, Hants. The only satisfaction he received was the statement by Mr. Acland that the Education Department consider that School Boards will be wise to refrain from providing hymn-books for children which are connected with any particular church or denomination, and to which objection might be taken by some of the parents.

M. Pierre Courbet writes in *Cosmos* against Professor Max Muller for saying that, if the Buddhist Life of Jesus, brought forward by M. Notovitch is true, "It would demonstrate once for all that Jesus is a real historic personage." He says: "What! because there has been discovered in an obscure monastery of the Himalayas a manuscript that nobody knew about up to this day, do you pretend that this manuscript constitutes such an historic monument that it would smooth away all difficulties relative to the life of Jesus? When an historic work has not been known to its contemporaries, it is necessary, if we are to accord it serious belief, that its author should be known, and that we should be able to show that the work in question is really his."

M. Courbet thinks there is no need of any new document to establish the historic character of the life of Jesus; but he does not bring to the evidence the sceptical criticism which he brings to the work of M. Notovitch. He displays his own ignorance of the subject by talking as if the Gospels were demonstrated to be the actual work of eye-witnesses, and by quoting the palpable forgery in Josephus and the questionable passage in the Annals ascribed to Tacitus, as if these were decisive. He even makes out that the Toldos Jeshu says that Jesus raised the dead. What the Toldos Jeshu does say may be seen by any reader of *The Jewish Life of Christ*.

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The following comes from America, and is not vouched for. Some may think that, if not true, it deserves to be: "A Congo native, who has been taught to read and write, has just sent a letter (his first) to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It reads as follows: 'Great and good chief of the tribe of Christ, greeting: The humblest of your servants kisses the hem of your garments, and begs you to send to his fellow servants more gospel and less rum. In the bonds of Christ. UGALIA.'"

The Holy Carpet has gone, as usual, from Cairo to Mecca; but many intending pilgrims have been scared by the early outbreak of cholera. Even Muslims are becoming too infected with rationalism to fancy that the holiness of the carpet will ward off disease germs.

Catholicism has been defined as a religion of candle-grease; but this definition will no longer serve, since the Pope has given his sanction to illuminating churches by electricity, except on the altars, which, as before, will only be lighted by wax candles or lamps with olive oil, the altar being specially dedicated to God, who is fond of the old fashions.

Mariano Gentile, the millionaire, who died recently at Messina, left his immense fortune to the Jesuits, although he had many poor relations. The fact has caused much indignation in Sicily.

The foundation-stone of the projected Roman Catholic cathedral for Westminster will be laid by Cardinal Vaughan on June 29. There is to be a great gathering of the faithful from all parts on this occasion. According to the prophecy of the leading Catholic organ in this country, the crowd will be the "biggest ever gathered for a single service since the time of the Reformation." Perhaps it will be, and perhaps not. In any case, the London *Echo* says, it will not be a bigger crowd than other religious bodies, "or even Secularists," could bring together, if they made as great efforts as the Roman Catholics have made to secure a gigantic display. Still, it is no use blinking the fact that the Catholic Church is making headway in England. It seems destined to absorb a large part of the Protestant Church; and, as Charles Bradlaugh predicted, the great fight of the future will be between Catholicism and Freethought—the two logical extremes of Faith and Reason.

The confession of Arthur Orton, the "Tichborne claimant," whose case excited so much attention about twenty years ago, ought to remind people of the little weight to be given to popular judgment of evidence. The mass held that the claimant, having been recognised by his mother, in the dark, must be the real Sir Roger, and, with his counsel, Dr. Kenealy, he was, for a time, one of the most popular men of the day. Such facts should serve as a warning against the too ready reception of strange stories of years gone by.

W. D. Howells, the American novelist, in a recent interview, said: "I do not go to church, because the sermons I am likely to hear make me antagonistic. I feel that I want to get right up in my seat and refute, then and there, many of the dogmas and arguments of the so-called Christian life."

The Messiah business is not as flourishing as in the old days. Mr. Christ Koresh Teed has suspended his *Flaming Sword*; the prophet, T. L. Harris, who captivated Laurence Oliphant, and was said to have been rejuvenated, is showing signs of age, and losing the regard of young lady followers; and Christ Schweinfurth, known as the Rockford Messiah, has been indicted by the grand jury of Winnebango county, with three of his "angels," who, it is said, have become mothers under his ministry, professedly through the instrumentality of the Holy Ghost. They are charged with living in open defiance of morality. It always was a risky profession.

At a banquet of ministers in Chicago, on the evening of May 1, Fred L. Chapman, editor of a church paper, said he had thoroughly investigated the cost of conversions in that city, and he found that each soul saved by the Baptists cost $285; by the Methodists, $384; the Presbyterians, $533, and the Congregationalists, $580, the average being $443. Under the law of competition it would appear that the Baptists will ultimately possess the earth.

Under the heading, "A Christianised Kafir," the Pretoria *Press*, of South Africa, reports the case of a native charged with rape and attempted murder. It says: "The accused was a member of a choir of Christian natives in this city. A hymn-book was found near the scene of the struggle, and, after being arrested, he asked for a Bible, which he said had been in his pocket." Perhaps he had been reading the choice stories in the book of Judges, how the Israelites took the daughters of Shiloh, and how the Levite treated his concubine.

It is reported that a son of Mr. Frederic Harrison, the famous Positivist, has just joined the Catholic Church. Our readers will remember that Mrs. Besant's daughter was recently reported to have joined the same community. Those who are tired of thinking, or incapable of it, find Catholicism a soft pillow for their poor heads.

In the case of the young lady librarian who sued a man of God at Los Angeles for a slander uttered in public prayer, the court decided that no prayer containing a slander, publicly uttered, can be exempt from the legal consequences, and that no communication made by a pastor to his congregation is privileged because of such relation.

On Sunday, at Clermont Ferrand, they celebrated, with a grand historical cavalcade, the eighth centenary of the First Crusade which Pope Urban II. preached at Clermont, and which the people received with shouts of "God wills it." The religious wars then began lasted for centuries, involved millions of lives, and finally left the hated Moslem in possession of the holy places at Jerusalem, while Turkish soldiers still have to keep the peace between rival Christian sects.

It is noted as a somewhat curious coincidence that, just as the Crusades are occupying the public mind in Paris once more, arrangements are being made for building a Mohammedan mosque in Paris.

In Paris there is now open a Buddhist Temple, so M. Lafont assures us in his new book on Buddhism. He also mentions that he knows of Christian missionaries, sent out to convert the Buddhists, who became adepts of the Buddhist faith.

Dean Farrar has just issued a book on *The Lord's Prayer*, which is advertised in the *Spectator* as "Most racy and readable." Has the new Dean been perusing the *Freethinker*, and has he caught its profane infection?

The Rev. Scott Hershey, of Boston, is reported as saying that there are two millions of young men in America "who are practical and theoretical unbelievers in the Christian religion, through the influence of Colonel Ingersoll." Let us hope it is true.

Four youths have been charged before the Dover magistrates with playing football on Sunday. The gravamen of the charge was that the game "was played during the hours of divine service." But as it was not played near a church the case was dismissed. Those four youths have much to be thankful for. In the old Bible days a man was put to death for picking up firewood on the Sabbath. Playing football would have meant roasting alive, at the very least.

Last Sunday evening a sermon on "The Use of Atheists" was preached at Westminster Chapel by W. Evans Hurndall, M.A. The chapel is a large edifice, and the preacher (as we are informed by a friend who attended) was a man of eloquence. But he knew little of Atheism. He admitted the brilliancy of the Atheistic attack on Christianity, and alluded in highly complimentary language to the late Charles Bradlaugh; but he told his congregation that Atheism was "sin in its most shocking form," and that the Atheist had "no reason to lead a moral life." Mr. Hurndall mistakes his little tabernacle for the illimitable universe. He doesn't understand any way of being good but his own; and he forgets that the most immoral men of the age are professed Christians.

Parson Collins, of Blisland, near Bodmin, in Cornwall, has mediæval notions as to the function and power of the Church. Four lads in his parish committed an assault on a servant girl, and the parson induced her to forgive them out of consideration for their parents. Two of the culprits agreed to go to church, confess their crime, and receive absolution. This they did, and after the service they distributed £2 worth of bread at the church gates, by way of penance. There was a great concourse of people and plenty of laughter and horseplay. One lad gave away the bread, and the other spooned out treacle from a big tin, while a member of the militia band discoursed upon a trombone. "Bread and treacle Sunday" will long be remembered in the parish. Whether morality has gained anything by the parson's interference we leave our readers to decide for themselves.

A "Christian Israelite" who has "served the Lord for forty years" advertises for some "kind Christian friend" to lend him £30. What on earth, or elsewhere, is Jesus Christ doing? Why doesn't he come to the relief of this servant? The streets of the New Jerusalem are paved with gold, and a few ounces might easily be spared (say when they are repaving) for a found sheep of the House of Israel.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 19, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C.: 7.30, "The Flight of the Jerusalem Ghost."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—May 26, Manchester. June 9, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

C. Dodd.—See paragraph. Liverpool is a big city, and should give Mr. Putnam big audiences. We note your memorandum re the old matter.

J. W. Gott.—Glad to hear the Bradford Secularists were so pleased with Mr. Putnam. He will make friends, and keep them, wherever he goes.

W. Witty (Hull).—Some comparative moral statistics of the religions in India appeared in the *Freethinker* of March 17.

A. McInnes (Glasgow).—As you are "a follower of Jesus," he may know something about you. We don't. It is kind of you to invite us to answer your letters in a Birmingham paper. Perhaps it is equally kind on our part to decline your invitation.

J. F. Haines.—Shall appear in our next.

Recruit.—Pleased to hear that you thought Mr. Foote's lecture "grand and instructive." Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell*, denounced by "Dangle" in the *Clarion*, has often been held up to abhorrence in Freethought journals.

James Neate.—See paragraph.

Pat.—Joseph Barker was for a brief period co-editor of the *National Reformer* with Charles Bradlaugh. It was more than thirty years ago. Joseph Barker did return to Christianity, and the English Freethinkers thought it was because he could not "boss the show." He was a man of frequent changes, and nearly boxed the compass of opinion.

G. Lovett.—Marchant is entitled to his opinion that he succeeded in closing Secular meeting-places. He is not cut out to do anything of the kind. Mr. Foote is perfectly indifferent to Marchant's opinion of *him*. He is content to let his pamphlets on the Atheist Shoemaker and the Hall of Science Libel Case speak for themselves. They will produce their effect on persons accessible to reason. Other persons must be left to their natural stupidity.

G. Sudley.—(1) We do not remember such a sentence in Mr. Holyoake's writings. He is an Atheist himself, and the author of a very interesting and instructive *Trial of Theism*. It is impossible that *he* can regard an Atheist as "one who is without morality," though he may have said, and said truly, that the vulgar generally regard an Atheist in that light. (2) Lord Bacon's views on Atheism are expressed in his two essays on "Atheism" and "Superstition." There is a careful article on his lordship's criticism of Atheism in the second volume of Mr. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought*. (3) Catholic monasteries and nunneries are not subject to government inspection. They are treated as private houses. (4) We are quite satisfied that such institutions have been the scenes of grave scandals, and that they should be subject to inspection, in the common interest of human liberty.

J. K. Maagaard.—Shall appear.

C. W. Smith.—The *Chronicle* correspondence on "Is Christianity Played Out?" appeared early in 1892, we believe.

J. Keast.—Sorry to hear there are threats of disorder at the Bristol open-air meetings. We hope the local Secularists will support the Branch platform.

J. Burrell.—Thanks. See paragraph.

Thor.—Shall appear.

S. H. Alison says he is in Scotland for an indefinite period, and cannot book any dates for London Branches.

A. Adams, secretary, desires us to state that the Hull Branch has decided to discontinue its meetings during the summer. They will be resumed on the first Sunday in October.

A. C. L.—Cuttings are always welcome.

Absalom.—Thanks for your interesting letter. The verses shall appear.

E. C. Smith.—We are obliged for the copy of the Theosophist pamphlet, but we think we have given sufficient attention to Mrs. Besant, unless we notice a fresh development in her meteoric career. We dare say there will be something to reprint from Mr. Putnam's letters when the *Truthseeker* arrives.

J. Saunders.—Next week. Thanks.

A. J. Woodward.—The joke is an old one. We told it and printed it years ago.

Papers Received.—Derby Daily Telegraph—Chat—Crescent—Accrington Advertiser—Islamic World—Twentieth Century—Post—Willesden Chronicle—Public Opinion—Open Court—Two Worlds—Birkenhead News—Light—Solidarity—Truthseeker—Progressive Thinker—Boston Guardian—Liberator—Leaves of Healing—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Echo—Isle of Man Times—Preston Guardian—Hull Times—Ilfracombe Gazette—Western Morning News—Morning—Builder's Journal.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

Since my return from Derby I have been ploughing through tremendous arrears of work. During my absence from London I left certain critical matters in the hands of Miss Vance, who carried out my instructions with tact and loyalty. I desire to express the highest appreciation of the energy and attention she has displayed during the recent trouble in connection with the Hall.

The audience, on Sunday evening, were comfortably seated, and everything looked as usual. They little knew the narrow escape we had run, or what labor and anxiety had been incurred.

Owing to my preoccupation with so much other work—to say nothing of other reasons—I must defer giving the *history* of this Hall of Science affair. But I am thoroughly resolved to give it before the N.S.S. Conference, and therefore I shall give it in next week's *Freethinker*, unless the paper or I should be dead before then.

And really a Secular leader is liable to curious dangers. I have met with several madmen in my time, and a week or two ago I met with one who is now in an asylum. He called at the office and wanted to see me alone for a few minutes. I did not grant him the interview, but advised him to go home and see a doctor. He left a basket at the office, which he would call for presently. When the police opened it they found several things, including a nice, sharp carving-knife.

With respect to the Hall of Science, it will be remembered that Mr. R. O. Smith would not promise to extend the time of his offer to the end of May. So far as the *time* is concerned, after what has just happened, he cannot help himself. I am therefore keeping the matter open. At the finish he will either come to terms or he will not, and in any case I presume he will consult his own interest and convenience, so that it is not so very difficult to make a reasonable calculation.

A Dublin friend, who promises to take ten shares, expresses his surprise that my appeal has to be continued. He imagined that the £600 would be raised in a few weeks at the outside. In his own mind there is no doubt whatever as to the necessity of maintaining headquarters for our party in London.

Some Lancashire friends, who have previously subscribed to various objects in our movement, say they do not understand why the London friends cannot raise the £600 themselves. "How is it," said one of them to us, "that a well-to-do Londoner doesn't come along and say, Here is the whole £600 for you?" There is some force in the observation. But, on the other side, it must be said that London has furnished the major part of what has been received from this appeal; and that, after all, the provincial friends are not uninterested in the maintenance of headquarters in London. The metropolis is really a national centre, and a success in it reacts favorably upon the entire country.

I want Secularists, in the provinces as well as in London, to regard this matter very seriously during the next week or so; and to apply for shares, or to forward donations, during that period.

A Christian opponent at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening declared that if I devoted what he called my

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"brains and eloquence" to Christianity, I should not need to appeal so long for £600. Perhaps not. But I make allowance for the relative poverty and disadvantages of Secularists. Still, I do think that the amount should be more than realised by the end of May.

The few donations that have reached me since last week will be acknowledged in the next issue of this journal. I will also state the exact number of shares applied for, the total of subscriptions, and the amount of conditional promises. Reckoning these we are not far off the requisite figure, and a little fresh effort should carry us to the point of success.

I desire to correct a misapprehension of my closing remarks last week. I do not mean to act—indeed I cannot act—except in concert with the Board of Directors and the shareholders of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited). If they do not approve my plan, I shall be unable to carry it out. If they do approve it, I recognise no right on the part of others to any sort of objection. All our troubles at the Hall have arisen from conflicting powers and divided responsibilities. My own view is that an enterprise in which money is sunk should be conducted on business principles; and I shall be much astonished if that view does not commend itself to the Directors and the Shareholders.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote occupied the London Hall of Science platform on Sunday evening, and lectured to a good audience on "Riddles of the Sphinx." He was listened to with profound attention, and tremendously applauded at the finish. Mr. Touzeau Parris, who kindly came and took the chair, said that such a lecture ought to have been heard in a hall twice the size and packed to the doors. He was glad to know that the President of the N.S.S. was one who could give real thought, as well as time and energy, to the work of the movement. Mr. Parris made an earnest appeal for support to the Hall scheme, which had his heartiest sympathy. His remarks on this point were supplemented by the lecturer; after which there was some good-tempered discussion. Mr. Foote lectures at the Hall of Science again this evening (May 26), taking for his subject "The Flight of the Jerusalem Ghost"—*apropos* of the Whitsuntide celebration.

The *Derby Daily Telegraph* devotes an editorial to the recent debate between Messrs. Foote and Lee. The following extract from this article will interest our readers: "For obvious reasons we shall make no attempt to report, even in summarised form, the arguments adduced; and we have the less hesitation in adopting this course because arrangements were made by the disputants themselves to have the debate reported at length and published in pamphlet form. But the considerations at which we have hinted need not stand in the way of our bearing testimony to the skill and ability with which the two opponents sustained their parts. Both men are born debaters. To earnestness of conviction, and the rare gift of submitting complex matter in an attractive form, they unite oratorical powers of a really brilliant type. Mr. Lee, despite his connection with the West of England, furnishes evidence, in moments of fervid declamation, of Hibernian origin. That he loves his work—that his heart and soul are in it, no listener to his eloquent appeals could fail to perceive. On Thursday he was manifestly suffering from weakness—he had, it transpired, been compelled to spend most of the day in bed—but he entered upon his task with an ardor which never failed him, and with a fascinating fluency which never for a moment flagged. Mr. Foote is more deliberate in his utterances, but his phraseology bespeaks the scholar no less than the elocutionist, and at times he rises to a very high level of oratorical expression. A more vivid and impassioned peroration than the one with which he brought Wednesday's meeting to a close it has rarely been our fortune to hear. We can pay its author no higher compliment than to say that it awakened recollections of Charles Bradlaugh in his best days. It is pleasant to be able to say the debate was marked by mutual courtesy. Mr. Lee gave to his conclusions the broadest basis. He made it clear, as may be imagined, that he was a whole-hearted believer in Theistic doctrine; but there was no suggestion, however remote, of the sectarian spirit. Mr. Foote, for his part, was studiously careful to avoid the aggressive style which debaters were accustomed to adopt a generation back. That he advanced many points and drew many conclusions which were distasteful to some of his hearers will, of course, be understood; but there was throughout a manifest desire on his part to uphold the dignity of the debate. The close interest with which the argumentative duel was followed was quite remarkable. On each evening the spacious building was crowded, many being unable to find sitting accommodation. Now and again there was a disposition on the part of a few sensitive listeners to interrupt the outspoken advocate of Freethought; but, in the main, Mr. Foote was well and patiently listened to, and his own sympathisers in the room did not fail to punctuate his more powerful arguments with hearty cheers. It is hardly necessary to say that the great majority of the listeners—who included a good many ladies—were favorably disposed towards Mr. Lee, whose reception was of a most enthusiastic description."

Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, last Sunday evening. His lecture was enthusiastically applauded. Mr. Roger made an excellent chairman. Mr. Clarke, of the Christian Evidence Society, offered some opposition, and invited the lecturer to a public discussion, which Mr. Watts declined. Our colleague wishes it to be understood that he cannot meet third- or fourth-rate men in set debate. He is quite ready to discuss with representative Christians, but with no others.

To-day, Sunday, May 26, Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. Of course, he will have good audiences.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, our American visitor, delivered three lectures to good audiences at Bradford on Sunday. His addresses were highly appreciated, and all who were present look forward with great pleasure to the time when Mr. Putnam will visit England again. At the close of the day's work a very hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the lecturer. It was coupled with a request that he would try to induce Colonel Ingersoll to visit the old country.

Liverpool friends will note that Mr. Putnam lectures in their city to-day (May 26). They will, of course, do their very best to give him crowded meetings in the Oddfellows' Hall. Many friends within easy railway distance of Liverpool will probably take this opportunity of seeing and hearing the President of the American Secular Union. In the chances and changes of things some of them may never have *another* opportunity; they should therefore seize *this one*.

The Battersea Branch, in defiance of the "sanctity of the Sabbath," is going to have a special entertainment and dance this evening (May 26) at 8. Members of the N.S.S. and their friends are heartily welcome. The tickets (3d. and 6d.) can be obtained at the Secular Hall or at the outdoor meeting. The proceeds will go to the Branch exchequer, which is in a depleted condition.

The Bethnal Green Branch deserves great credit for the brave way in which it has carried on the open-air propaganda in Victoria Park. It has had to suffer a good deal from Christian rowdyism, but it has never been intimidated. Last Sunday afternoon, we regret to say, it had another painful experience. A man called Eltlein, who at one time asked assistance of Secularists on the ground that he was "a gentlemanly opponent of Atheism," has lately revealed himself in his true colors. He heads a band of rowdies who molest our speakers and disturb our meetings in Victoria Park. On Sunday afternoon this person's brutal tactics led to a scene of great disorder. We appeal to Freethinkers in the neighborhood to rally round the Victoria Park platform, and assist in maintaining order against these fanatical followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Delegates and individual members who will attend the National Secular Society's Annual Conference at Bristol, and who desire to have hotel accommodation secured for them, should communicate with the local Branch secretary, Mr. J. Keast, 32 Morgan-street, St. Paul's, Bristol.

Little time is now left to make arrangements for the Conference. The local Branch has everything ready as far as Bristol is concerned. All that now remains is for the Branches all over the country to see that they are represented. We hope to see a large gathering on Whit-Sunday.

The special Committee of the Bristol Branch will show the delegates places of interest on Whit-Sunday, as far as the time permits; and on the Monday they hope to have a pleasant outing with as many friends as can stay over.

The Manchester Branch has for some months supplied copies of the *Free Review* to the various Free Libraries in the city, numbering sixteen in all. The Libraries Committee have now undertaken to supply the magazine themselves. Up to the present the Branch has not been successful in its efforts to introduce the *Freethinker*, but it will make another attempt shortly.

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REPLY TO MR. PUTNAM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Had you, as Chairman at the Hall of Science last Sunday evening, not deprecated (though you did not actually forbid) discussion after the lecture of the President of the American Secular Union, on "Freethought," I should certainly have at once offered myself as a speaker.

But though I considered Mr. Putnam's account of Christianity as a complete travesty of the facts, and therefore thought it called for some criticism from myself *before* the audience dispersed, I could not overlook your appeal to those present to spare the lecturer additional fatigue; especially as, when my name was called out, by someone unknown to me, your brief comment was a distinct discouragement of my being put forward as a representative of the Christian side: the instincts of a gentleman compelled silence on my part. Besides, whatever may be the views and utterances of American Freethinkers, they are men of like passions with Christians; and I could not help somewhat warmly sympathising with the very genuine friendliness of the reception of a Transatlantic cousin. Had I spoken, my first words would have been those of welcome from an Englishman to one of the great English-speaking—and, in the main, English-feeling—Republic, unbroken amity with which would almost mean peace for the whole world.

But, as my abstinence from the discussion was due only to the reasons already given, I think it is due to me, or rather to Christianity—actual Christianity, not Mr. Putnam's presentment of it—that I should be permitted to state my criticisms of his statements in your columns, especially as I desire mainly to name certain facts which it will be wise for him to take into account before he commences his lectures in the provinces.

I.—In the first place, then, he went out of his way to nail his colors to the mast, by defining what he understood by Christianity. He distinctly *restricted* it to—made it coterminous with—belief in these doctrines: (*a*) the total depravity of all mankind; (*b*) the vicarious sacrifice of Christ; (*c*) eternal damnation. And he added that faith was, for Christians, everything, and conduct and character nothing. And, further, he insisted that his definition was true of *historical* Christianity.

Under these circumstances, I need not go into the question whether the above-stated definition agrees with the New Testament or not; though my criticism would certainly not lose force by such an appeal. A reference to history (*a*) *past*, (*b*) *present*, will suffice.

(*a*) It is surely not unreasonable to appeal for the general Christian view of doctrine to what is, *par excellence*, *the* Christian summary of belief—the Apostles' Creed. Compare that Creed with Mr. Putnam's definition; and, though I am in no way desirous to minimise any common ground, I call upon the President of the American Secular Union to show any justification for substituting his statement for the Authorised Version. As to how far the doctrines, as defined by him, are in accordance with, or in antagonism to, those held by myself, I will state very briefly later on.

(*b*) For I will now pass from the Christian creed of the Ages to consider it in our own times. From the very nature of the case, unless he be a Don Quixote charging against windmills, the creed which Mr. Putnam devotes himself to opposing must be that which Christians *actually* hold now. He has surely not crossed the Atlantic to attack that which no longer exists! What, then, *is* the Christian creed as taught in all our churches and chapels?

It has occurred to me that Mr. Putnam may assert that in *America* the Christian creed *is* as he has defined it. I do not care at the moment to say what is or what is not the prevailing doctrine in his great country. I know that those of my own Episcopal Communion there are at one with us here. I know what was the general teaching of the two most-admired preachers in U.S.A. during the last quarter of a century—Mr. H. W. Beecher and Dr. Phillips Brooks. I know what is held by a great many leading American theologians, for I have read their books. And all this, which I *know*, is wholly against any very marked divergence of doctrine, such as could alone justify Mr. Putnam's statements.

But in England! *Risum teneatis, amici?* I do not ask Mr. Putnam to do it. But supposing some trustworthy English ally of his were to visit every church and chapel in London and large provincial city or town, not once, but many times, what proportion would the three doctrines with which he sums up Christianity bear to the general teaching of the preachers? At the most, a not large percentage.

Now I return to my own views. As to the "total depravity of all mankind," I entirely object to the phrase; but I entirely believe that the Fall is universal. As far as anything can be known by observation of all cases verifiable, every human being I have known has been sinful. As to the "vicarious sacrifice of Christ," I entirely believe in it, and believe it to be so much in accordance with the universe, as it is known to us, that, did Christianity not teach it, it might appear opposed to fundamental natural laws. As to "eternal damnation," I accept what the New Testament says, but take the words therein written in their natural sense, by which I mean their connotation in the minds of the original speakers, hearers, writers, and readers.

(1) Archdeacon Farrar—now Dean of Canterbury—in his speech at the Manchester Church Congress, October 5, 1888, brought forward a mass of details: (*a*) as to the meaning of such words as "eternal"; (*b*) as to various views on the subject of "eternal punishment" held by the Church of Christ at various times of its long history, which anyone, honestly desiring to form a just opinion, should know. I am in no way referring to Dr. Farrar's views. I am simply calling attention to what he named as *his* facts.

(2) I also spoke on the same subject at that Congress, and named the opinion which I have, for nearly fifteen years, constantly expressed—*i.e.*, that belief is not at all the same as a creed, and that a so-called "infidel" may often be far more of a believer in God and in Christ than those intellectually accepting the Christian creed. I hold that it is natural and reasonable that the phrase, "belief in," in the Bible should mean what it means in ordinary life; and that, therefore, the man who shows every mark of the spirit of Christ *is* a believer in Christ. I fancy that many "infidels" will be in a future state (or, rather, are in the spiritual world now existing) far higher than multitudes of fairly sincere Christians; and everything I read about Christ in the Gospels, of which the latter half of St. Matthew xxv. is one remarkable instance, confirms me in this view. Nor do I recollect that any Christian to whom I have explained it has objected to it as un-Christian.

(3) But, as the name of Farrar may almost prejudice many against his views, and my opinion may be regarded as of little value, I will now bring forward the testimony of one whose ecclesiastical and theological learning was gigantic, whom no one could accuse of being Latitudinarian, and who, as his *Life* proves, was the last man to yield an iota of what he regarded as true dogma or Catholic truth in deference to the wishes or denunciations of the religious parties who might, at any given time during his career, be dominant in the Church. I mean Dr. Pusey.

In his volume, *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment?* he states, as expressing the orthodox view of the Universal Church: "None will be lost whom God can save without destroying in them His own gift of freewill. None will be lost who do not obstinately to the end, and in the end, refuse God." Substitute in that quotation, for "God," "the ever-living Being Who is infinite Love and Truth and Equity and Holiness and Wisdom and Power," which sums up the Christian idea of God, and it would seem that the belief of the Church of Christ simply endorses the cry of Abraham, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

But to return to my main present thesis—viz., the immense difference between Mr. Putnam's definition of the Christian creed and the creed itself, both past and present. How did that difference come about? Well, the only person who can fully explain it is that gentleman himself. Still, one may conjecture that, for his own purposes, he has chosen to name as the true Christian creed that which undoubtedly was for a long time very dominant in America, though never in England or on the continent of Europe. He has, I presume, Calvinism in view; but even in America Calvinism has, I believe, ceased to be dominant. The present danger in America—I speak from the Christian point of view—is not that too much Calvinism is preached, but that its many noble elements are likely to be overlooked and forgotten—*e.g.*, its splendid testimony to the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to Christ being the only Savior from sin.

II.—But I have not yet done with Mr. Putnam's definition of the Christian faith. I have dealt with it as regards the Church's creed, but I have hardly touched at all so far on his statement—which it is difficult to quote without indignation—that "faith was, for Christians, everything, and conduct and character nothing."

I have already pointed out that faith in the Bible covers conduct and character; but it is better, because simpler, to ask whether any considerable section of the Christian Church has ever held a view so dishonoring to God and so lowering for man. Did Calvinists, *when* they were dominant in what is now the U.S.A., speak lightly of holiness? Were they indifferent to conduct and character? Was it not the very nobility of their lives which almost commended what was narrow and untrue in their setting forth of the creed? Is Mr. Putnam so ignorant of the history of his own people as not to recognise that, to their indomitable resolution and martyr spirit, and zeal for righteousness and abhorrence of falsehood, the American Republic, to a great extent, owes its very existence? Again, he has probably heard of Mr. Moody, a renowned American Evangelist, who has more than once visited our shores. Would it not be unjust to the last degree to say of Mr. Moody that he had not with burning enthusiasm declared the absolute necessity of a converted life, full of goodness in thought and word and deed?

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But, taking the widest view possible, whom has the Christian Church ever honored the most? Why, the saints. And what does "saint" mean but an eminently good man—loving, humble, self-sacrificing, truthful, honest, just, temperate, pure?

III.—And this leads me, in conclusion, to contrast so-called "Freethought" and the Christianity Mr. Putnam has crossed the Atlantic to oppose. As he is a stranger here, he ought to be thankful to me for naming some facts emphasising the contrast.

(a) He was in the "Hall of Science." Is science taught there now? Not much, I think. I am not at all a likely person to be unjust to "Freethinkers." Often the sense of their extreme weakness in numbers, and in means, and in power, so appeals to my feelings of pity that I would fain abstain from drawing attention to that weakness. And so it was that, when three ladies of great intelligence and earnestness were, *for a time*, holding classes in the Hall of Science, I went out of my way in conversation with Christians, and in speaking to Freethinkers in the hall itself, to draw attention to the extraordinarily high percentage of honors attained by Mrs. Besant, Mrs. Bonner, and Miss Bradlaugh's pupils. *But how long did this last?* A few years only; then—I believe I am right in saying so—the classes ceased to exist in that hall. What had gained my sincere admiration turned out to be a mere flash in the pan; and I could not help thinking of the old Christian standard of "patient continuance in well-doing." And, because I was almost more than fair to Freethinkers, I am entitled to point to the hundreds and thousands of Christians who, with no desire for popularity, and out of pure love of their kind, continue, year after year, in ceaseless efforts for the intellectual (for I am not now speaking of the spiritual) improvement of their younger brothers and sisters. A single Christian man, Mr. Quintin Hogg, out of his own resources, has done more for the scientific education of the millions of our metropolis than fifty Secular Halls of Science (*if they had existed!*) would have done in a century!

(b) I repeat, Mr. Putnam was in the "Hall of Science." It is the cathedral of his English comrades. It does not strike one by its vast dimensions. It is not very noble in its architecture. Its adornments are not remarkable. In the same street is St. Luke's Church. It is in a poor neighborhood, with small resources. From mere curiosity I looked in last Sunday night, and was astonished at its dimensions, its architecture, and its adornments. I had anticipated nothing of the kind.

But, farther, how many "Halls of Science" or the like are there in the country? There is one at Leicester. Are there ten of any pretension in the whole of England? I trow not. But churches—why there are, I suppose, from 10,000 to 15,000; and in saying that I am speaking of the Church of England only.

Again, you, Mr. Editor, congratulated Mr. Putnam on the very large attendance. Well, the hall was crowded, but it was an altogether exceptional occasion, and there are many Nonconformist chapels which can boast a congregation far larger every Sunday in the year. *Why is that?* Have you, after all, made a mistake as to human nature, and have we blunder-headed Christians, by some happy piece of luck, managed to come into touch with the great heart of humanity?

(c) Once more, Mr. Putnam was in the "Hall of Science," the English headquarters of Secularism. If Secularism fails to be secular, where does it expect to succeed? Well, Mr. Putnam can inquire of you what Secularists are doing—of you, Mr. Editor, and all your lieutenants, who are for ever denouncing us for our lack of good deeds, as is natural, considering our creed knows nothing of "conduct and character." I do not mean "doing" on the platform or in the press, but I mean in good works. I urge him to inquire carefully how many children the members of the National Secular Society instruct, how many sick persons they visit, how many poor they relieve, how many hospitals they provide, how many drunkards they reclaim, how many of their fallen sisters they restore to the paths of virtue, to how many mourners they speak words of comfort. This is good secular work, is it not? I do not ask Mr. Putnam to inquire how much you *talk about* these works of mercy, but how many you *do*. And Christians—what of them? I will take but one single instance, though in my own experience I have known, and sometimes taken part in, scores of a like character.

Last Sunday morning I received by post the May number of the *Plaistow Parish Messenger*. I put it in my pocket to refer to when my opportunity came in the evening to reply to Mr. Putnam. That opportunity you did not offer, so I refer to that "Church Monthly" now. You will, I am sure, recollect that not so many years ago Secularism was jubilant in Plaistow, London over the Border. It had a local habitation (not always its good fortune elsewhere), the Cromwell Club. That Club, by the way, had rather a bad name in the neighborhood. It was not, I have been told, a centre of "light and leading." The Club has long departed from the building. The Christian Evidence Society gives lectures in it now, and Christianity is *doing* something for the 21,000 odd persons in that desperately poor parish. What is it doing? Of course, nothing as regards the improvement of "conduct and character," for Mr. Putnam is quite clear about that. That was what the Secular Cromwell Club existed for; Christianity, historically, never! However, I open Mr. Given-Wilson's "Church Monthly." In it are many things of a religious and spiritual character; but, as these are to the Presidents of the N.S.S. and the A.S.U. what a red rag is to a bull, I will not hurt your feelings by naming them. I will speak only of the secular undertakings it records. (1) "Our Labor Fund." (2) "Children's Annual Excursion." (3) "St. Mary's Day Nursery." (4) "St. Mary's Hospital for Sick Children." (5) "St. Mary's Medical Mission." (6) "St. Mary's Holiday Home for Children." (7) "St. Monica's Home of Rest for Women." (8) "St. Mary's Parish Sale Room." (9) "St. Mary's Garment Society." (10) "The Annual Parochial Tea." (11) "St. Mary's Gymnasium." (12) "Church of England Temperance Society." I observe, also, that there are acknowledgments of gifts from just 250 persons. You will pardon me for naming the saints so often; I must apologise for such hypocrites and fanatics having, by some sort of accident, got connected with secular works of mercy. It has just occurred to me that I am sadly mistaken. Mr. Given-Wilson is a Freethinker in disguise, and, had he not been Jesuitical, he would have omitted all the saints and put instead the "N.S.S.'s Day Nursery," the N.S.S.'s Hospital," etc. As to the 250 contributors, they must certainly be *habitués* of the Hall of Science, Old-street.

This is, indeed, a subject for inquiry. Should my surmise be justified by facts, these generous Freethinkers, who in their modesty pose as Christians, must no longer bring credit to that detested name, but avow themselves for what they are—the only honest men. But, in the meantime, I will ask Mr. Putnam to inquire whether all the adherents of the N.S.S., through the length and breadth of England, do as many secular good works as one vicar of a poor parish, and those who respond to his appeals.

C. Lloyd Engstrom,
Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society.
13 Buckingham-street, Strand, W.C., May 11, 1895.

DON'T RAKE UP OLD GRIEVANCES.

The spook of the Rev. H. P. Hue,
When expelled from Mother Earth,
With spookly speed to Paradise flew
To claim his abode with the saintly crew,
And join in their dismal mirth.

Saint Peter looked out, "Who the dickens are you
Comes hammering thus at the gate?"
"I'm the spook of the Rev. H. P. Hue,
Who so long have harassed the infidel crew,
Come at last in a sanctified state."

"Nay, nay," said Saint Peter, "that story won't do;
Your lying is known too well.
If you are the Rev. H. P. Hue,
You know that all liars must get their due
With the fibbers that frizzle in hell."

But the spook of the Rev. H. P. Hue
Smole a Cheshire grimalkin's smile,
And shrilly he crowed "Cock-a-doodle-doo,"
And made St. Pete look exceedingly blue,
As he stirred up his heavenly bile.

"For God sake," he cried, "come in, Brother Hue;
Don't rake up that wretched old score;
My skin was at stake when that d—d rooster crew.
But just let it drop, and I promise you true
That I'll mention shoemakers no more."

T. Clark.

Here is a good specimen of honest prayer, said to have been made by a disappointed Scotch immigrant: "O Lord, we, thy disobedient children, approach thee this night in the attitude o' prayer (an' likewise o' complaint). When we cam tae Canady, we expectit to find a land flowin' wi milk an' honey. Instead o' that, we foun' a place peoplit wi' ungodly Irish. Scoor them oot, drag them o'er the mooth o' the bottomless pit, but ye needna let 'em drap in. Drive them to the uttermost pairts o' Canady. Mak' them but hewers of wood and drawers of water; but, O Lord, ne'er mak' them magistrates, members of Parliament, nor any kind o' rulers o'er the people. An', O Lord, gin ye hae got ony lan' tae gie awa', gie tae thine ain peculiar people, the Scotch. An' the glory be all thine ain. Amen."—*Toronto "Secular Thought."*

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PROGRESS IN AMERICA.

As an instance of how the work of Ingersoll and the "infidels" is telling on American opinion, we cut the following from an article contributed by Mr. R. B. Marsh to the *Non-Sectarian*:—

"The Bible idea of the ways and times in which this earth and man began to be; of man's fall, and the curse upon him and the earth; of the need of an atonement, were all well enough when men knew no better, and could not see any higher; but when these ideas were used to check, to torture, and to kill those who tried to read God's real book, then it was harmful, and was the moving cause and justification of great injustice and wrong. We know there was no 'Fall,' no curse; that labor is the salvation, not the curse, of the race; especially that God could not have been circumvented, surprised, angered, or led to repent. We cannot believe that woman was an after-thought, nor that she was the author of man's sin, or the cause of his 'fall.' We do know that polygamy, slavery, wars of conquest, persecution for belief's sake, have been, and some of them yet are, excused and justified by many passages in the Bible. When men are so far inspired by the spirit of the truth that wherein the Bible and the creeds oppose facts and righteous acts they can say, 'All the worse for the Bible,' as the anti-slavery men said when told that the Bible taught slavery, all will then be well, and we will cease to object.

"The common view of the merits of Christ are based on the Fall and the Curse, though Jesus never referred to them. We do not believe that Jesus could have had as truthful a view of the laws of the universe as we have to-day. His idea of prayer, since he knew little of natural law, may not be true. If believers can have anything they ask for, we have had no true believers; and we can easily see that nothing would so quickly and surely ruin the race as that way of getting things done. We cannot believe that Jesus is the sole hope of the race, since but a small part of the world has ever heard of him, and the ages before his time could not have accepted him. If God is limited in his 'plan' by so narrow a 'scheme' as this, our belief in him and reverence for him would suffer such a shock that nothing but cowardly fear could induce us to worship him."

Witches.

"O. J. L." says—and says truly—that (theological) "Christianity decidedly holds that" communication between the seen and the unseen world "is not only a possibility, but an absolute, unquestionable fact"; and he might have gone on to add that it holds with equal decision the reality of demoniacal possession, of divination, and of sorcery generally. Now, is there one syllable in the entire Bible about the cessation of these supernatural or extra-natural phenomena? An ignorant man at the present day, who has faith in Biblical inspiration, is bound to believe in the existence of witches, sorcerers, evil spirits, diviners, media, and all the rest of it. Not the slightest hint is anywhere given that such persons are ever to cease out of the land as long as the world endures; and, this being so, the wretched creatures whose pitiful stories you narrate in your leading article had no small amount of justification for their belief that they were dealing with the powers of evil. If, instead of wasting time and money in attempting to make these poor creatures understand subjects which can scarcely by any possibility ever be of any use to them, they were taught that the so-called demoniacs were merely people afflicted with epilepsy and mania, and that the Witch of Endor was nothing but a fortune-teller and ventriloquist, and as big an impostor as any of the scoundrelly "media" who so cruelly and wickedly humbugged poor Miss Florence Marryat, the Clonmel and other ghastly tragedies might well have never happened at all.—*A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society*, in "*English Mechanic*."

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

OUR TASK.

Some people, not over wise, often advise me to let the parsons and theology alone. Why? We, the Freethinkers, began our open attacks upon the Protestant fetish, the Bible, considerably over two hundred years ago. If our attacks had been fruitless, we might have been discouraged, and even dropped the task. But has it been? Is there a single point upon which we have directed our guns which has not suffered? I know of none. We have been answered, refuted, imprisoned, ostracised, abused, slandered, refused the rights of citizens; but somehow the Christian scholars have been compelled to adopt our principal views and drop the principal ones they formerly held. The early unbelievers who attacked the Bible were very much milder than the Bible's defenders of to-day. They have lost the battle, and we have won. Our views are now in possession of foremost scholars and of the Universities. Then why should we cease to attack the Bible and theology? We must convert the masses, and rescue them from priestly and parsonic bondage. That is our task, and we shall certainly accomplish it.

Besides, people who bid us drop it are unphilosophical. It is only by canvassing the past and present notions of mankind that we can work improvement. All true education must take man as he is, study his present state, and teach him its defects. There is *no other* basis for true education for the individual or the world. Socrates took the Athenians as they were, canvassed their current and most familiar views and prejudices. So did Plato, Aristotle, and the rest of the philosophers. Not to multiply examples, if the Reformers had not discussed Aristotle and attacked at least the dominant post human folly had assigned to him, they must have labored in vain. Were Aristotle or any other philosopher at present dominating men as that name had done for ages before the Reformation, we should be compelled to attack him in the interests of human advancement. Ay! and if Aristotle had been all his worshippers averred, it was still necessary to attack him, for, right or wrong in his views, his name dominated and enslaved the European intellect. And let me say, an enslaved intellect, even if right in its views, is immensely worse off than a free intellect, even if its main opinions should be false. It is the dominance of an opinion or of a name that man has most to dread. And so now, if Jesus and the Bible were all their votaries say, it would be necessary to attack them both, to rouse thought and doubt and disbelief and keenest criticism, in order to emancipate the human intellect from the thraldom they have produced. Yes, we must begin with man as we find him, if we would work reform. We must canvass the views he holds, whether in politics, social life, or religion. There can be no improvement without this. I defy my critics to name any reform in the history of man which did not spring from a sifting of the prejudices and views before held. There never was, there never can be, a reform without this course being pursued. And our critics themselves see this plainly in other departments of life; but for some unexplained reason cannot see that it holds good in religion.—*J. Symes, in "Liberator."*

PROFANE JOKES.

"Your new servant girl is very pious, I hear?" "Yes. If she was as careful about the crockery as she is about the Ten Commandments, she would be a jewel."

Pulpit sensationalism has reached a climax in San Francisco, where a young preacher illustrated his sermon on dancing by waltzing through it. It was a very moving discourse.

Missionary—"Has the Lord been good to you since my last visit?" Native—"Yes, de Lord was bery good to us till last spring, when de Debil put it into de head of some man to build a lighthouse on dat p'int, and we hasn't had a wreck since."

Joe—"There goes a man who for ten years never drank liquor, used tobacco in any form, or stayed out after 9 p.m., and never missed a Sunday at church." Bill—"A model man, indeed. Is he a missionary?" Joe—"No; he's an ex-convict."

"I never take a lad into my employment who does not know his Bible, and know it well," said the smug individual in sombre black. "Quite right, sir," said the sky-pilot, warmly; "nothing like a knowledge of the Scriptures for fitting a lad for any walk in life." "I find it so," replied the sombre one; "I am a grave-stone cutter; and when Christians come to bury a relative they like to have a nice, smooth, fire-insurance text to put on the tomb. They never know where to find those texts, and I make the lads find 'em for 'em. It pays." "Er, yes," said the sky-pilot, as he moved away to think it over.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Flight of the Jerusalem Ghost."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, special entertainment and dance. Tuesday, at 8.30, social gathering.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, conversazione for members and friends.

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Monday, at 8.30, business meeting to discuss the Conference agenda.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Workings of Conscience in Shakespeare's Plays."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Councillor Ward, "'Nunquam's' *Merrie England*."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, "The Two Adams."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?"

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Antidotes to Superstition."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, debate between W. J. Ramsey and H. Cheavers. "Is the Bible Account of Creation in Accordance with Science?" Thursday, at 8, C. James, "What Think ye of Christ?"

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. James, "God at the Bar of Humanity."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, C. Cohen, "The Fruits of Christianity"; 3.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Salvation, True and False"; 6.30, J. Rowney will lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Stanley Jones, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science"; 3, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future." Wednesday, at 8, Arthur B. Moss, "Some Delusions of Theology."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, J. Rowney will lecture.

KILBURN (High-road): 6.30, St. John will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, T. Thurlow, "The Bible *v.* Science."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are they True?"

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Kingdom of Heaven."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, W. H. Vining, "The Great French Revolution"; 3.15, C. Cohen, "The Existence of God."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Our Lord Jesus Christ"; 7, "What is there Left of Christianity?" Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Christ as a Teacher."

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, T. Garner, "Christian and Secular Redemption"; 7, "The Secret of England's Greatness."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, S. P. Putnam, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 3, "Christianity and Woman"; 7, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 3, "Mohammed and Christ"; 6.30, "Man and the Universe—from a Christian and Secular Standpoint."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, W. Heaford, "God and Morality"; 3, "The Lord's Prayer Critically Examined"; 7, "The Creed of an Unbeliever." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Seaman's and Fireman's Union Hall, Coronation-street): 7, C. Aarstad will lecture.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "Brain and Soul."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, Mr. Smith, "The Creation."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, W. Dyson, "The Origin of Man"; 7, "Historic Man."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, debate between Mr. Mitchell and the Secretary of the local C.F.S.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 3, C. Aarstad will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—May 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—May 26, m. Wood Green, a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 30, Hammersmith. June 2, m. Kingsland; 9, m. Pimlico, e. Camberwell; 16, Wood Green; 16, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 20, Hammersmith; 23, m. Victoria Park; 26, Hyde Park; 30, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 26, m. Clerkenwell. June 2, Camberwell; 9, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Tottenham; 16, m. Mile End; 23, m. Wood Green, e. Tottenham; 30, Clerkenwell, a. Finsbury Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—June 2, m. Finsbury Park; 19, m. Kingsland. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 22. SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

A Full Report of the Bristol Conference of the National Secular Society, with Mr. Putnam's message from Colonel Ingersoll, will appear in our next issue.

PRICE HUGHES ON ATHEISM.

THE editor of the *Methodist Times* has been doing a sensible thing. He has been reading the *Freethinker*. We hope he will continue this policy of self-improvement. It is too much to hope for any considerable change in his mental constitution, but a regular course of the *Freethinker* will produce some effect in time. And in such a bad case we must welcome the very smallest mercies.

Mr. Price Hughes does not at present show any signs of reformation; in fact, the medicine he has taken has made him a trifle worse; but we believe that this is a common occurrence in the early stages of medical treatment.

We noticed the following paragraph in the last number of the *Methodist Times*:—

> "Mr. Coulson Kernahan's last striking book, *God and the Ant*, recently reviewed in these columns, has created quite a storm in Atheistic circles. They rage furiously against the author and his brilliant book. But they are out of date. Atheism is a long-exploded piece of antediluvianism. These people, as we have often remarked, are two thousand years behind the time. They had better waken up and get acquainted with the facts of the last two thousand years."

It is difficult for Mr. Hughes to be accurate. We charitably assume that he sometimes tries to be. Perhaps he tried in this instance, but was betrayed by his unhappy preference for misstatement. At any rate, there is no truth in the observation that Mr. Coulson Kernahan's *God and the Ant* has "created quite a storm in atheistic circles." Our review of the booklet was perhaps sarcastic; it certainly was not "furious." And as for "raging," why the editor of the *Methodist Times* could give us fifty in a hundred at any time, and beat us easily.

Why, indeed, should we "rage" against Mr. Kernahan or his book? He is turning an honest penny by writing up Christian platitudes. Merely this and nothing more. There is not an argument in all his pages which any one of our open-air lecturers would not make mincemeat of in five minutes. Nor is there any particular grandeur or beauty in the way in which he presents his plea for God. It is a sign of the decadence of Christianity that such a volume should be praised at all. Cudworth and Charnock and Leighton lie neglected upon the library shelves while this feeble little apologist flutters round the arena, and all the Christians cry: "Bravo! Magnificent! Kernahan for ever!" We could almost drop a tear over the wretched degradation of our old enemy.

Mr. Hughes tells Atheists that they are out of date. But does he really think so? Will he meet one of them in public discussion? Has he *faith* enough to try the experiment?

Atheism is "a long-exploded piece of antediluvianism." This is a good mouthful, but we defy any man to realise its meaning.

We cheerfully admit that Atheism has survived many *floods*. It survived floods of persecution, floods of "confutation," and floods of calumny; and we dare say it will survive the flood of Mr. Hughes's flashy rhetoric.

Cardinal Newman was a far wiser man than Mr. Hughes. He did not regard Atheism as "exploded." He dreaded it as the natural and logical conclusion of "reason" when divorced from "faith."

Mr. Hughes says that Atheists are two thousand years behind the time. We presume he means that they are not Christians. If he means anything else, he is talking nonsense. Christianity does not pretend to prove God's existence. It starts with that assumption. Revelation does not precede, it follows Natural Religion, and is based upon its conclusions. Every text in the New Testament is addressed to believers; and it is noteworthy that Jesus Christ was too discreet to get into a discussion with the Sadducees—the men who denied the soul, the resurrection, and a future life; that is, nearly all that flatters the vanity and sentimentalism of the average religionist.

What new evidence of God's existence, of his wisdom or his goodness, has appeared during the last two thousand years? The problem is just where it was before the Christian era. New illustrations may be adduced, but it is impossible to invent a new argument. The human mind exhausted its capacity in that direction before the advent of Jesus Christ.

Atheists *are* acquainted with the facts of the last two thousand years. They know the arts by which Christianity rose to power; they know with what weapons it defended its privileges; they know the secret of its long usurpation. Atheists do not need to "waken up," as Mr. Hughes says in defiance of grammar. Christianity is waking up—to the fact that it is found out; and in its extremity it is following the tactics of the ostrich, as though *that* will prevent its destruction.

Atheism is not out of date. It is up to date. It uses to-day's science, to-day's history, to-day's humanity, and to-day's common sense. It challenges Theism in the light of the newest Evolution. And when to-morrow's truth comes, Atheism will be the first to welcome it; for truth is the natural enemy of lies, and the greatest lie in the world is the one that is preached from Christian pulpits. It is a lie that has eaten away manliness and integrity, and manufactured dastards and hypocrites.

G. W. FOOTE.

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"A CONFESSION OF FAITH."

A NEAT little volume, choice both in appearance and contents, has this year been issued by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. It is entitled *A Confession of Faith*, by An Unorthodox Believer, and has as its motto a couplet from A. H. Clough:—

> Enough that in our soul and heart
> Thou, whatsoe'er Thou mayst be, art.

The author is a Theist of the school of Martineau and Professor Francis William Newman. His volume bears the stamp of thought, sincerity, and fine feeling. Love of truth and love of humanity are evident characteristics of the author, and, finding these in a book, I am little concerned at absence of agreement in matters of opinion. Only in confessions of faith learnt by rote, and coming, as Carlyle said, "from the teeth outwards," can there be unanimity of statement. When men set down what they really think with regard to themselves and the universe by which they are surrounded, their differences of faculty, of training, and of experience are sure to show themselves, and even when ideas are similar the terminology in which they are expressed is bound to vary. "Define your terms" is a mandate which the critic has constantly to lay before the author.

The writer of the book in question sets out by saying: "I believe that Nature is all-in-all, and that there is nothing above it or beyond it." In other words, he does not believe in the supernatural. He says: "The evidence of miracles—evidence which the believer in the supernatural regards as conclusive—leaves me where it finds me. Experience has proved that nine miracles out of ten are cases either of imposture or of illusion. For the tenth there may be a place amid the mysteries and infinities of Nature." He observes: "I hold myself free to deny the supernatural, without attempting to disprove it. The burden of proof rests on those who affirm it. If such persons refuse to argue for it, they put themselves, so far as I am concerned, out of court. If they consent to argue for it, they give judgment against themselves. For every argument that appeals to the reason bases itself on an implicit belief in the validity and sufficiency of Nature; and to ask Nature to sanction the supernatural is to ask it to discredit itself, and in so doing to falsify the faith that we repose in it, to stultify the appeal that we make to it, and to nullify the verdict that we profess to regard as final." He holds further that knowledge of ultimate realities is unattainable by man. Yet he follows this by saying: "I believe in God—*i.e.*, I believe that there is a real object of human worship and a supreme end and centre of existence." Is this a definition? Most people would think that any definition of God which excluded the supernatural resulted in no God at all. For there is probably no word used with more various meanings, or more needing accurate definition, than this word "God." Truly, there be gods many. They are of all kinds, and many of them—the Christian owner of hell, no less than the Mexican god of war—are very ugly devils. What one man regards as the real object of human worship is a very different ideal from that of another. Our author says: "When I say that I believe in God, I do not necessarily mean that I believe in a Supernatural Being, or in a Personal First Cause, or in a Moral and Intelligent Governor of the Universe, or in a Great Unknowable. What I do mean is that I believe in the naturalness of the instinct that leads men to worship, and in the reality of its object." His God, if I read him rightly, *is in* Nature. Yet he believes in evolution. Does, then, God grow and develop? This seems the logical outcome of his position; yet I am not sure that I should ascribe it to him rightly. His reasons for believing in God, he says, are two: (1) "I believe in God because it is my nature, my private and personal nature, to do so." On this I have only to remark that the author admits that his nature is fallible. We all inherit superstitions, and most of us are trained in them also. (2) "I believe in God because it is my generic nature, my nature as a man to do so." He goes on to say: "A belief so widespread and so enduring as the belief in God must needs have a real object." Will he say so if you substitute for "God" the word "ghosts," from whom man's early gods probably sprung?

The writer says, "God is love;" and to the question, "How shall I know what is true?" as to the kindred question, "What shall I do to be saved?" says there is but one answer—namely, "Love." Will he then accept the converse of his proposition, and put it that "Love is God"? The real basis of his belief appears to be sentiment, and the "scunner" with which he writes of Atheists and Materialism seems to indicate that, despite considerable candor of mind, he is still the victim of prejudices about *words*. He says: "Feeling is all-in-all." Need I remind him of the succeeding lines in Faust?—

> Name ist Schall und Rauch
> Umnebelnd Himmelegluth.

Like Kant, who, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, shows the illusiveness and illogicality of all demonstrations of deity, yet brings God back in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, in order, according to Heine, to console his servant, old Lampe, our author appears to bring the supernatural in, with prostrations, immediately after having dismissed it, without any blessing. So with the doctrine of immortality. He says: "I believe that I shall live hereafter, and that I shall be happy or unhappy in the next life according as I have done well or ill in this"; but he allows that "the arguments for immortality are doubtless inconclusive." Here again we appear to have a feeling that "spiritual" life is real and unending. His heaven and hell, he tells us, are states of the soul. But these are realities here now, irrespective of permanent continuance, and our author sees the absurdity of supposing we merit either unending happiness or unending misery.

With very much that the confessor has to say on duty and the conduct of life I am in hearty sympathy, while totally disagreeing with his terminology. He insists on what Matthew Arnold called "the secret of Jesus," but which I should call the open secret of life—a secret openly taught by Buddha ere Jesus was born—viz., that to live for higher aims, the lower must be resigned. What our author calls aiming at spiritual perfection I should prefer simply to name self-culture. And to this all who desire to get the best out of this life are bound to attend, whether they believe in any life to follow or not. Our author thus expresses the final article of his short Confession of Faith: "I believe that Love, as the triumph of self-sacrifice, is the supreme end of existence, the fulfilment of the law, the first and last of duties, the way and the goal of life, the real presence of the eternal God." Here, too, I feel that our differences are mainly of terminology, and "name is but sound and smoke." In reason and nature there is common ground for the devout Theist and the irreverent Atheist.

What, however, the orthodox believer will find notable in this *Confession of Faith* is, not its affirmations, but its omissions. There is nothing of the creeds and dogmas which have occupied so much attention in the past, and which, however dry and dead now, were vital points of Christian belief when it was flourishing. The *Confession* might have been written by a Jew, Moslem, or Buddhist, save that it contains nothing distinctive of any of them. It is faith whittled down by reason to the point of mere feeling, and with some slight alteration of terminology would be acceptable to the Secularist.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT.

TAKING a retrospect of the history of the last hundred years, it is exceedingly gratifying to all friends of progress to contemplate the advancement Freethought has made. To the disgrace of the Church, be it said, the Statute-Book of England still contains enactments against free speech, and against the legal right of Secular Societies to receive bequests for the promulgation of their principles. But, notwithstanding this injustice, which is the legacy of a bigoted theology, we recognise that the efforts of the brave Freethought pioneers of the past have not been in vain. All honor is due to them for their persistent and heroic struggles in tilling and preparing the soil for the reception of the seed of freedom, which the toil of subsequent ages has caused to yield most prolific results. True liberty is not the offshoot of a day, but rather the growth of years. It has been truly said: "Our Eliots, our Hampdens, and our Cromwells, a couple of centuries ago, hewed with their

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broad-swords a rough pathway for the people. But it was reserved for the present century to complete the triumph which the Commonwealth began." When in 1662 the two thousand clergymen resigned their benefices, and gave up the national religion of the time, because they could not submit to the pet doctrine of the Church, which was "passive submission," they adopted the basis of Freethought principles. It is worthy of note that every reform that has taken place in connection with theology has been the result of adopting the principle of Freethought.

Freethought is, at the present time, making its impress upon all classes of society, and is exercising its influence in every section of the community. Glance at what phase of life we may, move in what circle we will, we shall find that Freethought confronts us more or less. It is prominent in our politics, in our poesy, in our philosophy, and in the various scientific expositions of the present day, and even in novels. It dominates the press, it agitates the pulpit, and it permeates our national seats of learning. As the Rev. W. Binns remarks: "Scientific men pursue their studies and proclaim their discoveries as if the old theology were non-existent. Owen extolled the serpent as perfectly formed, notwithstanding the curse pronounced; Lyell said there were men before Adam; ethnologists found races distinct in spite of original sin and the federal headship; philologists spoke of varieties of language long before the supposed time of Babel; and science everywhere asserted the universality and unfailingness of law, spite of traditionary miracles. General literature breathed the same healthy spirit, at once free, reverent, and inquiring. What natural depravity was taught in the muscular Christianity of Kingsley's novels? Dickens condemned cant, Sabbatarianism, and narrowness wherever found; and Thackeray, in the 'Newcomes,' looked for the salvation of honest James Binnie, though James was a disciple of that extremest of heretics, David Hume. As to poetry, it could only flourish where genius was unfettered by creeds. It needed to live in freedom, and when freedom was lost it sank into nursery imbecilities." The agitation of thought has proved to be the beginning of knowledge, and, when entirely unfettered, it is the surest guarantee for the perpetuation of wisdom.

A remarkable instance of the progress of Freethought occurred during the reign of Charles II., when the Royal Society was instituted in London. The object of this association was the promotion of science by experiment. According to its charter, it was "established for the improvement of natural science." The term natural was intended to imply a meaning that few persons to-day fully realise. In the *Life of Davy* we read: "At the period of the establishment of the society, the arts of witchcraft and divination were very extensively encouraged; and the word 'natural' was therefore introduced in contradistinction to 'supernatural'" (vol. ii., p. 178). It is related that this new movement drew to it most of the principal intellects of the nation, and that the clergy were so alarmed at its progress that they almost unanimously worked to bring science into contempt and to discredit its study. This attempt upon the part of the "servants of the Lord" proved one of the greatest failures of the Church recorded in history. For, in spite of all theological machinations, science has triumphed, and now its truths can be no longer successfully opposed. It is to be deplored that, during the advancement of science, it has had to encounter a continual conflict with religious fanaticism and priestly intolerance, and many of its exponents have been tortured and made to deny the evidences of their own senses. As Colonel Ingersoll says: "Theology has always been in the way of the advance of the human race. There is this difference between science and theology—science is modest and merciful, while theology is arrogant and cruel. The hope of science is the perfection of the human race. The hope of theology is the salvation of a few and the damnation of almost everybody."

In the seventeenth century Freethought made considerable advancement in the form of Deism. The belief in the Bible God received at that time a blow from which it has never recovered. From 1646 to the end of the century, writers mention that heretics were growing greater and greater in numbers and in importance, that "sectaries began to swarm." Boyle, writing at that period, said, if anyone wanted a new religion, let him come to London, and if he had one already he would soon lose it. Men became indifferent to the authority of the Church, and they put forth the claims of reason, instead of adhering to the demands of the orthodox faith. The late Dr. Newman referred to the "melancholy" fact that the only English ecclesiastical historian "is the infidel Gibbon." It was about this period that the battle for the freedom of the press was begun. This noble Freethought struggle cost such heroes as Paine, Hone, Wright, Carlile, Williams, Hetherington, Watson, and many others, their liberty, and imposed upon them privations which were keen to endure. For selling the *Poor Man's Guardian* upwards of five hundred persons were thrown into prison. For publishing the *Age of Reason*, in 1797, Williams suffered twelve months' imprisonment in Coldbath Prison. In 1812 Daniel Isaac Eaton was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment and the pillory for the same grave offence; and the following year Mr. Houston was sentenced to be imprisoned for two years in Newgate, and fined £200, for publishing his book called *Ecce Homo*. In October, 1819, Carlile was tried for publishing Paine's *Theological Works* and Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, and condemned for the first to Dorchester Gaol and a fine of £1,000, and for the second to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £500; and he had to find security for good behavior for himself in £1,000, and two securities in £100 each. His wife and sister were afterwards convicted of similar acts, and suffered heavy sentences.

Archbishop Whately points out that before the last half of the eighteenth century neither attacks upon religion, nor evidence in its support, were to any great extent brought forward in a "popular form." This, no doubt, was one of the reasons why Paine's *Age of Reason* and *Rights of Man* met with such signal success. He wrote for the people in a tone of common sense to which they had not been accustomed. These works caused a complete revolution in the theological and political world. Writers of that time described the situation as alarming, and the prospects dreadful. Even the philosophical Priestley dreaded a physical revolution as inevitable, and he thought a peaceful reform beyond all hope. In 1795 Fox declared that the laws proposed for stopping free inquiry and general reforms were such as to justify the people in forcibly resisting them. Still, theology was then strong enough to enact, and, as we have shown, to enforce, such laws. From that period to the present it has been necessary for Freethinkers to devote much of their time and energy to the task of securing that freedom and those rights which the Church destroyed and took from the people. That to a large extent we have succeeded in our work is an unanswerable proof of the progress of Freethought.

CHARLES WATTS.

REPLY TO MR. ENGSTRÖM.

I DESIRE to answer Mr. Engström in the shortest possible space, and, therefore, I shall not take up all his matter in detail.

He affirms that I am wrong on four general points as to definitions. First, my affirmation that the Christian religion is not *essentially* a moral system; secondly, that its belief is total depravity; thirdly, vicarious atonement; fourthly, eternal hell-fire.

I propose to show that on all these points I am correct.

In the first place, however, as to authority. I deny the right of Mr. Engström, or Henry Ward Beecher, or Phillips Brooks, or Dean Farrar, to give an *individual* definition of Christianity. I define Christianity by the Bible and the authorised creeds of the Christian Church. If Mr. Engström will not accept these, there can be no debate with him; for I do not concern myself with his individual definition of Christianity, but with the universal, world-wide, historic definition.

Mr. Engström tries to dodge the question by confining the definition of Christianity to the Apostles' Creed. As an Episcopalian, he cannot do this; for the Thirty-nine Articles distinctly declare: "The three creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, *ought thoroughly to be received and believed.*"

As a member of the Episcopalian Church, Mr. Engström cannot make the Apostles' Creed the sole definition of

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Christianity. He must take the Nicene, the Athanasian, and the Thirty-nine Articles. I take these creeds for my definition, together with the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism.

Now, on the point, Is morality essential to the Christian religion—that is, will the morality of a man save his soul? does it count for anything?

The Thirty-nine Articles say: "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ *by Faith, and not for our works or deservings.*"

The Confession of Faith says: "Works done by unregenerate men, *although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others*, yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith *they are therefore sinful.*"

One may be absolutely perfect in moral conduct, and yet be eternally condemned simply because he does not believe.

The Athanasian Creed says: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith, except one do keep whole and undefiled, *without doubt he will perish everlastingly.*"

The Christian Creeds thus teach that morality, simply as such, counts for nothing. Morality is insisted upon merely as an accompaniment of religion, *but not as its essence.* The essence is faith, and not morality; and it is faith only that saves a man.

As to total depravity, the Thirty-nine Articles say: "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man; and, therefore, in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." "Wherefore we have no power to do good works without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

The Confession of Faith says: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man being altogether averse from that good and dead in sin *is not able by his own strength to convert himself to prepare himself thereunto.*"

As to salvation only through the merits of Christ—the doctrine of Atonement—the Thirty-nine Articles I again quote: "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

And again in the eighteenth Article: "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

The Confession of Faith says: "They who, having never heard the Gospel, know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, *cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature.*"

As to eternal hell, or punishment of unbelievers, says the Athanasian Creed: "And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

Says the Confession: "By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death."

There is no need of further reference. I could quote from all the creeds of the Churches to the same effect. The question between Mr. Engström and myself is simply this: Will he accept the creeds of the Churches or not? If he does not accept them, then, of course, we have no quarrel; for I did not undertake to define Christianity according to Mr. Engström's notion. I know not, and I care not, what his notion may be. I take historic Christianity; I take the Church's own words. How can one define Christianity except by its own authoritative documents?

Now let Mr. Engström say whether or not he accepts the documents. Will he deny the Thirty-nine Articles? Will he go back on his own Church and trample its creed in the dust? If so, then Mr. Engström is an Infidel; he is an unbeliever, and he will be damned. He is in the same boat with me, and where I go there will he be also; for Infidelity is not a set of opinions, but unbelief of authoritative creeds. If Mr. Engström won't accept these creeds, if he throws them to the wind, if he says: I'll think for myself, I'll define Christianity to suit myself, I'll take what I please and reject what I please, then he commits the unpardonable sin of heresy; and if it were not for Freethought, he would be burned at the stake. Mr. Engström has a right to be a heretic, but he has no right to sail under false colors. He is not an orthodox Christian if he makes the Apostles' Creed the sole definition of Christianity. If he is an Episcopalian, he must also accept, as part of that definition, the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and also the Thirty-nine Articles. If a Presbyterian, he must accept the Confession of Faith and Catechisms. If a Methodist, he must accept the Book of Discipline. If a Churchman of any kind, he must accept the Church's documents. If he is a non-Churchman, if he rejects the Church's authority, its definitions and declarations, let him say so; but the issue between us then ceases, for he is simply one kind of an Infidel and I am another kind. He is a Christian Infidel, a Christian unbeliever, and not a Christian orthodox, or Christian believer.

If Mr. Engström does accept the authority of the Church's declarations, then he must admit that I am right; that I have not given a travesty of Christianity, but the Church's own definition. I know that Mr. Engström does not want this skeleton of the Christian religion brought forth to the light of the nineteenth century. He is ashamed of it. He wants to cover it up with flowers of rhetoric, and sentimental poetry and pious gush. He is dodging the question. Like the devil fish, he makes the waters so muddy that you can't see the devil fish that is in it. But it won't do. History is history, and it can't be changed. The meaning of Christianity is written all along in blood and fire on the pages of time. It can't be blotted out or covered up. I ask Mr. Engström to take his stand fairly, and not ride two horses at once. If he does, he will get an awful wrench, and perhaps a broken neck. If you reject these old creeds, say so like a man. Be honest; don't shuffle and wriggle. I have defined Christianity by its public, universal, and historic documents. That is the true critical and scientific method. You would make Christianity merely sentimentality; I make it a body of doctrine as defined by the greatest intellects of the Church, who had the courage to say what they meant.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

As an example of utter inconsistency, probably nothing can be found to-day or in the history of the past which can equal the institution known as the Christian Sabbath. It cannot claim the respect commonly paid to antiquity. It is a modern invention, not yet three centuries old. It does not come to us recommended by the general acceptance of even Christian people. To the great majority of them it is unknown. Only in Great Britain and her colonies, and in the United States of America, can it be found in the form in which we have it. The Protestants of these countries have selected a day appointed by the Church of Rome for a weekly festival, have bestowed upon it a name essentially Jewish, and endeavor to compel all who will submit to the compulsion to observe it in the manner which they judge to be most proper and becoming.

These Protestants claim that the Bible is their sole rule of faith and practice. Let us see what this Bible has to say upon the subject.

In all other matters they tell us that the ceremonial law of the Old Testament has been entirely abolished under the new dispensation. This they assert at least in one case, in which the New Testament repeats and confirms the more ancient law. The eating of the blood of animals was forbidden by Moses. In the New Testament it is just as strictly prohibited. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: That you abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from

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fornication" (Acts xv. 28, 29). According to the only possible sense of this passage, the obligation of keeping the Sabbath is not included among "necessary things," but the duty of abstaining from blood was re-enforced. Yet Christians all over the world eat the blood with the flesh of the beast, and Protestants in English-speaking countries insist upon keeping a Sabbath, although the day they keep is not that called Sabbath in their Scriptures, and the hours at which they commence and terminate the day are altogether different.

"The evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis i. 5). And so with all the other days. No one doubts that the Biblical day was from sunset until sunset recurred again. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" (Genesis ii. 3). The original Sabbath, if we accept the Bible for our authority, was from sunset Friday until sunset Saturday, and during these hours our more consistent Hebrew friends still observe it.

In Exodus xx. 10, 11, we read: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son nor thy daughter, thy man servant nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." Here we have the time appointed, the manner of observance prescribed, and the reason given for both. This reason has no application whatever to any other day of the week. Yet, if the Protestant be asked why he makes a special observance of the hours between Saturday midnight and Sunday midnight, this is the text to which he always refers, and in most cases it appears to be the only one with which he is acquainted as having any bearing upon the subject.

Another and totally different reason for this institution is given in Deuteronomy v. 15. "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." This may be because a Bible text, without another contradicting it, might feel lonely and out of place. It still, however, refers to the same day, for in the preceding verse we read: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

In the New Testament there is not, any more than in the Old, one sentence ordering or advising special practices for the first day of the week. That day is never mentioned in its pages except where the resurrection of Jesus is said to have occurred on it, and in one or two places where it is incidentally stated that the apostles were "together on the first day of the week," which might equally well have been the case on the second, third, or fourth. When Christianity had obtained sufficient influence in certain parts of the earth, and had become thoroughly organised as an ecclesiastical system, the Church authorities, recognising that all their power was derived from the belief of the people in the resurrection of Jesus, instituted a weekly festival in memory of that supposed event. The idea was as far removed from the Jewish Sabbath as possible. The one was a day of enforced rest from labor, out of sympathy with an over-worked God, who had exhausted his omnipotence in creating a world with a man and woman to inhabit it. The other was for the purpose of worshipping a man-God, who had triumphed over death and the grave, and for indulging in sports and general festivities appropriate to a season of rejoicing. Rejoicing did not suit the grim old Calvinist, with whom fear was the beginning and the end of religious worship, and in whose mind piety and gloom were identical; so he went back to the Old Testament, where he found in the terrible Jehovah a God after his own heart, and in his Sabbath a day exactly suited to his mind. He restored the Jewish observance, with some added horrors; but he forgot that the time he was keeping was not the Bible time. It altogether escaped his notice that it was the time appointed by his great enemy, the Roman Church. This hybrid monster is now presented to us under the name of the American Sabbath. The Protestants will compel us to accept it, if, we will submit to their compulsion; and the Catholics, who have already ridiculed its absurdity, will lend them their aid in order that, by their united efforts, freedom may be crushed out of the land and ecclesiastical dominion established. This once accomplished, they will feel at liberty to crush out the Protestants.

The observance of Sunday as an Old Testament Sabbath has no foundation in history, in policy, in general acceptance, even among Christian people, nor in the Bible from which they profess to derive their law. It is a mere tool for the tyrant bigot, to whom oppression of his fellow man is a ruling passion. To call it the American Sabbath is worse than blasphemy against a million gods; it is blasphemy against a free people.

It is the Sabbath which has made England and Scotland one day in every seven the laughing-stock of nations. Americans, it is begging for admission into your constitution. Once there, it will clutch your liberty by the throat. It dares already to parade before the world under your name. For the preservation alike of your national honor and of your personal freedom, disown it.

—*Boston Investigator.* E. J. BOWTELL.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—VIII.

JULIAN HIBBERT.

On the 28th of November, 1833, a scene was enacted at the Old Bailey which may serve to measure the distance from that time to this. It was deemed worthy of some prominence in the papers, and is thus reported in the *Annual Register* for that year (p. 169). It was in the case of a young man named Berthold, who was tried for stealing a boa:—

The first witness who presented himself for the prisoner gave his name Julian Hibbert, but, on being tendered the book to be sworn, he said he had no belief in its contents. The Recorder: "Is it the Old or New Testament?" Witness: "It does not matter; I have no belief in either. I made the same objection here two years ago, and was rejected." Mr. Phillips: "Then, sir, why do you come here now?" Witness: "Because I was subpœnaed." Mr. Phillips: "Are you of any creed at all, sir?" Witness: "No, sir." Mr. Phillips: "Are you a Deist?" Witness: "No, sir." Mr. Phillips: "Are you an Atheist?" Witness: "Yes, sir, I am." (Strong marks of disapprobation and disgust from all parts of the court followed this declaration.) Mr. Phillips (to witness): "Go down, sir; I will not ask you a single question." Witness, with the most perfect *nonchalance*, replied, "Very well, sir," and descended from the witness-box amidst loud hisses. Mr. C. Phillips, however, called him back, and, addressing him, said: "Perhaps, sir, you misunderstand the question, or we have mistaken or misunderstood you; I hope you did not mean to say that you are an Atheist?" Witness: "Yes, sir, I do." Mr. Phillips: "Do you know what an Atheist is?" Witness: "It is a negative term." Mr. Phillips: "What does it mean, sir?" Witness: "It means a man that does not believe in the existence of a God." Mr. Phillips: "And do you mean to say, sir, that you are such a person?" Witness: "Yes, sir." (Disapprobation manifested by every individual in court.) Mr. Phillips: "Witness, I will not disgrace myself by asking you another question." The witness then retired amidst the strongest manifestation of disgust and execration from all present.

Within two months of this scene, on January 23, 1834, the execrated Atheist was dead. He was but thirty-three years of age. Richard Carlile, who knew him well, and who at that time did not call himself an Atheist, wrote of him in the *Gauntlet*: "Though avowedly an Atheist, he was the best specimen of human nature that I have seen, read, heard, or thought of." Julian Hibbert came of a wealthy family, whose fortune had been made in the West Indies. He was a second son. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, he closely pursued studies all his life. This, possibly, acting on a delicate constitution, may have contributed to his early death.

Hibbert probably was attracted to Freethought by the prosecutions of Richard Carlile and his shopmen. Of Carlile he was a munificent supporter. Learning that a distinguished political prisoner had received a gift of £1,000, he remarked that a Freethinking prisoner should not want equal friends, and gave Carlile a cheque for the same amount. Julian Hibbert also spent nearly £1,000 in fitting up Carlile's shop in Fleet-street. Mr. G. J. Holyoake says: "Mr. Carlile said to us on one occasion, that Mr. Hibbert, from first to last, gave £7,000 in furtherance of his advocacy of free discussion in religion." He contributed "Theological Dialogues" to the *Republican*, and of these articles I possess the original MSS. In some sort also I may, perhaps, consider myself as having inherited his work, inasmuch as he commenced and published in 1826 *A Dictionary of Modern Anti-Superstitionists*, or "an account, arranged alphabetically, of those who, whether called Atheists, Sceptics, Latitudinarians, Religious Reformers, etc., have

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during the last ten centuries, contributed towards the diminution of superstition. Compiled by a searcher after truth." He refrained from giving his name through modesty, and the philosophy which loses the individual in his work; for we have seen he was ready enough to expose himself to execration when he thought the interests of justice demanded it. The Dictionary evinced great scholarship and research. It was, however, conceived on too extensive a scale, and in 128 pages, all that was issued, it only reached to the name of Annet.

Julian Hibbert also compiled "Chronological Tables of English Freethinkers," which were published in the *Reasoner* for 1855. In my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of all Ages and Nations* I have expressed my acknowledgements to Hibbert, whose idea I carried out on a more modest scale, and I only hope that in another fifty years my own work will be superseded by a better. Julian Hibbert set up a private printing-press at No. 1 Fitzroy-place, Kentish Town, and had, at great trouble and expense, special founts of type cast in uncial Greek, with which he was never satisfied. He was, indeed, as Carlile wrote, "as scrupulous and accurate as a classical scholar as he was noble in nature, punctual in morals, and amiable in manners." In his preface to *The Book of the Orphic Hymns*, the first work published in this type, he thus humorously defends his fad, not only as a matter of taste, but also as a matter of religion: "If orthodoxy or heterodoxy (salvation or perdition) depend upon the appearance of part of a single Greek character* in the faded writing of some half-a-dozen mutilated old books, surely every true believer ought to devote a considerable portion of his mortal existence to the study of those letters, the right or wrong understanding of which will, no doubt, equally open to him the gates of Heaven or of Hades."

We may be quite sure the book of Orphic hymns, though now valuable, never paid for the type-founding. His next work in uncial Greek was of more general interest, being the treatises of *Plutarch and Theophrastus on Superstition*, which he edited with notes, a life of Plutarch, and learned appendices "On the Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar," "Of Persons Falsely entitled Atheists," "Various Definitions of an Important Word"—viz., the word "God," and a catalogue of the principal modern works against Atheism.

In 1831 Julian Hibbert, being in ill-health, gave his press and types to James Watson, who had been his printer. James Watson, while working on Carlile's *Republican*, was attacked by cholera, which terminated in typhus and brain fever. He said: "I owe my life to the late Julian Hibbert. He took me from my lodgings to his own house at Kentish Town, nursed me and doctored me for eight weeks, and made a man of me again. After my recovery Mr. Hibbert got a printing-press put up in his house and employed me in composing, under his directions, two volumes, one in Greek, the other in Greek and English" (*Memoir*, by W. J. Linton, p. 31).

Hibbert also wrote in, and helped to sustain, Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian*, taking much interest in the fight for an unstamped free press up to the month of his untimely death. His will was proved, and the personal effects sworn under £8,000 by his executors, two good Freethinkers—William Devonshire Saul, of Aldersgate-street, wine merchant; and J. Brooks, of Oxford-street, bookseller. He directed his body to be given to an anatomical school, and requested that no person should wear mourning for him, or take any further notice of his memory. He bequeathed £492 to Carlile's printers, being the sum Carlile was indebted to them, in place of a legacy. To Henry Hetherington and James Watson he left £500. He had bequeathed a like sum to the Rev. Robert Taylor, but this he revoked by a codicil, in consequence, as he states, of Taylor having married a lady of large fortune.

The obituary notice in the *Annual Register* (p. 217) says: "Hibbert never partook of animal food, but lived in a rigid and abstemious manner. He had some landed property, and the residue of his estates becomes the property of his sister." A portrait of him is extant, and was engraved in the *Reasoner* for July 1, 1855. His face is a very attractive and sweet one, closely resembling that of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

J. M. WHEELER.

A Yankee tells us of a man who went to church on one of the days when souls may be bought out of purgatory for a trifling fee. As the priest came round he deposited his dollar on the plate. "Is my friend's soul out of purgatory now?" "Yes," replied the ghostly man. "Are you quite sure?" repeated the affectionate inquirer. "Quite sure," answered the priest. "Wal, then, they won't be able to put him back again?" responded the relieved friend. "Certainly not." "Wal, in that case I may as well tell you, reverend friend, that that there dollar is a bad one."

* A note refers to the controversy whether it is ος or θς in 1 Timothy iii. 16.

ACID DROPS.

"Lord, how the world is given to lying," said Jack Falstaff. Yes, it is given to lying. It is also given to romancing. If you listen to any ordinary person narrating a conversation or an experience, you will find that he (or even she) puts in a lot of dramatic touches, and unconsciously rounds the thing off after the fashion of a born story-teller; for the fact is, we are all more or less novelists, whether we know it or not. And if you only take this key in your hand, you will be able to unlock many a secret in history, ay, and even in religion. A great deal of the New Testament was written by conscious or unconscious novelists. They felt what would make a good story, or round off an incomplete one, and they put it in without hesitation.

We cannot check the ancient novelists who wrote what has come down the ages as history, but we can see how the same sort of thing is done now-a-days; and done, too, before the very eyes of people who are in a position to check the narrator, only they are too lazy, or too much lovers of a good story, to do so.

Here is a case in point. Mr. Hall Caine, the novelist, was recently "dined" by the Vagabond Club, and in the course of his speech he told a dramatic story of the death of James Thomson—the Freethought poet who wrote as "B. V."—in the house of the blind poet, Philip Bourke Marston. Mr. Caine stated that the two poets were alone all night in the house, and the blind poet was unable to see what was the matter, or to tell whether his friend was really dead or alive. This was a highly dramatic situation, and Mr. Caine told it well, and the gentlemen of the Vagabond Club listened to him with rapt attention.

But the story was *untrue*. Thomson was taken ill in Marston's rooms, but he did not die there. He was removed to University College Hospital, where he died two days afterwards, from loss of blood through the breaking of an internal blood-vessel. These facts were long ago given to the world authoritatively by Thomson's editor, Mr. Bertram Dobell, and subsequently by his biographer, Mr. H. S. Salt. Yet the dramatic (and false) story told by Mr. Hall Caine crept into the newspapers without a word of contradiction, and perhaps it will figure in literary anecdote books for several generations.

And now comes something still more surprising. Turning over the pages of that excellent little monthly, the *Literary Guide*, we noticed a paragraph on Mr. Hall Caine's speech to the "Vagabonds." After narrating Thomson's death in Marston's rooms, Mr. Caine added, "I do not know if ever that story has been told." Whereupon the writer in the *Literary Guide* remarks that "Mr. Bertram Dobell and Mr. H. S. Salt, as well as other cultured liberals, will afford to smile." Not a word of denial is given; even *this* writer lets the false story pass unchallenged, and only sneers at Mr. Caine for reading nobody's books but his own.

Really, it is a question whether anyone can "afford to smile" when history is written in this fashion. The world still swallows what satisfies its imagination. Science has not purged it of this weakness, and perhaps it will never do so. And in the face of it we can understand why history, and especially religious history, which is so concerned with the emotions, should be called "a Mississippi of falsehood."

One hundred and fifty-three thousand copies are stated to have already been published of a "Protest" by the Rev. Archibald G. Brown, of the East London Tabernacle, which bears the rather alarming title of *The Devil's Mission of Amusement* (Banks and Son). Mr. Brown charges the Church with having "gradually toned down her testimony" instead of "speaking out as the Puritans did," and with having then "winked at and excused the frivolities of the day." "There is," he tells us, "little, if anything, to choose between church, chapel, or mission hall. However these may differ in some respects, they bear a striking likeness in the posters that figure upon and disfigure their notice boards. . . . . 'Amusement,' he adds, 'is ousting the preaching of the Gospel' as the great attraction. 'Concerts, 'entertainments,' 'fancy fairs,' 'smoking conferences, 'dramatic performances,' are the words honored with biggest type and most startling colors."

It is not generally known that Scripture is one of the strictest subjects of examination for admission to the Navy. A gentleman, whose son is a candidate, only learned this fact at the last hour. He had spent a good deal of money in "coaching" the young man in algebra, French, and such like, but had omitted the Scriptures. When he was informed that this was really the most important of all—lapses in the others being passed over lightly, but lapses in

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Scriptural knowledge never—he telegraphed at once to the lad to "read up" in all haste for this most important department, and to secure the best ecclesiastical coach possible. He was much gratified and relieved to receive next evening a letter from the young hopeful to the following effect: "Dear Dad,—Don't worry. Had heard about the Scriptures from a chum. Know all about them. Have been reading up the 'Burning Bush,' which is the favorite here. Am sure to pass." It was a curious subject for a nautical examination; but there is no accounting for the idiosyncrasies of examiners.—*Liverpool Echo.*

A correspondent writes to the *Vossische Zeitung*, from Jaffa, that at the Easter festival in Jerusalem, during the ceremony of unsealing the Holy Tomb, two Armenian priests were attacked and thrown to the ground by Orthodox Greek popes, and a scene of violent conflict took place. The Armenian priests, on the intervention of the Turkish police, were carried senseless from the spot. These quarrels of rival Christian sects at the "holy places" have long been familiar all over the world, and afford matter of serene satisfaction to the Moslem, who not only possess the Holy Land, but keep the peace there. It is a beautiful illustration of how these Christians love one another.

The Religious Tract Society publish a good story of how, in some nameless place in Japan, a shop was discovered papered with leaves of the Bible. The woman who owned the shop had picked up a pile of waste paper thrown aside as useless, and papered her walls with it. This was not the most extraordinary part, for it had converted and made a Christian of her. The story does not say what parts of the Bible were pasted up, but if it had been such portions of the precious volume as the story of Lot and his daughters we should imagine it would disgust the Japanese with the fetish book of the Christians.

Sometimes the Bible gets put to very strange uses. The Chinese obtain copies of the holy Scriptures to wrap up their small groceries, and some have been known to use the paper as wadding for their guns.

Mr. John Haffenden, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the Straits, said that up to last year 140,000,000 Bibles, or portions thereof, had been distributed; but what was this amongst the 1,400,000,000 of the world's population? "Millions must still be entirely without that Gospel which our Lord more than 1800 years ago commanded to be preached to every creature." If Jesus Christ had only invented printing, it would not have taken so long to distribute Bibles to all the world's inhabitants. But just fancy the state of mind of those who consider this the one thing needful!

We should fancy that, if Jesus knew the result of Christian conversions among the heathen, he would repeat to the British and Foreign Bible Society the very unpolite language he used towards the Pharisees of his own day: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

A friend just over from South Africa, to whom we mentioned the case of the Christianised native of Pretoria who outraged and murdered a girl and then asked for his Bible, said it was the universal opinion out there that a Christianised native was a native spoilt. The one doctrine of Christianity which lays hold on their minds is that Jesus pays for all. He says that they never make collections for missions at the churches in South Africa, all the money coming from fools at home, who would do better to look after their own heathen population.

The Rev. E. E. Jenkins, ex-president of the Wesleyan Conference, and hon. secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, went down to Audley to officiate at a memorial service in connection with the recent colliery disaster at Diglake. He took for his text, "Be still, and know that I am God"; but, instead of being still, he proceeded to vindicate the Almighty at considerable length. He said: "Those marvellous escapes, which are familiar to the narratives of the mine, of the railway, of the city, of the ocean, reveal the interventions of the Unseen Arm which is always present mighty to save. And in addition to single acts of deliverance, God takes the calamity itself and uses it for his glory." So God's goodness is proved both by his saving some and by his killing others. For, Mr. Jenkins went on to say, "men who despise every other reasoning will often yield to the argument of misfortune, especially when they are in the presence of a catastrophe like the Diglake disaster; revealing the touching spectacle of absolute helplessness, the wisdom, foresight, and strength of men cast to the ground, and swept aside like the vilest refuse. Then the despised prayer for help rises to lips that never uttered prayer before, and those who would never have discovered it on the Mount of teaching, or in the Temple of Worship, find Him in Gethsemane." What a charming Deity Mr. Jenkins has got. He kills peoples wholesale, leaving widows and orphans, just to get a prayer for help from lips that never uttered prayer before. We doubt if one of the entombed miners would have behaved like this to a dog.

Of course, Mr. Jenkins falls back at last on the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. But what if the miners died cursing instead of praying? And what reasonable assurance could they have that a God, who acted in that demoniac fashion to them in this world, would act any differently in any other? Mr. Jenkins tries to clear up one mystery by another. Preaching "Be still, and know that I am God," is offering a drug for consolation, instead of the real help which springs from human sympathy.

A valet out of employment was charged at the Westminster police-court with stealing two pieces of old Mechlin lace, valued at £50, from an altar at the Brompton Oratory. The poor devil tried to pawn the articles for four shillings, and was "nabbed" in the attempt; so that all he got by his enterprise was an introduction to a magistrate.

Cardinal Manning declared, in a magazine article during the great "unemployed" agitation in London, that according to Catholic teaching it was no crime for a starving man to steal to satisfy his hunger. Why, then, was this wretched and destitute valet prosecuted? Was it because he stole from the Church? Is Catholic teaching only to be carried out at the expense of the laity?

Surely, if a man must steal out of mere self-preservation, he had better steal from the Church than from elsewhere. Church property belongs to God, and what does God want with £50 worth of Mechlin lace? He cannot wear it, nor should it decorate his altars while his children are in want of bread. What should we think of a human father who wore costly jewellery while his children were crying for food?

A writer in the *Church Times* says that the Archbishop of Canterbury does not take £15,000 a year; he is merely "entrusted by the Church with £15,000 a year to spend in its service and the service of the nation." Surely this alters matters very much. Only it is not the Church which entrusts him, but the State through its ecclesiastical commissioners. No doubt he has to pay a good deal for working expenses, but the nation has no control over him if he refused to spend a single farthing. As a matter of fact, the archbishops have contrived to save goodly fortunes out of their salaries.

Three weeks ago the *Guardian* proclaimed that "the law of the Church of England knows nothing of dissolution of marriage except by death." Now it says: "If anyone says that the living voice of the Church of England gives no certain sound on the question whether marriage is indissoluble, we cannot deny it." The explanation is simple. The bishops know on which side their bread is buttered, and that they must not come into collision with the State on such a ticklish question as Sir F. Jeune putting asunder those whom God has joined together. When divorce was first permitted by law, the so-called divine law of the Church became effete.

Christian Re-union has so far advanced that the Protestant Bishop of Derry has refused to allow the Church Congress to be held there, not because it might be offensive to the Romanists, but because the Protestants of Derry do not wish Ritualistic Anglicans among them. They do love one another.

The *Weekly Register* says it has been prophesied that the Pope will reign twenty years. As he has already occupied the papacy over seventeen years, they can safely say that any way he is not very far short of fulfilling the prophecy. But how is it we only learn of it just now?

The log-rolling *British Weekly* declares: "The infidel camp is much disturbed by the challenge in defence of the Christian faith which Mr. Coulson Kernahan has thrown down in his booklet, *God and the Ant*." It mentions Mr. Foote's article in the *Freethinker*; but if it takes this as a sign that the infidel camp is much disturbed it is amusingly mistaken.

The *Church Times* never allows its loyalty to overcome its Churchism. It boldly says that her Majesty, in relinquishing her rights of patronage in the Welsh Church, violates her solemn Coronation Oath, taken in response to the Archbishop's questions, the last of which was this: "And will you preserve unto the Bishops and clergy of England and Ireland, and to the Churches thus committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?" The *C. T.* does not notice that

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the oath says nothing about the law being altered. It was altered in the case of the Church of Ireland, and it may be in regard to the Church in Wales and England also.

The *Church Times* is horrified at the appointment of Ascension Day for the polling at Warwick and Leamington. It says this arrangement is greatly to be deplored. For people to exercise their rights of citizenship when they ought to be contemplating how a dead Jew overcame the laws of gravitation is really too awful.

The Archbishop of Canterbury stated at the meeting of the S.P.C.K. that the ancient Assyrian Church was almost on the verge of extinction, and, without help from the English Church, the Assyrians might join the American Presbyterians, the Roman Catholics, and might even become Mohammedans. Apparently this ancient Church, like other ancient Churches, is in want of cash, and the authorities are prepared to transfer themselves to the body offering the most dollars. Why don't the Jews make a bid to incorporate the ancient Assyrian Church?

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge also claims to have issued eight millions of volumes, 500,000 Bibles and Prayer Books, and four millions of tracts. A small per cent. of these may be of some value, but, on the whole, what a deluge of waste paper to be sure.

The B. and F. Bible Society and the S.P.C.K., having much wealth, prevent the circulation of erroneous copies of the Scriptures. But in early days some curious mistakes happened. Thus John i. 1 was made to confirm Buddhism, being translated "In the beginning was the Buddha, and the Buddha was with God, and the Buddha was God." In one of the South Seas the words, "where the wild asses quench their thirst," were rendered, "where pigs that eat men drink against their hiccoughs."

Samuel Letters, a laborer, of Charles, North Devon, has been fined 2s. 6d. and costs for ploughing a field on Sunday. He pleaded that he did not know it was Sunday, and was let off lightly. If, however, only half-a-crown was taken from all the people who work in their own gardens on Sunday, a very considerable income might be raised. We commend the project to the Lord's Day Observance Society.

Wicked Jessie Ireland, a Dundee lassie of sixteen, pursued her minister, the Rev. J. A. Simpson, for £500 for an indecent assault while on a pastoral visit. The judge left it to the jury to decide if a girl who worked in a factory was as innocent as Jessie pretended to be, and the defendant was acquitted. He has had a narrow escape from the toils of the wicked one who is always going about seeking to devour the men of God.

In Robertson County, North Carolina, an extensive underground whiskey still has been unearthed on the land of the Rev. Baylis Hamrick, a Baptist minister of fifty years' standing. The Excise officers have been baffled for many years, ever since the time of the war, but a few weeks ago were successful in discovering the still. Preacher Hamrick, a great exponent of faith in regeneration by water, has been one of the most successful whiskey smugglers of modern times.

Macaulay said that the Puritans objected to bear-baiting, not so much on account of the pain given to the bear as for the pleasure of the spectators. Something of this feeling may have animated the men of God who went to the race-course near Birmingham to publicly pray against the iniquity they are not inclined to.

Mr. W. J. Courthope, in his *History of English Poetry*, says that the legend of Robin Hood's piety was suggested by the tale of a knight in the *Legenda Aurea*, who was in the habit of robbing everybody who passed by his castle, but never allowed any business to come in the way of his devotions. But the union of religion with disregard of other people's rights has been a common observation from the days of David to those of the latest swindling director.

Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles of Sociology*, § 646, says: "Robbery as well as murder has had, and has still in some places, a religious sanctification." Says Burton of the Beloochis: "These pious thieves never rob, save in the name of Allah." Of a robber tribe among the Chibchas, Piedrahita writes: "They regard as the most acceptable sacrifice that which they offer up out of the robbery to certain idols of gold, clay, and wood, whom they worship. And at the present time in India we have freebooters like the Domras, among whom 'a successful theft is always celebrated by a sacrifice' to their chief god, Gandak." The modern method is to build a church and subscribe to missionary funds out of the proceeds of iniquity.

The Dublin *Evening Herald* says that the teacher in the National Schools, while they are ruled over by clericals, "can be little better than a sort of superior flunkey, whose politics and opinions—and not unfrequently even domestic affairs—are determined by another mind than his own. This state of things, it is needless to say, is not only prejudicial to the teacher, but also to the best interests of the country. Apart from the injustice inflicted on a large body of public servants, there are higher and broader grounds on which the country should demand a radical and a sweeping modification of present arrangements."

The Rev. W. M. Barrow, vicar of St. Clement's, Liverpool, runs some Church schools, and evidently with a keen eye to business. On May 20 he sent a circular to the parents of his school-children, stating that "the Managers have decided to charge no School Fees next week." But the vicar did not mean to let the parents have the benefit, if he could help it; so he asked them to send the amount of the weekly fee "at least" to his Mission Hall on the Monday. Surely this sort of thing is not one to be encouraged by the Education Department.

The *English Churchman* gives the following list of places where the Confessional is at work:—Ampthill; St. Andrew's, Worthing; St. Andrew's, Newcastle; Chiltlehampton; Holy Trinity, Leytonstone; St. Stephen's, Dorchester; Deal; St. Catherine's, Liverpool; Shernanbury; St. Andrew's, Plaistow; St. Margaret's, Liverpool; Stroud Green; All Souls, Harlesden; Holy Cross, St. Pancras. The *E. C.* hopes that Protestant parents in these parishes will make careful inquiries as to whether any children are admitted to Confession without the knowledge of their parents. It points out that the party urging confession also urge a celibate priesthood, and says: "In some cases clergymen have brought the utmost possible pressure on young people to induce them to go to Confession before, or immediately after, Confirmation."

Mr. Gladstone is an old-fashioned theologian. In a recent letter to the Rev. W. Spiers, who has written a volume on the Pentateuch, the G.O.M. says that he views with "special satisfaction" every effort to "abate the pride and rashness" of the Higher Criticism. Once upon a time these proud and rash gentlemen would have shared the fate of Uzzah; now they have only to dread the anger of Mr. Gladstone, and we guess they can smile at that.

Buddhists, as well as Christians, are capable of economy in religion. It is reported that they are getting into the habit of offering *hollow* candles on the altars to earn remission of punishment hereafter. The candles *look* all right, but they *weigh* badly. And as Buddha hasn't found out the fraud, the trade in make-believe candles is flourishing; indeed, says a correspondent of the *Manchester Evening News*, two or three millions have been contracted for within the last few weeks. But let the pious economists beware when the Boss wakes up to the imposition. To stint him of wax may make him waxy.

Satan was always a scapegoat. All the sins of the saints fall on his head, and he is now credited even with those of his divine protagonist. A Mr. Thomas Young, of Birmingham, has put out a pamphlet, *Christ or Satan*, in which he contends that hell is a work of the Devil, and as such must be destroyed. To make Satan the builder of the prison in which God punishes him is really too bad.

The Printing Trades Federation organised a demonstration in Trafalgar-square last Sunday afternoon to protest against "the tyranny of the Salvation Army, in discharging wholesale efficient Trade Union workmen in the printing department, because they would not join the Army, and supplanting them by underpaid Salvationists." Several Trade Unions were represented at the meeting; the speeches were tolerably warm, and the resolution that was carried wound up by stigmatising "the Salvation Army as only another name for a gigantic trading concern, conducted on a sweating system."

The Army, through "Colonel" Bremner, denies all the charges of sweating, but it denies them generally, and does not venture to contradict specific statements. Miss Morell, of the Hammersmith Branch of the Independent Labor Party, referred to an advertisement in the *War Cry* offering from six to eight shillings per week for "young girls used to tea-packing." At such a low wage some of these young girls would be tempted to join the class that Booth is "rescuing." The Salvation Army ought to pay higher wages to tea-packers; and it can afford to do so, for the tea it sells at two shillings a pound can be beaten in any shop in London for eighteenpence.

The name of God is spelled with four letters in almost every known language.—*Yonker's Gazette.* Including the American language. It is usually spelled with an "I."—*Brockton Times.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9 and 16, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. French.—We do not believe a word of it. James Thomson was too proud to claim the authorship of another man's writing; and he was well aware who wrote that article in the *Secularist*. The author was a personal friend of his, and is still living, though no longer connected with the Secular party. With the exception of paragraphs, Thomson never wrote anything in the *Secularist* which he did not sign. It was a point on which he was extremely punctilious.

A. B. Moss.—Thanks for your genial letter. Mr. W. T. Lee must have improved immensely since the time when he proposed to debate with you at Bermondsey. A man of faculty does improve in twelve years, especially when they are the prime years of his life.

H. Malson (Longton).—Thanks for paper. See paragraph.

L. Levine (Charleston).—Many thanks for papers. Mr. Foote will write on the existence of Jesus when he can find time.

S. Hatten (New York).—We are always pleased to receive American papers.

L. Peck.—You should read the work of M. Solovyoff before replying to his statements.

T. E. M.—The Inniscarra desecration case does not call for any comment in our columns. Thanks all the same for the cuttings.

G. Nidd writes: "I am receiving subscriptions towards the purchase of sixteen shares. That number you can depend upon. I have also promises of some more." This correspondent has our heartiest thanks.

W. H. Harrap.—Glad to learn you were so pleased with our criticism on Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did*.

E. G. Taylor.—See paragraph.

We have received, too late for insertion, a letter from the Rev. C. L. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, in reference to our last week's leading article. Mr. Engström does not deal with the points we raised as to the legal disabilities of Secularism and the legal privileges of Christianity. He only deals with the question we put to him: "If an honest unbeliever may go to heaven, what is the use of taking the trouble to be a Christian?" Upon this question he expends a good deal of what we cannot help calling verbiage; the sum of which is that, apart from heaven and hell (a very big *apart*), the man who is not a Christian loses the greatest inspiration to self-sacrifice. In reply to this argument, we venture to say that there are Secularists who work as hard for their cause as Mr. Engström does for his, and for a much smaller "consideration."

J. Upton.—Thanks for your good wishes. See paragraph. Glad to know you were "delighted" with Mr. Putnam's lectures at Liverpool.

C. W. Potter.—Pleased to hear you had such a good meeting at Edmonton. If you send us full particulars of the Teetotalism lecture, including time and place, we will give it a paragraph next week.

Papers Received.—Builder's Journal—Referee—Nya Sanningar—Truthseeker—Open Court—Derby Times—Twentieth Century—Dublin Evening Telegraph—Crescent—Liverpool Mercury—Western Figaro—Liberator—Straits Times—New York Sun—Isle of Man Times—Liverpool Echo—Staffordshire Sentinel—Boston Investigator—Las Dominicales—Freidenker—Liberty—Secular Thought.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

During the past week I have received very few responses to my appeal. It is impossible to say just now what will be the upshot of this business, but some decision must be taken immediately after the Bristol Conference.

According to my promise, and to avoid future misunderstanding, I proceed to give a succinct history of this affair. My space is limited, and perhaps that is fortunate.

Some time ago I gave a partial explanation, and I will endeavor not to repeat, at least unnecessarily, what is already in the mind of attentive readers.

I am obliged to go back to the very beginning; that is, a few months after the starting of the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company, of whose oirginal Board of Directors I was chairman. Mr. R. O. Smith proposed that the Company should acquire the lease of the Hall of Science for £2,000, this sum to include the fixtures and furniture. I laid his proposal before the Board, and I could have carried it by using my casting vote, which I refrained from doing. At the shareholders' meeting, in August, 1891, I plainly stated that in my judgment it was impossible to raise sufficient money to build a Bradlaugh Memorial unless the project was immediately connected with the life and work of the National Secular Society. This view was flouted by those who were bent on opposing me at any hazard, but subsequent events have proved that I was right. The Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company has made no real headway since I left it in the control of those who defeated my policy. According to its last annual report, which was not sent me, although I am a shareholder, I see that the Company allotted *one* fresh share in 1894.

When I turned my attention to a fresh method of acquiring the Hall of Science, I found that Mr. Smith's terms had risen. He said he was annoyed at his treatment by the Memorial Company, but I and my closest colleagues were not responsible for that. At any rate he wanted £3,000 instead of £2,000. I never could understand this increase, though Mr. Smith has since given an explanation which he thinks sufficient. Had he kept to his original offer, which he now sees to have been just enough to himself, he would long ago have had his £2,000, and we should have been in full possession of the premises.

It was reported by my enemies, who were very reckless, that I had a private arrangement with Mr. Smith, by which I was to receive a handsome slice of the purchase money. Some of them specified the precise amount. Well, I should imagine that the silliest and most malignant of them must now perceive the gross folly of their accusations.

My principal reason for closing with Mr. Smith was the impossibility of doing anything else. In a certain sense we were cornered. Those who talk glibly about getting another hall do not understand the difficulties. I know not where we could go, with money in our hands, to hire a suitable hall for pronounced Freethought lectures in the heart of London.

There was another reason. I never liked the Club at the Hall, but it was tolerated in Bradlaugh's time, and I believed it would at least pay a large share of the ground rent and other expenses. Unfortunately it declined steadily. The first year it contributed less than half the estimated amount, the second year a good deal less than that, and the third year a ridiculously small figure. Meanwhile the N.S.S. had been paying its contracted rent for its partial use of the building, although this was done with considerable difficulty, and partly by the many free lectures I gave on Sundays and on Wednesday evenings.

I am not blaming the Club committee in any way for this state of things, although perhaps some economies might have been effected in the management. But that, of course, is a matter of opinion. Anyhow, it was obvious that such a state of things would have to terminate; and what I *have* to complain of is, that when this did become obvious, the Club committee assumed an attitude of hostility to the Board of Directors and to the N.S.S. Executive. During the bother over the letting of the hall for an entertainment which, whether rightly or wrongly, the Directors and the Executive regarded as highly discreditable to the institution, the Club committee was simply defiant. It stood upon its technical right as tenant, without recognising any corresponding obligation in regard to rent; and as this was a difficulty that had not been foreseen, the Directors were obliged to give the Committee three months' notice to quit.

Constant friction followed, and it culminated one Wednesday evening when I went down to lecture and found the hall closed, owing to an alleged "misunderstanding."

Before the expiration of the notice to quit, Mr. R. O. Smith, himself a member of the Club committee, served it with a notice to pay *him* any rent, and to give *him* possession. I learnt of this by sheer accident, and I had much trouble in convincing the Committee that Mr. Smith's notice was perfectly illegal; indeed, I could only do it by the aid of the Hall Society's solicitors.

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Some other incidents I would rather bury. I do not wish to relate them unless I am compelled.

I must now go back to the early part of the year, when Mr. Smith first agreed to take £525 in cash and £75 in shares to extinguish his claim as vendor and mortgagee. Mr. Smith stuck out for the odd £25 beyond the £500 that was first offered him, and the prolonged negotiation gave the friend who was to advance the money an opportunity of changing his mind. I then saw Mr. Smith, and offered to raise the money in another way, if he would say whether he would accept it, and what time he would allow. Instead of answering these questions, he sent us a lawyer's letter, stating that he meant to take steps to obtain what was owing to him and to realise his security.

I told Mr. Smith that this was an extraordinary way of treating his colleagues (for he was a Director) and the party generally (for he was an N.S.S. vice-president). But he was stubborn, and I came to the conclusion that he had private views as to the future of the Hall of Science; a conclusion which was strengthened by the fact that nearly three months elapsed before he condescended to renew his offer.

This state of uncertainty was a great hindrance to us. We could not go on building on what might turn out to be a quicksand. And as the Club had ceased to be a source of income, while still hanging on to its technical right as tenant, we fell into financial embarrassments, which it was useless to contend against without a clear understanding with Mr. Smith.

What I have now to state I should prefer to leave unsaid, but so many people know of it, some of whom report it in a peculiar fashion, that I think it best to publish the facts.

The superior landlord put in a distraint for rent; and knowing that this was coming, I authorised Miss Vance to remove the National Secular Society's library, which she did. The London Branch, of which several of the Club committee are members, have been very anxious to know where the books are; but the Executive is satisfied, and the Branch will know in good time.

We kept the distraint going in order that the Hall might at least be fit for Mr. Putnam's reception; and, having lived through that, we let the landlord take his course. The sale took place, and persons who should have known better were there running up the prices of the very things we wanted to secure for our own use. One of them even told the auctioneer that the platform could be removed, and was therefore saleable. However, a friend bought from the bailiff, at his own risk, the articles necessary to the Hall as a meeting-place, and the audiences have perceived little, if any, difference in the aspect of the institute.

It was in the midst of all these troubles that Mr. Smith told us he was ready to listen to an offer when we had the money in our hands.

This story is a brief one to tell, but it covers many months, and the whole time has been one of great anxiety, and full of unpleasant incidents.

Personally, I am very tired of this business; and I sympathise with Miss Vance, upon whom it has entailed much extra labor, which, however, she has borne cheerfully. A meeting of the Directors will be held next week, and the result will be duly announced.

Fresh Donations.—A. Beadle, £1; A. Clarke, £1; W. W., 2s. 6d.; W. H. Harrup, £1.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

In spite of the hot weather, there was a good audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Flight of the Jerusalem Ghost." Mr. George Ward, who is so assiduous in his voluntary attention to the bookstall, was pressed into acting as chairman for once. He invited discussion, and some was forthcoming; but the speaker was young and inexperienced, and his remarks had little to do with the lecture.

Mr. Harry Snell, who is coming up from Nottingham, will lecture at the London Hall of Science this evening (June 2), his subject being "Christ and Socialism." Whit-Sunday is not the best time for a good audience, but we hope the London friends who are *not* out of town will drop in at the Hall as an encouragement to one of the most promising of our younger lecturers.

Notwithstanding many counter attractions, Mr. Charles Watts had good audiences last Sunday at Manchester. In the evening all the seats were filled. The lectures were enthusiastically received.

Mr. S. P. Putnam delivered three lectures at Liverpool on Sunday to first-rate audiences, the hall being crowded in the evening. The Liverpool friends are delighted with him, and he appears to be delighted with them. He writes us that he had "a fine time." Mr. George Wise, of the local Christian Evidence Society, offered opposition to Mr. Putnam's lectures; and we understand that a debate on something or other (we are not informed what) is to take place between these gentlemen during the summer.

Mr. Putnam has been "doing" North Wales since his Liverpool lectures. He will attend the National Secular Society's Conference at Bristol to-day (June 2), being billed to speak with Messrs. Foote, Watts, and others, at the evening (public) meeting.

Bristol Christians have been going about saying that Secularism was dead, and there is naturally some astonishment at the placards announcing the N.S.S. Conference and the public meeting, which is to be addressed by such a variety of speakers. The Rev. J. M. Logan, who debated with Mr. Foote, has engaged the St. James's Hall for his Sunday afternoon Bible Class while his chapel is undergoing alteration. But *this* afternoon (June 2) the Bible Class has to stand aside for the Secular Conference; which is a curious commentary on "the death of Secularism."

The Bristol friends will be happy to meet delegates at the station and take them to their hotels. All they require is to be informed of the time of arrivals. Delegates, or other visitors, who have not yet written to secure accommodation should communicate at once with Mr. J. Keast, 32 Morgan-street, St. Paul's, Bristol, who will be pleased to attend to their requirements.

It is customary for the delegates and visitors from a distance to sit down to a common dinner at one o'clock, between the morning and afternoon sessions of the Conference. This year's dinner will be at the "Crown and Dove," in Bridwell-street. The whole expense will be defrayed by one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, Mr. George Anderson, who does not attend Conferences himself, but likes to be hospitable to those who do.

A cheap excursion runs from Paddington to Bristol on Saturday at 12.35 noon. Fares, 9s. to return June 3, 10s. to return June 4, and 11s. to return June 10 or 17. If a sufficient number will notify their intention to avail themselves of this excursion to Miss Vance, a saloon carriage will be provided. There are also excursions from Swindon, Reading, and Bath by the same train. There is likewise an excursion at the same prices leaving Paddington at 11.10 p.m.

Mr. A. B. Moss, who is a member of the Camberwell Vestry, has been defending the right of open-air meeting. He was supported by Mr. Dobson, another Secularist, but the "Moderate" majority carried the day. It appears that tradesmen had complained of a "nuisance" caused by the "obscene language" in connection with the business of costermongers, and "political, atheistical, and other speakers," on the Triangle, at the juncture of Rye-lane and Heaton-road; and the Vestry Committee had placed the matter in the hands of the police. Mr. Moss naturally objected to political and atheistical speakers being made responsible for the language of costermongers; but the majority of the Vestry seemed to think that they were properly lumped together.

The Lambeth Branch commences a series of Sunday afternoon lectures in Kennington Park on Sunday, when Mr. Jones will lecture on "The Soul and Science."

Mr. E. G. Taylor, of Manchester, has for a considerable time been deeply interested in the Blasphemy Laws. An article from his pen upon this subject appeared in the February number of the *Westminster Review*. This article is now abridged and issued as a penny pamphlet by the Liberty of Bequest Committee, under the title *Shall Thought be Fettered in England?* Copies can be obtained of Messrs. Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London, E.C. Mr. Taylor's statement of the law is done with knowledge, care, and self-restraint. In some points, perhaps, it might be improved; but even as it is we heartily recommend it for circulation by N.S.S. Branches, and also by individual Freethinkers who wish to see the odious Blasphemy Laws swept out of our jurisprudence.

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SECULARISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

THE GLASGOW DEBATE.

(Continued from p. 324.)

On the third night Dr. JAMIESON affirmed "That Christianity is superior to Secularism." In spite of all his opponent's protestations to the contrary, it was quite clear that Secularism was negative and iconoclastic, and nothing more. Its pretence to satisfy all the needs of mankind, and in particular their religious aspirations, was farcical. G. J. Romanes, for long a Freethinker, but who returned to the bosom of the Church some years before his recent lamented death, had left it on record that the loss of religious belief left the world desolate for him, so that nothing in the creed of Science could reclaim the waste. Secularism, then, was a gospel of despair. He had already demonstrated that the New Testament forestalled all the so-called principles of Secularism, so that it was useless to maintain that the latter was superior to Christianity. Mr. Watts had painted for them a roseate picture of the idyllic home-life cherished by the Secularist theory of marriage and social purity. At the best, that was an impudent travesty of Christian prescription. Besides, Christianity inculcated purity of thought not less than of action, whereas Secularism was silent upon that all-important aspect of the subject. It was now his duty to disclose the real doctrine of Secularism respecting sexual morals. He regretted to see ladies present. By an inadvertence he had failed on the previous evening to warn them to stay away from this meeting. As it was, he should have to omit the vilest and most damning counts in his indictment, as utterly unfit for a mixed audience; but even with this limitation they would gain some idea of the hideousness of it all. His chief authority was a book which, to avoid advertising so vile a thing, he would call "The Beggarly Elements." If Mr. Watts insisted on having its actual title, then (with a melodramatic flourish) he would divulge it. This infamous production, he was ashamed to say, was written by a member of his own profession. Having read passages from it, which he construed as meaning that universal prostitution would be preferable to the present system of sexual relations, and added extracts from Owen, Harte, and "Dr. Agate," Dr. Jamieson declared that it must now be plain to all of them that the sexual morals of Secularism were those of the poultry-yard and the pig-sty. For let them mark well the fact: Bradlaugh, Holyoake, Foote, and all the Secularist leaders, had set their *imprimatur* upon the beastly "Beggarly Elements."

Mr. WATTS again commented on the failure of his opponent to deal with the case for Secularism. There had been no attempt to countermine his positions. It had been said that Christianity built hospitals, whereas Secularism had none; but they had overwhelming historic proof that there were systems of medical aid long before Christ. In answer to the chronic demand, "What had cold scepticism done for mankind?" it could easily be shown that scepticism was the precursor of progress. Thus the scepticism of Bacon opened up a new world for Science, and that of Hume the boundless field in which modern thought expatiates. He must recur to the Christian dogma of exclusive salvation, with its correlative of persecution. Dr. Jamieson had not even parried that thrust. Then what of the anti-social effect of the commandments of Jesus, who called upon his disciples to forsake all—kindred, home, and property—to follow him; of the injunction that they should shake the dust from off their feet against the cities that would not receive them, with the doom pronounced against such cities in the Day of Judgment; and what of the awful announcement that a man's foes would be those of his own household? The only pertinent question addressed to him during the debate had been, "Whether anyone who acted up to the teachings of the New Testament could be a bad man?" and he had now proved that that teaching incited to persecution, and tended to subvert the whole fabric of social order and happiness. Again, they had the witness of history for it that, when Christianity was primitive, and therefore pure, presumably Christians did literally carry out the behest of Jesus and renounce all worldly ties. His opponent ridiculed the notion that Secularists should posit the principle that Progress sprang from Liberty, because Secularists did not believe in free-will. He wanted to know whether Dr. Jamieson meant absolute or partial free-will; but, in any event, the New Testament specifically denied free-will, and he now proceeded to give chapter and verse to verify this.

For the rest of the evening the controversy raged round the centres thus indicated. Dr. Jamieson continued to bore diligently into the muck-heap of nastiness, from which the itinerant Christian Evidencer draws his chief inspiration, with spasmodic allusions to his opponent's arguments. Thus he gravely asserted that, although there had been pre-Christian hospitals, they were not for indoor patients, and that, at any rate, an unnamed "infidel" writer had admitted that the earliest mention of a hospital was to be found in the leper-houses spoken of in the Old Testament. Thus, it seemed that hospitals arose under the religion out of which Christianity emerged. The fact that Christianity could constrain a man to leave all for its sake struck him as a manifestation of its power. Why, he even admired Secularists who had gone to prison for conscience sake! When Mr. Foote went to prison had he not to forsake his wife and kindred? (Shouts of ironical laughter.) It was not true that the New Testament begat persecution. The shaking of the dust from off the feet was merely a symbolical act, and all the threats of vengeance referred to the end of the world. The fact is that the persecuting spirit is in human nature. When Jesus said that he came to bring not peace, but a sword, and that every household would be divided against itself, he meant no more than that the apparent apostacy of those who became Christians would give offence to the non-Christian members of the family; just as when in a Christian family one of its members turns Secularist there is certain to be some friction and unpleasantness.

Mr. WATTS said he was quite satisfied with the concession that hospitals were pre-Christian; the character of the institution was a mere detail. He gave the lie direct to the assertion that *The Elements of Social Science* ever received the official or unqualified recommendation of Messrs. Bradlaugh, Holyoake, and Foote; and it was a wicked calumny to say that it represented the Secularist teaching on sexual questions. There were portions of the work of which he heartily approved; but there were others that he categorically repudiated. It had been alleged that in its positive form the Golden Rule was the exclusive property of Christianity; but he would now produce three Christian authorities of the first rank—namely, Sir William Jones, Mr. George Matheson, and Mr. Grant—who concurred in avowing that the Golden Rule of Confucius was word for word the same as that attributed to Jesus of Nazareth, and that the ordinary negative form into which the Confucian aphorism is Englished is a mistranslation. It was charged against Secularism that it had done nothing for education; but what in its palmy days had Christianity done in the same regard? Absolutely nothing. And when the march of civilisation forced learning to leave the cloister and enter the university, and later the public school, the Church still insidiously or openly sought to taint and drug the springs of knowledge. They had heard it said that the Bible moralised society; but that was not always so. Statistics which he now placed before them indicated that crime had actually risen in some cases *pari passu* with an increased circulation of the Bible, and in proportion to the number of churches. His opponent talked of science as if Christianity had a monopoly of it; but, in truth, science was non-Christian, if not anti-Christian, as when it substituted a pathological theory for the Jesuine belief in demoniacal possession. It might be that the persecuting spirit did inhere in human nature; but that was not the point. Christianity stood condemned because, so far from eradicating or even controlling this spirit, it had, in the main, fomented and propagated it. Uniformity of belief was morally impossible, and yet Christianity insisted upon it in theory, and endeavored to force it in practice. Over and over again he had been mockingly called upon to produce the documentary standards of Secularism, and to point to its Bible. Secularists did not tie themselves down to any Bible-fetish; they gathered the treasures of wisdom and goodness and beauty from all ages and all sources, adding fondly to their store from the Book of Nature as well as of life, and leaving blank pages to be inscribed by the wiser and greater generations that are to come.

On the fourth night the proceedings came to little more than a rehash of what had gone before. Dr. JAMIESON again clamored for the production of the Secularist Bible. Mr. Watts's silly hypercriticism, that Jesus encouraged improvidence when he said "Take no thought for the morrow," sprang from a misconception, from which he might have been saved by consulting *Nuttall's Dictionary*, where one of the meanings of the word "thought" was given as "not to be anxious." Mr. Watts denounced predestination as an abominable doctrine, but that it had the reverse of a demoralising influence on its votaries appeared from the fact that three of the world's greatest benefactors—Knox, Howard, and Spurgeon—were uncompromising Predestinarians. Let his opponent give three names of unbelievers to match them. Galileo—a Christian, by the way—was molested more by his fellow philosophers than by the Church, since the former bounded on the theologians against him. Christ had been described to them as a bitter persecutor. What a monstrous aspersion on the character of him who bade Peter put up his sword, and exclaimed upon the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"! Freethinkers far more distinguished than Mr. Watts had expressed the warmest admiration for the person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Dr. Jamieson then read a series of well-known tributes to Christ from Rousseau, Paine, etc.

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Mr. Watts, in response to the challenge that he should name three Freethinkers whose benefactions could compare with those of Knox, Howard, and Spurgeon, went over a long list of British and American Freethinking testators to various benevolent objects, beginning with Girard, Smithson, and Lick. He did so under protest, for this process of counting heads and weighing purses was childish in the extreme. Benevolence was not the exclusive property of any sect, but an universal human instinct. The personality of Christ was depicted under two aspects in the New Testament—the gentle and the severe. The first was naturally the choice of the sentimentalist; but they could not reasonably take the one and leave the other. Both aspects were correlated to the same subject. As for the tributes of sceptics to Christ, the homage was paid not to the god, but to the man Christ Jesus; and on these terms Dr. Jamieson was welcome to them. He (the speaker) was not alone in thinking of the Jesus of the Gospels as a vindictive dogmatist; the Rev. Charles Voysey also thought so—seeking to explain the rancorous language and insensate conduct of Jesus by the hypothesis that latterly he became insane; and M. Renan also animadverts on the unlovely side of the character of his hero.

Of the many whimsical or surprising assertions made by Dr. Jamieson, towards the close of the debate, it will suffice to select the following: Benevolence is a distinctively Christian virtue, since non-Christian races generally are addicted to every form of cruelty. It is quite true that Christ could be stern as well as mild and loving, for it behoves every good man to be austere towards vice, not less than to be gracious towards suffering virtue or the repentant sinner. If Secularists lead the van of Progress, where are their representatives in science, etc.? Here was a galaxy of illustrious names in natural science, literature, art, etc. Where were the Secularists to set against them? Speaking of the practice of charity, while Christians had charities innumerable, Secularism had not a solitary one. A few years ago the total contribution of the Secularists of London to the Metropolitan Hospital Fund reached the magnificent sum of 30s. Christians went into the slums to carry succor to the needy, the sick, and the dying. Could Secularists point to their missions of comfort and mercy? Tennant in his work on Ceylon, and Darwin in *The Voyage of the Beagle*, acknowledged the marvellous change wrought by Christian missions in the minds and morals of races whose improvement had been despaired of by the most competent anthropologists. Finally, if Secularism satisfied all the needs of mankind, how came it that in the hour of death Christianity could often administer consolation, when Secularism was dumb and impotent? Joseph Barker had described a deathbed scene at which this helplessness was vividly impressed upon him, and "Saladin" had made a similarly abject confession.

Having dealt with most of these statements and exposed their inaccuracy, Mr. Watts, in his final speech, summed up and gave his impressions of the debate. Strictly speaking, as it required two to make a debate, there had not been any real encounter at all. His opponent had spent most of his time in picking up the filth collected by scoundrels with which to bespatter Secularism, and if ever a man was disgusted with this mode of controversy, he (Mr. Watts) was that man. Indeed, he felt obliged to stigmatise the debate as nothing short of a fraud upon the public. Not one of the theses which he advanced had been so much as touched. If this was the entire result of twelve months' preparation on the part of a man who did not believe in taking anxious thought for the morrow, it was evident his course of study would require to be indefinitely extended. In conclusion, Mr. Watts made a rapid survey of the whole field of the debate to show that all his positions remained unshaken, briefly recounted the services of Secularism to the freedom of the press and of speech, and, in a brilliant peroration, adjured his hearers to cleave to the truth, to be just and fear not; since, God or no God, heaven or no heaven, the consciousness of duty well done, and the assurance that the world had been bettered, even in an infinitesimal degree, by our presence in it, was the highest satisfaction which we could attain.

The perusal of the preceding report will give a better idea of the character of the debate than any systematic appraisement could convey. Mr. Watts exhibited characteristic amenity of temper, handled his material skilfully, and exercised all that alertness of apprehension and swiftness and directness of execution which great natural aptitude for polemic and long practice alone confer. We are sorry we cannot congratulate Dr. Jamieson upon any refinement, either in method or manner, since his first meeting with Mr. Watts a year ago. Probably his infirmity of temper is incurable, but he might, at least, have made some effort to rise above the combined bluster and chicane of an Old Bailey lawyer, united to the gentle art of the "baser sort" of sewage-vending Christian Evidence emissary. Although the debate as such must be described as a miscarriage, there is room for hope that Mr. Watts's well-digested and forcible exposition of the case for Secularism may not prove altogether unfruitful.

J. P. Gilmour.

A BIBLICAL BALLAD.

It wuz in the land uv Shinar thet this happened long ago,
Whan the water thet hed drowned the world hed gone off like the snow
Thet thaws upon the mountain side whan warmer days come round,
An' trickles to the valley with a ripplin', laughin' sound.

It wuz then the sons uv Noah journey'd westward wi' the sun,
An' lit upon a valley, whar they thought a rest they'd won,
For they'd done a bit uv trampin', an' their wives war gettin' cross,
So they reckoned they'd just stop an' hev a game at pitch an' toss.

Whan they'd done a bit uv loafin', an' as things war gettin' slow,
One feller casually remarked thet Jahveh played it low
Whan he soused the blessed world wi' a ruther longish shower,
An' he moved thet they in self-defence should start an' build a tower.

They called a gen'ral meetin', an' they gave the crowd their plan,
An' every mother's son uv them went for it to a man;
But es this story's gospel ye hed better understan'
Thet thar wuz jest one language to express the thoughts uv man.

Wall! they started on their contract, an' were doing fairly well
Till the Lord one day went walkin', an' wuz tickled wi' the smell
Uv the bricks thet they war firin'; so he hed a look around
At what the crowd wuz doin', an' wuz skeered at what he found.

"This kinder thing won't do," he said, "fer if they pull it through
They'll get too high an' mighty; no, this kinder thing won't do!"
Fer he wuz a trifle jealous uv the men he'd made from dust,
An' reckoned ef they built thet tower his bossin' job wuz bust.

He squatted down upon a rock, an' slowly scratched his wool
While thinkin' how to stop their game, an' bring them under rule.
He did a lot uv scratchin', but he figured out a plan:
He made them chin in different tongues instead uv only one.

This kinder played the devil wi' the job they hed on hand,
Fer every feller chucked it up, an' bust the blessed band;
And it's this way thet they 'count fer all the languages men speak—
Fer Roosian, French, an' Turkish, fer Fijian and Greek.

But it looks a trifle limpy to my unbelievin' eyes,
An' ef I wuz to tell the truth, I'd call it whoppin' lies.

The Gabbelunzie.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 10 and 11, Aberdeen; 13 and 14, Dundee; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 24, Derby; 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street; 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

This Decoration Day (May 30) a party of American Freethinkers have an excursion to the monument of Thomas Paine at New Rochelle, where they will orate and decorate the monument.

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MURDER IN A CHURCH.

Two murders have recently been committed in a San Francisco church, the victims being girls who were lured into the edifice, assaulted, and killed. A young man named Durrant, the librarian and assistant Sunday-school superintendent, is under arrest, and the pastor is under suspicion. The ministers of San Francisco have been officious in agitating for the passage of an ordinance to close the side doors or family entrances to the saloons, and now the saloon keepers are getting back at them. They have laid before the supervisors a petition, in which they set forth that, in view of the heinous crimes just committed in a church of that city, it is high time to call the attention of the authorities to the use to which buildings occupied as churches are put, and to suggest a remedy. While there are many such edifices in which no immoralities or murders are known to occur, yet for the general public safety the petitioners are of opinion that an ordinance should be passed closing all side and rear entrances to all churches in the city and county, and forbidding therein partitions, separate rooms, bedrooms, or bed-lounges; that no person but the authorised sexton shall have a key to the buildings, and that he shall be at all times under the immediate supervision of the police; that no church shall be opened without the consent of adjacent property owners; that no licence shall be granted to any minister who has not a good moral character, and that the signatures of at least twelve citizens and taxpayers shall be attached to the application for such licence. In this way, it is hoped, the church business will be brought under control until such time as a quickened public conscience shall abolish it altogether. The petitioners add that their memorial is not conceived in malice, but with the honorable and lofty purpose of protecting the lives of young girls, and to prevent the turning of church edifices into shambles, brothels, or houses of assignation. And the petitioners will ever pray.

It is a soberly-written document, its points are well sustained, and it was gravely argued before the supervisors by the attorney for the signers. The prompt squelch it got from the board was to be foreseen, but it reached the public through the newspapers, and has therefore done the work it was intended to do. It travesties with fine irony the slap-dash, hit-or-miss, dragnet methods of a big lot of reformers who have not been able to view themselves in the clear light in which they stand before others.

—"*Truthseeker*" (*New York*). GEORGE MACDONALD.

BABYLON AND PROPHECY.

In Judge Strange's work on *The Light of Prophecy*, written when he was a Christian, there are some observations on the prophecies concerning Babylon, which are of interest because Judge Strange personally visited the site of Babylon. He says: "The desolation of Babylon, as foretold by Isaiah and Jeremiah, has not yet been accomplished." It is written: "The burden of Babylon. . . . . Behold, the day cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate" (Isaiah xiii. 1-9). "The word that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans, by Jeremiah the prophet." "*It shall no more be inhabited for ever*; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." "As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities thereof, saith the Lord, so shall no man abide there, neither shall any *son of man* dwell there" (Jeremiah l. 1-14). "Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness where no man dwelleth" (Jeremiah li. 43). Babylon is at present inhabited by some seven thousands of people, dwelling in a town called Hillah, situated on a part of the very site of Babylon. There are also some villages. Neither has Babylon been overthrown, like Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is prophesied: "Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there" (Isaiah xiii. 20); but they do. Again: "Behold, the day cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners out of it" (Isaiah xiii. 9). This has not yet been done. *Rich.* p. 12, says: "The inhabitants of Hillah bear a very bad character." Another prediction is, that Babylon is to be "a land where no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man, pass thereby" (Jeremiah li. 43). Many travellers have journeyed through Babylon and described it. Again: "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations" (Jeremiah li. 26); but this has very freely been done.

Nya Sanningar, the new organ of the Swedish Freethinkers, continues its illustrations from the French Comic Bible. It also has given portraits and biographies of Darwin and of Voltaire in its recent issues.

GOD'S DAY v. MAN'S DAY.

DREARY and dull the morning breaks;
And why, we pertinently ask?
Why comes this day in sombre guise,
Whereon in gladness we should bask?

Traffic is o'er, the streets are void
Of careless throngs on pleasure bent;
And in their stead, *en route* to church,
In stiff puritanism pent,

A motley crowd of sober souls
Plod steadily with ne'er a smile:
For mirth perchance is sinful, and
May be but Satan's deadly wile

To draw our thoughts to earthly things:
Instead of harps and viols above,
We may be led to much prefer
The joys and sweets of human love.

The great Museum's door is closed;
On this day none can enter in:
Church and hotel together vie,
Dispensing sanctity and gin.

Now rouse, ye men! and protest make;
Let not your leisure thus be lost.
This day was set apart for you:
Take ye it then, nor count the cost.

Go, seek fair Nature on this day;
There, far from priestly sophistry,
Fraternise with all other life
Beneath the azure canopy.

Return ye, then, to town again,
Body and mind rejuvenated;
Welcome the advent of that morn
Which formerly ye almost hated.

THOR.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NEWSAGENTS AND THE *FREETHINKER*.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me to say a word in apology for the much-bullied newsagent. I agree that "it is annoying, and often disgusting, to see how certain newsagents try and damn the circulation of the *Freethinker*," when such is the case. But is all the blame due to the newsagents? Do Freethinkers do their duty? Do they, as a rule, make it a point to deal with a newsagent, who supplies them with the *Freethinker*, for other literature than Freethought? I have a personal friend who has been established thirty years, and for over twenty years he has made it a point to expose contents bills of Freethought journals, and always has exposed the pamphlet literature. Yet during the whole of that time there has not been a dozen Freethinkers who have taken the slightest trouble to go to him for morning, evening, or weekly papers or serials. And, while Freethinkers will thus starve those who sacrifice themselves to serve them, they must not be surprised if newsagents, whose only desire is to do business, refuse to do that which will result in absolute ruin.

Often have I seen the advice in your columns for Freethinkers to get their newsagents to take an additional copy and expose it in their window, engaging to pay for it if not sold. But this very act will probably lose them six or more customers, so you see the inducement is not good enough.—Yours truly,

J. F. HAINES.

Obituary.

BY the death of Professor Karl Vogt, Switzerland and Germany have lost one of the foremost Freethinking scientists. Karl Vogt was born at Giessen in 1817, and came into notice as a collaborator of Agassiz. In 1848 he was elected as Radical deputy, but was afterwards deprived of his chair at the university of his native town; and in 1852 was appointed Professor of Natural History at Geneva. His bold *Lectures on Man* made a sensation by their endorsement of Darwinism and their attacks on theology, which had a further thrust in his work on *Blind Faith and Science*. He also wrote *Investigations into Animal Communities*, *A Manual of Geology*, and several biological works.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Harry Snell, "Christ and Socialism."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 9, dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible."

ISLINGTON (19 Alwyne-road, Canonbury): 8, quarterly meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Milton and Liberty."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. H. Smith, "Land and Ocean: Are they Morally Governed?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Our Home Above."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. James, "God at the Bar of Humanity."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James, "The Brain or the Bible?" Thursday, at 8, C. James, "By their Fruits ye shall Know Them."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Our Gospels."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, T. Thurlow, "Jesus v. Home"; 3.15, St. John, "Miracles."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?" Thursday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?" 3, "Prayer." Wednesday, at 8, S. E. Easton, "Christ's Teachings."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, H. Courtney, "If Christ Came to London?"

KILBURN (High-road): 7, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible."

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, St. John, "Christianity and Progress."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Mohammed and his Koran."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Mr. Spiller will lecture; 3.15, W. H. Vining, "The Great French Revolution"—part iii.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, a lecture; 7, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Antiquity of Man."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, entertainment.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quaysides): 11, Hall Nicholson will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—June 2, m. Kingsland; 9, m. Pimlico, e. Camberwell; 13, Wood Green; 16, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 20, Hammersmith; 23, m. Victoria Park; 26, Hyde Park; 30, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 2, Camberwell; 9, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Tottenham; 16, m. Mile End; 23, m. Wood Green, e. Tottenham; 30, Clerkenwell, a. Finsbury Park.

T. THURLOW, 550 Old Ford-road, E.—June 2, m. Finsbury Park; 9, m. Kingsland; 23, Chatham. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 23. SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

HERBERT SPENCER'S REPLY.

MR. BALFOUR'S *Foundations of Belief* has already been reviewed in our columns. We thought it clever, well-written, and sophistical. Some positions that Mr. Balfour attacks are imaginary, in the sense that they are not the real positions of his opponents. In other words, he knocks down men of straw, and slays mere effigies. This, indeed, is clearly shown by Mr. Herbert Spencer, whose "Agnosticism" and "Naturalism" are so often the object of Mr. Balfour's assaults. Mr. Spencer's reply appears in the June number of the *Fortnightly Review*, and it is certainly very damaging. No doubt Mr. Balfour will pen a readable answer, the literary composition of which will be superior to Mr. Spencer's; but he will probably find it prudent to evade the chief difficulties of his task, and to substitute dialectical thimble-rigging for serious argumentation.

Mr. Spencer opens with a hit, a palpable hit, at Mr. Balfour's distinguished uncle, the Marquis of Salisbury, who demolished Darwinism in his address to the British Association, though his demolition of it has not disturbed the serenity of a single scientific Evolutionist; which is saying, by implication, that Lord Salisbury played to the gallery, and suggesting that Mr. Balfour is guilty of a somewhat similar performance.

Mr. Balfour is very strong on man's "needs and aspirations," which, of course, the universe is bound to satisfy, according to the familiar reasoning of our modern sentimental religionists. Mr. Spencer replies that this is arguing in a circle. The religionist is really *assuming* the existence of a Ruling Power which has arranged the universe to "minister" to man's requirements. Setting aside this assumption, how does the theory stand the test of examination in the light of fact? Tell a North American Indian that there is no "happy hunting-ground" after death; tell a Mohammedan that there is no unlimited supply of *houris* for him hereafter; tell the half-starved and over-worked Hindoo that he will not ascend to heaven after throwing himself under the wheels of the car of Juggernaut; and one and all of them will tell you that your information is "unsatisfactory" and devoid of true "consolation." Mr. Balfour's needs and satisfactions are of a higher order; but, as Mr. Spencer observes: "The question is whether the comforting character of a belief is an adequate reason for entertaining it; and the answer to this question is not to be determined by the quality of the comfort looked for, as high or low."

Mr. Balfour's view is only a refined form of the primitive view that all things were arranged for human benefit.

> "But the anthropocentric view does not appear acceptable to one who contemplates things without foregone conclusions. When he learns that millions upon millions of years passed during which the Earth was peopled only by inferior brutes, and that even now three-fifths of its surface are occupied by an ocean-basin carpeted with low creatures which live in darkness, utterly useless to man, and only lately known to him; and when he learns that of the remaining two-fifths, vast Arctic and Antarctic regions, and vast desert areas, are practically uninhabitable, while immense portions of the remainder, fever-breeding and swarming with insect pests, are unfit for comfortable existence, he does not recognise much adjustment to the wants of mankind. When he discovers that the human body is the habitat of thirty different species of parasites, which inflict in many cases great tortures; or, still worse, when he thinks of the numerous kinds of microbes, some producing ever-present diseases and consequent mortality, and others producing frightful epidemics, like the plague and the black death, carrying off hundreds of thousands or millions, he sees little ground for assuming that the order of Nature is devised to suit our needs and satisfactions. The truth which the facts force upon him is not that the surrounding world has been arranged to fit the physical nature of man, but that, conversely, the physical nature of man has been moulded to fit the surrounding world; and that, by implication, the Theory of Things, justified by the evidence, may not be one which satisfies men's moral needs and yields them emotional satisfactions, but, conversely, is most likely one to which they have to mould their mental wants as well as they can."

Mr. Balfour's chapter on the relative claims of Reason and Authority, according to Mr. Spencer, is "characterised by philosophic grasp, clear discrimination, and unusual lucidity of statement." Mr. Spencer agrees with Mr. Balfour—as, indeed, every man does outside a lunatic asylum—that life would be impossible if all our beliefs had to be formed by Reason without the aid of Authority. But he points out that we cannot really get behind Reason, for we must exercise Reason even in choosing our Authority. And here Mr. Spencer neatly turns the tables on Mr. Balfour. He remarks that there are two great authorities, Theology and Science; one accepted by Religionists, and the other by Rationalists. Science has been ever progressing, and now presides over "all the developed arts of life." Theology, on the other hand, has ever fallen more and more into discredit. Hebrew religion has really gone the way of Egyptian and Assyrian religion. Nor has there been any success in the *guidance* of theology.

> "After nearly two thousand years of Christian teaching and discipline, how near are we to that ideal life which Christian leading was to bring us to? What must we think of the sentiment implied in the saying of a glorified prince, repeated by a popular emperor, lauding 'blood and iron—a remedy which never fails'? Among the peoples who socially insist on duels, what advance do we see towards the practice of forgiving injuries? Or, turning from private to public transactions, what restraint do we find upon the passion of international revenge—revenge by the great mass insisted upon as a duty? How much moralisation can we trace in the contrast between the practice of savages, whose maxim in their inter-tribal feuds is—'Life for life,' and the practice of Christian nations, who in their dealings with weak peoples take as their maxim—'For one life many lives'? Towards the foretold state, when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, how much have we progressed, now that there exist bigger armies than ever existed before? And where are the indications of increased brotherly love in the doings of Christian nations in Africa, where, like hungry dogs round a carcase, they tear out piece after piece, pausing only to snarl and snap at one another?"

Mr. Spencer argues that all the "certitudes of religion" lack the essential characteristics of true *thinking*, which is nothing if not definite and self-consistent. Religion gives us "multitudinous conceptions of gods," which are out of all harmony with each other. Even when we come to the higher Theism, we find its "rational Author" of the universe to be but a bundle of "abstractions of human attributes existing unlocalised and multiplied by infinity." They are, indeed, unthinkable, and the "assertion of their existence becomes nothing but a blank form of thought."

G. W. FOOTE.

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THE ORTHODOX THEORY OF CREATION.

PREVIOUS to the present century orthodox believers had no difficulty in getting from their "spiritual guides" a satisfactory answer to the question: "By whom, and how, and when, was the universe created?" To-day the answer will be much the same as it was in former times, if given by believers in Bible Christianity; but it will not be so readily credited. Orthodox literature, specially prepared for pious folk, re-echoes again and again the old Mosaic story, regardless of the fact that it has long been pronounced by men of science to be utterly false. Even Mr. Gladstone's pen has been employed in the vain endeavor to sustain "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." Those who accept the statement that "in six days God created the heavens and the earth, and all that therein is," and that the period when this occurred was about six thousand years ago, never appear to consider what may be termed the previous question—namely, Was the universe ever created? This would be the first point, we should think, that ought to claim the attention of an unbiased and inquiring mind. Scientific men do not waste their time in trying to discover how or when certain events took place, until they are assured that such events did actually take place. They endeavor to obtain as many facts as can be discovered bearing upon any given problem, before attempting to offer any solution thereof.

Of course, the orthodox view is, that God *did* perform the alleged act of Creation; but those who believe this theory seem to disregard what the terms God and Creation really imply, and also the inability of the human mind to conceive the existence of the one or the performance of the other. If orthodox believers were to carefully study such writers as Herbert Spencer, they would see that, under analysis, the very terms of their statement, as interpreted from Genesis, are not even mentally conceivable, being merely symbols of thought. It is, we know, contended that God was a designer, and therefore a personal being. While, however, we have no doubt that there is a connection between a designer and a personal being, as we understand these terms, it is a totally different thing when these phrases are applied to what is termed God. The word "person," we believe, originated in the age of dramatic literature, when the actors were called personators. They represented upon the stage individuals who were in some way distinguished either for their position or their peculiarities. Hence the word meant dignity and importance, and thus angels and gods had the word applied to them. A similar idea is conveyed by the employment of the phrase in Shakespeare's time of "divers of worship," who were said to have been the poet's admirers and acquaintances. To apply, however, the word "person" to such a being as God is represented to be, appears to us the very essence of incongruity. Why should we allow ourselves to be deceived by imagining that we have a conception of a thing or a being, when we have only a conception of words which are supposed to represent an entity that is entirely unknown to us?

Creation is a word used to denote things that exist; it is also employed to indicate the mode or process by which things came into existence; but it is only with the latter use of the term that we have here to deal. The orthodox party have made concessions to Freethought upon three very important matters that were long held to be not only credible, but absolutely true, being, it was said, attested by the divine authority of the Bible. These were: (1) that all things came into existence at the command of God; (2) that the event took place in six days; and (3) that the time when it happened was coincident with the first appearance of the human race, whose successors we are. All these positions have now been practically given up by the majority of the more intelligent Christians. Science and the higher criticism have destroyed these orthodox theories that were once firmly held to be as solid as the "Rock of Ages." We do not assert that all orthodox writers concede these points; we do, however, allege that but few competent authorities now insist upon their acceptation.

With reference to the first-named position, the language of Genesis has always been open to doubt as to whether things said to have been created meant other than that they were made. It is obvious that the meaning which is applied to the fashioning of Adam out of the dust of the earth was not the same as that which refers to the exclamation, "Let there be light, and there was light." The first is a description of a mechanical process, while the second resembles the action of a modern conjurer tapping some object with his magic wand. Still, one thing appears evident, and that is, the writer of the Bible account, whoever he was, intended to convey the notion that all things appeared for the first time, at the period stated, in working order, and endowed with reproductive powers. The clearness of the statements made upon these subjects enables us to show their utter inaccuracy, as tested by observation and experience. The idea that the earth was one vast theatre of incessant change never, we presume, occurred to those who sought to explain the "how" of the eternal worker. Whether a man can be honest who accepts the theory of modification as now generally adopted, and at the same time professes to believe in the teachings of the Bible upon these topics, can only be determined by the amount of knowledge he may possess.

Probably those who possess little or no knowledge of the history of animals and plants may be credited with sincerity in adhering to the Bible account; but we fail to understand how men who have studied such writers as Charles Darwin can still believe in the fallacious and conflicting story of Creation given in Genesis. The materials there furnished are singularly deficient for the purpose of maintaining the theory of the original perfection of man. It is overlooked by the orthodox party that primitive man, as we call him to-day, is found to be in much the same condition as Adam is alleged to have been—that is, ignorant, naked, and without shelter. The peculiar point about the matter is, how the concocter of the Bible tale could imagine that the original state, which he describes our so-called first parents to have been in, was that of the highest human existence. It is equally remarkable that individuals with modern knowledge should regard that story as being true, and that they should deem the creation of man from "the dust of the ground" as being more sacred and dignified than his emanation from any other source. The very people who are fond of enlarging upon the beauty and marvellous construction of animal mechanism are those who consider it derogatory to think they have descended from one of them. Surely it is a more exalted idea to entertain the theory of Darwin than to believe that we were made from dust, which, by the way, science has shown to have been impossible.

Taking a broad and rational view of man's origin and history, we cannot escape the reflection that the orthodox theory presents an example of a gigantic failure. To suppose that a once perfect man could become the degraded savage that he has been found to be is one of the greatest possible incongruities; and, moreover, that this degenerated condition was designed by an omnipotent and omniscient being is an appalling reflection upon the "Most High." In the *Fortnightly* for January, 1894, Professor Büchner, in writing upon "The Origin of Man," quotes the following from a pamphlet by Hovelacque: "If God created man in his own image, as the Bible asserts, then the likeness has turned out as little favorable as the likeness that inversely, at different times and places, men have made of God and their gods."

Of course, these Bible fables may serve their purpose for a time by deceiving the uninformed and misleading the uninquiring. But for the intelligent and logical inquirer a study of the Hebrew records themselves is quite sufficient to discredit the orthodox theory of Creation, and to show, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the Bible and science do not agree: the one is stationary, the other is progressive; the first is bound by the ignorance of the past, the second is guided by the knowledge of the present. Modern thought has neither hesitation nor regret in giving up the Bible as a monitor in the practical duties of life; for we have science remaining, and its light will shine with an ever-increasing brightness as the years roll on, until theological ignorance and folly shall be replaced by a knowledge of natural forces and a wisdom based on the experiences of a more unfettered intellectual development.

CHARLES WATTS.

An anthropomorphic God is the only God whom men can worship, and also the God whom modern thought finds it increasingly difficult to believe in.—*J. Cotter Morison, "Service of Man," p. 49.*

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BIBLE FICTIONS.

III.—The History of Isaac.

The Bible "history" of Isaac may, with confidence, be pronounced fictitious. A careful examination of the sacred narrative shows no other conclusion to be possible. In the first place, this mythical patriarch is said to have been born when his mother, Sarah, had reached the advanced age of ninety. This event is, of course, stated to have been the result of a special act of divine power; but for the truth of the statement we have no other evidence than the bare word of an unknown writer who lived in an age of unreasoning credulity and gross superstition. In the next place, the stories related to account for the name are in the highest degree improbable, and bear the unmistakable stamp of fiction.

The name "Isaac" in the old, unpointed Hebrew was *Itz-kh-k*, and the word "laughter" was *tz-kh-k*. This fact suggested to the minds of the ancient Jewish writers an obvious derivation of the name of their reputed ancestor. Isaac was consequently said to have been so named because somebody laughed, and stories were invented narrating the event. These, like the fictions already examined, show clear evidence of fabrication.

According to the first recorded account, the Jewish God commanded the name to be given when he promised Abraham a son, and the name was suggested to that deity by hearing the incredulous "father of the faithful" laugh at the idea of his age-stricken partner becoming a mother at ninety. "And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarah, thy wife. . . . I will give thee a son of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations: kings of people shall be of her. *Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed*, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years, and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? . . . . And God said, Nay, but Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name *Isaac*" (Genesis xvii. 15–19).

It is implied that Abraham was alone when this promise was made; but the communication was of such an important nature, and so deeply concerned Sarah, that (assuming the account to be true) the worthy patriarch would, upon reaching home, have immediately acquainted his wife with the great honor that awaited her. Of this there can be no doubt; nor can it be doubted that from that hour Sarah would have lived in daily expectation of the fulfilment of the promise. Such an event—the most momentous in a woman's life—would, in an age when to be childless was accounted almost a disgrace (Genesis xxx. 23, etc.), be regarded as the greatest possible blessing. The promise of being the ancestress of nations and of kings would, in fact, never be absent from Sarah's mind, so that no repetition of the promise would ever be necessary, or cause her any surprise.

Turning now to Genesis xviii., we find another story written, like the first, to account for the name "Isaac." In this second story Abraham is represented as entertaining three heavenly visitors in the form of men, one of whom is said to have been "the Lord" himself. These spiritual beings, we are told, partook of a substantial meal of cakes, veal, butter, and milk, under a tree in front of Abraham's tent. "And they said unto him, Where is Sarah, thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he (the Lord) said, I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and lo, Sarah, thy wife, shall have a son. And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him. . . . . *And Sarah laughed* within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh? . . . . Then Sarah denied saying, I laughed not. . . . . And he said, Nay, but thou didst laugh" (xviii. 9–15).

Now, in this account, it will be seen, the promise of a son comes upon Sarah as a surprise; she is incredulous, and laughs at the idea of the occurrence of such an unlikely event; the conception is altogether new to her; clearly she hears the promise for the first time. The "Lord" also, in this second story, speaks as if he had never made such a promise to Abraham before, or as if the fact of having done so had quite slipped his memory. It is evident that, if one account be true, the other must be fictitious. In these two accounts it is also to be noticed that "the Lord," who is said to be unchangeable and no respector of persons, administers no reproof to Abraham for his incredulity and laughter, but is not quite so lenient to Abraham's wife.

I come now to the "history" of Isaac. Now, it is to be remarked that if from the life of this patriarch we omit the stories of the Birthright and the Blessing, which belong more properly to the "history" of Jacob, there remain (besides the short accounts of his marriage and death) but three recorded events. These are: Isaac's denying his wife, his making a covenant with King Abimelech, and the naming of Beersheba; and all three were taken from the "history" of Abraham. Abraham denied his wife when living at Gerar, and some time later made a covenant with Abimelech. Isaac also denied his wife at Gerar, and at a later period made a league with Abimelech. These have already been noticed; we have, then, but to consider the third event.

The inspired writer of Genesis xxi. tells us that, immediately after the making of a covenant between Abraham and Abimelech, the place where the agreement was made was named by the former Beer-sheba, "the well of the oath." "And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of the well of water which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. And Abimelech said: I know not who hath done this thing. . . . . And he (Abraham) said: These seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba because there they sware both of them" (xxi. 25–32).

Here we have an account of the origin of the name "Beersheba." It was called "the well of the oath" because of an agreement entered into between Abraham and Abimelech respecting a well which Abraham's servants had digged, and also because on the same day a covenant had been made between the same two persons which had been ratified by an oath. This being the case, it is somewhat surprising to read that before the place was named by Abraham his discarded wife Hagar was found wandering "in the wilderness of Beersheba" (Genesis xxi. 14), though how there could be a wilderness so designated before the place was named passes all understanding.

Leaving the solution of this problem to ingenious Christian apologists, I turn to Genesis xxvi., which contains a narrative of events nearly a hundred years later. According to the veracious writer of this chapter, the same king Abimelech, with his chief captain, made a covenant with Isaac, and the place where the two confirmed the agreement by an oath was named *Beersheba*. "And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another; and Isaac sent them away. . . . . And it came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day" (xxvi. 31–33).

Here we are told that Isaac named the place *Shebah*, "an oath," because there he and Abimelech had made a covenant, and had taken an oath to observe it; and also that on the same day his servants had digged a well (*beer*). Hence, connecting the two circumstances—the digging a well and the taking an oath—the place was called *Beer-sheba*.

Thus, it will be seen, we have two accounts of the origin of the name Beersheba. In the first, it was so named by Abraham when Isaac was a child just weaned; in the second, it received its name from Isaac when that patriarch was nearly a hundred years old. In both cases the name originated in an oath and a well; one of the parties, Abimelech, King of Gerar, was the same in both accounts. In both cases Abimelech took with him Phicol, the captain of his army, as a witness.

It does not require much discernment to perceive that one narrative was derived from the other; nor is it too much to assert that, had the three stories we have examined in the life of Abraham never been invented, the same three stories which, in a slightly altered form, constitute the chief events in the "history" of Isaac would never have been written.

VERITAS.

Boy (to his sister)—"The preacher said there is no marrying in heaven." Sister—"Of course not. There wouldn't be enough men there to go round."

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

CONSIDERING the distance of Bristol from the North, there was a goodly gathering at the St. James's Hall, which had been tastefully decorated with plants, flags, and mottoes from Paine, Ingersoll, etc. Among the Societies represented were the following:—Aberdeen, J. P. Gilmour; Bethnal Green, C. Cohen; Blackburn, J. Umpleby, N. Ashworth; Bolton, W. Collins, C. N. Atkinson; Bradford, J. W. Gott, J. Sunderland; Bristol, K. Hunt, J. Keast; Bath, J. Oram; Birmingham, R. Taylor; Bedlington, R. Forder, C. Cohen; Cramlington, C. Cohen; Camberwell, Mr. Egan; Chatham, F. J. Boorman; Derby, Messrs. Briggs, Whitney, Swain; Dundee, C. Watts, J. P. Gilmour; East London, E. Bater; Edinburgh, C. Watts; Finsbury Park, G. Ward, Miss Robins; Finsbury, J. Anderson; Glasgow, J. P. Gilmour; Hull, R. Forder; Huddersfield, W. Spivey; Islington, A. Guest; Manchester, Mrs. Pegg, C. Pegg, E. C. Taylor; Nottingham, S. W. Thompson; North-West London, Miss Brown, G. Brown; Rochdale, J. Sunderland; Sunderland, A. B. Moss; South Shields, J. T. Horseman; Westminster, R. Forder; West London, F. Todd, F. Schaller; Wood Green, S. R. Thompson; Ox Hill, J. Keast.

Individual members attended from Bath, Blenavon, Cardiff, Merthyr, Gloucester, London, etc. Many of the Vice-Presidents, including the veterans Truelove and Umpleby, were present on the platform.

Mr. FOOTE briefly opened the Conference by expressing the hope that all the proceedings would be animated by the single desire of advancing the cause.

The minutes of the last Conference having, on the motion of Mr. Moss, seconded by Mr. TAYLOR, been taken as read, Mr. J. ANDERSON asked if he would be in order in asking some questions, to which Mr. FOOTE replied that, when the Agenda was disposed of, there might be an opportunity to introduce any other business.

The PRESIDENT then read the Executive's Annual Report, as follows:—

Your Executive, in presenting this report for the year 1894-5, feels it to be one with which the Society may, on the whole, be fairly well satisfied. Considering the general and prolonged depression in industrial circles, it is gratifying to know that there has been little falling off in the amount of members' subscriptions, and that certificates have been issued to more than three hundred new members, while new Branches have been formed at Rochdale and Stockton-on-Tees, and another so far away as Kokstad, in South Africa.

It is also pleasant to note the abiding honor in which the Society's late President is held in this country. A statue of Charles Bradlaugh was unveiled at Northampton in the month of June. A tremendous, and perhaps unprecedented, concourse of people filled the square in which it stands, together with all the approaches; and the enthusiasm of the crowd, both then and at the evening meeting indoors, beggars description. A considerable number of Freethinkers were present from London and the Midlands, and your President represented your Society officially at both gatherings. Some months afterwards a fine marble bust of Charles Bradlaugh, presented by the donor of his portrait at the bar of the House of Commons, was unveiled at Manchester; on which occasion your President had the honor to officiate as chairman.

During the late School Board elections in London, which were of immense importance, owing to the great struggle between Church and Chapel, your Executive did what was possible in support of the cause of Secular Education. Mr. Charles Watts was put forward as a special "Secular" candidate in Finsbury. He made a gallant fight, and was well backed by industrious friends; but the press boycott rendered success impossible in such a vast constituency, numbering more than eighty thousand electors. Unfortunately there was a Social Democratic candidate in the field, also in favor of Secular Education, who polled a good many votes, though considerably less than Mr. Watts. Mr. Watts will fight again, and sooner or later he will win, and represent our cause with dignity and efficiency on the greatest School Board in the world. (Applause.)

One incident in this struggle is worthy of special mention. The Rev. Dr. Parker, of the City Temple, wrote a long and able letter to the *Times* in favor of Secular Education as the logical outcome of Nonconformist principles. This letter was printed as an election leaflet by Mr. Watts's committee, with an invitation to "Vote for Watts, the only candidate running on Dr. Parker's lines."

Your Executive has decided to initiate the formation of a Secular Education Council for the whole of London, and next winter will present a favorable occasion for attempting this important project. (Hear, hear.)

Secularists have engaged in School Board contests in other parts of the country, notably Mr. John Grange at Bradford, and in some cases they have been successful. It is also a matter for congratulation that so many Secularists have been elected under the new Parish Councils Act. One of your vice-presidents, Mr. A. B. Moss, was elected with Mr. Dobson, another member of your Society, at Camberwell; and during the brief time he has been sitting as a vestryman he has done some good work in a Secular direction. Another vice-president, Mr. Victor Roger, has also been elected at Lambeth, in spite of bigoted opposition.

Owing to reasons which will probably be discussed by this Conference, the past year has not been one of special activity in platform propaganda outside London; though Mr. C. Cohen has done excellent and highly appreciated work on the Tyneside. Curiously, however, there has been more than the usual number of public debates, which are always of the highest value to our movement. Your President has debated before crowded audiences with the Rev. J. Waldron, at New Brompton, and with W. T. Lee, at Derby. Mr. Charles Watts has also held debates with Dr. Jamieson, at Glasgow; with the Rev. David Macrae, at Dundee; and with Mr. George Wise, of the Liverpool Christian Evidence Society.

The open-air propaganda has been well maintained in London, where Sunday lectures are delivered in the Parks and other public places. Very large audiences are addressed by your Society's speakers, such as Messrs. Moss, Heaford, Rowney, Guest, Haslam, Jones, and St. John; and the meetings are almost invariably peaceful and attentive, except when disorder is deliberately created by vulgar and disappointed opponents, who are unable to attract audiences of their own. It may also be mentioned that the London Secular Federation—fortunate in its new secretary, Miss Annie Brown—has weathered all its financial troubles, and wiped out a heavy indebtedness which, for a year or two, had crippled its energies.

The Society's *Almanack* has not had the sale that might be expected. Seeing the number of Almanacks that have entered the market since your Society's was first published, and the impossibility of competing with ventures addressed to the general community, it may possibly be prudent either to publish a smaller Almanack at a reduced price, or to issue the necessary information it contains in some other form.

The most important feature, perhaps, of the year's work has been the vindication of Secularism against its most malignant libellers. It was mentioned in the last annual report that legal action was being taken against the printer and the publisher of an unspeakably vile calumny on the London Hall of Science. That action was carried to a successful issue. The libellers were condemned in a court of law, and their indulgency in the unrestrained luxury of defamation has cost them nearly £300. It was impossible to take action against the men of straw for whom the printer and publisher were acting. Such scoundrels will never be weaned from their dirty business, but it is something to teach Christian printers and publishers that they cannot reckon on impunity if they put the filthy lies of low Christian Evidence advocates into general circulation. (Applause.)

The full report of the trial of this case, with a long and important preface by your President, is published in pamphlet form; and members would do well to circulate it as extensively as possible amongst their orthodox friends and acquaintances.

Your Executive is still responsible for the Freethought propaganda at the Hall of Science. How long its tenancy will continue depends on several circumstances, some of which are beyond the purview of this Conference. An opinion may be elicited, however, as to whether the continuance of the tenancy is desirable; and in order that the expression of it may be unbiassed, the Executive refrains from giving a special opinion of its own.

Among recent changes at the Hall of Science is the disappearance of the Club, to which your Society was affiliated. That affiliation was suspended by the Executive some months ago, as it was deemed necessary to disavow all moral responsibility for a certain class of entertainment, which, though not illegal, was regarded as discreditable. The Hall was sublet for this purpose without consultation with the Executive, and persisted in, despite the Executive's protest. The whole matter was laid before a special members' meeting, which overwhelmingly endorsed the action of the Executive; and the suspension of the affiliation was only removed when the Executive was satisfied that the Board of Directors of the National Secular Hall Society had taken ample precaution against any similar unpleasantness. Now that the old Club has ceased to exist, it is morally certain that whatever social element exists in future at the Hall of Science will be strictly confined to the members (and friends) of the National Secular Society. (Hear, hear.)

An invitation was given to your Society to send delegates to a Conference representing the principal advanced societies of the kingdom, as well as such religious societies as the Salvation Army Social Wing, the Christian Social Union, etc. The Conference was called by the Humanitarian League to discuss the Criminal Code, the public control of hospitals, slaughter-house reform, and cruel sports such as the hunting of tame animals. Your President and Mr. Wheeler attended. On the first and most important question, that of the Criminal Code, a resolution, proposed by

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the Rev. W. D. Morison and seconded by the Rev. W. Horsley (both prison chaplains), simply asking for inquiry into the working of the criminal law, was overridden in favor of an amendment, proposed by your President, declaring the Conference in favor of "the substitution of the idea of reform for that of punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies." As this amendment, which was carried almost unanimously, was in the very terms of the Immediate Practical Objects of this Society, the result so far was highly gratifying. The other resolutions passed at this Conference were also in accordance with the Principles of the National Secular Society.

The Bill to Abolish Prosecutions on account of Religious Opinions, which was introduced last session by Mr. Samuel Storey, M.P., and which is substantially identical with the Bill that was carried to a division by Charles Bradlaugh, has been introduced this session by Mr. Gourley, M.P. Being backed by some influential Radical members, it should obtain considerable support if it comes up for the second reading; but few private Bills have much chance in the present state of public business, and already the air is full of rumors of dissolution.

Your President states from his own personal knowledge that during the past four or five years many thousands of pounds have been lost to this Society through the infamous Blasphemy Laws. (Shame). He is convinced that Secularism will never take its proper place, and never attain to its proper strength and organisation, until the Blasphemy Laws are abolished. It is absolutely essential that Secularism should be able to hold property in trust for its maintenance and propagation; property which could never be alienated, except by a special Act of Parliament, from the purposes of its dedication.

Unfortunately there is little prospect of the Blasphemy Laws being abolished in the immediate future. The growing toleration of the age is too apt to take the line of indifference, while the bigots of every sect fight tenaciously for the last relics of their evil privileges. The worst of good people, as Voltaire said, is that they are such cowards. They allow themselves to be terrorised by the enemies of liberty and progress. How else is it possible to explain the rebuff which has just been experienced by the Sunday Societies? Owing to the late verdict in the case of the Leeds prosecution, men like Sir Robert Ball, the great astronomer, no longer feel it safe to deliver lectures on Sunday. A Bill introduced into the House of Lords by a layman is challenged by the Archbishop of Canterbury; and although the Home Secretary, in the House of Commons, says that the law appealed to by the Sunday bigots is absolutely indefensible, and an outrage on rational freedom, he declares that the Government has no intention of doing anything to remedy the mischief. Happily the Secular party has always defied the Sunday bigots and the Sunday laws; whenever threatened, it has put on a bold front; and this has generally convinced the bigots that they had better turn their attention to easier victims.

In glancing abroad, it may be noted that Mr. Joseph Symes at Melbourne is still maintaining his weekly journal, the *Liberator*, which a few months ago was threatened with extinction. Mr. Symes is a man of great energy and perseverance, and it is not surprising that he has tided over a great difficulty. Mr. W. W. Collins and Mr. Wallace Nelson, also at the Antipodes, are laboring with zeal and success. A field for Freethought propaganda is also opening in South Africa. There is no special news from India. In the West Indies there is a Freethought Society with a journal called *Progress*, ably conducted by Emanuel dos Santos, a member of your Society.

In Sweden, where the cause of Freethought received a considerable impetus through the imprisonment of Mr. Lennstrand for blasphemy, the subsequent illness of this gentleman led to the relinquishment of his paper named *Fritankaren*, or Freethought. Early in the present year a provincial paper, the *Soderkoping's Posten*, has been prosecuted for blasphemy, on account of an article on the clericals and the schools, and the editor of the paper sentenced to two months' imprisonment. But the sentence has not been allowed to pass unchallenged, and a new Freethought paper, entitled *Nya Sanningar*, or New Thoughts, has been started in Stockholm, edited by Petrus Aspland, and promises to worthily uphold the Freethought cause in Scandinavia. The veteran Captain Thomson has also translated some of Ingersoll's lectures into Swedish.

Secular principles have also been advanced in Hungary by the discussions upon the clerical opposition to the Civil Marriage Bill; as in our own country the recent Ritualistic disturbance at the marriage of a divorced person has accentuated the Secular position that marriage, being a civil contract, should have a civil celebration, while allowing all who desire a religious ceremony, in addition, to have the same, whether in church, chapel, or other building.

Up to the present no intimation has been received from the International Federation of Freethinkers as to the date of its next Conference, though a postcard has arrived stating that circulars upon the subject would be sent. There is reason to suppose that the Congress will be held at Brussels, and your Society will doubtless wish to be represented.

Since the last Conference death has removed three of your Vice-Presidents: Mr. Thomas Slater, of Leicester, and formerly of Bury, a veteran worker in the cause of Secularism; Mr. Charles James Hunt, a younger but also well-known public advocate, whose death was probably accelerated by his exertions in the cause of political and social reform; and Mr. Joseph Brown, the indefatigable secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation. Mr. Daniel Baker, the second oldest of your Vice-Presidents, has suffered a dangerous illness, but has happily recovered. (Applause.)

There is a name dear to British Freethinkers, though its bearer is an American. (Applause.) Col. Ingersoll has lately entered upon a fresh campaign. For some months he has been addressing crowded audiences in various American cities, great excitement being caused by his new lecture, *About the Holy Bible*. At Hobboken, in New Jersey, the clergy petitioned the mayor to prohibit Colonel Ingersoll from lecturing, but the official attorney advised that this was impossible; the lecture would have to be delivered first, and a prosecution for blasphemy might come afterwards. Detectives attended the meeting, which they probably enjoyed, and took down the Colonel's "blasphemy"; but the authorities shrank from a prosecution. It is noteworthy that the bigotry of the Hobboken clergy elicited a general protest from the American press. Even the religious journals thought it would be more discreet to let Colonel Ingersoll alone.

America is represented at this Conference by the President of the American Secular Union, Mr. S. P. Putnam. (Applause.) Mr. Putnam has been warmly welcomed in London, and in the few provincial cities he has already visited; and doubtless the most cordial reception will be given him by this Conference. Upon this, at least, there may be thorough unanimity. Secularists in this country honor Mr. Putnam as the elected chief officer of their brethren across the Atlantic. He comes from the land where the body of Thomas Paine was laid in its humble grave, to visit the land where that great Freethinker first saw the light of day. He brings with him a message of encouragement from the noblest of Americans, from one whose splendid brain is equalled by his generous heart. And when our American guest returns to his own people, with what we may hope will be delightful memories of the mother country, we trust that he will do his utmost to gain us a visit from Colonel Ingersoll. (Much applause.)

Mr. BOORMAN (Chatham) moved, and Mr. THOMPSON (Wood Green) seconded, the adoption of the Report, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. C. WATTS then moved as a resolution arising out of the Report: "That the members of this Conference hail with unqualified pleasure the presence among them of their able American co-worker, Mr. S. P. Putnam; and they wish to convey to him their appreciation of the great services he has rendered, and is still rendering, to the cause of mental freedom. Further, all present wish to assure Mr. Putnam of their earnest desire to have a visit from the great orator, Colonel Ingersoll; and they hereby kindly request Mr. Putnam to use his influence to induce the Colonel to cross the Atlantic at an early date, and to assure him that he would receive from the Freethinkers of this country a most genuine and enthusiastic reception."

Mr. PUTNAM said it had been the dream of his life to visit England, and when he returned to America he should report the work that was going on under the same flag here. It filled his heart with joy to hear the applause that greeted the name of Colonel Ingersoll. He belonged to the whole world; a citizen of the whole earth. His dominant thought was the sentiment of Thomas Paine inscribed on the walls, "The world is my country, mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion." Colonel Ingersoll had constant calls on his time. He had a great law practice, and, in addition, he devoted himself to Freethought. He had listened to Colonel Ingersoll's lecture, "About the Holy Bible," at Chicago with an audience of six thousand persons. He had up to the present only received a brief message, but one full of heart and sympathy for the English Freethinkers. Ingersoll loves and admires England. It would be a pleasure for him to come here, but there are great demands on his time. He, however, felt sure the time was not distant when the great Freethought soldier of America would greet the English Freethinkers.

The adoption of the Financial Report, moved by Mr. KRAST (Bristol), and seconded by Mr. SUNDERLAND (Bradford), was carried after various questions by Mr. J. Anderson had been disposed of.

Mr. Foote having vacated the chair, which was taken by Mr. Watts,

Mr. G. WARD (Finsbury Park) moved the resolution standing in the name of his Branch: "That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President for 1895-96." Mr. PEGG

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(Manchester) seconded, and Mr. FORDER read a letter from Mr. George Anderson. Mr. Anderson said he had long felt that the President of the N.S.S. should be recouped for his loss of time and money in serving the party's interests. It was unfair that heavy burdens should be laid upon those who were doing such valuable work. Of course it might be said that Presidents had asked for nothing. But that was no answer. Mr. Bradlaugh had died several thousand pounds in debt, owing to this state of things. Christian congregations looked after the worldly wants of their ministers, and Secularists should do the same; and Mr. Anderson believed the congregation was large enough to do it. He hoped the Conference would appoint a committee to consider the matter and to report upon it forthwith.

Mr. FOOTE said that he doubted whether the suggestion was feasible in the present condition of affairs, but it was a matter on which he could say little, except that he often felt it hard to bear his heavy out-of-pocket expenses. Some discussion followed, and ultimately, in accordance with Mr. Anderson's suggestion, a committee were appointed. They were Messrs. Anderson, Forder, Watts, and Ward.

Mr. FOOTE was unanimously re-elected, and, on re-taking the chair, was received with applause. He said it would be but the pride which aped humility if he said this was unexpected. Nevertheless, he felt the honor done him. He would rather be the President of this poor, struggling, oppressed society of devoted men and women, working in a great cause, than to enjoy a post of cheap and easy honor in any walk of life. If there be any better man the party preferred, he hoped he should be sensible enough to render him as loyal support as he himself desired. The place was not a bed of roses. Some seemed to regard the President as a sort of Aunt Sally, against whom they must shy all their sticks. He did not complain. Freethinkers have a larger share of individuality than others, or they would not be Freethinkers. He had done his best. No man could do more. He had never been of opinion that the Society wanted a dummy President. When Mr. Bradlaugh spoke to him about taking the post, he said if it was for the good of the Society, he would stand aside. Mr. Bradlaugh said: "No, Foote, I will be no party to having a dummy President. You must either take it or leave it, as I mean to nominate you." Experience had more than ever convinced him that a firmness was necessary. What is our condition? We are outlaws. We have to fight the whole world, living from hand to mouth. A fighting party must submit to some kind of discipline. Blows were only effective when struck with the power of the whole party, and organisation substituted for guerilla warfare. Going about from place to place, he had a more extensive view of the wants of the party, and he felt that the lecture system was chaotic, and required a vigorous concentration and guiding hand from the centre. Money was wasted for want of this. Often circumstances arose rendering it desirable to have at once special lectures or to meet opposition in some place; but it could not be carried out because of our elaborate paper machinery. He had decided to see what he could personally do to organise the lecture system, and intended to put his hand to the task. In conclusion, Mr. Foote pledged himself that he would follow, however feebly, in the footsteps of his predecessor, and he trusted that, when they met again, they would have no cause for regret.

Upon the motion of the Executive, the following Vice-Presidents were nominated for re-election: Dr. T. R. Allinson, G. Anderson, D. Baker, N. B. Billany, J. E. Brumage, Prof. L. Buchner, M.D., W. W. Collins, R. Forder, S. Hartmann, W. Heaford, G. J. Holyoake, P. A. V. Le Lubez, A. B. Moss, T. Parris, S. M. Peacock, W. Pratt, J. H. Ridgway, V. Roger, J. Samson, Dr. E. Schlaeger, R. O. Smith, Mrs. T. Smith, J. Symes, E. Truelove, J. Umpleby, Miss E. M. Vance, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler.

Mr. J. ANDERSON called attention to the absence of the name of Mr. G. Standring, who, it was explained, had resigned.

Mr. BRIGGS (of Derby) objected to the name of Mr. R. O. Smith, and a motion that it be omitted was seconded.

The PRESIDENT, as on another occasion, asked them not to be hasty at the risk of being unjust. Unless in the case of criminal conduct, it was generally best to let a man decide for himself whether he should remain or resign.

This was done; Mr. BRIGGS having stated that his object had been attained in drawing attention to the matter.

The following were also nominated by the Executive for election as Vice-Presidents: E. Bater (London), J. F. Dewar (Edinburgh), J. P. Gilmour (Glasgow), and S. P. Putnam (America). Carried unanimously.

Upon the motion of Messrs. PEGG and TAYLOR, the standing orders were suspended, and the name of Mr. Cohen added to the list of Vice-Presidents.

The motion by Rochdale Branch, "That the office of Honorary Secretary be abolished," was lost; and the motion by Executive, "That Mr. Robert Forder be re-elected Honorary Secretary," was carried unanimously.

Messrs. W. B. Thompson (Chatham) and Arthur Wheeler (London) were elected Auditors.

Mr. SUNDERLAND (Bradford), on behalf of the Rochdale Branch, moved: "That on and after Whit-Sunday, 1896, no member shall be eligible for re-election as President until three years have elapsed from his vacating such office." He jocularly asked, "When shall I come in?" The motion fell through for want of a seconder.

At this stage of the proceedings the Conference adjourned for dinner, since "'tis mete that those should meat who meet at meetings." The repast provided for the delegates at the "Crown and Dove" was a capital one, giving general satisfaction.

(Continued on page 363.)

ACID DROPS.

JOHN WALSH, of Liverpool, is dead, and the coroner's jury has returned an open verdict over his corpse. John went to a "wake." There was plenty of drinking and the usual row, and John got hit over the head with a poker. According to the coroner, the whole affair was "most disgraceful." There was gross perjury, he declared, on one side or the other; and it was shocking that such things could occur in a Christian country. Very likely! But there will be more wakes, more drinks, more quarrels, and more broken heads. Popular religious ceremonies will not die out in a hurry. The Liverpool coroner must wait.

Sir Daniel Lysons' recent book on the Crimean War gives a pathetic little story showing how little "funk" at the thought of death there is in reality, as compared with pulpit representations. General Lysons found a soldier lying on the ground, and asked if he were wounded. "No, sir; cholera," was the soldier's reply. The general dismounted and offered him some brandy. "Thank you, sir," he said, "it would be wasting it; I am dying."

Now that Arthur Orton is making a clean breast of it, and confessing how he passed as Sir Roger Tichborne, it is worth remembering that the late Charles Bradlaugh took a very decided stand in opposition to "Sir Roger's" counsel, the late Dr. Kenealy. Bradlaugh's open letter to Kenealy in the *National Reformer* caused a good deal of excitement, and sold very largely when it was reprinted in pamphlet form.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is priest enough to sympathise with the Church clergy who object to marrying divorced persons. This is all very well, from the priests' point of view; but as long as the Church clergy are State officers, in the religious department, they must conform to the law; and the law says that divorced persons may marry again, even when the divorce was brought about by their own misconduct.

Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen, lecturing at the British Museum on the Folk-lore of Babylonia, spoke of King Sargon as the Moses of Chaldea. He was born of a princess, who placed him in a basket of bulrushes and entrusted him to the waters of the Euphrates. He was rescued from the water by an irrigator, who adopted him as his child, and instructed him in the art of gardening. He was so prosperous that he became king of the city of Agadé, and the founder of the first Babylonian empire. Mr. Boscawen considers that Sargon was undoubtedly a historical character, which is probably more than can safely be affirmed of Moses.

Another semi-mythical hero was Etanna. It was he who built the great tower to reach to heaven, which the gods threw down as fast as he built it; and finally they changed the speech of man and caused the work to cease. This legend is doubtless the origin of the Bible yarn of the Tower of Babel. Mr. Boscawen affirmed as much himself, and said in conclusion that the field of Babylonian folk-lore promised a rich harvest for the students of comparative mythology.

The Rileyites have revived their tactics on the London School Board. They go there to obstruct and hinder the work of education. Repairs were absolutely necessary to put some dozen schools in poor neighborhoods into fair sanitary condition, but these good Christians opposed the motion tooth and nail.

There is not so much humanity, after all, in this Armenian atrocity agitation. The zeal of English Christians in this matter is very largely sectarian. It is also stimulated by the fact that Turkey is a weak power. You never can be quite sure of a Christian in any good cause. He is so apt to be a Christian first and a man afterwards.

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The Arbitration Alliance is "an association of Christians founded last year on behalf of international arbitration," and one day last week it held its annual meeting. One of the speakers was Dr. Brooke Herford, but this reverend gentleman's ideas of arbitration are rather peculiar. "The kind of arbitration he desired to see at the present moment," he said, "was the dispatch of English war-ships to Constantinople, to distinctly show the Turkish powers that we meant business with regard to the future protection of Armenian Christians." It appears from this that arbitration is all right until "Christian" interests are at stake; and then, especially if you are strong enough, you must go in for blood and blazes.

According to report, a Christian has actually been found in Russia in the person of Prince Dimitri Khilkov, who has been influenced by Tolstoi to divide his estates among his peasants. Perhaps humanity is the motive rather than Christianity. At any rate, we hope the Prince will not join the sect of Skopski, the only Christians who follow out the teachings of Matthew xix.

Mr. Mark H. Judge, honorary secretary of the Sunday Society, in giving evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, stated that his Society "did not encourage lectures or entertainments on Sundays for commercial profit." This is true in a certain sense, but to some people it may be misleading. The Sunday Society pays its lecturers, and it is as "commercial" to take money for lecturing as to take money for making chairs. Would it not be better if the Sunday Society did its own work without touching outside matters? For our part, we do not see why the proprietor of a hall should not be free to organise Sunday lectures and musical entertainments just as well as religious or philanthropical committees. Surely a thing which is right in itself cannot become wrong when it is done for a profit; and if lecturers and musicians are paid, why should not other persons devote their time, skill, and experience to the enterprise, and take their legitimate share of the financial results?

Mr. Gavazzi King, in giving evidence before the same committee, made some humorous observations. "There was difficulty," he said, "in getting subscriptions in Yorkshire. Yorkshiremen would pay for their seats, but it was difficult to get money after the event. They did not care to contribute to a collection, because they had got in then. Of course, that was a Scotch characteristic as well." Yes, and we fear it is a common characteristic of human nature.

An inquest has been held at Nottingham on the body of Mrs. Long, a widow, who died suddenly as she was entering the Tabernacle, Mansfield-road, Nottingham, of the congregation of which she was a member.

James Canning, the ex-soldier, sentenced to death for the murder of his sweetheart, expresses his wish to die and be with the murdered girl in heaven. Truly the Christian religion is a very consoling one.

The Rev. J. H. Sheldrake, D.D., of Cincinatti, is being tried before the Pittsburg Presbytery on the charge of adultery, which is made by the Rev. G. W. Chalford.

Charlotte Cooper, a servant living at Southsea, was found dead in her bed-room, laid out ready to be placed in her coffin, with her hands folded and her face tied up. On the table was a bottle containing carbolic acid, and a note saying: "My only dread is that I am not taking enough poison. God grant I may, for I want to be out of all these petty worries, for his dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ. Amen." We pity the poor girl, but then, as Talmage says, those Atheists are always committing suicide.

Rev. Alfred Barber, vicar of Burton Fleming, Hunmanby, E. Yorkshire, who has been in holy orders since 1877, and whose present living is worth £282 a year, has been before the Filey magistrates on a charge of indecently assaulting John Pogmore, a boy aged eleven. Enough evidence was taken to justify a remand, and the bail was fixed at £400.

The Rev. Charles Joseph has for some time been looking after the morals of Portsmouth. He does not seem, however, to look properly after his own congregation. One of the members has just been figuring in a nasty paternity case, and has been ordered to pay up by the magistrates. The "father" of the girl's baby, however, has appealed against the magistrates' decision, and it is probable that the reverend gentleman himself will have to appear as a witness.

Mr. Joseph has to pay £75 damages and costs for slandering a local publican, all in the interest of morality. His appeal has been dismissed at the Law Courts, the Master of the Rolls incidentally remarking that Mr. Joseph's speech was the dullest nonsense ever heard.

The Rev. Benjamin Waugh, secretary to the Society for the Protection of Children (salary £800 per annum), is pushing a Bill through the House of Commons to prevent parents insuring the lives of their children for a sum sufficient to meet funeral expenses. The insurance agents stigmatise his accusations against the working classes as calumny, and are actively opposing the Bill.

Even the pious New York *Herald*, after noting that there are only 50,000 professed Christians among the 45,000,000 inhabitants of Japan, reckons that "there will be few Japanese statesmen who will be inclined to look with favour on the introduction of more of the sort of Christian civilisation that has made itself so selfishly prominent during the last few weeks. We have seen during that time the most powerful European nations, professing the glories of the Christian religion, striving, not to assist Japan on her pathway to the highest civilisation, but exerting all their influence and menacing her with diabolical threats to the end that they, in their stupendous greed, may still gain a few more decades of years to milk the bloated cow of Confucius for their own pecuniary benefit."

A correspondent of the New York *World* sneers at Ingersoll for getting information out of encyclopedias and "such like handbooks." Suppose he does. Ingersoll's encyclopedias are up to date. The sneerer's encyclopedia is an antiquated Jew book, compiled by men who made up in assurance for their want of information.

The Rev. James Hunt, the Rector of Donegore, in Ulster, who said he would like to dynamite the Protestant chapel at Madrid, when brought before the Court of the General Synod last week, made a recantation "because ordered by the Court." Mr. Campbell, Q.C., contended that the recantation was insincere, and ought to be refused; but Lord Justice Fitzgibbon held that the Court could not enter into the question of sincerity or insincerity without trying the defendant for a new offence. The *Belfast News-Letter* says: "There must be some defect in the legal procedure of the Church which enables Mr. Hunt to continue to hold the position of Rector of Donegore."

The steeple of St. Nicholas's Cathedral, Newcastle-on-Tyne, needs repair, and counsel says that the Corporation is responsible for the expenses. It seems to us that St. Nicholas should repair his own church, or induce his friends to raise a subscription.

Rev. A. I. Steylter loudly complains in the *Cape Argus* of the growing desecration of the Sabbath. People out there are actually going in for entertainments on the Lord's Day. "Cannot they rest satisfied," asks this sky-pilot, "with six days for the pursuance of wealth and pleasure?" Which, being interpreted, means: Can't they let the clergy have one day all to themselves? Free Trade won't do in religion, anyway.

In a prominent position on the wall of a house of refreshment in North London is displayed the following: "Happy is the people whose God is the Lord." The effect is somewhat spoiled by the proximity of this warning in large type: "Patrons are requested to keep a sharp eye on their overcoats and umbrellas."

The priests of the shrine at Bansi (India) found one morning recently that the god, Mahadeo, was missing. Search was made, and the god discovered in a shawl beside a tank. Their first impression was that a miracle had been vouchsafed, which would bring grist to the priestly mill. This idea was dispelled when it was discovered that the god had lost his gold cuirass, his silver throne, and all his jewellery.

A Kansas "mejum" has published a pretended letter from the spirit of Horace Seaver, late editor of the *Boston Investigator*, addressed to the former proprietor of that paper, Mr. J. P. Mendum, telling him his wish to make that paper the organ of spiritual philosophy. The joke is, Mr. Seaver died in 1889; the message came on March 3, 1895, Mr. Mendum having died on January 11, 1891. The spirit message says: "Keep a more determined will on your health. The longer you remain on earth the better will I be pleased, and the better will it be for you." Evidently the Kansas "mejum" had not heard of the death of Mr. J. P. Mendum.

A terrible cyclone passed over a portion of Kansas, in the vicinity of Wichita, on the 1st inst., leaving death and desolation in its trail. The horrified people saw the approach of the destroyer, and prayed most fervently for deliverance; but the demon of the storm, the instrument of God's wrath, as churchmen call such afflictions, swept right on over their prostrate forms. A teacher in a district school saw the impending danger. With the little brood under her charge she fled from the line of destruction. Looking

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back a minute later, the school-house had utterly disappeared; but, relying on her own strength and energies, the dear children were safe. Moral: Don't stop to pray to any God when danger threatens, but, in Western parlance, "get up and get."—*Progressive Thinker.*

The Rev. Mr. Macaskill, of Dingwall, brought the heresies of Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man* before the Free Church Assembly at Edinburgh. He showed that the teaching of Professor Drummond, who, he said, would send us to look for our ancestry among "vile baboons and horrid gorillas," was quite incompatible with belief in the Bible. A motion for a judicial investigation into the teaching of the book was negatived, the Assembly being well aware that an investigation means badly in the long run for their own claims and those of their fetish book.

The Presbyterians in America, in their General Assembly at Pittsburgh, have also been troubled with the heresy of Dr. Briggs; but they shrink from expulsion, and the body is virtually deserting the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The *Boston Investigator* says: "A country judge in Hungary gave a decision a few days ago of which Solomon himself might be proud. Members of the Nazarene sect in the town of Gyoma requested his Honor to be allowed to crucify one of their number, 'who was a Messiah, and had been called by heaven to save men.' The judge for a moment was dumbfounded. 'Friends,' he replied, after recovering his senses, 'I do not wish to interfere with your religious practices. If your Messiah wishes to be crucified, let him prepare for death. Remember, however, that if he does not rise again in three days, I shall cause every one of you to be hanged.' The Nazarenes, it is needless to add, allowed their chief to live."

The example of Solomon and the patriarchs continues to operate in America, even though Mormon polygamy is stamped out. The *Boston Investigator* says: "The following list of witnesses to the saving power of Jesus' name is sent us by a Georgia correspondent:—Rev. F. B. Taylor, of Alabama, left his wife and ran away, and is now in Bullock county leading a false life; that Rev. Tombs Thomas has three living wives in Alabama, and one in Georgia; that one Sherwood, who goes around selling song books with a band of boys, has several wives; that Rev. S. B. Henderson quit the A. M. E. Church because the bishop would not agree for him to marry again while his first wife was alive; he married again, and now has quit wife No. 2 and gone off with another woman; that Rev. E. J. Smith has deserted his wife in Alabama and gone to the red hills of Georgia."

The same paper mentions that Sam Wah Kee, a converted Chinaman of this city, recently visited China and returned with his third living wife. This came to the ears of his former teachers, and they went to his place in Harrison-avenue to protest. Sam was surprised that exception should be taken to his polygamous tendencies, and he tried to explain that his action was in accordance with the dictates of true religion.

The *Baltimore Herald* says: "Hypocrisy is undoing religion. The scandals in the lives of ministers, particularly, occupy an inordinate amount of space in the daily records of events. In extenuation it may be said that men of the cloth are exposed to greater temptations than others, and that a much higher standard is set for them. But it is also true that they pretend to the attainment of a superior degree of grace, which ought to make them proof against the pitfalls and snares in their path."

A so-called *Story of the Life of Jesus* has been put out, for the young, by Mr. W. L. Sheldon. Mr. Sheldon is the lecturer of the Ethical Society at St. Louis, and the story is "told from an ethical standpoint." This means that the whole of the supernatural and miraculous elements of the Gospels are carefully eliminated. The angels that appeared to Mary and Joseph, to the shepherds, and to Jesus himself, the temptation of Jesus, the appearance of the risen Jesus to his sorrowing followers, all were dreams, illusions. The darkness at the crucifixion was simply the oncoming of night. When Jesus said "Peace, be still," it was the troubled minds of his disciples, not the waves of the sea, that were quieted.

This may be an "ethical" rendering of the Gospel stories, but, assuredly, it is not a rational and fair one. *Public Opinion*, of New York, remarks: "It is simply impossible that the New Testament record should be even approximately correct unless it is inspired; and to reject the theory of inspiration, and then proceed dogmatically to relate, in matter-of-fact detail, what Jesus did and said and thought, is certainly anything but reasonable and consistent. And such a course is the more to be deprecated because the book is especially designed for children, who will, of course, take everything in its most literal sense, and will never regard it, even if the author so intended it—though he evidently does not—as a historical and biographical romance, a 'Ben-Hur' sort of story from an ethical standpoint.

"Moreover, viewed in its purely secular and educational aspect, the book must be even more strongly condemned. To give the child his first important lesson in biography and history after this fashion is to risk vitiating his whole attitude towards history. It is demoralising to the youthful mind to treat it in this way. Every sort of teaching that tends to give the child a wrong attitude towards facts, everything that does not directly tend to cultivate and strengthen his ability to weigh and sift evidence and to reach a reasonable conclusion, is both unjust to the child and dangerous to the social order."

A similar work has been put out here by the Rev. Walter Lloyd, entitled *The Galilean*. It is founded on the altogether false assumption that the truth can be obtained from ancient records by simply omitting from them all that is inconsistent with modern knowledge. Mr. Lloyd ascribes to the Church, and not to the Gospels, all that he objects to, forgetting that we derive the Gospels themselves from the Church.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

June 9, Glasgow; 10 and 11, Aberdeen; 13 and 14, Dundee; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 24, Derby; 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street; 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14 Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Did Christ Predict his Resurrection?

If one conclusion from the records be more certain than another, it is that Christ's most intimate friends and disciples, even the twelve, looked upon his Crucifixion as the termination of his career, the prostration and crushing of all their hopes, the end of all things as far as their faith and future were concerned. They not only had no expectation of their Lord's Resurrection; they had plainly never dreamt of such a thing—the bare idea of it appears never to have crossed their minds; the rumor of the occurrence, when reported to them, "seemed to them as idle tales"; nay, they had the greatest difficulty in realising the fact even when Jesus appeared to them. Now, is it credible—is it even conceivable—that this should have been their state of mind if the Resurrection had been repeatedly foretold to them by their beloved Master, *and specifically as the sequel of the Crucifixion?* Could the previous announcement of so astounding an event have failed to create the most intense excitement at the time, and the most vivid expectation, after the Crucifixion had already three days previously so impressively recalled those (alleged) predictions of his sufferings and death, with which the prophecy of his rising from the dead was, according to the Evangelists, so inextricably mingled? I confess it appears to me simply inconceivable. If Christ did so utter himself, wishing thereby to prepare the minds of his disciples, the least that can be said is, that he entirely failed in his purpose.—*W. R. Greg, "Miscellaneous Essays," pp. 235, 236.*

For aught I see, though the Mosaical part of Judaism be abolished among Christians, the Pharisaical part of it never will.—*Rev. Robert South, D.D.*

If there were no preachers, we would know nothing of God; if no mediums, nothing of spirits. Our knowledge in this line is strictly limited to terrestrial beings.—*Otto Wettstein.*

In Italy the Bible is just this: for priests, a sacred text; for infidels, a book full of obscurities and contradictions; for the learned, an historical document, to be used with great caution; for lovers of literature, a collection of very fine specimens of Oriental poetic eloquence. But it never has been, and never will be, a fruitful inspirer of men's life.—*Professor Angelo de Gubernatis.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 9, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C.: 7.30, "The Romance of the Twelve Apostles."

June 16, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—June 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London. July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

E. Smedley.—(1) The quotations from Gibbon in *Crimes of Christianity* are taken from the best edition—Milman's, re-edited by Dr. Smith—in 8 vols. (Murray). Perhaps *your* reference is to another chapter, or another part of the same chapter. (2) The quotations from Justin and Tertullian are from the translations in the Ante-Nicene Library. Yours is a different translation and would not correspond verbatim, though the substance should be the same. (3) Mr. Watts's quotations from Renan's *Life of Jesus* were taken from the old Trübner edition. The cheap translation to which you refer is one that we have not examined. Trübner's books can generally be relied upon.

O. N. Wild.—We commented on the case as it stood, and could not well foresee what was to be disclosed at the next hearing. And our comment stands good, for the Catholic prosecutors were then no wiser than we. Thanks for your trouble.

John Smith.—We do not know Mr. W. Mawer's present address.

A. Liddle.—Thanks. We agree with you that letters like "Aldebaran's" in the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* are most serviceable to the Freethought cause. The appearance of such letters, in such a paper, is indeed a pregnant sign of the times.

Beelzebub.—Sorry we cannot find room for letters on Mr. Engström's unsatisfactory reply. Thanks for cutting. We note that the Portsmouth Branch was twitted with giving nothing to hospitals just when it was taking up a collection for them.

T. Riley (Halifax).—Sorry to hear that you endorse Mr. Haines's letter.

H. G. Shepherd.—Thanks. It shall have a paragraph in our next.

E. Howard.—See paragraph.

Owing to the holidays, our correspondence this week falls within narrow limits.

Papers Received.—Truthseeker—Crescent—Liberator—Western Figaro—Church Reformer—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Cape Argus—Bristol Mercury—Western Daily Press—Freidenker—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—Freedom—Liberty—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—New York Literary Digest—Bolton Journal and Guardian—De Dagersad—Light—Belfast News-Letter—Post—Christian Globe—Anti-Gambling Bulletin—Twentieth Century.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. G. W. Foote occupies the London Hall of Science platform this evening (June 9). His subject will be "The Romance of the Twelve Apostles."

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference was a great success. It was pleasant to meet delegates who had come all the way from Glasgow, though it was strange to see no representative from Plymouth. The large St. James's Hall was tastefully decorated with flags and flowers, thanks to the forethought and exertions of the local Reception Committee. Several ladies graced the platform with their presence.

As we predicted, there was a great supply of speaking talent. Messrs. Foote, Watts, Putnam, Moss, Cohen, Heaford, and Gilmour were all in fine form at the evening meeting, when addresses were delivered to the general public. One of the best speeches was that of Mr. Touzeau Parris, whose attendance had been doubtful until within a few days of the Conference. Mr. Watts was last on the list of speakers, and as the hour was getting late he had to speak *too* briefly, much to the regret of his many admirers. Mr. Foote had to be equally brief. Mr. Putnam had the most time allowed him, as was natural, and he kept the audience well alive to the end.

All the old Vice-Presidents were re-elected. The new ones are a welcome accession to the list. Mr. Foote was re-elected President with unanimity and enthusiasm. In the next number of the *Freethinker* he will address the Secular party, and explain what he briefly sketched at the Conference as to his immediate intentions with respect to the organisation and conduct of our propaganda.

A good report of the evening meeting appeared in the *Bristol Mercury*, and a briefer report in the *Daily Press*. This is an improvement on last year, when the Conference was practically tabooed by the Liverpool press.

Mr. Putnam delivers three lectures to-day (June 9) at Glasgow. During the week he visits Dundee and Aberdeen, and next Sunday he lectures at Edinburgh. We have not the slightest doubt that he will receive a splendid welcome from our Scottish friends. The hope we have to express is that they will bring their more orthodox friends to his meetings.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) for May 25 has arrived at our office. It contains the first of Mr. Putnam's letters, giving an account of his voyage across the Atlantic, and ending with the following sentences: "Yesterday at Southampton I was met by Watts and Foote. It was truly like a wonderful dream. It was a royal day, indeed, and I can only suggest the grand inspiration of the occasion. Next week I shall have much to write of our splendid English allies. My heart is full of this beautiful welcome to new shores and new work."

Our "sub," Mr. J. M. Wheeler, had rather a bad time on Monday night, in common with a good many other London friends returning by excursion train from the Conference. The Railway Company landed them on the Paddington platform about one o'clock on Tuesday morning, when the metropolitan traffic had all ceased. Mr. Wheeler had to walk to Holloway, and get up in the morning to write the Conference report. Before breakfast, as luck would have it, the postman brought him a Mahatma letter from India. It is written in Sanskrit, and our "sub" has to get it translated. This is rather rough. Mahatmas, who know everything, should at least condescend to be intelligible.

The envelope of this Mahatma letter is a common English one, and the handwriting, which is disguised, is English too. No doubt the envelope was sent out *addressed* to India, and posted there by the Mahatma—with his letter inside.

We have been pressing our "sub" to start a new Theosophical section himself. Everybody does that who gets Mahatma letters, and we don't see why Mr. Wheeler shouldn't have his share of the business while there is any money left in it. But somehow he doesn't take kindly to the idea. Ah, Mr. Wheeler, you'll never make a fortune; not in this world, anyhow.

Our gallant contemporary, the *Church Reformer*, edited by the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, is a paper we admire, though we are opposed to most of its principles. Mr. Headlam is such a "good fellow" that you cannot help liking him, and respecting him, even when you think him wrongheaded. It was an act of generosity on his part to go bail for Oscar Wilde. "I was surety," Mr. Headlam writes, "not for his character, but for his appearance in court to stand his trial." Mr. Headlam knew little of Oscar Wilde, having only met him twice; but he felt that the man's chance of a fair trial was imperilled, and he resolved "on public grounds" to let him have an opportunity of self-defence.

The Failsworth Secular Sunday-school will "procesh" on Whit-Friday (June 7). Headed by the Sowerby Bridge Friendly Brass Band, the young people and their teachers will start from the school at 10 o'clock. There will be singing by the choir as usual. In the afternoon the party will adjourn to a field, where sports, games, etc., will be provided. In the evening there will be a tea party held in the school. Some of our readers in the Manchester district will probably go to Failsworth to "assist" at this interesting function.

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We see, not from an official source, but from our foreign exchanges, that the International Congress of Freethinkers is to be held at Brussels on September 22, 23, and 24. The secretary of the Federation is M. J. Dons, 42 Rue du Fort, Saint Gilles, Brussels.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway, the latest editor and biographer of Thomas Paine, contributes a letter to the *Athenæum* on the Junius controversy. Mr. Conway refers to the curious theory of a certain school of American Liberals, headed by Colonel W. H. Burr, that Paine was Junius; a theory which is utterly untenable on the face of it, for the styles of the two writers are very different, and it is pretty certain that Paine did not possess the exact classical scholarship of the writer of the famous Letters. Besides, as Mr. Conway points out, Paine wrote of the "brilliant pen" of Junius, which he could hardly have done if he had been the author. He also wrote that the pen of Junius "enraptured without convincing; and though in the plenitude of its rage it might be said to give elegance to bitterness, yet the policy survived the blast." Neither the praise nor the censure is such as a man could well pass upon himself; and it is noticeable that when Paine is writing about Junius his style is as different as possible from that of the Great Unknown.

Félicien David, the composer of "Lalla Roukh" and "Le Desert," and one of the Saint Simonian forerunners at Suez of De Lesseps, has now, our Paris correspondent says, a monument in the cemetery of Le Pecq. His last wish was that no priest should officiate at his funeral. The monument, unveiled yesterday, is by M. Chapu. Few persons were present at the ceremony, but the pedestal of the bust was covered with roses, placed there by some friendly hand. —*Daily News.*

The *English Mechanic* (May 24), in a leading article, estimates the age of the earth at about twenty millions of years, and says that "the age of man runs into three hundred thousand years, and probably a hundred thousand or so more."

The proposed New Utah Constitution not only prohibits Bible-instituted polygamy, but provides for woman suffrage.

Under the heading "Literary Notes," the Conservative *Morning* devotes considerable space to Colonel Ingersoll's Home Life. It says: "Colonel Robert Green Ingersoll, the American Agnostic, lives in Fifth-avenue, New York, with his wife and two daughters, Eva and Maud. The elder daughter is now Mrs. Ralston Brown, and she has two children. Mrs. Ingersoll's mother is a member of the family, as are also her sister, Mrs. Farrell, and Mr. and Miss Farrell. This makes a family of eleven, and, excepting the two little children who are not yet old enough to solve the problems, they are followers of the Ingersoll anti-religious idea."

A correspondent, who recently visited Colonel Ingersoll, thus describes his daily habits: "He always rises at seven o'clock, shaves himself, and takes a cold bath with the regularity of clockwork. The breakfast hour is eight o'clock, and usually the whole family sits down at the table. There is no end to the conversation at that family board. All there are readers and thinkers. The Colonel enters into all of the family talk, whether it be about politics, music, the stage, some new actor, a recent book, a question in finance or law, or the doings of his baby grandchildren. Half an hour is usually given to the morning meal, and the next thirty minutes the Colonel spends in looking over his letters and glancing at the papers. He is an astonishingly rapid reader. Half-past nine finds him in his law office at 45 Wall-street."

Colonel Ingersoll holds the belief that no man's life should be written while he is alive. A record of the man's daily life is kept by his private secretary, as well as his important utterances and writings upon notable subjects. Scarcely a day goes by without bringing to the surface someone who desires to convert the Colonel. Whether the caller be a gentleman or a lady, the Colonel is always ready to be seen, and he listens politely.

It is usually five o'clock in the afternoon when the Colonel starts for home. The dinner hour is six, and the two daughters are invariably attired in white for this meal. Two or three times in the week the Colonel and some of the family go to the theatre. During the opera season they are regular attendants, both of the girls being musicians of exceptional ability. The Colonel is a great music-lover, although he is no musician himself.

The Colonel is a great admirer of Shakespeare. He has a collection of various editions of Shakespeare's works which rivals any private collection in the country. Hugo and Dickens are his favorite novelists. *Les Miserables* he regards as the greatest novel ever written, and *A Tale of Two Cities* is second in his affections. Wagner is his favorite composer.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has been elected an honorary member of the Philosophical Class by the Vienna Academy of Sciences. Dr. Mommsen, the great German historian, who gave the *coup de grâce* to the "history" of the third Gospel as to the birth of Christ, has also been elected an honorary member by the French Academy of Letters and Inscriptions. This is a welcome sign that the bitter feeling in France against Germany is abating, at least enough to permit recognition of the fact that science, like art, is international.

Humanity, the journal of the Humanitarian League, edited by Mr. H. S. Salt, is now in its fourth number. The June issue contains an important article on the "Report from the Departmental Committee on Prisons," and a stimulating appeal in relation thereto by Edward Carpenter. A paper on Public Control of Hospitals is contributed by Edward Maitland. We wish this modest little journal every success. Should any of our readers desire to become members of the Humanitarian League, they can address their communications to its office, 79A Great Queen-street, London, W.C. The minimum subscription is half-a-crown per year.

A written debate "About the Holy Bible" is to take place in the columns of the *Freethought Magazine*, of Chicago, between the Rev. J. R. Kaye, Ph.D., and Professor Felix L. Oswald. The latter gentleman has been for years a contributor to the *Popular Science Monthly*, and is author of *The Secret of the East*, *The Bible of Nature*, and other works. He can be trusted to worthily uphold the Freethought position.

The *Blue Grass Blade*, of Lexington, Kentucky, edited by C. C. Moore, an Infidel Prohibitionist, gives a good portrait of Mrs. Helen Gardener, the authoress of *Men, Women, and Gods*, and of several Freethought novels.

Alluding to his prosecution, Mr. Moore says: "They didn't merely 'threaten' me with a prosecution for blasphemy, but they put me in jail for blasphemy before they prosecuted me, and then prosecuted me; and when I beat them in the lower court, they took it to the Court of Appeals, and it's there now; and as soon as they can get to my case, some time in forty or fifty years from now, they will probably send me to jail, or the penitentiary, or hang me. In the meanwhile, however, I shall continue to blaspheme."

The *Independent Pulpit*, of Waco, Texas, in its May number, reprints from our columns Mr. Wheeler's article on "The Moral Claims of Christianity." The other contents of Mr. J. D. Shaw's paper are good, Mr. J. P. Richardson writing on "A Change of Heart," and Mr. C. L. Abbott on "The Philosophy and Development of Religion."

The Italian Freemasons and Freethinkers will make a special celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entrance of the Italian troops into Rome. The poor Pope, who has never reconciled himself to the Papacy losing the temporal power, although the States of the Church were a standing disgrace to Roman Catholicism, will, it is said, resent the national celebration as "injurious and insulting to the Pontiff and the Holy See."

The American Protective Association, a body formed to protect the interests of native-born Americans against foreign Catholics, has decided to go in for the taxation of all Church property and the absolute separation of Church and State.

The separation of Church and State in America. Some will say, Why, there is no connection. There is no established Church in the States, but there is State patronage of religion in many ways, one being the appointment of chaplains.

In Texas, for instance, the Waco *Daily News* says, "each branch of the State legislature is allowed a chaplain who gets $5 per diem for opening the daily sessions with prayer. That makes $10 a day which the taxpayer puts up for the good of the legislative soul—with cotton at 4 cents and a half million dollar hole in the treasury that must be plugged by his pocket-book. The average length of these invocations is two minutes. That is at the rate of $1,500 a day for ten hours' work."

The teacher was impressing upon her class her notion of the design argument. Providence had given feathers to birds, wool to the sheep, fur to the beaver. "Now, children, tell me what has a dog got?" Tommy held up his hand, and then answered: "Our dog has got pups."

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THE N.S.S. CONFERENCE.

(*Continued from p. 358.*)

AFTERNOON SITTING.

Mr. SHALLARD moved, on behalf of his Branch: "That no person be eligible as Vice-President who has not been a member for five years," and accepted an addition suggested by Mr. Cohen, "except on the express recommendation of the Executive," with which the motion was accepted by the Conference.

The motion of the Rochdale Branch, "That from this date no member shall be permitted to take part in and vote at the meetings of the Executive Council but the properly-appointed delegates from the Branches; the President, Treasurer, and Secretary alone excepted," fell through for want of a seconder; and its fourth motion for a monthly official statement was also, after some discussion, rejected in favor of the previous question, moved by Mr. GILMOUR, who characterised the proposal as costly and impracticable, while the demand for the list of persons receiving grants from the Benevolent Fund was "abominable."

Mr. JAS. ANDERSON moved: "That no Vice-President shall henceforth hold any paid office in the Society." Mr. BOORMAN seconded, as a matter of form, though he did not see any particular harm in the present arrangement.

Mr. FOOTE said obviously one person was aimed at by the motion. That person was the lady on his left. Miss Vance was Vice-President before she was appointed Secretary. She was rather more than less qualified on that account, and would rather forego the post of Secretary than her honorable position as Vice-President. He thought the motion hardly decorous.

Mr. S. R. THOMPSON, Mr. E. G. TAYLOR, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. BAKER having spoken against the resolution, it was lost, one hand only being raised on its behalf.

Mr. WARD moved on behalf of the Finsbury Park Branch: "That an Organising Secretary be appointed by the Society, who shall devote his time to interviewing persons known to be in sympathy with Secular principles, with a view to securing their adhesion to the Society or their financial support, obtaining as far as possible the renewed support of lapsed members, and furthering the interests of the Society in any other manner the Executive may deem expedient."

Mr. GILMOUR said the motion in the abstract was excellent; but how was it to be carried out? In London itself there was a field large enough for such a man, while in the provinces a week in each town would not cover each of the Branches.

Mr. FOOTE thought that the motion might be allowed to stand as a suggestion to the Executive. Mr. WITHY, of Bath, said he thought this motion a most progressive one, and would relieve the President of some of his work. (Mr. FOOTE dissented.) If adopted, he should be prepared to make a substantial contribution to the fund.

Mr. WARD having acceded to his motion being taken as a recommendation only, it was carried with but one dissentient.

Mr. COHEN, in moving "That properly-qualified speakers be sent by the Council of the N.S.S. into different districts for organising and lecturing purposes, and that a Committee be appointed by this Conference to draw up a scheme to that end, and submit the same to the Executive Council," said that at present there was plenty of chaos and very little system. Hotel keepers and railway companies profited, but little lasting good was done by spasmodic efforts. He dwelt on the advantages of a lecturer having a district where he understood the local needs, and of being able to meet emergencies at once as they arise. This he illustrated by his Tyneside experience. He thought the scheme would bring both men and money to the Society. Mr. KEAST (Bristol) approved of the resolution, but wished to add the words, "and Branches."

Mr. WATTS asked if this would not clash with the President's scheme.

Mr. BOORMAN (Chatham) would like to have more of a detailed statement; generalities were not of much use. Mr. Foote had intimated his intention of dealing with the whole subject. He was at a loss to see how the motion would prove of benefit.

Messrs. TAYLOR and PEGG both considered the motion valuable.

Mr. COHEN observed that he had not given details to avoid discussion on exterior issues. He thought the place for details would be a committee. They should work not to get big special audiences, but steady congregations.

The motion was carried, and Messrs. Cohen, Forder, Ward, Pegg, and S. R. Thompson elected on the committee.

The motion of the Islington Branch, "That a total abstinence section be formed in connection with the Society," was withdrawn on the explanation of the President that a similar motion had been carried at the Newcastle Conference, only the testotalers had failed to carry it out.

It was proposed and seconded that numbers 17 and 18 on the Agenda be taken together.

The first was the motion by Nottingham Branch: "To add the following to the Society's 'Immediate Practical Objects':—(*a*) The promotion of the fullest inquiry into all matters affecting the well-being of Humanity, especially in regard to topics (*e.g.*, the Population Question) which it may commonly be the fashion to evade or suppress. (*b*) The encouragement of a more general interest in social and political problems."

The second was the motion by Battersea Branch: "That the N.S.S. shall engage in real Secular work by advocating political and social reforms, with a special view to ameliorating the wretched condition of our fellow men."

These having been briefly proposed, Mr. THOMPSON (Wood Green) held that Branches should confine themselves to their own Freethought work, leaving other questions to other societies.

Mr. E. G. TAYLOR said he should speak "Yes," though instructed by his Branch to vote "No." The Manchester Branch had widely circulated a leaflet showing their relation to social matters. The Church, and even General Booth, was doing this; and he urged the Conference to show that their attitude was a positive and constructive one.

Mr. WATTS proposed, as an amendment: "That it is desirable that this Conference should appoint a committee of three, or more, persons, to draw up an authoritative and more elaborate statement than the one we possess at present, dealing with the human needs, and with the relation of Secular teachings to the social, political, and religious questions of the day."

Mr. BOORMAN said he should like to see elaborated something like a creed upon which all could agree.

Mr. PEGG (Manchester) thought that what we have in our Immediate Practical Objects rendered this not necessary. The immediate work—and there were too few to do it—was anti-theology, and he thought that work better kept distinct.

Mr. TOUZEAU PARRIS said that, though anti-theology was our object, we fought that the world might be better. There were many views as to how to do this; but let each of us try to make the world better our own way. We go against theology because we find it a hindrance to progress. We fight the Bible because we want a better world, and he thought we should make this known.

Mr. COHEN thought that, as with teetotalism, they might form Socialist sections.

The PRESIDENT: Which might break the Society up.

Mr. SHALLARD (West London) held there was great danger unless we adopt the plan of keeping to our Freethought work. His experience was that, when other questions were brought in, it was to the neglect of Freethought, and he contended that all the power we have should be thrown into the subject of anti-theology.

The PRESIDENT said our bond was a Freethought bond, and it was understood that in drawing up the list of immediate practical objects nothing should be incorporated which was any matter of contention in the party. It was rather late in the day to ask the Society to pay attention to the population question, on account of which it had suffered so much odium. He thought Mr. Watts's idea of a document showing how the Freethought view contrasted with the religious view might be useful.

The amendment was then put and carried, becoming the substantive resolution, and Messrs. Watts, Parris, Moss, and Wheeler were appointed as committee.

The motion by the Executive, "That in all elections to public bodies Secularists should endeavor to put forward candidates in distinct sympathy with Secular principles," was spoken to by Mr. Moss, who adverted to the advantages of having men who held our views and are proud to hold them upon public bodies, and mentioned his having been proposed as a people's churchwarden on the Camberwell Vestry, which gave him an opportunity of declaring his sentiments.

The next resolution, "That strenuous efforts be made to get the Education Department to change the code so that the three quarters of an hour now devoted to Scripture instruction in Board schools be utilised in teaching elementary science," was also moved by Mr. Moss, who thought it possible that some modification might be obtained from Mr. Acland. Mr. SAMSON seconded, and the motion was carried.

On the motion of the Manchester Branch, "That this Society take energetic measures for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws," Mr. E. G. TAYLOR read the following letter from Mr. S. Storey, M.P.: "DEAR SIR,—In an ordinary year we might have done something with the Bill, but the Government demands upon the time this year are, and are likely to be, so great that all I can fairly promise is to keep it before Parliament, and await a better time for carrying it into law. To promise more would be to mislead you, and I cannot do that, nor would you desire it.—Yours very truly, S. STOREY." Mr. TAYLOR thought the whole Society should take this matter up. Each candidate should be interviewed and written to. Public opinion was ripe, and he thought it would only need a favorable election to carry the ship right over the bar. The resolution was carried.

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The next, that the Society cease to issue members' certificates, was spoken against by Mr. THOMPSON and Mr. PARRIS, who alluded to how prized they were by some members, and was negatived by a large majority. The final motion about arrangements for the Annual Conference was allowed to drop, as founded on a misconception.

The time allotted having already been exceeded, the President declared the Conference closed.

EVENING MEETING.

A large number of ladies graced the platform at the public meeting, and there was a good attendance in the body of the hall.

The PRESIDENT, in a few brief words, introduced each of the speakers, who proved themselves fully entitled to the American designation of orators.

First came Mr. A. B. MOSS, who dealt with the indefinite character of modern Christian teaching and its modifications under the doctrine of evolution. "Do away with the fall of man," he said, "and there is no need for atonement by the blood of Christ. Let the people understand science instead of theology, give them facts instead of fiction, and then we can rear a race fit to make the earth the dreamt-of Paradise."

Mr. J. P. GILMOUR followed in a capital speech, at once humorous, sensible, and, at the close, poetic. He showed the progress of Freethought in Scotland, from the time when even the Rev. Robert Taylor did not cross the Tweed for fear of being shipped off to the hulks at New Holland for fourteen years, to now, when bicycles were a great agency in breaking the Sawbath. They saw in the everyday life of the people a freer and more courageous spirit, and for the state of things Buckle had depicted they had ever a desire for enjoyment, for rational recreation and pleasure. Mr. Gilmour concluded with a fine description of the breaking of the sun through the mist on Goatfell in Arran, which he compared to the progress of the cause in Scotland.

Mr. PARRIS, introduced as a Bristolian, made a fine rousing speech, urging that Freethinkers in good positions in Bristol should express their opinions, not only privately, but openly. The thoughts of our forerunners were now spreading in the Church. Christianity was seventy-five per cent. of orthodoxy kept in the background and twenty-five per cent. of Freethought stolen from us. The Freethought Holy Ghost had enlightened them. He contended that the work of Freethought was joyous and glorious, and urged his hearers to go for the truth, go for the reality, get away from the illusions of the childhood of the world kept up by authority, and to realise true human freedom.

Mr. COHEN spoke of the theological spirit as still venomous. It no longer burns, but bars; no longer fights, but slanders. He fought Christianity because he knew it and its history. It weakens man's intellect by teaching him to depend on revelation. It made the divorce between creed and conduct. To those who could discern the signs of the times, Christianity was passing away like the faiths that had preceded it.

Mr. PUTNAM, President of the American Secular Union, spoke of the work in America in regard to Church taxation, public schools, the attempt to place God in the Constitution, and the Sunday laws. He had hoped to read a letter from Colonel Ingersoll which was on its way. He ventured to prophesy that in the near future they would have the opportunity to welcome the Colonel. Mr. Putnam dwelt on the inefficacy of theology, and closed his address by reciting his poem, "Why Don't He Lend a Hand?"

Mr. HEAFORD, in a brief but energetic speech, spoke of the work of Freethought in hewing the way as pioneers for all classes of thinkers.

Mr. C. WATTS answered the questions, What are we as Secularists? and What we hope to be in future. He extolled the struggle for mental freedom in the past, and drew a contrast between the two armies—one with the banner, "Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion," and that with the inscription, "Knowledge is Power."

The PRESIDENT concluded the proceedings. He spoke of the disabilities of Freethinkers. In America they were striving for complete separation of Church and State. Here they had a bigger Church in a smaller State. To his own personal knowledge, thousands of pounds that would have come to this society had been lost because it was an illegal body. We are robbed, and the robbers insult us afterwards, asking what we do with what is stolen from us. He alluded to Mr. Bradlaugh's prediction that the great fight of the future would be between Catholicism and Freethought, the logical extremes of faith and reason. They, as Freethinkers, must be a fighting party and go on fighting, confident that reason would triumph in the end.

On Monday morning many of the delegates assembled at the hall, and were shown the lions of the city and neighborhood, visiting Clifton Downs, with the camera obscura and caves, or taking a Channel cruise, or going to Cardiff, Weston, Bath, and other places in the vicinity. A general feeling of satisfaction with the Conference, and the arrangements made by the Bristol friends, was expressed.

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT.

IT is unfortunate that so many good causes are impeded in some instances, and in others rendered futile, by the thoughtlessness and perversity of their adherents. Not a few estimable movements that have been originated with grievances to redress, or rights and privileges to gain, have failed to accomplish their objects, breaking up hopelessly ere the goal is in sight, owing to the injudiciousness of well-meaning advocates and the misplaced ardor of hair-brained enthusiasts. Particularly true is it that the practical success of what is known in England as the Temperance Movement has not been as extended as it might have been, and that what it has accomplished has been far less than what its early promoters anticipated; the present condition of the country respecting sobriety even evidencing the fact that what improvements in the drinking habits of the people have taken place are traceable to agencies other than, and in some cases in complete contradistinction to, the methods held in favor by teetotal reformers. This is not tantamount to questioning that during, say, the last twenty-five years the temperance army has assumed enormous proportions; that it has been the means of rescuing many inebriates from their folly, and of implanting in the minds of numberless children the virtue of temperance. It has done all this. Moreover, men and women of all shades of opinion give it their sympathetic support. The sight of so many people banded together with such an object undoubtedly exercises a moral influence on the nation, while it has become so potent a political factor in the land that Ministers of State have taken many of its principles and embodied them in legislative proposals. Further, it is not necessary to controvert the contention that, by means of an intricate and far-reaching organisation, the relation of the Temperance Movement to all forms and developments of social life is a critical and important one; nor would it be safe to deny that it has not outlived calumny, and is now enjoying the smiling sanction of the respectable classes. And yet, when all this is readily granted, there remains much to be noticed of the absence of any great and permanently elevating element in the mission of reformation. The party's program betrays the hand of the amateur, the disposition of the coercionist, and the exclusiveness of the narrow-minded. Its propagandists are but little more fortunate in their mode of spreading its gospel, for if they are not committing blazing indiscretions they are often flagrantly disregarding the laws of logic, and they not infrequently allow their ostentatious fervor to carry them from the domain of reason and truth. For much of the abuse showered on temperance advocates to-day they are, in the main, responsible themselves; and their lack of success is attributable to their lack of sense and ingenuity. Having chosen to found their movement on illogical and very controvertible grounds, it is small wonder that their principles are so discredited and the cause pulverised with ridicule.

Like religion, the temperance folk think that temperance should have "foundations," and in their anxious search for authority they have unluckily chosen that text-book of every creed, doctrine, fad, and craze—the Bible. Following the example of apostles of liberty, who have sought in its pages the gospel of freedom, and of slave-owners, who have found their traffic in human bodies sanctioned by the same holy writ; of lovers of peace, who declare that the precious volume breathes the spirit of brotherhood, and of fierce militarists, who gain satisfaction from the contemplation that its God was a god of war, who trumpeted his mission as being that to bring the sword; of the poor, who seek solace in its blessing, and of the rich, who aver that the Lord is on the side of the mighty; of the modern saviors of womanhood, who see salvation in the motherhood of Jesus, and of their opponents, who cite St. Paul's condemnation of woman, the high priests of temperance have gone to this book and built upon it the temple of their creed. No more striking evidence of inanity is needed than their incongruous attachment to the Bible on the ground of its injunctions to abstemiousness. Why, from drunken Noah, who imbibed so deeply that his sons were compelled to envelope him in a cloak, down to the New Testament Jesus, who turned brewer at the Galilean feast, and St. Paul, who advised his young friend Timothy to "take a little wine for his stomach's sake," there is

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absolutely nothing in the book enjoining the benefits of abstinence from intoxicants; nothing advocating the morality of sobriety and the desirability of temperate habits. On the other hand, its leading characters are intemperate men and women, full of greed for wine, loving dissipation, and rejoicing in freaks of intoxication. When a body of would-be reformers wish to be taken seriously, and given an attentive audience, they must make their premise at least reasonably legitimate; their foundations must be strong, and their deductive contentions logical. To try to advance temperance on scriptural or religious grounds is as nonsensical as it is paltry; it is playing a game which can be only witnessed with mixed amusement and contempt.

In other ways have the temperance people signally failed to turn to good account an unprecedented opportunity. By their alliance with the clerical party they have robbed their movement of no small part of its sincerity, and imported into it a spirit of hypocrisy and deception. Clergymen of all denominations are appealed to for support to the cause. They lend their kindly patronage, attended, it is true, with beneficent results in many cases, but too often accompanied with the flavor that attends the advocacy of their religion—the flavor of mere professionalism, and consequently there are many preachers of total abstinence whose lives are in complete variance with the principles they teach. Since the assumption of sympathy with the Temperance Movement has become an affair of respectability, it has placed many wine-bibbing people in awkward situations. Thanks to the Church, they are heroically rescued from the dilemma, provision being made by that august body for their membership in the Church of England "Temperance" Society as passive adherents to temperance principles, which is to say that they extend their pity and condemnation to the unfortunate poor, whose intemperate habits are often the effects of unfavorable environment, while they themselves indulge in endless guzzling without injury to their consciences. When what should be an unsectarian movement is bound up with religious organisations, it becomes contaminated, its energy is sapped, and its power for good rendered impotent.

Recent developments should certainly convince those in authority that the assistance of the clergy is not an advantageous help. In following their ordinary avocations, these professors of religion acquire such a cultured disregard for truth, and such a supreme taste for calumny, that when they are called to figure in other departments of life their distinguishing characteristics still cling to them. Thus, during the last few weeks, we have seen a publican named Pitt bringing to book a parson named Josephs for a libellous attack on him and his business house. Of course, as one satirical journalist has already pointed out, it was not altogether unnatural that a Joseph should exhibit antipathy to a Pitt; but, for all that, most rational people would think that his hatred might have stopped short of an attempt to ruin the man and his trade. And the humble apology that another clerical, the Rev. G. Wakeford, of Liverpool, was compelled to make the other day, withdrawing his accusations against a political club of that town, which he had described in his pulpit as a drinking and gambling hell, shows again that clergymen are far more likely to do harm than good to the temperance crusade, which, at any rate, should be conducted with seeming decorum. Beer and Bible, and the Church and "the trade," have been long enough in close alliance to beguile an ordinary observer of the real sincerity of the Church on matters concerning temperance. Nor are the actions of those men of God who in the late severe weather forbade their parishioners to go to a public-house for free soup calculated to enhance the confidence of the general public in the teetotal party. While so much time and effort are being worse than wasted in rancorous contests with publicans, who, after all is said, are tradespeople in a legal occupation, and in other petty disputes, a glorious opportunity of accomplishing *something* is being neglected. The excessive indulgence in strong drink continues a blight on the health and prosperity of the country, in spite of the prevalence of religion and its alleged wondrous properties of redemption. From their seats of authority the judges are reiterating their declarations that four-fifths of the crime of the country is directly traceable to drink. Social reformers state that, were it not for the degradation of the people by the demoralising influence of intoxicating liquors, the social problem would be less cumbrous and better able to be dealt with. There is scarcely an adult in the land who cannot bear some testimony to the pernicious effects of the consumption of the fluid; for, without borrowing the language of the temperance tub-thumper and speaking of the "wretched homes," "brutal fathers," "beaten wives," "starving children," etc., it can be averred that much misery and much crime are brought about by this cause. And yet the temperance folk do little but spin arguments and talk words; they delight in shadowy dreams which will never be realised, and create an Utopia which will never be effected.

Impracticable ambitions are but hindrances to a radical movement like that of temperance. To secure success, cant and hypocrisy must be cast off; wisdom must be accepted from the learned, whose knowledge of human kind and natural laws has been acquired by life-long labor, and has not been shapened by the emotions; and more account must be taken of circumstances. The whole question is a deep and perplexing one. Inebriety is now getting to be more regarded in the light of a disease, and the less the idea is current that people get intoxicated for the fun of the thing, or mere cussedness, and the more the evil is dealt with from a matter-of-fact and scientific standpoint, the sooner will there be a perceptible diminution of the national drink bill. The tendencies of education and enlightenment are against all manner of intemperateness. Salvation may, perhaps, be nearer at hand when the sciences of physiology and hygiene are taught the children in the schools in place of the "instruction" in the book which may be called the guide to drunkenness, and when the ceremonies of the Churches are abolished that require special brands of wine for their proper performance.

F. WILSON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WHERE IS GOD?

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalms xiv. 1; liii. 1).

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, and other writers in the *Freethinker*, want an answer to the above momentous question. I only desire a brief space to vindicate David's answer. David, if we have any belief in Scripture history at all, was in a position to know. David had himself brought the deity from Baale to Jerusalem (2 Samuel vi.). God was in the ark "dwelling between the cherubims" (verse 2). When David had got him safe there he "danced before the Lord with all his might." His wife reproved him for uncovering himself in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, but never thought of questioning the existence of God, or David might have called her a fool indeed. God at that time was safe in an ark. What has become of him since? The only information I have been enabled to gather is from Bishop Wilson, who thinks that Jeremiah, at the destruction of Jerusalem, carried the ark to the halls of Tara, in Ireland. Who will subscribe to dig it out?

ANGLO-ISRAELITE.

PROFANE JOKES.

Aunt—"If you are a bad boy, you won't go to heaven." Tommy—"But I want to go where you go!"

Jack—"Well, Nellie, what book is that you are reading?" Nellie—"*The Brand of Cain*." Jack—"Oh, a very able book that."

Clara—"Your new minister is a much younger man than the old one, is he not?" Phœbe—"Yes. What made you ask?" Clara—"I heard you had applied for a front pew."

"Jonah," expostulated the whale, "do keep quiet." "Certainly," answered the famous man, "now that I know where I am. I wasn't sure but I had been caught in a folding bed, doncher know."

"What is the meaning of a backbiter?" asked a gentleman at a Sunday-school examination. This was a puzzler. It went all round the class until it came to a simple urchin, who said: "Perhaps it's a flea."

Penelope—"Well, Bishop, it seems to me there is not much difference between salvation and perdition; only a syllable." Bishop Hellmuth—"My dear young lady, how can you say that?" Penelope—"Why, it's either eternal bliss or eternal blisters."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30 G. W. Foote, "The Romance of the Twelve Apostles."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 9, dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Science."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road, E.): 8, F. Lavenais, "Arbitration or War?"

ISLINGTON (19 Alwyne-road, Canonbury): 8, adjourned quarterly meeting.

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Monday, at 8.30, special general meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Bunyan and Puritan Thought."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, E. E. Sims, "The Case against Theism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. G. Hertzfeld, "Belief and Morals."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "The Philosophy of Atheism."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Mohammed and the Koran." Members' meeting after lecture to receive Conference report.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James, "The Soul and Immortality." Thursday, at 8, C. James, "Still it Moves."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "The Bible as a Guide."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, W. J. Ramsey, "The Curse of the Cross"; 3.15, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are they True?"

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, W. Heaford, "Spiritual Consolations." Thursday, at 8.30, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are they True?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Bible Lessons in Morality"; 3, "The Power of Prayer." Wednesday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Pretend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "Bible Tragedy and Comedy."

KILBURN (High-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "How Christ Came."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, M. Park, "God's Favorites."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Stories from the Bible."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, St. John will lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "From Christianity to Secularism, and What I Saw on the Way"; 7, "Moses and the Exodus." Thursday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "The Social Aspects of Christianity."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, C. Boeg, "Christianity and Paganism Compared."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam, "Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed: A Reply to Dr. Marcus Dods."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Free Library Hall, Ocean-road): 11, C. Cohen, "An Old Attack upon Religion with Modern Appliances"; 3, "Do we Need a Religion?" 7, "Jesus Christ: God, Man, or Myth?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members and friends meet at the tram terminus, bottom of Suig Hill, at 2.30, and will go by car to Hillsboro' for Little Matlock.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, R. Weightman, "Priestcraft."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, J. Kent, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Mr. Mitchell will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—June 9 m. Pimlico, e. Camberwell; 13, Wood Green; 16, m. Wood Green, e Edmonton; 20, Hammersmith; 23, m. Victoria Park; 26, Hyde Park 30, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Ovedon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 9, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Tottenham; 16, m. Mile End; 23, m. Wood Green, e. Tottenham; 30, m. Clerkenwell, a. Finsbury Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—June 9, m. Kingsland; 23, Chatham. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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WRIGGLING.

WE recently printed a long letter from the Rev. C. L. Engström, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. Our reply to it appeared in the same number of the *Freethinker*, and in the following number there appeared a supplementary reply by Mr. S. P. Putnam, whose lecture at the Hall of Science had been brought under discussion. Mr. Engström now reprints his letter in the form of a pamphlet, under the title of *Christianity and Secularism*. He does not reprint our reply and Mr. Putnam's, and let the controversy tell its own story. That is too much to expect from even the most plausible Christian. Yet it is the course we prefer, and always endeavor to follow. During our controversy with the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes with regard to the "Atheist Shoemaker" we gave both sides of the case, leaving our readers to form their judgment upon the facts; while our opponent studiously kept every word of our side of the case from appearing in the *Methodist Times*.

Mr. Engström has chosen his own method. In front of his reprinted letter to the *Freethinker* he puts some "Last Words" on Mr. Putnam's reply, and after it some "Notes" on our own article. Thus his letter is neatly sandwiched between two slices of vindication.

Mr. Engström wastes a whole page over a trifle, and the way in which he wastes it throws a strong light upon his theory of evidence. He stated in his letter that, as chairman at Mr. Putnam's lecture, we discouraged discussion. This we denied, and Mr. Putnam denies it too. Mr. Engström adduces the corroboration of an anonymous friend of his who was present, and with two against two he thinks he has proved his assertion "up to the hilt." We quite understand, after this, how Mr. Engström is satisfied with the evidences of Christianity. What we do not quite understand is why he conceals the fact that questions *were* asked after Mr. Putnam's lecture, and that two persons *did* speak in opposition. It is true that five minutes was offered to each speaker, and perhaps true that this is not enough for a man of Mr. Engström's "representative position." But it is customary to extend the time for a representative opponent, and if Mr. Engström had risen he would have had a sufficient opportunity.

We said that Mr. Engström was constitutionally inaccurate, and his "Notes" confirm our opinion. He states that at the Christian Evidence lectures at the Hall of Science (very ancient history this!) my followers—whoever they are—have "never been satisfied with less than half an hour for their criticisms." An ingenuous reader would conclude that they had half an hour *each*, whereas they had half an hour *altogether*. And if there were five or six of them, as there might be, it did not amount to many minutes apiece. But, after all, this is skimble-skamble stuff for a deliberate pamphlet.

Mr. Engström is still unsatisfied, and works in another paragraph on the same topic. He has a curious way of insinuating his own merits in tones of humility. He does it often in a kind of aside, as though his fine qualities could not be suppressed; and the self-eulogy falls unobtrusively like a casual feather from a rich plumage. Mr. Engström complains of the "inadequate time" allowed him in replying to Mr. Putnam at Camberwell, which was "accentuated by the extreme latitude I had allowed that very afternoon in Regent's Park to a Freethinker, who had not even heard my lecture!" This is more than a profession of fair-play. It is a confession of folly. There is absolutely no sense in letting a man answer you who has not heard you.

In his letter to the *Freethinker* the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society charged Mr. Putnam with having said that "faith was for Christians everything, and conduct and character nothing." This we thought it necessary to deny immediately. Mr. Putnam's assertion was not about *Christians*, but about *Christianity*. He took the ground that Christianity, as such, was a creed, and not an ethical system; that morality was only "tacked on to it," because no creed could get along without something of that kind. Mr. Engström was guilty of a gross misrepresentation, but he does not apologise for it. He affirms that Mr. Putnam "did not say it *in his lecture*." Well, we affirm that he did, and more than once. And when Mr. Engström's anonymous friend says that "the qualification which Mr. Foote makes in the *Freethinker* about there being some good things taught by Jesus, only came out after opposition"—we can only reply that there was no such qualification, and that there were no such words, in our article. If there were, let Mr. Engström produce them. Until he does so, we must regard his anonymous friend as being about as accurate as himself.

Mr. Engström used much vague language about certain Atheists standing a better chance than certain Christians in the hereafter, and we ventured to ask him this plain question: "If an honest unbeliever may go to heaven, what is the use of taking the trouble to be a Christian?" Mr. Engström replies that "the believer in Christ has an inestimable advantage over the (intellectual) unbeliever, however moral he may be, in regard to the capacity of growth in goodness." How justly did South observe that, if Judaism died out of Christendom, Pharisaism never would! There is nothing more nauseous and detestable than comparing the "goodness" of the devotees of rival systems. "We are holier than you" never came from the lips of self-respect. But since Mr. Engström issues a sort of challenge, we beg to tell him that Atheists experience as much "growth in goodness" as Christians. We will not imitate his example, and say *more*. How many Christians does Mr. Engström know who are morally superior to Jeremy Bentham, Robert Owen, or John Stuart Mill? How many morally superior to William Kingdon Clifford? How many morally superior to Charles Darwin, who combined the intellect of a Newton with the tenderness of a woman and the innocence of a child?

With regard to Dr. Pusey, we never said that his views were "in the main opposed to those of Dean Farrar," since it is impossible for any man to say what Dean Farrar's views really are. What we said was that Dr. Pusey wrote in opposition to Dean Farrar's argument that "everlasting punishment" means something short of "everlasting punishment." We quoted Dr. Pusey's own words, which are far more to the point than Mr. Engström's inferences.

Mr. Engström notices what we said as to the legal disabilities of Secularism. "I think," he remarks, "there is a good deal in what he says, and I am glad to take this opportunity of stating very publicly [why *very*?] that *I think those inabilities are very unjust, and that they ought to be at once removed.*" Good! though they are not *in*abilities, but *dis*abilities. But fine words butter no parsnips, and pleasant sentences redress no wrongs. We shall expect Mr. Engström to translate this language into deeds. Will he induce the Christian Evidence Society to send in a petition in favor of the Bill which is now before Parlia-

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ment? Probably not, for he guards himself by a reference to the "methods of Freethinkers of the N.S.S. type," which make it so "difficult for the Legislature to deal fairly with their principles"—as though the Legislature had shown a great anxiety in this direction!

Our party ought to have endowments, if it can get them. Mr. Engström makes us that concession. But he denies that the Church of England subsists on the revenues of national property. Does he mean that tithes, the payment of which is enforced by the law, are not national property? Does he mean the same of Church Rates where they are still collected? Has he the coolness to say that the sum levied on the *Freethinker* publishing office every year is a voluntary offering to his Church? Anyhow, we beg to tell him that when the Church of England gets disestablished, like the Church of Ireland, it will not matter a straw whether he believes its revenues arise from national property or not. Disendowment will settle the question in a terribly *practical* manner.

Mr. Engström is good enough to say that the "greater part" of his comments on the "hopeless failure of Secularism as a system of doing good" is "utterly unaffected" by our strictures. Christians always say that; it is a stereotyped expression. But with respect to "doing good" it is just possible that Mr. Engström does not understand us. He "sincerely hopes" that our leaders are "paragons of goodness"—which is the language of cant; but he is sure that Secularism does not abound in good works, like Christianity. "When Atheism is reached," he says, "it is an historical fact that the spring ceases to flow, the life of philanthropy is dead." Is it? Well, it all depends on what you mean by "philanthropy." We hear a lot about the reclamation of drunkards and the rescue of "fallen sisters," but it makes no appreciable difference to the sum-total of drink and prostitution. The *causes* of these evils remain untouched. And it is just here that the Secularist parts company with the Christian. "Rescue" those you call "fallen sisters" if you will; but what if, when you rescue one, another takes her place? What permanent good have you effected? Sensuality is not the cause of prostitution, as you imagine; the one is natural, however lamentable—the other is artificial. The cause of prostitution is the difficulty of earning an honest livelihood. And unless the economical conditions of society are changed for the better, your "reclamations" and "rescues" are like the wail of an infant against the roar of the northern blast.

Mr. Engström concludes his "Notes" on our reply to his letter by stating what *he* believes, and what *he* teaches. But this is extremely unimportant. Mr. Engström is only a man, and only one man. Christianity is a great historical system. It cannot be defined, any more than it can be judged, except in the light of history. It is interesting, of course, though not important, to learn that Mr. Engström believes our "position in eternity will depend on our loving or unloving life"—though it seems to us that the loving lives have the best of it *here*, apart from any hereafter. But when Mr. Engström seeks to pass this off as pure and simple Christianity, he is flying in the face of the Bible, of history, and of the teaching of his own Church. And this brings me to his "Last Words" in answer to Mr. Putnam, who is well able to reply for himself, only he is away in Scotland, and the matter is scarcely worth another article.

Mr. Putnam said that Mr. Engström had no right to "dodge the question by confining the definition of Christianity to the Apostles' Creed." Mr. Engström replies that if he adds the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds it makes little difference, except against Mr. Putnam; for one of them distinctly states that "they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire"—which, according to Mr. Engström, proves that Christianity *is* essentially a moral system. That is, Mr. Engström takes the sentence about evil and good as though it were the whole of the Creed, without the slightest reference to the sentences which declare that those who do not hold all the "incomprehensible" doctrines "cannot be saved." And this is what Mr. Engström regards as honest argument.

But the most curious part of his "Last Words" is the one relating to the Thirty-nine Articles. Subscription to them, he says, is not required of laymen. Quite true. But what the clergy are required to teach the laymen are expected to believe; at any rate, it is the doctrine of the Church. Mr. Engström further observes that the Thirty-nine Articles have "existed only a few centuries." But what of that? They ought to be true to exist so long. Besides, Mr. Engström is bound by them, whether they are ancient or modern. It is likewise urged that these Articles might be "increased, decreased, or abolished." But they have *not* been; and what is the use of "might be's" in a serious discussion? Mr. Engström is quite right in saying that "the only persons they can possibly bind are members of the Anglican Communion." But then he belongs to that Communion, and he is a party to this controversy.

It is idle for Mr. Engström to attempt to ride off on the old quibble that "good works" are the fruit of "faith." Nor is that the point at issue. The point is this—Is there salvation in honesty without belief? Mr. Engström appears to hold that there is. But we repeat that he is only Mr. Engström. He says that he was brought up in a theological school, which he hopes he will never depart from—the school of Hooker, Butler, Barrow, and Pearson. Very well then; we will appeal to these divines against the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society.

The real doctrine of historic Christianity is taught with great plainness by Thomas Watson, a seventeenth-century divine of considerable fame, known by his *Body of Practical Divinity*. "A man may go to hell," he says, "as well for heresy as adultery." Mr. Spurgeon took this text and amplified it into a famous passage, declaring that adultery and murder might be forgiven, but there was no forgiveness, in this world or in the next, for unbelief.

The Church of England, in the old days of Elizabeth, issued a Book of Homilies, which is still printed and annotated, and published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The Homilies are mentioned in the Church Articles as containing "godly and wholesome doctrine." They were meant to be read aloud by ministers who could not write their own sermons. Let us listen to these Homilies:—

> "If a heathen man clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and do such other like works; yet, because he doth them not in faith for the honor and love of God, they be but dead, vain, and fruitless works to him. . . . . All the life of them that lack the true faith is sin, and nothing is good without him that is the author of goodness; where he is not, there is but feigned virtue, although it be in the best works. . . . . Jews, heretics, and pagans do good works; they clothe the naked, feed the poor, and do other good works of mercy: but because they be not done in the true faith, therefore the birds be lost."

Now let us take the great Hooker. This is from the eleventh chapter of the twelfth book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*:—

> "Not that God doth require nothing unto happiness at the hands of men saving only a naked belief (for hope and charity we may not exclude); but that *without belief all other things are as nothing.*"

Butler, so far as we are aware, has no express declaration on this point. Barrow, however, has a whole sermon on Infidelity, which he sets down as the "chief" cause of "all the sin and all the mischief in the world." It is not a mistake of the head, but "a sinful distemper of the heart." A divine law says *that we should believe*, and unbelief is disobedience to God. Barrow points out that Scripture gives "unbelievers" a "first place" in the "lake burning with fire and brimstone."

Pearson, in his famous book on the Creed, rejects the opinions which Mr. Engström rejoices to see entertained by Dean Farrar. Not for a moment will he shorten "the eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction." With diabolical callousness—feeling sure of heaven himself—he remarks that "it were not perfect hell, if any hope could lodge in it." Dean Farrar does not believe that "every form of retribution beyond the grave is necessarily endless." Bishop Pearson expressly says that it is. He is equally emphatic as to there being no salvation outside Christianity. In his chapter on the second Article about Jesus Christ, he writes: "The necessity of belief in this part of the Article is not only certain, but evident: because there is no end of faith without a Savior, and no other name but this by which we can be saved, and *no way to be saved by him but by believing in him.*"

Mr. Engström will probably indulge in more controversial wriggling, and quote passages from his favorite divines about our being judged "according to the works done in the flesh." But he cannot get over the fact that, elsewhere,

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they distinctly couple *belief* with *works*, as necessary to salvation. Nor can he find so much as a hint in any one of them that an honest Atheist may go to heaven. On the contrary, they do not so much as allow the *existence* of an honest Atheist. When they speak of "works" generically, they include belief. They are blind to the great truth that belief is entirely intellectual, and absolutely independent of volition. They regard faith as an act of the will; and, if it be so, we are as justly punishable for a wrong belief as for theft, adultery, or murder. On their own principles they are strictly logical. Mr. Engström is only a sentimentalist. He is a fair specimen of the smooth and plausible Christian apologist of the present age. Such men are always wriggling away from the logical consequences of distinctive Christianity. Their definitions are born of exigency, and not of principle. They seek to make Christianity respectable in the eyes of people who are ignorant of its history. The venomous old serpent that once devoured its holocausts of victims, now wreathes and glances alluringly, like the tempter in *Paradise Lost*. Those to whom history began yesterday may be deceived; many of them *are* deceived. But those who know history, understand principles, and appreciate logic, will be on their guard. The fangs are there, though concealed; the cruel jaws are ready to gape; the ravenous maw still yearns for prey. Fools may play with it, till their hour comes. Wise men will beware.

G. W. FOOTE.

WITCHCRAFT.

THE trial of Irish peasants for burning Bridget Cleary as a witch should bring home to everyone the horrible character of this Bible superstition. There is every appearance that ignorance and superstition are alone to blame for the atrocity. Had the accused persons believed that the poor woman was really herself, and not in the possession of some evil spirit, they would never have thought of injuring her. Under such circumstances, it seems as if to condemn to death the victims of ignorance and superstition is but to add a legal atrocity to that already perpetrated. What is needed is, that such instruction shall be given as shall remove the causes of superstition. These causes are to be found in the popular religion. The belief in witchcraft is a legitimate and logical outcome of that religion, and it may be doubted if it will be wholly extirpated while that retains unquestioning belief.

The delusion of witchcraft is the natural result of a religion that rests on terrorism, for, as Lecky remarks, the panic which its teachings create overbalance the faculties of the multitude. The belief in a devil who is the head of an organised kingdom of evil spirits (Matthew xii. 24–26), and who goes about seeking whom he may devour, contains in itself the essence of witchcraft. The theory is founded on, and supported by, the Bible, as I have fully shown in my recent pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*. Fear is at the foundation of all religion. One of its chief manifestations is fear of the dead, fear that they may return to plague the living, and the belief that all hurtful phenomena are the result of such action by evil spirits. Animism, the belief in spirits, is, in the words of the renowned anthropologist, Dr. E. B. Tylor, the groundwork of the philosophy of religion, from that of savages up to that of civilised man.

In his article on "Demonology," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Dr. Tylor says: "No record shows the ancient theory more clearly than the New Testament, from the explicit way in which the symptoms of the various affections are described, culminating in the patient declaring the name of his possessing demon, and answering in his person when addressed. The similarity of the symptoms with those which in barbarous countries are still accounted for in the ancient way may be seen from such statements as the following, by a well-known missionary (Rev. J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa*, p. 217): 'Demoniacal possessions are common, and the feats performed by those who are supposed to be under such influence are certainly not unlike those described in the New Testament. Frantic gestures, convulsions, foaming at the mouth, feats of supernatural strength, furious ravings, bodily lacerations, gnashing of teeth, and other things of a similar character may be witnessed in most of the cases.'"

"Among the early Christians," continues Dr. Tylor, "the demoniacs or energumens formed a special class under the control of a clerical order of exorcists; and a mass of evidence drawn from such writers as Cyril, Tertullian, Chrysostom, and Minutius Felix shows that the symptoms of those possessed were such as modern physicians would class under hysteria, epilepsy, lunacy, etc." (See their works, and references in Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*; Maury, *La Magie et l'Astrologie*, part ii., chap. ii., etc.).

Though the belief in sorcery has existed from the earliest times, its palmiest days were those of credulous Christianity. Sorcery and saints, miracles and magic, grew and flourished together. If unanimity could turn fancy into fact, witchcraft was a stern reality. Divided on so many other points, here Christians were at one. Possession by devils, one of the chief features of the Gospels, gave occasion for the display of that prime token of orthodoxy, the power of exorcism. So the thunders of the Vatican against witchcraft were re-echoed from Lambeth and Geneva. Indeed, the spread of the Bible in the sixteenth century vastly contributed to the renewed persecution of alleged witches. The Puritan was as bad as the Inquisitor, and in godly Scotland and pious New England some of the latest and most horrid atrocities took place. The men of God constantly preached about the devil and his agencies of evil, and, as a consequence, nervous terrors of witchcraft abounded. The accusation was, moreover, a specious plea for getting rid of all sorts of objectionable people. The witches of the Middle Ages were but the votaries of the ancient proscribed religion. There is abundant evidence that Paganism survived in Europe until close upon the time of the Reformation. The witches' Sabbaths were the orgies of Sabazios, a development of Dionysius or Bacchus. In stamping out witchcraft the Church was really suppressing the remnants of a rival faith. The charge was afterwards levelled at heretics, political and religious opponents, and was also a means of extracting the property of the wealthy. Mr. James Russell Lowell, in his essay on "Witchcraft" (*Among My Books*, First Series, p. 128), remarks:—

> "I have already said that it was religious antipathy or clerical interest that first made heresy and witchcraft identical, and cast them into the same expiatory fire. The invention was a Catholic one, but it is plain that Protestants soon learned its value, and were not slow in making it a plague to the inventor. It was not till after the Reformation that there was any systematic hunting out of witches in England. Then, no doubt, the innocent charms and rhyming prayers of the old religion were regarded as incantations and twisted-out evidence against miserable beldames who mumbled over in their dotage what they had learned at their mother's knee."

It has been computed that the witchcraft mania cost the lives of over nine millions of people, mostly women. The Bible text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xxii. 18), has truly been written in blood and fire.

The case in Tipperary may, in some measure, enable us to realise the horrors connected with this Scripture-warranted belief. We may be sure, however, that all the cruelties inflicted by witch-torturers were thrown into the background by the inner agony of those victims of credulity and hysteria who were looked on as sold to the devil, and who often themselves believed that they had entered unwittingly into a contract whereby they would be eternally lost. Mr. Lecky, in an eloquent passage, points out that no class of victims endured sufferings so unalloyed and intense.

> "Not for them the wild fanaticism that nerves the soul against danger, and almost steels the body against torments. Not for them the assurance of a glorious eternity, that has made the martyr look with exultation on the rising flame as on the Elijah's chariot that is to bear his soul to heaven. Not for them the solace of lamenting friends, or the consciousness that their memories would be cherished and honored by posterity. They died alone, hated and unpitied. They were deemed by all mankind the worst of criminals. Their very kinsmen shrank from them as tainted and accursed. The superstitions they had imbibed in childhood, blending with the illusions of age, and with the horrors of their position, persuaded them in many cases that they were indeed the bond slaves of Satan, and were about to exchange their torments on earth for an agony that was as excruciating, and was as eternal."

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How was it that men could, without pity or compunction, see their fellows writhing amidst blazing fagots for an imaginary crime? The case of Bridget Cleary helps us to see that it was their religious belief, their Bible-supported superstition, which made them regard these as agents of an evil spirit. Is it not an anomaly that a Government which authorises the Bible as the word of God should yet try for the crime of murder, and perhaps condemn to death, the poor fanatics whom it has left in ignorance, and who read in the Bible the awful words, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"?

J. M. WHEELER.

DID CHRIST WORK MIRACLES?

IN asking the above question, it must not be inferred that we believe in the reality of miracles. Neither must it be assumed that we for one moment believe that Christ did perform any of the wonderful things recorded of him in the New Testament. Further, whether what is termed a miracle was ever performed or not does not concern us at present. We prefer the more practical inquiry: Are the miracles, *as ascribed to Christ*, true? and, if they are, what is their value as evidence of the truth of the claims set up on his behalf by his enthusiastic devotees? It is not here overlooked that the belief in miracles, as evidence of the validity of such claims, is now to a great extent abandoned by the modern school of Christian exponents. They have discovered that, like many other arguments that were once regarded as being indispensable to the Church, the one based upon miracles has to be given up. As Professor Huxley says, "every new discovery in science pushes the supernatural further from us, by enlarging the boundary of human knowledge."

Still, no doubt there are many Christians who retain the belief that the miracles ascribed to Christ prove him to have been more than man, and that they establish the truth of Christianity. We hope to show that this belief is not supported by fact. The latter assumption is false upon the very face of it, inasmuch as, if it were true that Christ raised the dead, it would not therefore follow that he was correct in denying the facts of physiology, or in making poverty a test of perfection. The New Testament being right in advising children to honor their parents is no proof that it is equally right in saying Christ was in two places at one time, or that he was born without a human father. Neither does it corroborate the statement that Christ the son was as old as God the father, and that the Devil was more potent than either of them. The most that miracles can prove, supposing them to be true, is that those who worked them possessed what is called miraculous power. But this is no evidence of the divinity of the whole of the Christian doctrines and precepts.

Against the alleged truth of Christ's miracles is the admitted fact of the "stability of nature," and the observed law of cause and effect. We only know of existence as it is, and we judge of its nature and power from experience and investigation. From these sources of knowledge we learn that at certain degrees heat will burn, water will drown, and poison in given quantities will destroy life. To believe otherwise is for man to leave facts and reason, and to revel in fancy and credulity. The forces in nature, so far as we have discovered them, are regular in their order, and "constancy of succession marks their operations." It has been truly observed: "Look upon any class of phenomena in the world, and what do you see? You see certain phenomena always followed under the same circumstances or conditions by certain other phenomena, without the least variation. . . . This constancy of following—of sequence—is called a law; and when the constancy of following embraces a great number of phenomena, possessing very different characteristics, it is called a general law. But all we know is, and all we mean is, when we speak of the constant order of nature, that all the facts or phenomena we have examined are always found following the same order of succession." These are truths that science has made known in modern times, and, if they were always relied upon, the reality of miracles would not be perceptible.

It is alleged that Christ's miracles are superior to any others, and are supported by better testimony. This is not true; and, if it were, it would deteriorate their value. For then they would be subordinate to reason and judgment, whereas, theologically, they are intended to command absolute subjection. But have we any trustworthy evidence at all for Christ's miracles? Paley's famous proposition upon this point is, that we are bound to believe the testimony of twelve men of good character, who could not possibly have been deceived as to *any* supernatural event, and who changed their lives in consequence of their belief, and suffered, or were content to suffer, torture and death in attestation of their sincerity. What special pleading! Where is the testimony of "twelve men of good character" to vouch for the Christian miracles? Where are the eye-witnesses who are supposed to have seen the miracles? The argument of martyrdom is worthless in this case. Many instances may be given of men being content to suffer death and torture in attestation of their belief of the wildest superstitions.

F. J. Foxton meets Paley on his own ground, and tests his argument thus: "I will simply apply the terms of the proposition to actual circumstances in real life. I will imagine that a report that a man was raised from the dead yesterday, at Hampstead or at Highgate, was circulated to-day in the City of London. I will suppose the exact testimony assumed by Paley (though such, I believe, never was produced in attestation of a miracle) was really at hand in verification of the event—*i.e.*, twelve honest witnesses who changed their lives from the moment they witnessed it, and who, rather than confess themselves deceived, were content to suffer torture and death. I will suppose this testimony and these witnesses fairly produced to twenty indifferent persons of sound minds taken indiscriminately from the streets of London, between Hyde Park Corner and Whitechapel, and I contend that not one of them would believe the miracle on the evidence produced, or on any other evidence whatsoever; and this simply for the reason assigned by Hume, that every one of these persons would at once conclude that, as a question of probability, it was more likely that the witnesses should be deceivers or deceived than that the miracle should be true; and this natural conclusion would be founded on the general principle laid down by the philosopher that, whilst miracles are contrary to experience, the falsehood and the perversion of testimony are matters of almost daily occurrence. A frivolous attempt to fasten upon Hume a logical inaccuracy in the use of the word 'experience' will not succeed in mystifying the common sense of mankind."

If the miracles of the New Testament were true, they would destroy the attributes of an omnipotent, good, all-wise, and impartial God. Further, they would render the perfection of his government impossible. A miracle, as understood by the Church, implies a special act upon the part of God, and his interference with natural sequences. Now, all acts of God, supposing him to be the being Christians regard him, must be good acts. If, therefore, it were wise for God to perform certain acts eighteen hundred years ago, it would have been equally wise for him to have done so four thousand years previously. So long, therefore, as he abstained from performing those acts, so long did he withhold advantages from his children, and thereby deal unjustly towards them. To urge that an act of God may be good and necessary at one time and not at another is to reduce the government of God to a level with that of man, and to admit that the "divine" economy is neither uniform nor perfect. Again, granting the existence of God, all sequences were arranged by that God. If arranged by him, they were so arranged from eternity. Anything which acted contrary to that arrangement was either the result of an after plan on God's part, in which case he is not all-wise and immutable, or the arrangement took place in spite of God, and in that case God is not all-powerful.

It should be borne in mind that events which are termed "miraculous" may be superhuman, but it does not therefore follow they are supernatural. All forces in nature that are more powerful than those possessed by man are superhuman; still, they are natural. If it is urged that Christ's power to perform miracles proved him to be divine, how is it that the Bible records that miracles were worked through an agency the very opposite to that termed "divine"? In Deuteronomy (xiii. 1–3) we read: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass," etc. Here the children of

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Israel are warned against the miraculous power, though the sign and wonder came to pass. In Matthew (xxiv. 24) we also read: "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Further: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matthew vii. 22). In the Acts of the Apostles we have an instance given of a "child of the devil" commanding the attention of the multitude, through his supposed miraculous power, to a far greater extent than Christ is reported to have done. The record is: "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest" (Acts viii. 9, 10). Is not this evidence sufficient that, according to the Bible, the working of miracles was not confined to "divine" influence? The New Testament admits that devils could be cast out by the children of the Pharisees (Matthew xii. 24-27). Does that prove their "divinity"? If not, why is Christ casting out devils cited to prove him more than man? Well might Archbishop Trench say that "a miracle does not prove the truth of a doctrine, or the divine mission of him that brings it to pass." Before the miracles of Jesus can be of any evidential value, it must be shown, not only that they took place, but that such events could not have occurred without the aid of "divine" influence.

However extensive the belief in Christ's power to work miracles may be at the present day, it appears from the New Testament that many of the people, before whom it is said the miracles were performed, did not believe in them. It is clear that even in those days much faith was necessary to the belief in miraculous power. Where Scepticism existed Christ's occupation as a thaumaturgus was gone. Matthew (xiii. 58) informs us that in one place Christ "did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." But had the object of miracles been to prove the divine mission of Christ, it was in the midst of unbelief that they should have been wrought. It is a noteworthy fact that Jesus seems to have succeeded tolerably well with his wonders among the ignorant, the insane, and deaf and dumb people. When, however, he came in contact with thoughtful unbelievers, his prestige was gone. Hence we read in Matthew (xi. 20): "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not"; and in John (xii. 37) it is said: "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." Here, then, is a clear admission that in Christ's time his miracles were disbelieved and rejected. Is it expected that to-day we are to be more credulous than were our predecessors eighteen hundred years ago?

It now remains to be ascertained, supposing Christ did perform the miracles ascribed to him, what was their nature, and did they substantiate the claims set up for the supernatural character of Christ?

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE CHARACTER OF "GOD."

IT has often occurred to me, when reading articles or listening to debates or addresses on the greatest subject which civilised mankind has ever had to consider—viz., the belief or non-belief in the Christian doctrines—that the arguments adduced are of too learned a character to be thoroughly understood by the majority of people. The simpler the argument the better, say I. Of course, such a state of affairs has been entirely brought about by the "believers." Your Christian is as slippery as an eel; you never know when you have got him; he dodges about from one corner to another, and, of course, the Freethinker has to patiently follow him, and, by common-sense argument, drive him from his latest position. The Freethinker knows perfectly well that it is not at all necessary for him to enter into a lot of abstruse verbosity in order to prove his opinions. Two or three, aye, even one of his arguments, are quite sufficient. But naturally, as he is the attacking party, he is compelled to fight his opponent on the latter's own ground, and consequently has frequently to argue about matters which have but very little to do with the question at issue. In fact, it is remarkable how loth a Christian is to enter into any discussion whatever on the vital theories of his belief; he prefers to beat about the bush, as it were.

To those who are in doubt I would say: Listen not to the voice of the charmer, but close your eyes to all superstition; reason with yourself in a sensible and practical manner, and abide by whatever your own common sense dictates. There is no necessity whatever to go very profoundly into the subject, for if the principles will not bear close examination, one need not bother oneself very much about the mere details.

It is quite unnecessary for me to say anything particular *re* the Biblical account of the miraculous birth of Christ, the various miracles which he wrought in his ministry, and the various other extraordinary events—far more extraordinary than any contained in the *Arabian Nights*, which the "Book of Books" tells us of, because all this absurdity has long ago been fully exposed in all its nakedness by those who refuse "to become as little children." This absurdity has evidently been long apparent to some of the branches of the Christian Church, for they have once more been asking themselves whether the story of Mary's virginity is correct, or whether, in their "little understanding," they have not been mistaking the allegorical for the real.

There is, however, one great principle of Christianity which is most glaringly false, and which I wish to once more point out to the readers of this journal, for I am fully aware that far abler pens than mine have previously dwelt upon this particular subject. I refer to the *character* of the God we are asked to worship.

We are told that God is almighty, just, merciful, meek, gentle, and everything else that is noble. Let us see what truth there is in all this.

If God is *almighty*, he has absolute control over the whole universe, and everything that happens must therefore be entirely brought about by *his will*. An individual's mind is part of the universe, and therefore he controls *that*, putting every thought therein, good, bad, and indifferent. For, if he does not do so, he is not omnipotent. God, therefore, puts the thoughts of theft or murder into the minds of some of his children, and then, because they do as he tells them, plunges them into eternal torment and damnation. Is this just or merciful? But I have frequently been told, in answer to this, that it is the Devil (or, in other words, man's own evil thoughts), and not God, that does the tempting. But then God made the Devil, and therefore he made sin. And if it is the Devil who tempts us, then the Devil is merely a servant of God, who does all his master's dirty work. No Christian would ever acknowledge that God is not stronger than the Devil, for God is almighty; therefore the truth, even from the Christian point of view, must be one of two things—viz., that God either tempts us directly himself, or else is coward enough to stand by and look on while the Devil pummels poor weak mortals to his heart's content. Again I ask, Is this justice or mercy? The good God, the gentle God, he to whom we are beholden for such tremendous gifts and mercies, brings us into the world with a natural tendency to do evil, sets traps of temptation all along our Path of Life, and then, should we transgress, as is more than probable, visits upon us a punishment so great that we, in our poor intellects, are scarcely able to comprehend it.

We are told that this deplorable state of affairs has been brought about by the sin of our first human parents. But that is a poor consolation to us. What have we to do with our first parents? Why should we have to pay the penalty of their sin? When this question is asked of a Christian, he generally replies by quoting that infamous text, "The sins of the father shall descend upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." This is one of nature's most unjust laws, but it is certainly not a law which any just God would ever have created.

Again, what satisfactory explanation can be given of the fact that one man is born in the purple, endowed very highly with intellectual and physical advantages, whereas another is born in some den of filth, neglected and ill-treated in his childhood, learns nothing but vice, associates with nobody but drunkards, thieves, and harlots, and

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whose whole life is one long struggle for existence? What justice is there in this? Christ said, "Blessed be ye poor"; but where the blessedness of their state comes in I, for one, am not able to divine. I suppose the explanation is that in "the world to come" they will receive far more favors than the unfortunate inheritors of wealth, who are doomed, on account of their wealth, to perdition. Therefore it is perfectly evident that if we do not suffer the most dreadful misfortune and cruelty in this world, we are certain to do so in the next; and *vice versa*. And all this, forsooth, because of the transgression of our first parents. Again I ask, Where is the hand of reason or mercy to be found here?

Another thing, flattery is not at all compatible with meekness or gentleness. One would imagine that a good God would have been quite satisfied in seeing a man lead an honest and unselfish life. But no. The Christian's God "is a jealous God," whom it is absolutely necessary to bow down to and worship, and to metaphorically grovel in the mud before, if anything but damnation is to be expected. Is not the whole business disgusting? Is not the idea of cringing, fawning, and flattering opposed to all the better feelings of our nature? Yet this is what we are told we must do.

How long are people, who boast of their practical common sense, going to continue professing belief in a religion whose great doctrines are totally opposed to reason? Fortunately there are many signs that the dark cloud of superstition is rising, and will eventually give place to light; that man, looking back through the vistas of nearly two thousand years, seeing that Christianity has brought in its train intolerance, bigotry, nameless cruelty, famine, and bloodshed, and that it is false in practice as well as theory, is eventually awakening to the truth. That Christianity is at variance with the sciences is a notorious fact, and it is almost equally well known that scientists and philosophers—the profoundest of all thinkers—are opposed, almost to a man, to its doctrines. The clergy are no longer taken seriously except by a small minority of the population, and no longer is a sceptic looked upon as a social leper, unfit to be personally known. There is no mistaking these changes; even a straw is sufficient to show the way the tide flows. Christianity is slowly but surely losing its hold of the people, for, to use the words of Pope, they are beginning in earnest to "take nature's path, and mad opinions leave." C. H. S.

ACID DROPS.

A week or two ago we printed an exclamation of the Queen's to one of her ladies in regard to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Her Majesty was surprised and shocked to learn that such a Society was needed in a country like England. We have now to record a noteworthy declaration by Mr. Rider Haggard, the novelist, who is well acquainted with South Africa and its "heathen" population. Speaking at a meeting of Mr. Waugh's society, Mr. Haggard said that savages practised polygamy and fought in Homeric fashion, but they had their good points. "So far as I am acquainted with them," he said, "and so far as I know, there has never been amongst them any instance of the maltreatment of a child. They love their children, and I think they would rather die than injure them; and I will go further and say this, that if any enemy of the Christian faith could go amongst those savages and could translate to them the record of the cases which come before this Society, could convince them—which I think would be impossible—that those things were true, and that these things were done by the white lords in every class of society—if that could be done, then I say the chances of Christianity, as a religion, among these savages would come to an end; they would reject it; they would have nothing to do with a creed which was followed by the men and women who did such things."

Mr. Rider Haggard then told a pathetic story of a Matabele who was chased by two English scouts. He was a fine fellow in the prime of life, and was carrying a lot of things, all of which he cast away in his flight except a bundle upon his back. At last, seeing escape hopeless, he turned round, as savages do, to be killed. But the scouts re-assured him, and asked him what he had in the bundle, and why he did not throw it away with the other things. He took down the bundle, opened it, and showed them a baby a year old. "It is my daughter's child," he said; "I was taking it to her." He could have saved himself from what he thought certain death by forsaking the child, but he stuck to it, though it was not his own.

Just fancy the infamous hypocrisy of Englishmen and women, so many of whom ill-treat their own children, sending out missionaries to "save" savages like that splendid Matabele! It is enough to make honest people vomit.

The Catholic Church does not allow divorce in a general way. Special dispensation for it has to be obtained from the Pope, and only very rich or powerful persons are favored by his Holiness. It is also well known that the Catholic Church, while not forbidding second marriages, has always discountenanced them; and in this respect it is true to the common doctrine of a future life. If a man marries often—say like the Duke of Argyll, who, at the age of seventy-two, is leading a third bride to the altar—how are his domestic affairs to be settled in Kingdom-Come? Which of the women he lived with on earth will be his wife in heaven? And what are the others to do? This dreadful puzzle, the other way about, was put to Jesus Christ, and it was too much for him. He answered it, as he generally did when he was cornered, by a subterfuge. So the puzzle remains to this day. If there be a future life, in which we shall recognise each other and consort together, a second marriage is simply abominable, and sets up a source of bickering and quarrelling for all eternity. How could a man hurry off with a second wife to church if he really believed that his first wife had only emigrated to a country where he would soon have to join her? Second marriages are one of the many proofs that the belief in a future life is more profession than reality.

We find the following definition of the Christian Missionary Society in the columns of the *Behar Times*, India: "An electeosynary agency for the encouragement of canting hypocrisy amongst low-caste people."

Gambling is a woful vice, according to the Rev. Mr. Barnes and his friends of the Anti-Gambling League; but rattling for Bibles in the parish church of St. Ives is quite in accordance with God's will. Did not they fill up the apostle-ship by drawing lots? As Solomon says (Proverbs xvi. 33): "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

A Jew at Trieste, named Paolo Lipsich, has been accused by the Church of having made a crucifix, and of having afterwards fired a shot at it. For this alleged offence he has been sentenced to fourteen months' imprisonment with hard labor. He is to have no food but what he can pay for; at stated intervals he is to be compelled to fast; he is to be ultimately expelled from Austria; and he is to pay all the expenses of his trial.

This charge is probably as absurd and false as that of spitting on prisoners, or of the Sanhedrim trying Jesus by night and without giving full opportunities of defence, or as the malicious charge everywhere brought against the Jews of using Christian blood at their Passover.

About fifty years ago a number of Jews were put to death on this charge at Damascus. In earlier days it was the constant resort of the Christians when they wanted to plunder the race from whom they obtained their God and Savior. Early in the fourteenth century all the Jews were expelled from France on pretence of having crucified a Christian boy. Dean Milman says: "In one day all the Jews were seized, their property confiscated to the Crown, and the race expelled the realm. The clergy, in their zeal for the faith and the hope that their own burthen might be lightened, approved this pious robbery."

A cloudburst in the Wurtemburg Black Forest district last week destroyed whole villages and drowned at least one hundred persons. In Northern Hungary and Galicia also upwards of a hundred persons have been killed by a water-spout, and hundreds of houses were swept away.

Three lives were lost on a boating expedition in connection with the Bible-class excursion from St. Margaret's Church, Rochester. Of a party of twelve only two of these Bible students had the practical knowledge of swimming. The curates of the church made a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to recover the missing bodies.

In the Punjab alone as many as 1,037 deaths from snakes occurred last year. In every province, except Bombay, mortality from this cause is on the increase. The people are apathetic, and the superstitious respect in which the snake is held is a part of the religion of a great many of them. All their gods do for them is to allow their superstition to destroy them.

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"Providence" has drowned a lot of persons by floods in Germany, and terrified Florence with a fresh earthquake. Mr. Gladstone says that "Providence" fitted up the earth for man's habitation. Nothing of the kind, says Mr. Herbert Spencer; man has to accommodate himself to his environment as best he could. The facts are with Mr. Spencer.

Moody's congregation were singing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name," at Fort Worth, when the roof fell. They were rejoicing that their prayer for rain had been answered. One woman was killed as a result of the power of Jesus' name.

God is no respecter of persons. The Rev. W. R. Shepherd, of Hartburn, near Morpeth, went shooting in the vicarage grounds. He shot a rook, but did not kill it. However, he killed himself. In going after the rook he fell over a precipice. There is a moral in this somewhere, only we haven't time to dig it out.

George Owen Orpet has been sentenced at the West London Police-court to six months' imprisonment with hard labor. He was a very religious man, and preached on Sundays. His firm found him £30 wrong last June, but forgave him and raised his salary. But he went wrong again, and this time he has to pay the penalty. Wallace Brothers will probably fight shy of preaching employees in future.

Rev. J. R. Cappe, of Mt. Vernon, Kentucky, who slings hell-fire and brimstone according to the Baptist creed, on last Sunday murdered his wife by shooting her five times, because, he said, she gave more pie to her own children than to his, the two having raised separate crops of children, before they became partners in the baby-raising business.

Is it true that a Christian Evidence lecturer at Liverpool is in the habit of asking opponents their names and addresses? Is it true that an opponent gave his name and address a few Sundays ago? Is it true that on the following Tuesday he was dismissed from his employment on a certain railway?

A way in which the public are taxed to support religion was indicated at the Horwich District Council, where the secretary of the Ænon Baptist Chapel claimed that land belonging to the trustees should be exempt from street-making expenses, as it was intended for the erection of a chapel. It was resolved that the application be entertained when the building was erected.

The officials of the Printing Trades Federation have given instances of sweating by the Salvation Army. They say: "Repeated efforts have been made to get you to pay the rotary hands in the machine department the union rate during the last twelve months, but you have declined each time. That you do not and never have, in the warehouse department, paid the union rate; and we challenge you to produce your books to refute this. We do know that you have paid 2s. for a full night's work; and we ask, 'Is this union rate?'" They give further instances of persons who have been discharged and replaced by others, to whom are given less than half the rate of wages. They say: "We defy you to point to another case in which a newspaper is produced on such low conditions as your *War Cry*, *Gazette*, and *Little Soldier* are now produced by you."

The truth seems to be that the Salvation Army is a large business firm, which utilises religion in order to buy cheaper and sell dearer than other firms whose business it absorbs. The blood and fire, bands and banners, are the advertisements for Booth & Co.'s S.A. tea and S.A. clothing.

The *Blue Grass Blade*, edited by an Atheist teetotaler, has some lines on "The Sin of the Sacrament." Here is the first verse:—

If Jesus, whom the pious ones believe to be divine,
Had never made His thaumaturgal blunder
Of turning *aqua pura* into poison-tainted wine,
While the people stood agape with awe and wonder,
But had taught that holy banquets, with sacramental toasts,
Paved the way for making drunkards in His name,
He might have made the lesson more impressive to the hosts,
By proclaiming wine the leading-string of shame.

The Rev. G. L. Perin has been picturing Jesus as a newspaper man. He asks what would Christ have done had he been an editor? Possibly he would have accepted crucifixion with relief.

There are no liars in the world like Christian liars. In the first place, they take to it naturally; in the second place, they have had such a lot of practice. Take that "Atheist Shoemaker" story, by way of illustration. Although it has been thoroughly exposed, so that its pious author has apparently withdrawn it from circulation for ever, the Christians go on declaring that it is as true as Gospel. Opening the Nottingham *Argus*, we notice a letter from a pretentious, ungrammatical individual, called William Lewin, who writes himself down as secretary of the local Christian Evidence Society. This person "begs to state," as though he knew *all* about it, that the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes "placed the whole of the proofs in the hands of Mr. George Jacob Holyoake," who has "entirely supported Mr. Hughes." Now the "proofs" were not placed in Mr. Holyoake's hands, nor did he take the trouble to discover them. Mr. Hughes simply produced *his own witnesses*. It was subsequent to Mr. Holyoake's investigation that Mr. Foote discovered the Atheist Shoemaker's father and brothers and shopmates, and the house where he last lived in London; and it was this fresh evidence that proved the falsity of Mr. Hughes's story.

The *Islamic World* has an article on "The European Liquor Traffic with Africa," which it shows has developed to an enormous extent. The Muslims preach temperance to the natives, but the Christians bring gin, rum, and ruin in their train. The writer says: "No wonder the late Captain Burton preferred for Africa a repetition of the slave trade in its worst form to the liquor traffic and its terribly blighting influence, if we must choose the lesser of two evils."

In 1665 the Bible Society published, for the benefit of the Pequot Indians, located in Massachusetts, a translation of the Bible into their tongue, by Rev. John Elliot, known as the "Apostle to the Indians." The *Sunday at Home* says: "The book has lasted longer than the people for whom it was made; the tribes to which Elliot preached have vanished, and their language is extinct."

Savages and semi-civilised nations can always understand the Bible to the extent of knowing that it countenances polygamy and drink. They can appreciate such texts as "Bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after; for oxen or for sheep or for wine or for strong drink," and they understand Christianity just well enough to know that it promises to wipe out all their sins.

Duguid, the "mejum," produced a spirit photograph, which turned out to be a reproduction of a continental picture. Now an apologist says: "A medium may, on passing through a picture gallery, become impressed by some picture which, although forgotten soon after, may yet make a persistent appearance on his negative on subsequent occasions." This is almost as good as the explanation of the medium's hands being black when the spirit pulled the hair of a sitter, who, aware of the spirit's proclivities that way, mixed lampblack with his hair-oil. So intimate is the contact between mejum and spirit that what happens to one affects the other.

The *Daily Chronicle* (June 8) notes a case of belief in witchcraft in Lincolnshire. The witch is a quiet, harmless old lady who lives in an almshouse. One of her neighbors had pigs who wouldn't fatten, hens that would not lay, and cows who gave little milk. Evidently the fault was with the witch, who had been seen to cast an evil eye over byre and poultry-yard. The farmer and his wife took counsel how to allay the malign influence. It was believed that if a bone could be broken or blood drawn all would be well; and it is affirmed that this was done by the woman, who fell on the old lady, pushed her over a fence, and broke her arm. The *D. C.* says "it seems almost incredible in these days of Board schools." It would be strange, however, if the belief in witchcraft did not survive while the fetish book which countenances it is so absurdly reverenced.

The Liverpool *Courier* asks, How many Agnostics and Atheists have we in the House of Commons? It says: "This question is exercising the minds of some excellent Churchmen and leaders of religious thought. Their idea is that the number is not less than seventy. Of course there is no accurate information on the point, because the professors of Agnosticism and Atheism are generally careful to conceal their opinions. However, it is doubtful whether concealment will be possible in the future, for with a view to the general election these Christian gentlemen are organising themselves into a body whose purpose it will be to give the electorate information as to the religious opinions of every candidate." We expect a number of candidates will be simply members of the Church of England, which there is high authority for saying that every member of the English nation legally is.

There is a deal of method in most madness. The most enthusiastic preacher of hell-fire will eat, drink, and grow fat; and revivalists, who are so preoccupied with the next world, generally manage to rake in the shekels in this world. We are not surprised, therefore, that the mad fellow who went to Balmoral (with a revolver) to take the

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place of the Queen had written a letter to Vanderbilt, the American millionaire, offering to marry his daughter.

"Canterbury" is no fool, nor is his brother Archbishop of York. The report of their Committee upon the new Scheme for the Relief of Voluntary Schools is well summarised by the *Westminster Gazette* as "How to Dip into the Public Funds while Dodging Public Control." England, however, is not blind enough to fall into such a trap.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has among its functions the determination of some Church questions here. It also determines the rights of property in Indian idols, and is, on that said account, said to be worshipped in some parts of India as a supernatural agency.

There was a nice little quarrel over the gods at Buddha Gaya, the Jerusalem of the Buddhists, where Gautama Buddha is said to have meditated under a fig tree, not cursing it. The temple erected there is in the hands of the Brahmins, and those in custody removed the statue of Buddha, substituting their own idols instead. The Viceroy, however, visited the temple, and made the Mahout produce the statue of Buddha, which he had hidden. The Maha Bodhi Society are now going to restore the sacred temple, and to found a college there to be the centre for the propaganda of Buddhism all over the world.

The real Christian spirit is not extinct. It burst out in something like its old force at the celebration of the eighth centenary of the first crusade held in Clermont, Ferraud. A famous Dominican preacher, Father Montfabre, broke into a fury of speech. He declared that France must once more undertake a crusade, this time against the godless, the usurers, and the Freemasons. He made a vehement appeal to undertake the work to the two Cardinals and forty Bishops present. The congregation received his utterances with loud applause, clapping their hands, and crying out "God wills it!"

No doubt there are plenty of fanatics who would dearly like to see a crusade against the enemies of the Church. To lop off the heads of the leading Freethinkers would be a work of merit like that of Elijah slaying the four hundred priests of Baal. Kill but the boldest scientists, thinkers, writers, and speakers, and the Church might once more dominate and bring back the Middle Ages.

Prebendary Harry Jones, in his reminiscences, entitled *Fifty Years*, tells of some interesting communicants. He says as one instance of many: "On the first occasion of my officiating as rector at St. George's, a string of tottering old people ostentatiously filed up to the altar rails and received the Holy Communion. Next morning they presented themselves in a body at the vestry door, asking that their names and addresses might be put down, obviously expecting to be paid for their devout attendance the previous day. On my declining to recognise this claim of these poor old folk, the party never presented itself again at the Table of the Lord; but one morning a crippled leader among them came to me and said confidentially that he had lately gone to St. Peter's, but that if I would occasionally give him something he would communicate at St. George's."

The requisition of a dole for taking the sacrament is a striking contrast to the good old times, when the magical efficacy of the Savior's body and blood, and the fear of being debarred from the holy table, brought much grist to the priestly mill. Now the very paupers want to be paid to act as communicants. The darkey loved his Jesus for the sake of the wine, but they think such a slender meal requires a little cash along with it.

In the ancient Thargalia of the Athenians a man was annually sacrificed to expiate the sins of the nation. The man was not, as in the Christian scheme of atonement, the worthiest and most innocent person, but the most worthless person known, and the custom was to reserve certain of the criminal classes, who, in case of plague, famine, or other supposed visitations from angry deities, were thrown into the sea in the belief that the sacrifice of their lives would cleanse or wipe off the guilt of the nation.

Mrs. Besant has adopted the Swedenborgian method of making an allegory of the Christian atonement. This is putting new wine into old bottles with a vengeance. The historic facts are that the doctrine arose from savage belief in the efficacy of blood, and savage customs of paying for crimes committed.

The *Daily News* of Friday, June 7, in reviewing an important sociological work by the Vicomte G. D'Avenel, writes as follows with respect to slavery and its abolition in France: "M. D'Avenel convincingly proves that the oft-cited edicts of Louis le Hutin effected little with regard to the emancipation of serfs. What really, though very slowly and partially, did liberate these bondsmen of Church and noble was, firstly, the influence of the communes, the contagion of municipal liberties; secondly, and chiefly, the condition of the country. Wars had depopulated and devastated entire regions. The problem was to get corn sowed, harvest reaped. Thus, towards the close of the thirteenth century the most precious commodity in France, the source of all wealth and power, was the husbandman—the laborer. Scarcity of hands had so much increased a man's value that he was haggled for, was enabled to make a good bargain for himself, to acquire not only his freedom, but a concession of land. Sentiment, benevolence, Christian charity, had little or nothing to do with the movement. Thus, neither the clergy nor the monastic orders showed any alacrity in manumitting their serfs. Even in 1376 the austere monks of St. Bruno, a brotherhood vowed to poverty and penance, sold a number of these white slaves, as they might have done a flock of sheep, to the Duke of Burgundy. Nevertheless, here and there we come upon manumissions of favorite serfs made by individual owners 'in the name of Christ.'"

The whole subject of Christianity and Slavery should be treated by a first-rate historian. It is not too much to say that the real facts have been obscured or suppressed by orthodox historians. Slavery existed in Europe right down to the fifteenth century; not *serfdom*, but complete *slavery*, and the Church owned slaves just like other proprietors. Vicomte D'Avenel shows that Languedoc and Gascony, for instance, swarmed with slaves little more than four hundred years ago—Turks, Egyptians, and negroes. A "black Saracen" sold for about £25, and a little negro fetched twice the price of a parrot. This was fifteen centuries after the advent of Jesus Christ.

In an article on "Ancient Egyptian Ideas of Immortality," Mr. Boscawen says: "The Ancient Egyptian thought the dead composed of four parts—viz., Sah, the mummy; Ba, the soul; Khu, intelligence; and Ka, the double."

The Ka, or spirit, could not exist without its rations of bread, beer, wine, meat, oxen, and geese, which were supplied for its sustenance. When a person died it was considered that he became absorbed into the spiritual body of the chief deity—Osiris. The body could exist without the Ka, but the latter could not exist without the body. Hence the Ancient Egyptians went to so much trouble and expense to preserve their carcases.

Rudyard Kipling's new poem, "Mulholland's Contract," is an amusing production. Mulholland gets in a dangerous position among the cattle that had broken loose on the lower deck in a gale of wind; so he makes a "Contract with God," something like Jacob in the old Jew Book.

> An' by the terms of the Contract, as I have read the same,
> If He got me to port alive I would exalt his name,
> And praise His Holy Majesty till further orders came.

Mulholland gets his orders from "God" to go back to the cattle-boats, after his recovery in hospital, and preach the Gospel to his drinking, swearing, and fighting pals. Then comes this delicious verse:—

> I have been smit and bruised, as warned would be the case,
> An' turned my cheek to the smiter exactly as Scripture says;
> But following that, I knocked him down an' led him up to Grace.

Mr. Hall Caine, the novelist, has written a *Life of Christ*. Could anything be more appropriate? Those other novelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, wrote a long time ago, and are somewhat behind the taste of the present age. Mr. Hall Caine has taken their material, which is all that exists, and worked it up in a more *fin de siècle* fashion. No doubt it will pay him as well as *The Manxman*.

We read that Mr. Hall Caine will re-write his Jesus Christ now after a prolonged stay in the one-horse country which is facetiously called the Holy Land. Perhaps he wishes to put in the necessary local color; perhaps he hopes to receive an infusion of the Holy Ghost.

Poor Lord Rosebery! He has had his chance and lost it. Keeping race-horses, and winning the Derby, have been his ruin. The editor of the *Methodist Times* says so, and he ought to know. In funereal tones, and with an expression of an undertaker, Mr. Hughes deplores "the moral downfall of that unfortunate man." But while the lamp holds out to burn the vilest sinner may return. It is to be earnestly hoped, therefore, that his lordship will repent before it is too late, and "give his heart to God" on an early Sunday in St. James's Hall. By doing so he will secure the premiership for a whole generation. Still, we trust that Mr. Price Hughes will not write a book about his "turfite" convert. That would be a greater punishment than he could bear.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 16, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C.: "Mrs. Besant's New Views of Christianity."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—June 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London. July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

S. Howard.—We rank with the admirers of Robert Browning as a poet, but his Christianity seems to us but little above the level of common Methodism. Its redeeming feature was its Universalism. Browning thought that all would be saved somehow and at some time. Of course we say this in view of his published work. In private, according to Robert Buchanan, he declined to be called a Christian at all. Perhaps the truth is that he grew out of Christianity in later years. We know the poem you refer to—"Gold Hairs." It is fine in its way, and is complete without the last two verses. The "lie" referred to in the fourth line of the last verse is, of course, the doctrine of natural human goodness, which Christianity has always combated, and must combat to the end of the chapter.

Subscriber.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. Millar (Belfast).—It is a Christian trick to call Joseph Barker "*late* infidel lecturer and co-editor of the *National Reformer* with Charles Bradlaugh." People who read it are led to believe that they are reading recent history. Joseph Barker started the *National Reformer* with Charles Bradlaugh *thirty-five* years ago. They soon parted, and Joseph Barker, finding he could not "boss" the Freethought movement in England, went back to Christianity. He was a most unstable man—everything by turns and nothing long.

E. Smedley.—(1) Christianity is nothing without reference to a future life. Secularism has nothing at all to do with a future life. Hence the sanctions of the two systems are entirely different. Christians never talk about making the best of this life until they are shaky about the next life. Christianity does not mean doing the best for humanity; it means saving your soul through the blood of Christ. Take that away, and its ethical teaching, so far as it is true, belongs to humanity at large, having existed before Christianity was born. (2) If the God of the Bible meant to recommend teetotalism, he could have said so plainly, like the God of the Koran.

J. Little.—Your order handed to Mr. Forder. We regret to hear of the prolonged depression at West Auckland. These industrial problems are vastly more important than the problems of kingdom-come.

J. M. Headley (Yarmouth).—Freethinkers certainly ought to deal with newsagents who are liberal enough to supply Secular literature. We thank you for displaying our contents-sheet, which is a help to our circulation.

T. Birtley has again accepted the secretaryship of the Chester-le-street Branch. There are scores, perhaps hundreds, of Freethinkers in the district, and we hope they will rally round Mr. Birtley and the Branch.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Collected at Bristol Conference, £2 12s.; J. Withey, 5s.; J. Proctor, 5s.; A Friend, 5s.; Mrs. Henderson, £1; Huddersfield Branch, 7s. 6d.; I. Tapp, 6s.

W. Cabell points out, with reference to Mr. Engström's letter, that Jesus Christ appears to have known nothing about the doctrine of original sin, which is a speciality of Paul's. Jesus Christ spoke of "ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance"—an expression which is opposed to all the teaching of the Churches.

B. Bendl.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. Dodd.—Mr. Putnam would probably not enter into a public debate in this country except after consultation with Messrs. Foote and Watts. It is scarcely fair to leave him at the mercy of every Christian Evidence lecturer who wants an advertisement.

J. P. Gilmour.—Glad to hear you were all so pleased with Mr. Putnam at Glasgow. The American Secularists will prize the hospitality you showed their representative.

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks for cuttings.

Papers Received.—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Liberal—Open Court—Liberator—Twentieth Century—Freidenker—Isle of Man Times—Liberty—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Light—Horwich Advertiser—Liverpool Courier—Harbinger of Light—Echo—Morning Leader—Essex Telegraph—Crescent—Secular Thought—Islamic World—Birmingham Daily Mail—Western Figaro—Manchester Courier—Nottingham Guardian—Jerusalem Star—Reading Observer—Blue Grass Blade.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE.

Conferences are very useful gatherings. They enable workers in various parts of the country to meet and get acquainted. They excite a certain amount of moral enthusiasm. They also lead to the comparison of ideas as to the best way of promoting the success of the movement; and although these ideas are sometimes very crude, and more imaginative than practical, there is sure to be some advantage in their open ventilation and discussion.

At the Bristol Conference one or two Branches desired to add to the N.S.S. Immediate Practical Objects, but the proposal was negatived. We have already a pretty extensive program, about which there is, in the main, practical unanimity. But if we go on adding planks, after controversy and division, we shall weaken rather than strengthen our Society. It should never be forgotten that our primary bond is Freethought, and that our chief object is to fight Theology, which, in education, politics, and social life, still exercises an oppressive and reactionary influence.

Mr. Watts's proposal, which was adopted, seems to me a very useful one, if it is carried out with sufficient thought and care. A little volume, plainly written, and showing how Freethought conflicts with Theology in public and private life—in politics, sociology, and ethics—would be of inestimable value. It is not enough to offer inquirers a catalogue of Principles and Objects. The skeleton must be clothed with flesh, or it will not be attractive.

Mr. George Ward's proposal, on behalf of the Finsbury Park Branch, was also good intrinsically, though the Conference did not think the time had arrived for carrying it into effect. It would involve a heavy expense to send an organising secretary through the country to do what was contemplated. The proposal, however, being remitted as a recommendation to the Executive, can be taken up without further discussion at the psychological moment.

Mr. Cohen's proposal was also excellent, but it has been carried before. It is a capital idea to send lecturers into the country, but the difficulty is how to do it. Personally, I do not believe it can be done by our present organisation; and I am reluctantly and painfully driven to the belief that our organisation cannot be much improved while we lie under legal disabilities. Brains and energy cannot work without means. Enthusiasts may think otherwise, but they soon get undeceived if they condescend to practice. The bigoted Christian law is the secret of all our difficulties. We have lost thousands of pounds during the brief term of my presidency, and we shall go on losing until the law is altered. Meanwhile, we may dodge the law, but we have no real security; for even if property itself is secure, there is no guarantee that it will not be alienated from its original purposes. Mr. Joseph Symes built a hall at Melbourne, and other people are in possession. He denounces them as tricksters and thieves—as they are from a moral point of view—but they laugh at him, for the law is on their side. Yes, we shall never do great things, as an organisation, *until property can be dedicated to, and held in trust for, our special objects*—that is, until we enjoy the advantages of endowment like other bodies.

While our organisation remains as it is, in consequence of our disabilities, I see little use in the means by which Mr. Cohen's proposal is sought to be carried out. A committee must sit somewhere, and if it sits in London what does it really know (as things now are) of the provinces? Only a person who goes all over the country is in a position to know what is wanted. Accordingly I told the Conference that I had resolved to take this matter in hand myself. I have worked out my plans, and in a month or so I shall put them into a circular. All the lecturers I have spoken to believe in my idea as the only one that is practicable in the circumstances, and I shall be happy if I can utilise their services, as they should be utilised, in the propaganda of our principles.

I have no doubt that the Committee appointed to report to the Executive will fall in with my scheme when they come to talk it over with me. I have given the matter much thought; I have taken it to bed with me and got up with it in the morning; and so far as our lecturing system is concerned, I see no alternative between my plan and chaos.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote occupies the London Hall of Science platform again this evening (June 16). His subject will be "Mrs. Besant's New Views of Christianity." After the lecture Mr. Foote will announce the decision of the Directors of the National Secular Hall Society with respect to the institution.

Mr. Putnam lectured at Glasgow last Sunday, and, in spite of the midsummer weather, to capital audiences, the evening meeting being phenomenal for the time of the year. His lectures were highly appreciated, and a general hope was expressed that he would soon revisit the "tight little island." A collection for the Glasgow Infirmary realised £3 15s.

The day before his Glasgow lectures, Messrs. Gilmour and Black took Mr. Putnam down the Clyde, and he was enchanted with the spectacle, first of human industry, and then of natural beauty. Mr. Putnam was in good hands that day, and, as the Yankees say, he had a good time all through. To day (June 16) he lectures at Edinburgh, and of course the "saints" will give him a first-rate welcome.

We have received the New York *Truthseeker* containing the first of Mr. Putnam's letters after his reception in England. Our American guest is very warm-hearted, and it is with considerable hesitation that we decide to reproduce some portions of his letter for the benefit of our own readers, who will not be able to see the blushes of those he eulogises. The extracts will appear in our next issue.

Mr. A. B. Moss was very busy on Sunday. Three open-air lectures make a big day's work. His afternoon meeting in Victoria Park was a very large one. A certain Christian rowdy was there, with his lambs, intending to create a disturbance. Their interruptions, however, were dealt with by Mr. Moss with good humour. After the lecture, however, there was a very ugly rush for the platform; but the members around it stood firm, and they were supported by six stalwart policemen, who meant to stop the little game of those

> Who prove their doctrine orthodox
> By apostolic blows and knocks.

Thanks are due to the County Council police for their prompt action in stopping disorder.

Bristol Christians are annoyed. They went about saying that Secularism was dead, and lo! the N.S.S. held its Conference at Bristol, and reports appeared in the local newspapers. This was too much for Christian flesh and blood to bear with equanimity. Accordingly, a Christian Evidence lecturer, named Grinstead, went to Eastville Park to lecture on Secularism—the thing that was dead; and gravely informed his hearers that all Freethinkers were pot-house men. It is a wonder he did not say he had met them there. On the following Sunday, the N.S.S. Branch secretary, Mr. Keast, lectured on the same subject, taking the precaution to have a police officer handy, much to the surprise and disgust of a few Christians who came for a row. Mr. Keast put some questions which the Grinsteadites could not answer. They *could* answer in *one* way, but they feared that policeman.

In mentioning the Bristol papers that reported the N.S.S. Conference, we overlooked the *Times and Mirror*. A correspondent who sends us the cutting writes: "When I saw it I thought the days of miracles had returned. So orthodox has the *Times and Mirror* been hitherto, that for several years it would not notice, except by inserting their advertisements, such mild heretics as the Bristol Sunday Society. Secularism is clearly becoming respectable even in Bristol."

The Wood Green Branch is doing good work at its open-air station. Unfortunately it has to meet unscrupulous opposition. We hope the local Freethinkers will rally round the platform and support the lecturers. It will never do to have any of our meetings broken up by bigots.

The International Congress of Freethinkers will be held this year at Brussels on September 22, 23, and 24. All the arrangements are being undertaken by the Belgian Rationalist Federation. Four subjects are definitely placed on the agenda for discussion: (1) The Abolition of War, (2) The Relations between Church and State, (3) The Equality of Men and Women, (4) The Religious Emancipation of Women. Some groups also propose to discuss the Attitude of Freethought towards Christian Democracy. The circular will be laid before the National Secular Society's Executive at its next meeting, when a delegation to the Congress will no doubt be decided upon.

"A Freethinker" protests in the London *Star* against the narrow sectarianism of the Anti-Vivisection Society. Its annual meeting opened with "prayer," and most of the speakers talked a great deal about "religion." The *Star* correspondent says that all this is in spite of the fact that "the modern humanitarian movement is largely the work of Freethinkers, while on the other hand many vivisectionists are unimpeachably orthodox in their creed." We may add, for our own part, that the noblest denunciation of the vivisectors came from the pen of Colonel Ingersoll.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has had to decline the Prussian Royal Order "Pour le Mérite," as he holds that certain opinions of his, often repeated and strongly expressed, debar him from accepting it. After all, he can afford to dispense with orders and decorations. It is better to remain plain Mr. Herbert Spencer. That name will be enough on his tombstone.

The Manchester Branch desires us to announce that its Annual Picnic will take place on Sunday, July 14, at Chester. Friends intending to join the party are requested to apply for tickets at once, so that the necessary arrangements may be made without delay. Full particulars will be given later on. Address—Joseph Seddon, 83 Upper Lloyd-street, Moss Side.

The *Boston Investigator*, now in its 65th volume, copies Mr. Stephenson's poem, "Fiend or Fool," from our pages, to the first position in its own.

The 24th Judicial District Court of Kansas, in Barber County, has just decided that the reading of the Bible is not compulsory in the public schools of that State. A Freethinking father, whose son was expelled for refusing to take part in devotional exercises, obtained a mandamus compelling the board to reinstate his son as a member of the school.

"Christ is the Head of this House; He is the unseen guest at meals," is a motto inscribed on the walls of a temperance restaurant at Bristol. It is quite usual for the head of the house to put in an appearance at meal-times; but at this particular restaurant the provender was not of the savory character expected when so distinguished a guest puts in his appearance. The Bishop of Bristol would probably have elevated his nose at the meals.

A CABINET COUNCIL IN HEAVEN.

Time: The beginning of our era. One Sabbath morning. Eleven o'clock by the celestial chronometer. The Holy Ghost flaps its wings and coos aloud. Yaveh, waking, rubs his eyes: "What's up?"

Holy Ghost: "News from the earth."

Yaveh: "What news? Si je conçois comment on s'y comporte Je veux bien que le diable m'emporte. How is my only begotten Son getting on below?"

Holy Ghost: "He has become a D.D."

Yaveh: "What's that?"

Holy Ghost: "Devil Dodger."

Yaveh: "Don't understand Latin turned into bad English."

Holy Ghost: "Well, Yaveh, you are the boss of the show, and created everything (Yaveh nods), devils included."

Yaveh: "Certes—to plague mankind. Pour nôtre bon plaisir."

Holy Ghost: "You sent devils into men, and your dutiful son—*enfant terrible*—is having some rare fun, ha! ha! He is driving them out. A pack of poor devils has just entered the bellies of pigs!"

Yaveh (in a rage): "Sacré nom de la Trinité! My lightning apparatus! I'll smash the damned coon!"

The apparatus is set up, but the Holy Ghost gives it a slight turn, and the lightning strikes an island, yclept Santorin, which disappears with thousands of innocent people. There was joy in heaven! Chorus: "The heavens are telling." Charles Keoll Laporte.

The church doors throughout the capital of Madagascar have been covered with placards inciting the people to kill the Queen and her husband, and welcome the French. This is the effect of the new Catholic crusade.

Evangelist Wharton says: "I believe in a free country, the freedom of the press, and free speech; but I am in favor of shutting the mouth and gagging the tongue of every person who goes around defaming God and undermining the teachings of God's Church." Brother Wharton is living a century or so behind his time.

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MAN'S DUAL NATURE.

THEOSOPHY, I think, is now the only system which teaches that man's nature is of a sevenfold character. So far it is universally apprehended that human nature is divided in two phases. The metaphysician's terms are "mundane and supermundane," or "natural and transcendental." The Spiritists call it "material and spiritual." The Christian employs the expression, "body and soul." The newest of new Spiritualists divide our nature in three; they distinguish between "soul" and "spirit," or the ethical and the intellectual plane. Leaving the unquestionable material element out, however, we have undoubtedly still a twofold nature left. We have the sentiment or emotion, and the intellect or reason. The former is the animal instinct refined, our motive power, the incentive stimulus to action; the latter is the second thought or reflection, the guiding power of utility. Each has its own function to perform, and where the line is not drawn in its proper place, there mischief is the result. Where the sentiment is unguided by reason, it assumes the form of superstition, and where misplaced it culminates in frantic passion.

Hence it is that we stand, as it were, kicking with one foot on the moist soil of superstition, and the other on the dry land of reason. The former draws us back towards religion, as the latter pulls us up towards common sense. As the one prevails, so the other recedes; as the first is neglected, so the last flourishes. We are referred to statesmen. These believe in Christianity. Why cannot you? The nearest and simplest answer to this question, which is the very embodiment of absurdity both in form and spirit, would be, first, because my brain is differently constructed, of course; besides, my education and experience have been different from theirs. But I should further like to ask, Has their religion anything to do with their statesmanship? Does the statesman, in his capacity as such, live out his Christianity? Does he refrain from contributing to the maintenance of the army, or the furtherance of implements of war? If not, he does not assist to keep the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Or does the Christian physician pray over the sick or exorcise devils, like Jesus did, instead of giving them medicine? Or does the Christian Judge sanction the commandment, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"? Nay, only recently, in Ireland, a poor woman who was suspected of witchcraft was held over fire and otherwise maltreated in order to effect a cure; but the ultra-religious bigots were secured, and an inquiry was opened. Or do great Christian judges believe in the Bible, when it teaches the art of anointing as a remedy for illness? Nay, last year two parents in London were imprisoned for that offence. Why, by the argument of greatness we might prove anything. We might as well say there are great preachers who believe in Roman Catholicism, therefore that is right; or there are great Freethinkers who disbelieve in Christianity, therefore Christianity is wrong. The fact is, statesmen are politicians when in Parliament on week-days, and on Sundays they are Christians and go to church. They are politicians when dealing with politics, and Christians when writing in religious magazines.

Here again, then, are we confronted with another phase of the duplicity of human nature. And what is the cause of it? It may be said, not without valid grounds, that human kind is only just emerging out of its infancy. The coat of the ape is worn off, but the animal instincts are not yet outgrown. Again, there have been more centuries of natural, or rather unnatural, selection, in which all those who exhibited even the slightest symptoms of mental independence were killed off, and only the religious and half-developed were permitted to survive, than there have been years of religious freedom. But is there not another reason near at hand? Could a clearer and more logical way of thinking not be established in one generation?

The facts are, that the plastic, susceptible mind of the child is muddled and crippled in the school by the mixing together of irreconcileable theories—scientific facts and theological errors, facts and fancies, knowledge and guesswork, science and superstition. In one hour the pupil is taught that our earth is the centre of the universe, and that the sun, moon, and stars were put in the heavens to give light to its inhabitants; in the next hour he is taught, with as much fervor and gravity, that the globe itself is only an infinitesimal part of the universe, an insignificant speck in the heavens, moving through space with an inconceivable rapidity, its movements depending upon the sun, and, in turn, compelling the moon to follow it. In one hour he learns that man was once created perfect, but fell, and that he is now a depraved, corrupt being, who is helplessly lost to an irrevocable doom, unless he gets someone else to atone for him; and, in the next, he learns from history that man has gradually developed from a lower type, working out his own salvation, and he knows from experience that there are good qualities in the worst, and bad in the best men, and that everybody has to face his own guilt, suffer for his own transgressions, and bear his own responsibility, and that no personal sin can be atoned for by another. At one time he is told that maladies are the result of the possession of devils, at another that they arise through natural causes. In one lesson he is brought to believe that witchcraft is a crime to be punished by death; in another, that it does not exist. One day he is taught to rely on prayer; another, to help himself. One day that killing is a crime; another, that he who will not risk his life to exterminate the heathen, in order to convert them, is kindling the wrath of God.

Is it a wonder, then, that reason is impeded, the intellect stifled, and judgment perverted? Is it a wonder that passion is fostered, that superstition and bigotry flourish, and that the instincts are sustained? The time thus spent is wasted, and so is the longer time which is required to unlearn these pernicious errors. When we consider that these precious years—the years that should be utilised to give the child a foundation for a lifetime—are thus lost, never to return, and that the energy which should be given in the service of mankind is thus swallowed up in the quibbling of theological controversy, we must admit that it is a scandal and a disgrace, and it is enough to raise the indignation of any right-minded philanthropist. Stealing money is a crime, but thieving time and energy from the weak and unprotected child is the most abominable theft of all; and I would fling back into the teeth of those who are responsible for this state of affairs the saying: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

But I look forward to a time when this sort of thing shall have ceased; when the Unknowable shall be left out of the field of education till the child has a mind of its own to judge for him or herself; when he or she is able to sift the chaff from the wheat and discern the truth from falsehood; when the little minds shall no longer be tortured by the fear of hell, and charged with the impossible task of uniting the incompatible; and when the time of learning shall be wholly devoted to the sphere of the realm of science. Then, and not till then, will spring up a noble race to bless humanity, which has long enough been held in bondage by the cursed and baneful influence of religious strife and tyranny, and to establish a paradise upon earth, which has too long been the scene of all the horrors of a hideous hell. Then, and not till then, shall bigotry, tyranny, and irrational brute-passion subside, and Reason, with her train of noble servants, reign supreme.

J. K. MAGGARD.

Obituary.

OUR London friends will hear with regret of the death of Mrs. Mary Hartmann, wife of the much-respected Vice-President, Mr. S. Hartmann. It was my painful duty to conduct the last offices for the deceased at the Crematorium, at Brookwood, on Sunday last. The sad event was accentuated by the fact that Mr. Hartmann was away in Germany, just recovering from a severe illness after undergoing operations for an internal complaint; and he was prevented, by distance, from arriving home until a few hours after his wife's death. Several friends were present from the Camberwell Branch who, after the cremation, visited the ground where the ashes are to be buried, which is immediately behind the grave of Mr. Bradlaugh. This spot is becoming quite a "Freethinkers' corner." One inscription on a very old lady simply says: "She led a good life without hope of reward or fear of punishment." In the name of the whole of the Executive and of the many members who know our good friend Hartmann, I tender our sympathy and respect to him and the only daughter in their bereavement.—ROBERT FORDER.

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BOOK CHAT.

A Life's Experience is a good title for a treatise on Hydraulics and many other matters, by James Emerson, of Willimansett, Massachusetts, who, besides much pertaining to his business of testing water wheels, has some plain speaking directed against law, doctors, and priestcraft.

* * *

The Essentials of Logic, by Bernard Bosanquet (Macmillan & Co.), consists of ten lectures given under the Oxford University Extension system. Beyond the technical instructions on the art of judgment and inference, some sound advice is given; for instance, the following: "Determine always to know the truth; welcome all information and all suggestion; but remember that truth is always systematic, and that every judgment, when you scrutinise it, demands a fuller and fuller connection with the structure of life. It is not cleverness or learning that makes the philosopher; it is a certain spirit, openness of mind, thoroughness of work, and hatred of superficiality."

* * *

It is a reproach to European histories of philosophies that hitherto they have overlooked the profound systems of thought long current in the East, and which ages ago anticipated nearly all that the Germans have advanced in a transcendental direction. This reproach Dr. Paul Deussen removes in his *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*. Professor Deussen begins by discussing Indian philosophy, with which he is thoroughly at home, before proceeding to that of Greece, that of the Bible, that of the Middle Ages, and Modern Philosophy.

* * *

Perhaps, when the Germans find that transcendentalism has been tried and found wanting in India, they may fall back on practical experience. Some sign of this may be seen in the publication of *Immanente Philosophie*, by Max Kauffmann. The immanent philosophy is a German form of Positivism, discarding ontology and all metaphysical hypotheses, and concerning itself alone with the demonstrable and real.

* * *

Dr. Allan Menzies has issued through Murray a sketch of primitive religious beliefs and practices, and of the origin of the Great Systems, under the bold title of *A History of Religion*. It goes somewhat on the lines of C. P. Tiele's work, and gives a useful list of authorities.

* * *

Joseph Jacobs, noticing in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* Dr. James Drummond's Hibbert Lecture on "Christianity in its Most Intelligible Forms," says: "The Christian scheme is Individualistic in tendency; the Jewish was largely Socialistic. The primary care of the Christian is his own soul; that of the Jew, his own nation."

* * *

Mr. Jacobs says, further: "The ideal personality of a mystic Christ is the real differentia of Christianity from other religions. A real personality, like the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels [?], could not be made into an ideal for all humanity. He himself was conditioned by the historic circumstances of his time, and those who would follow him would be limited to his authentic acts and utterances. But in the ideal figure of the Christ, as created by Paul and John, each generation of men could read their own ideals, and have done so. The historic problem of Christianity is to trace how this purely ideal figure of Christ became attached to the name and life of the Jewish peasant of Galilee."

* * *

Thomas Paine in a New Light is an address by M. M. Mangasarian, who is a lecturer of the Chicago Society for Ethical Culture. The new light is not at all new to Freethinkers, nor on the whole do we think it a very true one. M. Mangasarian, like some other Ethical Culturists, seems very fastidious, and objects to pioneer work that it was not done in kid gloves.

* * *

When Did Paul Live? by "Scholasticus," is another American pamphlet, sent us by Mr. L. Levine, to whose courtesy we are indebted for many American papers. "Scholasticus" argues that, as Josephus knew nothing of Paul or other Apostles, the story of the *Jewish Life of Christ* may be incorrect, and Paul antedate the Christian era.

* * *

Dr. Hamburger, the head Rabbi in Berlin, has put out a book entitled *Jesus of Nazareth*. His object is to exonerate his race from the charge of crucifying Christ. He urges that the power was in the hands of the Romans, and that he was put to death as a political agitator. That the people of Jerusalem received Jesus with joy was sufficient to rouse the Romans, who were wont to crucify the Jews by hundreds and thousands if they removed the votive tablets and statues of the emperors.

Dr. Hamburger contends that Jesus could only have been put to death by the Jews as a blasphemer, if he had cursed Jehovah, and such a charge or any could only be heard by a full Sanhedrim, and in the day time. Moreover, the verdict could not be given until three full days had passed. All this is inconsistent with the gospel story of the trial of Jesus by night, with grave Jewish judges spitting upon him, and the execution early the next morning.

THE CRIMES OF CLERGYMEN.

A CORRESPONDENT takes us to task for giving so much prominence to the shortcomings of the clergy, which he characterises as a waste of valuable space and of no earthly importance to the furtherance of the principles of Freethought. It is quite true that we have not hesitated to place before our readers the delinquencies of this class of people; and for all we can see to the contrary it is in the line of our work to continue to do so.

It is not that we are disposed to rejoice over the evil conduct of our fellow-men, or that we have any taste for the recital of their dishonorable doings, that we open our columns to such news. This class of men occupy an entirely erroneous position in the eyes of the community. They are held in places of esteem and trust, irrespective of their individual merits, and solely on account of their profession; and it is because of this fact that we deem it our duty to expose their crimes whenever and wherever they are committed, so that the public may the more quickly realise the lack of moral force which there is in religion, and the danger lurking in the mawkish sentiments which surround the sacerdotal class with a false halo of purity and honor.

When the public learns that it is not the profession of faith which makes the man; when it truly realises that he with the high choker and the ministerial air may be, nevertheless, a villain, and is the more to be watched on that account; when Christian wives have the courage of one bright young lady dwelling not a hundred miles from this city, who told one of these pious hypocrites on the occasion of his second or third visit that, if he intended to call again, she would prefer to have him come in the evening when her husband would be at home, then may we be amenable to our correspondent's criticism; but then there will be little to criticise, as we shall have little to report.

The *Investigator* believes that there is nothing higher than a pure moral character, and that nothing is more conducive to this ideal attainment than honest, legitimate, and self-respecting employment. This clergymen lack, as their profession is one of ease, affording opportunities and temptations for wrong-doing, to which the man engaged in daily labor is not subjected. The calling is one of an immoral tendency, and should be painted in its true colors, so that honest men and women may know the wolf even when he is disguised in sheep's clothing. For these reasons we shall continue to expose the crimes of the clergy as one of the highest duties which we owe to society.

—*Boston Investigator.*

Utilising the Bible.

The saloon-keepers are supplying themselves with mottoes to hang in their bar-rooms, with choice quotations from the Holy Bible, to stimulate the tippling habit. Here are specimens:—

"Give . . . . wine unto those that be of heavy heart; let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Proverbs xxxi. 6, 7).

"Thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after . . . . for wine or for strong drink" (Deut. xiv. 26).

"Drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy work" (Ecclesiastes xi. 7).

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities" (1 Timothy v. 23).

What other book can equal the Bible in contributions to encourage the drinking element?

It was just at the portal of a church as the congregation were coming out. Two nice-looking young men were leaving, breathing grand sentiments of piety and sound theology regarding the sermon they had just listened to. One of them slipped on a piece of ice, and his arms and legs flew around in eight or ten different directions at once. As soon as he recovered his equilibrium, he ripped out: "J. C. (not John Collins), a little more and I'd have gone to h— sure." Then a deep and dark-blue silence fell on all the place.

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MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam :—

June 16, Edinburgh ; 23, Manchester ; 24, Derby ; 25, Nottingham ; 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street Branch (lecture held at West Pelton Co-operative Hall at 6.30) ; 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne ; 14, Bristol ; 16 and 17, Plymouth ; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth ; 18, Leicester ; 25, Liverpool.

Special Note.—Through an error Mr. Putnam has July 28 at liberty. Any Branch requiring that date should write to Mr. Watts at once.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

BALLAD OF THE BOLTED BONES.

Miss Sarah Adeliza Jones,
A ritualistic maid devout,
Possessed a box of holy bones
She couldn't get along without.

Full many a finger that, for alms,
Cash down, had erst absolved and blessed ;
Full many a toe whose saintly charms
Devotion's pious lips had pressed.

Ascetic was the maiden's bent,
And in her self-devotion vast,
Vicariously keeping Lent,
She set her poodle dog to fast,

And bade him live on cold, raw hope,
The inner dog to mortify.
Ah ! maid devout, 'twas rash to ope
The relic-chest when he was by !

In vain the blow—the warning tones—
For ere she bolted down the lid
The dog had bolted down the bones,
And bolted down the street and hid.

Current Christian Creeds.

From the fable of Eden to the imagination of the last trumpet, the whole story of the Divine order of the world is dislocated and deformed. The blight of birth-sin, with its involuntary perdition ; the scheme of expiatory redemption, with its vicarious salvation ; the incarnation, with its low postulates of the relations between God and man, and its unworkable doctrine of two natures in one person ; the official transmission of grace through material elements in the keeping of a consecrated corporation ; the second coming of Christ to summon the dead, and part the sheep from the goats at the general judgment, are all the growth of a mythical literature, or Messianic dreams, or Pharisaic theology, or sacramental superstition, or popular apotheosis. And so nearly do these vain imaginations pre-occupy the creeds that not a moral or spiritual element finds entrance there except "the forgiveness of sins." To consecrate and diffuse, under the name of Christianity, a theory of the world's economy thus made up of illusions from obsolete stages of civilisation, immense resources, material and moral, are expended, with effect no less deplorable in the province of religion than would be, in that of science, hierarchies and missions for propagating the Ptolemaic astronomy, and inculcating the rules of necromancy and exorcism.—*Rev. James Martineau, "The Seat of Authority in Religion," p. 650.*

At a recent Salvation Army meeting it was announced that a "tea-meeting" would be held on the following week. A printed circular gave the day and hour of the meeting, and concluded : "Salvation is free, but not the tea."

The minister having finished his talk about the song of creation, and intending to make a climax, turned towards an open window, and, with an appropriate gesture, exclaimed : "Let us pause a moment, and listen to the song of praise that nature is sending up, at this moment, to the throne of the Creator." Everybody listened ; but just then an old ass outside of the church rent the air with its "!!!!!!"!

I HAVE SEEN DEATH !

In my strength I denied God ; his wisdom, his goodness, I scorned.

In my weakness still I denied him ; nor learned I any new thing.

Vaunted believers : "Death's coming will bring thee discernment."

I have seen death, but not the wisdom of God.

Vaunted believers : "Death's coming will bring thee discernment."

I have seen death, but not the goodness of God.

Vaunted believers : "Death's coming will bring thee discernment."

I have seen death, but still I know not God.

Yea, I have seen the blackness of Sheol and feared not.

I have felt the chill of death and was unafraid.

I have lain in the stillness of night with death and darkness.

Alone have I lain near death, with peace at my heart.

I looked into dread Sheol, and Sheol is *Nothingness.*

To the grave went I and listened, and all was still.

Deep darkness is there, and silence unbreakable.

The quiet of night, immutable, possesses the grave.

Harry H.

Dressing a Saint.

Pearson's Weekly (May 11) has an account of a visit to a Saint Manufactory in Paris, which is known as *Paradis*, for they turn out thousands of saints for all parts of the world in plaster, stucco, pasteboard, wood, and metal. The head of the establishment said : "Do you see that great shapeless mass of wood ? We are going to make a Saint Rose of Lima out of it. In the face, tinted in a manner which you would look upon as glaring, but which is demanded by the natives of the country, we will insert two enamelled eyes. We will place a wig upon her head, and then dress her in all kinds of rich materials. The red velvet mantle, studded with gold embroidery, which will cover her shoulders, will cost £90. The robe caught in at the waist by a paste girdle will come up to £36, and add to that £15 to £20 extra for the linen under-garments."

"What ! under-garments ?'

"Why, certainly. This Virgin has underclothing exactly the same as a flesh-and-blood woman. She has a whole trousseau of chemises and chemisettes, and a wardrobe of white skirts, which will be used in profusion on feast days to give amplitude to her dress. Her stockings are of pink silk, and she has some black silk ones also. Her feet will be encased in satin shoes."

PROFANE JOKES.

"I don't like Willie," said one youngster of another. "Why not ?' he was asked. "'Cause every night he goes and blabs everything to God."

Dr. Litany, on the way home from Easter service, remarked : "Ah, Miss Van der Mode, Easter-tide is truly a joyous occasion." "Yes, one does feel so happy in new clothes."

An old chief gave his experience of Indian agents this way : "S'pose agent heap bad man, heap swear, steal half Injun blanket, Injun flour ; s'pose agent lovum Jesus, steal all."

A Tennessee Methodist class leader had before him a six months' probationer, whom he was questioning for admission to all the privileges of the Church.

"Well, Sambo," said the class leader, "I hope you are prepared to live a Christian life in accordance with your profession. Have you stolen any chickens during the last six months ?'

"No, sah ! I done stole no chickens."

"Have you stolen any turkeys or pigs ?'

Sambo looked grieved. "No, sah !"

"I am very glad to hear this good report," continued the class leader, "and I trust you will continue to live an honest, Christian life."

After church Sambo hurried home with his wife, who had overheard the catechising. When they were fairly out of everybody's hearing, he drew a long breath of relief and turned a self-approving glance to his better half. "Golly," he said, in a half-cautious whisper, "ef he'd er said ducks I'd be'n a lost niggah, suah."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Mrs. Besant's New Views of Christianity."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 9, dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, St. John, "Are Acquired Characters Inherited?"

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Edmund Burke and Law."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Miss Vallance, "Future Rewards and Punishments."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Fall of Man."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, St. John, "Christianity and Progress."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, R. Forder, "Religion and Progress."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, A. G. Hertzfeld, "The Real and the Ideal Jesus." Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones, "Social Aspects of Christianity."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, C. Durrant, "The Resurrection"; 3.15, "Heaven and Hell."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Lucretius Keen, "Can we Follow Jesus?" Thursday, at 8.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Can we Follow Jesus?" 3.30, "Prophecy." Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "Bible Comedy and Tragedy."

KILBURN (High-road): 7, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why we do Not Believe in Christianity."

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Gospel Fairy Tales."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Antidotes to Superstition."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Fairy Tales from the Bible."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. Heaford, "Holy Faldes."

TOTTENHAM (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones, "Social Aspects of Christianity."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, S. R. Thompson will lecture; 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture. (Collections in aid of Hospital Sunday Fund.)

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Civilisation"; 7, W. J. Ramsey, "God so Loved the World." Thursday, at 8, Robert Forder, "The Gospels: By Whom and When Written?"

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, C. Doeg, "Christianity and Paganism Compared." Adjourned annual meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, E. Marx Aveling, "The Materialistic Conception of History"; 3, "Child Labor"; 6.30, "Religion and Morality."

NOTTINGHAM (Woodland Hall, Upper Parliament-street): 7, Business meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Ernest Evans, "Immortality from a Biological Point of View"; 7, "The High Infantile Death-rate, and How to Prevent it." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH: 1.15, brakes leave North Shields for picnic at Holywell Dene.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Grave, Old Pelton): 7, a lecture.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "Religion and Morality"; 7, "A Trinity of Infidels."

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, J. Kenst, "Is Christianity True?"

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

MIDDLESBRO' (Market-Place): Thursday, at 7, C. Cohen, "The Existence of God." Friday, "Christianity and Morality."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, C. Cohen will lecture.

STOCKTON (Market Cross): Monday, at 7, C. Cohen, "Christianity: Can it Last?" Tuesday, "Christ as a Teacher." Wednesday, "The Meaning of Secularism."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 16, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 17 to 21, Stockton-on-Tees; 23, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 27, Wood Green; 30, m. Victoria Park, a. Regent's Park, e. West Ham.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—June 16, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 20, Hammersmith; 23, m. Victoria Park; 26, Hyde Park; 30, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 16, m. Mile End; 23, m. Wood Green, e. Tottenham; 30, m. Clerkenwell, a. Finsbury Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—June 23, Chatham. July 17, m. Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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MRS. BESANT'S NEW GOD.

NINE months ago, in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*, Mr. Gladstone wrote an article on the Atonement, with special reference to views expressed in Mrs. Besant's *Autobiography*. Mrs. Besant was abroad at the time, and she says that reply was impossible. But now that she has returned to England, and settled (as she thinks) the Judge difficulty, she answers the Grand Old Man in the pages of the same magazine.

Mr. Gladstone is no fool; on the contrary, he is a shrewd dialectician, with a keen eye for an opponent's weak points. Accordingly he touched Mrs. Besant on a very sore spot. He pointed out that, although her changes had been frequent, and even startling, she was always cocksure that she was right. Recognition that she had been misled brought with it no modesty or diffidence. Every time she changed she had the utmost confidence in her new opinions being the panacea for the ills of humanity. Mrs. Besant "dismisses" what she is pleased to call Mr. Gladstone's badinage; remarking, by the way, that he has himself been subject to "vast and numerous changes" in his political career. This is true enough, in one sense; but Mr. Gladstone's changes bear little relation to those of Mrs. Besant. *His* changes have been *practical*, while *hers* have been *speculative*. And his changes have all been in one direction, from Toryism to Radicalism; while her changes have been in several, and sometimes in opposite, directions.

Mrs. Besant does not even discuss the Christian doctrine of Atonement, though she plainly rejects it as connected with "a merely historical event"—that is, with the Passion of Jesus Christ. Instead of defending herself—or rather her old criticism of the orthodox doctrine of Atonement—she prefers to submit to the thoughtful public a new conception that "may to some prove suggestive and helpful." Well, we have read what she has to say, but we have not found it *helpful*, though we have found it *suggestive*. It suggests to us that Mrs. Besant is bent on playing Theosophy for all it is worth, and that in doing so she is leaning more and more towards "advanced" Christianity. There are prophets who declare that Mrs. Besant's intellectual career will be a parabola, and that she will ultimately return to the point where she first started. Others even predict that she will become a Catholic. But they forget that the Catholic Church offers women only suffering and silence.

In presenting her conception of atonement to the "thoughtful public," Mrs. Besant starts out hand in hand with Mr. Gladstone. They agree for once, and when they do agree their unanimity is wonderful. This is what the lady writes:—

> "I need not here argue the question of the Divine Existence, whence is our world; for Mr. Gladstone as Christian, and I as Theosophist, can agree that our world and our universe result from the Will and Thought of the Logos, who was and is 'God.'"

Mrs. Besant, then, has a God. When she first put the case for Theosophy before Freethinkers, whom she now leaves to their abject destiny, she kept "God" very much in the background; in fact, she said she had no personal deity whatever. We smiled at the time, not because we thought Mrs. Besant was deceiving, but because we were struck by her surprising innocence. We felt sure that the personal deity would soon make his appearance; and here at length he is, with his attributes as well as his name dignified with capital letters. And having accepted the "God" of Theism, there is no reason why Mrs. Besant should not go to the utmost lengths of orthodox Christianity. Why strain at gnats after swallowing a camel? Nothing is hard to believe when you once have faith enough to accept the doctrine that the universe we know, with all the life of this world as it stands in the light of evolution, was planned by a wise and good Creator. If we believed that God slays people wholesale by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, famine, and disease, we should certainly find it easy enough to believe that he ordered the massacre of the Canaanites. Yes, Bishop Butler was right. If you believe in a God of Nature, you are illogically scrupulous in rejecting the God of the Bible.

Having put her "God" in evidence, Mrs. Besant goes on to explain how he began business, at least with respect to the "universe," which she seems to confine within the bounds of human knowledge.

> "If the world be the work of the Logos, and the law of the world's progress in the whole and the parts is sacrifice, then the Law of Sacrifice must point to something in the very nature of the Logos; it must have its root in the Divine Nature itself. A little further thought shows us that if there is to be a world, a universe at all, this can only be by the One Existence conditioning Itself, and thus making manifestation possible, and that the very Logos is the Self-limited God; limited to become manifest, manifested to bring a universe into being; such self-limitation and manifestation can only be a supreme act of sacrifice, and what wonder that on every hand the world should show its birth-mark, and that the Law of Sacrifice should be the law of being, the law of the derived lives. Further, it is an act of sacrifice in order that individuals may come into existence to share the Divine bliss."

Mrs. Besant no doubt thinks she understands this metaphysical jargon. When she was an Atheist she laughed it to scorn, and pointed out that such phrases were unthinkable, and therefore unmeaning. Now she gravely asserts what she formerly derided. But she does not explain her assertions. She does not tell us what is the One Existence—whether it is the one of which (say) a pig or an idiot is a mode. She does not tell us how the Unconditioned could ever become Conditioned, or what it was conditioned by, or how an infinite being could possibly limit himself, or why he sacrificed himself for what he could achieve without any sacrifice. Could it be a sacrifice at all to create beings to share his bliss? Is not that the very height of enjoyment? Do parents sacrifice themselves when they bring children into the world? Do they not enrich their own lives by opening up fresh sources of happiness? It appears to us that Mrs. Besant's "God" is a thoroughly irrational conception. But all theology is at bottom irrational, Mrs. Besant's is no exception; it simply conforms to the universal rule.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

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OUR SUN-GOD.*

THE connection of Christianity with ancient sun-worship was elucidated exactly a century ago by Charles François Dupuis in his great work, entitled *Origine de tous les Cultes* (Origin of all Religion). This monument of the erudition of unbelief, as the work of Dupuis has been termed, is certainly out of date, so far as finding a universal explanation of religion in solar worship is concerned. Man is, after all, ever nearest to man. In his own needs, hopes, and fears, in his dreams and in his immediate surroundings, may be found the explanation of his faiths. As a time-measurer, the moon was for a long period yet more important than the sun, and Bastholm mentions tribes who worship the moon without worshipping the sun, though there are few, if any, who worship the sun without worshipping the moon. Yet must the sun in all parts of the world have attracted the curiosity and excited the admiration of early man. With its departure came cold and darkness, and the danger which attended darkness; with its return light, warmth, activity, and joy. He observed how nature blossomed with the strength of the sun and withered at its decline. His conclusion, that the Lord of the sky controlled the destinies of earth, was a natural one. The very essence of the old Egyptian faith was the assimilation of the worshipper to Osiris, and the belief that, as the sun rose and set and rose again, so man might live on through the darkness of the grave.

Max Müller remarks: "If ethnological researches prove anything, they prove that *Heliolatry*, not of course in the sense of a worship paid to a ball of fire, but as a recognition of the supernatural character of the sun as the source of light, warmth, and life, is the most widely-spread form of early faith, meeting us at the Equator as well as near the Pole, among the Indians of the West as well as among the Indians of the East, and therefore not so entirely strange, as classical scholars imagine, when it greets us again and again from behind the thin veil of Greek and Roman mythology." When it is understood that Daphne is a name of the dawn, as Phœbus of the morning sun, the story of the maiden flying from the embraces of the god becomes intelligible.

Can such traces be found in Christianity? Most assuredly they can. The Gospel miracles are all solar in character. The supernatural birth, in midwinter, heralded by a star, the adoration of shepherds and sages, the wonder-working of the god, his cruel death and glorious resurrection, are all features attributed to the sun and vegetation gods of antiquity. The late Mr. R. A. Proctor, in a paper on "The Beginning of Christianity," in *Knowledge* (January, 1887), remarked: "Because the sun brings light it has been taught that the sun-god causes the blind to see; because the sun restores winter's dead to life, the sun-god raises the dead; because the sun restores sickly and diseased vegetation to health, the sun-god heals the sick; because the sun turns the waters which fall on the earth into the rich juice of the vine, the sun-god turns water into wine; because the sun causes the seeds which fall on the earth to bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and even a hundred-fold, therefore the sun-god feeds the world richly out of little; because the sun kills feeble vegetation, the sun-god blasts the barren tree; because the sun rises above the sea-horizon, the sun-god walks upon the water; and because the sun reappears after the darkness of storm, the sun-god stills the tempest."

The principal festivals of the Christian Church are astronomical and regulated by the sun and moon. In the very name Sunday we preserve the central object of worship. Easter celebrates the crossing over the vernal equinox and the resurrection of nature from the power of winter and of death, the bursting of the leaf from the apparently lifeless branch. Whitsuntide represents the fuller outpouring of the divine spirit in bud and blossom; Christmas the reawaking of the new light, the dawn of the longer day. In the old pictures of Christ with a halo of glory, surrounded by his twelve apostles, and distributing the sun-fruits bread and wine, we are forcibly reminded of Apollo surrounded by the signs of the zodiac; and in the orientation of churches we may see another survival of the solar cult.

I have before now pointed to the important passage in a letter of the emperor Hadrian, not so often quoted as the questionable testimony of Tacitus, and with much more appearance of being genuine, in which the great emperor, having visited Egypt, expressly states that the Christians were worshippers of Serapis, a development of the sun-god, and that their chief priests were known as bishops of Christ. The worship of Mithras, another sun-god, was at the same time widely spread, and probably contributed many items towards the amalgam of Paganism and Judaism found in Christianity.

Mr. Parsons, in the little book before me, dwells on these items. He points to the evidence of the early Fathers, who declared that Christianity was no new thing, but, as St. Augustine said, existed in ancient times. St. Jerome says (in Amos vi. 14): "In our mysteries we first renounce him that is in the West, who dies to us with our sins; and, turning about to the East, we make a covenant with the Sun of Righteousness and promise to be his servants." Mr. Parsons devotes several chapters to showing that the ancient Jewish deity, Malachi's "Sun of Righteousness," was also of solar character. He alludes to his descent in fire, the symbology of the bull, and the serpent of brass, as confirmatory of his theory. His book, while perhaps making somewhat too much of this, contains much matter of interest to students of that great eye-opener, comparative mythology. J. M. WHEELER.

* *Our Sun-god; or, Christianity before Christ*; by John Denhan Parsons. Published by the Author, 7 Crawshay-road, London, S.W.

DID CHRIST WORK MIRACLES?

(Concluded from page 375.)

IN endeavoring to ascertain if the miracles ascribed to Christ are consistent with his alleged "divine" character, it must be remembered that acts performed by or through the dictation of an all-wise and good God should be in harmony with utility, justice, and wisdom. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that, whatever miraculous works Christ performed, the power to perform them was, according to St. John, given to him by his father. "I can of my own self do nothing. . . . . I seek not mine own will, but the will of the father who sent me. . . . . For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will" (John v. 30; vi. 38). Thus, if it can be shown that certain miracles which are credited to Christ are not in accordance with wisdom, utility, or justice, the performance of them was no evidence of supernatural power. Let us see what are the facts of the case according to the "inspired" records.

It is stated in Mark (v. 2–13) that one man had "an unclean spirit," which meant that he was possessed with a host of devils; but Matthew, in relating the same circumstance, states there were two persons in this unfortunate position (viii. 28). Both statements are made upon the authority of "God's word," so it will be difficult to say which is right. Jesus, we are told, drove the devils from their human habitation; their departure, we should think, was sufficient to "play up" with the strongest constitution. Of course there could be no objection to relieving the man, or men, of the Satanic imps. But what followed? Instead of destroying the tormentors when they were outside the man or men, Jesus allowed the devils to enter "about two thousand" swine, all of which "ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were choked." This was a great injustice to the owner of the pigs, and a reckless waste of food. This miracle reflects no credit upon Jesus. We fully endorse Professor Huxley's words when he said, referring to this incident: "Everything that I know of law and justice convinces me that the wanton destruction of other people's property is a misdemeanor of evil example" (*Nineteenth Century*, February, 1889).

The case of Jesus cursing the fig-tree is an instance of wild passion and injustice. Matthew says Christ went to lodge in Bethany, and in the morning, returning into the city, he hungered; when, seeing a fig-tree afar off, he went to it, "if haply he might find anything thereon"; but when he came to it he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs, observes Mark, was not yet. If Christ had been a wise man, not to mention his being God, he ought to have known the state of the tree before starting to ascertain. Then Jesus said unto the tree, "Let no fruit grow on thee

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henceforth for ever," and presently the fig-tree withered away. Is this an indication of divinity? If so, cultivated humanity is vastly superior. St. Augustine suggests, in one of his sermons, that it would have been better had Jesus, instead of cursing the fig-tree, caused it immediately to bring forth the desired fruit by the word of his mouth. Certainly it would have given a hungry man more satisfaction than the sight of a barren tree, besides exhibiting a greater display of "divine" power.

The miracle of turning water into wine, as related in John (c. ii.), was, to say the least, indiscreet and useless. Where is the moral lesson to be derived from this miracle? Has it tended to promote sobriety? Has it not rather afforded a pretence to weak-minded persons for them to indulge in that which, when immoderately used, "steals away the brains"? When Christ beheld his friends and relatives drinking freely, it would have been of more practical value to posterity if, instead of providing them with more wine for their use, he had given them a lesson either in moderation or abstinence. Evidently Christ did not believe with the writer of Proverbs (xx. 1) that "wine is a mocker." If he did, he ought to have known that it was wrong to provide temptation for his disciples. There are many members of the "fallen race" now living who, in this particular, are superior to Jesus the "divine."

The account in Matthew (xiv. 15–21) of feeding "about five thousand men, besides women and children," with "five loaves and two fishes," presents some curious features. If the event really occurred, one of two things must have happened: either the stomachs of the people were contracted (for we are told they "were filled"), or the provisions were more than stated. To have satisfied so many individuals, and then to have "twelve baskets full" left, the weight of the loaves and the size of the fish must have been extraordinary indeed. There is also to be considered the difficulty of dividing five loaves and two fishes into sufficient parts, to enable each one to have even a taste, to say nothing about all of them being "filled," and there being "baskets full" of fragments remaining after the repast. What a capital thing it would be if a similar event could take place to-day; and what a useful lesson it would have been if Christ had told the world how the thing was done. If professed Christians really believe what their master said, why do they not try to emulate him in such good works? He has told them (John xiv. 12–14): "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the father may be glorified in the son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." The fact is, no true believers can be found in this sceptical age, or else they are too indolent to ask "anything" in Christ's name. If this is not so, let them appeal to Jesus for power to do "greater works" than he did, and in time we shall learn the result. May it not be truthfully said to the vast majority of churchgoers to-day, "O, ye of little faith"?

The greatest miracle mentioned in the New Testament is the alleged resurrection of Christ; but, as we have fully dealt in a pamphlet with this subject, only a brief reference to it here is necessary. To substantiate such an improbable event as the alleged resurrection of Jesus, the evidence adduced to support it should be exceedingly clear, and above suspicion of fraud or imposture. This is not the case in reference to the allegation that Christ rose from the dead. While it is frequently affirmed in the Gospels that Jesus was seen after he was crucified, no one directly states that he himself beheld Christ in the flesh. Moreover, even those persons to whom it is supposed Christ appeared failed on those occasions to recognise him. Matthew (xxviii. 17) states that when he appeared to the eleven in Galilee some of them "doubted"; Luke says (xxiv. 16) that the two disciples with whom it is related Christ had a conversation did not know their Master; and, according to John (xx. 15), Mary Magdalene herself failed to recognise him. Where did Christ meet his disciples? According to Matthew (xxviii. 16, 17), by appointment at a mountain in Galilee; whereas Luke asserts (xxiv. 36) that it was at Jerusalem, where the eleven were gathered together, and whence, after he had partaken of fish and honeycomb, Christ was carried up into heaven. It is true against this supposition we read that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians xv. 50). Besides these slight difficulties, we are at a loss to know who the "eleven gathered at Jerusalem" were. Thomas, says St. John, was not present. Judas had hung himself, and Matthias was not chosen till after the Ascension.

The testimony of St. Paul is anything but satisfactory. His belief in the Resurrection was based upon faith and tradition, not upon knowledge and investigation (Galatians i. 11, 12; 1 Corinthians xv. 3). Moreover, his belief in the then speedy end of the world has proved to be wrong, which shows that he was by no means to be explicitly relied upon in his statements; while his reasoning in favor of the doctrine, as contained in 1 Corinthians xv., is fallacious in the extreme, opposed as it is to experience and the facts of science. St. Paul says: "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." But this seeing of Jesus occurred in a vision; and what is a vision? The word is used in the New Testament to convey the impression of something otherwise imperceptible to human eyesight being rendered visible by the exercise of supernatural power or influence. It is differentiated from a dream, in so far as the latter is only a mental concept, or series of conceptions, engendered in a state of semi-somnolency—or, to put it plainly, in a state "between sleeping and waking."

These visions are not objective realities, but the result of impaired imagination. Recent experiments by psychologists show that persons in a certain mental condition frequently think they see and hear things which have no actual existence. The habit among scientists is, when they come in contact with any extraordinary event, to investigate the matter with a view of discovering its why and wherefore. It is far more reasonable to seek for a natural cause of phenomena than to attribute them to supernatural sources. The one is within human experience and observation, while the other, if it exist, is outside both. Those who have studied the human mind will probably have been struck with the fact that some of the greatest intellects in all ages have been influenced by the prevailing opinions of their time. This will somewhat explain why eminent writers have so rarely attacked the superstition of their own nation. Accordingly, few popular writers in this country deal with Christianity as they do with other religions. Simply because the prevailing opinion here is that the Christian faith is more sacred than any other, and to treat it lightly, or to criticise it too severely, would be offensive to Mrs. Grundy. Attacks upon the religion of other nations are applauded; but the home article must be let alone, or handled very tenderly.

Miracles are still believed in, and professed to be worked, by the Catholic Church; but Protestants denounce them as frauds, although there is quite as much evidence of their reality as there is of those ascribed to Christ. Dr. Middleton, in his *Free Inquiry*, speaking of miraculous events, writes thus: "If either part be infirm, their credit must sink in proportion; and if the facts be especially incredible, they must of course fall to the ground, because no force of testimony can alter the nature of things." If we apply this rule to the miracles of the New Testament, the unbiased reader will readily see that all the noise made about their truth is "sound and fury, signifying nothing." Certainly the following is most incredible: that a man was born without a human father; that Lazarus should come from the grave "bound hand and foot with grave clothes," after he was dead and decomposition had set in; that saints, who had been dead and confined in their graves, should rise and go into the city; that Christ did not work miracles in consequence of the unbelief of the people; that if the miracles really took place, his disciples would have lacked faith in his power; and that Jesus should be performing a miracle at Cana of Galilee while he was in the wilderness of Judea. These stories cannot be believed except at the sacrifice of reason and common sense, and, therefore, we reject them.

CHARLES WATTS.

If God could exist without a cause, then the universe could also. If you can imagine a God who existed without the world from eternity, then you can much easier imagine a world that existed from eternity without God. If I once assume that the universe, this great organism of suns and stars, could have arisen from nothing, then verily there is also nothing to prevent me from crediting that it arose without the assistance of a God.—*Karl Heinzen.*

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BIBLE FICTIONS.

IV.—The History of Joseph.

The Bible "history" of the mythical patriarch Joseph thus commences: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his other children, *because he was the son of his old age*; and he made him a coat of many colors" (Genesis xxxvii. 3). This statement reads like the commencement of a fairy tale, and is, in fact, of the same character. If Jacob loved Joseph better than his other sons, it was *not* because he was the son of his old age. According to Genesis xxix. 20, xxx. 26, and xxxi. 41, all Jacob's sons, with the exception of Benjamin, were born during his second term of seven years' service with Laban. Zebulon was born in the same year as Joseph; Asher and Issachar were only one year older, and Reuben the eldest was but six years his senior. Yet the inspired writer represents Joseph as little more than a lad, and the other ten sons of Jacob as men of mature years.

We are next told by this veracious historian that Joseph had two dreams, which foreshadowed his occupying, at some future time, such a high position that all the members of his family should "do obeisance" to him. On relating to his father and brothers the second of these dreams—one in which the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down before him—Jacob is represented as saying: "Shall I *and thy mother*, and thy brethren, indeed, come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (xxxvii. 10).

Now, it is evident from the words italicised that Jacob believed his wife Rachel (Joseph's mother) to be then living with him, and it is equally evident that the writer intended this to be understood; the moon in the dream symbolised Rachel. But, according to Genesis xxxv. 19, Jacob's favorite wife had long been dead. Thus we read: "And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath . . . . and Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave," etc. The inspired writer, when fabricating the story of the dreams, had forgotten this circumstance. The matter is not of much importance, but it serves at least to indicate that we are dealing with fiction, not history. Of course, if the story of the dreams, and of Joseph being the favorite of his father "because he was the son of his old age," be fictitious, that of the jealousy and hatred of his brothers, which caused them to put him in a pit and afterwards to sell him, may be set down as of the same character; one is represented as the result of the other.

Jacob's sons, we are told, sold their brother to a company of *Ishmaelites*, who carried him down to Egypt (xxxvii. 25–28). These *Midianites* sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers (xxxvii. 36), and Potiphar bought him "of the hand of the *Ishmaelites* which had brought him down thither" (xxxix. 1). To this there is nothing to be said, except that the Ishmaelites were not Midianites. In the house of Potiphar Joseph was advanced to a position of trust. Though but a youth, and without the smallest experience in business matters, his new master "made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had." Here an event occurred which renders his name proverbial. Being "comely and well-favored," his master's wife conceived a violent passion for him, and made certain overtures which, as a virtuous youth, he rejected with abhorrence. In revenge, the lady falsely accused him to her husband, and Joseph was cast into prison. Here, however, "the Lord was with him," and gave him power to foresee future events. Having correctly interpreted the dreams of a butler and a baker, he was subsequently released to interpret a dream of Pharaoh's, which having satisfactorily accomplished, he was made ruler "over all the land of Egypt." In this exalted position his brothers, several years later, came and bowed themselves down before him, as prefigured in his dreams.

So runs the story; but the presence of one word in it suffices to prove it a fabrication. After the rejection of her proposals to Joseph, Potiphar's wife calls the men of her house and tells them that her husband "hath brought in *an Hebrew* unto us to mock us; he came in unto me," etc. (xxxix. 14). Later, when accusing Joseph to his master, she says: "The *Hebrew* servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me," etc. (xxxix. 17). Again, Pharaoh's butler, when speaking of Joseph to the king, says: "And there was there a young man, *an Hebrew*, servant of the captain of the guard," etc. (xli. 12).

Now, these several statements imply that Joseph was of the Hebrew *nation*. The expression, "an Englishman" or "an English servant," presupposes the existence of an English nation, and could not be employed before such a nation had arisen. So the term, "a Hebrew," or "a Hebrew servant," clearly implies that the Israelites were at that time a separate people. The name is employed, too, as if the nation to which Joseph belonged was well known to every Egyptian. Potiphar's wife had heard of this nation; her servants had also heard of it; Potiphar had a knowledge of it; the butler knew of its existence; so did Pharaoh. Yet, it is scarcely necessary to say, there was no nation called "Hebrews" at that time. Jacob and his sons, who were unknown to the Egyptians, were the only persons in existence who might, perhaps, be designated "Hebrews"; but they had never called themselves by that name.

We have, however, a further proof of fabrication. The inspired writer represents Joseph as saying to Pharaoh's butler: "For *indeed* I was stolen away out of *the land of the Hebrews*," etc. (xl. 15). From this statement we can form a just estimate of the Bible word, "indeed." There was no "land of the Hebrews" in Joseph's time; there was no land of the Hebrews even in the time of Moses, who is said to have been the writer of the story. We know, also, from the Egyptian monuments, that down to the time of Rameses III. Palestine was called "the land of the Amorites" and "the land of the Hittites." The latter name further appears in Assyrian inscriptions several hundred years later.

We read in Genesis xiv. 14 that Abraham, after defeating four kings, "pursued them *unto Dan*," and again in Deuteronomy xxxiv. 1 that God showed Moses "all the land of Gilead, *unto Dan*." There was, however, no place of that name until long after Moses' time (Judges xviii. 29). A reconciliation is in this case attempted by ascribing the employment of the word "Dan" to a later writer or copyist, who is said to have inserted the name by which the city was known in his own day. But an explanation of this nature, assuming it to be satisfactory in the incident relating to Dan, cannot be applied to the matter under consideration. In the latter we have to do, not with the writer's own words (as in speaking of a place as "Dan"), but with the utterances of the chief characters in the story. If these be false—as they undoubtedly are—it must be waste of time examining the veritable "history" of Joseph further. It must not be forgotten, too, that "Joseph," like his reputed father, "Jacob," was the name of a Canaanitish deity, worshipped in Palestine as early as 1600 B.C. The fact is in itself a proof that the Bible stories of these two patriarchs are fictitious.

There remains to be noticed an Egyptian work of fiction, called *The Tale of the Two Brothers*, composed by a scribe named Enna, about 1400 B.C. This story is thought by some to have suggested to the sacred writer the incident of Potiphar's wife. Upon this point, however, I have some doubts. According to this narrative, a man, named Anpu, working one day in the fields with his younger brother, Bata, sent the latter to his house to fetch some "seed-corn." "And the younger brother found the wife of his elder brother occupied in braiding her hair." Having loaded himself with corn, he was about to leave the house, when "she rose up and laid hold of him and said to him, Come, let us enjoy an hour's rest. . . . . And he spoke to her and said, O woman, thou hast been to me like a mother, and thy husband like a father, for he is older than I, so that he might have been my parent. Why hast thou spoken to me of so great a sin?" In the evening, upon her husband's return, the lady accused the younger brother, saying: "When he came to take seed-corn for thee, he found me sitting alone, and he said to me, Come, let us make merry an hour and rest. Let down thy hair. . . . . And he used force with me, that I might not make a report to thee. Now, if thou allowest him to live, I will kill myself." Believing this tale, Anpu caught up a knife and went in search of his younger brother; but the latter, having been warned of his danger by the cows (whose language he understood), escaped. Later the elder brother learned the truth, whereupon he cut his wife in pieces, and gave her remains to the dogs.

The younger brother, after this, lived in a hut under a cedar tree, and received from the gods a most beautiful wife. The latter, after a time, left him to live with the king, who married her. Bata then transformed himself

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into an Apis bull, and afterwards into a tree. Lastly, he was born as the son of his former wife, and when he grew up became king of Egypt. VERITAS.

A CHANGE OF HEART.

THERE are two ways of influencing people to change their opinions. One is by an appeal to their reason, and the other by an appeal to their emotions. Upon all questions except that of religion, everybody concedes that the first is not only the best, but the only sensible and proper way; and Liberals make no exception in the matter of religion.

With them, when any proposition is offered for their acceptance, the only question is, Is it true? and the only way of settling that question is by reasoning upon the evidence for and against the truth of the proposition. If the evidence is strong enough to convince their minds of its truth, they believe in it. If it falls short of convincing evidence, then they reject it.

Christians, on the other hand, while recognising the validity of the rule of the supremacy of reason upon all other questions, ignore it entirely when they come to the matter of religion, and, through the influence of early teaching, shut off their reasoning faculties, and, giving way to emotional feelings, profess a belief in propositions that their reason would condemn as foolish and absurd, if they would but allow it to have any weight in the matter. It is for this reason that the clergy strive so hard to influence the young before their reasoning faculties are developed, well knowing that, if they can once bring these immature minds within the influence of the Church, it will be next to impossible for them to break away from it.

For this reason creeds and confessions of faith are constituted, most of them containing much that has no foundation in common sense or scripture, but which must be accepted through the fundamental principle of all religious faith. That is, suppress your reason and believe all we tell you, no matter what the evidence is; no matter if all nature and science cry aloud to your brains that it is absurd and impossible, believe it all by faith—another name for credulity.

> Open your mouth and shut your eyes,
> And I'll give you something to make you wise,

is the old couplet by which school children used to fool the simple ones; and revival methods are but the counterpart of the same trick to fool the simple ones who trust in the promise; but there the analogy ends; for while the little child—by the exercise of his reason—finds out that he has been tricked by the nauseous dose that has been put into his mouth, the convert is made to believe that he or she has received the Holy Ghost, or something equivalent, and through life, by faith, continues to cultivate the delusion.

Under mesmeric conditions, or hypnotism, the victim may be made to believe the worst tasting things to be delicacies, and smack his lips as if they were good. So, by the same influence, the revival preacher, by suggestions, makes the convert believe that he or she has experienced a change of heart, and thus secured his or her salvation from the never-ending torments of hell-fire.

But what is this change of heart? The heart is but a muscle, and in no way the seat of sensation or feeling. It may be changed by ossification or fatty degeneration, but such changes signify nothing but disease, and in no way influence the opinions or character of the person who owns them. The phrase, "change of heart," was invented by ignorant men, who knew nothing of physiology, or any other science; who thought the heart was the seat of the soul, the centre of feeling, and the controller of character; but we now know that that function belongs to the brain alone, and that the heart is the least sensitive of all the organs of the body, and has less to do with the formation of the character, or manifestation of feeling, than any other. But supposing, for the sake of argument, that a change of heart means all that Christians claim for it; what is the benefit of it? and how does it influence the character and conduct of the person who has experienced it? Do they not have the same impulses and tendencies that they had before? It is true that for a time, while under the influence of religious excitement, they may fancy that they are changed, and one mental excitement overlays and draws all others; but nature re-asserts itself, and the victim finds that he or she is just what nature made them.

Look at the ministers, who must be supposed to have all experienced the change of heart; are they not human, and subject to the temptations of "the world, the flesh, and the Devil"? Yes; and is it not proved by the records of our courts that there are more clergymen in our penitentiaries than there are of Infidels, ten to one?

Women, from their more sensitive nervous organisation, unhygienic dress and habits, and superficial education, are, in nine cases out of ten, the victims of this delusion of a change of heart, especially those of immature age, just emerging from girlhood into maturity, when they are most sensitive to nervous and emotional excitement. The revival preacher paints in vivid colors the flames of hell and the never-ending torments of those who do not experience a change of heart. All reasoning power is smothered in the deluge of emotional excitement, and the one dominant passion, for the time being, is fear, overwhelming fear. The condition of the victim is analagous to that of the delirium of fever, or the extravaganza of nightmare. It is like the hot period of fever, and, like that, is succeeded by a period of exhaustion, when the victim sinks into a semi-trance, and imagines that the work of God in her heart is complete, and that that insensible muscle has been changed. It is like the breaking of a wild horse. The will has given way under the tremendous strain of feeling, and she resigns herself to a power that she feels to be uncontrollable. Henceforth she is the docile instrument of the church and minister, and helps to decoy other immature victims into the same trap.

But in what respect has she been changed by this mythical change of heart? If she was kind and good before, she will still be kind and good. If she was irritable, malicious, and quarrelsome before, the same character will be observed after the so-called change. In one particular, however, she is changed, immeasurably for the worse. She now dares not think—that is, she dares not question the truth of the tenets of her Church, or venture into any investigation of them. To her faith has interdicted any exercise of reason upon those subjects, and denounced damnation for her if she attempts to find out whether they are true or not. There is one chamber in her mind that she is forbidden to enter—the noblest and best of all the gifts of nature, the one that constitutes man the highest of all organised beings—the faculty of reason.

Like the fatal closet in the castle of Bluebeard, any attempt to discover what the faculty of reason has to say about religion is the unpardonable sin. Bluebeard is the great "I am," the mythical God of all religion, and his murdered victims were the martyred Freethinkers who had curiosity enough to look for the truth, without regard to consequences. Freethought is the genius that shall come in due time to kill this old Bluebeard of the sky, and prevent the further sacrifice of seekers after truth.

The doctrine of a change of heart—like a great many other doctrines of the Church—derives no sanction from the Bible. Jesus never taught it, nor did any of his disciples or apostles. The only place where anything like it is mentioned in the holy book is found in the story of Nebuchadnezzar being turned out to grass. God there says (Daniel iv. 16): "Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given to him, and let seven times pass over him."

This is all that "the blessed Book" has to say about a change of heart, and this is the only case of such a change in all history. Such a case affords but little support for the modern notion of a change of heart through revival methods; but it is a fact that the revival change seems often to change the disposition to that of a beast, as it did Nebuchadnezzar's. That is, it banishes the victim's reasoning power, and leaves him or her to the operation and direction of the purely animal part of his nature; and, when such a change takes place, the proper place for the victim would seem to be, to be turned out to grass among the beasts, as was the King of Babylon in the story; or, better still, to be sent to a lunatic asylum, where scientific treatment might restore the patient to the use of reason.

Now, what is the remedy for this disease—for disease it is—of faith? It is a disease that paralyses the intellect, and interdicts the use of the only faculty that enables us to judge of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood.

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As I have before shown, there is no such thing as a change of heart. From the nature of the human race the change must mean nothing but a change of mind; and such a change implies the right to change it again whenever we find that our former opinion is not true.

The brain is the organ of the mind, and its action results in what we call intellect. To the intellect, then, we must appeal to settle the truth or falseness of any opinions we have formed, hastily, under the pressure of over-excited emotion. It is the duty of everyone to hold the mind open at all times to the reception of truth; and that we may be enabled to recognise the truth, we must welcome all evidence that is convincing, whether it comes from a "Thus saith the Lord" or the speculations of men. Do this, and you shall find that peace of mind that passeth all the fabled joys of a paradise among the clouds.

—*Independent Pulpit.* J. P. RICHARDSON.

UP FOR JUDGMENT.

BY A. SCALLYWAG.

ST. PETER stood guard at the golden gate,
With solemn mein and an air sedate,
When up to the top of the golden stair
A man and a woman, ascending there,
Applied for admission. They came and stood
Before St. Peter, so great and good,
In hope the City of Peace to win,
And asked St. Peter to let them in.
The woman was tall, and lank, and thin,
With a scraggly beardlet upon her chin.
The man was short, and thick, and stout;
His stomach was built so it rounded out.
His face was pleasant, and all the while
He wore a kindly and genial smile.
The choirs in the distance the echoes woke,
And the man kept still while the woman spoke.
"Oh, thou who guardest the gate," said she,
"We come hither, beseeching thee
To let us enter the Heavenly Land,
And play our harps with the Angel Band.
Of me, St. Peter, there is no doubt;
There's nothing from Heaven to bar *me* out.
I've been to the meeting three times a week,
And almost always I'd rise to speak.
I've told the sinners about the day
When they'd repent of their evil way;
I've told my neighbors—I've told them all—
'Bout Adam and Eve, and the Primal Fall.
I've shown 'em what they'd have to do
If they pass in with the chosen few.
I've marked their path of duty clear—
Laid out the plan of their whole career.
I've talked and talked to 'em loud and long,
For my lungs are good, and my voice is strong;
So, good St. Peter, you'll clearly see
The gate of Heaven is open for *me*.
But my old man, I regret to say,
Hasn't walked in exactly the narrow way;
He smokes and he swears, and grave faults he's got,
And I don't know whether he'll pass or not.
He would never pray with an earnest vim,
Or go to revival, or join in a hymn;
So I had to leave him in sorrow there,
While I, with the chosen, united in prayer.
He ate what the pantry chose to afford,
While I, in my purity, sang to the Lord.
And if cucumbers were all he got,
It's a chance whether he merited *them* or not.
But oh, St. Peter, I love him so;
To the pleasures of Heaven *please* let him go!
I've done enough—a saint *I've* been.
Won't *that* atone? Can't you let him in?
By my grim Gospel, I know 'tis so,
That the unrepentant must fry below.
But isn't there *some* way you can see
That he may enter who's dear to me?
It's a *narrow* Gospel by which I pray,
But the chosen expect to find *some* way
Of coaxing, or fooling, or bribing you
So that *their* relations can amble through.
And say, St. Peter, it seems to me
This gate isn't kept as it ought to be.
You ought to stand right by the opening there,
And never sit down in that easy chair.
And say, St. Peter, my sight is dimmed,
But I don't like the way your whiskers are trimmed:
They're cut too wide, and outward toss;
They'd look better narrow, cut straight across.
Well, we must be going, our crown to win;
So open, St. Peter, and we'll pass in."
St. Peter sat quiet, and stroked his staff,
But, in spite of his office, he had to laugh;
Then said, with a fiery gleam in his eye:
"Who's tending this gateway—you or I?"
And then he arose in his stature tall,
And pressed a button upon the wall,
And said to the imp who answered the bell,
"Escort this female around to Hell!"
The man stood still as a piece of stone—
Stood sadly, gloomily, there alone.
A long-life settled idea he had
That his wife was good and he was bad.
He thought if the woman went down below,
That he would certainly have to go;
That if she went to the regions dim,
There wasn't a ghost of a show for *him*.
Slowly he turned, by habit bent,
To follow wherever the woman went.
St. Peter, standing on duty there,
Observed that the top of his head was bare.
He called the gentleman back, and said:
"Friend, how long have you been wed?"
"Thirty years" (with a weary sigh);
And then he thoughtfully added, "Why?"
St. Peter was silent, with head bent down;
He raised his hand and scratched his crown;
Then, seeming a different thought to take,
Slowly, half to himself, he spake:
"*Thirty years* with that woman there!
No wonder the man hasn't any hair!
Swearing is wicked, smoke's not good;
He smoked and swore: I should think he would!
Thirty years! with that tongue so sharp!
Oh, Angel Gabriel, give him a harp!
A jewelled harp with a golden string.
Good sir, pass in where the angels sing.
Gabriel, give him a seat alone—
One with a cushion—up near the throne.
Call up some angels to play their best;
Let him enjoy the music—*and rest!*
See that on finest Ambrosia he feeds;
He's had about all the hell he needs:
It isn't just hardly the thing to do
To roast him on earth and the future too."
They gave him a harp with golden strings,
A glittering robe and a pair of wings;
And he said, as he entered the realm of day,
"Well, this beats cucumbers, any way."
And so the old Scripture text stands fast:
The last shall be first, and the first shall be last.

ACID DROPS.

THE House of Commons has had a discussion over Oliver Cromwell, and the vote for the expense of a statue of the Great Protector was only carried by a narrow majority. It was no special business of the Irish members, but they rose to the occasion, and called Cromwell a liar, a hypocrite, and a murderer. Many other compliments were passed on the mighty dead, and altogether it was a good thing for a lot of brave members of Parliament that Cromwell was not handy with a company of his Ironsides. The most curious thing in the whole discussion was that nobody appeared to understand that Cromwell was the first great statesman in English history who understood, and as far as possible practised, religious toleration. Cromwell has his imperishable monument already in the history of England.

Since the above paragraph was in type the House has had another debate on this Cromwell statue, and a large majority has refused to honor the greatest of English rulers. Such is the wisdom of our National Palaver! There is some consolation for us in knowing that it was reserved for a Freethinker, Mr. John Morley, to rise above the squabble of parties and do justice to Cromwell, although he was a Christian.

A venerable professor, in moving a resolution at the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland anent the "Armenian Atrocities," wound up by saying that "Britain required to speak out with all her voice, and, if necessary, with all her guns as well." That's the style! Let the Christians keep it up, and we shall have a nice big war in the east of Europe—all for the glory of the Prince of Peace.

Christians can challenge the world in talking nonsense, but when it comes to talking with guns they take the first prize easily.

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Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach," and "Let the women keep silence in the churches;" but some hundred and fifty of them were ready to orate in the churches last week. The sacred ministry, thanks to Paul and the Christian Church, was the last resort of male exclusiveness, and now the New Woman is capturing that.

It is well that women are taking up the cause of Temperance, but there is a danger of their resorting to impossible remedies. We do not believe they will ever *force* men into sobriety. They might *lead* where they cannot *drive*. A woman's smile is ten times more commanding than her frown. When she resorts to compulsion she is playing a game in which she is sure to be worsted.

The women who are orating at the International Temperance meetings in London are all in favor of "prohibition." That is, they want to sail by the north-west passage, to take a short cut to the millennium. Well, there is *no* short cut. It may be sad, but it is nevertheless true; and the lessons of history are, after all, better guides than the unrestrained enthusiasm of lady reformers.

The Temperance ladies had a "special service" last Sunday morning at the City Temple. They were strong on "prohibition," which has nothing very "spiritual" about it. They also talked a lot about "Christ"—a gentleman who turned a large quantity of water into wine at a social party, and drank wine himself at the last meal he ever took before his unfortunate decease.

Miss Belle Kearney, a Mississippi lady, said there were "scores of Christian young women earnestly longing to do something"—which is very creditable to them; only it is a pity they haven't something to do already. She begged them to take part in this work, and wield the dagger of prohibition to slay the monster of drink. Alas! that monster is too tough to be slain in this easy fashion. In the course of time these Christian young women may learn that drunkenness is less a symptom of personal immorality than of social disease. Let the Temperance ladies work ten hours a day in a depressing atmosphere, let them live in one or two rooms in a back street or a filthy slum, let them rest at night where sleep but half refreshes, and they will soon understand the attraction of the public-house. Men will have some excitement, if it is only the excitement of drink; they will have some cheerfulness, if it is only in the gaslight of a bar or taproom.

Miss Kearney spoke of the Temperance agitation as "the most blessed work ever known." Perhaps she will tell us, as a Christian, why Jesus Christ neglected this "most blessed work." Why did he leave it for the "impostor" Mohammed to establish a teetotal religion?

Lady Somerset did not say much about "Christ," but she said a good deal about "God," who is understood to be a near relation. She declared that their efforts would be futile without "a new baptism of the spirit of God." Well, if that is what the Temperance movement is waiting for, its success is not likely to be immediate. Christians seldom take up a good cause until it has made considerable headway, and then they generally spoil it with sectarianism, cant, and sentimentality.

A model newspaper is to be published at Chicago. It will have no Sunday issue, and that of Monday will be set up on Saturday night. It will give no record of crimes. The trouble is that the model people, who call for such a model paper, will go on buying its wicked rivals in order to learn the news.

Public Opinion, of New York, reviewing a book on the Emperor Julian by Miss Alice Gardner, says: "Miss Gardner has made a book which is at once accurate and readable. Some of the traditions about Julian are indeed ruthlessly swept aside as mythical; we note with some regret that the saying, 'Galilean, thou hast conquered,' has gone the way of most other famous death-bed remarks that were never uttered." Why should *Public Opinion*, which is a very ably-conducted paper, regret the exposure of a falsehood promulgated by priests in the interest of their own superstition?

Joseph Canning, who murdered his sweetheart in Bermondsey, has all along expressed his expectation of meeting her in heaven when executed. It is a consoling faith is Christianity.

At Newcastle Police-court Samuel Bryson was remitted to the workhouse as insane. He was charged with creating an obstruction in Brunswick-place by preaching from the Bible. A policeman asked him to desist, but he said he was working for God, and God should be obeyed rather than man. When examined by the doctor he quoted texts, and said that if locked up he would pray till the gates opened and let him out. The doctor said there was no doubt of his insanity, whereby he appears to have meant that he was a genuine believer. If the old prophets and apostles could return, they would stand a good chance of sharing the fate of Samuel.

The man who edits the "Monthly Record of the New Cross and Brockley Young Men's Christian Association" should really be more careful. Under the heading of "Personal" he writes as follows: "Congratulations to our friend, Mr. H. G. Hearn, on his marriage with Miss T. Ward, which has lately been consummated." This is *personal*, with a vengeance.

Rev. Henry George Benjamin Lemoine was found guilty at the Norwich Assizes of defrauding a local tradesman. The man of God said that the "still small voice of conscience" did not accuse him. The Lord Chief Justice remarked that the still small voice of the jury did. Sentence—twelve months' hard labor, afterwards remitted to six.

Another man of God, the Rev. Allen Zechariah Grace, got into trouble at the Bow-street Police-court, London. He was charged with stealing various articles from a restaurant. Prisoner wrote a "beautiful and affecting letter" to the magistrate, who generously remanded him to "see what could be done for him." If something is *done* for him, we hope he will *do* no more restaurants. Losing four children a few years ago is really no excuse for robbery to-day, even if the money is wanted for drink.

The Rev. William Jackson Holmes has been committed for trial by the Faversham magistrates on a charge of stealing a gold watch chain and jewellery from Miss Ellen Partes, whose father entertained him while conducting a Wesleyan Mission. Prisoner had to undergo a month's imprisonment at Manchester before the Faversham police could lay hands on him.

At Ludlow, Mr. John B. Wood Henley, a J.P., was charged with using threatening language to Sir Charles Henry Rouse Boughton, Bart., of Downton Hall. The evidence went to show that the dispute took place after church on the 26th ult. The defendant admitted calling Sir Charles a bully, a coward, and a liar, and said "he thought the words adaptable for the occasion." After a long hearing the Bench dismissed the case, and ordered each party to pay his own costs.

Christian sects go on multiplying. The latest addition is the Link of Love, or the Towel and Basin Circle. This refers to J. C.'s washing his disciples' feet. By-and-by we shall have a Dish and Finger-Fork Circle, with reference to the Last Supper.

The Presbyterian Synod of Tennessee, being anxious to set the Bible up properly, resolved "that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, and if there are any errors in it they do not affect its inspiration." Presently it dawned on them that they had made fools of themselves. How could an *infallible* book contain any *errors*? So the foolish resolution was rescinded.

The Rev. John Morrow, of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, is the leader of what an American paper calls a novel religion, but which, in its main elements, is a very ancient and basic one indeed. He teaches that the work of sanctification should be carried out until shame is dead and men and women appear together in a state of nudity.

The Rev. C. W. Savidge, a rival religionist, has gone to some trouble to examine the female converts of the Rev. J. Morrow. Several ladies said they had heard of it, but did not follow it out, owing, perhaps, to not having attained sufficient holiness. A Mrs. Christenson, however, acknowledged being a follower of the faith of Morrow, having sat in sessions with him. The meetings were always held at the houses of the sisters, sittings having been attended by Mrs. Christenson at her own house, and at that of Mrs. Thomas Grocox, who is also a believer. The husbands of Mrs. Christenson and of Mrs. Grocox offered no objection to the service, but did not participate. Mrs. Christenson explained that Morrow taught that the services of nudity should be held only in private in the homes of the members. In all the instances she knew he was the only man who participated, no others, we suppose, having the necessary sanctification.

Dr. Horton was unkind to a brother clergyman, the late Rev. Mr. Malthus. How absurd, he remarked, was the prediction of Malthus of a time when the progress of population would exceed the growth of the means of subsistence. Dr. Horton has never read Malthus, or is incapable of understanding him.

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We notice that the *Methodist Times* is going to have a special department for "personal Holiness." The first duty of the writers in that part of the paper should be to teach Mr. Price Hughes to tell the truth. If they cannot teach him to do it, they might at least remind him of its necessity.

For some time we have watched the advertising career of a gentleman in the W.C. district of London. When we first noticed his advertisements they were of moderate dimensions. He now takes half a page, and we see his big advertisements in the Christian papers; which is very strange, for he sells a cure for corpulency, and how on earth can the followers of Jesus Christ grow fat? This "corpulency" gentleman gives opinions of the press on his specific, and these opinions have a curious resemblance to each other. Occasionally they are almost word for word. For instance, *Forget-me-Not* says: "It is marvellous how this 'Pasteur' and 'Koch' of English discoverers can actually reduce as much as 14lb. in seven days with a simple herbal remedy." The *Southport Visitor* also says: "It is marvellous how this 'Pasteur' and 'Koch' of English discoverers can actually reduce so much as 14lb. in seven days with a simple herbal remedy." It is positively certain that these two "opinions" were written by the same hand. *Whose* hand it is not very difficult to judge. The curer of corpulency was ill-advised to let these identical expressions of unbiased editorial opinion appear in the same advertisement; but perhaps he thought it did not matter in a journal like the *Methodist Times*.

If a Christian wants to diminish his obesity, he need not try a corpulency-curer's specific. He has only to follow the Bible injunction of "fast and pray."

An American paper says: "A. J. Blackwell, the rich and erratic Indian, who owns the city of Blackwell and David City, in the Indian Territory, has donated $300,000 to build a temple at David City, of peculiar model, for the perpetuation of Indian religion. He says he saw God in a vision, who commanded him to erect the temple. It will be open to all Indians, but not to any other race, and will be furnished with an interior garden, to symbolise the Indians' love for nature." The Red Indian, like the white Christian or olive Jew, sees God in a dream, and leaves no description of his appearance. Probably he is not foolish enough to father another person's child on the strength of a dream, like Joseph.

The *Spectator* of last week, writing on "Herbert Spencer's Agnosticism," deals with his contention, that all our notions of deity are human, in the following manner: "It would be as reasonable to say that, because a child's conceptions must be childish, they cannot be shaped and directed and prepared for future development by the mind of the child's parent or tutor." Surely it is sufficient answer to this that the child has actual experience of his parent or tutor, while man has no such experience of God. When to this is added the fact that all notions of God betray their human origin, vary as men vary, and are of bad genesis, because springing from human animism and fetishism, the reflection follows that all interpretation of the universe in the terms of finite man must be futile and misleading, which, we take it, is Herbert Spencer's position.

Is it true that "Mr. Slater, the wonderful clairvoyant and psychometrist of California," who is now advertised in the Spiritist papers as giving *séances* in London, is identical with the medium Slade who was convicted of fraud and sentenced to imprisonment at Bow-street in 1876?

The spiritist who informed us that Slater was Slade must have been mistaken, and the spirit who told him must have been a Diakka, one of those mischievous, lying spirits from the Lord who so frequently haunt the poor mejums. For J. J. Morse, himself a leading trance mejum, says, in *Light*, that Mr. Slater is, "without doubt, the most wonderful test medium, psychometrist, and psychic that the United States or any other country possesses at the present time"; that he has known this "some ten years"; and that "Mr. Slater's record as a man and a medium is all that can be desired." Now, since Mr. Slade has not only been convicted of fraud, but has more recently been in an asylum for inebriates, clearly he cannot be the same as Mr. Slater. The spirit who suggested their identity must have been of the same species that Jehovah sent to deceive King Ahab.

Light, by the way, for June 15, contains some funny letters. One is from "the leader of the circle" at a certain notorious mejum's performances in the N.W. district. He sends a spirit photograph to the editor. Two signed letters immediately follow, calling the mejum a fraud. One says: "I distinctly noticed that the female spirits all had beards under the chin, corresponding exactly with that worn by the medium. The drapery used to disguise the face failed to disguise this from my eyes."

Sir J. W. Dawson writes to the New York *Science* from Montreal to give his opinion that the four rivers of Eden are the Kherkhat, Karun, Tigris, and Euphrates. The only trouble is that these four rivers are not one, and none of them flow through Ethiopia.

The publisher of a paper that is virulent in its abuse of the *Freethinker* issues a pamphlet on *The High Church Confessional*. Here is a specimen of its chastened language: "There is not a conceivable species of indecency in sexual intercourse which is not particularised in these 'Holy Fathers' as fit matter to pour into the ears of women of every age and degree, married and unmarried. Indeed, so minute, full, and loathsome are the instructions given to these ministers of lust in their intercourse with females that the most abandoned women in the dirtiest brothels of London would blush to read them in connection with the holy name of religion." While this is the way in which one set of religionists write of another set, we may reasonably hope that the days of Christian Reunion are still distant.

Rochefort's paper reports that the clericals are in very bad odor at the commune of Rimogne, an important place in the Ardennes. The clergy have all disappeared, and all ceremonies are conducted civically. Two Sundays ago a priest came by train from Taillette. One of the inhabitants asked him what he wanted, and he replied that he had some one to see. "That may be," was the rejoinder, "but if you are not out of the village in five minutes, the clarion will sound, and you will be conducted to the station by more than a thousand persons." The priest was off in a hurry.

It is reported that two infants, joined together like the Siamese twins, have been born at New York. Devotees of the Design Argument should try to explain this abnormality. Is the Great Designer liable to eccentric moods, or did he arrange these inseparable twins on purpose, so that their parents might earn money by exhibiting them? We might ask some more questions, but we should like to have these answered first.

The Koran forbids the use of alcoholic drinks. The Bible recommends them. How curious it is, then, to open a paper like the *Methodist Times* and to find it full of the Local Veto Bill and the best way to make the people of this country teetotalers. And the joke is that all this zeal in favor of teetotalism is manifested by Christians, and by the very Christians, for the most part, who persist in forcing their bibber's handbook into the hands of children in our public schools. Verily a Christian is a most extraordinary bundle of contradictions.

In deciding a case under the Welsh Sunday Closing Act, the judge declared that the amount of chicanery, prevarication, and perjury resorted to for the purpose of evading the law was demoralising to the country.

The Rev. John Robertson declares that, by his *Ascent of Man*, "Professor Drummond has damned the souls of thousands of young men throughout the country." This is his thanks for seeking to reconcile Evolution with Christianity by means of gush and imagination.

The Committee of the Canadian Senate, appointed to deal with the question of divorce, have resigned because nearly half of the Senate Final Court of Appeal have decided, for religious reasons, to vote against all applications for divorce, without hearing the evidence. The Senate Court consists of thirty-nine Protestants and thirty-two Catholics. All the latter, and some of the High Churchmen of the former, will have no divorce on any account whatever. The action of the committee will probably lead to the beneficial change of having a proper Divorce Court established in Canada, instead of the matter being left to the tribunal of the Senate.

Dr. Prestwich has just published a work on Geology and the Flood. He accepts what the *Christian World* calls "the now generally established view" that the Jewish story of the Flood was borrowed from Babylon. He thinks there was a big flood at the close of the post-glacial period, ten or twelve thousand years ago; and the original fact, in the course of ages, got overlaid with legends; amongst them, of course, being the story of Captain Noah and his wonderful sailing menagerie.

At a prayer-meeting in Brighton, New York, a young man got up and confessed to several forgeries. A few prayer-meetings of that kind seem to be wanted in England.

Dr. Horton, of Hampstead, has been addressing the St. Edmund's Guild—consisting, we believe, of Board School teachers, on "Earthly Joys." This is a subject which the clergy are beginning to take up with considerable zeal. They used to regard this earth as a vale of tears; but a good many of them now regard it as a big music-hall, with a fine variety entertainment, provided free, gratis for nothing by God Almighty.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

June 30, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—June 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London. July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Grosse Wise.—We insert your letter. But why did you assume that the paragraph referred to you? Remember the French proverb—*Qui s'excuse s'accuse.*

A. G. Levett.—Thanks for cuttings.

F. Benay (Plymouth).—Mr. Foote could not possibly pay you another visit in the spring. It was not easy for him to foresee the recent development of affairs in London, with all its worries and anxieties. You may rely upon a visit from Mr. Foote in the autumn, and he will write in a few days offering you a date. With respect to letters, you must remember that Mr. Foote does not keep a secretary, that he has to do everything with his own hands, and that he has more than he can do, though he works seven days a week.

J. M. R. B.—All right, in the special circumstances.

G. Turner (Brighton).—Always glad of good jokes, original or selected.

F. C.—Thanks for cutting. The *Freethinker* tracts are sixpence per hundred.

C. Wright.—The proportion of criminals in India is, among native Christians, 1 in 799; Mohammedans, 1 in 836; Hindoos, 1 in 1361; and Buddhists, 1 in 3,787. You will find an account of Professor Newman and his family in the biographical sketch of C. R. Newman, prefixed to his *Essays in Rationalism.*

J. Grinstead (Bristol) denies that in his lecture at Eastville Park he stated that all Freethinkers were pothouse men. "I never," he states, "said or implied anything so foolish or untrue." We should be sorry to do Mr. Grinstead, or any man, an injustice, and we cheerfully publish his disclaimer. Perhaps our informant will have something to say on this matter.

Rev. C. L. Engström sends us a letter, which we do not insert, as it does not advance the controversy. If he has anything to say in reply to our last week's article, we shall be happy to insert his communication. Small personal matters will not interest our readers. We say this, not out of any disrespect to Mr. Engström, but in the interest of rational discussion.

B. Munton.—The Parson's Hymn, "Money, oh money, thy praises I sing," appeared in the *Freethinker* many years ago, and has been reprinted in our tracts.

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks for cuttings.

The secretary of the Liverpool Branch wishes the workman who spoke to him at Leonard Hall's lecture to communicate, either by letter or personally.

L. Levine (Charleston).—We are much indebted to your constant courtesy.

E. H.—(1) It is for the Theist to define what he means by God before the Atheist undertakes to deny. The Atheist finds he cannot believe in God, as usually defined; but he does not therefore assert a universal negative. (2) The imaginations of a future existence are a prolongation of certain aspects of this one, and no more certify reality than imaginations of fabulous animals. (3) Certainly the Bible can be cited on the side of teetotalism, but the bulk of passages are on the other side. What is there the Bible cannot be cited for?

J. Keast.—Bristol Freethinkers should certainly attend and support you.

Papers Received.—Zoophilist—Animal's Friend—Eastern Daily Press—Yarmouth Mercury—Public Opinion—De Dagsraad—Vegetarian Messenger—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Liberty—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Blue Grass Blade—Literary Digest—Philosophical Journal—Harbinger of Light—Progressive Thinker—Light—Two Worlds—New York Evening Post—Secular Thought—Forget-Me-Not—Crescent——Isle of Man Times—Liberator—Nottingham Argus—Dundee Advertiser—Johannesburg Standard and Diggers' News—Open Court—Berkshire Chronicle—Newcastle Evening Chronicle.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

The Directors of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited) have left the Hall of Science matter in my hands, to do what I find possible in the peculiar circumstances of the case. It appears to me that the crisis ought not to be prolonged a moment more than is necessary, and there are special reasons why midsummer should be a turning point. My appeal for £600 has not yet been adequately responded to. Donations, applications for shares, and conditional promises, only amount to about £450. Surely it should be possible to make up the required sum during the next few days. If not, I must let the matter drop, for this is the last appeal I can make upon the present basis. I hope it is distinctly understood that all the money sent in any way in response to this appeal will be returned to donors and applicants if the project is not carried to a successful issue. I pledge myself personally to the fulfilment of this promise.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

There was a good audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Mrs. Besant's New Views of Christianity." This evening (June 23) Mr. Charles Watts occupies the platform, and Mr. Foote will take the chair. As the occasion may be a very important one, we hope there will be a large attendance.

Mr. Putnam continued to have "a fine time" after leaving Glasgow. He had two good houses at Aberdeen, and the next day he went with a party of local "saints" to Balmoral, Mar, and Braemar. He describes it as "a magnificent trip."

The annual excursion of the London Secular Federation will take place on July 14. Clacton-on-Sea will be the place visited, per G.E. Railway. Tickets (3s. each) can be obtained from the local secretaries, from Miss Brown, 22 Pembridge Villas, Notting-hill-gate, or Mr. Forder at 28 Stonecutter-street. As the time is short, we hope this announcement will be spread widely and tickets circulated speedily. A special committee is appointed to look after details, and will probably arrange for a general tea, similar to the one provided last year at Margate. Messrs. Foote and Watts intend to join the excursion, and other well-known Londoners will no doubt be present. We want to see a good gathering at Clacton, and as the committee are reported to be powerful in prayer, there is a prospect of glorious weather for the outing.

The annual excursion of the West London Branch will take place on Sunday, June 23, by the steam launch "Countess," to Walton-on-Thames. Light refreshments can be obtained on board, and a string band has been engaged to enliven the journey. The launch leaves Hammersmith Pier at 9.30 a.m., and the tickets are 3s. for adults and 1s. 6d. for children, return. As the number of tickets is limited, and a large demand is anticipated, application for them should be made at once to the Branch secretary, F. Todd, 59 Tunis-road, Shepherds Bush, W.

The Bradford Branch has started an open-air campaign in the market-place, James-street.

A two nights' debate will take place on July 1 and 2 at the Temperance Hall, Leeds-road, Bradford, between the Rev. A. J. Waldron and Mr. John Grange. The subject for discussion is, "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better System for Man?"

The Battersea Branch has a brake excursion to Riddlesdown next Sunday, June 30. Adults' fares 2s. 6d., children 1s. 3d. A free tea and other refreshments will be given to the children, according to donations received. Tickets can be had at the hall, or at outdoor meetings on Sunday morning and evening. All seats must be booked to-day, Sunday, June 23.

The Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Fund acknowledge the receipt of £36 11s. 9d. collected by Miss Emmeline Robins and friends of the Finsbury Park Branch of the National Secular Society. This is an increase of £6 upon the amount collected last year.

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Mr. Keast informs us that after his lecture in Eastville Park, Bristol, he, with his wife and little children and Mrs. Bracey, were attacked by a mob of the C. E. Society savages, and but for the prompt and brave action of the park-keepers would have been fit for the Christians' hospital. This is what Freethinkers have had everywhere to put up with in opening new ground in the open air, but by dint of tact and perseverance they overcome, and in several of our London parks the C.E.S. people now sing very small indeed. Bristol Freethinkers should unite to support Mr. Keast in his arduous task.

It has been decided that the annual outing of the Liverpool Branch shall be held this year on July 14, when it proposes fraternising with the Manchester Branch at Chester. Those who intend to take part are requested to give in their names as early as possible, in any case not later than the 30th of this month, in order that proper arrangements may be made.

The *Liverpool Daily Post* of June 15 devoted a leader to the career of the Emperor Julian, generally nicknamed "the apostate." It concedes that Julian foresaw in the triumph of Christianity, as it then was, the extinction of Hellenic culture and Roman discipline, to be inevitably followed by the Dark Ages.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie's contributions to the *Freethinker* are appreciated in many quarters. The *Boston Investigator*, of May 25, gives his recent poem on Noah's Ark the first place in its columns.

Mr. J. A. Richardson's article on "Wonders in Gozo" is reprinted from our columns into the *Liberator*, of Melbourne.

Mr. Edward Clodd is about to put out a book on the story of "Joseph the Dreamer"—not the Joseph who dreamt he was to marry Mary, but the one dealt with in our columns by "Veritas." No doubt he will deal with the Egyptian Analogue in the Tale of Two Brothers; but, as the book is intended for children, the incident of Mrs. Potiphar will probably be lightly glided over.

The grave of Thomas Paine at New Rochelle was visited on Decoration Day by a crowd of Freethinkers. Dr. E. B. Foote, junr., presided, an ode to Paine by G. E. Macdonald was sung, and addresses were delivered by T. B. Wakeman, Henry Rowley, Henry Frank, and others. A subscription was opened for a bronze bust of Paine to decorate the Paine homestead.

Ingersoll is making a wide and deep impression on the public in America. This is shown by the criticism of the men of God. The more ignorant are everywhere denouncing him, while the enlightened, like the Rev. J. T. Sunderland, in the *Non-Sectarian*, confess that, "as an argument to show that the Bible is not a supernatural, perfect, and infallible revelation from God, Mr. Ingersoll's lecture is unanswerable." Of course Mr. Sunderland finds Ingersoll's view of the Bible inadequate, but he admits that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, that the Song of Solomon was almost certainly not written by Solomon, and that we do not know the author of Job, or Ecclesiastes, or Esther.

Mr. Sunderland says of Ingersoll: "He is entirely justified in saying that Genesis contradicts science. The story of the Flood is unhistoric. There never has been a universal flood. The story of the Tower of Babel, and of such an origin of the different languages of the world as is there represented, science declares to be myth, and not fact." What is this but admitting that the Christian Church has all along been in the wrong, and that, consequently, no wise God has had anything to do with it?

Signor Bovio's "St. Paul" caused great excitement on the occasion of its first performance at Naples. The local "Catholic Society" begged the Prime Minister to prohibit the performance "so as not to risk offending the Catholic sentiment of the immense majority of the citizens." A deputation also waited upon the Prefect, and asked him at the last moment to stop "this atrocious offence and serious insult to the religious sentiment of all Neapolitans." The authorities, however, felt unable to interfere. In the evening, says the *Daily News* correspondent, the theatre was crowded with students and professors, eager to do honor to Bovio and liberty of thought.

The *Blue Grass Blade*, of Kentucky, June 2, has a remarkably good article on Christianity by Miss May Collins, a Kentucky young lady, born May 1, 1876. She quotes Mill, Gibbon, Mosheim, Lecky, and Buckle, and comes to the conclusion that "if a man named Jesus really lived and spoke his thoughts, the most likely thing is that he was a monk in the College of Alexandria," and that the Christian Church has been the greatest enemy of her sex. Mr. Moore, the editor of the *Blade*, challenges all the clergy of Kentucky to meet this nineteen-year-old infidel girl in written debate.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

EXTRACTS FROM HIS FIRST LETTER.

With banners floating, the "City of Berlin" neared its goal from across the waters, with its wondrous freight of human hopes and joys. Intently I watched the surging multitude along the wharf to discover the stalwart Watts, for without his genial face I should be a pilgrim and a stranger indeed. He was on hand, and by his side George W. Foote; and we waved a greeting from deck and shore. After some tedious preliminaries of landing, unloading, and examining baggage, etc., we finally made out to shake hands in true English and Yankee fashion. We were soon in the railroad coach, which seemed small compared to our ponderous American cars, but it was elegant and comfortable, and we had a compartment all to ourselves, which was certainly advantageous, for we could talk to our hearts' content, as if at our own firesides. It didn't take long to become acquainted with our noble comrade, George W. Foote, who is as open as the day, and greets you with the frankness and politeness of a man of the world. The journey of ninety miles to London was a delightful one. A fresh May day it was. The golden buttercups mingled with the green grass in wide fields. The trees were in blossom. The farmer was ploughing, and villages and cities gleamed upon the view. Soon we were in the heart of London, and I was as hungry as a bear, for it was about 3 p.m., and I had not eaten since the morning on board. There is nothing like a good square meal to spice the journey and to keep your footing on this solid earth, for really I was in such a sort of ecstatic, dreamy state of mind that I felt I could almost be disembodied and not know it. I was in London; just think of it. London! the marvellous city of the world, where you are "in the swim" of the wonder and joy of the universe. In London, without doubt, the red heart of humanity sweeps its swiftest, grandest tides. Well, we had a long and joyous dinner. It was an intellectual repast along with delightful material things. Foote is an excellent caterer. He is not a dreamy philosopher. With his intellectual vitality he has a keen comprehension of the reality of life, and is a wise and witty cosmopolitan.

After dinner Watts takes me to his own home on Effra-road, Brixton. Through what a bewildering maze we pass as the great omnibus rolls along. Over the Thames, with its crowded bosom sparkling beneath you; by the great parks and hundreds of gardens, miles and miles we go, and yet the multitude does not seem to diminish. The streets are full, the shops are shining with all manner of goods, and business is evidently driving. However, Effra-road, which stretches from the Brixton thoroughfare, is almost as quiet as a country lane. It is simply beautiful in the bloom of May, grass and flowers in front of every dwelling, and here and there almost a forest of trees. In this lovely and entrancing scenery glows the fireside of our Freethought friend, Charles Watts, known in both worlds for his able and brilliant labors. What a hospitable welcome I had! Mrs. Charles Watts will never be forgotten by her many American friends. . . . . What a joyous evening I had on Effra-road, where the murmur of mighty London is scarcely heard, though the great city heaves and tosses and thunders only a block away. I could scarcely realise that Watts and I, who had battled together on the frontier of the New World, were now again together in the heart of old England, thousands of miles from the scenes of our former companionship.

The next day, Saturday, I was busy writing a multitude of letters, and getting off my "News and Notes" for the *Truthseeker*, until noon. Then the hansom cab is ordered, and Watts and I take a long drive to Euston station, where he is to take the cars for Glasgow. For a week he is to lecture and debate in Scotland. We meet Mr. Foote at the station, and bid good-bye to Watts at 2 p.m.; and then Mr. Foote takes me to his own home for dinner. In going thither I catch a glimpse of the walls and towers of Holloway prison, where for twelve months Mr. Foote was incarcerated—the martyr of liberty—maintaining with unflinching courage the rights of a free press. . . . .

There are four pretty children, bright as jewels, and sparkling with health and happiness. Mrs. Foote is entirely congenial with her husband. After dinner we go aloft to the top story, where is the study and splendid library of my host. What an array of books he has, worth their weight in gold! What stores of wisdom, out of which are forged the thunderbolts of Freethought, and the "Acid Drops" and "Sugar Plums" that burn and sparkle in the pages of the *Freethinker*. What a memory and a promise in these hoarded treasures, the new ever flashing from the old at the magic touch of genius.

After a smoke and wide intellectual discursiveness among books, we take a trip to the Zoological Gardens. This is a very interesting place. We pass through beautiful scenery, and we witness all sorts of curious and wonderful things, dim suggestions of man himself in a vast variety of animal life. . . . .

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From the "Zoo" we walked through Regent's Park—a magnificent park, vast in extent, with great sweeps of green and masses of forest. At times the city is lost in the stretches of foliage, and you can easily imagine that you are with shepherds and their flocks in some Arcadia far away from the "madding crowd."

From Regent's Park, on top of the tremendous omnibus, looking over all creation, as if from a moving tower, we thunder and rattle to our destination, and Saturday night spreads its moonlight splendors over the scene, and dreamland follows anon. . . . .

Sunday evening sparkled along, and with it one of the great occasions of my life. For the first time I was to address an audience of English Freethinkers. I trembled in anticipation of it—it meant so much. England and America were to shake hands, and I hoped there might be nothing to mar the glory of the union. And there was nothing. When I reached the Hall of Science there was a great crowd in front; and by half-past seven o'clock every seat was occupied, and people were standing. I guess there were about 1,400 present, for that is, I understand, the capacity of the hall. I like an English audience. They know how to cheer. They do it with a vim, a cordiality, a thunderousness which is truly enlivening. A man who can't talk after such a cheer as they give must be somewhat like a man who has no music in his soul. It is like martial music, this glorious welcome—when we enter the hall—when President Foote arises to address the people—when the representative of American Freethought is introduced—when the names of Bradlaugh, Foote, and Watts are mentioned—when the brief and cheery message of Ingersoll is read—when the magic words, Thomas Paine, are uttered, and when finally the speaker closes. It was, I must say, a magnificent occasion and a grand success, and with all my heart I thank Foote and Watts and other English friends for their generous, beautiful, inspiring welcome. The thrill of comradeship from England to America is indeed jubilant and far-reaching, and will make the labors of the future more glorious throughout the world.

I like George W. Foote. He is a born leader. He has a penetrating and independent judgment. He has clear insight. He understands the situation. He comprehends Freethought. There are no clouds or mists in his intellectual horizon. He has breadth as well as concentration and energy. He is an all-round man, level-headed, brave, determined, uncompromising, yet intellectually charitable; far-seeing, for he beholds in the principle the inevitable result; and therefore he is never swung off his balance. He does not fall into side issues. He keeps straight on to the goal. He is the man of the hour, and the movement in England is broadening and deepening and strengthening through his wise conduct.

America knows Watts, vigorous and splendid, and still in the prime of his powers. Fortunate it is that we have such men as Watts and Foote to lead forward the great Freethought enterprise in England. They are admirably adapted for co-operation; masterful in their way, and winning the confidence, support, and affection of the Freethought army all along the line. Amidst a thousand difficulties and disappointments, this great army is moving on. Robert Forder, Arthur B. Moss, and others, whose names I shall hereafter mention in connection with more full details of this great movement, are enthusiastic and talented co-laborers and standard-bearers, constantly pushing onward the banners of our hope, fearless and advancing at every point of the mighty conflict.

I do believe that Ingersoll would have an audience of 20,000 people the first night he spoke in London. The English people do love and admire him; and no man in the wide world would secure such a welcome as he. Everybody inquires, "When is Ingersoll coming?" It is in the air that America must contribute its noblest flower of genius to the struggling hosts of freedom in other lands.

Monday morning I find the office of Charles Watts the younger, who, as publisher, is doing a splendid work for Freethought, for culture and advancement, for science and literature. . . . .

I ventured into the wonderful Cathedral of St. Paul's—a sublime structure, indeed; gloomy, however, as a grave. A choral service was going on as we entered. The music was beautiful, but the prayers between were execrable, and the preaching—well, when it came to that dull stuff, we retreated. In such a place as St. Paul's there should be only music. That only can accord with the glory and vastness of its architecture.

So far as I can judge, London is the most beautiful city in the world. It is not simply immense, a huge bee-hive, a whirl of business, a rush of millions of people, a rattle and thunder of thousands of vehicles; it is a city of gardens, of flowers and grass and trees, entirely in contrast with Chicago, Boston, New York, or any other city that I know of. No other city can boast of so many and such large parks as London; and besides the parks there are innumerable gardens in front and rear of the houses on almost every street. Every Londoner wants a garden, and he will scarcely rent a house without a garden. There is, therefore, a charming mingling of country life with this great city. There are many quiet nooks where you are embowered with green foliage and flowers of all hue; and in the busiest streets verdant spaces flash upon the view. Wherever there is a chance to put a tree, there a tree grows. At this season of the year, with the glorious sunshine of May flooding all, the views are simply enchanting. The sweetness and beauty of nature greet you amidst the art and splendor of man's achievement. Along with the thousands of gardens and hundreds of parks and squares, there is the Thames river, with its ever-changing magnificent water views, its bridges, its boats, its ships and barges, the vast and splendid architecture on either side—historic buildings, towers and domes, far as the eye can reach.

I like the great omnibuses. How they roll along crowded with passengers on top. There is where I like to get. It is something of a climb, but you feel quite elated when you sit down twenty feet in air and go bowling along as if you were riding a comet. What sights are presented as you dash through the surges of London life!

The hansom cabs are fine, too—easy and cheap. There are thousands of them, and they glide merrily along like gondolas on a river. No matter in what part of the city you may be, these cabs are always at hand.

They keep the streets clean here. Boys and men are all the time at work with shovels, "dust-pans," etc. If a particle of dirt accumulates, it is instantly brushed away. The streets are like a floor.

The rush of traffic is enormous. Oftentimes, at a crossing, a long array of vehicles awaits the passage of another array. The police, by a simple motion of the arm, regulate the passage. There is no talk or dispute. Now one procession moves on, and then the other. You have to take a good look when you cross the street, and then make a dash. Every day in London you would think that nobody was at home, and that everybody was on the go. It is like an everlasting festival day. It beats New Jerusalem all to pieces. Nobody would want to go to heaven so long as he could stay in London and see the sights. The angel Gabriel might blow his trumpet, and it would not disturb a single soul. They are used to all sorts of noises here. Even the resurrection would not be a very surprising affair in such a cosmopolitan place as London. SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

—*Truthseeker.*

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

June 23, Manchester; 24, Derby; 25, Nottingham; 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street Branch (lecture held at West Pelton Co-operative Hall at 6.30); 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Special Note.—Through an error Mr. Putnam has July 28 at liberty. Any Branch requiring that date should write to Mr. Watts at once.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Is Man a Religious Animal?

We do not share the idea that "man is by nature a religious animal," or that we have "a religious sense" that must be accommodated at the expense of the truth. Man is no more a religious animal than he is a whiskey-drinking animal. A little child possesses neither the fear of God nor the thirst for liquor, and but for certain environments would neither pray to God nor drink whiskey. He learns from association and example to do both. The most that can be admitted is that the habit of praying through a long series of generations has, by heredity, implanted in us some susceptibility to superstition, by means of which association, example, and persuasion may the more easily develop in our minds the religious sentiment.—*J. D. Shaw.*

It was on a Sunday afternoon, and the little boy had just come home from church. Seating himself in the chimney corner, he burst out crying, and would not eat his dinner. "What are you crying for, my boy?" asked his father. "The minister's text was, 'Ye must be born again,' and I am afraid that I shall be a gall next time," replied the precocious youngster.

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SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—IX.

JAMES WATSON.

THE subject of my present sketch was one of those quiet, unassuming, unobtrusive workers, whose services to the good old cause are too little known, but, where known, should be highly appreciated. Born of poor parents in an obscure town, Malton, in Yorkshire, September 21, 1799, a taste for reading led him in a Freethought direction. Employed at Leeds, he became acquainted with such Radical works as Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, Cobbett's *Register*, and Carlile's *Republican*. When Carlile was imprisoned with his wife and sister for selling blasphemous publications, he appealed to lovers of free discussion to serve in the shop. Humphrey Boyle was the first volunteer from Leeds. He was arrested, tried, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. When sentenced, May 27, 1822, Boyle remarked: "I have a mind, my lord, that can bear such a sentence with fortitude." Of similar stuff was James Watson, the second volunteer from Leeds. He, too, was arrested in February, 1823, for selling Palmer's *Principles of Nature*. His trial took place on April 23. In his defence he endeavored to prove from the Bible that Palmer was justified in what he had written, but the judge told him he "might quote from the Bible, but not comment upon it." He was convicted and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in Coldbath Fields Prison, and to find bail for good behavior for two years. In prison Watson read Hume, Gibbon, and Mosheim, which he said "would have made me a Freethinker if I had not been one before." He afterwards conducted Richard Carlile's business until Carlile's liberation from Dorchester Gaol in November, 1825, and then became a compositor on Carlile's *Republican*. Attacked by cholera, he was nursed by Julian Hibbert, who employed him on his own projects, giving him his own type and presses, and at his death leaving him a legacy of £500. In the meantime Watson suffered another six months' imprisonment for selling Hetherington's unstamped *Poor Man's Guardian*. With the legacy from Hibbert, James Watson constituted himself a sort of society for promoting useful knowledge. He set up as bookseller and publisher, issued many Freethought works, such as D'Holbach's *System of Nature*, Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, Paine's *Age of Reason* and *Common Sense*, Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, Francis Wright's *Few Days in Athens* and her *Lectures*, R. D. Owen's discussions and pamphlets, Shelley's *Queen Mab* and *Masque of Anarchy*, Byron's *Cain* and *Vision of Judgment*, J. Clarke's *Letters to Adam Clarke*, Godwin's *Political Justice*, Lamenais' *Modern Slavery*, Evans Bell's *Task of To-day*, Powell's *Bible of Reason*, *Yahoo*, *Eece Homo*, *Human Origin of Christianity*, Hume's *Miracles*, Diderot's *Thoughts on Religion*, Lawrence's *Lectures on Man*, Englefield's *Physiology*, Dr. T. Cooper's *Rights of Free Discussion*, T. Cooper's (the Chartist) *Purgatory of Suicides*, Southwell's *Impossibility of Atheism*, Holyoake's *Rationalism*, *Logic of Facts*, etc.

The list is a goodly one, though far from complete. It represents valuable works, tending in the direction of mental emancipation and of political and social reform; works tabooed by the privileged classes, and many of which they had sought to suppress. Let it be remembered, too, that the cheap publication of such works was the direct incentive to that rivalry of new cheap literature intended to counteract the supposed pernicious effect of the dissemination of "infidelity and sedition." I do not scruple to say that, by his publications, James Watson did more for the real education of the people than some vaunted societies and wealthy firms with all the influence of respectability at their back. His publications, though cheap, were not of the "cheap and nasty" order. They were neat, well printed, and showed throughout a publisher who loved sound thought and sound work in every department. Mr. W. J. Linton, his friend for forty years, says: "There was no mistaking an edition by J. Watson. To him life and all its circumstances were to be kept in wholesomeness, though means of beautifying might fail him. The pride of the poor man was his. His honesty should be clean skinned and pure, if his clothes were threadbare; his public appearance, as his home, ever dignified, made worthy of respect. Serving in his shop, he had pleasant and informing words for all who sought his wares; the character of this or that book about which you asked might be trusted to his judgment. His conversation, if you cared to make acquaintance with it, supplemented what he sold—what he had given, if apostles in his day had been able to print and live without death. . . . . He was of the stuff of those old martyrs who smiled when they were flayed alive; who thrust their hands into fire to pluck out unharmed their more tender souls. For the respect in which his probity and his business qualities were held, his name as treasurer of subscriptions in aid of political sufferers may be voucher enough. He was one to whom you might have trusted untold gold; he could not have wronged you of the smallest coin." Mr. Linton gives a pleasant instance of how principle was more than profit with Watson. In '38 Linton projected a cheap library, for the people, of extracts from works beyond the purchasing reach of working men. Watson laid before him the difficulties, and, finding him resolute, offered him (a nameless stranger) his books and services. When the account was made up he found there was no charge for folding and stitching. Watson had been sure the book could not pay, and he and his wife had folded and stitched every copy to save Linton so much expense.

By judicious investments in works of solid value, James Watson served the cause in perhaps the most effective way in which it can be served—by the spread of its literature. He did this more for the sake of propaganda than for profit, but by economy he was able to retire when between fifty and sixty. On January 23, 1854, a public tribute was paid to him at the Literary Institution, John-street, Fitzroy-square, at which Mr. W. D. Saull presided, and Messrs. T. Cooper, R. Moore, W. J. Birch, R. Le Blond, and G. J. Holyoake testified to his great services to the Freethought cause. He lived at Norwood until November 29, 1874, and in Norwood Cemetery a plain granite obelisk bears the following inscription: "James Watson, 1874. Erected by a few friends as a token of regard for his integrity of character and his brave efforts to secure the right of free speech and a free and unstamped press." A Memoir, by his friend, W. J. Linton, to which I am indebted for most of these particulars, has a copy of Watson's photograph as frontispiece, and is a modest, yet not unworthy, memorial of a sterling though little-known Freethinker.

J. M. WHEELER.

IS THE BIBLE A FIT SCHOOL BOOK?

ARE there really obscene passages in it, passages obscene and indecent that teach no moral? If it can be proved there are such, there can be no question as to its being unfit for a school book. If there are errors and contradictions that a thoughtful student can easily see, it is unfit for a school book, as it is a part of his education to be right and trace errors. If the book in all its parts is not instructive and decent—that is, if it cannot be read without dictation as to what parts, it is not a fit school book. For instance, if the book cannot be opened at random and read from, by and before an assembly of children of both sexes, it is unfit for a school book.

If any passage cannot be intelligently and satisfactorily explained to a pupil of inquiring mind, it loses its value as a school book. To say that certain passages were made purposely obscene to teach us a moral would be the same as giving a boy a lot of cheap detective and love stories in order that he might not follow in the steps of the characters in the stories. In young minds it is very often the reading of such that puts the wrong ideas in their heads.

That some of the Old Testament stories of wars, rapes, murders, etc., are more degrading than the cheapest of our novels, goes without saying. Was there ever a more degrading and obscene expression or command than that contained in Numbers xxi. 17, 18? I say that any man that would even have such thoughts in his head, not speaking of putting them in execution, is not fit to be copied, nor his writings read anywhere. To have such put in the way of pure and innocent children, whose minds are not matured, and whose reasoning powers are already dwarfed because of being compelled to believe the doctrines taught in this book, without any intelligent explanations, is an outrage that a really moral parent or guardian should forbid. Keep all indecent books from the schools; if the Bible has indecent passages, it should not be excepted.

BELMONT.

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

Some English, French, and American missions in China have been wrecked, and the religious press are crying out for "a firm policy." Some of the apostles of the religion of peace do not contrive to commend themselves where they go, and always want the gospel backed up by gunpowder.

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BOOK CHAT.

IAMBLICHUS ON THE MYSTERIES.

MR. BERTRAM DOBELL, of 77 Charing Cross-road, has published a second edition of *Iamblichus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians*, translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. The first edition was issued in 1821 from the printer at Chiswick, "for the translator, Manor-place, Walworth." The work is worth some attention, both on account of the author, the translator, and the present publisher.

* * *

The author Jamblichus, of Chalcis, N. Syria, was one of those neo-Platonists who, about the time of Constantine, vainly sought to stay the progress of the Christian superstition by an eclectic Theosophic philosophy drawn from the earlier faiths. He was a pupil of Porphyry, one of the early opponents of Christianity, but did not altogether follow his master. His followers called him "wonderful" and "most divine" teacher, while the Emperor Julian said of him, in his fourth oration, that "he was posterior in time, but not in genius, to Plato." His Platonism was much mixed up with oriental ideas and speculations. He lets us see the philosophical notions with which the later Egyptian and Chaldean priests explained their religion. Jamblichus was probably more indebted to Pythagoras, whose life he wrote, than to Plato.

* * *

Jamblichus teaches a kind of Theosophy, but it is not the modern Blavatskyite Theosophy of "esoteric Buddhism," but the genuine ancient wisdom religion, the inner doctrine of the priests, to whom mysticism was philosophy. Its doctrine was essentially Pantheism. In the words of Thomas Taylor, the translator (pp. xii. and xiii. of Introduction): "All beings proceed from, and are comprehended in, the first being; all intellects emanate from one first intellect; all souls from one first soul; all natures blossom from one first nature; and all bodies proceed from the vital and luminous body of the world. And, lastly, all these great monads are comprehended in the first ones, from which both they and all their depending series are unfolded into light."

* * *

The Theosophy, or, as Taylor more properly calls it, *Theurgy*, of Jamblichus consists in his teaching how union with the divine is to be obtained. The work is prefaced by "The Epistle of Porphyry to the Egyptian Anebo," in which he inquires and expresses his doubts as to the relation of men to the gods. The work itself purports to be "The Answer of the Preceptor Abammon" to this epistle, and a solution of the doubts contained in it. The solutions of this Pagan decadent will hardly satisfy the modern mind; but they are most interesting as exhibiting a curious stage in human thought, combining an attempt to account for the gradations of being in the universe with the hope of obtaining a supernatural elevation to the powers of man, and with a defence of the principles and practices of Polytheism.

* * *

It is curious to note the attention given to Jamblichus at the time of the Pagan Renaissance. Editions of this work on the Mysteries were published in 1483, 1497, 1516, 1556, 1570, 1577, 1607, 1641, and at Oxford, with a Latin translation by Gale, in 1678. Giordano Bruno refers to it in his *Heroic Enthusiasts*, and Taylor, the translator of Jamblichus, says that his modern critics "perceive only his little blemishes, but have not even a glimpse of his surpassing excellence. They minutely notice the motes that are scattered in the sunbeam of his genius, but they feel not its invigorating warmth, they see not its dazzling radiance."

* * *

The translator, Thomas Taylor, the Platonist (1758–1835), was a remarkable man, both for his scholarship and his independence of thought. He professed himself a Pagan, and wrote an argument in defence of Polytheism, entitled *A New System of Religion*. He devoted his life to translating and defending the works of Plato, Aristotle, Porphyry, Plotinus, Proclus, and Julian; and is said to have been so thorough a Pagan that he sacrificed a bull to Zeus. This report is probably unfounded, for he was a vegetarian. Certain it is that he was a modern Pagan, and one of considerable powers of mind and elevation of character. He also contributed important articles to *Valpy's Classical Journal*. All his works are now extremely scarce and dear. *The Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* has been recently reprinted at New York, and the publisher of the present volume holds out the hope that it may be followed by the republication of other works by Thomas Taylor. We would especially commend to his attention *The Arguments of Celsus and Julian against Christianity* and *The New System of Religion*, upon which last Mr. Wheeler contributed some articles to the *National Reformer*.

* * *

Mr. Dobell, the publisher, is a bookseller of taste. He not only knows a good thing when he sees it, but the fact that it is *caviare* to the multitude does not prevent his trying to get the literature he appreciates before the fit, though few. This is seen in his publication of the works of James Thomson (B.V.), and the pains he has taken in many ways to make that gifted poet known. The present volume is a *fac simile* of the original edition, which is so rare that the British Museum copy is imperfect. It reflects credit on the publisher, and we trust it will meet such success as to encourage him to reproduce other, and, as we think, more important, works of Thomas Taylor.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A WISE DENIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Kindly do me justice by publishing this letter in the next issue of the *Freethinker*. In the present issue I find the following: "Is it true that a Christian Evidence lecturer at Liverpool is in the habit of asking opponents their names and addresses? Is it true that an opponent gave his name and address a few Sundays ago? Is it true that on the following Tuesday he was dismissed from his employment on a certain railway?"

If the above insinuations refer to myself, let me say that they are absolutely false. There is not an iota of truth in the whole matter.

GEO. WISE.

MUTUAL HELP.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mark Twain, or somebody else, said: "If you want to get on, join the Methodists and start a shop," the meaning of which is obvious. Let us Freethinkers learn of the enemy to help each other. I think we ought to go out of our way to put work in the hands of our brother and sister Secularists, and if they keep a shop a quarter of a mile farther away than the nearest of its kind we ought to deal there. Known Freethinkers are avoided by religious bigots, and their brothers-in-arms should endeavor to make up for what they lose in this way by their steady support.

A. GUEST.

PROFANE JOKES.

A clergyman, named Fiddle, refused to accept the title of D.D., because, as he said, he "didn't want to be called the Rev. Ichabod Fiddle, D.D."

Parker—"I would join the church if it wasn't full of hypocrites." Tucker—"Oh, you are mistaken about that. There's always room for one more."

Tired Child (at church)—"Mamma, how much did you put in the collection?" Mother—"A penny, my dear." Tired Child—"Well, the preacher gives an awful lot for his money."

School Teacher—"If you had your choice, Willie, would you rather be as wise as Solomon, as great as Julius Cæsar, as rich as Crœsus, as eloquent as Demosthenes, as tall as Goliath, or as good as the prophet Elijah?" Willie—"I'd rather be a drummer in a brass band."

THE LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL meeting held at the Hall of Science, June 13; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler, R. Forder, G. Standring, W. H. Baker, G. Ward, M. Loafer, W. G. Renn, F. Schaller, S. R. Thomson, G. J. Warren, A. Wheeler, Miss Vance, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Treasurer's report received. The information obtained by the Secretary *re* Annual Excursion was discussed, and on the motion of Mr. Renn, seconded by Mr. Forder, Clacton-on-Sea was decided upon, price of return tickets to be 3s., children half price. Messrs. Ward, Renn, Schaller, and Miss E. M. Vance were then elected as an Excursion Committee. It was decided that the Annual Collection by Branches in aid of the funds of the Federation should take place in July, the actual Sunday to be left to the discretion of the Branches. Monthly lists for July were ordered to be printed, particulars for which must be received by June 24.

N.B.—The President having kindly undertaken the responsibility of providing the heavy deposit required by the Railway Company on account of the Excursion, it is particularly requested that all secretaries will push the sale of tickets, and remit to the undersigned at their early convenience.

ANNIE BROWN, *Hon. Sec.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," & not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "A Christian's Delusions: Christ and Death."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 9, dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, R. Forder, "A Chat with the Devil and a Peep into Hell."

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH (91 Mildmay Park): Monday, at 8, Meeting of members.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Keats and the Sense of Beauty."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Henry Spence, "Practical Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?" 7.15, A. G. Hertzfeld, "Secularism and Social Questions."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Tales from the Gospels."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. James, "Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Modern Shams and Delusions." (Collection on behalf of Sam Standring.)

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, George Standring, "Christianity *v.* Humanity"; 3.15, A. Guest, "Missions Unglorified."

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (Middlesex side): 7, J. Fagan will lecture. Thursday, at 8.30, S. E. Easton, "What must I Do to be Saved?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 3.30, F. Haslam will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "Recipes for Happiness."

KILBURN (High-road): 7, M. Pack will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Mohammed and his Bible."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Historical Basis of Christianity."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible"; 3.15, W. Heaford, "Christ and His Teachings."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Old Faith and the New"; 7, C. James will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, T. Thurlow, "Jesus *v.* Home."

HULL: Monday, at 8.30, members' meeting at Mr. Simpson's, 131 Great Thornton-street, to arrange annual picnic

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Hammond, "The Metamorphosis of Christianity."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, S. P. Putnam, "Freethought and Morality"; 3, "Christianity and Woman"; 6.30, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, "Nunquam's Confession—a Criticism of *The Hammer*," by a Clarionette.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Sailors' and Firemen's Union Hall, Coronation-street): 7, R. Mitchell, "The Atonement."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, W. Treasure will lecture.

CHATHAM (corner of the New Brompton-road, High-street): 11.15, T. Thurlow, "The Unpardonable Sin."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, C. Cohen will lecture.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 3, R. Mitchell, "The Fall."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 23, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 27, Wood Green; 30, m. Victoria Park, a. Regent's Park, e. West Ham.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—June 23, m. Victoria Park; 26, Hyde Park; 30, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 26. SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

ROME IN ENGLAND.

"I am aware that the art of printing will always present an insurmountable barrier to the total and absolute subjection of the human mind; but when I consider the cunning and the wiles which were successfully practised in former ages by a knavish and interested Priesthood to subject even thrones to its insolent domination, I am not without fears that the modern attempts to reduce mankind to that dreadful state of vassalage under which they groaned, particularly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, may in some degree prove successful. Even should the Romish clergy succeed in obtaining *half* the power which they exercised at these periods, it would be a matter, in my apprehension, which every true friend of liberty ought to deplore; for I have universally observed in my perusal of history that the increase of ignorance and oppression always kept pace with the increase of clerical power."—*William Cobbett, "Register," vol. xxvi., pp. 312, 313.*

THE opening of the new Roman Catholic cathedral at Brompton this week calls renewed attention to the advance of Roman Catholicism in England. Measured by numbers, that advance is not alarming. A leakage from its membership to some extent compensates for its conversions, mostly made from those apists of papists, the Ritualists. But in wealth and influence it is constantly progressing. Its proselytes are mostly drawn from the well-to-do. Men like the Duke of Norfolk and the Marquis of Bute offer it almost unlimited financial resources. As an establishment it has grown vastly in half a century. In 1845 it had 776 priests in England; now it has three thousand. Then it had 622 churches, now three times that number; then eight nunneries, now two hundred and forty; then thirty-four religious houses, now close on five hundred; while its colleges have increased from two to thirty-six.

Considered as a divine institution, Romanism is abominably absurd. It is founded on obsolete dogmas and mistakes which civilised man has outgrown, and it has maintained its authority by the most detestable crimes and cruelties. But regarded as a human institution, Romanism is worth study. It represents the survival of the fittest elements of many ancient faiths. Its worst institutions had value in building up a powerful corporation. Sacerdotal celibacy centres the minds and affections of its ministers on their Church, and prevents the dissipation of their property to children. Confession gives it a hold over domestic life. Saint and image worship satisfy popular wants for the concrete and near, rather than the abstract and remote deity of Protestants. Purgatory offers an inexhaustible supply of wealth to the priest, and a more natural theory of after-life than eternal heaven and hell. The Virgin Mother unites symbols that come home to the affections, and gives woman a place in worship unsupplied by the bachelor Trinity. The Roman Church service appeals to the senses, and its boasted infallibility gives repose to the mind.

Above all, the Church has thriven by its perpetual readiness to compound with popular weakness and superstition for the sake of its own dominion. The Romish Church is the outcome of the cunning schemes of thousands of men who kept, as far as possible, all knowledge in their own corporation, in order that it might rule over the ignorant. Hence it is that, though stained with the blood of myriad martyrs, and laden with the frauds and forgeries of ages, it yet holds on; and Macaulay could look forward to the Church still existing in undiminished vigor, "when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruin of St. Paul's."

Rome knows its power consists in the control of education; hence its unceasing fight for the schools. The Jesuits have everywhere bent themselves to the highest of tasks, that of moulding men. It was their schools opened in Germany after the Reformation that furnished the soldiers for the Thirty Years' Religious War. Everywhere the same men are now training the young for a new crusade, ostensibly against "Freemasonry, Libertinism, and Naturalism," whereby they mean Freethought and civil liberty. They talk now of the Christian State, and even of Christian Socialism; but they mean, as of old, the subjection of the world to the dominion of the Church.

Semper Eadem is the motto of Romanism. What it has done it would do again if it had the power. Nature chained is not nature changed. The root principles of religion not only justify the suppression of heresy, they demand it. If I am leading hundreds to eternal torment, it is a mercy to stamp me out as speedily as possible. A real change of circumstances has led to a pretended change of policy. Rome now speaks of toleration, but it means supremacy. It pretends to patronise science, but it encourages superstition. It exalts faith and discredits reason. Men like Mr. Benjamin Kidd and the Hon. A. J. Balfour are in this its unwitting allies. It presents the logical ultimatum of their depreciation of reason before authority. All priests find in Rome their instinct for sacerdotal sway embodied; and, as Protestantism breaks up, the more consistent Church, boldly proclaiming that there is no standing ground between Atheism and submission to herself, is bound to gather up those who, from whatever cause, prefer authority to reason.

England's conversion is now the dominant thought of Rome. England is, in the language of the Propaganda, "St. Mary's Dowry" and "the patrimony of Peter." The Pope's letter is being followed up by an organised attempt to bring Britain back to "the faith of our fathers." Should disestablishment come, a large portion of our Romanising High Church clergy will be prepared to accept Romish orders, in the hope that Romanism will become the reversionary legatee of the Anglican Church.

In the face of the advance of Catholicism, it behoves Freethinkers to close up their ranks and fight superstition, not simply with the guerilla warfare of free lances, but with compact and well-drilled organisation. With a tithe of Romish funds, Freethinkers would soon prevent any fear of Romish encroachments. Is it not a shame that, while a Church that has erected the worst despotism that ever bound and crushed not only the bodies, but also the minds of men, can draw immense wealth to itself by holding out threats of hell-fire, and by pretending to save the dead from purgatory, the endowment of Freethought halls, designed to unshackle the minds of men and to combat superstition, is not permitted by law? Surely Freethinkers should be up and doing. The days of struggle are not yet over.

J. M. WHEELER.

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MRS. BESANT'S NEW GOD.

(Concluded from page 385.)

MRS. BESANT, as already explained, has a "God," like all the rest of the mystery-mongers; and she proceeds to "justify" her deity, who requires it as much as any other god or godling in the whole pantheon. And the justification of the god of Theosophy is remarkably like that of the common god of Theism. All these systems find themselves confronted with the problem of evil, and set about explaining it, but not until they are driven into doing so by sceptical opposition. The first explanation advanced had the merit of sublime simplicity. Divines declared evil to be a mystery. But sceptics retorted that this was only a confession of ignorance, and did not help in the least. It left the problem unsolved, and calling it by a grand name did not make it a bit plainer. Besides, the "mystery" was, after all, quite artificial; it was really no more than a flat contradiction between the theory of "God" and the facts of nature. When this point was pressed home, the theologians saw that they must somehow prove that evil is really good; and thus they reached the serene quackery of ultimate optimism, declaring that discord is misunderstood harmony, that a man groaning with the toothache is unconsciously sounding his note in the symphony of universal happiness. This theory still holds the field, only it is modified by a "wrinkle" borrowed from Evolution. Evil is not exactly good, the divines tell us, but it is good in the making; and when we get to the end of the process (if we ever do!) we shall look back, like Jehovah upon his six-days' creation, and pronounce it all "good." Of course the argument is based upon prophecy; it is like paying an account with a very long bill, due sometime after death or forty days after the millennium. Still, it serves the purpose; the Micawbers of theology exclaim, "Thank God, that's settled!" And the Micawber family is large, and Mrs. Besant is one of them. She meets her difficulties in relation to evil by resorting, not to the vindication of the day of judgment, but to the final disclosures of reincarnation. We shall not, however, follow her into that region, but stick to the prosaic world of things as they are now—the world of actual experience, of more or less exact knowledge, and of more or less approximate logic.

Let us examine Mrs. Besant's theory of the function of pain, apart from its apparatus and jargon of Theosophy.

> "By pain we learn when we have struck against a law, and the law which pierced us when we opposed it becomes our strength when we place ourselves in harmony with it. By pain we learn to distinguish between the eternal and the transitory, and so to strike our heart-roots into that which endures. By pain we develop strength, as the athlete developes muscle by exercising it against opposing weights. By pain we learn sympathy, and gain power to help those who suffer. Thus only is the Christ-soul developed and at length perfected, and when this is once realised pain is no longer grievous nor an enemy, but a sternly gracious friend, whose hands are full of gifts."

Now, we entirely dissent from this philosophy, which appears to us the very reverse of the truth. "Adversity (says George Meredith) tries us; it does not nourish us." Mrs. Besant has mistaken the trial for the nourishment. A child does not grow strong in darkness, privation, and suffering; it grows strong in sunlight, plenty, and happiness. When adversity comes, it does not *give* strength; it only *tests* the strength that has been acquired in prosperity. We do not deny that pain is useful in one way, as a warning against danger. But the danger is itself an evil, the proof being that we try to avoid it; and the usefulness of the warning depends on our ability to shun the danger. There is no use at all in pain when a little child falls against the fire, and is burnt in its helplessness; nor is there any use in pain when a man is cremated alive because he differs from other people on religious questions.

Mrs. Besant draws a fallacious analogy between the athlete and the sufferer. In the first place, the athlete does not suffer; generally speaking, he takes a pleasure in his exercises and performances. In the next place, no man gains any strength from *bearing* pain, although he may gain strength by exerting himself against the *causes* of pain. In the third place, the very idea of an athlete is *active*, while the very idea of a sufferer is *passive*. Man is the *victim* of pain, and if he bears it willingly, in a spirit of self-sacrifice, he bears it for the sake of some other victim.

Certainly we learn sympathy by pain. But that is only one illustration of a *general* law—namely, that we learn sympathy by experience. And the very fact that there is such a strong tendency to associate sympathy with suffering shows how pain and weakness have predominated in human experience. There are a hundred persons ready to help a child when it is in distress for one who will play with it and enter into its child-life. The sympathy of delight is far rarer than the sympathy of sorrow.

The final sentence of Mrs. Besant's panegyric on pain is wonderfully like the stock language of Christian divines. Pain, forsooth, is the great agency of moral and spiritual culture. Well, if it is, there is something wrong with its distribution. The poor, who have little time and means for sinning, get the most of it; and the wealthy, who have plenty of time and means, get the least. The "sternly-gracious friend, whose hands are full of gifts," is a pretty figure of rhetoric; but, as a matter of fact, pain is the colleague of death, and joy is the colleague of life.

This is clearly admitted, although not intentionally, in Mrs. Besant's final paragraph, wherein she declares that man is "to grow upward, to become the Christ in strength not in weakness, triumphant not crucified." Which is a confession that pain is an *evil*, although a *necessary* evil. But then the question arises—What made it necessary? And the only answer Mrs. Besant can give is—The will of God. The deity could have started man strong instead of weak; triumphant, instead of crucified. That is what every father would do for his children, if he could. God *could*, but he *did not*. Yet we have to listen to eloquent nonsense about his *benevolence*.

Mrs. Besant's philosophy of pain will not stand the test of criticism. She cannot justify her "God" by appealing to the past or the present. She is only safe when she appeals to the future. No one can contradict her then. At the same time, no one is bound to believe her. There may be reincarnation for all of us; but, also, there may not be. What we have to do is to judge by the known, not by the unknown; by experience, not by speculation. Bring theology down to the test of fact, and it fails miserably. All it can do at the finish is to exclaim, like the gentleman in the melodrama—"No matter, the time *will* come!" In other words, "God" is an object of *faith*—whether it be the god of Christianity or of Theosophy. To vindicate him at the bar of *reason* is to subject him to a painful humiliation.

G. W. FOOTE.

MORALITY WITHOUT RELIGION.

Is morality possible without religion? By morality we mean the principles which rule and regulate the actions, customs, and general habits of mankind; and the word 'religion" is here used in its ecclesiastical sense, as representing Theistic beliefs which are said to be professed by a majority of the human race. Considerable difference of opinion obtains among theologians as to whether the two—morality and religion—are necessarily identical. Some hold that man is born with a God-given capacity to distinguish right from wrong; others urge that it is only in the Bible that the proper guides to human action can be found. But many of the Professors at our Universities have discovered, during the past two decades, that it can no longer be consistently maintained that wisdom speaketh to her children only through the Hebrew or Christian records. The practical question, however, here to be considered is: Can moral conduct exist, and pure and noble lives be led, without the aid of the Christian religion? Of course we do not wish to convey the impression that, in our opinion, there is no morality taught in the New Testament; but we do contend that whatever is of ethical value in that book is not peculiar to Christianity.

Nothing appears to us more clearly demonstrated from history and personal experience than the fact that religion and morality were distinct in their origin, and that in many important instances they have remained so in their development. The first forms of supernatural religion of which we have any record originated in fear and the prostration of reason, while morality was the outcome of

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intellectual culture and thoughtful experience. This truth has been clearly shown in an able book, *The Morals of Evolution*, by the Rev. Minot J. Savage. On page thirty-one he observes: "Religion and morality were totally distinct in their origin. At first they had nothing to do with each other. Religion was simply an arrangement between man and his gods, by which he was to gain their favor or ward off their wrath. Morality, on the other hand, is a matter of behavior between man and man." On pages twenty-four and twenty-five Mr. Savage says: "Go far enough back into antiquity to come to the time when large numbers of men were fetish worshippers; when the object of their adoration, their reverence, or fear is a stick, or a stone, or a reptile. Of course, you will understand in a moment that the worship of an object like this cannot be associated in the mind of a worshipper with any necessity for telling the truth, with any necessity for being pure, with any necessity for being charitable and kind towards his fellows." The same principle is enforced in the case of the Indian devotee who fasts and torments himself, not that he may benefit mankind morally by his sufferings, but solely in order that he may acquire favor and power with the gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Seeva. Such a man is very religious, but he is not necessarily a moral man; for, if his fellow men were to emulate his example, the human race would be enervated if it did not become extinct.

That religion does not always ensure the practice of morality, the Bible itself testifies. Take the conduct of Noah, with his drunkenness and injustice; of Abraham with his cruelty to Hagar and her child; of Jacob with his many wives; of Moses and his relentless wars; of Joshua and his merciless slaughters; of Samuel's cold-blooded murder of Agag; of David, whose career was one of incessant crime and hypocrisy; of Solomon with his licentiousness; of Peter, who was not particular to avoid falsehood, or of St. Paul, whose honesty was not unimpeachable. Now, all these men are regarded as having been religious; but who will attempt to defend their actions as being moral? And in our own time, under the very banner of the cross, Christians have defended the most immoral deeds. Who does not remember those iniquitous wars which took place in Zululand and Afghanistan a few years ago? Did not Christian bishops, from their seats in Parliament, openly express their approval of a cold-blooded and sanguinary policy, which brought down upon the nation the opprobrium due to the cowardly and uncalled-for attacker and despoiler of the weak, the unprotected, and the semi-savage; a policy which led to national suffering, national poverty, national degradation and humiliation, and which caused the blush of shame to mantle the cheek of every true-hearted Englishman? Even Mr. Gladstone publicly declared his sorrow at finding so many of his co-religionists going woefully, fatally wrong in matters of national morality. His words were: "To my great pain and disappointment, I have found during the last three years that thousands of Churchmen supplied the great mass of those who have gone lamentably wrong upon questions involving deeply the interests of truth, justice, and humanity. I should hear with much comfort any satisfactory explanation of this very painful circumstance."

These instances should be sufficient to convince any impartial mind of the fallacy of the theologian's assertion that we owe our morality to religion. The lesson of ecclesiastical history is that religion never did necessarily ensure moral conduct, or inspire useful deeds. If it be asked why Christians are more active at present in promoting the public welfare than were their predecessors; why Christianity is more humane than it was at the time of the Inquisition and the Star Chamber; or why to-day its professors deprecate offences which a few centuries ago the Church sought to condone, the answer is that a higher moral sense obtains now than in former times. The desire to practise love, benevolence, and mutual toleration (in a word, morality) has grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength, until the theologian's statement as to the ethical force of religion has been reversed, so that we find it is morality that has purified religion, not religion that has purified morality.

As regards the contention that God originally endowed man with power to discover moral truth, it is open to the three following objections: (1) The case of Adam, as recorded in Genesis, contradicts the assumption, for it was not until after he went wrong that he found out what was good and what was evil. (2) If man already knew what to do and what to avoid, there was no necessity for the Old and New Testaments to tell him. (3) We have learnt only by experience and education what tends to the honor and welfare of our race. It is by these means that the human family have been able to emerge from their original state of barbarism. Experience and careful study have demonstrated that moral progress does not depend upon any theological belief, but rather upon the proper exercise and development of our intellectual powers. The great Roman statesman and philosopher, Cicero, taught that man's morality was the necessary result of reasoning built upon human necessities. Robert Owen gave practical meaning and force to this teaching by inculcating principles the legitimate adoption of which would probably end in the establishment of a world wherein human character should be formed upon principles based upon right-knowing and right-doing, upon the expulsion of ignorance and the removal of the causes of evil. The only religion of the future which will be worthy of the name as a binding system will be one in which the good of all faiths shall be retained, and from which their errors shall be eliminated; a religion based, not upon supernatural figments and allegories, but upon the eternal laws of nature and the laws of that great kingdom of human nature whose only monarch is man. It is he who must be regarded as the real actor in the great drama of existence, if we wish to adorn life with ethical value and practical utility.

The fact that human sympathy and affection are developed in all lands, under various systems of government and different forms of religion; that virtue in all its forms was practised by so-called "heathens" long before the time of Christ, ought to be sufficient to show that we are not dependent upon the Christian faith for the cultivation of the better part of our natures. It is said that Christianity introduced new motives and sanctions. But what were they? The motives were the hope of heaven and the fear of hell, which are selfish in the extreme, and far below many of the incentives offered by the ancient philosophers. As to supernatural sanctions, they have but little or no practical influence upon the majority of people, who are actuated in daily life more by mundane considerations than by what may happen "beyond the grave."

It is strangely overlooked, by certain students of history, that emotion without knowledge, feeling without reason, ruled the world when man was really in his intellectual infancy, and then morality was at its lowest ebb. When, however, the human intellect was cultivated, and mental freedom illuminated the mind of man, morality developed, and superstition and the power of the Church proportionately declined.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE PRIEST IN POLITICS.

IT has often been remarked in these columns that the struggle in Ireland between the Parnellites and the nominally Nationalist party was one which was interesting to Freethinkers, in that it seemed to foreshadow the partial revolt at least of some of the more enlightened of Irishmen against the growing and ever-threatening arrogance of the Catholic Church. Revolutions at first are not always strictly logical, or at least are not thoroughly defensible on strictly logical grounds. Thus Protestantism is notoriously inconsequential. The claim for the right of private judgment up to a certain point, and the rejection of the claim beyond that point, is absurd. In the same way, the Parnellite claim, that priests have the right to dogmatise on questions of "faith and morals," but not on questions of politics, is indefensible. Yet, as the air clears, we see where we stand, and the pioneers are naturally less able to perceive the drift of their work than those who look back after a long time on what has been accomplished.

Some day the whole story of the priestly intrigue, which succeeded in driving Mr. Parnell from power into an early grave, may be told; and an interesting story it will be. But one thing stands clear in the matter. The Church, in one sense, chose her own ground. It was she who

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precipitated the fight. And really the Parnellites were forced into the conflict with the Church originally. Parnell was too diplomatic and too opportune a tactician not to avail himself of any help or of any force he could. As long, therefore, as the priests—by force of public opinion—were compelled to follow and aid him, Parnell accepted their services. And so, after the crisis of 1890, Mr. Parnell would not have been the man to commence a gratuitous fight against so powerful a body as the Irish priests. It was they, therefore, who made the fight a question of religion, and used every engine which such an organisation as the Catholic Church possesses to force clerical nominees on the electorate. Priests swamped the Federation meetings, priests blackened the political platforms, priests stood on the hustings, priests flooded the national conventions, priests patrolled the voting-stations, priests swarmed into the polling-booths—they almost stood over the ballot-boxes. Can it be wondered at that Parnell was beaten, that even he went down under such a weight as no man could bear? Great men can do much, but no man is equal to all the world. Napoleon could win battles against enormous odds over and over again. But Napoleon could not stand for ever against a world in arms. The world is greater than any one man. And Parnell—whose name there is nothing outrageous in bracketing with Napoleon's—learnt the same lesson. Parnell worked wonders in that nine months in '91. Another man would not have lasted a week; he stood for the best part of a dreadful year. Nay, if it had been possible for him to have taken care of himself more and husbanded his nerves, he would probably to-day be on the crest of a wave which would carry him back to his old position.

However, to come more directly to the way in which priestly influence is manipulated, there is a recent instance to hand which illustrates it admirably. But it is necessary to state a few circumstances first. It must, then, be explained that Dublin is strongly and, in fact, enthusiastically Parnellite. Four out of the nine Parnellite members sit for Dublin seats. The fact is noteworthy, inasmuch as Dublin is naturally less priest-ridden than the rural districts. But it remains—from whatever cause—Dublin is Parnellite. Now, it is an important thing for the Church to capture as many seats for Poor Law Guardians as possible. If there is a Catholic majority on the Board of the Union, they can get all foundlings registered as Catholics. Whether a child, therefore, will be damned or saved depends on the voting of Tom, Dick, and Harry at the elections. However, in Ireland every election down to town-commissioners, or petty local boards of guardians, is fought on questions of national politics. It was Nationalist *versus* Unionist at the Parliamentary election; it was Nationalist *versus* Unionist at the Municipal election; it was Nationalist *versus* Unionist at every election. This is but natural where the national issue overshadows all smaller local issues. But when the Parnell crisis came there was another sub-division. And we had Parnellite, Anti-Parnellite, and Unionist. Now, the Unionist as a rule was a Protestant; the Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites were Catholics. There were numerous exceptions, of course, especially on the Nationalist side, many Nationalists being Protestants. But, as a broad rule, the political division was also a religious division—perhaps the latter was really the cause of the former. Hence, though the Church denounced the Parnellites, it would prefer a Catholic Parnellite as Poor Law Guardian to a Protestant Unionist; for the Catholic Parnellite would serve the purpose of helping to make a Catholic majority on the Board, whilst his Parnellism would be, in the circumstances, merely academic.

And now comes the point. At the Poor Law elections in Dublin there were in some cases Catholic Anti-Parnellites running against Catholic Parnellites, the possible effect of which would be to let in the Protestant Unionist. And as the Parnellites, being in a great majority, as I have said, in Dublin, claimed the seats, it was necessary to draw off the Catholic Anti-Parnellites rather than let the seats fall into the enemy's hands. The Church, in short, had to choose the lesser of two evils. And so Archbishop Walsh addressed a letter to the press, from which the following are extracts:—

> "I am distressed to hear, in connection with the coming Poor-Law elections, that there is danger of some confusion being caused by the action of some apparently over-zealous persons in putting forward, in one or two instances, a number of Catholic candidates in excess of the number of vacancies to be filled. If the contest lay merely between Catholic candidates, the variety of choice thus offered to the electors would seem quite free from objection, and might even have its advantages. But I understand that the policy of starting rival Catholic candidatures is now being acted upon under wholly different circumstances, where it may expose the Catholic vote to the risk of ruinous division in face of a solidly-united vote at the other side."
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> "In the peculiar circumstances of our Poor-Law Administration the religious interests of our Catholic poor are seriously at stake in almost every election of Poor-Law Guardians that takes place in Dublin. Therefore, I cannot but feel called upon to express my dissent from the mistaken action of those who, under the influence of zeal for the advancement of any political interest, would jeopardise the election of those candidates to whose care the religious, as well as all other, interests of the poor may safely be entrusted.
>
> "From some things I have come to know of, I can have little doubt that there are places in Ireland where the conflict, even as it now exists, turns largely upon issues that lie at the very root of Catholicity. But I have to do only with Dublin. As regards Dublin, so far as my knowledge of public affairs extends, the conflict, in the various forms in which it has made itself in any way seriously felt amongst us since the tragic day of Mr. Parnell's death in October, 1891, has turned upon issues that are either exclusively political or exclusively personal.
>
> "Upon such issues, as upon any others in the whole wide field of merely political or personal controversy, it surely is open to Catholics, in so far as regards their religious duty, to range themselves at one side or at the other, according as the one side or the other commends itself the more to their personal judgment. The one vital moral issue, the importance of which, as a matter of Catholic principle, necessarily outweighed that of all other issues in the case, has, through the course of events, long since disappeared from its old place of prominence in the dispute.
>
> "If the present disastrous political division amongst our people is to be kept up, I for one feel bound to see that no opportunity is given to keep it up here under cover of any appeal to religious duty."

This letter was dated March 8, '95, and the net purport of it all was that the Catholic Anti-Parnellite candidates were to be withdrawn. But, naturally, the Parnellite press trumpeted the letter as a vindication of their policy; they alleged that it was practically the capitulation of the enemy. And inasmuch as the Parnellites in the country had been greatly persecuted and thwarted by the priests, Archbishop Walsh's letter was circulated with its declaration that the issue is now "either exclusively political or exclusively personal."

Now comes the second act, or rather a sequel which casts a curious light on priestly diplomacy and priestly "honor." It is necessary again to explain. A few weeks ago Mr. John Sweetman, the Anti-Parnellite member for East Wicklow, created a sensation by resigning his seat because he was dissatisfied with the want of back-bone displayed by the McCarthyite party in the House. It is not necessary here to enter into his reasons, but in a singularly straightforward letter to his constituents he explained that he could not consent to keep trooping through the lobbies keeping a Government in office which had admittedly lost its mandate and was powerless to legislate for Ireland. Mr. Sweetman offered, however, to stand again as a Parnellite. The Parnellite party accepted him as their candidate, and the campaign in Wicklow—one of the most charming counties in the United Kingdom—commenced. It is to be presumed that the Parnellite electioneers—in order to disarm clerical intimidation—spread about copies of Archbishop Walsh's letter declaring that the issue was purely a political one. In this way it is possible that a great force which was used on the Anti-Parnellite side at the General Election would have been destroyed. But Archbishop Walsh may not be completely forgetful of past services. The Anti-Parnellites helped the Church before; the Church can return the compliment. The difficulty was the existence of the previous letter. So Archbishop Walsh addressed another letter to the papers. The important passages I quote:—

> "Dear Sir,—I had hardly arrived in Dublin this evening when I happened to hear of a mischievously misleading statement which, it seems, has been in-

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dustriously circulated during the last few days throughout the eastern division of the County of Wicklow.

"The constituency so inopportunely plunged at this Easter time into the excitement of an electoral contest, by the resignation of its representative in Parliament, lies within this diocese of Dublin. The statement which I hasten to contradict is to the effect that it is my wish that the priests of the various parishes throughout the constituency should abstain from all interference in the coming contest.

"I am very far, indeed, from wishing anything of the kind. It has always been my desire that the priests of this diocese should exercise to the fullest extent their natural and legitimate influence in all public affairs.

"I trust that on the present most critical occasion the priests of Wicklow will not fail in their public duty."

The meaning of this letter is plain. A nod is as good as a word, as they say. The priests, of course, were not *ordered* to interfere; they were *left free*. The effect of the letter need hardly be dwelt on. The previous declaration of March had served its turn; it had captured the Catholic seats in Dublin, under cover of soft words as to the indifference with which the Church viewed the whole question. In April the muzzle was taken off the priests, the former letter was nulled practically, and it was trusted that the priests "will not fail in their public duty." This is the Church—higgling and bargaining in the political market, swallowing to-day what it said yesterday, like the lowest political charlatan—whose "honor" could not tolerate Parnell. Of course the object of it all is plain to any observant man. Now that Parnell is gone, it is not so much Parnellism or Anti-Parnellism the Church cares for. Practically it is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. What she really wants is to get the control of Irish politics into her own hands. It is to be hoped that the Irish people will be sufficiently alive to their own interests, and sufficiently mindful of past history, to frustrate that design. For it would mean the "running" of Ireland in the interests of the clerical ring; and the welfare and aspirations of the Irish people would be wholly subordinated to the exigencies of the political ambitions of the papacy. Ireland, in fact, would become a mere counter in the game which the Vatican fondly desires to play in European politics. The triumph of the Church would be the final extinction of the hope of Irish liberty.

FREDERICK RYAN.

THE CHURCH AND MARRIAGE.

THE hold that the Church still keeps upon the minds of the people is due less to belief in its theological dogmas than to the laws and customs that bring the clergy into relation with the people in every great event of life. In birth, marriage, baptism, affliction, and death the priest or minister has to be sought to perform legal rites, give consolation, or administer sacraments. This makes the clergy indispensable to a respectable life; and, to avoid legal disability or social contumely, people who are secretly opposed to religion give their outward support to the Church. In the province of Quebec the State comes to the aid of the Church by refusing to permit the civil registration of births, or to allow marriage by a magistrate, making the clergy indispensable in these matters, even to those who would have the courage to brave social opinion and do without the ministrations of the self-styled ambassadors of God. In Quebec a child has no legal existence, and is not deemed to have been born, unless a minister of religion certifies that it has been baptised by him, or has been acknowledged before him by the father.

As belief in dogma subsides, the clergy realise the importance of maintaining these laws and customs to prevent people from falling off from their support of the Church. Hence we see a growing disposition to enforce Sunday laws, which give to the clergy a business monopoly of one day in seven, and to insist on the necessity of clerical aid in the important functions of life. Persons who marry without priestly sanction are stigmatised as "adulterers," and those who are buried without clerical ceremonies are abused as "infidels," by those who have lost the expected burial fees and missed the prestige of recognition.

That the marriage edicts of the Romish Church are not founded upon divine authority is shown by the fact that they can be set aside for money, which of course would not be the case were they commanded by God. There is no Bible saying that can be distorted into reading, "Thou shalt not marry unless thou payest to the priest five hundred dollars." Yet restrictions against the marriage of relatives are set aside upon payment of a fee "for kindred," as it is called. The evil effects of this priestly control may be illustrated by two examples. In a country village in Ontario a man became intimate with his cousin. Finding that a child was to be born, and desiring to protect his cousin from infamy, the man went to a priest to request him to perform the marriage ceremony. Learning that the parties were cousins, the priest refused his consent to the marriage unless he was paid $500 "for kindred." This it was impossible to do; and, to avoid disgrace, drugs were administered which resulted in the girl's death, the Church thus being the indirect cause of murder.

In another case in the same district a man desired to marry his brother's widow. He applied to the priest, who refused to perform the ceremony of marriage except upon payment of $500 "for kindred." Consulting a friend, a stratagem was suggested and acted out. The man waited upon the priest with the woman, who had adroitly enlarged her person. The man, with assumed shamefacedness, confessed "criminal intimacy," and, the eyes of the priest having verified the fact by a survey of the rotund form of the female, he kindly and humanely granted the dispensation. Fourteen months later the couple brought to the priest for baptism an infant of a few days. He performed the ceremony, but asked, in some perplexity, "What became of the other baby?" Then the man told him that the baby was a pillow, and he received such a lecture as the experience of a father confessor well enabled the priest to give. But the marriage had been secured, and the Church had caused the trick and lie. To protect morality, immorality had been caused. As long as the Church can secure legal and social recognition it will maintain its tyrannical control of the lives and fortunes of men, and it is necessary not only to disprove the dogmas of religion, but to destroy the legal prerogatives and social prestige of the clergy, before the "Church of Christ" will cease to be a hindrance to the progress of man.

To secure these results two courses are necessary. First, to work for repeal legislation, which will secularise the Church, make it pay taxes like honest people, and remove from it all civil authority, as has been done in France. Secondly, let men have the courage of their convictions and ignore the Church. If a man doesn't believe in baptism, let him refuse to have his child christened. If he doesn't believe in Jonah, let him not send his child to Sunday-school, where this fable is told as a fact. It is a shame that for the sake of entertainment or fashion children should be taught falsehoods that they will have to unlearn. If he is a Secularist, let him secure civil marriage, friendly consolation, and secular burial, and never acknowledge the existence of a class of men who, by a professional espousal of supernatural beliefs, are the enemies of mental advancement.

But it is useless as well as senseless to abuse the clergy personally for these evils. They are often sincere men, who are the victims of an erroneous education, or else they yield to the demand of the people, who offer them pay for services that the clergy know have no foundation in reason or natural right. It is the people themselves who are to blame, and the remedy is in their own hands. The Church would fall in a day should the people unitedly ignore its claims. Let those who are already so enlightened as to perceive the falsity of its pretences consistently refuse to lend their support. Their example will do more than any amount of teaching to deliver the world from the control of ecclesiastics.

In *Les Ruines* Volney imagines a judgment of the priests and rulers before a celestial tribunal. His words may be translated as follows:—

"'What, then, teachers of the people, is it thus that you have deceived them?'

"And the disconcerted priests answered: 'O legislator! we are men; and the people are so superstitious! They have themselves provoked our errors.'

"And the kings said: 'O legislator! the people are so servile and so ignorant, they have prostrated themselves before the yoke that we hardly dared to show them.'

"Then the legislator, turning to the people, said:

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'People, remember what you have just heard. These are two profound truths. Yes, you yourselves cause the evils of which you complain; it is you who encourage the tyrants by a cowardly adulation of their power, by an imprudent exaggerated admiration of their false charities, by abasement in obedience, by licence in liberty, by the credulous welcome of all imposture. Upon whom will you punish the faults of your ignorance and your cupidity?'

"And the confused people remained in a sad silence."

—*Secular Thought.* ROBERT C. ADAMS.

AN OLD MALE FABLE.

I WONDER if we, as a sex, shall have always flung at us that fable of Eve plucking the apple! Yes, as long as the lean-visaged, be-whiskered gentry occupying the pulpit continue to hurl it at us. It is not long since that J. B. Simmons, before the Baptist Publication Society, said: "Beautiful as woman was when God created her, we cannot deny that in morals and religion she was a deplorable failure. From the day she turned her back upon God and God's word (both of which things she did without any influence from Adam) she became a heathen. Heathenism originated in her heart."

I presume Simmons was in the Garden of Eden at the time, and knows just how much influence Adam used! Of course, men have always believed that their sex possesses all that is good and noble, while it is women who are ever vile and depraved. Does not the Bible ask arrogantly: "How can he be clean who is born of woman?" Is not that sufficient for the world of men? How they have hounded us on to the bitter end. How they have flagellated us, scorned us, and bowed our heads in the dust, because of this Biblical statement, and the book's innuendoes concerning our moral lack! Oh, the bitter humiliation that some sensitive women have endured at the stigma! Some of them—not all! There are women among us who are so bound to the Bible, so attached to the Church and its sleek, broadcloth-coated preachers, that if the latter told them that women were made from the ribs or hoofs of the Devil, they would believe it. These women sit in the church and listen with equanimity to the clerical blackguarding of their sex. But you may be sure that something is lacking in their mental department—"rooms to rent," or something of the kind. I never see a bright-faced, quick-witted, brainy woman, with the faculty of penetrating the superficial mass dubbed religion, attending the churches to-day. None of it for them! They know that the Bible was written by men, and they will have none of it. The devout churchwomen of to-day are of the plastic order. They can sit in the pews and hear their sex libelled with impunity. The lineaments of their putty-faced physiognomy never change a particle under the fire. Why? Because they believe that Eve brought sin into the world through the plucking of the apple! They believe that women are depraved and born immoral. The minister has said so, and they believe it; poor creatures with petrified thinking faculties which would disgrace a stone image. EVA A. CASSELL.

An Irishman bought a cow from a Protestant, and proceeded to pour holy water (as he supposed) on the animal's back, making the cross with due solemnity. Having got a bottle of turpentine by mistake, the more he poured the more the cow kicked. He tried the *holy water* again, when the cow broke loose, kicked him over and dashed away, to the surprise of Paddy and his Bridget, who exclaimed: "Holy Vargin, and mither of Moses! *isn't the Protestant strong in her yet?*"

A lady in the North had asked her son, who was going up to town, to bring back with him a certain motto for the Christmas decoration in the parish church. On arrival at his destination, he found he had lost all recollection as to size and description of motto. Thereupon he telegraphed back, and received the following answer: "For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; 9 ft. long by 2 ft. wide."

Friend—"How are you doing now?" Scribbler—"First rate. Rev. Mr. Saintlie and I have gone into partnership. Making money hand-over-fist." Friend—"Eh? how do you manage?" Scribbler—"I write books, and he denounces them."

ACID DROPS.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH carried his Oaths Bill into law, but many judges are either ignorant of its contents or are bent on gratifying their bigotry at the expense of justice. A case in point has just arisen in the Towcester County Court. Mr. G. T. Smith, a juryman, claimed to affirm, on the ground that taking an oath was contrary to his religious belief. This was a perfect compliance with the terms of the Oaths Act, and the judge was bound to let Mr. Smith affirm; but, instead of doing so, he impertinently inquired *what was* Mr. Smith's religious belief; and on his declining to answer, as no part of his duty, he was ordered to stand aside, and another juryman was taken in his place. Judge Snagge may be a very good Christian, but he discredits the seat of justice by usurping illegal powers.

The only way to get this point raised in the Court of Queen's Bench is for some juryman, who is not allowed to affirm, to inform the judge that he respectfully denies the right of the court to detain him as a spectator, and then to leave the place and see what will happen. If anything *does* happen, we will see that the matter is fought out to the bitter end.

Some time ago "General" Booth expelled a lot of Salvationists at Camberwell for imagining they had any local rights. These castaways have organised themselves as "Free Salvationists," and advertise themselves as "All alive! Growing rapidly!" Yes, yes; that is all very well—in its way; but Booth gets the cash, and while he does that he will smile at disaffection.

At the annual meeting of the Nottinghamshire District of the English Church Union, held at Newark, the Rev. W. C. Leeper lamented the small attendance. He thought all Evangelicals should join his Romanising body, for the fight was not going to be between the Church and Dissent, but between Religion and Atheism. He said that even at the Wesleyan Chapel at Nottingham the minister burst into tears because he was overcome at seeing his chapel with only a handful of people, while he had met hundreds going out of Nottingham in brakes and pleasure-vans and on bicycles, intent on pleasure. That Wesleyan minister crying over other people putting their one day of leisure to some use must be a curiosity.

At Patterson, New Jersey, there was a Chinese Sunday-school, with over twenty male scholars, representing the Flowery Land. That school has come to grief. The scholars would have none but female Christian teachers; then the aspirants for heavenly wisdom wanted each a separate teacher. Finally, the head teacher issued an order to her young lady assistants not to take private walks with the Chinamen, lest scandals should arise. Denied these aids to Gospel knowledge, the heathen Chinee doesn't care to know anything further about Jesus Christ.

It was stated before the Bristol Baptist Association that at the village of Hanham two young people were married a little while ago at the Baptist Chapel, and the vicar had been pestering them ever since to marry over again in his church, as their union, he said, was a civil but not a religious one.

At the same meeting the Radstock Baptist man of God said that at Radstock the parish magazine, issued by the rector, bracketed the notice of the burial of a respectable Nonconformist with that of the burial of an illegitimate child as "Buried without the services of the Church."

Sir Gilbert Parker, Governor of Lagos, in a letter to the *Times*, refers to the failure of missionary enterprise in Africa. "It is not surprising," he says, "that the negro fails to comprehend the phenomena of the Trinity; many cultivated Europeans admit the same difficulty." He reminds Bishop Tugwell that the best remedy for the gin disease is Mohammedanism, which is a teetotal religion, while "Christianity and drink usually go together." "There is a dignity and self-respect about the Mohammedan negro," Sir Gilbert Parker says, "which is looked for in vain in his Christian brother. Compare his neat turban and decent flowing-robes with the stove-pipe hat and broadcloth of the semi-educated town native, labelled 'Christian' all over; and a very objectionable person this so-called Christian usually is."

The *Westminster Gazette* reads a lesson to that angel of light, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who wants to weed the Liberal party of all but the teetotal section of the Nonconformists. Self-respect, the *Westminster* says, would "shine forth a little more pleasantly if not combined with reckless vilification of others"; and it protests against "foolish and irrelevant personalities" and the "intemperate lan-

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guage" of the more pious supporters of temperance. Such writing as this is little short of blasphemy. Only the irreclaimably wicked would find fault, especially in sharp language, with a saint like the editor of the *Methodist Times*.

Our London contemporary, the *Morning*, wants to know how it is that Mr. Price Hughes, who is a vice-president of the National Anti-Gambling League, inserts advertisements in his paper of excursions to the Manchester races. Can it be that the advertisements are for the benefit of tract distributors?

Professor E. Hall has shown the feasibility of the Red Sea miracle—at least to the satisfaction of certain members of the Victoria Institute. He asserts that a gale of wind on Lake Menzaleh was so strong as to sweep away the waters, leaving all sailing vessels resting on the damp bed of the lake. If Professor Hall had seen two millions of people crossing, with the "waters a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," while the waters drowned others by the stretching out of a man's hand, he might have considered the miracle paralleled. But he seems to forget that a miracle explained is no miracle at all.

Dr. Henson, of Chicago, has been denouncing Mrs. Stanton and her Woman's Bible. He says the work is to be "issued at the dictation and under the supervision of a woman who is an avowed disbeliever in it," and declares "her strategic purpose, however, is to reach a class of women who as yet have not lost faith in the Bible, and under the pretence of revision she proposes to turn loose upon the Bible a horde of so-called revisers, who shall root around in it until they have effectually destroyed it." All that is necessary to disgust women with the Bible is to show them exactly what a beastly savage old book it is, and we fear the woman's revision will rather tend to cover this up than to expose it.

Adjectives, etc., from the lips of a lecturer for the Christian Truth Defence Society on Peckham Rye: "Dirty blowflies"—"Rats"—"Fools"—"Thick-headed"—"Starve-gutted"—"Humbugs"—"Dirty hounds." These are all we can condescend to print. The rest must be printed by the Christian Truth Defence Society.

The rector of Clifton, Beds., after having proclaimed the banns of marriage between Mr. Thomas and Miss Alcock, and after the arrangements for marriage had been made, declined to allow the marriage to proceed, on the ground that the lady had not been baptised. A question was asked about the matter in the House of Commons, and Mr. Asquith declared that the action of the rector was without legal warrant. This, however, is not much consolation to the parties insulted. Surely it is time marriage was made a civil ordinance, as in other countries.

The Marisberg Asylum in Germany, which was under the control of monks, was conducted on truly religious principles. Dr. Capellmann, the head physician, let the brothers tell him what the patients' symptoms were, and then began his treatment founded on what they said, the treatment being fasting, penitential girdles, flagellation, and other means of mortifying the flesh. The Asylum has been temporarily closed.

Kieff is the Russian Mecca, and pilgrims travel there from all parts, because it was there where the warrior, Saint Vladimir, first forced Christian baptism upon his heathen subjects. The peasants make the pilgrimage on foot, and it is astonishing to learn from what great distances these poor devotees come, often suffering incredible hardships on the way, and not unfrequently sinking under fatigue and hunger.

Larks (June 17) devotes a column to "An Atheist's Execution," giving an account of the death of the Chevalier Lefevre de la Barre, who was executed in 1766 for having insulted an image of the Savior. He behaved bravely, even flippantly, at the scene of execution. Voltaire interested himself much on his behalf, and mention of the incident is made in our little book on Voltaire. There is, however, no evidence that la Barre was an Atheist. As he boasted of having read Voltaire, it is rather probable that he was a Deist.

Travelling mediums, who materialise your grandfather, give you a portrait of your dead mother, and slate-writing from George Washington, for one dollar, and travelling evangelists, who convert sinners at fifty cents a head, in our opinion all belong to the same class of frauds and humbugs that every honest person ought to ignore. They are each and all guilty of obtaining money by false pretences. The woods are full of that class of criminals.—*Freethought Magazine*.

We see from *Light* that Mrs. Besant and Colonel Olcott have been visiting the great American test mejum, Mr. John Slater, who is said to be the person who, under the name of Henry Slade, was convicted of fraud on Dr. Ray Lankaster and Dr. Donkin in 1876. As the mejum's most renowned performances are with slates, his name seems rather appropriate, whether he be Slade or only a spiritual double of that worthy.

The *English Churchman* is much annoyed that at the Liverpool banquet to the Shahzada, "in spite of the presence of the Bishop of Liverpool, grace was said by the leader of the local Mohammedan community." It complains that "nothing has been done to remind the Shahzada that England is a Christian land, and that to her Christianity her greatness is due."

The Shahzada probably knows too much to credit this. He knows that the Christians of India are the most criminal of the population, and that Christianity has left the Abyssinians almost barbarians. He sees here that Christians act right in the teeth of the doctrines they profess.

"The Secret of England's Greatness" is the title of a well-known picture representing the Queen presenting a Bible to an Eastern chief. Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's Secretary, was instructed to write that Her Majesty never made use of any such expression.

Two dead bodies were discovered on Sunday morning at Burley-hill, Allestree, near Derby. "Vermin killer" had been taken by the deceased, one of whom was a young lady named Naylor, the other being the Rev. A. E. Constable, of Guiseley, near Leeds.

George Schrofield Stanford, clerk, at Gurney's Bank, Yarmouth, suffered from religious mania. One evening he took his sweetheart for a walk, pushed her into the water, and knelt on her until she was dead. He then drowned himself. Another blessing of religion!

The Rev. Robert Barlow Gardiner cannot stand whistling. A lad named Cassal blew a whistle as he was walking in front of the man of God, who thereupon struck him with a walking stick. The magistrate fined him sixpence, with two shillings costs.

It is a Christian country. The *Echo* (June 24) says: "Within the last two weeks fourteen bodies of murdered infants have been found in London." Let us haste to convert the far-off heathen.

At a meeting of the Universities Mission to Central Africa, held at King's College, the Rev. Horace Waller, a missionary, dwelt on the spirituality of the natives, which was more marked than in European nations. A remarkable instance of this was related by Mr. Waller, when trying once to save the life of a man accused by the witch-doctor of raising a terrific storm. The missionary took the man by the arm, and exhorted him to go to the chief and state he did not cause the storm. When he got to the tent, however, he said, much to the confusion of the missionary, "I did it." The missionary is probably quite right in regarding superstition and spirituality as identical.

Buckle was ridiculed for including earthquakes among the causes of superstition. Yet, since the shocks at Florence, there is hardly a street in which there are not lighted shrines with a view to better protection.

To-Day publishes a sermon by the Rev. T. W. M. Lund, of Liverpool, on the late Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. Mr. Lund says it is the object of Christ's society to fuse mankind and minimise its selfishness. How beautiful! But what is the fact? Why, at this very moment, the Christians are engaged all over the world in stealing land from the "heathen," and snarling at each other, as Mr. Herbert Spencer says, while the theft is being perpetrated. And it is in Christian countries that the race for wealth is carried on with the utmost greed and recklessness.

"Peter Lombard," in the *Church Times*, says that mothers sometimes confound baptism with vaccination, and tells of a young man who did not attend confirmation, although he had been specially prepared for it, because he thought he should have to strip to be examined, and he did not relish the idea.

The Bishop of London thinks that clergymen should not refuse to marry divorced persons if innocent, but only if guilty. His theory seems to be that the innocent party in a divorce is so unmarried that he or she can remarry, while the guilty party is still so married that he or she cannot form a new union.

The Prince of Wales does not like long sermons; nor do the soldiers. The Rev. A Robins at Windsor is known as the "Soldier's Bishop," and the Prince is said to have told him once, when he promised to attend church, that the

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sermon must not last more than five minutes. The soldier's bishop ascended the pulpit, watch in hand, and completed his sermon in exactly three minutes; and the Prince congratulated him on the fact at the luncheon at the barracks after church.

Professor Chamberlain gives the following as a genuine piece of Japanese English, by a native who has visited England: "The Testimony [*i.e.*, Testament] of English said that he that lost the common sense, he never any benefit though he had gained the complete world." The Jap, in secularising the gospel text, has certainly improved it.

A little while ago Austrian farmers were, like our own, praying for rain. Now floods have come in districts where the corn was nearly ripe, and great damage has been done. In some places houses have been swept away and people drowned.

The *English Churchman* is not satisfied with the late Government having hindered the band of the Coldstream Guards from playing at the elevation of the Host at the opening of the Roman Catholic cathedral. It asks that the Act of 10 George IV., c. vii., sec. 26, which prohibits processions with religious emblems, should be put in force against the Catholics. From its description it appears to be equally applicable to the Salvation Army.

The use of incense and vestments in his diocese has been vexing the Bishop of Exeter, who bids his clergy to cease these luxuries—at any rate until the law permits their indulgence.

Ibn Abbas, who some years ago explained in the *North American Review* why he prefers Islam to Christianity, now compares their effects on marriage and divorce from the Moslem standpoint. He says that there are fewer divorces in Cairo with 250,000 inhabitants than in the county of Ashtabula, Ohio, with but 37,000. He says: "Divorce is repulsive to Islam, and every writer of the Moslem faith has condemned it."

Ibn Abbas says: "The polygamy of Islam has come in for a full share of unrighteous indignation on the part of Christian writers. But there is no evidence that Jesus the Nazarene (upon whom be peace) prohibited polygamy." He declares that Moses sanctions, and Jesus never abrogated, what is essentially the Moslem rule.

Ibn Abbas further remarks: "History tells us that Napoleon the Great did, under the sanction of the chief Bishop of the Christian Church, divorce the wife of his youth to suit the ambitious aspirations of his destiny. This has no parallel in Moslem history. The divine laws of Islam, and its judicious licence of polygamy, have rendered such a condition of things unnecessary. It is in this, as in many other instances, that the religion of Islam is better suited to the demands of social and national life. Mr. Syud Ameer Aly, a judge of the Calcutta High Court, has stated that 'ninety-five per cent. of the Mohammedans of India are, either by conviction or necessity, monogamists,' and the late General Macgregor is responsible for the statement that 'only two per cent. of the population of Persia enjoy the questionable luxury of plurality of wives.'"

Parnellism without Parnell does not seem to be a very distinguished article. Its leaders are under a strong temptation, which they cannot resist, of playing to the gallery and damning everything that is British, whether good, bad, or indifferent. The *Independent*, for instance, in rejoicing over the fall of the Liberal Government, exclaims: "Away with them, down with them, especially that charlatan, John Morley—a wretched sneak, a tricky Agnostic," etc., etc. Surely it ill becomes those who cry out against the priest in politics to raise the *odium theologicum* against Mr. Morley. It is enough to damp the enthusiasm of many Freethinkers in this country who have stood up in the darkest hours for justice to Ireland.

Perhaps, after all, the Redmonite organ is not in the least sincere in this denunciation of Mr. Morley as a "tricky Agnostic." It may be only the natural gambol of the professional politician, who is becoming the curse of every democratic country. Talk about Cromwell! Why, to our mind, it would be far better to hand over the reins of power to one man of commanding intellect and character than to suffer the rule of hundreds of little ambitious office-seekers, who make a living by pandering to every prejudice and superstition of their clients.

A new sect of religious worshippers have made their appearance at Zalma, Mo. The Rev. Joseph Shrader is the shepherd of the new flock. The centre of attraction is a young girl, who makes periodical flights to heaven, so it is claimed, returning with messages for the believers. The Rev. Mr. Shrader claims the Bible to be out of date altogether, as it is not consistent with modern times, and proposes to establish a new code, obtained through the instrumentality of his "angel."

On Long Island, New York, there is a village named Babylon, and a local magnate has made himself ridiculous by issuing an order to the constable to arrest all persons caught riding bicycles through the village on Sunday. The constable says he cannot do it, for the cyclists come in hundreds, and he has no assistance.

A writer in *Blackwood's* says that "priests cannot change their priestly countenance if they wished. For some mysterious reason the subcutaneous tissue over the cheek-bones and under the jaws of the cleric's face gets an undue supply of nourishment, which leaves distinctive marks, while the consciousness of a share in the Apostolic legacy gives a muscular set to the lips."

The French Catholic papers are still harping on "the bankruptcy of science." They cannot possibly mean that systematised knowledge is bankrupt; but good phrases ever were commendable, and this is used to mean the hoped-for bankruptcy of a republic under which science and discussion are free. The reactionaries want to administer the estate—not of science, of which they know nothing, but of the body politic, which they hope to administer. Brunetière was induced at the Vatican, not to rehabilitate the story of creation, or of Joshua causing the sun to stand still, but to help restore the influence of the Church in the State.

God indulges in occasional freaks of monstrosity, even in fishes. A shark, recently washed ashore at Midian, British Columbia, had two distinct tails, three perfect eyes, and what appeared to be the rudiment of a fin or flipper hanging to the under jaw.

The Lancaster *Spy* charges Mr. G. R. Kirlew, of the Strangeways Boys Refuge, with indecent conduct under pretence of religion. Mr. Kirlew pursues the proprietor and editor for libel. They plead justification, and produce witnesses to show the charges are true, and made in the public interest. The case is not yet adjudicated.

His brethren of the Dundee Free Presbytery exonerated the Rev. J. A. Simpson, of Bonnet-hill Church, from the charges of indecency made against him, but affectionately admonished him to be more guarded in his conduct in future.

At Chelmsford Assizes the Rev. R. Temple, rector of Thorpemorieux, near Ipswich, consented to a verdict against him for £50 and costs for slandering Miss Emily Carpenter, a schoolmistress. On returning from a holiday, she found a rumor circulated in the village that she was a mother of two children. The rumor was traced to the defendant and his wife, the parsonage having an antipathy to the schoolhouse.

Ananias Again!

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has recently turned to lesslobbering Bradlaugh! This is atrocious. Let us have his venom in any form but that. Let the donkey kick and bray against Bradlaugh to his heart's content, but let him not praise him. That is loathsome to a degree we cannot describe. The lying Hughes says that Mr. Bradlaugh promised his constituents that "there would be no propagation of Atheism" in Northampton. Well, Mr. Symes was very intimate with Mr. Bradlaugh; he went repeatedly to Northampton to propagate Atheism, almost immediately after Mr. Bradlaugh's first election; and never heard or read till now that Mr. Bradlaugh objected to it, or that he had promised his constituents that such should not be done. The local papers will show that Mr. Symes lectured there twice in the Square to immense crowds, on "Christianity the Worst Foe of Liberty," and "Christianity the Worst Foe of Truth." Out of those lectures sprang a debate with a Mr. Barber, in the Town Hall, extending over four nights, we think. At a later date our editor lectured there again on "Lost! The Christian Heaven." And, on another occasion, he met the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam in debate in the Northampton Town Hall. The local papers will afford information as to dates, etc. The lectures and debates embittered the Christians, but we never knew that they called upon Mr. Bradlaugh to put a stop to them. Had Mr. Symes remained in England, it is extremely probable that he would have visited Northampton on many subsequent occasions. Mr. Hughes evidently finds it congenial to lie. That lying spirit which deceived Ahab's prophets seems now to be monopolised by the rev. gentleman.—*Liberator.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 30, Camberwell Secular Hall, 61 New Church-road: 7.30, "All About Angels."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—June 30, Milton Hall, North London. July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. S. PENGELLY.—Many thanks. Such cuttings are extremely useful.

W. J. CHIVERS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. MORTON.—Were it not for the power of early association, the Bible would never hold its present place even as literature. Parts of it are sublime, and some passages are pathetic; and the authorised English Version bears the strong stamp of simplicity, having been executed when our language was in its youthful prime. But it is absurd to compare the Bible with Shakespeare. He is more sublime than the Bible at its best; and his intellect, imagination, fancy, wit, and humor have furnished the world with a great rich feast; whereas the Bible supplies only a few simple dishes. How a man appreciates Shakespeare is a fair test of his intelligence; we would even say, a fair test of his character.

DOUBTER.—*Darwin on God*, by G. W. Foote, contains all the important passages on religion in the great scientist's works and in his letters. Read that little volume, and you will see that Darwin was as much an Atheist as the editor of the *Freethinker*. We do not remember that the late Professor Tyndall ever made a direct avowal of Theistic belief. Mr. Herbert Spencer and Professor Huxley are Agnostics; that is, they have no "God"; that is, they are Atheists, as we understand the term.

W. FARMER.—We consider Lotze an immensely overrated thinker. He is lauded by the "advanced" Christians, who wish to obtain a new lease of life for their system, and who naturally cling to any eminent writer who countenances their general supernaturalism. Some day or other we will devote an article to Lotze's views on religion.

O. N. WELD.—Forming a company or a registered society is the only way to acquire property for Freethought purposes until the law allows us to hold property under a trust deed. Shareholders can receive interest if the enterprise succeeds financially; not otherwise. We know the Freethought party is not a wealthy one, and that there are many claims upon its generosity.

A. LIDDLE.—In our next.

G. NARWIPER.—We believe we noticed your pamphlet when it first appeared. It is not usual to notice the same pamphlet twice.

W. S. R.—Perhaps it is as well to leave the matter as it stands for the present. We certainly think that Freethinkers should, as far as possible, deal with newsagents who are liberal enough to supply Secular publications.

J. ROBERTS (Liverpool) wishes to ask Mr. George Wise whether it is the rule at his meetings to ask those who offer opposition their names and addresses; or whether, if not the rule, it has sometimes occurred; and, if it has occurred, what was the object of the inquisition?

J. J. R.—"The Lord hath need of them" is an excuse for many shady transactions.

W. H. MORRISH (Killarney).—Your example of distributing *Freethinkers* while on your holidays is a good one, and will, we hope, be followed.

X. Y. Z. and H. MALBONE.—The reference to Numbers xxi. 17, 18, on p. 396, obviously should be Numbers xxxi. 17, 18.

W. J. HOCKSON (Engcobo).—Thanks for paper. We are pleased to see there are Freethinkers in Zambuland.

C. WRIGHT.—Slade was sentenced to three months' imprisonment at Bow-street about the end of October, 1876. About the same time the Rev. Dr. Monck was convicted at Huddersfield. The revelations of the Fox sisters were made in the *New York Herald*, September, 1888.

J. KEAST (Bristol).—We accept Mr. Grinstead's disclaimer, but it is to be regretted that he did not express himself less ambiguously. Glad to hear that the Secular meetings in Eastville Park continue to be successful. Mr. Putnam is roaming the country, and we have not his address. No doubt, if this meets his eye, he will send you his subjects for July 14.

J. SIDDON.—See paragraphs. We pass by the libel on Colonel Ingersoll. It is bad policy to notice these beastly slanderers unless you can punish them. They have no sense of shame, and they glory in an advertisement.

JAS. NEATE (hon. sec.) reports that the Bethnal Green Branch, which is a poor one in a very poor neighborhood, collected £2 5s. on Hospital Sunday.

J. TOMLINSON—(1) It does not matter a straw whether Mr. Hughes owns the *Methodist Times* or partly owns it; he is its editor, and responsible for what appears in it. (2) Our extract was correctly taken from *Light*.

JAS. PAYNE.—See "Acid Drops." We fear that nothing will be done to check the contravention of the Oaths Act until one of our men gets into Parliament. Soliciting Christians is no use; you must frighten them to get any justice out of them, at least towards Freethinkers.

J. G. DOBSON.—See paragraph. We hope the rowdyism will be checked.

D. F. GLOAK.—Sky-pilot Campbell, of whom you speak, may be a zealous Christian, but he is not overburdened with veracity. It is utterly untrue that the Secularists put the bailiffs into Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh's house. He had no standing at all in the Hall of Science libel case. He asked to be included, but our solicitors treated his letter with silent disdain. You will find all the information in our pamphlet, a copy of which should be purchased and preserved by every Freethinker. Orders for literature should be sent direct to Mr. Forder.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—T. Carne, 15s.; F. Swatts, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Small, 2s. 6d.

W. SCRIVNER.—Received, but too late for notice this week.

A. LEWIS.—Your letter raises an interesting question. It shall appear in our next issue.

H. W.—Thanks; but we cannot use it without the name and date of the paper.

LIVERPOOL.—Of course we treat your letter as "private." See our reply to another correspondent on the same matter.

J. E. STAPLETON.—Thanks for your long (not too long) and interesting letter, with most of which we heartily concur. No doubt the course adopted at the Conference will give substantial satisfaction all round.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cape Mercury—Dundee Courier—Isle of Man Times—Truthseeker—Public Opinion—Liberty—Rangoon Times—Light—Crescent—New York Freeman's Journal—Manchester Courier—Progressive Thinker—Clarion—Justice—Finchley Free Press—Church Reformer—Bristol Mercury—Newark Herald—Northampton Daily Reporter—Essex and Suffolk News—Post—Two Worlds—Freidenker—Twentieth Century—Der Arme Teufel.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

SPECIAL.

THE National Secular Hall Society is still in possession of the Hall of Science, but circumstances, into which I need not enter this week, render it inadvisable to hold our meetings there for the present. I have therefore had another hall engaged, in order not to break the continuity of our propaganda. It is not so large as the Hall of Science, but it is large enough for our summer meetings. The only difficulty is that we cannot charge for admission. We shall, however, make a collection at the entrance—a silver one for the body of the hall, and a copper one for the gallery; and in the special circumstances of the case Secularists will of course *give* as much as would in other circumstances be *exacted*.

Milton Hall is known to many Freethinkers already. It is situated in Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road. It is two minutes' walk from the "Mother Red Cap," three minutes' walk from the Camden Town Station of the North London Railway, and five minutes' walk from Camden-road Station of the Midland Railway. Tram cars from Hampstead and Highgate pass the door. Cars from Holloway, Islington, or King's Cross pass Camden Town Station. Persons coming by the underground railway, and getting out at Portland-road or Gower-street, can take a penny ride on the cars running from the corner of Euston-road and the Hampstead-road. Omnibuses run from Camberwell, Victoria, and Westminster direct to Camden Town. Milton Hall is really very accessible, and

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we hope it will be crowded this evening (June 30). North London Freethinkers should do their best to fill it to the doors.

Mr. Charles Watts will be the lecturer. His subject is to be "Cromwell and English Freedom," with special reference to *religious* freedom. The following Sunday the lecturer will be Mr. J. P. Gilmour, of Glasgow, and on that occasion I shall take the chair.

The whole subject of our propaganda in London is occupying my attention, and I shall shortly suggest some new developments. G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures in the Camberwell Secular Hall this evening (June 30), his subject being, "All About Angels." This lecture will be new to South London Freethinkers.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. He was in excellent form after a recent brief holiday, and his lecture was very warmly applauded; indeed, he received an ovation on resuming his seat. Considering the time of the year and the heat of the weather, there was a capital audience. Mr. Foote, who presided, made an announcement with respect to future meetings, the particulars of which will be found in our "Special."

Mr. S. P. Putnam, our American visitor, lectured three times at Manchester on Sunday, to large and appreciative audiences. "His kindly and genial manner," the Branch secretary writes, "combined with his large store of humorous anecdotes, completely won the hearts of his hearers, and he was greeted time after time with rounds of applause." Several new members joined the Branch during the day.

The Plymouth secretary desires all members to be present next Sunday to make arrangements for Mr. Putnam's visit. The treasurer will be glad to receive quarterly subscriptions, which are now due.

Mr. C. Cohen has been having a lively time in the North. His first two meetings at Stockton were very large and orderly, and fair opposition was offered by a Methodist minister; but the third meeting was riotous, and Mr. Cohen and his friends were severely hustled; indeed, they had to be protected by the police, who guarded Mr. Thwaites's shop, where the little band of Secularists had taken shelter. Fortunately, the general public is much impressed with Mr. Cohen's ability and courtesy. At Middlesboro' there was a similar experience. The first open-air meeting was orderly, but the second had to be given up after Mr. Cohen had spoken for about twenty minutes. He is to visit the district again shortly, when we hope he will meet with a more civilised reception. Freethinkers in the neighborhood who wish to assist in carrying on this propaganda should communicate with Mr. J. G. Dobson, 33 Trent-street, Stockton-on-Tees.

Mr. Cohen held two large and successful meetings on Newcastle Moor last Sunday. A few followers of the man Powell tried to create a disturbance, but their efforts were a failure. Newcastle friends are to have Mr. Putnam with them on July 7, and a tea will be arranged for visitors from outlying places. Those who mean to sit down to that repast should communicate with the Branch secretary, Mr. J. G. Bartram.

Our readers will find on another page a full advertisement of the London Secular Federation's annual excursion on Sunday, July 14, to Clacton-on-Sea. The tickets are now on sale, and we hope they will speedily be bought up. We should like to see the special train well packed; and should there be any surplus, it will go towards Freethought propaganda in London. Messrs. Foote and Watts, as already announced, intend to join this excursion. Other lecturers who may be going will perhaps drop us a line, so that the fact may be mentioned.

"Nunquam" has been found out by a Midland correspondent, who accuses him of irreligion. He says, in reply, that good houses are more blessed than fine churches, and "if to cleave to one's fellow creatures be irreligious, then I am a very infidel. . I want to impress upon you that the boundaries of Slow's borough are included in the British Islands, that the British Islands are only two small dots on a big map, that there are several races of people in the world who do not recognise the Rev. Hopley Porter as their spiritual guide, and that in the mysterious deeps of the great sea of the past are buried nations as powerful, civilisations as perfect, creeds as true, heroisms as noble, and humanities as beautiful and as pathetic as any that the sun now shines on."

Mr. J. P. Gilmour, of Glasgow, who was elected vice-president of the N.S.S. at the Bristol Conference, is coming south for a month's holiday, and on the Sundays he will take the opportunity of lecturing to English audiences, who will find him well worth listening to. He is a deep student, widely read, fluent in speech, and by no means devoid of humor. Mr. Gilmour lectures at Manchester to-day (June 30), and we hope the local "saints" will give him a thoroughly hearty welcome. On the following Sunday he lectures in London, and on this occasion Mr. Foote will take the chair for him, partly out of personal esteem and partly out of compliment to the Scottish Secularists.

The Sheffield friends take an outing next Sunday, July 7, when they will visit the residence of R. S. Wilson, Esq., Tuxford Hall, where they are invited to tea.

There has been a controversy on "The Soul" in the columns of the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, in which J. J. Brown, author of "The Eternal News," has sustained the spiritist standpoint, while "Aristipus," "Aldebaran," and "Lucretius" have written from a sceptical standpoint.

Professor Marshall Hall, a musician of some celebrity in Australia, has composed an overture, "To Giordano Bruno." The idea of the work was suggested by a perusal of the life of the great Freethinker and martyr to superstition and bigotry.

At the Battersea Park Gates on Sunday morning, at 11, Mr. Stanley Jones will debate with Mr. Cyrus Symons on "The Soul and Science." Mr. Symons is a Unitarian, and a very courteous opponent. Freethinkers in the district are asked to support the meeting, as the Branch excursion is on that day.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in the comment upon the Old Testament which she is writing for *The Woman's Bible*, says: "With our ideal of the great first cause, a God of justice, wisdom, and truth, the Jewish Lord, guiding and directing that people in all their devious ways, and sanctioning their petty immoralities, seems strangely out of place, a very contradictory character, unworthy our love and admiration. The ancient Jewish ideal of Jehovah was not an exalted one."

It has been decided to erect in Paris a statue to the memory of Victor Hugo. The situation selected is the square in the centre of the avenue called after the poet, and near the house where he died. The subscription list recently opened for this purpose has already reached a total of many thousand francs.

Reviewing the third volume of "the noble edition of Tom Paine's writings" edited by Mr. M. D. Conway, the *Pall Mall Gazette* admits that Paine was "a remarkable figure," that he "played a considerable part in the world's affairs," and that he "played it honestly." His influence is allowed to be "enduring," and "to wax rather than to wane."

The writer of "Medical Gossip" in the Glasgow *Bailie* states that the local Secularists, who complain of the inquisitorial treatment of Freethinking patients in hospitals, are raising money to enable them to subscribe for a certain number of beds, to which they will have a right. We shall be happy to hear, in due course, how this enterprise has succeeded.

Mr. Larner Sugden, a well-known Freethinker, of Leek, has been selected amongst twelve applicants for the post of Surveyor to the Stoke Council and Engineer to the Bucknall Sewage Scheme. His election was unanimous.

The resignation of the Liberal Government and the approaching dissolution of Parliament will put an end to any chance of bringing on either of the Bills for the legal relief of Freethinkers. Mr. Manfield's "Liberty of Bequest" Bill and Mr. Gourley's "Religious Prosecutions Abolition" Bill share a common fate. Perhaps it will make no great difference to the prospects of either of these measures whether the new House of Commons is Liberal or Conservative. Private bills have no assistance from Governments; they fail or succeed according to the zeal, vigilance, and influence of their friends.

During the last elections a leaflet, drawn up by the President of the National Secular Society, was extensively circulated, and after reading it a large number of Liberal candidates promised to vote for an alteration in the law as

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it affects those who are opposed to the Christian religion. A similar leaflet, brought right up to date, will be prepared for the coming elections. We appeal to Freethinkers all over the country to bring this question to the front at election meetings, and to extract straightforward answers from candidates. Merely to ventilate our grievance at public meetings is in itself a great advantage.

In *Open Court* (June 6) M. D. Conway writes of his visit to Dr. Martineau on his ninetieth birthday, and mentions the progress made by Unitarians and others during that period. He says: "The prosecution of Richard Carlile in 1819 for selling the works of Paine (a more orthodox man than Martineau) was conducted by a Unitarian. This went on till Carlile, and Jane Carlile, and Mrs. Wright, saleswoman in the bookshop, and even the store-boy, were all shut up in gaol for years. So far as I can learn, Mr. Fox, of the Society now known as 'South Place,' was the only Unitarian who denounced these persecutions."

Further on he says: "The vaunted freedom from creeds of Unitarianism has been something like the boasted absence of State religion in the United States—an absence which leaves us fettered by the Sabbath, taxed for an army of explicitly unconstitutional chaplains, and taxed to support all churches because church property is not taxed. Indeed, the absence of an authoritative Unitarian creed seems to have been once felt by many Unitarians as an incentive to secure conformity by tongue-lynching—of course I refer to their narrow wing, now very small: there was always a magnanimous Left, and under Martineau's leadership it has long been the Right."

Dr. Martineau, at the time when Theodore Parker was virtually kicked out and tabooed by the American Unitarians, extended sympathy to him, alluding to some "painful experience" of his own. Perhaps he remembered he had been over-much of a Christian, and far too little of a human brother, to his own sister, Harriet, when she went a little farther in heresy than himself.

Mr. F. H. Balfour, in a lecture given before the Japan Society, said Buddhism was making strides in Japan. "Among the priesthood," he said, "you will find men of the highest families and the deepest erudition, who are not only versed in Eastern and Western metaphysics, but know as much about Christianity as you and I do. Where do you think we shall find one of the completest libraries of Christian evidences in Japan—a library containing all the standard controversial works, from our old friend Archdeacon Paley down to *Lux Mundi*, and the latest volume of the fervent Farrar? In some theological training-school under missionary superintendence? No; but in the great Temple of Reformed Buddhism at Kyoto. All these are healthy signs. The Buddhists are fighting for their faith and for their lives; they do not regard Christianity with indifference, but attack it with honesty and boldness; they are foemen worthy of our steel, and every inroad that is made upon their ranks is a very hard-won victory."

The *Freethought Magazine*, of Chicago, gives, as frontispiece of its June number, portraits of the Rev. J. R. Kaye and Dr. Felix L. Oswald, who are conducting a written debate on the Bible in its columns. Hudor Genone has a feeble reply to "Corvinus" on the reconciliation of religion and science. Dr. Carus also replies to "Corvinus," but only pelts back hard names. Herman Wettstein gives illustrations of the heterodoxy of American divines and Rabbis; Mr. Hale writes on Alfred de Musset as illustrative of the French literature of despair.

November 12 will be the eightieth anniversary of the birth of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who, with Ernestine Rose, her senior by over five years, followed Frances Wright in pioneering the advocacy of Woman's Rights. All these were Freethinkers; and Susan B. Anthony announces that on that date all the women pioneers left in America will assemble at the great Metropolitan Opera House of New York to celebrate the occasion and the fact of Mrs. Stanton having called the first woman's convention together some fifty years ago.

Mary Proctor, daughter of the late R. A. Proctor, is doing something to popularise astronomy in New York. She lectured recently to the working classes at some grammar schools, and expected only a dozen or two, but had attentive audiences of over eight hundred.

Dr. A. J. Gordon has published *How Christ Came to Church*. If successful, it should be followed by *How Christ Got Kicked Out and Run In*.

Public Opinion, of New York, under heading "Religious," gives an extract from the London *Freethinker*. We are getting on.

AWAY WITH PARSONS!

AWAY with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because they falsely claim to know
That God exists, and strive to show
That they're his agents here below!
That's why.

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because they hold a bunch of tracts
That tell of ancient monstrous acts
Of gods and beasts, and say they're facts.
That's why.

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because a man who binds his brain
Within a book can ne'er attain
To moral worth; his life is vain.
That's why.

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because these book-bound weaklings dread
The brains of ev'ry healthy head,
And preach dependence on the dead.
That's why.

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because they fill the infant mind
With thoughts of heav'n and hell, designed
The moral sense to warp and blind.
That's why!

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because with science they are wroth,
And ever try to stop the growth
Of all that conquers mental sloth.
That's why!

Away with parsons and with priests!
But why?
Because they've filled the earth with fears,
Dissensions, hopeless hopes, and tears,
Throughout a thousand wasted years.
That's why.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Christian Virtue.

It has been the custom to label every virtue as Christian that has been evolved as human, ages and ages before our own era, at which time every good thing was re-dated, christened, and re-named, as if it were the result of an historical Christ! Indeed, one expects to hear of the elements of pure air, fresh water, and clear sunlight being christened under this name in the same way that the well-known healing by means of mental medicine, which was practised by the pre-Christian races, has been designated "Christian healing." We shall probably have Christian Lunacy or Christian Idiocy! Yet the fact remains that the direct enemies of the human race in Europe have been the most besotted supporters of the doctrines called Christian. It cannot be too often repeated that the foundations of the Christian faith were laid in falsehood and ignorance. The Fall of Man in the beginning was *not* a fact, and consequently there could be no *curse*. It is but a fable misinterpreted; and the redemption of the New Testament is based upon the fable in the Old. There *is no* virtue nor efficacy in a vicarious atonement, and no priesthood ever had or will have the power to forgive sin, to break the sequence between cause and effect, or to evade the Nemesis of natural law.—*Gerald Massey.*

He (earnestly)—"And now that we are engaged, Ethel, will you pray for me?" She (earnestly also)—"Oh, no, George. I've been praying for you for eight years; but now that I've got you, I'll thank the Lord for you."

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (June 15).

It was a grateful change, after all, to pass from the turmoil of London to the great, quiet, and beautiful country. London is a continual pressure, an everlasting excitement. There seems no end in time or space to its enormous activities. It is difficult to keep still long enough in London to write these "News and Notes." I desire to be on the go, in the swim, all the time. The electric currents possess the universal air, and you cannot escape the sparkling influence unless you take a long journey into the country. One must do this occasionally, I think, in order to recover his equilibrium.

Hence I rejoiced in the loveliness of English scenery as I dashed to Derby on the express, with Watts and Foote in the compartment with me. How delightfully the landscapes spread away from the rushing train; fields and meadows, forests and hills, dotted with villages and handsome dwellings of the rich and lordly, with now and then a towering church or castle, ancient relics of gloom, in the bourgeon of this glorious springtime, adorning the portals of the past, while the music and splendor of the future are bursting forth.

With these mingling feelings of reminiscence and hope, the end of our journey is reached at Derby, a stately village of one hundred thousand people; a village, it seemed to me, after London and in contrast with American cities of like size. An American city would hum from one end to the other, but here the people move along without hurry or tumult; and, honestly, it did seem to me, at first sight, as if I had struck a New England burg of about five thousand population. However, Derby is a handsome place, and the people are good-natured and accommodating.

There were bubbles of excitement, however, circulating through its streets. There was to be a clash of arms in the intellectual arena, and the religious and Freethought spirits were in a state of animated expectancy. The debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. T. W. Lee took place at the Temperance Hall. There were present, I should think, fifteen hundred people at each session. At any rate, the hall was crowded to its utmost capacity. The Christians were on hand to witness the downfall of Infidelity. They composed at least three-fifths of the audience.

Mr. W. J. Piper, editor of the Derby *Daily Telegraph*, presided on both evenings. He is, I understand, a Unitarian, and he did his duty impartially and admirably, and held the reins of government so firmly that the perturbed theological soul must needs listen according to parliamentary rule—a thing which Mr. Piper said could not have been done ten years ago. Free debate was then impossible. Secularism has been training the people.

Mr. T. W. Lee is a representative of the Christian Evidence Society. He has been a disputant for about fifteen years. He was, at the beginning, I understand, bombastic and egotistical; and I can see some remains of the primeval strata yet. Occasionally, by his manner and the look of his eye, it appeared to my mind that he would like to demolish things by pure physical force, by the "sword of faith," and not by the clash of argument; but evidently he has learned his lesson, and holds his theological team under good control. He does not allow his temper to get the best of him. He is keen, shrewd, and well-equipped. He is a wily opponent. He knows when to dodge, and where to put in his hardest blows. He is a skilled dialectician. He manages his case with the adroitness of a lawyer. He has evidently studied the defences of modern theology. I must confess that I was pleased with his energy, his tenacity, and his determination not to be whipped, no matter how severe might be the blows upon his metaphysical cranium. Even if he was knocked down he wouldn't admit it, and he had a majority of the audience to shout victory while in the jaws of defeat.

Mr. Foote was the man for the occasion. He is imperturbable, no matter how furious the conflict. He does not get excited. He measures his opponent fairly. He knows what he has to do; that the majority of the audience is hostile, and he must handle his subject both carefully and courageously. He has the power both of eloquence and logic. The people are bound to listen to what he says. He constrains by his personal presence. He has physical vitality. He is like a soldier. His speech is persuasive, his method argumentative, with here and there a brilliant illustration or flash of humor. He appeals to the intellect. He is analytic and convincing. He made his hearers see differences where his opponent endeavored to confound them. Not until his closing address did he gather together in one thunderbolt the condensed logic of his incisive reasoning; and then he fairly captured his audience with his splendid peroration, and extorted applause even from the orthodox crowd. Once in a while the enemy showed his teeth and growled, and was just on the point of precipitating a mob; but Foote was in his element then, and quelled his audience by what they could not help but admire, his display of English grit.

Mr. Lee, in his argument, followed the usual metaphysical lines. He made a statement, not of facts, but of opinions. The question was, "Which is the more reasonable, Theism or Atheism?" Mr. Lee said, in substance: Something now exists, therefore something has always existed, for something cannot come out of nothing. What is this eternal something? It cannot be the universe as it now is, for that we know has changed. It cannot be the atoms which compose the universe, for they are conditioned and limited. The uncreated substance must be unconditioned and unlimited. Being unconditioned and unlimited, is it intelligent? It is, for the order and symmetry of the created universe declare this. Is it benevolent? It is, for the universe also declares that, on the whole, created existence is for good, and not for evil.

This is the substance of Mr. Lee's argument. It is the old argument from design; an argument which cannot be improved upon with all the artifices of modern theology. Through thick and thin, Mr. Lee stuck to his argument with manful resolve. It was his only salvation.

Mr. Foote did not endeavor to meet Mr. Lee with any metaphysical back-fire whatsoever. He wisely confined himself to facts. He stuck to the scientific method entirely. What are the facts of the universe, and what do these facts mean? In the original statement of the question Mr. Lee put it as follows: "*Resolved*, That Theism is a more reasonable *theory of the universe* than Atheism." Mr. Foote declined to admit the words, "theory of the universe;" for, said he, Atheism is not a "theory of the universe." It does not profess to explain things. It is simply an acceptance of facts as far as they go. Mr. Foote was right in this. He did not try to elucidate the universe, but simply the facts of human knowledge. These facts, if there is any validity in human knowledge, teach that it is impossible that the universe should be created by an infinitely wise, powerful, and good being. In the first place, we cannot conceive creation, and therefore it cannot be reasonable. But, allowing creation, the creative force, whatever it may be, is responsible for all that exists. It therefore creates the evil, and cannot, therefore, be infinitely good. It cannot be infinitely wise, for everywhere are marks of imperfection. Therefore, whatever the creative force may be, it cannot be God, as defined by Theism. God, so far as we know, is purely the creation of the human mind.

These were the points elaborated by Mr. Foote. He did not once get off his base. He did not try to

> Soar away
> And mingle with the eternal ray.

He let all speculation alone. He did not build up an airy fabric of Atheism as opposed to an airy fabric of Theism. He did not dogmatise about the unknown. He simply said: These are the facts; Theism does not fit the facts. No Theistic theory ever invented by man does fit the facts. What is the inevitable conclusion? Atheism, pure and simple. Agnosticism is practically the same thing. It rejects every known theory of Theism. Therefore it is "without God," and that is Atheism. No doubt the Christians saw the force of Mr. Foote's argument. They realised as never before the logic of Atheism; that, based on facts, it is impregnable, and that the only answer to it is the wail of faith and the gush of sentiment. Mr Lee knew how to wail and how to gush, and he sought applause by expressing the fervor of his belief. The Christians knew the point, and applauded his assumptions vociferously, while, when he attempted argument, they were dumb. His logical weakness was apparent even to his friends.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

The other Monday morning, as Colonel Blank was walking in his garden, watching an old negro man doing some work which he had hired him to do, the following conversation took place:—

"We had powerful preachin' up at the meetin' last night."

"Ah! what was the sermon about?"

"De maracle, sah."

"What miracle, Sambo?"

"Dat ar maracle, sah, 'bout de loaves and de fishes."

"Well, what did the minister say about it?"

"Well, sah, you see old Marse Jesus had been preachin', and doin' a lot of teachin', and the 'postles went round wid him, and one day after dey hab tramp all day with nof'n to eat, dey went and got hungry; but dey could find notfin' to eat but two loaves and one or two little tiny bits of fishes, so de blessed savior he kindly blessed dem, and thar was five thousand fishes and five thousand loaves, and de good 'postles dey were oh so 'appy, and dey went and eat 'em all up."

"Why, Sambo, I think you have got that wrong."

"No, indeed, sah, no I ain't. You don't understand. De maracle was, dat de 'postles could eat all de loaves and all de fishes and they didn't bust."

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FOLK-LORE AND SPOOKS.

On Tuesday, June 18, I attended, by invitation, the rooms of the Folk-Lore Society, Albemarle-street, W., to hear rival papers on Psychism and Folk-Lore from the ex-president, Mr. Andrew Lang, author of *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, and *Cock-Lane and Common Sense*, etc., and from the present president, Mr. Edward Clodd, author of *The Childhood of Religions, Myth and Dreams, The Story of Creation*, etc. Both are eminent in folk-lore, and Mr. Gomme, author of *Ethnology and Folk-Lore*, presided.

The occasion of the debate was the presidential address of Mr. Clodd, wherein he had said of the Society for Psychical Research: "Analysed under the dry light of anthropology, its psychism is seen to be only the 'other-self' of barbaric spiritual philosophy 'writ large.' It disguises the old animism under such vague and high-sounding phrases as the 'subliminal consciousness,' the 'telepathic energy,' the 'immortality of the psychic principle,' the 'temporary materialisation of supposed spirits,' and so forth. The Society will sell you not only the *Proceedings* containing these precious phrases, but also glass balls of various diameters for crystal gazing, from three shillings upwards." These and some other remarks were not to the mind of the author of *Cock-Lane and Common Sense*, and I fully expected a smart debate. But, although Mr. Lang's paper contained, like his book, a good deal more of Cock-lane than of common sense, in the sense of giving unsupported testimony with no opportunities of cross-examination, he fairly climbed down, declared he said nothing about a spirit world, and only advocated the claims of the Society for Spookical Research as affording much matter for folk-lore study. Their provinces overlapped, the student of folk-lore being engaged in psychical research, and *vice versâ*. He encouraged the use of crystal balls, preferring those at four shillings, as a certain percentage of persons saw hallucinations in them. He referred to the distinguished names in the Spookical Society, some of whom, like Mr. Balfour, had science in their blood; and quoted some of the tall stories of Eusepia Palladino's "manifestations," such as boxing Prof. Lodge's ears and pulling his whiskers while supposed to be securely held, and of D. D. Home's levitation. He finally mixed up Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego with a passage from Jamblicus, and the report of various savages walking through fire, and introduced a photograph taken by Mr. Thompson, son of the late Archbishop of York, showing the latter. This photo was passed round, and there was certainly nothing very psychic about it. The savage Shadrach & Co.—about as unspiritual a set as could be found—were certainly dancing in steam; but the steam came from a pit, the obvious purpose of which was concealment of how it was done.

Mr. Clodd, in reply, justified his attack on the Spookists by their pseudo-scientific attitude; thus, their authorities for the appearance of apparitions of death were founded on testimony 7 per cent. only of which was British, while 30 per cent. was Brazilian. The truth was they were trying to find proof of spirits, and those who went in that attitude were sure, like the Empress Helena when seeking the true cross, to obtain just what they wanted. He referred to other testimony about "the not immaculate Mr. Home," mentioned that Professor Lodge, though renowned as a physicist, held that psychical problems were best dealt with in a hazy and muzzy state of mind, and declared that the whole proceedings of the Psychical Society were vitiated by their unguarded methods.

Mr. Lang briefly replied, urging that the Psychical Society did collect a mass of folk-lore. Mr. Edward Maitland, author of *The Soul and How it Found Me*, then spoke of having heard in California at midnight a midnight axe, which he took to be the warning of spirits against bears. Mr. Alfred Nutt endeavored to minimise the difference between Mr. Lang and Mr. Clodd. A clerical stranger complained that scientific men did not give attention to spiritual phenomena, and the present writer replied that in the early career of the Royal Society, when belief in witchcraft abounded, it did give attention to such questions, but found it had to protect itself against fruitless talk as against plans for squaring the circle or perpetual motion. Spiritism was a survival of a once general theory. Mr. Gomme, the chairman, briefly but concisely summed up the debate.

There was one statement in Mr. Lang's paper I should have liked to have dealt with had there been time. He spoke of the eminent members of the Spookical Society as "not in the slightest degree superstitious." Now, there is no active member of that Society for whom I have more respect than Mr. Lang himself. But assuredly the statement is not true of him. Indeed, I question if it is true of anybody. We inherit superstitions with our blood. Mr. Lang has a strong strain of "special Scotch," and, as he told us, "a dilapidated liver." Brilliant, highly cultured, and erudite on some points, he is evidently no judge of the value of testimony. A man of science may be easily bamboozled by a tricky woman, as Mr. Crookes certainly was by Miss Florence Cook, and probably Professor Lodge by Eusepia Palladino. A man of letters, too, may be duped as easily as a scientist.

J. M. W.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

June 30, Sheffield.

July 6, Chester-le-Street Branch (lecture held at West Pelton Co-operative Hall at 6.30); 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Special Note.—Through an error Mr. Putnam has July 28 at liberty. Any Branch requiring that date should write to Mr. Watts at once.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

WRONG CHANGES WITH LOCATION.

Palgrave, the Arabian traveller, when in Ri'ad, a central kingdom of Arabia, the seat of the Wahabee zealots of Mohammedanism, had an interview with Abd-el-Kereen, a member of the ruling family. He sought for information as to the peculiar teachings of this Wahabee sect. To that end, he asked the aged sheik to tell him the difference between great and little sins, for during their conversation all wrongs seemed resolved into one of these. The reply was prompt:—

"The first of great sins is the giving of divine honors to a creature. The second is drinking the shameful"—that is, smoking tobacco.

"Murder, adultery, and bearing false witness; what are they?" The reply:—

"God is merciful and forgiving; these are little sins."

Had the Mohammedan made similar inquiries of Mr. Palgrave, who was a Catholic Jesuit in disguise, it is probable the first of the great sins would have been the denying that Jesus Christ is less than God Almighty; the second, the denial that the Bible is the word of God; with a third added, rejecting Sunday as a holy day. The lesser sins would be the persecution of infidels and heretics, and lying for the glory of God.

Early education and environment seem to change our notions of right and wrong. The cannibal deems it no crime to roast and eat fat missionaries. We wonder whether the natives of Hawaii do not indulge a regret that their parents had not eaten the fathers of the sons of the missionaries who have lately usurped their government.—*Progressive Thinker.*

PROFANE JOKES.

"What did you learn at Sunday-school, Harry?" said his mother, after his first visit to that institution. "Nothing." "Nothing! What did the teacher talk about?" "Only that they put dandelions in the lion's den, and he wouldn't eat them."

"In the life to come," shouted the evangelist, "there will be no marrying or giving in marriage." Those who were sitting near the Chicago woman heard a low cry of horror as she arose from her seat. "In that event," she remarked to the usher, as she left the church, "I've got no time to be monkeying here."

The story of the Jew who thought God almighty was making too much fuss over his eating a bit of pork, because a storm occurred just then, is equalled by this from Scotland. A Peebleshire man was known to be in the habit of saying his prayers in a field behind a turf-dyke. One day some wags followed him to listen to his devotions, and as he prayed he told what a sinner he had been, and said that if the dyke fell upon him it would be only what he deserved. The wags on the other side could not resist the temptation, but pushed the dyke over him, when, as he scrambled out, he was heard to say: "Hech! it's an awfu' world this; a body canna say a thing in a joke but it's ta'en in real earnest!"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Cromwell and English Freedom."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 9.15, brake excursion to Riddlesdown. Thursday, at 8, members' quarterly meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "All About Angels."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, C. Cohen, "The Scientific Basis of Morals."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11, debate between Stanley Jones and Cyrus Symons, "The Soul and Science."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "The Plagues of Egypt."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Modern Quacks."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, L. Keen, "What Must I do to Inherit Eternal Life?" (Collection in aid of the Federation.)

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, W. Heaford, "Spiritual Consolations"; 3.15, A. B. Moss, "Antidotes to Superstition."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement." Thursday, at 8.30, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Shall we Live Again?" 3.30, "The Curse of the Cross." Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, G. H. Baker, "Christianity a Plagiarism."

KILBURN (High-road): 7, St. John will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, F. A. Davies, "The Whitewashing of Jesus."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, St. John, "The Curse of Superstition."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, R. Forder, "Theology and Science."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, C. Cohen will lecture; 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, a lecture; 7, S. R. Thompson, "The Origin of the Gods." (Collection on behalf of Sam Standring.) Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tuntine Society; 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Antiquity of Man according to Science."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, J. P. Gilmour, "The Bible and Disease"; 6.30, "The Social Purity Sham."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, musical evening.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, S. P. Putnam, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 3, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century"; 7, "Christianity and Woman." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, annual meeting, election of officers.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting—urgent.

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "The Law of Population."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, W. Treasure, "The Old Testament."

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Grays, Old Pelton): 7, a lecture.

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Hall Nicholson, "The Origin of Man."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 30, m. Victoria Park, a. Regent's Park, e. West Ham.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—June 30, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 30, m. Clerkenwell, a. Finsbury Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—July 17, m. Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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ROME OR REASON.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY is dead. By the time this article is in print the grave will have closed over the remains of a valiant soldier in the great army of human liberation.

We have yet to see what the religious journals will say about Huxley. The secular press is almost, if not quite, unanimous in eulogy. The great Agnostic's character is praised as well as his intellect, his integrity as well as his accomplishments. All admit that he made his mark, as a teacher and a personality, upon the age in which he lived.

Huxley was the chief English champion of Darwinism. Darwin himself stood high above the controversies of his time. His intellectual atmosphere, so to speak, was as serene as the Kentish home in which he dwelt. He had no time for the debates in the market-place. The great mill of his mind ground slowly but surely. It made no noise, but at the finish there was bread of truth for the whole world—for his own age, and for all ages to come. He was a sublime discoverer, and not a fighter; although there was a certain magnificence in the steady forward movement of his genius. It pressed onward, as Tyndall said, with the quiet, irresistable force of an avalanche, breaking impediments to pieces and grinding them to dust. Huxley, on the other hand, was a born fighter. You could see it in his face. He was alwys alert, his powers and knowledge were always at command, he was always ready for a challenge, and he loved the keen air of battle. "What a man you are!" exclaimed Darwin, as he watched his younger friend and disciple flashing his bright sword, and slaying heaps of Philistines. It was Huxley, above all men, who pressed Darwinism upon public attention. And he was admirably equipped for the task. Great faculty for debate, a powerful and racy style, fine eloquence on fit occasions, and a rich allusiveness, the result of his immense reading—all conspired to make him the popular champion of the new faith.

Huxley thought himself out of Mosaism before he lighted upon Darwinism. Like his master, he also thought himself out of Christianity. His name was Thomas, and he humorously confessed to a particular sympathy with the Apostle who bore that name in Palestine. He likewise thought himself out of Theism. Yet he declined to call himself an Atheist—"for the problem of the ultimate cause of existence is one which seems to me hopelessly out of reach of my poor powers." Here, however, we think he was mistaken. Atheism is not a theory of the universe, in Huxley's sense of the words. "Atheist" means "without God." And does not "Agnostic"—a term which Huxley coined—mean precisely the same? The Atheist says he *does not* know of any God; the Agnostic says he *cannot* know of any God. Is not the difference rather metaphysical than practical? The only value of the term "Agnostic" lies in its being less offensive to orthodox ears. But will it *continue* to be less offensive if it beats "Atheist" out of the field?

There seems to us to have been a confusion of the metaphysical with the practical in Huxley's writing about the "possibility" of miracles. It is the *practical* possibility of miracles with which Christians are concerned. To argue the question *à priori* is trying to fly *in vacuo*. And just as Mill served the enemy by his ridiculous, and wildly rhetorical, eulogy of Jesus Christ, so Huxley served them—of course unintentionally—by his old panegyric on the Bible as a book to be read in Board Schools. It was a great mistake on Huxley's part. He praised the Bible *for one* reason, but he might have known that it was kept in the schools for *another* reason. The clergy do not care overmuch about its "exquisite beauties of mere literary form." They use it as a text-book of Supernaturalism.

But every man is entitled to make some mistakes. It is the bad privilege of our common frailty. Enough if they are as few as possible. Huxley was human like the rest of us; but, after all reservations, he was a bright scholar and an intrepid thinker, fighting valiantly for his convictions, and standing out boldly from the mob of cowards and hypocrites. He put his heart as well as his head into his work, and so it became fruitful work for humanity.

While this great apostle of Reason lay dying, within an hour or two of his last breath, the devotees of Faith were laying the foundation stone of a vast and costly cathedral at Westminster. Cardinal Vaughan officiated, dressed in the gaudy trumpery of his craft, and surrounded by hundreds of priests, who in turn were surrounded by thousands of laymen. It was a festal day, a day of triumph, for the Catholics. They were once proscribed, but now they lift their heads proudly, and talk of their future "conquest of England."

We do not believe that the Catholic Church will conquer England, but we do believe that it will continue to make headway. It is bound to profit by the rationalising movement which is going on in the Protestant Churches. Those who want pure, unadulterated Faith, without any mixture of Reason, will naturally go over to Catholicism, which teaches a dogmatic creed dogmatically, and spares its devotees the trouble of thinking. The Catholic Church borrows the language of Jesus Christ, and exclaims to those who are tired of harmonising Religion and Science—"Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

Charles Bradlaugh once declared that the great fight of the future would be between Catholicism and Freethought. We think he was a true prophet. Logical extremes have an eye for each other. Across the chaos of Christian sects, Reason and Faith recognise each other as natural enemies. They can never sign a treaty. They must fight it out to the bitter end. And before the end, it may be that Faith will gain power enough to oppress, to persecute, and to slay. But the martyr-spirit of Freethought will be roused to defy, and we believe to overcome, the great enemy of human freedom.

G. W. FOOTE.

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE.

I DEARLY love a crank. Not because "Great wits are sure to madness near allied, And thin partitions do their bounds divide," for the better opinion is that of Lamb, that "the greatest wits will ever be found to be the sanest writers," for which the names of Aristophanes, Lucian, Rabelais, Shakespeare, and Voltaire may suffice. But in your crank there are always vague possibilities. He gives scope for the larger hope. One who wanders out of the common road may open up new prospects. We may profit from his errors. Sanity is only the balance of the faculties, and the balance may be over-weighted by a preponderance of the higher qualities, as well as of the lower ones. When Dr. Max Nordau instances men like Tolstoi and Ruskin as types of "degeneration," we may say there is a kind of insanity which rises above the common level, as well as an imbecility that sinks beneath it. Jesus, Mohammed, Joan of Arc, Francis d'Assissi, Jacob Boehme, George Fox, Emanuel Swedenborg, were all insane. They were visionaries who, in varying degrees, contrived to infuse into others the contagion of their own insanity.

A madman of a different stamp is Dr. Friedrich Nietzsche, for he has had a training in science, art, literature, and philosophy. On that account his madness is the more dangerous to this age. That he is mad few could read his latest and greatest work, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Berlin; 1883-91)—"Thus spake Zoroaster" (which he calls "a book for all and none") without admitting. But it is the work of a madman of genius. The king says in Hamlet: "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go." That of Nietzsche is claiming much attention. At Jena, H. Tuerck writes on *F. Nietzsche and His Philosophical Errors*. At Berlin, L. Stein has a book on *F. Nietzsche's View of the World and its Dangers*. Even at Glasgow a German teacher announces a work, *From Darwin to Nietzsche*, showing that he regards the latter as summing up the doctrine of the survival of the fittest; while the Anarchists are calling for an English edition of Nietzsche's works.

Dr. Nietzsche is a Saxon of Polish descent, born at Rücken, October 15, 1844. His father was a clergyman in Naumberg, but he lost him while young, and was brought up by his mother and sisters—a spoilt child, evidently. He studied under the noted philologist, Ritschl, at Bonn and Leipsic, and was, by his recommendation, appointed Professor of Classical Philology at Basel, when but in his twenty-fourth year. He had early thrown aside Christianity for Paganism, and his well-attended lectures showed preference for such subjects as Greek literature, Greek tragedy, and the dawn of Greek philosophy.

He already displayed a tendency to scepticism, cynicism, and an intellectual self-exaltation, which I should call egomania—a disease which has finally sent him into seclusion; for in 1889 it was reported he was dead, the fact being that he was insane. In his portrait you can see the man of genius and the madman. His face is clear cut, of the German aristocratic type, with lofty forehead, heavy brows, deep eyes, wide nostrils; a head expressing proud, self-reliant *hauteur*, deep thought, and keen sensitiveness; the head of a musician, poet, philosopher, and crank. Nietzsche is all these. He gives the impression of a high-mettled, vicious horse, that will not bear the traces—a superb animal, but one that needs breaking in before he can run in harness. Alas, he is not broken in, but broken down. May he recover, having learnt the virtue of humility, the beauty of compassion, the worth of human service!

Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer and many another pessimist genius, was born out of due time into a world unworthy of him. Haters of modern society are usually conservative reactionaries, lamenting the good old times, when their class lived in secure comfort, because the masses were ignorant; or radical Utopists, contrasting the existing social state with their ideal of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Nietzsche is neither. He despises the old *régime*. Individualistic and aristocratic by birth, training, and temperament, this Neo-Cynic allows that democracy is a defence against the pest of tyranny; but his *bête noir* is *der Pöbel*, the mob, the crowd of vulgar, sordid *canaille*, glorified as "the people." Equality, he declares, is not a fact; fraternity is a dream; and the only liberty he cares for is the liberty to develop into the Superior Man, and to rule inferiors. He would not go back to monarch or priest rule, but forward to a new aristocracy developed through Anarchism—the rule of the Higher Men, the Uebermenschen. He announces the death of God, the birth of the Superior Man. God is dead. He died through compassion for suffering he could neither prevent nor cure. The trouble is that the Superior Men are not of age and power to step into His shoes and take up all His deserted functions. So we lie twixt two worlds—one dead, the other powerless to be born. Man is a cable over an abyss, along which the animal may pass to the Uebermenschen. What is great in man is that he is a bridge, and not an end. Our business is to push on, whoever falls over. Patient sedentariness (*Der Sitzfleisch*) is the sin against the Holy Ghost. We must keep moving. For Schopenhauer's "Will," or blind instinct for life, he substitutes *Wille fur Macht*—will for power. What is the strongest medicine? he asks. Victory. Only the great ones count, he says; the rest are *der Pöbel*. A people is but a circumlocution of prolific nature to arrive at six or seven great ones. It would be well to sweep away a whole species to produce one better specimen. "What," he asks, "causes more sorrow in the world than compassion?" "Among the cowardly it is bad form to say anything against bravado, and callous men cannot endure anything said against compassion."

Nietzsche is, frankly anti-Christian. He says, in effect: Blessed are the arrogant, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the strong, for theirs is the kingdom of man. Be strong, for to be weak is to be miserable. He dislikes philanthropists who cultivate the rotten potatoes of society. He scorns the weakness of compassion. Stamp out the unfit. Nothing has done us more harm than the extravagances of the compassionate. It is the petty men who are masters and preach up the petty virtues which enable them to thrive. The Superior Man disregards and disdains alike the petty morality and the petty immorality of mediocrities. "Who would be Creator must work in Good and Evil alike. He must first be a Negator. Evil belongs to the highest good—the creative." Nietzsche despises humility. Christian morality is that of slaves and the sick—the negation of life, the morality of the hospital. The morality of the Superior Man is affirmative, not negative. It is the symbol of prosperous, vigorous life, of the will for power become the principle of life. The one communicates of its fulness, enriches, brightens, and adds to the joy of the world; the other impoverishes, enfeebles, and disparages the world. Christianity is a malady, a denial of the Ego; but the morality of nature is a triumphant affirmation of the Ego. Christianity he regards, as Tacitus did, as a pernicious superstition; or with the aversion which Goethe expressed for "the cross and bugs." The cross is, in his expression, "the most venomous of the trees planted on earth." Priests are but invalids turned doctors, seeking to soothe their clients' sufferings by opiates and syrups, which never touch the root of the disease, and who would be promptly dismissed were the patients permitted to return to natural health. Christianity, he says, gave Love (Eros) poison. It did not kill, but turned it into Vice. In his hatred of hypocrisy, humbug, and conventionality, he appears, like Moses at sight of the golden calf, ready to break all the Decalogue. He extols the motto of the Assassins, "Nothing is true; all is permissible." He girds at "Cowardice which masks as Virtue." To the Philistine he appears a dreadful apostle of intellectual pride and moral anarchy—the conscienceless assailant of all that is holy. This is wrong. Nietzsche says: "Laugh warmly, mischievously; but with good conscience." Beneath his cynicism surges an earnest, restless seeking after the best. He contemns the Pharisaic hypocrisy of the "unco guid," but preaches sincerity, courage, and self-reliance. Be yourself, bad as you may be, this will be the first step onward.

Many of his utterances are mere sportive malice. He writes in oracular aphorisms, full of cynical wit and paradox. Thus he says that Messiahs always get to their kingdom riding on asses. He asks: "Is man but one of the mistakes of God, or is God but one of the mistakes of men?" "Where the tree of knowledge is, there is always Paradise—so says the oldest and the youngest serpent."

His characterisations of men are sharp and cynical. Pascal he calls the "self-murderer of Reason"; Rousseau "the return to Nature in *quadrupedis naturalibus*." Spinoza's Pantheism is "hocus pocus"; Kant he calls "cant"; Comte he terms "that clever Jesuit," Victor Hugo "the Pharos on the Sea of Insanity," Michelet "Ecstasy out of the Rock," Schiller "the moral trumpeter," Carlyle "the

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heroic moral interpreter of dyspepsia." Elsewhere he sneers at Carlyle as "an English Atheist who thinks it an honor not to be one." J. S. Mill is "clothed lucidity"; Renan represents "the loss of Reason through original sin" (his training as a Christian priest); Zola is "the love of stinks," Liszt "the school of feminine fluency." First a disciple of Wagner, Nietzsche afterwards preferred the author of "Carmen." Bizet, he says, is Mercury; Wagner, Thor or Zeus; and the gods have light feet. His favorite authors are Machiavelli, Voltaire, Galiani, Emerson, and de Stendhal (Henri Beyle), whom he calls "the last great physiologist," and whose saying, "What excuses God is that he does not exist," is after his own heart. Schopenhauer he called the last German worth consideration. But "the first duty of a philosopher is to get beyond his day;" so as soon as heroes become popular he gives them up. Schopenhauer gives way before Zarathustra Nietzsche, who proclaims that *he* has given the Germans the most profound books they possess, and adds that he has good reason to believe that the Germans do not comprehend a word of them.

I have been unable to find any mention of two writers who appear to me to have much influenced Nietzsche—viz., "Max Stirner" (Kaspar Schmidt), Anarchist, author of *Der Einzige und Sein Eigenthum*, and "Philipp Mainlaender" (P. Batz ?), pessimist, author of *Die Philosophie der Erlösung*. Both these are profound but little-known writers, who have scattered seeds bound to grow and fructify wherever they find fit soil. Nietzsche owes most to Stirner; but where Stirner is critical, even in proclaiming "I am the measure of Truth, and what I call my right is, in truth, only my might," Nietzsche is dogmatical—not the less so because he proclaims that his judgments are his alone, and need have value for no one else. In the saying of Mainlaender, "God is dead, and his death was the life of the world," we have the keynote of some of Nietzsche's own philosophy.

The higher race that is to take the place of the defunct deity hardly seems to include woman. Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, appears a misogynist. In his paradoxical fashion he says "Man has created woman—whence, from one of God's ribs—his own ideal." "There is ever something deceptive in love," he says; "but, then, there is always some reason in deception." He couples "the eternal feminine" with "the eternal fool." Feminine love is a kind of parasitism, always costly to the host. The Higher Man is above all that. He is, in short, a god, above the common needs of humanity.

Such, if I understand it—which is doubtful, for Nietzsche is more a poet than a philosopher, and delights in paradox, phantasy, and the oracular opaqueness of a new revelation—is the gospel according to Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. Its dynamite is not less dangerous because hidden in darkness. It seems to logically include the abolition of conventional morality, the elimination of the unfit, the erection of a system of caste, and the rule of a new aristocracy. The militarism of Germany has made this possible as the program of one of its most original though most cranky thinkers.

My voice can hardly reach Dr. Nietzsche in his seclusion, or I might say: My afflicted brother, are you not learning that we are all dependent on the offices of the humblest; that for us not only the great ones fought and thought, but the poor ones have toiled and suffered? Is a sick person necessarily a parasite on society who should no longer be let live? Was Cæsar Borgia, that type of the "will for power," really greater than the unknown fireman or nurse who dies trying to save others? We are not gods, but men, among men, dependent, from our first breath, upon others. Think of all we owe to the past. Dive we ever so deep, soar we ever so high, we cannot escape our duty to our kind. Surely humility, compassion, brotherly love, and brotherly service befit us. We all need to partake of the holy, human sacrament of sympathy. I, too, own ai *Dieu ni maître;* but let us not throw away the baby along with the dirty water. J. M. WHEELER.

DOES NOTHING.—I once said to him (Carlyle), not long before his death, that I could only believe in a God who *did* something. With a cry of pain, which I shall never forget, he said, "He does nothing."—*Froude's "Life of Carlyle," vol. ii., p. 260.*

MORALITY WITHOUT RELIGION.

(Concluded from page 403.)

So far from it being impossible to conceive morality existing apart from religion, it appears to us difficult to understand how ethical conduct, in its strictest sense, can be depended upon if it is regulated by the popular theological faith. To comply consistently with the requirements of this faith would tend to fetter human actions, and to deprive them of their true ethical value. Moral freedom cannot co-exist with compulsory belief, and the performance of all noble action is incompatible with the lack of power in man to do good. The Christian religion compels its adherents to believe that of themselves they are incapable of goodness; that uniformity of belief is absolutely indispensable to personal salvation; that one particular faith is of more importance than conduct; and that the ultimate personal consequences of an immoral career can be avoided by a death-bed repentance. Now, we submit that such teachings as these are not in harmony with the development of that morality which we should all aim to exemplify in our daily lives.

It is quite a misreading of history to attribute human progress to such transcendental views as are incorporated in modern orthodoxy. In so far as Christianity accomplished anything in its early history, it was the destruction of Greek and Roman civilisation, and the substitution for it of a thousand years of intellectual darkness and moral degradation. As Sir J. Mackintosh observes: "In that higher sense in which morality denotes sentiment, it is more exactly true to say that religion depends on morality and springs from it. Virtue is the state of a just, prudent, benevolent, firm, and temperate mind." Surely, with the records of the sublime ethical teachings of Buddha and of a host of ancient philosophers before us, it cannot, with truth, be asserted that these virtues depend for their manifestation upon the belief in any supernatural religion. Besides, the morality taught and practised by Atheists, Agnostics, and Secularists at the present day amply refutes such an assumption. Dr. Priestley, the Unitarian Christian, says: "General states of mind, turns of thought, and fixed habits, which are the consequences of them, arise from education and the circumstances men are placed in." Hence, an enlightened and cultivated society adapts its religion to the moral requirements of the age, which shows that morality, not religion, is the lever that regulates human improvement.

It appears indisputable to us, taking an impartial retrospect of history, that the development of morality has been the result of the cultivation of the intellect, the acquirement and diffusion of knowledge, and the improved physical conditions which science has enabled us to obtain. This fact has been fully established by such eminent writers as Buckle, J. S. Mill, and Professor Huxley. If, however, our contention be doubted, let it be shown that the secular agencies here mentioned were ever fostered and inculcated by the early advocates of the Christian religion. The very reverse is the fact, for when orthodoxy was supreme the intellect of the masses was neglected, knowledge was limited to the few, and physical training was comparatively unknown. As the result of this Christian apathy, immorality predominated, ignorance darkened the human mind, and disease robbed life of its vigor, rendering it useless for elevating enterprises. Thus we find that it is during the present century, the most sceptical period of the Christian era, that ethical culture has made its greatest advancement, and that morality has been placed upon a scientific basis. No one to-day, of any marked intellectual standing, would for a moment question that a moral character could exist independently of any theological religion. In all business transactions the mundane results of conduct are regarded as being of greater importance than its religious sanctions.

It strikes us as being peculiar that many writers, otherwise well informed, should never have made the discovery that man, apart from theological beliefs, has an instinctive love of life and happiness, and that, under favorable environment, his delight is in seeking to augment the comfort, and to promote the highest pleasure, of our present existence, irrespective of any considerations of an after life. This being so, why should it be thought that the contemplation of a future life, of which nothing is known, constitutes the sole foundation of virtue? It is a

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fact known to every thoughtful man that truth, honor, and general right-doing are just as essential to the well-being of society and the happiness of the individual, whether there be a God and a future life or not. Further, if these essentials are not duly observed, no belief in God and immortality will prevent society from becoming deteriorated. This fact is so obvious that in the commercial world it is acknowledged that the success of commerce depends, above all, upon the virtue of veracity. Hence we repeat that in business the practical observance of the elements of morality is looked for in preference to the profession of the creeds of religion. A moral man is always relied upon, while believers in religion have too frequently proved themselves destitute of ordinary honesty.

In this practical age the notion is rapidly being given up that the welfare of the human race depends upon the belief in God and in a future state of existence. In the words of the Rev. M. J. Savage, in his *Morals of Evolution*: "Are not the laws of society existing in themselves and by their own nature? These laws are essential in the nature of things; and they stand, and you live by them, whether there is a God or not." The same writer observes: "Suppose there is no future life, does morality fall? I think not. . . . . It does not make one particle of difference in regard to the validity of these laws [which govern human conduct] whether we are to live forever or only one hour." Here we recognise the superiority of Secularism to the many conflicting theologies of our time. These are symbols of intellectual poverty, mental despotism, and moral degeneration. Secular philosophy proclaims the necessity of seeking to make the best of existence as we find it; to learn the duties that devolve upon us, and to seek to discover the best mode of performing them, with a view of adding to the nobility of our own characters, and of augmenting the happiness of others. With us morality is not an importation from heaven; it is a growth of earth. It is inspired, not by love to God, but by solicitude for the benefit of man; not by the hope of heaven, but by a desire to make earth the home of justice, truth, joy, comfort, peace, and lasting love. We strive to have our reward in time, not in eternity; and our consolation consists in beholding the emancipation of men and women from the theological snares and allurements which during ages of ecclesiastical supremacy dominated the human mind.

CHARLES WATTS.

BIBLE FICTIONS.

V.—THE PATRIARCHS IN CANAAN.

THE ancient Egyptian monuments and the discoveries at Tel-el-Amarna now firmly establish the fact that the patriarchal "history" in Genesis is fictitious. We know from these sources that about 1630 B.C. Thothmes I. effected the conquest of Canaan and the greater part of Syria, and that some thirty years later Thothmes III. had long wars with the Hittites, Phœnicians, and Amorites, and other inhabitants of Syria and Palestine, and ultimately reduced to subjection all the cities of Canaan. Among the recorded victories of the latter king is a great battle at Megiddo, in which Thothmes defeated the combined armies of the Hittites and their Phœnician allies, after which he levied tribute on all the petty kings of Palestine. The spoils taken on this occasion prove the inhabitants to have been, not a number of savage tribes, but a comparatively civilised people. Among these are mentioned gilded war-chariots, coats of mail, gold and silver statues, vases, rings, jewels, tables inlaid with gold, thrones of cedar-wood and ivory, rich hangings, etc.

About 1400 B.C. the whole of Canaan was again overrun by Seti I., who reconquered all the revolted cities and provinces. Again, about twenty years later, Ramses II. invaded the country with a large army to bring the Hittites and Canaanites once more into subjection. A fierce engagement took place near Kadesh, in which, however, Ramses was only partially successful. A long struggle ensued, and many battles were fought; but in the end Ramses was glad to come to terms with his formidable antagonists. We know, further, from the record of an Egyptian military officer that in this reign the southern portion of Canaan was infested by bands of robbers and marauders.

The tablets of Tel-el-Amarna (about 1450 B.C.) prove that the land of Canaan contained a large number of petty kings, each envious of, and hostile to, the other, but all nominally subject to the king of Egypt. The king of Jerusalem, for instance, complains that the kings of Geser, Gath, and Keilah had occupied the country round about, and had intercepted his communications with other cities. The king of Babylon also informs the Egyptian king that his ambassadors had been murdered in passing through Canaan.

About 1210 B.C. a great confederacy of the kings of Western Asia, headed by the Hittites, overran Syria and Palestine, and, pressing on to the frontiers of Egypt, were about to invade that country, when they were met and defeated by Ramses III. Following up this victory, Ramses marched through Canaan into Syria, and reconquered one after the other all the revolted provinces. Having this accomplished, he returned to Egypt with a large number of prisoners, including thirty-eight kings or chiefs.

From the foregoing epitome of *real* history, it is manifest that Palestine, in the time of the Jewish patriarchs, was inhabited by a people who were both numerous and warlike, and well able to hold their own, and that for the weak and unprotected there could be no security for life or property.

Now, the description of Canaan in the days of these nomadic patriarchs, as given in Genesis, is that of a land perfectly peaceful. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are represented as living in complete security, and as leading about immense flocks and herds from one part of the country to another without the smallest interference from anyone. Moreover, from the Bible narrative it would appear that the land during this period (which was that of the Egyptian domination) was very thinly peopled, and that the few inhabitants were a primitive, law-abiding people, of peaceful disposition, who stood somewhat in awe of the Hebrew patriarchs.

Abraham, with sheep and cattle in such numbers as to give employment to 318 men, finds plenty of pasture land (belonging apparently to no one) wherever he chooses to go. So does his nephew, Lot; so does his son, Isaac; so does his grandson, Jacob. They even take upon themselves to change the names of places. No one ever questions their right to appropriate all the fields and meadows in any locality, nor attempts in any way to molest them. According to the statements in Genesis, the period during which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in Canaan was 215 years. Yet during the whole of this time—though the land was constantly plunged in the most sanguinary wars, with all their attendant horrors, and robbers and freebooters everywhere abounded—not one of these patriarchs suffered the slightest annoyance.

So far from this, two sons of Jacob are represented as massacring all the men and boys of a whole city with complete impunity. This incident furnishes a fit illustration of the fabulous nature of the whole patriarchal "history."

Jacob's daughter, Dinah, we are told, was taken and ravished by Shechem, the son of Hamor. The young man, however, desiring to make the girl his wife, he and his father waited upon Jacob to arrange the marriage. The latter appears to have left the matter in the hands of his sons, who made it a condition that Hamor and all his people should be circumcised. To this Shechem and his father agreed, and prevailed upon all the men of their city to submit to the operation. On the third day, when the Shechemites were in an enfeebled state, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, "took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword." Further, "the sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city. . . . . They took their flocks and their herds and their asses. . . . . and all their wealth, *and their little ones and their wives took they captive*" (Genesis xxxiv. 25–39).

This story is almost too ridiculous for serious notice; but, since it is gravely related as an historical event by the sacred writer, some comments may not be considered unnecessary. Now, the statement that two young herdmen could, unaided, slay all the males of an entire city, even under the circumstances mentioned, is an outrage on common sense, and needs not to be twice considered to be rejected. We are to believe that the men of Shechem

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allowed themselves to be slaughtered, one after the other, like sheep, and that none of the women of that city had either the strength or the will to use a weapon in defence of her husband, brother, or son. One has, further, to imagine two young men leading away captive several hundreds of women and children, and also taking with them all the flocks and herds which they had collected from the fields adjacent to the city. To believe this story one must possess the blind faith and unreasoning credulity of a Christian apologist.

When the occurrence came to the ears of Jacob, that patriarch, it is true, censured the two murderers; but his chief concern was for his own safety. By the command of his God, who, even in the most criminal acts, watched over him and his sons, he removed to another part of the country. There would seem at that time to have been no one in the land—no friends or relatives of any of the murdered men—either able or willing to bring the murderers to justice. In fact, some short time afterwards Jacob's sons returned to the neighborhood of the massacre as if nothing had happened, and no one made the slightest attempt to lay a hand on them. They have then but their father's sheep and cattle, and are unattended. All the women and girls whom they are stated to have carried away from Shechem have vanished. The inspired writer, in continuing his veritable narrative, has forgotten all about them, and in the remainder of his history writes as if the event had never occurred. Clearly, even according to the Bible account, the story of the massacre is a fiction.

In Genesis xlix. 5–7 Jacob, when blessing his sons before his death, refers to this matter. He says: "Simeon and Levi are brethren; weapons of violence are their swords. . . For in their anger they slew *a man*. . . . Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel." From this it would appear that the two sons named had slain only *one* man—Shechem. The hundred dogs in the back garden have turned out to be but "our dog and another one." We may take it, then, that in the earliest account Simeon and Levi were simply represented as having assassinated the seducer of their sister, and that this story at some later date became transformed by the hand of some imaginative writer into the massacre of a whole city.

In any case, no rational person can repose the smallest faith in either narrative; for, apart from the numerous contradictions and discrepancies which prove a large number of the events recorded in Genesis to be fictitious, the Bible history of the patriarchs in Canaan, taken as a whole, is not only inconsistent with what we know was the condition of that country, but is under such circumstances manifestly impossible. VERITAS.

SAYCE ON THE BIBLE.

THE Rev. A. H. Sayce has been writing in the *Christian Commonwealth* upon "How the Bible was Written and Preserved." It is interesting to be told that "the oldest books at present known to us have come from Egypt and Babylonia," especially as the Christian clergy have always asserted hitherto that the Bible was the oldest book in the world. But Mr. Sayce gives us no information as to how the Bible was written or preserved. He has a lot to say about Egyptian and Babylonian writing; but as he admits that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and in Hebrew characters, it is difficult to understand what Egypt and Babylon had to do with it.

The rev. gentleman's biblical criticism is, as usual, very remarkable. He admits that Isaiah ii. 2–4 has nothing to do with the context, and has been quoted from another writer; but objects that "chronology" is against the idea that the words were taken from Micah iv. 1–3, although in Micah they are perfectly in accord with the context; as though "chronology" could prevent any scribe that chose to do so from writing in the words of any prophet into the composition of any other. He has an elaborate theory about the ancient libraries of the Jews (if they ever had any) having been taken to Babylon; because the Book of Kings ends abruptly with the reign of Evil-Merodach. But if anyone will take the trouble to compare 2 Chron. xxxvi. 25 with Ezra i. 3, he will see that the Book of Chronicles terminates in the middle of a sentence; the explanation being that Ezra once formed part of Chronicles, and has been clumsily separated. Similarly, it is very probable that the Book of Kings has lost its end in much the same way, and the fact that it now concludes where it does is no proof that it was written at Babylon or in the reign of a Babylonian king. E. P.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (June 15).

I WAS pleased to meet the Liberal friends of Derby. I expect to lecture at this place while in England. Mr. W. Westwell and Mr. Robert Ainsworth were present from Manchester. We were at the same hotel, and the hours outside the debate were enlivened with generous sociability. Under the guidance of Mr. Foote and Mr. Westwell, I discovered the superb beauties of English cooking. I don't understand Daudet when he speaks of the "coarse meat and horrible cookery" of England. I suppose I shall know more about it when I visit Paris, if I have the opportunity; but I really think at present that the English do know how to cook.

On Thursday we had a delightful drive together about Derbyshire, and the prospects were lovely indeed. Here is English scenery in its simple magnificence. Nothing like the wild and grand scenery, the prairies and mountains of America; but there were ample fields undulating and glittering in emerald glory; there were antique forests, over whose crumbling arches swept the splendor of the spring, decorating anew the immemorial columns; there were gentle declivities fading into the cloudy and luminous horizon, the green hedges, the hard and shining road, the snug hamlet, the lodge and stately gateway, the elegant park, the gardens just beginning to bloom, the great mansion, half hid by trees and shrubbery; the wandering herds following the dog, the horseman in the distance; the white flocks, the shimmering lake embosomed in the hills; the town, splendid on the verge between earth and sky, like a fairy picture, gorgeous and illuminated with the slanting rays breaking from floating cloudlands; while, mingling with these scenes, burst and quivered and rolled the sweet singing of the birds. And how shall I describe the delicious lunch—milk and soda, bread, butter, and cheese! That was all we could find in the remote village, amid whose quaint and picturesque precincts we seemed to be flung back a hundred years, far from the haunts of civilisation. I did not know that so secluded and venerable a spot, where the din of the world is lost amidst gray and mossy walls and blackened rafters, could be found in the bustling England of to-day. But England, after all, stretches wide and far, and has an infinite variety of aspect, and the old continually mingles with the new.

After the debate on Thursday night a large deputation of Secular friends waited upon Mr. Foote, and thanked him for the admirable fight he had made. Mr. W. Whitney spoke in behalf of the Derby Branch of the National Secular Society, and congratulated Mr. Foote upon the efficient and dignified manner in which he had defended their position. The American visitor also received a cordial welcome. So the Derby meeting closed with enthusiasm and courage in the Freethought ranks at this important point.

Saturday morning Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts, and myself visited Nottingham for a few hours. This is about fourteen miles from Derby, a manufacturing town of 240,000 inhabitants. It has a much more business-like appearance than Derby. The passers-by are more alert, and there are crowds occasionally. The great castle looms on a precipitous height as we approach the station. We did not have time, however, to mount its frowning walls, around which so many battalions have surged and crowded in bleeding masses. We visited the Arboretum, in which there is a beautiful display of flowers, with walks amid blooming foliage and dazzling carpet of grass, from the crest of which, where the monument and cannons gleam, is spread a vast and splendid panorama of the city. Returning, we pass through the cemetery, in whose shadowy majesty white death mingles with many-colored, blossoming life. We witness the memorials of those who have served humanity, and whose names are in the annals of Freethought. Among those shines the name of William Nowlan, the father of Mrs. Charles Watts. He was one of the champions of the Secular cause in Nottingham years ago. Nottingham is noted as one of the old camping-grounds of Watts. Here he has borne the lance in the arena of intellectual debate, and made Freethought victorious. Therefore there are pleasant and noble recollections connected with this place. I was pleased to meet Mr. Chater, and also, at his house, Mrs. Charles A. Watts, daughter-in-law of my veteran comrade. She was sojourn-

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ing here for a few days on account of her health. Nottingham will brightly abide in the memory of the Secular Pilgrim, though but a few hours were passed amid its charming associations.

At Nottingham my comrades bid me good-bye, after having seen me safely into the cars bound for Bradford. At this place, where I arrive at early candle light, I am met by J. W. Gott, John Grange, H. Smith, and James Sunderland, and their cordial greeting makes me ready for any fate in this somewhat frontier post of English Freethought, for Freethought is not by any means in the swim here at Bradford. It is a constant struggle to keep above water, but there are strenuous and noble workers. The *Truth Seeker* is a monthly publication, and it is doing good service to advance organisation. It is a useful pioneer journal, sold for only a penny, and one gets more than his money's worth every time. Such a journal in America would cost at least five pennies. By means of the *Truth Seeker* Bradford forges ahead and keeps the light of reason sparkling abroad. I have fair audiences for the three lectures on Sunday, May 19, and they are appreciative and enthusiastic; and I must say that I like Bradford, whatever the fortunes of war may be. I enjoy the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Gott, and am surrounded with home comforts. Saturday afternoon I take a trip with Sunderland over the city, or town rather; for, although Bradford has a population of 240,000, it is not, in English parlance, a city, as it has no cathedral and no bishop. Only those places are cities where cathedrals and bishops put in an imposing appearance.

Bradford, in some parts of the day, and at some places, presents almost as busy and crowded a scene as London. It is a manufacturing point. The Lister mills, the largest in the world, are here. They are simply immense, and astonish one with their height and variety. I visit Maningham Park, a beautiful place. Bradford is amply endowed with parks. Outside of London it surpasses all other towns of its size for the number it possesses, although in the heart of the city we do not see trees and gardens as we do in London.

Bradford is a picturesque place, although it is crowded with warehouses and factories, and its streets are narrow and crooked like those of Boston. I travel, after my rounds of the principal resorts, to the home of Mr. Sunderland at Undercliffe, and it is a climb to get there. It is like going up Zion's hill. However, we don't have to walk; we ride on the top of a big tramcar. The tramcars here have two stories, and they do present a gigantic appearance. A wonderful and beautiful view is unfolded as I mount upward on this tremendous vehicle. Bradford is built mainly in the heart of a great basin. Vast hills roll away on every side, decorated with residences. Far as the eye can see these billowy mountains extend. It was like many a scene in the Old Granite state, and reminded me more of my native territory than any place I had yet visited. The sun was setting as we traversed the lofty ridge, and it was indeed a gorgeous prospect. The sky was like a vast dome of mingling gold and blue, with darkening grey. Swell on swell of table lands, and mighty hills like the swaying of a huge sea, swept to every point of the horizon, while deep down below gleamed and glowered the multitudinous city. As my friend Smith said, looking at Bradford at night time, when its thousand lights were flashing, it seems as if heaven itself was turned topsy-turvy, and all the shining stars were huddled and scattered in flaming masses in the abyss beneath. Bradford certainly can boast of beauty and sublimity.

I must not omit to write of Laycock's Temperance Hotel, where they drink tea and eat toast and talk with the volubility of a ladies' sewing circle. It is a congregation of cranks from morning till night, and the humming and the buzzing and the flashing and the crashing of ever-varying ideas are immensely amusing. It is like the sputtering of electric batteries with opposing currents. This is one of the oldest places in Bradford, and is a curiosity shop indeed. Here is freedom of speech, the utmost antagonism of thought with prevailing good nature; while occasionally there is a lurid lightning glare which threatens disaster, but glances off in a rainbow shower of jolly laughter. I wouldn't have missed Laycock's on any account. It was unique, universal, interesting, evolutionary, and revolutionary. I liked it. It was good as a play. I hope it will keep rolling and tumbling on in Niagara-like fashion, with its intellectual rapids, long as the world stands. Bradford won't be a dull place to visit as long as Laycock's flourishes.

John Grange was chairman of the meetings, and made excellent opening addresses, giving a hearty welcome to the American visitor. Friends were present from Leeds, Shipley, Halifax, and other neighboring places. Some came many miles afoot to attend. I was quite encouraged to meet these loyal comrades. I must extend my thanks to the ladies, Mrs. Gott, Mrs. Grange, Mrs. Sunderland, and others, for their support. Only a few ladies in Bradford are willing to be identified with the movement. It is a pleasure to find a few who are brave and intelligent.

I leave Bradford with the star of progress shining upon my way. I have faith in the courage and devotion of our allies here. Especially must I thank Mr. J. W. Gott for his generous comradeship.

I return to London on Monday. I spend the evening at Watts's, where we outline future campaigns. Tuesday I am busy with "News and Notes," and can't see much, although there are thousands of objects yet to view. Tuesday evening I attend the annual meeting of the Malthusian League. I listened to earnest and splendid addresses from Dr. C. R. Drysdale, President; George W. Foote, A. B. Moss, Dr. T. R. Allinson, Mrs. Thornton Smith, and others. I was deeply interested in the many and fruitful ideas advanced. Of course I cannot see but what the Malthusian proposition is correct. Population must increase faster than the means of subsistence, and the check must be war, famine, and pestilence, or wise human control. It is a subject worthy of the widest consideration and the utmost liberty of expression. I am afraid we could not hold such a meeting as this in New York. We have not freedom of speech enough yet. Our English friends are ahead of us on some points. They have fought the good fight and won. Of course, in England, where the population is so overflowing, the pressure of the Malthusian question is much greater than in our own country, whose natural resources are still far in advance of the demand made upon them; but the time is surely coming when we in America must confront this enormous problem, the solution of which is absolutely necessary to human progress.

After the meeting I had a walk and talk amid London lights and shadows with A. B. Moss and Mr. Lawrence, a veteran of the Bradlaugh ranks. We stood on London Bridge—historic spot—and watched the wonderful scene, and in imagination traversed the ages past. We went by the old London Tower, glooming in the solemn midnight with the strange majesty of crime and death, and horror and glory; we passed over the stupendous Tower Bridge, a marvel of human achievement, one of the most amazing structures anywhere on the planet; a kind of crystallised Niagara in its magnificence, strength, loftiness, and massive proportions. I walked through Billingsgate, silent as the grave at this hour, with only a solitary policeman on his rounds; but at five o'clock in the morning what life and language burst in tumult here, a pandemonium of every ejaculation under the sun. The Tower of Babel or the Day of Pentecost couldn't equal this for diversity of tongues.

A. B. Moss is one of our best workers on this side, a vigorous and straightforward speaker. He has had a vast variety of experience. He is London born and bred, and understands how to reach and move the great masses of the people.

I was also glad to meet Edward Truelove, the oldest of our veterans here. He is in his eighty-fifth year. His courage is unquenchable. He has suffered in our cause, but bates no jot of heart or hope. He will die in the harness, with all the glorious enthusiasm of youth.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

July 6, Chester-le-Street Branch (lecture held at West Pelton Co-operative Hall at 6.30); 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Holy Mummery.

At Montreal, on the 28th ult., three priests blessed a new bank located in that city. The archbishops sprinkled holy water throughout the building, the assistant priests responding to the benediction.

We had one of those holy banks in Chicago in 1890. It sported an immense capital, opened and closed its business hours by prayer, and conducted its entire business on Christian principles. Godly business men, and troops of widows and orphans reared in the faith, made their deposits in this pious bank. Some $400,000 were diverted from legitimate purposes, the bank failed, and thousands were ruined financially, all for the glory of God. The business world will do well to keep an eye on this Montreal combination or mixture of religion and finances.—*Progressive Thinker.*

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ACID DROPS.

Lord Rosebery's Government fell over cartridges. No, says Mr. Price Hughes, he fell over the turf. Winning two "Derbies" lost him the Premiership. And serve him right. The man who won't listen to the *Methodist Times* and "act accordin'" deserves ostracism—and apparently gets it.

We know Mr. Price Hughes's opinion of Lord Rosebery. What we want now is Lord Rosebery's opinion of Mr. Price Hughes. If it were printed in the *Methodist Times*, it would treble the circulation.

The *Methodist Times* wants to put "fifty God-fearing young Methodists into the next House of Commons." Only fifty! Think of it! What modesty! Mr. Hughes ought to head the fifty. He has modesty enough.

Alas! the fifty dwindles down in practice. Mr. Hughes hints that he can find money enough for *one* candidate, and wishes to hear of a "young lay Methodist" who is willing to spend the money in wooing votes. He will probably find a good many lay Methodists on that lay.

Canon Ince has been writing in the *Expositor* on "The Miraculous Conception and Virgin Birth of Christ." He tries to get over the contradictions between Matthew and Luke by saying, "Their narratives must be derived from different sources." We thought both were from the Holy Ghost. What a pity they did not state what those sources were, and whether Mary, Joseph, or some others were responsible for their statements.

John, Mark, and Paul, according to Canon Ince, left out the virgin birth because they were concerned with other matters. Here again it is a pity that they did not drop even a hint that they had heard of such a remarkable occurrence. But the best explanation of Canon Ince is the reason that neither Jesus nor Mary gave any testimony on the matter. That, according to Canon Ince, was because of the "essentially private and delicate character" of the facts. We thought the Incarnation was the very basis of the Christian scheme. If so, its evidence should have been demonstrated, and not left on no better ground than the virgin birth of Perseus or of Buddha.

About thirty years ago a sensational trial took place in India, known as "the Maharaja Case." The reports are still sought after by the curious. It was alleged that certain high caste persons known as "Maharajas" posed as gods, and that the young women of the sect worshipped them, and regarded a divine visitation as a high honor. The adherents of the sect said that their proceedings were religious, and of essentially a private and delicate character. But an investigation took place, the Maharajas were condemned, and the scandal ceased.

The *Daily Chronicle* played it rather low over that Cromwell statue subscription. It appears that the £3,000 for the statue was sent by cheque to Mr. Gladstone before the *Chronicle* appeal was published. According to rumor, the person who sent the cheque was Lord Rosebery. If this be true, it is very much to his credit, and shows him to be capable of *action* in the midst of floods of *talk*.

Many funny things have been said of late about Cromwell, but the funniest is ascribed to Mr. Gladstone. The Grand Old Man is reported to have said on board the "Tantallon Castle" that "Cromwell was a dastard." That takes the cake.

The Rev. A. Poe, the Protestant rector of Ballynahon, has got into trouble through disobeying Jesus Christ's command to "give to every one that asketh." The reverend gentleman was mounted on a bicycle, and a tramp asked him for alms. This being refused, the tramp knocked the parson off his machine with a stone, belabored him with a stick, and then decamped. The poor parson was picked up unconscious and badly injured.

Spirit photographs were discussed by the London and Provincial Photographic Association. Mr. Duguid, the "medium" most noted for these productions, was years ago assistant to a Glasgow photographer. He inserted in *Hafed*, a pretended contemporary account of Jesus, a plate copied from Cassell's Family Bible, and has passed off a picture of the Cyprian's Priestess as spirit guides under various names—Lily, Aurora, Mignon, etc. One member of the association stated his belief that one of the portraits in *The Veil Lifted* was simply a picture of the bust of Clytie.

Oh the humbug of those dear religionists. Some years ago there was a row over Sunday tramcars in Glasgow, and it ended in a compromise, by which the cars were to run just in time to take the Godites to kirk and back again! The blessed Sabbath was to be broken a little, and the Godites were to have all the benefit of the desecration!

Something similar to this is proposed by Mr. Charles Hill, secretary of the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association. He is dead against all recreation on Sunday, nor will he hear of a theatre being used for even a lecture. What he proposes is this, that all licensed houses should be prohibited from being used on Sundays, *except for religious purposes*. For brazen hypocrisy this about takes the cake.

The Cape of Good Hope sky-pilots and Sabbatarians have been much riled by the success of the Sunday concerts at Cape Town. A deputation of these and the Y.M.C.A. waited on the Premier, and induced him to promise to bring in a measure dealing with the matter. Evidently there is a wide field for Freethought propaganda at the Cape.

John Jones, sub-postmaster at Trealaw, Rhondda Valley, and a prominent local preacher in the district, has been sentenced at the Glamorganshire Assizes to four years' penal servitude for forgery.

A religious riot between Christians and Hindus has taken place in the Madras presidency. The Shanars are descendants of aboriginal devil-worshippers, much looked down upon by the Hindus. The Christians have been far more successful with them than with the higher castes, and at Tinnevelly they have a bishop of their own. At Kalugumalai about a hundred Shanars abjured Hinduism and embraced Christianity. Considerable excitement was occasioned by their baptism in the Catholic church. The Hindus demanded the removal of a paudal which had been fixed by the Catholic missionary in front of the church. The Christians refused, and a riot took place. The church was set on fire, and some of the Christians were either suffocated or burned to death, while others who escaped by the windows were arrested by the police. Fires and murders were then committed indiscriminately, and the barbarous scenes continued for six hours, with the result that there were twenty deaths among the Shanars, a large number of wounded on both sides, and the Shanar property was totally destroyed.

The young lady who committed suicide with the Rev. Mr. Constable, of Guiseley, was, it appears, his wife, the parties having been quietly married by special licence last Easter.

In the case of the prosecution of the Manchester *Spy* for accusing Mr. Gilbert R. Kirlew, the editor of the *Christian Worker*, the *Children's Own Paper*, and chairman of the Working Lads' Institute, who was publicly described as "with a burning zeal for the cause of Christianity," of being "a loathsome being, who has misused the name of God and the vicariate of Christian work to gratify his unnatural passion," the case against the defendants, who pleaded justification and produced evidence in support of their charges, was dismissed.

San Mateo, near Ferrol, in Spain, has been the scene of a bloodthirsty fight. It all arose out of religion. There was a fair and a religious procession, and a quarrel began as to who should carry the patron saint of the village. First came hot words, then blows, then knives and revolvers; and forty persons, including two men of God, were among "the wounded." The patron saint did not interfere. Perhaps after a long spell of heaven he found the fighting a relief.

The New York *Daily Tribune*, in an article on the Salvation Army, says that "it does not appeal to the intellect, but to the feelings; the people it strives to reach have little intellect to be appealed to." At the same time, the *Tribune* thinks the Salvation Army is educating the religious residuum "for useful membership of religious bodies of the older and more polite type." According to this estimate—to put it plainly—"General" Booth is only the jackal to the lion of Ecclesiasticism.

Booth wants to keep in with all parties, so he has given orders that no Salvation Army building shall be let for political purposes during the coming contest.

At the Royal Agricultural Show, at Darlington, five men who took refuge under a tree during a thunderstorm were struck down by lightning. Two were killed outright, and the others writhed hysterically, though they escaped with but slight injuries.

The *Daily News* leader writer must have a curious idea of Providence. Detailing a case in which three viragos assaulted a girl because, as they said, "She's very pretty; let's make her ugly," it says: "They then caught her by the hair and dragged her to the ground, and, after beating her unmercifully, one of them stabbed at her with a tin-

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opening knife. Here, however, Providence interposed, and the knife was mercifully directed to the body of one of the viragos." This Providence which directs a stab at one person to wound another is a curious kind of "critter." It reminds us of the old farmer who said: "Drat that Providence; first he rotted my taters, then he spoilt my corn, and now he's took my missis. Drat Providence, say I."

The Christian people of Saybusch, in Galicia, won't have a Jew in the town, and, because one appeared as clerk in a lawyer's office, smashed the windows of the house he lodged in, broke the furniture, and stole his books and clothes. Fourteen persons were arrested, and one boasted that he paid for drinks for all who declared they would drive away the Jew from the town.

The Rev. R. H. Haweis has been rounding on his clerical brethren during his visit to Australia. He is reported as saying that the Church is officered by men inferior to those of twenty years ago. The Church, always the resort of the fool of the family, now only holds out prospects to the palpably dull or dishonest.

The lower clergy of Rome have started a new journal, called the *Intransigent*, to advocate Christian Socialism and the interests of the poorer priests, who get little chance of advance under the present ecclesiastical system. There are, it appears, Headlamites even at the headquarters of Catholic faith.

There is a large variety of Raskolniks, or Dissenters, in Russia, and no sooner has the Holy Synod suppressed one heterodox sect than another rises in its place. The latest heretical development is a sect known as Pilgrims, or Wanderers. They probably inherit a nomadic tendency, and, under the influence of religion, declare that the reign of Anti-Christ is at hand. That arch fiend seizing the seats of government, the only salvation will be to flee to the Siberian morasses, forests, and hills, where the Pilgrims retire to lead a primitive Christian life. The Holy Synod has cursed the sect as malignant enemies of Mother Church, and measures are to be adopted to root them out from their remote Siberian retreats.

The *Times*, in its notice of the late Professor Huxley, mentions that at the meeting of the British Association at Oxford, in 1860, Bishop Wilberforce had the impertinence to ask Huxley whether he was related to an ape by his grandfather's or his grandmother's side. Now, there is hardly a theologian living who would venture this sort of insult. This is left to the "gentlemen" of the Christian Evidence Society.

The *Times* does not give Huxley's dignified reply, which is, however, of historical interest. He said: "I asserted, and I repeat, that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a *man*, a man of restless and versatile intellect, who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to religious prejudice."

Bradford has an Art Gallery; it has also a School Board; and the two disagree. The head mistress of one of the schools asked for permission to take her scholars to see the pictures. This was refused by the School Management Committee, and when the reason was asked at a Board meeting Canon Simpson talked about "public morality," and said that "the character of some of the pictures in the gallery made it inadvisable to send the children there."

We can hardly believe that there are any "wicked" pictures in the Bradford Art Gallery; such as Lot and his daughters, or David dancing naked before the Ark. Canon Simpson may have his eye upon a picture of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. But mere nakedness does not corrupt children. There is a delicious French story about a little sister and a littler brother looking at a picture of "our first parents." The little fellow asked which was the gentleman, and the little maiden said she couldn't tell—they had no clothes on. But perhaps children don't run that way in Bradford.

How they love one another! The High *Church Times* says of the Low Church Association: "The chief work which this so-called Church Association carries on is exactly described as a disturbance of the Church's peace." And it goes on to complain of "the unscrupulous method which the Association's colporteurs too frequently pursue" in attacking Ritualism.

The Rev. F. T. Wethered defends the Rector of Clifton, Bed., who refused to marry parties whose banns he had put up, because one of them was unbaptised, on the ground that he is legally required to have their Christian names; "and how can a person acquire a Christian name except at baptism?" We fancy the law would say that the Christian name, in a legal sense, is the name before the family name, and that it is acquired by registration without baptism.

The energy of Mr. Stead is to have a new outlet. He has discovered, through the spooks, that the crying want of the age is a Baby Exchange. It is an old saying that those who don't want children have too many, and those who do want them have none. Mr. Stead is going to rectify this. We hope he won't make a worse muddle than in his dabbling with other social topics.

The choir of a church in Leicester have struck under peculiar circumstances. The lady members donned ecclesiastical raiment—cassocks, caps, surplices—and were ordered to wear ordinary dress. They struck, and have been supported by the male members, who don't see why the clergy alone should sport ecclesiastical millinery.

What a funny title! The League of the Christian Ladies' Boot. Its object is to free the Chinese ladies from compression of the feet. The ladies of the League compress their waists, which is more dangerous. A Chinaman said: "We squeezy foot; you squeezy waist. Same both. Get husband."

At the Royal Albert Hall meeting of the Woman's International Temperance Association, when Miss Weston came to the front, the band struck up "Rule Britannia," and the audience (or was it congregation?) joined in "spontaneously." What splendid *internationalism!*

Canon Wilberforce spoke at that meeting, taking the place of Mr. W. S. Caine, who had to leave for Westminster. "I am not Caine," he said, "and I am not Able to fill the position worthily." This gorgeous witticism convulsed the audience (or congregation). According to the *Methodist Times*, their "gaiety was not eclipsed for several minutes."

Fathers Stanton and Hogg, the well-known Ritualists of St. Alban's, Holborn, are going to try to bring about Christian Reunion by issuing an English edition of the Roman Missal, in which the Communion Service of the Church of England will be incorporated. The mere announcement suffices to send the *English Churchman* in a rage.

"She" is an American. Her registered name is Mrs. J. C. Brooker. She is absolute ruler of the Perfectionists, calls herself "daughter of God," and holds communication with him through angels. The previous "She" was Mrs. Martin. She was buried at Cincinnati on May 25, and the Perfectionists keep watch night and day over her grave in order to witness her resurrection and ascent to heaven in a chariot of fire. Fools! of course; but are they bigger fools than some ancient persons we read of who saw the "son of God" go through a similar performance?

A certain Christian Evidence journal is asking whether it is to live or die, and is frantically appealing for help to avoid a silent funeral. One of its friends, a red-hot Orangeman, hopes it will receive support to oppose Atheists, Secularists, and other "loose persons." Even the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes asks his friends to buy it for a few weeks, if only out of charity, in order that it may carry on its crusade against "scoffers." But a paper cannot prolong its life by such arts as these. The fact is, there is no real demand for Christian Evidence journals. Their only chance lies in the patronage of Secularists. That is why we don't advertise them.

We see it reported that the Rev. Dr. Parker, of the City Temple, on entering the twenty-sixth year of his ministry there, announced that he would forego the fixed stipend paid to him as pastor, and depend solely on what the people chose to bring him, whether it was much or little. Dr. Parker has always been so keen after money that we are tempted to believe he fancies this plan will work out better than the other. He was never known to be satisfied with "little."

In the interest of scientific clearness I object to say that I have a soul, when I mean all the while that my organism has certain mental faculties which, like the rest, are dependent on its molecular composition, and come to an end when I die; and I object still more to affirm that I look to a future life, when all I mean is, that the influence of my doings and sayings will be more or less felt by a number of people after the physical components of that organism are scattered to the four winds.—*Huxley.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

August 4, Newcastle.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. T. G.—The "childishness" is in complaining of what could not be avoided. Milton Hall, even in Kentish Town, is better (for the present) than no hall at all. Mr. Foote and his colleagues are not under an obligation to do impossibilities. They do their best, sometimes for not so much as thanks.

M. Andrews.—Five hundred shillings would be of little use; they only amount to £25; and we have appealed enough.

E. G. Taylor.—Letters cannot be published without the writer's consent. Mr. George Wise says that his letter to you was marked "private," and asks us not to publish it. Of course we respect his wishes, though it seems to us that he lacks courage in the matter. Mr. Wise, by the way, doesn't answer the question put to him in the *Freethinker* as to whether he asks opponents at his meetings for their names and addresses, and what he wants to know their *addresses* for.

J. D.—Your essay on "God and the Atheist" shows that you have thought; but you require a great deal more practice in composition before your efforts will reach the level of publication.

F. W. Swain.—Pleased to hear the Derby friends were so delighted with Mr. Putnam's lecture.

W. Mann.—We did not keep the copy of the *Times* in which Sir Gilbert Parker's letter appeared. The date would be near June 20. Canon Taylor's articles, and other criticisms of missionary enterprise, have from time to time been noticed in our columns.

H. Duncan (Sunderland).—Will see what can be done.

A. G. Scopes.—Received. Shall be pleased to see you at Clacton.

R. J. Murray.—Mr. Foote has written you privately on the matter.

Augustus.—Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., will supply you with a good cabinet photo of the late Charles Bradlaugh for 2s. 6d.

E. Calvert intends to join the London Secular Federation's excursion.

J. Wood.—See paragraph. Mr. Foote cannot take part in any open-air meetings at present, being already overworked. But he will make an exception if you find you cannot hold your meetings at Wood Green on account of Christian rowdyism. He has always held it to be his duty to intervene to the best of his power in such emergencies.

W. A. Lill (Sheffield).—Correspondence should reach us by Tuesday morning. Your letter is too late for "Sugar Plums." Glad to hear, though, that Mr. Putnam had an enthusiastic reception on Sunday.

Papers Received.—Church Reformer—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Christian Commonwealth—Humanity—Zoophilist—Huddersfield Daily Examiner—Nottingham Argus—The Literary Guide—Manchester Spy—Manchester Courier—Boston Investigator—Twentieth Century—Truthseeker—Freidenker—Open Court—Progressive Thinker—Light—Two Worlds—Isle of Man Times—Yorkshire Post—Cape Argus—Non-Sectarian—New York Tribune—Manchester Evening News—Crescent.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

That a man should determine to devote himself to the service of humanity, including intellectual and moral self-culture under that name; that this should be, in the proper sense of the word, his religion, is not only an intelligible, but I think a laudable, resolution. And I am greatly disposed to believe that it is the only religion which will prove itself to be unassailably acceptable so long as the human race endures.—*Huxley.*

SUGAR PLUMS.

The summer weather did not prevent an excellent audience from assembling in the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "All About Angels." This evening (July 7) Mr. Foote takes the chair at Milton Hall for Mr. J. P. Gilmour, of Glasgow, who is on a visit to the South, and is taking the opportunity to address a London audience. We hope the metropolitan Freethinkers will give their Scottish visitor a hearty reception. He deserves it.

Last Sunday evening the Hall of Science was closed, and Mr. Charles Watts gave his lecture at Milton Hall instead. His subject was "Cromwell and English Freedom." Considering that the change of place of meeting had only been announced for a few days, there was a very good audience, who gave Mr. Watts an enthusiastic reception. Miss Vance presided, and made a neat little speech. Previous to the lecture Mr. Watts drew attention to the death of Professor Huxley, and paid a well-deserved tribute to his useful career. The references made to the principal incidents in the Professor's public life, and to his peaceful death, were received with sympathetic applause.

Our London readers are again reminded of the Secular Federation's Annual Excursion to Clacton-on-Sea next Sunday (July 14). The tickets are now on sale, and full particulars will be found in our advertisement columns. Messrs. Foote and Watts have given up their Sunday, for lecturing purposes, in order to join the party and spend the day with the "saints," who will doubtless muster in strong force. Freethinkers should induce their Christian friends to come by our special train, just to see what a melancholy, miserable set the "Atheists" are when they "assemble and meet together."

Our American visitor, Mr. S. P. Putnam, lectures to-day (July 7) in the Amphitheatre, Northumberland-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne. We hope there will be a big rally of Tyneside Freethinkers on this occasion. They should come in from twenty miles around, and give the President of the American Secular Union a regular North-of-England welcome.

It is well that our American visitor is combining work with pleasure, or he would go back to New York utterly demoralised. Everywhere he goes the "saints" are showing him generous hospitality, and taking him about to the various places of interest. And "Samuel"—as Mr. Watts calls him—is enjoying himself immensely. He is having "a fine time" indeed. Yes, it is the lecturing that saves him. Without that he would feel inclined, when he goes home in September, to rush off to Florida, or some other happy land, instead of buckling-to for the annual Convention of his own Society.

Mr. Putnam continues his "Notes and News" from England in the New York *Truthseeker*. The number for June 22 contains the account of his day up the Thames with Messrs. Foote and Watts, his visit to the British Museum with Mr. Wheeler, and his experiences at Liverpool. We shall reprint all this in due course.

The Liverpool friends took Mr. Putnam in on one point; of course not designedly. They forgot to tell him that Liverpool is at the mouth of the Mersey, and he forgot that London is a long way up the Thames; so that he falls into the mistake of supposing the Mersey to be the "broader and deeper" river of the two. Of course the Thames is far and away the premier river of England.

Ingersoll was invited by the manager of the Queen's Theatre, Montreal, to lecture there. The Colonel was agreeable, and sent on his advertising matter. Every paper refused to insert it, and the manager, on account of the boycott of the press, got the contract cancelled.

Captain R. C. Adams, the energetic president of the Canadian Secular Union, is, of course, not satisfied with this, and assures the Colonel that if he comes he will find his audience. He says: "The gifted authoress, Helen H. Gardener, once lectured to a thousand people in Montreal on a Sunday evening, but no mention of the fact was made in Monday's papers. She afterwards wittily wrote: 'Montreal has no newspaper. If a few ministers meet together, it is news. If a thousand people gather to hear a Freethought lecturer, it is not news.'"

Professor Huxley was once wroth with an Evangelical busybody at a seaside resort, who offered him a tract and wanted to know whether he was "saved." It seemed to the great scientist a piece of gross impertinence. He told the soul-saver to mind his own business—at which the soul-

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saver felt "insulted." The fussy religionist did not understand the serenity with which an unbeliever can face death, leaving all the "funk" to the Christians, who hope to go to heaven, but have an awful fear of going to the other place. Professor Huxley's death was calm and peaceful, as became a philosopher. He read and wrote up to the last day of his life, and "through all his sufferings," the *Times* says, "he preserved that amiable and kindly disposition which made him so beloved in his own household."

It goes without saying that Professor Huxley died without the assistance and consolation of professional exhorters. His wife and one of his daughters were with him when he drew his last breath. Which was as it should be. All the dying really require is to let their last gaze fall upon dear faces. Death is then a mixture of sleep and love.

The *Daily Chronicle* writes of Professor Huxley's death: "The uppermost thought born of the sorrow which this morning's news brings is that a striking and charming personality is withdrawn. . . . . True to himself, it followed that he was wrong-doer to none, and with his withdrawal there remains one the less of that type of the ideal man who endeared himself to such as knew him only in the fellowship of spirit. To those who knew him as friend and counsellor his loss will be irreparable."

The *Chronicle* also notes that Professor Huxley was "conscious to the last, and knowledge of his coming end was born with equanimity, his strength of character and his amiable disposition never forsaking him."

The *Daily Telegraph* wrote: "We have had in Thomas Henry Huxley a guide of light and leading in natural science of whom England may well be proud, foremost in pursuing the task of enlarging the area of human knowledge, faultless in scientific integrity, and as true a friend by his work and worth to his age and to his race as he was a fast and loyal votary of Truth, and fearless follower of her steps, wherever they might lead."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* paid a high tribute to Professor Huxley, and courageously stated that his controversy with Mr. Gladstone about the Mosaic account of Creation was one of his finest efforts. The *Westminster Gazette* wrote: "We lose in him, not only an eminent scientist and a brilliant writer, but a commanding *man*."

The next dinner of the Omar Khayyam Club will be held on Saturday, the 13th, at Box Hill, Dorking, and George Meredith will be one of the guests.

The Manchester Branch will shortly enter upon an active out-door crusade, and, with that object in view, they have engaged the services of Mr. C. Cohen for a period of four weeks, commencing Sunday, August 18. A subscription list will be opened to defray the expenses, which, of course, will be considerable, and friends are desired to subscribe as liberally as possible.

Secularists in the Wood Green district are earnestly invited to rally round the Secular open-air platform. At a recent meeting there was persistent and reckless disorder, and eventually Mr. C. Cohen had to be protected by the police on his way to the railway station. The local Branch means business, and will not be intimidated. It intends to open a Freethought bookstall on Saturday evening (July 6) at 6 o'clock, at the foot of Jolly Butchers' Hill, close to the lecture station. This novel enterprise deserves the utmost success.

The *Rangoon Times* appears to be a very liberal paper. There have been discussions in its columns on such questions as the views of Colonel Ingersoll, Is Christianity True? etc., in which due prominence has been given to the letters of Freethinkers. One of the writers, signing himself "Truthseeker," cites Mr. Wheeler at length on the connection between Christianity and Buddhism. Another writer boldly signs himself "Atheist." Heresy seems to flourish in Burmah.

Humanity, the monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, continues its crusade against the brutal features of our "Christian civilisation." The July number contains an important article by J. M. Greg on the Irish Cattle Traffic, and an able reply by H. S. Salt to Mr. D. G. Ritchie on the Rights of Animals. Accompanying this number, at least in *our* packet, is a facetious Play in one act, entitled "A Lover of Animals," by H. S. Salt. It is brightly written, and, if we may be pardoned the pun, not without salt.

The New York *Daily Tribune* reviews the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, and, after the manner of Christian reviewers, seeks to turn commendation of Mr. Bradlaugh into disparagement of those who work on similar lines. It concludes by saying: "The truest judgment of his character and work is embodied in that one word which was his self-chosen and best-known name, 'Iconoclast.' But it is one thing to smash empty images with the hammer; it is another and vastly different thing to knock one's own head against an Everlasting Rock."

Leslie Stephen's Life of his brother, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, makes it clear how the great legal luminary, who, by the way, was a prolific writer both on the *Saturday Review* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, gave up, one by one, every article of Christian belief. "One by one went tower and temple down." Yet Sir J. F. Stephen found life sweet, bright, and glorious, and said: "I should dearly like to live it again."

Sir James once had an interview with Cardinal Newman. "Fitzjames," says his brother, "was not the man to be awed by any reputation into reticence." He asked him plainly for some reasonable ground for believing that his Church was what it claimed to be. Newman replied, in substance, that he could not argue with a man who differed so completely on first principles. Fitzjames took this as amounting to the admission that Newman had nothing to say to anyone who did not go three-fourths of the way with him. "I said at last," he proceeds, "'If Jesus Christ were here, could He say no more than you do?' 'I suppose you to mean that, if He could, I ought to be able to give you what you ask?' 'Certainly; for you profess to be His authorised agent, and call on me to believe you on that ground. Prove it.' All he could say was: 'I cannot work miracles;' to which I replied: 'I did not ask for miracles, but for proofs.' He had absolutely nothing to say."

The Sunday Society has just held its twentieth annual meeting in London. Mr. Holman Hunt, the artist, vacated the chair for the new president, the Rev. Canon Barnett, who delivered a long and "churchy" address. Somehow or other, these clergymen will take a professional view of everything. Canon Barnett is in favor of opening places of culture on Sunday; but he seems to be opposed to Sunday amusements. Even in the matter of Sunday lectures Canon Barnett does not appear disposed to make any legal concession to Secularists, who could not get "incorporated," and could not, therefore, take advantage of the alteration in the law which Canon Barnett proposes. Still, it is well to have this Sunday question ventilated; and, from this point of view, the Sunday Society—even with a parson for president—may be wished every success.

THE HONORARIUM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

It will be remembered that at the last Conference of the National Secular Society a letter was read from Mr. George Anderson, suggesting that its President "should be recouped for his loss of time and money in serving the party's interests." Accordingly, the Conference appointed a Committee, consisting of Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Robert Forder, and Mr. George Ward, to consider the best plan to be adopted for carrying out the suggestion. The Committee met and drew up a circular, which probably most of the readers of the *Freethinker* have seen.

This Committee unanimously passed the following resolution, proposed by Mr. George Anderson, and seconded by Mr. George Ward: "That the sum to be paid the President of the N.S.S. for this year be £100, to be confirmed, augmented, or diminished each year by vote of the Conference."

By this resolution it was the desire of the Committee to carry out the object, for which it had been appointed by the congress of delegates, in the most satisfactory manner both as to terms and amount, leaving the Society to act yearly in future as circumstances might dictate.

It is to be hoped that what has been done will meet with the approval of the Secular party, and that its members will subscribe the required amount as promptly as possible.

CHARLES WATTS.

Subscriptions Received:—

Per Miss Vance: S. Hollies, 5s.; G. Anderson, £5; "Rubber Stamp," 10s.; J. Kennedy, £1 1s.; D. Davis, £1 1s.

Per R. Forder: W. Carter, £2 2s.; C. J. Pottage, £2; W. C. Stuart, £1 1s.; W. Lamb, 10s.; W. P. Ball, £1; J. Fulton, 10s.; J. D. Pottage, 5s.; Crabtree Brothers, 3s. 6d.; A. J. Marriott, 5s.; J. Hayes, 2s.; F. S. C., 1s.

Per Charles Watts: Z. Z., 5s.

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DEATH OF PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

On June 29 Europe lost one of her most distinguished scientists, and Freethought one of the ablest advocates, of the century. Born May 4, 1825, Thomas Henry Huxley's early education was carried on at home and in his father's school at Ealing. In 1842 he entered the medical school at Charing Cross, passed with honors in anatomy and physiology, and, after some medical experience among the London poor, became M.R.C.S., and in '46 joined the Medical Naval Service. From Haslar Hospital he was selected to accompany Captain Owen Stanley on a surveying voyage in the Southern Seas. He investigated the fauna of those regions with avidity, sent home papers to the Royal and Linnean Societies, by which he acquired reputation, so that soon after his return home in 1851 he succeeded Edward Forbes in the chair of Natural History at the School of Mines. He enriched zoology with many memoirs, and joined Tyndall in studying glaciers in Switzerland. He was foremost among the men who stood beside Darwin; and, next to Darwin himself, to Huxley must be ascribed the honor of popularising the doctrine of Evolution. In 1860 he delivered popular lectures on "The Relation of Man to the Lower Animals," and afterwards, in his *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863), showed the relation of man to the higher apes. This was ten years before the publication of Darwin's *Descent of Man*. In this year he was elected Professor of Comparative Anatomy to the Royal College of Surgeons, and held that office for seven years. He became president of the Geological and the Ethnological Societies in 1869 and 1870, and presided over the meeting of the British Association held at Liverpool in 1870. In this year he also became member of the first London School Board, and was chairman of the committee which arranged the scheme of education adopted in the schools.

All this while Huxley was contributing, by magazine articles, lay sermons, and addresses, to the spread of science viewed in the light of evolution. These were afterwards published—the *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews* in 1870, *Critiques and Addresses* in 1873. In '76 and '77 Mr. Huxley was propagating his views on science and evolution in America. The *American Addresses* were published in 1877. His book on *Hume*, contributed to Morley's "Men of Letters" series, is a model of clear exposition, and he puts the argument against miracles in his own incisive way. One of his last works was seeing through the press a complete edition of his non-technical essays in nine volumes. The *Essays Upon Some Controverted Questions* contain some of his most important anti-theological writings, such as those on "Gladstone and Genesis," "The Evolution of Theology," "Science and Morality," "Science and Witness to the Miraculous," and "The Keepers of the Herd of Swine."

In his anthropological study on *The Evolution of Theology* Huxley shows he had bottomed the pretensions of religionists. He found the genesis of their god in ghost belief, and traces the many traits of similarity between the religious beliefs and observances of the early Jews and those of the savage inhabitants of the Tonga Islands. With the critical researches of Biblical scholars like Kuenen, Kalisch, Reuss, and Wellhausen he was perfectly familiar. He was equally at home on the ground of New Testament criticism, and men like Gladstone, the Bishop of Carlisle, and Prebendary Wace found their arguments pulverised. His keen perception of the weak places in their armor was shown by keeping them to the story of the Gadarene swine.

His letter on the "Corybantic Christianity" of the Salvation Army was enlarged into an incisive criticism on Booth's scheme of dealing with "Darkest England," under the title of *Social Diseases and Worse Remedies*.

Throughout his career Professor Huxley made it clear that the trend of his teaching was in opposition to the dogmas of the theologians. In the autobiographical sketch appended to his collected essays he thus sums up his life's aims: "The last thing that it would be proper for me to do would be to speak of the work of my life, or to say at the end of the day whether I think I have earned my wages or not. Men are said to be partial judges of themselves—young men may be, I doubt if old men are. Life seems terribly foreshortened as they look back; and the mountain they set themselves to climb in youth turns out to be a mere spur of immeasurably higher ranges, when, with failing breath, they reach the top. But if I may speak of the objects I have had, more or less, definitely in view, since I began the ascent of my hillock, they are briefly these: To promote the increase of natural knowledge, and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction, which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of man except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is, when the garment of make-belief, by which pious hands have hidden its uglier feature, is stripped off. It is with this intent that I have subordinated any reasonable or unreasonable ambition for scientific fame which I may have permitted myself to entertain to other ends; to the popularisation of science; to the development and organisation of scientific education; to the endless series of battles and skirmishes over evolution; and to untiring opposition to that ecclesiastical spirit, that clericalism, which in England, and everywhere else, and to whatever denomination it may belong, is the deadly enemy of science."

This testimony is true. Huxley was a valiant teacher, thinker, and fighter for Freethought. Knowing the forces on the side of superstition, he armed himself with every weapon of learning and of skill in controversy to meet and master the obscurantists on their own ground. He was one of the few men who combined high scientific attainments with equal literary gifts. His work was many-sided, and his power of lucid exposition unrivalled. His writings are clear, elegant, and trenchant, and take rank with our best literature. He was the protagonist of evolution. In promoting higher education, in popularising science, in spreading Freethought and combatting superstition, his influence has been deep and wide, and his loss is one that will not easily be supplied.

Huxley called himself an Agnostic. He found it was an unpardonable sin to presume to go about unlabelled. "I could find," he says, "no label to suit me; so, in my desire to range myself and be respectable, I invented one; and, as the chief thing I was sure of was that I did not know a great many things that the 'ists and the 'ites about me professed to be familiar with, I called myself an Agnostic." Of the position indicated by the term, as clear an account as any is that given by Huxley at the close of his famous essay, "On the Physical Basis of Life":—

"If a man asks me what the politics of the inhabitants of the moon are, and I reply that I do not know; that neither I, nor anyone else, have any means of knowing; and that, under these circumstances, I decline to trouble myself about the subject at all, I do not think he has any right to call me a sceptic. On the contrary, in replying thus, I conceive that I am simply honest and truthful, and show a proper regard for the economy of time. . . . . Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing, and can know nothing? We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it."

This is Secularism, and plain common sense. Huxley lived a good secular life, one of tireless activity in the service of truth and justice, without fear and without reproach. Our reverent tribute of admiration must be laid on his grave.

FREETHOUGHT PHILANTHROPY.

Among the many large bequests by rich men which have distinguished the present century, the gifts of Freethinkers have figured conspicuously. The founder of Girard College, in addition to the $84,000,000 required for the establishment of that college, gave during his lifetime and at his death $30,000 to the Pennsylvania Hospital, $20,000 to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, $10,000 to the Orphan Asylum, $10,000 to the Lancaster Schools, $10,000 to provide fuel for the Philadelphia poor, $10,000 to aid distressed sea captains, $20,000 to relieve poor Masons, $50,000 for city improvements in Philadelphia, and $300,000 for canals in the State. When, in 1814, the Government needed help, Girard at once advanced $5,000,000; and when, in 1793 and 1797, Philadelphia was afflicted with the yellow fever, and but twelve persons could be induced to nurse the sick and bury the dead, Stephen Girard, the Freethinker, was one of these.

James Smithson left $500,000 to found the Institution named after him at Washington. Peter Brigham gave $3,000,000 to establish hospitals in Boston. John Redmon gave $400,000 to support free beds in the Boston hospitals.

James Lick gave $1,000,000 to found an astronomical observatory. William McClure gave $500,000 to aid the working men of Indiana. A. T. Tilley gave $30,000 to build a school at Northampton, Mass., for the scientific training of women without theology.

In Glasgow, Scotland, the Mitchell Library was established at a cost of £70,000 by a Freethinker; and in the same city Mr. George Baillie left £18,000 to establish unsectarian schools, reading-rooms, etc.

Many other similar acts could be named, one of them being a bequest of $50,000 by the late Mr. Butland to the Toronto General Hospital.

J. S. Ellis.

Scepticism is the highest of duties, and blind faith the one unpardonable sin.—*Huxley.*

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THE FIRST THEOLOGIAN.

Once, in the times of the cavemen, thousands of years ago,
Came there a storm which blustered over the land, laying low
Forests which grew on the hillsides; bringing with it the rain,
Thunder, and lightning; and strewing beasts, stricken dead, o'er the plain.

Gathered a group of the tribesmen, awe-struck, appalled at the sight;
Huddled they close at the cave-mouth doubting that morning light
Would never again follow darkness—scared, now and then, with the flash,
Bright and speeding, of lightning, followed by thunder crash.

Crouched they in fear and in trembling, fearfully watching the play
Fitfully made by the lightning; anxiously longing for day;
Dreading the crash of the thunder; hearing the pitiless rain
Lash on their shelter of limestone—entering time and again.

Huddled they closer together, shivering, wakeful, afraid;
Hearing the shriek of the storm-fiend as he passed by on his raid;
Eyes staring open in terror under their long-matted hair—
More like to beasts than to mankind, crouching in dread in their lair.

Slow spread the dawn in the eastward, merging the black into grey;
Lulling, the gale fell to sighing. This was the promise of day.
Then came to one of the tribesmen speech with the coming of light;
Passed from each one of the tribesmen fear with the passing of night.

Peered they abroad from their cave-mouth into the dusk of the dawn;
Saw, in the soft breezes waving, each blade of grass with its awn;
Saw the destruction the forest had suffered throughout the night;
Saw a lightning-seared mammoth prone in the spectral light.

Then rose the voice of the speaker: "When by myself, I have thought
That there were spirits whose pleasure came from the pain by them wrought.
But now I know there are spirits, strong with a strength beyond man,
And our day's journey is merely to them nothing more than a span.

"We've heard their voice in the thunder, we've seen their rage in the wind,
Tearing the trees up, and leaving nothing but wreckage behind;
We've seen the flash from their fire-stick streaking the blackness of night;
We've seen the death of the mammoth, quick, in the midst of his flight.

"Thus they bring hurt and wreak vengeance; they may bring death on us, too,
Quick as was brought on the mammoth lying out there in our view."
Listened the tribesmen in silence; listened intently till he
Spoke of their end by the spirits, and of the pain that might be.

Startled, they looked at each other; then they began to discuss:
"What if the death which he speaks of should be the death brought on us?
We must do something or other. What he has said is the truth,
For we have seen that the spirits kill and destroy without ruth."

Once more the voice of the speaker took up the thread of his speech:
"Let us take gifts from the hunting; fish found by us on the beach.
Let us lay them on a boulder close to the edge of the wood,
And when the wild spirits see them they may do works for our good."

"Yea, that is wise," said the tribesmen. "He counsels wisely and we
Straightway shall make to the spirits gifts, and the spirits will see
That we give honor and fear them, and they will leave us at peace."

. . . . . .

Such were the words of the cavemen. So came the gospel of peace.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

THE HOLY LAND AND THE HOLY BOOK.

THE editor of a religious paper recently offered a prize for a short paper on the above subject, designed to convey information to the young. I wrote the following, but have not as yet received the prize: "The so-called Holy Land is of about the size and fertility of Wales. The phrase, 'from Dan to Beersheba,' has been used so often that people have, without thinking, supposed them to be as far apart as Cape Horn and Behring Straits, whereas they are nearer than from London to Liverpool. Jerusalem the golden is a one-horse town, noted for spurious relics and fleas. The whole plateau on which it is built could never have accommodated fifty thousand inhabitants. Solomon's temple was a shanty ninety feet by thirty, and, before this was put up for Jehovah, he used to live in a tent.

"The so-called Holy Bible consists of sixty-six books by various authors. Whom they were written by, or when they were written, nobody certainly knows. As they have come down through many hands, they have probably been much touched up *en route*. Some were certainly not written by the persons to whom they were ascribed. Thus Deuteronomy contains an account of the funeral of Moses, and the Psalms of David refer to the captivity of Babylon. They are interesting records of Semitic legend, folk-lore, and tradition, and contain some fine poetry, as in Job, Isaiah, and some of the Psalms. But they contain numerous contradictions, indecencies, absurdities, and atrocities, and the earlier historical books bear the stamp of barbarism. Only undiscriminating ignorance or interested priestcraft could attribute such a mixture to an all-wise God."

CELSUS.

Christian Evidences.

Christian evidences are not such as would be required in ordinary matters requiring proof. Christian evidences of its past history consist of the fables handed down by the "Christian fathers." Those fathers, from Paul down, took the ground that a lie in the interest of the Church was a good thing. The Christian evidences of the future are reduced to one item—faith. And those that relate to the present are two in number. The unanswerable evidences to what are called the truths of Christianity are that so many great people have believed them, and that so many Bibles are printed! These two facts startle and appal the unbeliever with their tremendous force. Argument against such evidences as these has but little weight. The fact that the Bible has fewer readers than any book in the world has no weight. Even in Christian families, reading the Bible and taking salts are intimately associated repugnances. You can find ten thousand people who believe the Bible to one that has read it. What the minister reads from the pulpit is considered sufficient for the average Christian. And the "general belief" proof is akin to the former universal belief in a flat earth. God himself, with millions of his most learned people, believed the earth flat and stationary. But that didn't affect the rotundity or disturb the revolutions of the globe. Neither does the general belief in the stories of Jonah and Christ make them true, nor the millions of Bibles printed establish the claims of that book to divinity, or even to decency.—*Ironclad Age.*

Obituary.

IT is with regret that I announce the death of another friend and supporter of the Secular movement in Failsworth. The interment of Mrs. Fletcher, of Failsworth, took place at the Unitarian Chapel on Wednesday, June 26. By the kind permission of their minister the Secular Service was read by Mr. Pegg, of Manchester, in the chapel, and afterwards at the graveside. Mrs. Fletcher, who was seventy-four years of age, was one of the oldest supporters of the Failsworth Secular Sunday School, and, although she has not taken an active part for some time, her loss will be greatly felt. The funeral was attended by a large number of teachers and friends from the Secular schools, and the most sincere sympathy is felt by all who knew her for those who are related to her.—E. HOWARD.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Re HADRIAN'S LETTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In his interesting article on "Our Sun-God" Mr. Wheeler refers to the famous letter of the Emperor Hadrian to Servianus. In that letter, which, be it noted, is only preserved to us at second-hand, Hadrian is represented as saying that "the (Egyptian) worshippers of Serapis are called Christians," and that "those consecrated to the service of Serapis call themselves bishops of Christ." But does not Mr. Wheeler think that there is some mistake here? Hadrian's letter may be dated about A.D. 134. Now Dr. Barr Mitchell, in his learned monograph on "χριστος," has shown that in the so-called "Christian" epitaphs there is no instance earlier than the third century wherein the name-word is not written "Chrestos" or else "Chreistos" (same pronunciation, emphasising the long *e*). And in *Antigua Mater* Professor Johnson—who, on the publication of this book, found Freethinkers more in accord with him than when he put out *The Rise of Christendom*—says that for the first *four* centuries it was the common practice of the Christians to write the name of their Master "Chrest" or "Chreist." On the whole, then, it seems pretty certain that not earlier than the third century did the term "Christian" come in to use.

But, if this be true, Hadrian could hardly have written as above. χριστος is the proper Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word which we write "Messiah," and which means "anointed." From the first, Greek-speaking Jews would, as a matter of course, use this as their equivalent. But Hadrian could hardly have been referring to Greek-speaking Jews when he wrote of the Egyptian worshippers of Serapis. Besides, Chrestos was a title borne by Osiris; and, therefore, the probability is that the (Osirian) worshippers of Serapis called themselves "Chrestoi"=the "good folks," or followers of the Good One. We cannot say which word Hadrian used in his *original* letter; but it seems to me very unlikely that he wrote of the Egyptian worshippers of Serapis as "Christians."

However, I am sadly sensible of the fact that my information is too meagre for my opinion to be of any value. Perhaps, therefore, Mr. Wheeler will kindly favor his studious readers with *his* views on this important point.

ANDREW LIDDLE.

[When the Greek conquerors of Egypt assimilated the old Osirian faith with the Greek worship of Hades in the worship of Serapis as Lord of the Underworld (the sun-spirit which, presiding over the destinies of the dead, assured their resurrection, similar to his own), Chrestos became his title, as equivalent to the Egyptian *nefri*, or "excellent," found on Egyptian tombs with the *crux ansata*, or sign of life. Among Egyptians of the post-Ptolemaic period Chrestoi was equivalent to "the good, the justified." Thus the monks of Serapis were Chrestoi, and Hadrian may originally have so written it. But, as one-third of the inhabitants of Alexandria were Jews, it is likely that the play on words, which identified the worshippers of the "anointed" with the "good," is earlier. Philo shows the eclecticism which was going on a century before Hadrian. The Therapeuts he describes were like the monks of Serapis, and they are identified by Eusebius with the Christians. We find this play on words in Romans xvi. 18, 1 Peter ii. 3, in Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian; all usually dated before the fourth century. The latter says (*Ad Nationes*): "By a faulty pronunciation you call us Chrestians, and so utter the sense of pleasantness and goodness." It was natural that tomb inscriptions should retain this older and more general form. No doubt the double meaning tended both to popularise the Christian name and to modify the character of the faith. The letter of Hadrian indicates that in the second century Christianity was allied to, or had not entirely disengaged itself from, the Egyptian faith, and suggests that it dates rather from Alexandria than from Jerusalem.—J. M. W.]

THE POPULATION QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In an "Acid Drop," in your issue of June 23, you refer to Dr. Horton as "never having read Malthus, or being incapable of understanding him." I believe there is a more probable explanation of the Doctor's present pronouncement as to the absurdity of Malthus' prediction. In the *Christian World* of November 9, 1893, there was a summary of a deliverance by Dr. Horton, under the heading, "A Straight Talk," in which the following occurs: "Dr. Horton boldly dealt with the population question, denouncing as gross selfishness the bringing into the world of families by those who cannot maintain them, and introducing children to disease and dirt, and, still worse, to moral and spiritual ruin. He showed how [the] increase of the colliery population had greatly increased the struggle for existence in the coal trade." The *Christian World* further added: "The lecture appears at length in the *Christian World Pulpit* of yesterday."

Dr. Horton is a patron of the Christian Evidence Society, and Secularists, who have been so wearily enlivened for the past twenty years or so by the classic and impartial diatribes delivered by the lecturers of the above society against the Malthusian theory in general, and *The Elements of Social Science* in particular, have in some instances retorted with the foregoing extract from the *Christian World*: the result being that the cyclopedic erudition of the C.E.S. lecturers has been perturbed thereby. Now, it is quite possible that the rev. gentleman's attention may have been drawn to the indiscretion wherein he had given truth place before Christianity; hence the absurdity of Malthus's prediction.

A. LEWIS.

THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the veracious Acts of the Apostles we read (ii. 5) that "there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven." Now, I used to be told that the Jews were dispersed for rejecting Christ. But it appears from this passage that they were already among every nation. Is this a sign of the late date of the Acts of the Apostles?

GALIO.

That Stuttering Sergeant.

"In our company during the civil war," said Captain T. E. Barlow, of Milwaukee, "was a stuttering sergeant named Thomas, and a chaplain named Chenautt, who was exceedingly untidy in personal appearance. The sergeant was a wit, and gave the chaplain no end of trouble. One cold day the parson had preached for over an hour, and at the close of his discourse asked anyone who felt serious to come forward. The sergeant went at once. 'Do you really feel serious?' asked the chaplain, rather doubtful of his convert. 'Se-se-serious! I-ah-ah-should say I—I di-did. Any m-man w-would feel s-se-serious to s-s sit on a c-ca-cake of ice t-t-two hours and h-he-hear y-you p-preach,' was the reply. On another occasion at mess the sergeant began to eat before the chaplain had asked the accustomed blessing. Extending his hands over the table, the chaplain said, 'Pause, sergeant, pause.' 'Y-yes, I s-s see 'em. D-d-d-d——d dirty ones, too.'"—*Ambrose Bierce*, "*Dod Grile*."

PROFANE JOKES.

"The Rev. Mr. Oldbuck is a sort of reminiscent sinner." "How so?" "He revels in the recollection of what a devil of a fellow he was in his youth."

Michael—"What is the matter with Dr. Thirdly? He looks as though he were panic-stricken." Gabriel—"He is, poor soul. He has just met Dr. Speakpeace, whom he knew on earth as a Unitarian, and no one can convince him now that he is not in the infernal regions."

In a Sunday-school the teacher had been explaining the text, "Let your loins be girded." Wishing to see if they understood the explanation, he said to a boy: "Well, tell me now how and why we are commanded to gird up our loins?" "To keep up our breeches, sir," replied the youth.

A boy was reading from an old-fashioned primer, the letter "s" of which was made long, very much like the letter "f" of the present time. He came to the sentence about Solomon, which he read as follows: "Solomon was the wifest man that ever lived." "True, my boy, true," said his father, who was listening. "He had a thousand of 'em."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, J. P. Gilmour will lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.15, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 9, dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Annie Besant, "Individual and National Ideals."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Monday, at 8.30, general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. Guest, "Bible Tragedy and Comedy."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, St. John, "Has Man a Soul?"

CAMBERWELL GREEN: Tuesday, at 8, a lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why we do Not Believe in Christianity."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ and His Teachings."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. James, "The Philosophy of Atheism."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, G. Standring, "What is the Old Testament?" 3.15, F. Haslam, "The Fall of Man."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Stanley Jones, "Christianity Critically Examined." Thursday, at 8.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Civilisation and Christianity"; 3.30, "The Social Aspects of Christianity." Wednesday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, a lecture.

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, E. Pack will lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "My Imprisonment for Blasphemy."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Fall of the Bastille."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. Heaford, "Christ and His Teachings."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, 3.15, and 7, C. Cohen, "Christianity: its Rise, Influence, and Decay."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Can these Dry Bones Live?" 7, "Inspiration." Course of lectures by C. Cohen: Monday, at 8, "What Think ye of Christ?" Tuesday, "Christianity: Is it True?" Wednesday, "Christianity: Its Rise." Thursday, "Christianity: Its Progress." Friday, "Christianity: Its Decline." Saturday, 7.15, addresses by Messrs. Forder, Moss, Rowney, Easton, James, Lewis, Thompson, and Miss Vance.

COUNTRY.

DERBY (Pollitt's Dining Room, Market-place): 7.45, general meeting.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Antiquity of Man according to Science." Arrangements for excursion to Chester on July 14, after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rochdale-road, All Saints): 6.30, C. Pegg, Humorous Reading.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Amphitheatre, Northumberland-road): 11, S. P. Putnam, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 3, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century"; 7, "Secularism and Christianity."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Excursion to Tuxford; meet at Victoria Station at 1.20; train leaves at 1.37. Tickets to be had of the Secretary.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Important meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (Market-place, Godwin-street): 6.30, J. Greeves Fisher, "Has Man a Soul?"

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, lower end): 7, J. Kenst, "To Live Christ over Again."

CHATHAM (corner of the New Brompton-road, High-street): 11.15, A. B. Moss, "Ancient Saints and Modern Sinners"; 7, "Antidotes to Superstition."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—July 7, Victoria Park; 8 to 12, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—July 7, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 14, m. Kingsland, e. Edmonton; 21, m. Camberwell, a. Victoria Park, e. Camberwell; 24, Hyde Park; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m. and e. Wood Green.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—July 7 Chatham.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—July 17, m. Kingsland.

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LAWS AGAINST RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

A Statement and an Appeal.

THE present age boasts of its freedom. Civil and religious liberty is almost a commonplace among Englishmen. Catholics, Dissenters, and Jews have all been enfranchised. They enjoy the full rights of citizenship; their propaganda, worship, and property are fully protected by the law. But there is one exception to this rule of toleration. Freethinkers are still victims of oppression. They may vote for members of Parliament, and other representatives of the people; they may even sit in Parliament without hypocrisy or subterfuge under Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Bill; but they are still insulted as jurymen by ignorant or bigoted judges; they are liable to penalties for propagating their principles; and the law does not allow Freethought Societies to hold any kind of property, or to receive any legacies.

Many persons who are not Freethinkers are unaware of the grievances under which they suffer, and the following statement is intended for their benefit. It is believed that, when they understand the facts of the case, they will, for the most part, be favorable to an alteration of the law, so that *all* forms of opinion may enjoy a legal equality.

Under the old English law, heresy, blasphemy, schism, and other such offences, were tried and punished by the Ecclesiastical Courts. By the writ *de heretico comburendo* atheists, heretics, blasphemers, and schismatics could be burnt to death. This penalty was only abolished in 1677 by the Act 29 Charles II., cap. 9. The Act did not, however, take away the power of the Ecclesiastical Courts to deal with such offenders by "censures not extending to death." But in the course of time, by a gradual change of practice, the Ecclesiastical Courts have lost actual jurisdiction except over clergymen of the Church of England.

As *heresy* dropped out of sight attention became fixed on *blasphemy*. Lord Coleridge said that "the law of blasphemous libel first appeared in our books—at least the cases relating to it are first reported—shortly after the curtailment or abolition of the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts in matters temporal. Speaking broadly, before the time of Charles II. these things would have been dealt with as heresy; and the libellers so-called of more recent days would have suffered as heretics in earlier times."*

Thus law and practice continued till the passing of an Act known as the 9 and 10 William III., cap. 32, called "An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness." It declares that "any person or persons having been educated in, or at any time having made profession of, the Christian religion within this realm, who shall, by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God, or shall assert or maintain that there are more gods than one, or shall deny the Christian doctrine to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority," shall upon conviction be disabled from holding any ecclesiastical, civil, or military employment, and on a second conviction be imprisoned for three years and deprived for ever of all civil rights.

Lord Coleridge and Sir James Stephen have both called this law "ferocious." But it still disgraces the Statute Book. So much of it, as affected the Unitarians, was ostensibly repealed by the 53 George III., cap. 160. Lord Eldon, however, in 1817, doubted whether it was even partially repealed; and Chief Baron Kelly and Lord Bramwell, so late as 1867, held that a lecture on "The Character and Teachings of Christ: the former Defective, the latter Misleading," was an offence against the Statute.

This "infamous" Act was drawn up with such stringency that it defeated itself. No prosecution ever took place under it. But it largely guided the judges in their view of the Common Law of Blasphemy, under which scores of Freethinkers have been imprisoned.

The Act of William III. specifies certain *opinions* as blasphemous; it says nothing about the *language* in which they are couched. The crime was not in the *manner* but in the *matter*. And this view of Blasphemy has been held by all our judges, with the single exception of Lord Coleridge. In Woolston's case (1730) the Court "would not suffer it to be debated whether to write against Christianity in general was not an offence at Common Law." In Carlile's case (1819) the Court "was bound not to hear the truth of the Christian religion questioned." It declared that "if the defendant wished to produce authors to show that the Christian religion *might be denied*, that could not be allowed." Lord Chief Justice Abbott said "it was not competent in a Christian court, in a court of law, to rise up and say that the Christian religion was not a religion of truth." Mr. Justice Best went still farther. He said: "The Act is not confined to those who libel religion, but extends to those who, in their most private intercourse, by advised conversation *admit* that they disbelieve the Scriptures.' Lord Ellenborough, in the case of Eaton (1812), who was prosecuted for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*, said that "to deny the truth of the book which is the foundation of our faith, has never been permitted." In the case of Hetherington (1841), it was decided by Lord Chief Justice Denman that "an attack upon the Old Testament is clearly indictable." In the case of Paterson (Edinburgh, 1846), the Lord Justice Clerk said that the law expressly provided that "they who publish opinions contrary to the known principles of Christianity might be called to account and proceeded against by the civil magistrate." When the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was illegally arrested at Devonport, in 1861, for *intending* to lecture against the Bible, he brought an action for false imprisonment, and obtained *one farthing* damages; Lord Justice Erle, holding that the policeman, although he acted illegally, had really conferred a benefit on the plaintiff by preventing him from disseminating infidel opinions. Precisely the same view was taken by the Court of Exchequer in the case of Cowen *v.* Milbourn. Baron Bramwell said "it was unlawful to deny the truth of Christianity or the divine authority of the Scriptures." Lord Chief Baron Kelly added that to call the teaching of Christ misleading was "a violation of the first principles of the law, and cannot be done without blasphemy."

Sir James Stephen, in his *Digest of the Criminal Law*, among alternative definitions of Blasphemy, gave the following: "A denial of the truth of Christianity in general, or of the existence of God, whether the terms of such publication are decent or otherwise." The same high

* *The Law of Blasphemous Libel.* The Summing-up in the case of Regina *v.* Foote and others. Revised with a Preface by the Lord Chief Justice of England. London: Stevens & Sons.

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authority, in a later magazine article,* held that the crime of Blasphemy consists in the mere expression of heterodox opinions; that it is only an *aggravation* of the crime to express them in "offensive" language; that "a large part of the most serious and most important literature of the day is illegal"; and that every bookseller who sells, and everyone who lends to his friend, a copy of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, or of Renan's *Life of Jesus*, commits a crime punishable with fine and imprisonment.

Sir James Stephen detested this Law of Blasphemy. He even went to the length of drafting a Bill for its total abolition. He said that he preferred "stating it in its natural naked deformity to explaining it away in such a manner as to prolong its existence and give it an air of plausibility and humanity."

This view of the law is borne out by the language of indictments for Blasphemy. In the abortive prosecution of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, and the successful prosecution of Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp (1883), it was alleged against them in their indictments that they wickedly and profanely attempted "to bring the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt," not only "against the peace of our lady the Queen," but also "to the great displeasure of Almighty God."

Lord Coleridge, however, in summing-up at the trial of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey in the Court of Queen's Bench, while admitting that the law of Blasphemy "is undoubtedly a disagreeable law," let humanity get the better of his legal judgment. Against the decision of all previous judges, he laid it down that "if the decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without a person being guilty of blasphemous libel."

"Such a law," said Sir James Stephen, "would never work." You cannot really distinguish between substance and style; you must either forbid or permit all attacks on Christianity. Men cannot discuss doctrines like eternal punishment, for instance, as calmly as they do questions in philology. When they feel deeply they will express themselves strongly; and "to say that you may discuss the truth of religion, but that you may not hold up its doctrines to contempt, ridicule, or indignation, is either to take away with one hand what you concede with the other, or to confine the discussion to a small and, in many ways, uninfluential class of persons."

John Stuart Mill expressed the same truth in an article on "Religious Prosecutions," in the *Westminster Review* of July, 1824: "To declare that an act is legal, but with the proviso that it be performed in a gentle and decorous manner, is opening a wide door for arbitrary discretion on the one part and dissatisfaction on the other. The difficulty is greatly increased when the act itself is offensive to those who sit in judgment upon the manner of its performance."

Such a law is a downright absurdity. It means that twelve Christians are to be put into a jury-box to decide whether a Freethinker has attacked Christianity in a "becoming" manner. What is the Freethinker's liberty worth in such circumstances? Would Liberal writers like to be tried by their opponents for attacking Conservatism without a proper respect for the "decencies" of controversy?

"There is one reflection," said Sir James Stephen, "which seems to me to prove with conclusive force that the law upon this subject can be explained and justified only on what I regard as its true principle—the principle of persecution. It is that if the law were really impartial, and punished blasphemy only because it offends the feelings of believers, it ought also to punish such preaching as offends the feelings of unbelievers."

Unbelievers do not ask to have their feelings "protected." They demand—and sooner or later it must be conceded—that religious questions shall be discussed as freely as political and social questions. What has truth to fear from the wildest storms of controversy? "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple: whoever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

Freethinkers will never be satisfied until the odious Blasphemy Laws are swept out of existence. A beginning has already been made. The late Charles Bradlaugh introduced a Bill to abolish them, and, in the face of acrimonious bigotry, forty-seven members of the House of Commons voted for the measure.

Some day a more successful attempt will be made. Meanwhile attention is invited to the disabilities which the Blasphemy Laws lay upon Freethinkers.

Their opinions being illegal, their Societies are outside the protection of the law. They cannot as Societies hold any kind of property; in fact, they are in the position of Trade Unions under the old laws against such combinations. Legacies left them may be intercepted, and intercepted by Christians. Some years ago house-property was left to the Bolton Secular Society and appropriated by the heir-at-law. In 1886 the sum of £500 was left by Mr. Josiah Spencer to assist the Manchester Secularists to obtain a hall of their own; Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mr. George Payne being appointed trustees. This sum was also appropriated by the residuary legatee, the Duchy of Lancaster Court holding that part of Mr. Spencer's will to be invalid.

In order to defeat this disabling law, as far as possible, Freethinkers may form Limited Liability Companies; but the shares may in time pass into hostile or indifferent hands, and several properties have been lost or diverted in this way. Of course a legacy may be left absolutely to an individual, with an understanding that he is to apply it, or a portion of it, to Secular purposes; but such a legacy would be invalid if a secret trust could be established. And if the sum to be disposed of were a large one, a testator might feel the want of a proper security; for, admitting the strict rectitude of the person he trusted, his intentions might be frustrated by accident, such as death or bankruptcy.

To obtain at least a partial security for non-Christians, Mr. Manfield, late member for Northampton, introduced a Bill which never came up for the second reading. Its title was the "Civil and Religious Liberty Extension Act," and its special object was to make it "lawful for any person to create and endow, or create or endow, any Trust for inquiry into the foundations and tendency of religious and ethical beliefs which from time to time prevail, or for the maintenance and propagation of the results of such inquiry."

A more drastic Bill, drafted on the lines of the one introduced by the late Charles Bradlaugh, was introduced, first by Mr. S. Storey, member for Sunderland, and afterwards by his colleague, Mr. J. Gourley. It provided for the practical repeal of the Blasphemy Laws by abolishing prosecution on account of religious opinions. This measure also failed to reach a second reading.

It is doubtful whether anything will avail except the absolute repeal of the Blasphemy Laws by such a Bill as Mr. Gourley's. There is no express law declaring that Freethought Societies shall not hold property or receive legacies. The disability follows from the illegality of their propaganda at common law. While it is a crime to oppose Christianity, it is as illegal to leave money for the promotion of Freethought as it is to leave money for the promotion of theft or murder.

Prosecution and imprisonment are not the worst evils of the Blasphemy Laws. A cause which is persecuted has a compensation in the publicity that is given to its principles, and the stimulus that is given to its activities. But to rob it of those material rights, which are indispensable in a civilisation based upon property, is to doom it to suffer the worst form of injustice. It is within the personal knowledge of the present writer that many thousands of pounds have been lost to the Secular party, during the last five years, in consequence of the infamous law which denies Secularists the common rights of citizenship, and makes them *as Secularists* but aliens in the land of their birth and affection.

This is not a religious question at all. It is a political question. Secularists appeal for a recognition of their full rights of citizenship, not on the ground that their opinions are true—for all sects occupy that ground, to the exclusion of others—but on the ground that Religious Liberty should cover every variety of conviction. Unless it does so it is not Liberty at all, but merely an extension of Privilege.

With this view the following questions have been drawn up for use in the present general elections. Secularists are earnestly invited to put these questions to parliamentary candidates, and to bring this statement of the nature and effect of the Blasphemy Laws to their notice:—

* "Blasphemy and Blasphemous Libel." By Sir James Stephen, *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1884.

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(1) Are you in favor of the fullest extension of Civil and Religious Liberty?
(2) Do you consider that Secularists or Freethinkers should be liable to prosecution, fine, and imprisonment for disseminating their principles?
(3) Do you consider that Secular Societies should be kept without legal security for their Funds and Property?
(4) Do you think it just and right that legacies left to Secular Societies should be withheld from them under sanction of the law?
(5) Will you vote, if you have the opportunity, for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, under which Freethought is a crime?
(6) If you are not prepared to vote for the entire abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, would you vote for such a measure as the Liberty of Bequest Bill?

Candidates' answers to these questions should be noted and forwarded to the editor of the *Freethinker* as soon as possible. Such information will be extremely valuable in view of the introduction of a Bill in the new Parliament.

G. W. F.

UNDOGMATIC CHRISTIANITY.

We hear a good deal in these days of undogmatic Christianity. The Creeds have long been crumbling, and now Christians are saying, "Oh, we are not bound by what our fathers believed." Even the preachers, who are sworn to believe and defend the articles of their faith, notoriously do not preach them. Whoever heard a sermon enforcing the doctrine that "Works done before the grace of Christ and the Inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God," or teaching that "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved." Such sermons would not be listened to by intelligent congregations. We are offered now all the honey and none of the vinegar of the old faith. The genuine, old, unadulterated Christianity cannot be obtained at any price. The brimstone is carefully omitted from the treacle. Hell is unmentionable to ears polite, and is supposed to have been turned into a skating rink.

Now, either the old dogmas were true or they were false. It is either true or not true that God Almighty, the presumed creator of the universe, came down to the earth at a particular time and was born of a mortal woman, who did or did not remain a virgin. And the necessity for this illegitimate birth either did or did not depend upon a prior woman having partaken of some forbidden fruit. If there was no Fall, then there was no necessity for a Redeemer from the effects of that Fall.

To say that dogmas do not matter is virtually to confess that they are untrue, and to say this is to affirm that what has been held to be the very core of Christianity during the mass of the centuries of its existence is founded on mistakes or falsehoods.

The New York *Tribune* (Sunday, June 16) devoted an editorial to showing that Christians could, with Dr. Heber Newton, give up the dogma of Christian's bodily resurrection. It says: "The evidence for dogmas, however, is one thing; that for Christianity as a system of life and conduct is another." But why should we trust on matters of life and conduct a system which has proved to be in the wrong in other respects? Why should we go back to Jesus, who believed in demons, for a system of life and conduct any more than to Buddha?

What is Christianity without its scheme of redemption, its salvation through the punishment of an innocent person? Wherein is it differentiated from "essential" Judaism, "essential" Islamism, or "essential" Theism? If Socrates, Darwin, or Mill could get to heaven without believing Christianity, why on earth should I or anyone else believe it? For I find questionable, not only its dogmas, but its very essence. The central doctrine of all religion is reliance upon God, and such reliance I hold is futile and weakening to moral fibre.

We are now told that the Bible is "inspired but not inerrant"; that is to say God dictated some part of it, but did not keep out errors in other parts. If this meant frankly that it is partly true and partly false, I can agree. If the undogmatic Christians will honestly admit the supremacy of reason we will shake hands, only we shall proceed to test it on the very fundamentals of the faith; on the doctrine of the existence of God. Will they say God or no God it does not matter, or is their real meaning, "We do not care how much you throw over as long as you pay your pew-rents promptly? You may dispense with every doctrine of Christ, only you must hold on to the name of Christian because it is so highly respectable."

The politician who said "Them's my sentiments, and if you disapprove of them they can be changed," was no more accommodating than the creedless Christian, who even, if he gives you his "sentiments," will never state distinctly what it is he accepts and what he rejects. Christianity, in fact, is shredded down to a mere sentiment common to all religions. What is left should be infinitely precious, for it is infinitesimally small.

J. M. Wheeler.

CROMWELL THE FRIEND OF FREEDOM.

The name of Oliver Cromwell has recently been brought prominently before the public through a proposal having been made in the House of Commons to erect in his honor a national statue; but I regret that the late Government did not adhere to this intention to nationally recognise the services of one of England's greatest sons. It is, however, gratifying to find that what a prejudiced Parliament failed to do, will shortly be accomplished by private generosity. Surely if statues are raised to the memories of kings, who did nothing that added to the honor and nobility of the nation, one should be erected to commemorate the hero of, what was undoubtedly, up to that period, the grandest epoch in the history of our country. From my earliest years the character of Cromwell always had a peculiar charm for me, inasmuch as in him I recognised a concentration of those qualities which make a great and noble man. His genius for achieving thorough reform of the gross abuses of his time, his fidelity to principles which he deemed right, his keen power of discrimination in the midst of difficulties, his courage under adversity, and his marked power of self-control in the hour of victory, commanded my admiration. Not being a hero worshipper, I do not regard Cromwell as having been a perfect man. Still, I agree with the late Charles Bradlaugh that Cromwell "was a man of higher stature and of mightier will than any other who lived in his age." As a Secularist, I applaud his persistent defence of mental freedom, of the right of personal opinion, also his sincere vindication of religious liberty. Secularists need not ignore the excellent traits in a person's character, because they are unable to endorse the whole of his conduct. Our duty is to acknowledge noble and useful actions wherever they are found, and to emulate the good deeds of others, so that we may be the better enabled to equip ourselves with the means of fighting successfully the battle of life.

To be in a position to judge fairly the career of Cromwell, it is necessary to remember his early training, the incidents that led to his entering upon public life, and, above all, the characters of the men with whom he had to cope, and the circumstances with which he had to contend. He was educated in the strict Puritan faith. For some time he sat in Parliament "a silent member," but the unjust attempt upon the part of the king to exact the payment of ship-money from Hampden and others enraged Cromwell, and he became a determined enemy to the despotism of Monarchy. He commenced his public life in stormy times. Society was then rotten to its very core, and Cromwell had to confront intrigue, treachery, and conspiracy. The five years of his rule as Protector was one continual struggle, not only against petty machinations, but also against attempts to take his life. In his time parties not only differed in opinion and policy in reference to general political matters, but a fierce and bitter feud existed between the supporters of the king and those who favored government by Parliament. Such conditions, no doubt, caused Cromwell to resort to methods that, under other and better circumstances, he would not have adopted. While, of course, it is absurd to say that Cromwell was

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"raised up by God," still there is no doubt that he was for the most part equal to what the hour demanded of him. To the Freethinker of the present day, a man marching to battle singing psalms, with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other, would not be regarded as a political messiah, or an ideal hero of the Saxon race. The fact, however, remains that, whatever was the incentive, Cromwell possessed an undaunted courage, which made him as supreme in Parliament as he was victorious on the battle field.

It is said that Cromwell was a fanatic and superstitious in religion, which probably, to a certain extent, is true; but so was the King. Yet the one proved himself a lover of liberty, and the other a tyrant by nature. Even religious fanaticism has not the same effect upon all natures. Some men have a too keen sense of justice, and are too strong intellectually to be swayed by the more insiduous and pernicious influence of the fanatical spirit of theology. Such a man was Cromwell, who never allowed his own ardent zeal in the cause of religion to prompt him to unjustly interfere with the worship of others. But what is called fanaticism in him I should term a deeply-rooted enthusiasm inspired by a sincere belief in the stern Puritan faith. With him to "please his God" was his highest duty; but to do this fortunately he deemed it necessary to be fair and just to man, and to use his power to secure for all equal privileges and equal rights. It was not that vulgar theological fanaticism which has so often, since his time, deprived men of that to which they were entitled by birth and citizenship. We must judge Cromwell, if at all, by his works at a most critical epoch in our history. He purified the seat of Government by ridding it of political corruption; he was the head of a movement that suppressed the King and the power of the aristocracy; he gave a fatal blow to the delusive but mischievous belief in the "divine right of kings"; and he made the name of England feared, if not respected, by all the civilised world. Moreover, he raised, from most unlikely materials, the finest army in Europe. His grand regiment, called the "Ironsides," was "never beaten." In his first engagement the enemy were three to one, and at the battle at Winceby his horse was killed, and fell upon him. He rose, but was again struck down; still he was not to be defeated, for, mounting a trooper's horse, he made the enemy fly, pursuing them many miles and won a glorious victory. Where are the kings, or other members of the royal blood, who ever displayed, in the face of such fearful odds, similar skill and bravery? Contrast this military ability and this indomitable courage with the conduct of the Duke of Cambridge in the Crimea; and yet upon this "feather-bed soldier" more of the people's money has been wasted than would pay for the erection of a hundred statues to the great Protector.

The position of Catholicism previous to the time of Cromwell must not be overlooked. He succeeded in checking the flames that had been lighted by the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholics believed that no faith ought to be kept with heretics. But Cromwell gave the Duke of Savoy and the Pope of Rome to understand that if justice was not done, "England's guns should be heard in the castle of St. Angelo." Neither must we forget by whom he was surrounded. We may fairly judge a man by the company he keeps, if he is free to select it. Cromwell had around him the master-minds of that age. John Milton, who was his secretary, was one of the most virtuous and learned men of the period. Frederick Harrison says: "By rare and unexampled fortune, the first political genius of his age was served by the greatest literary genius of his time. . . . . Never had ruler so mighty a poet in his service; never did poet share such labors of state under so great a chief." Milton's friend, Thurloe, was Secretary of State, and among Cromwell's associates were Andrew Marvel and George Fox, besides John Hampden, of whom Baxter said, in his *Saint's Rest*, that he should like him for a companion in heaven. Cromwell's greatness was not marred by either bigotry or selfishness. Whenever he found honest men of ability he was willing to avail himself of their services, not for purposes of his own, but for the service of his country. That was an indication of true statesmanship, and of the highest political wisdom.

However much some of my readers may be opposed to the political views of Cromwell, it cannot truthfully be denied that in the very height of his power he proved himself possessed of qualities which all Secularists must admire. He was brave and honest and he had a scrupulous consideration for those who differed from him, provided they did not seek to trample upon the rights of others. This fact will be amply proved in my next article. His aim was to establish a system of justice throughout the kingdom. The means he sometimes employed would not perhaps be thought the most appropriate to adopt to-day, inasmuch as conditions have changed since his time. Still, in the words of Macaulay, "he reformed the representative system in the most judicious manner, and rendered the administration of justice uniform throughout the island."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

LINCOLN'S RELIGION.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S character is shown in the truest, clearest, and most effective light when it is presented in its real colors. He was neither a blatant infidel nor a professing Christian. He was simply an unbeliever. He was without faith in the Bible or its teachings. On this point the testimony is so overwhelming that there is no basis for doubt. In his early life, Lincoln exhibited a powerful tendency to aggressive infidelity. But when he grew to be a politician, he became secretive and non-committal as to his religious belief. He was shrewd enough to realise the necessity of reticence with the convictions he possessed, if he hoped to succeed in politics.

It is a matter of history that in 1834, at New Salem, Ill., Lincoln read and circulated Volney's *Ruins* and Paine's *Age of Reason*, giving to both books the sincere recommendation of his unqualified approval. About that time, or a little later, he wrote an extensive argument against Christianity, intending to publish it. In this argument he contended that the Bible was not inspired, and that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God. He read this compilation of his views to numerous friends, and on one occasion, when so engaged, his friend and employer, Samuel Hill, snatched the manuscript from the author's hands and threw it into the stove, where it was quickly consumed. A Springfield friend said of him that, in 1838, "Lincoln was enthusiastic in his infidelity." John T. Stuart, who was his first law partner, declares: "Lincoln was an avowed and open infidel. He went further against Christian belief than any man I ever heard. He always denied that Jesus was the Christ of God." David Davis stated that "Lincoln had absolutely no faith in the Christian sense of the term."

These authorities ought to be conclusive, but there is further testimony. This latter is important as explanatory of Lincoln's frequent allusions, in his presidential messages and proclamations, to the Supreme Being. To the simplicity of his nature there was added a poetic temperament. He was found of effective imagery, and his references to the Deity are due to the instinct of the poet. After his death Mrs. Lincoln said: "Mr. Lincoln had no faith and no hope in the usual acceptation of those words. He never joined a church." She denominates what has been mistaken for his expressions of religious sentiment as "a kind of poetry in his nature," adding, "he was never a Christian." Herndon, who was his latest law partner and biographer, is even more explicit. He says: "No man had a stronger or firmer faith in Providence—God—than Mr. Lincoln; but the continued use by him late in life of the word 'God' must not be interpreted to mean that he believed in a personal God. In 1854 he asked me to erase the word 'God' from a speech which I had written and read to him for criticism, because my language indicated a personal God, whereas he insisted no such personality ever existed."

So it must be accepted as final by every reasonable mind that, in religion, Mr. Lincoln was a sceptic. But, above all things, he was not a hypocrite nor a pretender. He was a plain man, rugged and earnest, and he pretented to be nothing more. He believed in humanity, and he was incapable of Phariseeism. He had great respect for the feelings and convictions of others, but he was not a caviller. He was honest and he was sincere, and, taking him simply for what he was, we are not likely soon to see his like again.—*Chicago Herald.*

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THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE STILL FORBIDDEN.

THE Austin *Statesman* of April 7 has an editorial that would have better fitted the first of that month. It is entitled "The Danger of Great Learning." It is the old cry of wolf, when there is no wolf. It is the old scarecrow of the priests of all religions, from the earliest times of which we have any record, to prevent men from knowing anything except what the priests chose to tell them. The first law ever promulgated for the government of man was, that he should not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and the penalty prescribed for disobedience was death. The man did eat the fruit, however, and found out that it was good, and that all that God told him about the danger of doing so, was a lie, and the knowledge he thus acquired had made him as one of the gods.

Thus it has been from the first until now; the priests have been denouncing learning and trying to persuade men that the greatest sin they could commit was to attempt to learn the truth about the mysteries of their religion. It is for this reason they tell us that God has chosen the weak and foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings cometh wisdom—such as priests approve of. Great learning is dangerous to the Church, and to all the pretensions of the teachers of the myths of religion; but it is the greatest blessing of life to all who are able to acquire it. It is the greatest emancipation proclamation that ever spoke freedom to a race of slaves; that set free the human mind from the shackles of superstition and the bondage of priestcraft. Priests have struggled to prevent its progress, and the history of religion has been a long record of the persecution of learned men by rack, thumbscrew, and the stake, to prevent the spread of knowledge. But all this has been in vain. Knowledge has increased and multiplied in spite of the attempts of priests to suppress it; until now, through the humanising effect of learning, religion has been disarmed of all its tools of torture, its teeth have been drawn, and it can only gnash its toothless gums and slander those it fain would kill. But hear the pious editor of the *Statesman*:—

> "The man with great learning becomes so confident of his mental strength, of his ability to weigh every statement and apply the strict rules of syllogism to every proposition, to analyse statements and problems, that he loses faith or belief in all things that do not receive the endorsement of hard, material facts, and measure up to the standard of his intellectual logic. While such a man may be said to be severely intellectual, he refuses to believe anything partaking of the supernatural."

All this is most solemnly true; but if an infidel had said it instead of the pious editor of the *Statesman*, every minister in Texas would have denounced it as a slander upon the Church, and an attempt to throw discredit upon the holy mysteries of the Christian religion.

The poet says, "A little learning is a dangerous thing." It is dangerous because it is little, and the less it is, the more dangerous, in exact proportion. But the theory of the Church and the *Statesman* is, that the more learning a man has, the more dangerous it becomes; for—as the editor says—"What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Now there are two assumptions in this statement. First, that man has a soul; and, second, that great learning will cause him to lose it; neither of which has a particle of evidence to sustain it. If it be true that man has a soul concealed about his person, it would seem that a learned man, who has studied anatomy, physiology, and psychology would be most likely to find out the truth as to whether he had one or not. So also, if he should find out that he actually had a soul, he would be best able to tell whether the knowledge that had enabled him to demonstrate the fact, would be likely to cause the loss of that soul.

There can be no danger in knowing the truth, except to those who would wish to suppress it; and the editor's talk about the danger of learning means nothing more than that it would be very dangerous to the cause of religion if the learned man should discover that all the talk about the soul was humbug. If a man has a soul, there can be no danger in a knowledge of the fact. If there is no such thing as a soul, and the theory is but an imposition taught by interested parties for their own benefit, then the learning that would enable us to find out the truth about it must be beneficial to everybody except those who are profiting by the imposition.

It is like this. A man comes to me and says, "There is a fortune for you that amounts to millions deposited in the First National Bank, that you can have by paying to me 10 per cent. of it." I reply, "Good! I will go at once and draw the money and pay you the commission." "No," he says, "you cannot do that; the money will not be paid to you until after your death; but it is a sure thing for you then if you pay my commission now." "Well," I say, "it is a good thing for my estate, anyhow, if true. I will go to the bank and ascertain the fact, and cheerfully pay your price for the information." "No," he says; "that won't do; you must take my word for it. There is great danger that you may lose it all by knowing too much. You must have faith that it is true—all safe as I tell you. All learning that goes beyond faith is dangerous." And so, if I am a fool or an ignoramus, I pay the commission, exemplifying the proverb, "A fool and his money are soon parted," and hug myself with the delusion that I am smarter and richer than the infidel who, from his great learning, refuses to believe in the promises of the Gospel sharp, who is now living high on the money he has fooled me out of. Such bunco steerers as this find it very dangerous to meet a man who has learning enough to see through their little game.

The pious editor seems to think that belief is a matter of volition, and that the learned man refuses to believe in the supernatural out of pure pride and cussedness; and not because the evidence is insufficient to convince an intelligent man who has learning enough to know how to sift, weigh, and analyse it. But the fact is, everybody must believe that which is proved by evidence if he has brains and education enough to comprehend the evidence. Every lawyer knows and acts upon his conviction, that if he has an honest case he must secure an intelligent and learned jury to try it; but if he has a bad or dishonest case, in which he must pull wool over the eyes of the jury and make them believe that falsehood is truth, and the truth a lie, then he has no use for men of intelligence on his jury, and secures, so far as he can, a jury of ignoramuses, who will believe any nonsense that he may tell them. I quote again: "He [that is the man of great learning] is intellectual, but he demands material proof of everything, forgetting that his intellect receives the evidence of many material facts that are not confined by any one of his senses, but the moment that the spiritual is presented to the intellect for belief, although the material is sustained by the same kind of evidence, he refuses utterly to believe it."

If by this the editor means to say that the spiritual is sustained by the same evidence that material facts are, I take issue with him. The spiritual rests upon faith alone for its evidence, but material facts are sustained by material evidence sufficient to force belief upon any cultivated mind. When such evidence is presented, it does not rest with the will to believe or to reject it; if the judgment is convinced there is no escape from the conclusion. As I said before, the spiritual has absolutely no evidence to support it but faith, and whether a man believe it or not, will depend upon whether he has sacrificed his judgment to his fears and hopes, or has sufficient brains and learning to properly weigh evidence.

The pious editor goes on to say: "The miracles wrought by Christ when he was on this earth are attested by the same kind of testimony that informs us of the remarkable military career of Alexander, or Charlemagne; the man of great learning refuses to believe the proof of the former, while he gives ready credence to the latter."

It is true that both rest upon hearsay testimony; but there is another element in the evidence which he has forgotten; and that is, the probability or credibility of the story itself. If a man should come to me and say that he ate a beefsteak for his breakfast this morning, I would have no difficulty in believing the story, because there is no improbability in it, and the man could have no motive in deceiving me about so simple a matter. But if he told me his cow jumped over the moon, I would utterly refuse to believe it, though the testimony came from the same man that I had believed in the first case; and so would the editor of the *Statesman*, or any man of a very moderate degree of learning.

When a man tells me that Christ raised a dead man to

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life after he had been so long dead that putrefaction had set in, I want something stronger in the way of testimony than the word of any man, because it is much more credible that the man told a lie than that a dead and rotten corpse should come to life.

The histories of Alexander and Charlemagne have been told by hundreds of writers in all the nations of the earth; and we know who they are, and the authentitity of their works. Besides, there is nothing in their works that transcends the bounds of probability, not to say possibility. The life and miracles of Christ are found only in a book that is as full of marvels as the life and adventures of Baron Munchausen.

Nobody knows who the authors were, nor when the stories were written. The Jews, among whom these miracles are said to have been performed, did not believe in them, never did believe in them, and do not believe in them to this day. The Romans, who governed Palestine, and the Greeks who stood at the head of the science, arts, and literature of the world are all silent as to the wonderful things that are said to have taken place in their midst. How absurd to say that these improbable and impossible wonders are sustained by the same evidence as are the histories of Alexander and Charlemagne.

One more quotation and I have done. "Outside of the evidences of the divinity of Christ, and beyond that a Christian professes to have been drawn or taught by the Holy Spirit, is the fact that he revealed a religion that no man or set of men would or could have conceived at that age or time."

If the pious editor had a little more learning, he would have known that modern research and discovery has proved, beyond doubt, that whoever it was that concocted the Christian religion, he revealed nothing that was new; that the whole teaching of Christ, as told in the Gospels, was copied from earlier Pagan books and traditions that the fathers of the Church endeavored to destroy, and hoped they had destroyed, but which modern learning has brought to light.

It is too late in the history of the world to attempt to build up barriers against the tide of learning; the time was when the power of the Church could suppress all attempts to enlighten the mass of the people. That time has passed away, never to be revived. Free schools, free thought, and free speech have opened the eyes of all men to the impositions and fraudulent claims of the teachers of religion, and the tide of learning, like the leak in a dam, has grown until it is now irresistible. Let everybody know and understand that learning is always safe, and the more we have of it, the safer we shall be.

—*Independent Pulpit.* J. P. RICHARDSON.

Obituary.

A WELL-KNOWN London character has passed away in the person of Dan Chatterton, who died on July 7 at the age of seventy-five. As a vendor of literature and bill-poster his gaunt figure was familiar in the London streets and parks, since the days when Hyde Park railings fell and Mrs. Law first spoke there despite prohibition. Devoted to the propaganda of Communism, he lived in great poverty, and produced a curious paper and pamphlets which he set up and printed himself. Violent in invective against princes, peers, priests, and other parasites, he would not hurt a fly, and he was the soul of integrity. He was working almost to the last. Miss E. Robins, like her sister a true sister of mercy, nursed him during the last week in his slum residence off Drury-lane. Mr. Forder conducted the funeral.—J. M. W.

After Death.

"After death—what?" Eternal peace. We simply go back to the eternity of unconsciousness wherein we were before birth. Others must now fight the battle of life for us. We may rest forever. Is this not infinitely more consoling than eternal joy for the few and eternal torment for the many? And this is what true Christianity implies. *And it is not progressive*—it means now precisely what it did in the days of the popes and Calvin and Edwards. Do not be so foolish and think it is me, and not you, marching on the "broadway" of destruction. Few there are, indeed, scrambling on the "narrow path"—all others, including all those who doubt a single word of that hoary book, are damned! There is no middle ground.—*Otto Wettstein.*

ACID DROPS.

THE men of God are a danger in every movement. They should really stick to their pulpits, and let laymen do the political and social work of the world, just as they let laymen do all its professional and industrial work. When they take up a cause, or a principle, they nearly always overdo it. A layman, used to the rough-and-tumble of the world, is more circumspect; he has also more self-control, and a stronger sense of justice.

Some years ago we told some of our Socialist friends, who are also Atheists, that the men of God would exploit their movement as soon as it was profitable to do so. Well, our prophecy is fast being realised. Listen to men of God like the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and you would fancy they were all Fabians. But they are not, and they don't mean to be. They only want to attract the support of people who are Socialistically inclined; and their Socialist sentiments—always vague and therefore easily disownable on occasion—are only the bait upon the hook.

Having no real sincerity, but only the simulation of it, such men of God overdo everything, as we have already remarked. Just take an illustration. Many of our readers know that Mr. Blatchford's *Merrie England* has been a striking success. At any rate, it has had a very extensive sale. Now a fact like this is one that tells with Mr. Price Hughes. Accordingly, he praised "Nunquam's" book, and only regretted that he was not a Christian. Well, a reply to "Nunquam" is written by Mr. George Brooks, who is a Christian; whereupon the *Methodist Times* pitches into the replier, describing him as a self-made man who has made a "pile," and who therefore sees nothing but wickedness in all attempts to improve the social position of the people. It also accuses him of using a "vituperative" style and employing "brutal language."

Mr. George Brooks writes to the *Methodist Times*, stating that he has not made a "pile" at all, and that he earns a living by his pen; and as to the "vituperation" and "brutal language," he challenges Mr. Hughes to produce anything of the kind from the book. Mr. Hughes does not accept the challenge, nor does he express any regret for his misrepresentations. Which is exactly what would be expected by anyone who knows the author of "The Atheist Shoemaker."

Mr. Price Hughes naturally gives his readers a "tip" over the general election. "The duty of every Christian," he says, "at this national crisis, is to speak and act and vote as he believes Jesus Christ would have spoken, acted, and voted if he had been in similar circumstances." What a beautiful rule of policy, to be sure! It means anything or nothing. There are pious Conservatives and pious Liberals, and both sides feel that they have the support of Jesus Christ.

There is one thing that Jesus Christ *would* probably want to do if he were alive. He would want to "boss" the Salvation Army or the West London Mission. But he wouldn't do it. Booth and Hughes would take precious good care of that. Jesus Christ dead for nearly two thousand years is one thing; Jesus Christ in the field as an active rival is quite another.

From a report in the *Christian World*, it appears that "General" Booth's match-making business—we don't mean the matrimonial department—is a wretched failure. Traders and consumers will not pay double the market price for Salvation lucifers. But why doesn't Booth sell them cheaper, especially as he got his capital for nothing? His reply is that he pays such *high wages*. Well now, that is news!

When the news arrived that the Canadians had carried a "Prohibition" law, the "Temperance" women (who shortly before had passed the previous question to a resolution supporting some small attempt to improve the industrial position of women) stood up and sang the Doxology. It must surely have been a revised version. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," but curse him for having said in his written word "that it is wine that maketh glad the heart of man"; and for having, by his incarnate word, turned the water into wine.—*Church Reformer.*

Charles Jackson Holmes, mission preacher, was sentenced to three months' hard labor at Canterbury, for robbing a Wesleyan minister, whose guest he was, at Faversham.

At the East Riding Sessions the Rev. Alfred Barber, on bail, pleaded guilty to indecently assaulting a boy named John Pogmore, at Filey, on May 25. Prisoner is a Church of England clergyman, and was recently married. He was sentenced to four months' hard labor.

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Michael Cleary, the husband of the poor woman who was burnt as a witch near Clonmel, has been sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude, and those who assisted him in his superstitious cruelty have received various minor terms of imprisonment. While Christians hold, as the word of God, a book which proclaims "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," the punishment of witch-killers is an anomaly, proving their Bible belief is nothing more than a farce.

Charles Jackson Jones, a mission preacher, has been sentenced to three months' hard labor at the East Kent Quarter Sessions for stealing jewellery at Faversham. He was conducting a mission in the neighborhood when he perpetrated the theft.

Dr. Pentecost is having the same trouble with the congregation in his London Tabernacle that Dr. Talmage encountered in Brooklyn. The coppery color of the contents of his contribution boxes worries him. He finds an average of no less than six hundred big, clumsy English pennies each Sunday. The modest shillings and sixpences make a poor show amid the mass of grosser metal, and the yellow gleam of the sovereign is almost unknown. The preacher's prejudice against copper as a monetary metal is so strong, that he has expressed it in earnest language to his people. No bimetallist has made a more eloquent plea for silver than that of Dr. Pentecost to his congregation. Even threepenny bits, he declares, are more respectable and honorable than the despised brown coins.

The Theosophists had a split at their Convention. Mr. H. A. Coryn demanded that, as its first business, the Convention should address itself to the consideration of the legal status of the European section, with a view to determining whether it was or was not *de jure* a part of the Theosophical Society. This resolution Colonel Olcott declared out of order. His ruling was challenged, and, on a vote being taken, was upheld by thirty-nine to fourteen.

Then came a squabble over a letter from the American section, which it was proposed to reject as improperly directed. Some were for waiving technicalities and receiving the letter and answering it in a friendly spirit; others, led by Mrs. Besant, held that the letter should be simply received and laid on the table. While it pretended to make overtures of peace, Mrs. Besant argued, it really had behind it a very different sentiment. She moved that it be simply received as an act of courtesy without discussion or further action. On a vote being taken, this course was adopted.

Then came the *denouement*. Irritated at the two decisions come to, antagonistic to the American section, all those delegates who had voted on the opposite side rose in a body, together with their friends, to the number of fifty or sixty in all, and, one of their number acting as spokesman, it was announced, with portentous solemnity, that they had determined to sever their connection thenceforward with their fellow European members—in pursuance of which resolve they thereupon one and all tramped hilariously out of the room. The first object of the Society is to promote universal brotherhood. It is getting on.

Light, the organ of the high-class Spiritists, says of the Theosophical Society: "It is being shivered to atoms by personalities, constitutions, rules, formalities, officials, and doctrines, all the direct result of intense organisation. Theosophy has not set us an example—it has put up a warning."

The *Church Times* urges the entire body of the Church of England to vote solid Tory, because "We have reached a supreme moment when, if we put forth all our strength, we can arrest the assault upon the Church for many a long day to come." The more frankly the Church becomes partisan in politics the more surely will the doom come when its day of party triumph is over.

The "unco guid" of Glasgow still prefer dirt to desecrating the Lord's Day. At first the public baths were only open on "lawful days," and when it was proposed that they should be opened for an hour or two on Sunday morning, the Council and the Kirk raged in chorus, and all but swore over the impiety of the conception. Better be dirty than offend the Deity by washing under public auspices on the Sabbath morning. But the contemptible squalling was useless. Common sense refused to budge or vanish "up the Cowgate," and at last the slight concession was made that the baths might be opened for a short time on Sunday for the benefit of those who had no private baths of their own.

The accommodation proved insufficient, and last week Mr. Stevenson proposed that the baths should be open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Again the bigots raged about the sanctity of the Sabbath, and Mr. Stevenson's motion was lost; but a motion doubling the open time on Sunday morning was carried, so the Lord's Day will be doubly desecrated after all.

A religious riot has taken place at Porbandar, Bombay, owing to the clashing of Hindu marriage processions with the Moslem Mohurran. Three persons were killed and 184 injured. It is a sweet thing is religious fervor!

Nietzsche's statement that a people is nature's circumlocution for a few great ones, has been considered an instance of the callousness of Anarchism. It is, however, curiously paralleled by Coventry Patmore, the Roman Catholic poet and essayist, who says the world is but a dunghill whereon to grow one or two saintly characters. This is a good instance that extremes meet.

The bicycle in America, as in England, is helping to turn the first day of the week into a day of recreation. The ministers are seeing the drift, and giving Bicycle Sermons. The Rev. Mr. Scadder, New Jersey, who describes himself as an enthusiastic wheelman, frankly says that if the movement continues, the churches will be weakened, if not ruined. It is seriously proposed that all the churches should provide store rooms for bicycles, and open their door to wheelmen wearing riding-dress.

A new old story of a soldier saved by his Bible is going the rounds of the religious press. It is of a soldier who, during the storming of the Malavand Pass, was hit in the chest and fell to the ground. The bullet, however, was buried in a Bible which the soldier carried in his bosom, and had thus saved his life. Many similar tales, and possibly true ones, are told of all fetishes. A Freethought volume would never have served, but a pack of cards would have done the business.

Messrs. Booth and Shaw, the Liberal candidates for Halifax, have been heckled on the subject of the Blasphemy Laws. Being asked if he would vote for their repeal, Mr. Shaw replied, "That is a most difficult question. I could not answer that." Mr. Shaw has simply to say if he is in favor of Freethinkers being punished by Christians for opposing Christianity. There is really no difficulty in the question; the difficulty is in Mr. Shaw's reluctance to do justice to those who differ from him on religion.

Alderman Booth was rather more explicit. He replied that so far as the Blasphemy Laws affected religious distinctions or civil rights, he should be prepared to repeal them to that extent. But if words have any real meaning, that is repealing them altogether. Freethinkers don't want to curse and swear in the public streets, if that is what Alderman Booth is thinking about. What they want is the same right as Christians to hold and propagate their opinions. No more and no less.

The *Tablet* (R.C.) sneers at Huxley as "a fanatic of negation and a dogmatist without a creed," and says "the theory of the *Origin of Species* was accepted, not from a belief in its inherent truth, but because it gave speculators a colorable pretext for dispensing with the assumption of an intelligent Creator of the universe."

The *Church Times* says of Huxley, that "in entering upon the arena of theological controversy, he forgot the homely proverb which forbids the cobbler to go beyond his last." After the thrashing he gave theologians this is either ignorance or cheek.

There is a boy evangelist out in Missouri who weighs only about seventy-five pounds. He is thirteen years of age, and boasts of having broken the entire Decalogue before his conversion. This precocious sinner was plucked like a brand from the burning, and baptised into the Baptist Church before he had reached his teens. He now conducts services in knee-breeches and broad collar. They go ahead so rapidly in America that there is hope that he may emerge from his evangelistic stage ere he comes of age.

Mr. Page Hopps is an amiable man as well as a theologian with an inclination towards Spiritualism. He hopes to see a great reunion of Christendom in another sense than Dr. Lunn's. People will "intensely agree about the things of the spirit which are spiritually discerned." Mr. Hopps hopes that "even such iconoclasts as Colonel Ingersoll" will join this happy family. We fancy he will be disappointed. Colonel Ingersoll has logic as well as poetry. He is opposed to every form of supernaturalism.

Christian temperance people, who act on the "fallen angel" theory in their attempts to put down drinking, are all on the wrong tack. They don't understand the law of cause and effect. It would do them good, unless their case is hopeless, to study Mr. Charles Booth's remarks on the "drinking habits of London workmen." Mr. Booth finds that it is the worst-paid workers who drink the most, and

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that drinking increases with irregularity of employment. Skilled men, well paid, and in regular work, as a rule drink the least. This is exactly what might be expected by a common-sense Materialist.

A big pilgrimage, organised by the American Catholic bishops and sky-pilots, has left New York for Loretto, Rome, Lourdes, and Paray de Monial, where the pilgrims will have the opportunity of worshipping Our Lady of each place. Four separate and distinct virgins, yet the four are not four, but one.

Yellow fever is raging at Santos, in Brazil. Men were dying by scores in the city, and on the British and foreign vessels in port. Some British ships had their flags flying at half-mast for weeks as man after man of the crews succumbed to the scourge. The death-boat was being rowed about the harbor day and night, from vessel to vessel, collecting the dead for burial. Some ships had only one or two men left of their entire crews.

During a thunderstorm in Southern Sweden, last week, fourteen persons—nine men and five women—were struck by lightning. Eight of the men were killed on the spot, and the others had to be taken to a hospital.

A lady representative of the *Christian World* went to report the proceedings at the laying of the foundation-stone of the Cathedral cathedral at Westminster. She was stopped on the stairs leading to the Press seats. "Pass this lady out," cried an official, and she was passed out. It was stated that Cardinal Vaughan was emphatic in ordering that the *Christian World* was one of the papers not to be admitted! More Christian harmony!

Three centuries ago the Catholic Church would have burnt the editor of the *Christian World*. Now it only puts an affront upon a member of the staff. The *will* is there, but the *power* is gone, or burning would still be the order of the day.

It was rather appropriate that, at the launching from Genoa of a new ship called "Giuseppe Garibaldi," the vessel entered the sea splendidly amid the cheering of the by-standers, but, moving before the appointed time, without the customary blessing of a priest.

Orangemen and Catholics came into collision at Boston on Independence Day. Casualities—one dead and scores wounded. Good old religion!

American lynchers are not very particular. A party of them entered a negro church in Lake City, Florida, dragged the black preacher from the pulpit, and shot him dead. Of course they were all Christians. How they love each other!

The G. O. M. has long been engaged on an annotated edition of Bishop Butler's works, which he has nearly completed. It is to be published as soon as possible in two volumes—one for Butler and one for Gladstone. The G. O. M.'s ruling passion is strong at the finish. He always had a love for theology, and he would have made a splendid archbishop. Even in his political orations he was always at home with God Almighty, especially in the perorations.

"Come unto me, all ye that want a smoke, and I will give you tobacco." This is not in the New Testament, but it might have been if Jesus Christ had preached in the nineteenth century. "If you want a smoke (free)," says an East-end advertisement, "come next Sunday afternoon, at three, to Christ Church Hall, Hanbury-street. A free cup of tea, if you like. Tobacco gratis." This is very different from the old style of "compel them to come in." We shall yet see smoking-pews in churches.

The secretary of the Liberator Relief Fund says there are still 2,528 victims on the books, for whom a further sum of £50,000 is required. Most of these were deluded by the pious character of the directors and their supporters, and the appeal is, properly, mainly directed to the churches.

"A Faithful Servant" writes to the Duc d' Orleans through the Paris *Figaro*, relative to his wearing the order of the Holy Ghost at the marriage of the Duc d' Aosta: "I wish the Holy Ghost had inspired you better."

The Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs. Benson gave their second garden party last week. According to the society papers it was quite too too exquisite an affair, and would have considerably astonished Jesus Christ could he have been present.

At the Laurel Hill Convent, Limerick, sixty-eight of the nuns and boarders were prostrated with every evidence of irritant poisoning. One of the nuns died and was privately interred without any inquest.

Bishops Doane and Coxe, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, have been much scandalised at the idea of a Woman's Bible, and have been denouncing the New Women who projected the scheme. Bishop Doane prophecied no end of evils from women's rights, and said money would buy their votes "as it now does themselves." Bishop Coxe said: "The effort to establish the 'New Woman' has, it must be said, been accompanied by a desire on the part of the agitators to emancipate themselves from religion. When I read from day to day of the utterances of this new cult, giving forth startling 'truths' and disseminating odious principles from the lecture platform, I am inclined to cry, 'Oh! shame, where is thy blush?'" Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, and other of the advanced women, are starting on the bishops, and we bet the women will have the last word.

A Catholic priest, known as the Canon-Bishop of Segouzac, has been brought before the Correctional Chamber at Paris for conducting a matrimonial agency.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions have long been dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the Land of the Rising Sun, where the native Christians will not stand the nonsense of their American pastors, and wish to run a Christianity of their own. A committee has gone out to investigate and report.

There is quite a row between English and American missionaries in Japan. The latter claim that their work is of greater importance than that of their British *confrères*, because America spends much more money on her missions than England. The English declare that this does not prove the merit of American mission work, as it is quite possible that five pounds of English money, spent judiciously, may do as much good as double that amount of American funds. The Jap looks on and laughs.

In the text book of *Moral Philosophy*, by Father Rickaby, in use at Stoneyhurst, and published with the express approval of the Pope, it is laid down that "Brute beasts, not having understanding, and therefore not being persons, cannot have any rights. They are of the number of things." It goes on to show at length that "We have no duties to them, not of justice, as is shown; nor of religion, unless we are to worship them like the Egyptians of old; not of fidelity, for they are incapable of accepting a promise." It even shows at length that "We have, then, no duties of charity, nor duties of any kind, to the lower animals, as neither to sticks or stones." Paul said, "Doth God care for oxen?" Such is Christian morality!

The papers have been making a fuss about a monkey getting into St. Stephen's Church, Hampstead, and defying all efforts to dislodge it. Really this is not the first time a monkey has been in church—or even in the pulpit.

A Dalziel telegram reports a sad accident on the Mississippi. A large passenger steamer had a hole knocked in her bottom, and made water so fast that the captain was only just able to run her upon a sandbank. Several persons jumped overboard while she was in deep water, and were drowned; but all on board were saved after she stranded, with the single exception of a Christian minister. He had been on his knees praying from the first moment of the accident, and in getting into the boat he stepped into the water. Such is the efficacy of prayer.

A special train conveying Dutch pilgrims to Mont-Aign ran off the line near Antwerp. One pious lady was killed, and several pious persons were badly injured.

Jehovah will not look after his own houses. The parish church at Callington, near Plymouth, has been partially destroyed by fire. Just a little of that water which made Noah's Flood would have stopped this calamity.

There is a foul-mouthed fellow in Liverpool who delights in (safely) libelling Colonel Ingersoll, and circulating the most abominable lies about his personal character. This fellow makes a great boast of his Christianity, but many Christians are ashamed to hear him profess to be of their religion. We happen to know that he was kicked out of a Christian church for getting drunk while denouncing drinkers in general, and moderate drinkers in particular. We could say more, but the rest will keep until it is wanted.

There was a regular scuffle between rival clergymen in the pulpit at Irvine last Sunday. The Rev. Albert Kerr and a rival orator had both been asked to preach by different sections of the church. They fought for possession of the Bible, and the police were called in but declined to interfere

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

July 21 and 28, Milton Hall.

August 4, Newcastle; 11, 18, and 25, St. James's Hall, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

H. L. Sumner.—Thanks for Lady Cook's pamphlet on *The Evils of Society*. It is plain-spoken and honest. We do not agree with all she says, but we believe her pamphlet will do good in its way.

W. McLachlan (Chicago).—Yes, it is the same Mr. Wheeler who introduced you to Mr. Foote at Glasgow in 1876. If you write to him address your letter to 27 Enkel-street, Holloway, London, N.

E. Truelove writes that he will subscribe £2 and "G. R." £3 to the President's Honorarium Fund.

E. Smedley.—(1) Martin Luther did not practise polygamy himself, but he appears to have thought it compatible with Bible Christianity. No doubt he liked a drink when he was thirsty. (2) We have often explained the "Great Debate" which Z. B. Woffendale advertises. It was a surreptitious job, done by a reporter who could not take a verbatim report, although it pretends to be verbatim. The noble Woffendale's speeches are twice as long as Mr. Foote's, and he also embellished the "Report" with annotations. Mr. Foote declined to read the proofs of the wretched abortion, and publicly repudiated all responsibility for it. As the law now stands a debate in which Mr. Foote takes part could not be published without his consent.

G. Narwiger. We regret the oversight. In our next.

A. Woxley.—Your letter arrives very late. We have condensed into a paragraph for "Sugar Plums."

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. Keast.—Glad to hear you are having such good meetings at Eastville Park, Bristol. The open-air propaganda in the summer should swell your indoor meetings in the winter.

J. Hill.—See paragraph. Glad to hear from such an old reader. The general public does not buy the *Freethinker*; it rarely does buy anything worth buying. Humanly speaking, we love the world, and wish to serve it; but, intellectually, we rather despise it. "Providence" has stocked this planet with a terrible lot of fools.

J. G. Bantham.—So you all liked Mr. Putnam at Newcastle. Why, certainly. He'll be liked anywhere.

A. B. Moss.—Pleased to hear you had capital audiences at New Brompton. Shall be glad to see you at Clacton.

W. Bradburn.—What is the use of asking us whether there is any truth in the story of "an Atheist" who "said to his dying daughter," etc. The preacher who told it may have had a low forehead, but he had plenty of *front*.

W. J. Wenham.—(1) Sufficient reason for Jewish hatred of Pilate arose from his removing the army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem and placing Roman standards on his palace, and from his using the temple revenues to construct an aqueduct. (2) Philo would share the prejudices of his countrymen, but we cannot be sure we have his writings as written. (3) Our sources are not trustworthy enough to judge Pilate's character. Many legends cluster round the name of Pilate. The story that he committed suicide at Vienne rests on the dubious authority of Eusebius (*H. E.* ii. 7), and probably arose from there being a Mount Pilatus, or cap-shaped, there; it was also said that he became a hermit by Mount Pilatus, near the lake of Lucerne, and that he was beheaded by Nero. Tertullian says he was a Christian in conscience, and in the Ethiopic Church he is a saint. His day is June 25. The Copts also say he died a Christian martyr. Origen, Chrysostom and Hilary assert that his wife became Christian, and the Greek Church makes her a saint (Procla), and observes October 27 as her day. Washing the hands was a Jewish and not a Roman custom, and helps to betray the unhistorical character of the whole story.

T. Powell.—Well, if Jesus did not steal the donkeys, he requisitioned them. We admit the technical distinction.

E. G. Taylor.—Received with thanks. Our statement and appeal, with the two Bills, will be reprinted in leaflet form for permanent use.

Curious.—Many thanks for the information. The copy of Mr. Foote's pamphlet on the Resurrection, which you enclose, is one of the special sheets printed for binding when *Bible Romances* are completed. Whoever is selling them for one penny is a thief. The sheets have been stolen from our stockroom. We should be glad to identify the culprit.

W. Cassell sends £1, his half-yearly subscription to the N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.

Sympathiser.—Dan Chatterton was a character. He breathed fire and slaughter, but wouldn't hurt a fly. His integrity was remarkable. Poor as he was, you might have trusted him with ten thousand pounds, and you would have found it all right, even if you found him dead of starvation beside it.

W. P. Sorer.—We cannot send you copies of the Bills. Let Mr. G. W. Palmer, the Liberal candidate at Reading, have a copy of this week's *Freethinker*.

B. Bennett.—We cannot answer such questions through the post. If you want to waste your time by studying Baxter's views, read the *Christian Herald*.

T. Dobson.—The questions for parliamentary candidates are printed in our first article this week. We don't think it would answer to publish Mr. Putnam's "Notes and News" in a separate form.

J. H. Simpson.—Many thanks. We hope your example will be followed everywhere. Candidates should be pressed firmly on subject of the Blasphemy Laws.

Papers Received.—Non-Sectarian—New York Tribune—Public Opinion—New York Sun—Literary Digest—Secular Thought—Light—Two Worlds—Isle of Man Times—Truthseeker—Open Court—Remarks—Southend Express—Freidenker—Progressive Thinker—Church Reformer—Universal Republic—Twentieth Century—World's Advance Thought—Western Daily Mercury—Crescent—Islamic World—Glasgow Weekly Herald.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

The Directors of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited) having left the Hall of Science matter in my hands, as Chairman of the Board, I have had to act according to my best judgment; and in doing so I have closed the Hall for Freethought meetings until we can arrive at a definite settlement. Meanwhile I have had Milton Hall engaged for our Sunday evening meetings. It is not central, like the Hall of Science, but it is fairly accessible, and anything is better than a serious break in the continuity of our propaganda.

Milton Hall will be closed this evening (July 14), in consequence of the Secular Federation's excursion. So many of our own people being away, and the weather being too fine to tempt many strangers indoors, it is better to discontinue the meetings for once, than to put a lecturer on the platform to address empty chairs.

On the two following Sundays—July 21 and 28—I shall be at Milton Hall myself, and, with a little judicious advertising in the neighborhood, I dare say we shall secure good meetings. Friends who can circulate handbills announcing these two lectures should communicate with Miss Vance at 28 Stonecutter-street.

As a first step in carrying out the lecture-scheme which I mooted at the Conference, and which I have since referred to in the *Freethinker*, I have engaged St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, for three Sunday evening lectures in August. All the three lectures will be delivered by myself. We cannot charge at the doors for admission, but we can sell tickets beforehand; and it will be necessary to do this, as the expenses will be rather heavy.

Should this experiment succeed, as I believe it will, we could follow it up, and introduce other lecturers to the same public. I have long been of opinion that the West-end of London has been gravely neglected. Indeed, I am not sure it would not be a good policy to engage halls temporarily—say for a month or so—in various parts of this huge metropolis with its five millions of inhabitants, and put our best lecturers forward where the people can come and hear them without a long walk or a somewhat expensive railway journey.

I hope to get a brief holiday before this summer weather is ended; after which I shall be ready for a long hard winter's work. I believe our party wants the President to push forward. Those who will accompany him are welcome; those who will not must be left to come on afterwards.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

SECULARISTS all over the kingdom should make use of our first article in this week's *Freethinker* during the general elections now taking place. If a candidate does not understand the *questions*, he should be supplied with our *statement*. After reading that, it will be idle for him to say he does not understand the Blasphemy Laws. We have printed enough of this week's issue to allow of extra copies being available for this purpose.

Since the paragraph in our "Acid Drops" was in type, Mr. W. R. Shaw, Liberal candidate at Halifax, has been written to and supplied with a copy of Mr. Taylor's pamphlet. His reply is as follows: "Though absolutely opposed to Atheism in any shape whatever, I consider your contention in respect to the Blasphemy Laws a just one, and therefore I shall vote for any Bill which will further religious liberty."

Mr. F. Barratt, the Liberal candidate for Torquay division, in answer to a question from Mr. Widdicombe, of Dartmouth, as to whether he would vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, said he was in favor of the toleration of any view whatever.

Mr. S. P. Putnam lectured at Newcastle on Sunday. His audiences were not so large as they might have been, but this was probably owing to the hot summer weather. Mr. Bartram tells us that the "saints" were delighted with Mr. Putnam's lectures, and delighted with him too, as a thoroughly genial gentleman, full of human nature. They earnestly hope to see him again in the near future. At Chester-le-Street a fine audience gave Mr. Putnam an enthusiastic reception. To-day (July 14) he lectures at St. James's Hall, Bristol, where we have no doubt he will meet with a grand welcome. Bristolians had a taste of him at the Conference.

Mr. J. P. Gilmour, of Glasgow, lectured at Milton Hall on Sunday evening, his subject being "The New Theism." Mr. G. W. Foote presided, and Messrs. Wheeler, Forder, Heaford, Rowney, and other well-known London Freethinkers were present. Considering the miraculous weather there was a good attendance. Mr. Gilmour treated his subject with marked ability. Unfortunately he was suffering from hoarseness, but his voice improved as he went along, and rose for a powerful and brilliant peroration, which won enthusiastic applause. Mr. Gilmour lectures to-day (July 14) in the Secular Hall, Leicester.

London Freethinkers will doubtless turn out in strong force this morning (July 14) for the Secular Federation's annual excursion to Clacton-on-Sea. There seems every probability of fine weather, and the arrangements allow of a long time at the seaside. Our special train leaves Liverpool-street Station at 8.45, which looks very early, but is not so in fact, as the metropolitan train service enables people from almost every part of London to get there in time. Finsbury Park and Holloway are the difficult parts to get from, but we dare say the "saints" in that district will manage to catch the train by some sort of conveyance.

Tickets should be obtained, if possible, before the morning of the excursion. Of course they will be obtainable, as far as they hold out, outside the railway station, where Miss Brown and other friends will be prepared to supply late applicants; but the safest plan is to get tickets beforehand.

The same friend who gave £5 for free tickets to children last year, has repeated his generosity. The tickets have been distributed by the Excursion Committee in conjunction with the Branch secretaries.

Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Parris will go with the excursion to Clacton. Mr. J. M. Wheeler and Mr. R. Forder will be there as usual. Mr. A. B. Moss also writes that he may be expected. No doubt some other leading men will turn up before the train starts, and we hope they will find a perfect swarm of friends on the platform.

Excursionists to Clacton will find plenty of accommodation for dinner in various restaurants, with prices for all pockets. A common tea for the Federation party will be provided at Rigg's Retreat, a few minutes' walk from the pier, at ninepence per head. Mr. Foote will preside, and will be supported by the friends above mentioned. The time for this "communion of saints" is 5.30. This will give ample opportunity for brake-drives in the neighborhood or a sail on the sea.

Mr. John Grange debated with the Rev. A. J. Waldron at Bradford on the first two evenings in July. Christianity *versus* Secularism was the subject of discussion. Mr. Waldron spoke well and never fell into the orthodox method of abuse. Mr. Grange satisfied his own party and often won the applause of his opponents. A correspondent describes his opening speech on the second night as "masterly."

The Chatham Branch takes its annual outing on Sunday, August 11, driving to Stockbury Valley. They start from the Luton Arches at 9.30 a.m., calling at Military-road, Rochester, and Strood, for friends. The route selected is through Cuxton, Snodland, Town Malling, Wateringbury, and Detland Hill; returning through Key-street and Bainham. A good tea will be provided at the "Three Squirrels," Stockbury. Friends will provide their own lunch, which will (D.V.) be partaken at Wateringbury. Tickets, including tea, 3s. 9d.; children under fourteen half-price; to be obtained of J. Hill, 174 Canterbury-street, New Brompton, or from the committee.

The "Atheist Shoemaker" affair has been a subject of correspondence in the Nottingham *Argus*. Lindley Maxfield contributes a racy letter on the Secular side, and points out the absurdity of a letter by the local Christian Evidence secretary, who relies upon Mr. Holyoake's "vindication" of Mr. Price Hughes. Mr. Maxfield shows that the *facts*—as distinct from mere opinions—are on Mr. Mr. Foote's side, and that Mr. Hughes has yet to prove that Charles Alfred Gibson was ever an *Atheist* or a *lecturer*.

Darwin was intended for the Church, and Huxley as a child had strong clerical affinities. "I remember turning my pinafore wrong side forward, in order to represent a surplice," Huxley wrote, "and preaching to my mother's maids in the kitchen as nearly as possible in Sir Herbert's manner one Sunday morning when the rest of the family were at church. That is the earliest indication I can call to mind of the strong clerical affinity which my friend Mr. Herbert Spencer has always ascribed to me, though I fancy it has for the most part remained in a latent state." Our sub. has an early portrait of Huxley, taken over forty years ago, in which he appears remarkably like a Methodist parson, chiefly owing to his wearing a white, or blue, tie.

"Fifteen years ago" (writes a correspondent of the *Manchester Evening News*) "it was my lot to come in frequent contact with Mr. Huxley. At that time he was in his zenith as a social lion, and would turn blithely from a lecture on lobsters at the Zoo to a cultured drawing room, where he would stand sipping tea and gossiping on the latest book of the day, in entire defiance of his own principles of hygiene. On one occasion, which comes back to me vividly, he remarked that the best equipment for the battle of life was not a sound education, but a sound stomach."

The *Academy* says of Professor Huxley: "His encyclopædic learning, his absolute clearness of vision, his unrivalled facility of popular exposition, his trenchant argumentation, his lucid prose, his flashes of irony and wit, guarantee that his name will be preserved as long as the language is read."

Similarly, "E. R. L.," the writer of the obituary notice in the *Athenæum*, says: "To the present writer it seems impossible not to regard him as one of the very greatest minds of this century—a permanent glory of the English race."

The *Independent Pulpit* keeps up a good standard, as may be seen from the article by J. P. Richardson which we reprint. Mr. Davis also writes well on "Rational Morality"; H. Wettstein on "The Source of Psychic Phenomena," which he attributed to auto-hypnotism and double consciousness. Mr. Bailey writes on "Religion and Morality," and N. Zediker on "Immortality."

From a brief editorial in the *Independent Pulpit* we clip the following: "Freethinkers are often asked, 'What will you give us in place of religion?' This is a queer question; it is like the old slave who, on emancipation day, asked to whom he belonged, since they had taken 'old master' away. Liberalism is trying to set the Christian free, and for what it takes from him, there is no need of a return. It does, however, offer him many opportunities for making himself the happier and better for the burden he has cast off. It opens up to him a field for investigation and study, interesting, beautiful, and instructive beyond compare, and if he be so inclined, he may find in it the material with which he can clothe himself in beliefs and thoughts as much superior to the garments he has laid aside as the robes of a king to a beggar's rags."

The American Protective Association, at its convention at Milwaukee, passed the following resolution: "All institutions of an ecclesiastical character claiming temporal dominion or the right to define the extent of their own jurisdiction, are inimical to all forms of constitutional government, and are a menace to the perpetuity thereof."

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If this is anything more than an abstract pious opinion, the A. P. A. ought to throw itself into the work of the American Secular Union and support their Nine Demands for the complete separation of Church and State.

Dr. Andrew Dickson White, in his "New Chapters in the Warfare of Science," in the *Popular Science Monthly*, traces the different opinions held concerning the Bible. His last chapter is entitled "From the Divine Oracles to the Higher Criticism."

We receive from S. David's, Portland, Kansas, a copy of a little semi-monthly paper entitled the *Freethought Ideal*. The paper is new to us but it has already reached its thirteenth number. It is extremely cheap, as American papers go, being only 50 cents. per year; and is ably conducted. It ought to have a large circulation and do good work in the States.

De Dageraad continues its translation of *Crimes of Christianity*, and, in the July number, one of the editors contributes a long article on "Free Life."

While our London friends are enjoying themselves at Clacton, the Manchester saints will be picnicing at Chester. Their train leaves the Central Station at 9.20. Those from Liverpool and neighborhood who intend joining the excursion at Chester, should be at the landing-stage at 1.30, for the boat to catch the 2.10 train for Birkenhead. From the Central Station at 2 o'clock, change at Rock Ferry. Due at Chester 3.3. Trains leave Chester at 7, 8.35, or 10.5, for both landing-stage and Central Station.

Mr. T. McKinnon Wood, Liberal candidate for East Islington, says: "I am in favor of the abolition of the blasphemy laws, and of the granting of liberty of bequest to the institutions you name." Mr. B. L. Cohen, the Conservative candidate, also says: "I have no hesitation in assuring you that I also am a 'Freethinker,' if it is understood by that expression that everybody should be free to think as he likes, and also, as it appears to me, a necessary consequence, to bequeath his money to any institution he deems worthy of such consideration."

Nya Sanningar, the new Swedish Freethought paper, continues to publish illustrations of Bible texts. It also gives a capital portrait of Victor Hugo.

The Freethought Federation has opened its new headquarters at 141 South Water-street, Chicago, which, we hope, will be a centre of activity in that great metropolis.

Secular Thought (June 29) reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "A Jolly Japanese Religion" from our columns. The other contents are good. Our contemporary is now entering on its eighteenth half-yearly volume, and we are pleased to note that Mr. Ellis maintains it worthily as an exponent of the cause in Canada.

Freethought Philosophy.

Freethought doesn't make a man anxious. It makes him a philosopher. He takes life as it is, for what it is, and makes the best of it. A Freethinker never climbs on himself in the vain desire to lay hold of the "next world." He is fairly content with this world, even if things are not just as they might be. He can fold his hands with a quiet touch, or he can stretch wide his arms without waiting to see whether the Lord approves of the operation. The Freethinker finds enough to do to mind his own business, and has no time to waste, either in singing praises to keep God in good humor, or supplying mundane news for the information of Jehovah. He feels that life to him means work and service, and not show and ceremony. Let the poor Christian, conscious of his spiritual imperfection, struggle mightily for the kingdom of Jesus—the Infidel cares not; he has a kingdom of his own, within which he can live in peace, free from the interference of priestly demagogues.—*Boston Investigator.*

Priests, Women, and Children.

The Jesuits have been accused of hatching a regular system for undermining and corrupting the principles of youth. But, though the accusation be just, every priest is a Jesuit as far as relates to a desire of gaining the minds of youth. All priests have necessarily the desire of influencing the minds of others. From their very calling they have a disposition to be teaching; women and children are the materials that they like to work upon. Next to the Devil they dread men of understanding.—*William Cobbett, "Register," vol. xxxiii., p. 397.*

THE HONORARIUM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

It will be remembered that at the last Conference of the National Secular Society a letter was read from Mr. George Anderson, suggesting that its President "should be recouped for his loss of time and money in serving the party's interests." Accordingly, the Conference appointed a Committee, consisting of Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Robert Forder, and Mr. George Ward, to consider the best plan to be adopted for carrying out the suggestion. The Committee met and drew up a circular, which probably most of the readers of the *Freethinker* have seen.

This Committee unanimously passed the following resolution, proposed by Mr. George Anderson, and seconded by Mr. George Ward: "That the sum to be paid the President of the N.S.S. for this year be £100, to be confirmed, augmented, or diminished each year by vote of the Conference."

By this resolution it was the desire of the Committee to carry out the object, for which it had been appointed by the congress of delegates, in the most satisfactory manner both as to terms and amount, leaving the Society to act yearly in future as circumstances might dictate.

It is to be hoped that what has been done will meet with the approval of the Secular party, and that its members will subscribe the required amount as promptly as possible.

CHARLES WATTS.

Subscriptions Received:—

Amount acknowledged, £16 1s. 6d.

Per R. Forder: Toby King, £5; E. Painter, £5; H. Byshe, 10s.; A. Lewis, 10s.; R. Griffiths, 4s.; W. H. Wood, 2s. 6d.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. H. R., 1s.; J. P., 1s.

Per Miss Vance: J. and J. McGlashan, £1; W. Hardiman, 2s. 6d.; Edward Clodd, 10s.; C. H. Gask, 10s.; T. Beach, 5s.

Per Mr. Watts: Mrs. J. Donaldson, £5.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (June 22).

COVENT GARDEN theatre and the Italian opera make one of the supreme attractions of London at this season. Through the kindness of friends I was enabled to behold this splendor of fashion without its costing a fortune. The music is superb, and the orchestra is one of the finest and largest in the world. The stage adornments, the magnificence of scenery, and the brilliancy of the acting and singing, make a world of fascination for the lover of art. But besides the imaginary glory there is also outspread a real glory of wealth and enchantment in the vast auditorium itself. Here are the *élite* of London dressed in rich and royal robes. I was not among them, but over them in one of the democratic stalls, and from this height a gorgeous picture in living colors flashed and moved before me. Lords and ladies, with silks and jewels of uncounted value, composed the sparkling scene. It was like an immense animated garden, and one could but watch, with intense curiosity, its vibrating rainbow tints, and, at times, it seemed more unreal to my fancy than the romance of the opera itself.

The next wonderful panorama to unfold before my vision was the Kew Gardens, which I visited on Thursday with Foote and Watts. Even the opera must pale its artificial splendors before these multitudinous flowers—flowers of all hue, flowers of every climate. All that the soil can produce is gathered here for the scientific gaze, and for poetic ardor and love's sweet spell. The Kew Gardens are a great place for London courtships. If a fellow will not propose here on a fine day, with the beauty of nature about him, luminous as the imagined paradise, he certainly will never do it, and many a vow has been uttered amidst these glorious pomps. The Kew Gardens, although originated for purely scientific purposes, are open to the public, and the throngs on Sundays and holidays are innumerable. It is a gay and festive place, while to the eye of science it is a world of wonders. One is transported, as if by magic, into all the regions of the earth while he lingers in these botanic chambers, where the warmth of the tropics mingles with the breezy north. As you emerge from the glassy palaces, the trees and grass glitter on every side in arcades of jewelled floor and roof far as the vision can sweep.

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After the Kew Gardens, and a good square meal at Richmond, comes a magnificent drive to Hampton Court, six miles away, across the Thames, which here is a comparatively narrow stream, with green and wooded banks, and embowered mansions of the old English style. We pass through Twickenham with memories of the poet Pope in the mind, who here polished his brilliant lines for immortality. Twickenham is a curious town with a narrow and winding thoroughfare, and houses on either side as ancient as the hills, and great stone walls. I don't like these stone walls, for they shut out many a lovely view, and give England the appearance of feudal exclusiveness, which is not by any means the spirit of the times. I cannot report all the beauties of this charming journey, but the crowning beauty of all is Bushey Park. A wide road, smooth as a billiard table, extends straight ahead for a couple of miles. On either side are four ranks of mighty trees that stand like venerable warriors. Beneath these spreading canopies glows a green sward. Beyond the branching arcades on the sunlit fields are deer and sheep indolently feeding. As we glance forward, the vast columns of trees seem to meet and mingle in the mellow horizon, and backward the same prospect presents itself—masses of green sinking into silvery and golden distance in the glory of the occidental sun.

How shall I describe Hampton Court? A "new moon risen on mid-noon," we might say, in Milton's words. Here a thousand thrilling recollections mingle with the pomp of nature and of art. Through the wide galleries and storied chambers we wander; heroes and kings and the illustrious beauties of the olden time shine upon our vision; while from the vast windows of the palace we behold the glittering gardens, the fountains, the silvery sheen of waters, and the majesty of ancient oaks. I can only suggest the massive and brilliant glories of the renowned scenes, the great, solemn building, the shadowy arches, the laden walls, the relics of royalty and war, and the bright and variegated world without. Here the mighty Cromwell reigned in the grandeur of his solitary genius, a sublime energy in the midst of battling factions. I must confess I never understood Cromwell as I did this hour in the shadow and splendor of Hampton Court, when the glowing words of my comrades revealed the hero in his true colors. They studied him and comprehended him from a Freethought view, without prejudice, in the clearness of universal principles; and certainly the gigantic Puritan was an admirable and wonderful character—a man of action, like Cæsar and Napoleon, and equal to either of them in the creative energy of his genius. He was not, after all, a fanatical religionist, but a comprehensive and tolerant man, the best his time could produce; misunderstood in his own era, and only now being appreciated, not only as the greatest warrior England ever produced, but as its wisest statesman and boldest administrator.

It is the sunset hour; the chimes are ringing forth, and we wander alongside the Thames, where the boats glide up and down with merry passengers. As the great night glooms onwards, with its million stars in London's bosom, we return homeward with an added lustre in the illuminated chambers of memory.

On Friday morning, with Joseph Mazzini Wheeler (who has read more books than any other man in the Freethought ranks) I visit the British Museum. Mr. Wheeler is named after the illustrious Italian patriot, who was the friend and comrade of his father. Mr. Wheeler is known on both sides of the Atlantic for his learning and his devotion to our cause. I thoroughly enjoyed my day's trip with him, and the objects I viewed were enlightened by his extensive knowledge. The British Museum is a wonderful place. Here is a revelation of vast spaces of human history. Here are relics and mementos from almost every nation. We plunge into the depths of time. There is a vast procession of the ages as we wander through these majestic halls. Here are human implements dating back 4,200 years B.C. It seems that the British Museum knocks out Adam by 196 years. There are mummies and sarcophaguses and monuments dating 3,700 years B.C., and man must have been quite civilised to have produced these evidences of artistic talent and skill in the use of instruments. The library of the museum contains at present 2,000,000 volumes. A copy of every book published in the empire is sent to the museum and preserved. The reading-room is a vast circular, domed hall, in which, I think, a thousand students could be gathered at once. There are desks and conveniences for study. Anyone can call for and examine any book he desires. The libraries are beginning to overflow the whole building, and will in time undoubtedly occupy the total structure, and the other vast collections will be removed to other places, as some already are placed in the South Kensington Museum of Natural History, which we also visited. In this is a noble statue of Darwin.

In the display of animal life is vividly demonstrated the process of evolution, much to the scandal of the orthodox party, who protested against such an exhibition of nature's history, but it is too late in the day. There is a beautiful collection of birds and insects, and the truth of natural selection is plainly perceived as we follow the changing species. There are the bones of the ancient whale, which, I think, must have swallowed Jonah, since there is plenty of room to hold Jonah if ever he got in. He could walk around and take a nap quite comfortably in that capacious belly. There are also remains of huge mastodons, and of almost all the animals that have ever walked the earth. It is simply impossible to enumerate the multitude of curiosities. I must leave it to the imagination of the reader.

We also traversed the law courts of Lincoln's Inn, and witnessed the solemnities of justice. These courts are small and gloomy, but they hold an immense amount of wigs and dignity. Everything moved in a slow and ponderous fashion. The "law's delay" was pretty well exemplified.

We also took in Hyde Park—the people's park—a beautiful, ample space. Outdoor meetings of some sort are held here almost every day. If anybody is discontented he can come to Hyde Park and blow himself off. He is sure to find some listeners. One does not have to keep off the grass here. No matter how dilapidated one is, he can lie down on the greenery and bask all day in the sun, and he can sleep all night if he wants to. There is no policeman to tell him to move on. This is a vast lodging-house for houseless men and women in summer, and a motley scene can be witnessed in the small hours of the night. We passed by the noted "Reformer's Tree," under whose spreading branches many a mighty shout has been raised for liberty and justice. Here Bradlaugh has poured forth his torrents of eloquence. Fashion mingles with democracy at Hyde Park. This is typical English ground. The Anglo-Saxon race has surged here, rough and ready, polished and elegant, in vast variety. Our wandering steps encircle the Prince Albert Memorial that, in gilded magnificence, attracts the view at one of the entrances. It presents an imposing appearance. Prince Albert is displayed in golden panoply as the Patron of Art, and about him are placed the statues of the most illustrious geniuses of the human race. At the four corners are huge emblematical figures of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.

I can't write any more of London. I must hurry on to Liverpool, where I lecture, Sunday, May 26, and at no place have I found a more cordial and generous reception. I am met at the station by a deputation of the Secular Society, Messrs. R. Towers, J. Roberts, J. C. Balfour, Wollett, and Small, and I have a pleasant social evening Saturday at the home of Mr. E. Newman, president of the society. Sunday morning I am greeted by a fine audience, Mr. J. T. Ross in the chair. In the afternoon Mr. J. Roberts presides, and in the evening Mr. E. Newman. The numbers increase, and I have a crowded house at night, and I never enjoyed more enthusiastic applause. Mr. George Wise, a somewhat notorious evangelist, was present to debate. We gave him twenty minutes for reply to my lecture, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century," but as he did not make a single point, it is no use to waste space on his assertions. There was a ripple of debate at each lecture, but nothing of any importance was elicited from the Christian side. So far as the lectures were concerned, there was almost universal approval. The platform, however, is always free and open to discussion. But the trouble is that the Christian disputant never meets the issue fairly. He dodges and uses words instead of ideas, and his pettifogging is not worthy of report.

I meet many friends at Liverpool who have known me through the columns of the *Truthseeker*, Mr. Doeg, secretary; Mr. Charles Stocker, bookseller, etc. It was a pleasure to meet these sturdy supporters. It was the Queen's birthday, and there were processions and celebrations and outdoor meetings, but notwithstanding these attractions a splendid assembly filled our hall, and Liverpool has shown her magnanimous appreciation of America.

I like Liverpool. It is a brilliant, go-ahead city of over half a million inhabitants. It is the next to London in size, and is like to London in its cosmopolitan aspects. The representatives of all nations are in Liverpool. It is a natural gathering-place for every race, it being a kind of universal seaport. The Mersey is a noble river, much like our own Hudson. It is broader and deeper than the Thames, and has seven miles of docks. Here come and go innumerable craft, and the largest ships in the world. There are many fine buildings in Liverpool, galleries, parks, etc. The residential portion of the city is very handsome, and from the river back into the wooded and hilly country extends many a delightful prospect. The city is not built upon a level spot, but upon acclivities sweeping upward from the docks, so that as you traverse the streets on top of the huge omnibuses many a splendid view of the town attracts the gaze.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

Mother—"Yes, Bobby, God made you. I'm surprised that you should have forgotten that." Bobby—"Well, it happened a good while ago, Ma. Seven years is a long time for a boy to remember anything."

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THE INFIDEL CONTRACTOR.

We often can correctly say
What faith a man professes,
And sometimes can exactly weigh
The quantum he possesses.

The faith possessed by some who trade—
Like buttermen, or hatters—
May ne'er, or seldom, be displayed
Throughout their business matters;

But, some there are whose faith we know
Exactly to a fraction,
Because the full amount they show
In ev'ry trade transaction.

For instance: those to whom we owe
The wonders of construction
Are faithless, as their labors show,
And destined to destruction.

A road-contractor always tries
To minimise expenses,
And yet he always treats as lies
The Christian faith's pretences.

No mountain does he move to-day
By prayer, faith, or fasting.
But slowly cuts his toilsome way
With shovels, picks, and blasting.

To cut a hill with spades and picks
At cost of time and money,
When faith could do the job for "nix,"
Is sad, as well as funny.

Yet pious, godly persons bless
The godless undertaking,
Puffed up with Christian righteousness,
Whilst Christ they're thus forsaking.

A mountain's small in all regards—
In plan and elevation—
That measures but a million yards
By cubic computation.

Now, if a grain of faith can start
And cast into the ocean
A million yards, a millionth part
Would set a yard in motion.

But faith, to-day, can't even start
A tremor in a custard,
Nor equals e'en the billionth part
Of any grain of mustard.

Still, faith's required—says Holy Writ,
My brothers and my sisters—
To save us from the burning pit,
And keep our souls from blisters.

So, navvies and contractors all!
Shun shovels, picks, and blasting!
Unless you wish to squirm and squall
In hell for everlasting!

G. L. Mackenzie.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

July 14, Bristol; 16 and 17, Plymouth; 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

BOOK CHAT.

Man's Faith: His God-given Attributes. The Creed of an Artist, by Ilex Iluminati; 1895 (Labor Press, 57 Tib-street Manchester), is a sort of prose poem or rhapsody. The author is evidently an artist, and a lover of music, who has been influenced by Shelley, Browning, Whitman, E. Carpenter, and Ruskin. Disliking Church orthodoxy and conventionality, calling the Bible "a gross mixture of fallibility," he holds that "Religion is a Morality." On the question of the nude in art, he says: "We need to be frank with nature to be truly chaste. Reared under one prejudice and another, we warp the mind as Chinamen do the feet." The book is full of fervor and fine feeling, but it is one of those writings which Horace would recommend to be kept nine years, and then revised before publication.

* * *

Zola's *Rome*, on which he is now busy, is to be the second of a triology, *Lourdes, Rome, Paris*. *Lourdes* symbolises the Middle Ages with all the simplicity of its faith; *Rome* symbolises the present with the attempt of the Neo-Catholics to accommodate old faith to new wants and aspirations; and *Paris* will symbolise the future, in which Zola will try to foretell what will be the outcome of it all.

* * *

Huxley's "Corybantic Christianity" is a phrase that should stick to Booth's army of militant missionaries. The *Westminster Gazette*, however, points out that "its application to the Salvationists was new, but the collocation of ideas itself is as old as Celsus. That ancient writer applied it, curiously enough, to all Christians alike. We quote from Froude's essay on "Origen and Celsus" a paraphrase of some remarks by the latter: 'So long as the Christians were few there was tolerable agreement among them. As their numbers extended the mutinous spirit displayed itself; sect was formed after sect, each condemning the other, till they have little left but the name in common. Their faith rests on nothing but their hopes and fears, and they have invented the most extraordinary terror. God forbid that they, or I, or any man, should cease to believe that wicked men will be punished hereafter and good men rewarded. But the Christians have taken this ancient doctrine, and distorted its meaning, and now howl it out like the Corybantes, as if no one had ever heard of it before.'"

* * *

We are informed that Mr. Edward Clodd, the author of *The Story of Creation* and *A Primer of Evolution*, is not engaged on *The Story of Joseph*, as stated in several journals, including our own. There is probably some mistake in the name.

* * *

The *Rational View*, by Charles C. Moore, the editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, of Kentucky, is concerned with Christian theology. Mr. Moore, like several other of the leading American Freethinkers, was brought up to the ministry, which he left when he found he could no longer hold the Christian doctrines of the miraculous. At his very ordination he had his eyes partially opened. He says: "I remarked to Dr. Pickett that I should never be willing to defend the doctrine of slavery as it was understood in the South. He kindly but earnestly, rebuked the remark, and, picking up a New Testament, read to me the first five verses of the sixth chapter of First Timothy. I saw plainly that the passage not only justified slavery, but warned me, as a young preacher, that I must teach that slavery was right, and withdraw 'myself from such as said it was not.'" An endeavor to bring the truth of Christianity home to his auditors, and a study of Colenso and an investigation of the claims of the Bible, led Mr. Moore to resign the ministry, and become completely opposed to supernaturalism.

* * *

The *Rational View* is a book of 373 pages, giving Mr. Moore's views at full length. They are stated very clearly and simply, and, even when dealing with such topics as the evolution of life and society, are written so that he that runs may read. A large part of the book is devoted to showing the incompatibility of the Bible with the conclusions of reason, science, and common sense. Mr. Moore is always frank and direct. Thus he says: "At the very threshold of religious inquiry is the question, What is God? I do not think that any man can, with any great satisfaction, answer this question, though I think it can be answered, with great confidence, that God is not what he is represented to be in the Jewish Scriptures." He is equally ready to acknowledge his difficulties with regard to the Bible. Thus he says: "How the New Testament manuscripts ever got into the Greek languages I have never been able to find out." The *Rational View* is well calculated to stir thought, and we hope it is having a good circulation in America.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Jews on Tramp."
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, a lecture.
CAMBERWELL GREEN: Tuesday, at 8, a lecture.
CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."
DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. Cohen will lecture.
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones, "Stories from the Bible."
FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, no lecture.
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, W. Heaford, "The Creed of an Unbeliever." Thursday, at 8.30, W. J. Ramsey, "God so Loved the World."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Credentials of Christianity"; 3.30, "Holy Absurdities." Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.
ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, no lecture.
KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Stories Re-told."
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.
LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus."
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, no lecture.
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Stories Re-told."
REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, no lecture.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. G. Hertzfeld, "The Real and Ideal Jesus"; 7, C. Cohen will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN: Business meeting.
BRISTOL (St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street): S. P. Putnam lectures three times. Important members' meeting after evening lecture.
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, quarterly meeting of Tontine Society; 7, C. Doeg, "Religious Materialism." (For Branch Excursion to Chester see "Sugar Plums.")
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Picnic to Chester; train leaves Central Station at 9.20; tickets 2s. 9d.
ROCHDALE (Working Men's College): 7, special Branch meeting—election of officers, etc.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, members' quarterly meeting; 7, Mr. Drury, "Is Death an Eternal Sleep?"
SOUTH SHIELDS THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY (Free Library Hall, Ocean-road): 11, Annie Besant, "Masters as Facts in the Past and in the Present"; 3, "The Brotherhood of Man"; 7, "Man the Master of his Destiny."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (Market-place, Godwin-street): 6.30, John Grange will lecture.
DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Mr. Bowie will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Marchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—July 14, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford; 18, Wood Green; 20 and 21, Manchester; 23 to 26, Blackburn; 28, Stockton-on-Tees; 29 and 30, Middlesboro'. August 1, Wood Green; 4, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford; 6, Camberwell; 8, Wood Green; 11, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 15, Wood Green; 18, m. and a. Finsbury Park; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—July 14, m. Kingsland, e. Edmonton; 21, m. Camberwell, a. Victoria Park, e. Camberwell; 24, Hyde Park; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m. and e. Wood Green.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—July 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Tottenham. August 4, Camberwell; 11, Westminster; 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—July 17 and August 4, Kingsland.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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HARCOURT'S TUMBLE.

SIR WILLIAM VERNON HARCOURT was never an object of my admiration. Those who regard him as a great statesman are welcome to their belief. At any rate, it is not a theme for discussion in the *Freethinker*. Facts, however, are stubborn things. If you go away and come back you generally find they have been waiting for you. And it is a fact that Sir William Harcourt has had a very bad fall. After representing Derby for half a generation he has been rejected by a tremendous majority. His seat was considered perfectly safe, but he has lost it, some fifteen hundred of his supporters having deserted him and voted for the Tories.

In considering this event from a Freethought point of view, I must refer to something which occurred twelve years ago. I was then a compulsory recipient of Her Majesty's hospitality in Holloway Gaol. For attempting to "bring the Holy Bible and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt" I was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment like a common thief. I was dressed in prison garb, fed on prison fare, locked up in a brick vault twelve feet by six, denied all access to my friends except at rare intervals, refused all writing materials except a slate and pencil, and for a time only allowed one book to read—which, by a poignant irony, was the very volume I had fallen among thieves for studying too attentively. A man never forgets his experiences in such a situation. For ten years I have lived within sight of the tower of Holloway Gaol, and every time my gaze falls upon it, I am reminded (if I am ever likely to forget it!) that my great business in life is to attack the evil superstition which has always waged relentless war against the rights of Freethought.

I was tried for the fictitious crime of "blasphemy" at the Old Bailey. The judge who presided was a Roman Catholic. He was also a superlative bigot. One jury disagreed, much to his lordship's disgust. He then refused me bail, and I was locked up in Newgate. Another jury—obviously a packed one—was empanelled to try my case alone. I was found guilty, and sentenced to the utmost penalty the law permitted. I expected this, and I told Judge North that the sentence was worthy of his creed. Fortunately I couched my disgust in ironical language, or I might have had another six months for contempt of court.

A prisoner tried at the Old Bailey is like a rat in a hole. I was therefore not sorry to be tried again, on another indictment, in the Court of Queen's Bench, before the late Lord Coleridge. On that occasion I made a speech which was reported in the newspapers, and which attracted considerable attention. One point, at least, was clear gain. Christians had talked of my "indecent" attacks on Christianity, and, in addressing the jury, I complained of the use of this misleading word. Lord Coleridge, like a true gentleman, assisted me in this direction. He told the jury that there was no "indecency," in the proper sense of the word, in my alleged "blasphemy." "He may be blasphemous," said Lord Coleridge, "but he certainly is not licentious, and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind."

A petition for my release was signed by the foremost men in science, art, and literature. It was absolutely unique. But it made no impression on Sir William Harcourt, who was then Home Secretary. He would not even allow the slightest relaxation in my prison treatment. The "indulgences," such as they were, which I subsequently enjoyed, were granted by the Prison Commissioners in consequence of Lord Coleridge's representations. As the petition had no effect, a question was asked in the House of Commons by Mr. Labouchere. That was Sir William Harcourt's opportunity, and he took it like a Christian. In the face of Lord Coleridge's strong, clear words about my alleged "indecency," the Home Secretary replied that he could not see his way to remit the sentence of a prisoner who had been found guilty of "an *obscene* libel." In vain I asked him to liberate me on the charge of "blasphemy" and try me again on the charge of "obscenity." In vain the Radical papers protested against the Home Secretary's statement as an outrage. Sir William Harcourt knew I could not prosecute him for libel, as the House of Commons is a privileged place, where a man can indulge in lies and defamation with impunity. He also knew that he was pleasing Mr. Gladstone. He likewise knew that he was pleasing the great bulk of the religionists of this country. He played a mean, cowardly, contemptible part, which would have been nauseous to any man with a spark of magnanimity. And he did it to please the Christians.

Years have rolled by, and now the Christians have shown their gratitude. Sir William Harcourt has been kicked out of Derby by a coalition of Beer and Bible. Alderman Bemrose occupies his seat; and who is Alderman Bemrose? "He is pre-eminently a Christian," says a writer in the *Daily News*, "and he places that before all other considerations." I understand he is president of the Young Men's Christian Association. And this eminently pious man, this representative Christian, has sent Sir William Harcourt packing. He is knocked down, so to speak, by the very Bible party, in whose interest he slandered me so vilely. It is really refreshing. One rubs his hands, and feels that poetic justice has not forsaken the earth.

"Politics," says one of George Meredith's characters—"politics is climbing the greasy pole; mutton or no mutton, there's grease for certain." Sir William Harcourt has had the mutton; he has also had the grease. He is a member of the Church of England, yet he supports Disestablishment, at least where it is demanded by Liberals. He is a drinker—we do not mean a drunkard—yet he takes up the cause of Teetotalism. Anything to reach the mutton at the end of the pole.

Mr. Gladstone "took on" the Nonconformist Conscience, but he was a pawky old parliamentary hand, and knew

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how to *use* the Dissenters. Only on one occasion did he succumb himself. It was when he slapped Parnell in the face, and destroyed the prospects of Home Rule. Sir William Harcourt "took on" the Nonconformist Conscience after his chief's retirement, and it has sunk him fathoms deep in the ocean of failure. Temperance is an admirable thing. We love it as much as anyone. No man who does a lot of work can be other than temperate. But you cannot promote Temperance in opposition to human nature. People who are not teetotallers—and they are the majority—will never submit to fanatics who want to make it illegal, or difficult, to drink a glass of beer. Men who see that the liquor traffic must be regulated, cannot see why a "prohibition" clause should be inserted in a public bill. And they are apt to feel disgust when they learn that the author of the clause is not a teetotaller. Rich men, with well-stocked wine-cellars, are hypocrites to be so anxious about the poor man's sobriety. They are always legislating for *him*, but how their hands and eyes go up when he proposes to legislate for *them*!

I do not wish Sir William Harcourt any harm. But I am not sorry for what *has* occurred. He will obtain another seat, and I presume he will lead the broken army of Liberalism in the new Parliament. My desire is simply to emphasise what looks like a piece of retribution. He pandered to Christian bigotry, and he has fallen a victim to pious opponents. He flattered the Nonconformist Conscience, although he is himself a Churchman, and he has lost the sweets of office in consequence. He has now an opportunity for reflection, and I will see that he has a copy of this article to help him. G. W. FOOTE.

NAPOLEON'S RELIGION.

"In spite of terrors of Napoleon, he is entitled to the gratitude of mankind. He pulled down the Pope, and the monks in Spain and Italy, and the Inquisition in those countries. He carried the light of liberal principles to dark and enslaved regions. It will be impossible for all the kings and priests in the world to make men as ignorant and submissive as they were before he marched over the Alps.....Napoleon—and that was his greatest fault—gave, in some sort, a sanction to falsehood, and hypocrisy, and imposture, by going to mass. His example was of evil tendency. The act was, besides, a compromise with *fraud*."—*Wm. Cobbett, "Register," vol. xxviii., p. 6.*

THE time should be approaching when both Frenchmen and Englishmen will take an impartial view of the great personality who, a century ago, was rapidly rising to power in Europe. The harsh judgments of historians like Scott and Lanfrey may perhaps be somewhat modified by the conviction that Napoleon, like lesser men, often acted from necessity rather than from will. Lust of power grows by what it feeds on. The fabric of Napoleon's dominion ever needed new conquests to make the earlier ones secure. If ever a man could dominate circumstances, and, by seizing the opportune moment, subordinate them to his purposes, it was Napoleon. Yet Napoleon believed in destiny, and would have said with Bismarck: "There is so much *I must* in my life that I rarely reach *I will*." He said himself: "My son cannot replace me; I could not replace myself. I am the creature of circumstances."

Napoleon came at the break-up of the old feudalism, and completed the work. France was fighting for very life against the allied monarchies of Europe, and he won his way to the top by dint of his inherent fighting qualities. Physically, he was different from other men. His head was abnormally large, his blood circulated abnormally slow. In this respect, such a man was never known. His pulse beat only forty to the minute. This indicated great reserves of energy and callousness. He could easily stand work, troubles, and sleeplessness that would have killed other men. His habit was to get to bed at eleven and be up at three, and he had the "two o'clock in the morning courage." In war he could do everything for himself. "*Il n'est rien à la guerre, que je ne puisse faire par moi-même.*" He said with the same frankness: "*J'aime le pouvoir comme un musicien aime son violon*" (I love power as a musician his violin). He went straight to his point unembarrassed by scruples.

Rarely has the "Will for Power" been more absolutely incarnate or more reckless of honor, truth, sympathy, affection, or human life. He said to Metternich he thought nothing of the lives of a million men.* As a matter of fact, between 1804 and 1815 there were killed more than 1,700,000 Frenchmen, not to mention allies and enemies. The eternal Ego may be said to have been at bottom of his religion. On his beautiful bronze face was stamped, as Heine remarked, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Woe to those who stood in his way!

Yet he believed in Fate, which he identified with God. He was a Deist of the school of Voltaire, thinking with him, "*Si Dieu n'existait pas il faudrait l'inventer*" (If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him)—exactly what has been done. He had a genuine belief in an overruling Power, but he was consistent throughout. He regarded religion as an instrument of policy, and utilised it to render others subservient to himself. Atheism he was suspicious of. Those who deny celestial rule are apt to question terrestrial rulers boldly. To Laplace he noticed that his great work *La Mécanique Céleste* never once mentioned the name of God. "*Sire*," replied the astronomer, "*je n'ai pas eu besoin de recourir à cette hypothèse.*" Laplace had no need to recur to that hypothesis, but Napoleon had. He had a strong sense of the mystery of existence, and he knew that God was among the magical words, as he called *liberté* and *égalité*; excellent to conjure with.† His God or Fate was an unknown one. He said, "The problems of Providence are insoluble." "All predictions are imposture, the result of fraud, folly, or fanaticism." Yet he would have repudiated Positivism had it been started in his time. "A religion," he remarked, "which relates to this life, without teaching man whence he comes and whither he goes, is not supportable (*soutenable*)."

Napoleon did not believe in any special revelation. He said: "I once had faith. But when I came to know something, as soon as I began to reason, which occurred early in life, at the age of thirteen, I found my faith attacked and that it staggered." He became, as he said, "no capuchin," but a man of the world, ready to utilise it for his own aggrandisement. Of the Christian religion, he said: "As far as I am concerned, I do not see in it the mystery of the Incarnation, but the mystery of social order, the association of religion with paradise, an idea of equality which keeps the rich from being massacred by the poor." Again he says: "Society could not exist without an inequality of fortunes, or an inequality of fortunes without religion." "A man dying of starvation alongside of one who is surfeited, would not yield to this difference, unless he had some authority which assured him that God so orders it, that there must be both poor and rich in the world, but that, in the future, and throughout eternity, the portion of each will be changed." Christianity was not true, but it was useful. He said frankly to his friends: "It is said that I am a Papist. I am nothing. In Egypt I was a Mussulman; here I shall be a Catholic, for the good of the people. I do not believe in religions; but the idea of a God! [Then pointing upward] Who made all that?" (Thibaudeau, p. 152).

His sentiments were the same when at St. Helena. Mrs. Abell, in her *Recollections of the Emperor Napoleon* (p. 69), relates how she catechised him on the subject in Anglo-French. "*Pourquoi avez-vous tourné Turque?*" He did not at first understand me, and I was obliged to explain that "*tourné Turque*" meant changing his religion. He laughed and said, "What is that to you? Fighting is a soldier's religion; I never changed that. The other is the affair of women and priests; *quant à moi*, I always adopt the religion of the country I am in." He was much annoyed when accused of Atheism, though he confessed himself a fatalist, saying, "I believe that whatever a man's destiny calls upon him to do, that he must fulfil." His belief in destiny was doubtless genuine, though it, too, had its utility in impressing others with the idea that he was the man destined to rule, and that the stars in their courses fought for Napoleon.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

* "*Un homme comme moi se f... de la vie d'un million d'hommes.*" Napoleon's heartlessness is much dilated upon by Professor Sloane in this month's *Century*; yet it is strange that he relies chiefly on his merciful suggestion to the surgeons that his plague-stricken veterans, who were to be left behind in Egypt, be poisoned by an overdose of opium.

† He shrewdly observed that liberty was the need of the choice few, by nature elevated above the rest. It may be repressed with impunity, but equality, on the contrary, is the craving of the multitude.

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CROMWELL THE FRIEND OF FREEDOM.

(Concluded from page 436.)

THERE is no principle in Secularism that commends itself with greater force to all truly liberal minds than that of toleration, or, as I prefer to put it, a just consideration for the mental rights of those from whom we differ. As uniformity of opinion upon speculative subjects is impossible, all persons should be permitted, without impediment or persecution, to entertain whatever views upon such questions which may accord with their individual judgment. Cromwell undoubtedly entertained this view, for he proved himself a real friend of toleration, and that at a time when it was regarded by politicians as folly, and by divines as criminal. The Presbyterians of his day were as intolerant as the Roman Catholics, and Goldwin Smith says these very "Presbyterians who persecuted Cromwell with the most unrelenting malignity, were never persecuted by him." In reply to those who urged the justice of toleration, the Assembly of Divines at Westminster in 1644 pronounced it to be "the grand work of the Devil," and that it "had all error and all evil in it." A similar spirit of intolerance actuated the minds of most of the members of the numerous Christian sects with whom Cromwell had to deal. They appeared to revel in persecuting, and in inflicting the severest tortures upon each other. The Christian method of dealing with religious opponents was to whip them, imprison them, and place them in the pillory, to bore their tongues through with a hot iron, and have the letter B (for blasphemer) branded on their forehead. These were the humane and Christian modes of encouraging "religious freedom" when Secularism was unknown, and when the followers of Christ held absolute sway. To the credit of humanity, be it said, that in all ages, and among all faiths, there have appeared some natures too pure and too noble to be entirely corrupted by their theology. Among these, in the history of the past, is the name of Cromwell, the friend of freedom.

Cromwell was too great a lover of liberty to allow his faith in God to interfere with his duty to man. Goldwin Smith says: "Theoretically, of course, his toleration embraced only Protestants and Trinitarians, all sects of whom he desired to see, not only at peace with each other, but united. . . . . But the greatness of his nature carried him beyond his theory, and in all cases we find him practically the enemy of superstition." It is only just to observe here that Cromwell was himself superstitious, particularly upon the eve of his death. But this weakness upon his part did not destroy his practical love of toleration. Hence we find that he protected from Christian violence Biddle, the father of English Unitarians; he pleaded for the safety of the enthusiast, James Naylor, who roamed the country as "the Everlasting Son, the Prince of Peace, the Fairest among Ten Thousand"; he made determined efforts to obtain the readmission of the Jews to England, whence they had been banished since the year 1290; and when George Fox, the Quaker, was imprisoned and threatened with death for preaching, he was brought to Cromwell, who set him at liberty upon his promise that he would not take up arms against the Government. It is quite true that Cromwell issued some strict ordinances against both Catholics and the Anglicans, but it was not on account of their religious opinions, but in consequence of their political plots and insurrections. According to Baxter, Cromwell's maxim was: "The magistrate had only to do with civil things, not with a man's religion when held as a private view."

Equally liberal and considerate was Cromwell in political matters. In a letter to Major Crawford, he states the rule that should be observed in the selection of servants of the State. He writes: "Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing to serve it, that satisfies." His treatment of political opponents was not revengeful; he only desired to prevent them from injuring the Government of the country. If they persisted in trying to thwart his power, he had them simply confined until they were convinced of what he deemed "the error of their ways." Much severer treatment has been dealt out since his time to those who opposed "the powers that be." Surrounded, as Cromwell was, by determined and sometimes not over scrupulous enemies, he was compelled to do something to check their persistent machinations, or all progressive legislation would have been impossible. Ormond, a most formidable enemy of Cromwell, came to London disguised for the purpose of getting up a plot against the Government. He was discovered before he could carry out his design, upon which Cromwell said to a friend of Ormond's: "If you wish to do a kindness to an old friend, Ormond is in London; warn him to be gone." This was the action of a noble mind, not the spite of a revengeful spirit. No wonder that Algernon Sidney told Burnet "that the Protector had just notions of public liberty."

To those who question Cromwell's ability to advance the civil business of the nation, I would remind them of his words in calling attention to the abuses which then existed in connection with the law: "There is one general grievance in the nation. It is the law. I think I may say it, I have as eminent judges in this land as have been had, or that the nation has had for these many years. Truly I could be particular as to the executive part, to the administration; but that would trouble you. But the truth of it is, there are wicked and abnormal laws that will be in your power to alter. To hang a man for stealing sixpence, threepence, I know not what—to hang for a trifle, and pardon murder, is in the ministration of the law through the ill-framing of it. I have known to my experience abominable murder quitted, and to see men lose their lives for petty matters. This is a thing God will reckon for; and I wish it may not be upon this nation a day longer than you have an opportunity to give a remedy; and I hope I shall cheerfully join with you in it." From the standpoint of justice, can these sentiments be surpassed in the bold speeches of Cæsar, Bonaparte, or Washington, with whom Cromwell has been compared? To his honor, be it said, that he insisted upon trial by jury and the establishment of a high court of justice, where the legal rules of evidence were observed. "Nor," says Goldwin Smith, "unless to murder the Protector and overturn the Government was no offence, does the slightest suspicion rest upon it of having shed one drop of innocent blood."

I have no space here to deal adequately with what is supposed to be the three blots on the character of Cromwell—namely, his excluding members from the House of Commons in 1654, the execution of the king, and the Irish massacres. These acts can only be understood by remembering the circumstances of the time. Probably had he not have interfered with the members of Parliament, the conspiracies that were then being concocted against him would have culminated in destroying the commonwealth, if not Cromwell's life. I am opposed to capital punishment, believing that to kill a man is not the best way to improve him. If, however, such punishment is justifiable, it was, in my opinion, in the case of the king. As to the slaughter of the garrisons in Ireland, the mode of warfare in those days was less humane than it is now. The Protestants had been massacred wholesale, the Catholic General, Count Tilly, had slaughtered both the garrison and the inhabitants of the city of Magdeburg, while Alva, and other Catholic generals, had carried on a war of extermination. It was a sad and deplorable spectacle of religious warfare, and, rightly or wrongly, Cromwell thought that, doing what he did, was the best way to bring it to an end.

Political and religious freedom received an impetus during Cromwell's rule that has proved a lasting blessing to the nation. Cassell's English history, says: "The heroes and statesmen of the Commonwealth have left doctrines and examples which are still the study and imitation of nations." Hallam observes: "It is just to say that the maritime glory of England may first be traced from the era of the Commonwealth." And even Sir Walter Scott admits: "No government was more respected abroad than that of the Commonwealth." Unfortunately, it was followed by the Restoration, which I regard as being no fault of the principles which Cromwell enunciated. The truth is, the people were not prepared for self-government, having been trained amidst the influenced of monarchy. Hence the new principles were not thoroughly understood by the masses, and the Commonwealth had to be sustained by force. A true Republic is not like a plant forced in the hot-bed of military power, but it resembles more a tree developed by the fresh air of freedom and personal cultivation. Still, I share Goldwin Smith's view that Cromwell inspired an awe

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and reverence for the English name, and that he was the honest and indomitable exponent of principles that had found no parallel in any other period of our history.

CHARLES WATTS.

SECULARISM AND SOCIAL REFORM.

IT was recently remarked by a writer in one of the reviews that what he styled the New Secularism—by the way, whenever you want to create a sensation now-a-days, you drag the word "new," by hook or crook, into your title—that the New Secularism was more and more concerned with the affairs of this world, with practical measures of reform, than with even the theoretical discussions of theologians and scientists, or the conflict between religion and science. It was alleged that people to-day—or the mass of reformers at least—were more interested in how starving men should have food to put in their bellies, and naked men clothes to put on their backs, than debating who was Cain's wife, or even whether Atheism or Christianity was the more reasonable. The drift of thought, in short, has taken a more "materialistic" form—to use the cant phrase of the religionist. But it is, of course, none the less secularistic—at least, so this writer alluded to admits. "We may," he says, "agree to denounce (how kind!) the too-apparent worldliness of the wealthy church-going classes, without drifting with the equally apparent current of Secularism setting in amongst the new democracy." So the "new democracy" doesn't debate who was Cain's wife, it simply leaves the whole business alone and concerns itself with an eight-hours' day and *Merrie England*. Which proceeding, in so far as it is genuine, proves that the "new democracy" is wise in its generation.

Now, if it be the case really that the drift of democratic thought is to ignore the whole religious juggle, then it is for Secularists largely a matter for congratulation. Not that indifference in itself is a good thing, but the indifference which ignores as worthless, because it has tested, is good. In so far, then, as the democracy is unreligious, and seeks to devote itself to attaining practical objects which shall make better this life, the Secularist object is attained. And it is well that a religionist like the Rev. Walter Walsh should see and admit that this movement of the democracy is secular.

But there are some things which must not be forgotten, and which it may be well to remind the "new democracy" of. And the first point is, that if the time has now arrived when the religious shams and the religious red-herrings which were dragged across the path can be ignored by the democracy, that result is largely due to the Secularist pioneers of the past, who actively attacked these shams and worked for their overthrow. Mr. Belfort Bax, if I remember rightly, has said that the social movement will swallow up the secular movement. Possibly. But let us not forget that the secular movement was an absolutely necessary prelude to the social movement. Until the chains and shackles that bound man's intellect were removed, it was impossible that the chains and shackles which bound him socially should be broken. And this brings me to the chief, or at least, the inspiring reason for Freethought and Secularist propaganda. Of course, truth is truth, and is worth fighting for, for its own sake. If the proposition that there is a hell be false, it is, for the sake of truth alone, well to destroy it, just as it would be well to attack the proposition, say that the sun was only fifty million miles away, or that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle was double the sum of the squares on the other two sides. All these propositions being false are, for the sake of intellectual truth, worth fighting. And if they were put forward with any degree of weight and authority, we would find men prepared to demonstrate again their falsity, just as we see scientists wrangling over sun-spots or the number of the primary colors. But then you would never get a great popular organisation to take up these academic questions, nor, as a rule, would you find them exciting much enthusiasm. People are not inclined to profoundly champion mere abstract truths where these truths have no practical bearing on life.

But with the Freethought propaganda it is different. That really touches life. After all—as a mere hopothesis—the question of whether there be a god or a hell is as unimportant as whether there be canals on Mars. It is because the god-belief and the hell-belief are used as engines for the degradation of men, as weapons by which largely an unjust and hideous social system is maintained, that is why Freethinkers attack religion so hotly and so enthusiastically. When Mr. Goldbug first discovered—and it must have been far back in human history—that it helped to keep Jones and Smith contented if they were assured of a surfeit of good things hereafter; that they could be kept in hovels here and promised mansions of marble in the skies—in a word, when Goldbug discovered how to delude the mind and exploit the imagination, he had discovered a key to power. And when then a professional class arose whose business it was to dose Jones and Smith with these fairy-tales, the system was complete. Mr. Whitechoker was a friend of Mr. Goldbug—in fact, he represented the division of labor, it being difficult for the same individual to directly do the fleecing and the preaching at the same time. Though, indeed, they sometimes changed parts, Mr. Whitechoker going in for a bit of fleecing,* and Mr. Goldbug doing some preaching on his own account. And so the game went merrily on—and so it goes on to-day. The fat bishop with his thousands a year generally "has no doubt that some great object, known only to the Architect of the Universe, is served by the existence of poverty and suffering." And Goldbug, too—or the more diplomatic of the species—is profoundly distressed at the number of the unemployed. He mounts upon the worker's back, as Tolstoi says, weighs him down to the ground, and then assures everyone how distressed he is at the worker's condition, and how readily he would join in supporting any scheme to better it; he would vote for a Royal Commission, or even abolish the House of Lords—in short, he would do anything but—get off the worker's back.

But the first duty of those who would alter this state of affairs, who would end the reign of Whitechoker and Goldbug, is to clear men's minds of superstition. And Secularism is doing that. It is clearing the path. That is the function of Freethought. And when the way has been cleared of the rank growths which religion nurtures, it will be easier for the car of Progress to pass along. But where men are stunted by false and mischievous beliefs, where they do really think that they will have mansions in the skies if they live in dens here, no social progress is possible. You cannot make free in body those who are still slaves in mind. And Secularists are really, therefore, the advance-guard of the army of reform.

The work of the advance-guard, however, must not be forgotten, and, above all, it must not be undone. If the democracy becomes less enthusiastic or less active in the propagation of Freethought and Secular principles, it must be because these principles have been accepted and become part of the life of the people. And that brings me to the chief danger which lies before the democratic movement—the danger of Whitechoker coming back in another disguise. Already the metamorphosis of Jesus has set in, and we see the democracy being cajoled into a fresh slavery under a fresh name. This aspect of the case was well emphasised by a writer in a recent number of the *Free Review*. Labor Churches, Socialist parsons, bishops delivering sermons of the "new" pattern, Christian Social Unions; these things are in the air. And they are an omen. The old trick is being found out, and new tricks must be invented. Superstition, like everything else, must accommodate itself to its environment, and in a democratic age we will have a democratic superstition. Jesus now, it seems, was, in fact, one of the "unemployed." Which is, perhaps, the truest thing in the new Christology.

It is not to be supposed, of course, that I charge all these democratic Whitechokers with hypocrisy. Doubtless many of the sermons swelling with indignation at the evils of society, do really represent the thought and the heart of the preachers. But what I do point out is, that if these preachers want to remedy the evils they denounce, they must come down out of the pulpit and work. We have tried religion for a good while now, let us change the *régimen*. We have had preaching and preaching and preaching for hundreds of years. Let us try good secular

* According to a recent number of the *New Age*, there are no less than forty-seven ministers of religion who hold shares in Messrs. George's Brewery, Bristol.

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work, and leave the preaching alone. Instead, therefore, of, say, the Christian Social Union delivering courses of sermons in City churches, it really investigated the causes of the misery, and suggested what legislation or what changes would remedy it, the result would be infinitely more profitable.

But, above all things, the democracy must leave the old clothes of superstition behind. Patching the garment, even with the gaudiest of colors, is useless. "The choice," says the Rev. Walter Walsh, "of the near future is the choice between the religious and the secular ideas of life." That is so. And on the choice which the democracy makes will depend whether we fall back or go forward. The function of religion is to bolster up things as they are, and find *consolation* for those who are wronged; the function of Secularism is to investigate the causes of the wrong, and remove them.

FREDERICK RYAN.

INVENTION AND INJUSTICE.

BY COLONEL ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

INVENTION has filled the world with competitors not only of laborers, but of mechanics—mechanics of the highest skill. To-day the ordinary laborer is, for the most part, a cog in the wheel. He works with the tireless; he feeds the insatiable When the monster stops, the man is out of employment—out of bread. He has not saved anything. The machine that he fed was not feeding him—the invention was not for his benefit.

The other day I heard a man say that it was almost impossible for thousands of good mechanics to get employment, and that in his judgment the Government ought to furnish work for the people. A few minutes after I heard another say that he was selling a patent for cutting out clothes; that one of the machines could do the work of twenty tailors; and that only the week before he had sold two to a great house in New York, and that over forty cutters had been discharged.

On every side men are being discharged and machines are being invented to take their places. When the great factory shuts down, the workers who inhabited it and gave it life, as thoughts do the brain, go away, and it stands there like an empty skull. A few workmen, by the force of habit, gather about the closed doors and broken windows and talk about distress, the price of food, and the coming winter. They are convinced that they have not had their share of what their labor created. They feel certain that the machines inside were not their friends. They look at the mansion of the employer, and think of the place where they live. They have saved nothing—nothing but themselves. The employer seems to have enough. Even when employers fail, when they become bankrupt, they are far better off than the laborers ever were. Their worst is better than the toiler's best.

The capitalist comes forward with his specific. He tells the working man that he must be economical—and yet, under the present system, economy would only lessen wages. Under the great law of supply and demand every saving, frugal, self-denying, working man is unconsciously doing what little he can to reduce the compensation of himself and his fellows. The slaves who did not wish to run away helped fasten chains on those who did. So the saving mechanic is a certificate that wages are high enough. Does the great law demand that every worker should live on the least possible amount of bread? Is it his fate to work one day that he may get enough food to enable him to work another? Is that to be his only hope—that and death?

Capital has always claimed, and still claims, the right to combine. Manufacturers meet and determine prices, even in spite of the great law of supply and demand. Have the laborers the same right to consult and combine? The rich meet in the bank, club house, or parlor. Working men, when they combine, gather in the street. All the organised forces of society are against them. Capital has the army and the navy, the legislature, the judicial and executive departments. When the rich combine, it is for the purpose of "exchanging ideas." When the poor combine, it is a "conspiracy." If they act in concert, if they really do something, it is a "mob." If they defend themselves, it is a "treason." How is it that the rich control the departments of government? In this country the political power is equally divided among men. There are certainly more poor than rich. Why should the rich control? Why should not the laborers combine for the purpose of controlling the executive, the legislative, and judicial departments? Will they ever find how powerful they are? A cry comes from the oppressed, the hungry, from the down-trodden, from the unfortunate, from the despised, from men who despair and from women who weep. There are times when mendicants become revolutionists—when a rag becomes a banner, under which the noblest and the bravest battle for the right.

How are we to settle the unequal contest between man and machine? Will the machines finally go into partnership with the laborer? Can these forces of nature be controlled for the benefit of her suffering children? Will extravagance keep pace with ingenuity? Will the workmen become intelligent enough and strong enough to become the owners of machines? Will these giants, these Titans, shorten or lengthen the hours of labor? Will they give leisure for the industrious, or will they make the rich richer, and the poor poorer? Is man involved in the "general scheme" of things? Is there no pity, no mercy? Can man become intelligent enough to be generous, to be just; or does the same law or fact control him that controls the animal or vegetable world? The great oak steals the sunlight from the small trees, the strong animals devour the weak—everything at the mercy of beak, and claw, and hoof, and tooth—of hand and club, of brain and greed—inequality, injustice, everywhere. The poor horse standing in the street with his dray, overworked, overwhipped, and underfed, when he sees other horses groomed like mirrors, glittering with gold and silver, scorning with proud feet the very earth, probably indulges in the usual socialistic reflections and this same horse, worn out and old, deserted by his master, turned into the dusty road, leans his head on the topmost rail, looks at donkeys in a field of clover and feels like a Nihilist.

In the days of cannibalism the strong devoured the weak—actually ate their flesh. In spite of all the laws that man has made, in spite of all advances in science, the strong, the heartless, still live on the weak, the unfortunate and the foolish. True, they do not eat their flesh or drink their blood, but they live on their labor, on their self-denial, their weariness and want. The poor man who deforms himself by toil, who labors for wife and children through all his anxious, barren, wasted life—who goes to the grave without ever having one luxury—has been the food of others. He has been devoured by his fellow men. The poor woman living in the bare and lonely room, cheerless and fireless, sewing night and day to keep starvation from a child, is slowly being eaten by her fellow men. When I take into consideration the agony of civilised life—the failures, the anxieties, the tears, the withered hopes, the bitter realities, the hunger, the crime, the humiliation, the shame—I am almost forced to say that cannibalism, after all, is the most merciful form in which man has ever lived upon his fellow man.

It is impossible for a man with a good heart to be satisfied with the world as it now is. No man can truly enjoy even what he earns—what he knows to be his own—knowing that millions of his fellow men are in misery and want. When we think of the famished we feel that it is almost heartless to eat. To meet the ragged and shivering makes one almost ashamed to be well dressed and warm—one feels as though his heart was as cold as their bodies.

In a world filled with millions and millions of acres of land waiting to be tilled, where one man can raise the food for hundreds, millions are on the edge of famine. Who can comprehend the stupidity at the bottom of this truth?

Is there to be no change?

Are the "laws of supply and demand," invention and science, monopoly and competition, capital and legislation, always to be the enemies of those who toil? Will the workers always be ignorant enough and stupid enough to gives their earnings for the useless? Will they support millions of soldiers to kill the sons of other working men? Will they always build temples and live in huts and dens themselves? Will they for ever allow parasites and vampires to live upon their blood? Will they remain the slaves of the beggars they support? Will honest men stop taking off their hats to successful fraud? Will industry, in the presence of crowned idleness, for ever fall upon its knees? Will they understand that beggars

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cannot be generous, and that every healthy man must earn the right to live? Will they finally say that the man who has had equal privileges with all others has no right to complain, or will they follow the example that has been set by their oppressors? Will they learn that force, to succeed, must have thought behind it, and that anything done in order that it may endure, must rest upon the cornerstone of justice?—*Twentieth Century.*

CHRISTIANITY AND HONESTY.

If any Freethinker should regard Christianity as an association for the promotion of dishonesty, he need not enlarge upon the doctrines of salvation by faith, "Jesus paid it all," or the death-bed repentance of sinners. He can refer to the palpable fact that Christians never act up to their pretended beliefs, and that the beliefs themselves are very often, indeed, not held honestly. The *Non-Sectarian* of St. Louis, in its June number, says:—

> "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that not one-half of those who profess a belief in the Apostles' Creed, and renew this profession at every religious service which they attend, really believe that Jesus rose from the dead, or that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, or in the resurrection of the body. Most thinking men of all denominations have long ago ceased to believe in these statements of the creed. There is no question as to what these statements meant to those who promulgated this creed—they used plain language to state that which they themselves believed, and which they intended to demand of others as a pre-requisite to church membership, and as a declaration of principles. To put any other meaning into them, or to try to explain away their literalness, is a species of literary juggling and legerdemain which would not be tolerated elsewhere."

Now, could this be the case if Christianity really encouraged intellectual honesty in its members? It encourages, on the contrary, the profession of what is not believed, and thus undermines truth and honesty. Children are taught in the school to say they believe what they cannot believe, and their whole life is one organised hypocrisy, because to say what they really think will outrage respectability.

A *bonâ fide* Christian, one who really believes that God was born of a virgin in Palestine, and that he died to save us after we are dead from eternal damnation for sins committed before we were born, is as rare as the phœnix which St. Clement cites as a type of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christianity has only a Sunday existence, and even on Sunday infidelity may be, and is, preached from the pulpit, only it must be veiled in conventional phraseology. When will Christians be honest?

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

A Dangerous Book.

In Germany, some malcontents are circulating scriptural texts, such as the following:—

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence princes."—Psalm cxviii. 9.

"Put ye not confidence in a ruler."—Micah vii. 5.

"Put not your trust in princes."—Psalm cxlvi. 3.

"Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child."—Eccles. x. 16.

"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."—Luke xvi. 15.

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."—James v. 1.

The purpose of the malcontents is to show that, if all anti-revolutionary literature is prohibited, the Emperor will have to interdict the Bible.

THE BIBLE.—A true revelation, proceeding from a just and good God, and necessary to all mankind, ought to be clear enough to be understood by all the human race. But will the revelation, upon which Judaism and Christianity are founded, bear the test of this criterion? The elements of Euclid are intelligible to all who endeavor to understand them. This work excites no dispute among geometricians. Is it so with the Bible? and do its revealed truths occasion no disputes among divines?—*M. Boulanger, "Christianity Unveiled," p. 28.*

ASINITY.

GIORDANO BRUNO'S *Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo* is like Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, a treatise and satire on the Asinity, and especially the asinine piety of his day. The praises of the asinine goddess are sung in a sonnet, of which Mr. Owen, in his *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, gives the following translation:—

O Sainted Asinity. Ignorance most holy!
Stupidity most sacred! Devotion most profound
Thou alone can'st make us learned, good and sound,
While human thought and study are now of value only.
Little availeth the search that men so fully
Employ by every art or science Speration,
Little availeth their sky ward contemplation
To gain the heavenly seat which is thy object solely.

What boots them, ye curious, your persistent exploration?
The wish to learn the secret of nature's laws and ways,
If the stars be water, earth, or fiery exhalation?
Holy Asinity despises wisdom's rays.
Folded hands and knees form her sole occupation,
Expecting from Providence the luck of better days;
All passes, nothing stays
Save fruition of that eternal peace,
Which God will give her after her decease.

ACID DROPS.

PRAYERS are seldom sensible, but there was a very good one used in Parliament in Oliver Cromwell's time—namely, that those who had zeal might have wisdom, and that those who had wisdom might have zeal.

What a contrast to this old prayer is the new one drawn up by the Bishop of Ripon for use during the present elections. "Grant us rectitude and prudence"—"banish from us prejudice and partiality"—and so forth, is all very pretty, but it is so general as to be utterly meaningless. It would be perfectly true, if you were asked a man's address, to say he lived in the universe, but it would not enable anyone to find him.

No doubt the Bishop of Ripon really wants to see a thumping Tory majority; one pledged to uphold the House Lords and especially the Bench of Bishops. The Rev. H. J. Wilkins, vicar of St. Jude's, Bristol, is honest enough to say that "the Church has become a huge political agency for the Tory party." This is true enough, except for one word. The Church has not *become* a Tory agent; it was never anything else.

During the Shahzada's visit to Liverpool he was entertained at a lunch in the Town Hall, and grace was said by a Mohammedan official, who recited a verse from the Koran. This excited the indignation of some Christian sky-pilots, who cannot bear to see a poacher upon their preserves. One of them says it "calls for a solemn protest on the part of all who are concerned for the honor of their Lord Jesus Christ." But why not let Jesus Christ look after his own honor? On the Christian theory he is well able to take care of himself.

This incensed sky-pilot went on to refer to the Armenian atrocities, which he said were perpetrated on Mohammed's express commands. But is not this a Christian calumny? We invite the Rev. William Hutton to indicate the text in the Koran upon which he relies in making this terrible statement. And if he finds it, which we do not believe he can, we will then ask him to compare it with the Bible God's express command for the extermination of Canaanitish men and the outrage of Canaanitish women.

We commented last week on a bad accident to a train full of pilgrims in Holland. Since then a worse accident of the same kind has occurred in America. Two large excursion trains were proceeding from Richmond, Windsor Mills, and Sherbrooke townships, in the east of Quebec province, crowded with pilgrims for the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré. One of the trains dashed into the rear of the other, demolishing two coaches and frightfully mangling their occupants. Many persons were killed, including the three priests in charge of the pilgrimage. What an awful satire on the superstition of these excursionists! Several of them, doubtless, were going to the shrine of St. Anne for the benefit of their health, hoping to be cured by faith; and some of them died sooner than they would have done if they had stayed at home. Even the priests who were running the pilgrimage were smashed up. St. Anne could not help

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them in their extremity. Faith will remove mountains, but it will not save a man in a railway accident. Sceptics and believers fare exactly alike—"For one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth so dieth the other."

Methodism does not seem to be too flourishing. Mr. Champness, of the *Joyful News* Mission, has had to dismiss sixty of his evangelists. This is more than half of the total number. Methodism wants—at least, that is the opinion of the *Methodist Times*—a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They are praying for it to come down at the Plymouth Conference. But we guess they'll have to wait the Holy Ghost's convenience.

Hugh Price Hughes calls the Methodists to arms. Rome and the Church of England are both making desperate efforts to strengthen themselves. "The fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty are attacked!" exclaims the author of *The Atheist Shoemaker*. Very likely. They always have been. Mr. Hughes and his friends help to keep up the laws against Secularism. They only cry out when their own privileges are endangered. On the whole, we should like to see them suffer a little. It would give them a "fellow feeling" with the down-trodden Freethinkers.

The *Two Worlds* draws a subtle distinction. It says: "True, there might be an Atheistic Spiritist, but not an Atheistic Spiritualist." Be this as it may, we have read more than once of spirits, or their mediums, who have shelved difficult questions by saying they have roamed through the universe without coming into any contact with a god.

Something like a miracle is reported in a Madras paper. A girl of ten, at Madura, is said to have refused alms to a mendicant, who thereupon looked at her steadfastly and went away. As soon as he disappeared, pebbles, cotton, thread, straw, grain, and other objects began oozing out of her eyelids every fifteen or twenty minutes. These are the sort of tales that are spread by the mendicants.

The "Song of Songs," which is not Solomon's, and which Grotius called an indecent poem, is defended by the Rev. Dr. W. E. Griffis in the columns of the *Northern Christian Advocate*, as fit for public as well as private perusal. He says: "There is not in the whole poem of five thousand words one impure thought or evil suggestion, unless it be at the one point from the polygamist king who has disobeyed his God and the law of Israel." Now if Solomon knew of the law of Israel, as we have it, which is very doubtful, it is certain he did not disobey it by polygamy, or by seeking more concubines, for these practises were carried on by all God's favorites, and there is nothing in the Bible to condemn them. God himself is spoken of as having two sisters—Aholah and Aholibah—at the same time, who bore sons to him, and such an idea would hardly have been used even in metaphor had it been reprobated.

One would think by the flourish of trumpets over the Christian Endeavors, etc., that the old faith was triumphant all along the line, and that infidelity is rapidly becoming unknown. Those who look behind the circus methods of the churches know there never was a time when they had to rely more on adventitious aids to maintain their position. The Rev. Dr. Scot Hershey, of Boston, says that Ingersoll in America counts two millions of intelligent young men among his followers, and in every Christian country the old faith is being rapidly undermined.

Henry A. Lush, a Great Northern Railway guard, who committed suicide in his brake, left a letter to his wife in which he expressed a hope to meet her in heaven.

A few months ago Mr. Foote lectured to a large audience at Sunderland on the question "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" Several friends of a body calling itself the Anti-Infidel League were present, and their behavior was simply scandalous. Although they knew that discussion would be allowed after the lecture, they hooted, hissed, yelled, and otherwise indulged in the most brutal interruptions. Since then an Anti-Infidel Leaguer, named F. W. Birkett, has written what he considers an answer to Mr. Foote. A copy of this pamphlet has been sent to us, and we have read it through. It is the work of a very green hand. Words are put into Mr. Foote's mouth which he never used, and the replies to what he did say—or, more often, what he was supposed to say—betray a most extensive ignorance of the subject. With respect to the Josephus passage, for instance, Mr. Birkett does not appear to have heard that anyone but Mr. Foote ever regarded it as a forgery, whereas it is stigmatised as such by an overwhelming majority of Christian scholars. The testimony in its favor quoted from Renan is not given accurately. It may be taken honestly from some English translation, but it is not what Renan says in the French original. We will leave Mr. Birkett at this point. He will see how little he understands the question when Mr. Foote publishes the substance of that lecture in a separate form.

An acute writer says: "Every year of his life God is obliged to murder between sixty and seventy millions of human beings in order to keep down the surplus population of mankind." Besides the slaughter, large numbers are broken down in the struggle for life. According to the *New York Herald*, the American doctors say that paresis, or paralysis of mind and body is alarmingly on the increase in the big cities, owing to the worries incident to the increasing struggle for existence. New York is a hot-bed of the disease, which a century ago was unknown, even if it did exist. Civilisation is not without its drawbacks.

The Catholic League of South London sent the following question to Parliamentary candidates: "If returned to Parliament, will you do all in your power to secure that further and adequate financial aid from rates and taxes shall be granted by Parliament to all efficient Roman Catholic schools in England and Wales?" Twenty-four candidates had the wickedness or folly to reply to this question in the affirmative.

England is a free country. Of course everybody knows that. But the Secularists are robbed by law of their natural rights of property, while all religious establishments are subventioned by the State; and now the religionists are clamoring for public money to maintain their schools. What a peculiar sort of freedom it is, to be sure!

We regret that Mr. Storey has lost his seat for Sunderland. Mr. Gourley, however, retains his; and it was Mr. Gourley who took up the "Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill" during Mr. Storey's absence from Parliament through illness.

The Rev. W. W. Howard has removed to Leek, and the local *Times* gives him a two-column introduction to the inhabitants. Mr. Howard tells in his own way why the projected debate on the Soul, between himself and Mr. Foote, did not come off at Liverpool. "He is ready," says Mr. Howard, "to criticise my position, but he will not bring forward his own." This is—well, not accurate. Mr. Foote drew up a proposition which he would maintain in debate, as against Mr. Howard's; but the reverend gentleman wanted to draw up his own proposition and edit Mr. Foote's. Hence these tears.

In the current number of *Folk-Lore* it is mentioned that, in 1892, a child in Suffolk scalded itself with soup and died, though a "wise woman," one Mrs. Brundish, was sent for "to charm the fire out of her." The charm consisted in the repetition of these words:—

> There were two angels came from the north,
> One brought fire, the other brought frost.
> Come out fire, go in frost.
> Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

A correspondent of the *Rangoon Times* says there are out there two distinct classes of Christians, who look on each other as enemies. They are the well to do, who style themselves "Caste Christians," and the poor, who are known as "Non-Caste Christians." The ministers have to pander to the Caste Christians, for it is from them they derive these emoluments.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a sermon last Sunday, said that he sometimes got tired, and gloomy, and vexed; and at times anger or irritation would come upon him; but he kept an open book of pleasant poems on the table, of which he would read a few lines, and the irritation would melt away. We dare say this is a very good remedy. But how is it that the Archbishop finds it in a book of pleasant poems instead of in the Bible? Does poetry do as well, or better?

New York was visited by a terrible cyclone on Saturday night, July 13, and the outskirts of the city suffered severely. But the worst devastation was wrought at Cherry Hill, about ten miles distant. Several persons were killed by "Providence," and scores of buildings were blown down. One of these, a wooden church, was caught by the wind and turned completely round. Perhaps "Providence" will send another cyclone to turn it round again; otherwise the worshippers will have to say, like the Irishman, that the front of their church is at the back.

Mr. Keir Hardie has been defeated at West Ham. He went about the country fighting the Liberals and helping the Tories, and the Tories have repaid him by taking away his seat. Mr. Hardie is evidently a poor hand at a bargain. He will now be able to devote more time to preaching Jesus—unless he finds out what he ought to have discovered long ago, that Christianity is the greatest enemy of real progress.

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The Rev. John Page Hopps says of the Unitarians, in the *Coming Day*, "Dozens of Unitarian chapels are not churches at all, but churchyards dull and dead." He ought to know, for he has been among them the major portion of his life.

Coleridge, who had been a Unitarian himself, said that Unitarians were not entitled to the designation of the term Christian. This reminds us of a story of a gentleman of that persuasion who was introduced one day to a Churchman of the stricter sort, who inquired: "Did you say you were a Unitarian? Ah! well, then, I can recognise you as a gentleman, but not as a fellow Christian." "Oh, never mind about that," was the breezy reply; "I can recognise you as a fellow Christian, but not as a gentleman!"

In the *Sunday Companion* the Rev. G. P. Merrick, chaplain of Holloway Gaol, tells of the murderer, Neil Cream, who, it was proved, murdered in cold blood no fewer than thirty-five women. According to Mr. Merrick, he was one of the most proficient Bible students in the gaol, and could recite from memory almost half the Bible.

The *Daily News*, writing of Coleridge and those who rake up all the old sins of authors, says these latter "establish the Pagan conception of retribution, and make punishment eternal." This is a Christian calumny on Paganism. It was Christianity and not Paganism which taught eternal punishment, and it taught it for fifteen hundred years, till humanity got ashamed of the doctrine which the *Daily News* now stigmatises as Pagan.

Referring to the "Woman's Bible," now in course of preparation by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others, the *Catholic Union and Times* speaks of Mrs. Stanton as "the venerable maiden"! Is it possible that Father Cronin is so far behind the times that he does not know that Elizabeth Cady Stanton is a wife, and the mother of many children, some of them already known to fame? Or does he think that she is a modern "Mother of God" unaffected by the vicissitudes of maternity? In either case Father Cronin should come down into this century.—*Truthseeker.*

A "Bible Student" asks in the New York *Sun* why is it that Matthew and John, actual eye-witnesses according to Luke, avoid all mention of the ascension. "Dese sorter questions," said the colored preacher, "would upset any system of theology."

The Rev. J. J. Porter is a Baptist preacher. He is also the editor of the *Helper*, published in Jerseyville, Ill., and professes to be eager for a debate with "any living infidel scholar [dead ones being debarred] as to the correctness of the Bible." Here is a sample of what the Rev. Mr. Porter can do: "THOMAS PAINE. In 1792 he [Paine] went to Paris to engage in constitution-making with Condorcet. Soon he was imprisoned by Robespierre, and during the eleven months of his imprisonment he wrote the *Age of Reason*. He showed it to Dr. Franklin, who returned it, advising Paine never to publish it, but burn it up before it was seen by any other person, and thus he would save himself a great deal of repentance and mortification." The facts, as recorded by Mr. Paine himself, are that the first part of the *Age of Reason* was written in 1793, being completed in December of that year, six hours before the author's arrest took place. Franklin had then been dead about three years. I do not believe that the Rev. Mr. Porter desires to debate with Infidels on the "correctness" of anything. What he wants is a lying match.—*Truthseeker.*

The Rev. Mr. Easton, who claims to speak with knowledge because he has been a missionary in Persia, says: "All evidence goes to show that emancipated woman, so far from being a purifying and refining element in society, is herself an incarnate demon with nothing womanly in her but the name, a combination of Messalina and Lady Macbeth." Possibly Mr. Easton considers the Persian method of keeping women subdued and secluded preferable as it is more in accordance with the revealed word of God.

The refusal of the Rev. Johnson Myers, of Immanuel Baptist Church, Chicago, to baptise a colored applicant for membership, has made some talk among the colored population, and one of the leading black ministers, the Rev. Mr. Townsend, has retorted that he would rather take his portion in hell than go to heaven to meet such white folks as the Rev. J. Myers.

The Rev. J. I. Whitty, of Ramsgate, claims to have started Palestine Exploration, and puts his claims in verse as under:

> Since he who scribes—Johannes Irwine Whitty
> Explored Jerusalem, the Holy City,
> Have two and thirty age-worn years fled by—
> The present date below, marked Anno Domini.

Mr. Whitty may take the cake for his discoveries; he will hardly do so for his verses.

Providence has much regard for locusts, and in East Africa swarms of them eat up all the provender. A letter from the German mission there says: "Many people die of hunger. In a place near Mpwapwa, forty-six out of fifty inhabitants died of famine. Two weeks ago I was in a village where nine grown-up people out of seventeen had died of hunger in a single week. Hunger is the cry throughout the land."

During divine service a church at Calastarra, in Murcia, was struck by lightning. A child was killed, eight other persons were injured, and the building was set on fire. A very peculiar case of "Providence."

The Rev. W. Earle, a High Church clergyman, recently wrote a book in which he spoke harshly of dissenters. The Greenock *Telegraph* having criticised his view, Mr. Earle wrote to the editor: "Luther and Knox and Wesley, and all men like them, who opened the door for the sheep to leave the fold, must now have a hot corner. I could not believe that such incarnate demons are in heaven. All who oppose my book are enemies to the happiness of Christendom. Woe betide the papers which go against my book. In doing so they are going against God." This man of God evidently has the good old spirit of religion. But Luther, Knox, and Wesley also had a touch of the same complaint. They were not, therefore, incarnate demons. "Criticise me and you criticise God," is the common religious thought. Theists are obliged to make God such another as themselves. They must give God their own thoughts, having no other wherewith to endow him.

Mr. H. M. Stanley, the gentleman who went through Africa in such a Christian fashion, says it is written that "the whole earth shall know the Lord." We presume this means that Stanley was the Lord's advance agent. If so, the poor niggers must look out when the boss appears.

The *South Wales Times* devotes an article to "Secular Education and Atheism." It prophecies that if Board schools go on, "in two or, at the most, three generations, religion will be dead in the working classes of this country, and they will have sunk into Atheism." Horrible! most horrible! Sunday-schools, it seems, are inadequate to cope with the evil, wherefore the rate and taxpayer must be plundered for the support of denominational schools.

Mr. J. Kenyon, the Conservative candidate for Bury, has a funny idea of the duties of Atheists. He is reported as saying that though they cared nothing for religion, yet they ought to send their children to some denominational school to give them religious education. Mr. Kenyon apparently considers that Atheists give up religion because it is a good thing.

The New York *Independent*, a journal something like our *Christian World*, is flippant over the Woman's Bible. It says, "Why not? We have a Breeches Bible."

A. W. Malcolmson writes in the *Vegetarian Messenger* on "Biblical Difficulties Overcome." How naive he is may be judged from his saying, "It is remarkable that in the only model prayer Our Lord left us, he taught us to say, 'Give us this day our daily *bread*.' Not our daily *flesh or meat*." He is unaware that "bread" here is generic like "meat." He goes on to say that, at the Last Supper, "he took bread and wine, vegetable products." Is he not aware that the Passover, which Jesus celebrated, included lamb? He does not notice that "Our Lord" partook also of fish, and said "Rise Peter, *kill* and eat."

When the people of Neufchâtel opposed Frederick the Great's interference in favor of a pastor of the Swiss Church who denied the eternity of future punishment, "*Eh bien!*" said the king, "*si ces messieurs de Neufchâtel veulent être damnés à toute eternité, ainsi soit il.*" If these Neufchâtel people wish to be damned to all eternity, so be it. The gentlemen, it seems, did not profess to think the doctrine of universal salvation dangerous for themselves, but were fearful of its effect upon "their wives and servants."

James I. said: "No bishop, no king." He might have added: No cross, no crown. The king owned the bodies of men; the priests, the souls. One lived on taxes collected by force, the other on alms collected by fear—both robbers, both beggars. These robbers and these beggars controlled two worlds. The king made laws, the priest made creeds. Both obtained their authority from God, both were the agents of the infinite. With bowed backs the people carried the burdens of one, and with wonder's open mouth received the dogmas of the other. If the people aspired to be free, they were crushed by the king, and every priest was a Herod, who slaughtered the children of the brain. The king ruled by force, the priest by fear, and both by both.—*Ingersoll.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 21, Milton Hall, Hawley-Crescent, Kentish Town: 7.30, "Secularism and the New Parliament."

July 28, Milton Hall.

August 4, Newcastle; 11, 18, and 25, St. James's Hall, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. G. Dobson.—Thanks. See paragraph.

J. T.—*Isis Very Much Unveiled* is published at the office of the *Westminster Gazette*, price one shilling.

W. G.—The Melbourne *Harbinger of Light* says that Mrs. Mabel Besant Scott, only daughter of Mrs. Annie Besant, was baptised into the Roman Catholic Church on May 1. *Requiescat in pace.*

G. W. B.—We have always a large quantity of such copy on hand, and cannot guarantee an early insertion.

W. W. Roberts.—Your subscription is handed to our publisher, R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., to whom please send direct in future.

K. O. M. (Amsterdam).—James ii. 20 is evidently a contradiction to Galatians ii. 16. How otherwise can it be explained? Thanks for *De Dageraad*, and prosperity to Freethought in Holland.

J. Keast.—Thanks for the trouble you have taken. See paragraph. Bristol shall be attended to as soon as Mr. Foote gets his Lecture-Scheme in working order.

A Trinitarian (Nottingham).—Your letter is too long for its importance. You ask "Is God responsible for his acts?" but you do not define "responsible." Hadn't you better prove that there *is* a god first?

J. Seddons.—Pleased to hear that the Manchester excursion was a success. These social gatherings tend to cement our party.

E. M. Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, will be glad to hear from any friends in the West-end who can distribute or exhibit bills of Mr. Foote's three Sunday evening lectures at St. James's Hall; also from friends who can undertake to assist in the sale of tickets.

H. Cosgrove.—Thanks, but Mr. Foote has not time to write letters in provincial papers. It is quite true that the Rev. W. W. Howard has held public debates with Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Symes; but it was very many years ago. Of course Mr. Foote is quite ready to debate with Mr. Howard on reasonable conditions. And the first condition is absolute equality. Christians must abandon their old ideas of privilege. They used to burn Freethinkers; now they assume airs of superiority, and expect us to be thankful for anything they concede to us. But we want no concessions. We simply want justice and fairplay.

E. Shedley.—(1) Alleged facts must be substantiated before anyone can be called upon to explain them. Much of the phenomena of hypnotism, in public performances, is deception, and often collusion. No hypnotic patient can tell anything but what is in his own mind or what is suggested to him. (2) We do not know what debates of Mrs. Besant's are now in print. (3) Mr. Foote objects to wearing either ticket—"Individualist" or "Socialist." His view is that society and the individual have their rights and their provinces. But this is not the place to discuss the matter.

H. Mellor.—Parallels to the sayings of Jesus Christ are not in *one* book, but in *many* books. Jewish parallels are given in the famous *Quarterly Review* article by Deutsch, which has been reprinted in his "Remains."

C. G. Quinton.—Very sorry to hear of the continued rowdyism in Victoria Park. See a paragraph in "Sugar Plums." If it is absolutely necessary, Mr. Foote will come down and see whether a meeting cannot be held in spite of the blackguards.

Shareholder.—The National Secular Hall Society still occupies the Hall of Science, though the mortgagee has more than once "demanded" possession. The Society's solicitors are now acting, under the Chairman's instructions, and the result will probably be announced in next week's *Freethinker*. Of course it is ridiculous to expect a detailed statement of delicate business week by week. This paper is read by enemies as well as by friends.

A. Jackson.—It is a waste of time to reply to such a driveller. On one page he boasts of the downfall of Secularism, and on the next inquires whether his own paper is to live or die. With respect to your own query, the figures are an absurdity. Mr. Bradlaugh was never able to raise large sums of money for Secular halls. The sum he originally raised, twenty-six years ago, for the Hall of Science, is considerably less than has been raised for the same object since his death. It will be news to old members of the N.S.S. that "in Mr. Bradlaugh's time" the Society "could raise its thousands of pounds for special objects." Bible-bangers are never strong in arithmetic.

Papers Received.—Rangoon Times—De Dageraad—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugund—Western Mail—Liverpool Post—Progressive Thinker—Light—Two Worlds—Harbinger of Light—New York Sun—Clarion—Liberator—Truthseeker—Post—Literary Digest—Isle of Man Times—Freedom—Jerusalem Star—Glasgow Evening News—Sunderland Echo—Good Templar's Watchword—Philosophical Journal.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favor be marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote has not been lecturing for some weeks. This evening (July 21) he lectures at Milton Hall on "Secularism and the New Parliament." North London Freethinkers should do their best, in spite of the phenomenal weather, to secure him a large audience. Mr. Foote also lectures at Milton Hall on the following Sunday; on the next Sunday he opens a new hall taken by the Newcastle Branch, and then he returns to London for his three Sunday evening lectures at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, of which full particulars will be given in our next issue.

Mr. S. P. Putnam lectured at Bristol on Sunday. Owing to the wonderful weather, which makes it a burden to sit indoors, and perhaps still more to the Parliamentary elections, his audiences were not so large as they should have been; but those who did attend were delighted. We hope the Birmingham friends will rally in strong force at Mr. Putnam's lectures to-day (July 21). The battle of the elections is over, and people should now be free to listen to wit and common sense.

Providence favored the L.S.F. excursion to Clacton-on-Sea with delightful weather, and when there the saints thoroughly enjoyed themselves roaming or boating along the shore, taking a sea-trip in the "Koh-i-noor," or driving into the country. Mr. and Mrs. Foote, Mr. and Mrs. Watts, Mr. Parris, Mr. Moss, Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Forder, Mr. Truelove, and other well-known friends, were present and joined the common tea at Rigg's Retreat. In consequence of the beauty of the weather, the President said there would be no speaking, and briefly expressed a hope that there would be even better gatherings in succeeding years.

Mr. Joseph Symes has fought bravely against enemies and adverse circumstances at Melbourne, though we regret that he seems to be getting the worst of it at present. He is being sued for libel by one of the men who jockeyed him out of the hall he built for Freethought purposes, and at a certain stage of the proceedings he was charged with contempt of court on account of some remarks in the *Liberator*. Mr. Symes pleaded his own case, and denied that he meant to cast any slur upon the court; nevertheless the judge sentenced him to fourteen days' imprisonment.

Mr. Symes has apparently more than one man can do out at Melbourne. Bigotry seems as rampant there as it is here, and even more so. Mr. Symes brought on action for assault, and went into the box as a witness; whereupon he was asked a number of ridiculous and insulting questions of the "Where do you expect to go to?" order. It is scandalous that such proceedings should be tolerated in a court of justice. Our old colleague would be well-advised, in our opinion, if he refused to answer argumentative and hypothetical questions, which are only put for the purpose of raising a prejudice against him, and not at all for the purpose of eliciting relevant information.

Just as we are going to press we receive the *Liberator* for June 8, in which we note that Mr. Symes has won in the libel case, the jury returning a verdict of "Not Guilty." This prosecution had been hanging over Mr. Symes for many months, and he must feel relieved at its termination.

From the same number of the *Liberator* we see that the Secularists in Sydney are in trouble over their hall.

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The late lessee left them with a large arrear of rent, and a Mr. Blake, who bought one of their promissory notes, has moved for a public auction. It is said that the Christians are trying to get the place into their hands. Altogether it is a grave question whether Secularists should take the risks and responsibilities of property until they can hold it in trust under the full protection of the law.

Mr. Robert Forder lectures in Victoria Park this morning (July 21), and we hope the platform will be well supported by local Freethinkers. This open-air station has lately been the scene of much Christian ruffianism; indeed, the Branch has appealed to Mr. Foote, who may have to intervene personally. It will never do to let our meetings be stopped by blackguards who disgrace the name of Christianity.

There is a revival of interest in Spinoza in Holland. A new translation of his Ethics, by Dr. Gorter, has appeared, and a second translation has been announced. In Germany, also, Spinoza becomes more and more known, studied, and appreciated.

Mr. J. E. Dobson heckled the Liberal candidate, Mr. Samuel, at Stockton-on-Tees, on the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. Samuel replied, before a meeting of two thousand people, that he was in favor of the fullest extension of religious liberty, that he considered Freethinkers should be as free as any other body to disseminate their opinions, and that he would support Liberty of Bequest and Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

We know not what denomination the Rev. J. Howarth, of Sunderland, belongs to, but he certainly deserves a Sugar Plum for the way in which he supported Mr. Storey for bringing in a Bill to repeal the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. Howarth said he demanded that a man should be regarded as much a citizen, though he was an Atheist, as a man who was a Christian man and a Christian minister. This statement was received with much applause.

The Bristol Branch of the N.S.S. sent our "Questions for Parliamentary Candidates" to the candidates for the North and South divisions of their city. Mr. Lewis Fry replied that he was "in favor of complete civil and religious liberty," though he appears to think that people ought to be punished if they "give reasonable grounds of offence to the prevailing religious opinion of the country," which stultifies his first declaration. Mr. Charles Townsend replied that the "Blasphemy Laws ought to be repealed at once." Mr. F. S. Hill's reply was evasive. He was in favor of religious liberty (of course!), but "to give complete and careful answer to your questions would entail an amount of time and research which you will easily understand I cannot now give."

Mr. W. H. Lawless, one of the Liberal candidates at Bristol, replying to a local Secularist, wrote: "I am distinctly opposed to any laws inflicting disabilities upon citizens because of religious or non-religious opinions." Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the well-known Tory, wrote: "The Blasphemy Laws are doubtless old-fashioned in form and detail; but I think it necessary that offensive or indecent attacks on the faith of the great majority of the people should be liable to punishment; and therefore I am opposed to their repeal, unless something of that kind could be substituted in their place." That is, Sir Michael will not help to destroy the present stick with which Christians beat Freethinkers, unless he is certain of having in its place another stick, not perhaps so heavy, but good enough for the purpose. "Offensive" and "indecent" are what Bentham called question-begging epithets. Even "attacks" is a term of the same description. Criticism and discussion are christened "attacks," then they are called "*offensive* attacks," then "*indecent* attacks," and by that time the poor critic has become a monster deserving twelve months' imprisonment.

The annual picnic of the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school, which was arranged for July 20, has, in consequence of the election taking place on that day, been postponed to the following Saturday, July 27. The excursion goes to Hebden Bridge, the times of trains, etc., being the same as already arranged.

On Sunday last about forty members and friends of the Manchester Branch journeyed to Chester in a saloon carriage, where, after a pleasant run of seventy-five minutes they arrived, and were met at the station by two local Freethinkers and conducted round the walls of the city. In the afternoon a number of friends from Liverpool arrived, and the whole party proceeded up the river in a special barge to Eaton. The scenery was delightful, and the sail enjoyed by everyone. Before leaving Eaton a photograph group of the party was taken.

The July *Monist* opens with a thoughtful paper by Professor Joseph Le Conte on "The Theory of Evolution and Social Progress." His idea is that as organic evolution differs from mere chemical evolution, taking up new factors, so human evolution or social progress involves new factors to those of organical evolution. "Organic evolution strives only for the survival of the fittest. Social progress strives to *make* as many as possible *fit to survive*. In organic evolution the weak, the sick, the helpless, the old, the unfit in any way, perish, and ought to perish, because this is the only means of strengthening the *blood* or physical nature of the species. In social progress, on the contrary, the weak, the sick, the helpless, the old, the unfit in any way, are sustained, and ought to be sustained, because sympathy, pity, love, strengthens the spirit, the moral nature of man, the distinctive human nature. In a word, in organic evolution war is the great element of advance; in rational evolution, peace." Professor Le Conte admits that the moral nature is conditioned by the physical nature, but thinks the problem of their claims, and of how to obey the law of love and mutual help, without weakening the blood of the race by inheritance, can be solved by a rational education, physical, mental, and moral.

Leslie Stephen helps to explain how his brother, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen became a Freethinker, having been brought up in Evangelical Puritanism. He was one of those few who have sought to realise hell, and the fewer still who have thought of it as for themselves. "He imagined the whole world transformed into a globe of iron, white hot, with a place in the middle made to fit him so closely that he could not even wink. The globe was split like an orange; he was thrust by an angel into his place, immortal, inconsumable, and capable of infinite suffering; and then the two halves were closed, and he left in hideous isolation to suffer eternal torments.

Fitzjames's elder brother gave the first blow to this ghastly creed, and then Paine's *Age of Reason* shook him further. Defending Rowland Williams in the famous *Essays and Reviews* case, compelled a further examination of orthodoxy, and he came at length to think that religion would not survive theology, but that morality would survive religion.

Mr. George Meredith made a speech for the first time in his life on Saturday evening. It was at the dinner of the Omar Khayyám Club. "While coffee was being served," says the *Daily Chronicle*, "the beautiful face of the greatest of living novelists was observed in the doorway, and all the members rose to their feet and welcomed him with the greatest enthusiasm." Mr. Edward Clodd, the president, greeted Mr. Meredith on behalf of the Club, which calls itself after the great Persian poet so exquisitely rendered into English by the late Edward Fitzgerald. Omar Khayyám was a Freethinker as well as a poet. "Your large infidel," Tennyson called him, in a dedication to Fitzgerald.

Some of the American Unitarians are far more liberal than their English co-religionists. At New York, some time ago, they invited Colonel Ingersoll to address them, and we see from the *Boston Investigator* that Mr. J. E. Remsburg has been invited by the Rev. Mr. Simmons, pastor of the first Unitarian Church of Minneapolis, to occupy his pulpit. It would be cruel if Mr. Remsburg gave his popular lecture on "The False Claims of the Christian Church."

The Universalists of America are simply those who disbelieve in eternal punishment, and offer treacle without brimstone. They have churches of their own, but all Unitarians, and many others, are practically Universalists. The late Stephen Pearl Andrews once said to them a very good thing. He observed: "You Universalists have squatted on the biggest word in the English language. Now," said he, "the world is beginning to want that big word, and you Universalists must either improve the property or move off the premises."

The *Boston Investigator*, under the heading "What We See," has the following: "That the National Secular Society's Annual Conference in England was a great success; that Messrs. Foote, Watts, Putnam, Moss, Cohen, Heaford, and Gilmour were in fine form at the evening meeting, and addressed a large and enthusiastic gathering."

The *Two Worlds* says that Spiritualists, as well as Secularists, are not recognised by the law, and cannot, as Spiritualist societies, hold property, receive bequests, or own halls, and this is an ever-increasing source of anxiety to its promoters. It urges all its readers to question candidates if they are in favor of the removal of all religious disabilities.

The Italian Chamber of Deputies, by a majority of 264 to 62, has declared the twentieth of September, the anniversary of the entry of the Italian troops into Rome, a national holiday. This will be gall and wormwood to the Papacy, which still yearns for a restoration of its temporal power.

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Professor Bain is among the new recipients of £100 a year from the Civil List Pensions. We congratulate Lord Rosebery's Government on its courage in recognising the services of so advanced a thinker.

The friends of Dr. August Specht, editor of *Menschentham* and *Freien Glocken*, have been celebrating his fiftieth birthday, and, as it happens, the twenty-fifth anniversary of his becoming a Freethought speaker. Dr. Specht has written many German Freethought works, of which the most important is a *Popular Development History of the World*, which has reached a fourth edition.

The *Crescent*, "A Weekly Record of Islam in England," edited by W. H. Abdullah Quilliam, has been enlarged to sixteen pages. It is full of interest to all students of Mohammedan affairs, and, as our readers know, does not hesitate to carry war into the Christian camp.

The death of Professor Huxley leaves Herbert Spencer the sole survivor of the four intellectual giants who so powerfully upheld the doctrine of man's evolution from the lower forms of life. No man has done more than Huxley to popularise the study of science, and, by his remarkable literary gifts, to give it an interest and a charm which was irresistible, and which was sure to lead the reader to explore deeper into the storehouse of knowledge after reading one of Huxley's works.—*Secular Thought.*

The second edition of *Une Mère Vierge* (Mr. Foote's *Virgin Mother*), translated by C. Cilwa, has appeared in French. It is published by M. Felix Roy, 27 Passage de l'Opera, Paris.

THE HONORARIUM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

It will be remembered that at the last Conference of the National Secular Society a letter was read from Mr. George Anderson, suggesting that its President "should be recouped for his loss of time and money in serving the party's interests." Accordingly, the Conference appointed a Committee, consisting of Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Robert Forder, and Mr. George Ward, to consider the best plan to be adopted for carrying out the suggestion. The Committee met and drew up a circular, which probably most of the readers of the *Freethinker* have seen.

This Committee unanimously passed the following resolution, proposed by Mr. George Anderson, and seconded by Mr. George Ward: "That the sum to be paid the President of the N.S.S. for this year be £100, to be confirmed, augmented, or diminished each year by vote of the Conference."

By this resolution it was the desire of the Committee to carry out the object, for which it had been appointed by the congress of delegates, in the most satisfactory manner both as to terms and amount, leaving the Society to act yearly in future as circumstances might dictate.

It is to be hoped that what has been done will meet with the approval of the Secular party, and that its members will subscribe the required amount as promptly as possible. CHARLES WATTS.

[Subscriptions can be sent to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., or paid to any member of the Committee.]

Subscriptions Received:—

Already acknowledged, £35.

Per R. Forder: W. Hunt, 10s. 6d.; J. D. Leggett, 2s. 6d.

Per Miss Vance: J. T. Embleton, 10s.; S. Seal, £5; F. Burch, 2s. 6d.

Per G. Ward: E. Calvert, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Caisey, 4s.

We stand in the great presence of Nature, whose inspiration should be that of modesty, humility, and love. To accept Nature as the great cause of all things is that theory which involves the most coherent consequences, and it binds us to attempt explanations of mysteries by laws of science and philosophy. These methods may not lead us far, but they will not lead us wrong, and they will keep us modest by enforcing some proportion between what we declare and what we know.—*G. J. Holyoake, "The Trial of Theism," p. 51.*

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (June 22).

THE friends in Liverpool treat me royally. On Monday I have a red-letter day indeed, a day crowded with the noblest pictures of English scenery and its ancient magnificence. Through the kindness of Mr. Towers I am driven by him over to the olden and beautiful city of Chester, seventeen miles distant. We are accompanied by Mr. W. C. Balfour and Mr. Lawrance Small, who is one of the most active workers for Freethought in England, at home amid the treasures of modern science. I had good company, a delightful day, a road smooth as marble, a fine horse, and England's most superb springtime attire. We cross in the ferry-boat to Birkenhead. They don't have ferry-boats here like our big ones. The passengers go over in one boat and the teams in another, and the boats are small in comparison with our palatial ones. Birkenhead is a place of 100,00 inhabitants, and has a somewhat monotonous appearance, with its rows of houses, and scarcely a green thing to be seen; but soon we are out in the country, flying by the long, green hedges, the extensive fields, the rows of horse-chestnut trees, the white and red bloom of the hawthorns, the rugged oaks, and at times the mountain ash, or rowan, with its brilliant blossom. We pass by Port Sunlight, where they manufacture the Sunlight Soap. This is an immense industry. A beautiful village has been built around the huge factories, a kind of model village, where the working man can buy his own home by small instalments, and enjoy the conveniences of modern life. Mr. Lever, the originator of this vast enterprise, was a Freethinker, I understand, and a contributor to the support of Mr. Bradlaugh. He is a reformer after the Owen style. He believes in helping humanity by industrial methods. After passing Port Sunlight we roll through Eastham, Sutton, and other quiet and antique villages, over which the breath of change has never swept. At Chester we pass under the ancient wall built, I believe, by the Romans. The word "Chester" is from the Latin word *castra*, and indicates an ancient camping-ground. The present city of Chester has grown beyond the original ramparts, but these still remain as landmarks of centuries ago.

Old-fashioned streets and houses, overhanging walls, covered walks alongside the stores, etc., meet the view in this stately cathedral city of about fifty thousand people. The cathedral is the first object of interest. It was built in the thirteenth century. It is falling to pieces in places, and is now being renovated. It is a beautiful building, solemn and sweet in its voices and pictures of the past, as we wander through its freighted gloom, gaze upon its panels and carvings, its rich adornments, and the emerald carpet and shining trees that greet the blue heaven in the central space of its encircling walls. An ancient verger waits upon us and reveals the hidden beauties. He tells us he has been here for over fifty years. No doubt he loves the cathedral. Its carvings are among the most marvellous and skilful in the world, wrought in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. There was a sly twinkle of humor in the old man's eyes as he pointed out the quaint and curious figures. I must confess I was astonished. I supposed that in a cathedral so imposing, with its dim, religious light, there could be nothing in its carvings but scriptural and theological subjects. Ah me! those old monks had a vein of comedy, and in the very heart of the church the artist had pictured the humors of human life. There were carvings of clowns dancing, of lovers, of Red Riding Hood—a legend, it seems, of the tenth century—of a quarrelling married couple, with elbow against elbow, as if each sought for more room and neither would yield. There was, furthermore, the final tragedy, when they went at each other with knife and hatchet. There was also, as the verger smilingly hinted, a prophecy of Chicago, a picture of two great fat hogs and a litter of pigs, with the parson coming after his tithes. Well, it was funny to see these humorous displays in the holy sanctuary. Those old monks could not have been such a bad lot when they were capable of enjoying these secular pictures in the very midst of their religious solemnities. The gargoyles on the outside of the cathedral are equally comic and grotesque. One represents Gladstone, with feather pen in mouth, toppling over the Roman dynasty, and another Disraeli in a similar position. I must confess I do not understand the significance of theological art.

One of the most novel things I witnessed in Chester was a picture of the Virgin Mary being impregnated by the Holy Ghost. I do not dare to describe it. I could hardly believe my eyes when I looked at it; but there it was, on one of the main streets of Chester, on a building that must have been erected in the thirteenth century or before. What fools we mortals be! I said to myself, as I looked at that hideous caricature.

Chester is on the river Dee. We watched the salmon-fishing, which is quite an industry here. As I noted the fishermen hauling in the net, the music of the poet's song

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murmured in my brain, "Across the sands o' Dee." Near the river bank are the ruins of the oldest church in Chester, of the twelfth century, I believe.

At the landing-place my friends charter a steamship, the "Volunteer," to take our company up the river to the estate of the Duke of Westminster. Why should we not travel in pride and glory like any grandee of the land? It was a beautiful voyage. We left behind the gracious, venerable city, glittering on the high banks of the river. The prospect before us was infinitely sweet, the placid river, clear and smooth, the green banks, and the softly gliding vessel. Every moment there was a change

Into something rich and strange.

It is indescribable, the perfect loveliness, the solitude, the motion, the city fading from view, and only the winding liquid pathway with emerald splendors on every side, and ever-varying shades of color.

We reach the beautiful estate of Westminster. Here are the stables which produce the most famous horses in the world. Here is the magnificent park, with great trees, and the deer and sheep grazing on the ample green. The residence of the Duke seems like a village as we approach. There are the outbuildings and lodges, the chapel and tower, the main structure itself, and the golden gates, and the obelisk. We pass through the magnificent suite of rooms where royalty is entertained, where glorious pictures grace the walls, and statues gleam, and precious stones shine; where there is everything that wealth can buy. The duke has an income of a million pounds a year. He owns enormous quantities of land, houses in London, etc. I believe he is the richest duke of the realm. When he is away from his gorgeous palace visitors are permitted to enter, and the proceeds are devoted to charitable purposes. The Duke himself will show visitors about if he happens to be present; and the visitors do not always know who is their guide, and some amusing blunders occur. But the Duke takes it all in good part. I guess he likes to study human nature that way. I should think he would want some such relief from the awful dignity of his position, which must occasionally be tiresome. It is like keeping a big hotel. He has accommodation for over one hundred guests. He can't spend all his money whatever he does. I don't believe he enjoys himself one bit better than we Secularists did on this glorious day. The great house was just as beautiful to us as to him, with all its gay and splendid surroundings. The voyage in the golden evening from the palace to the city was like an enchantment, as if we were in the realms of poetry itself. The new moon shone out from the rolling clouds as we bowled along to Birkenhead, from whence we could see the far glittering lights of Liverpool glancing up and down the river away to the distant sea itself. And thus passed a day filled to the brim with bright experiences.

. . . . . .

Wonderful and many are the mountain and sea views in the glorious land of Wales. I can scarcely describe the ever-varying prospects unfolding in sunlight and mist and cloud. Immense hills, cultivated to the very top, sweep away in the vast distance; lovely vales intervene, beautiful villages and ancient dwellings contrasting with the pomp and pride and circumstance of modern life, which now overflow these once wild and untrodden regions. Wales is a favorite place of resort for the fashion and wealth of England. Llandudno is an elegant seaside city, with superb hotels and residences, a delightful beach, equisite expanses of water, and rugged surroundings. The coaching tours, however, are the supreme thing, with the "tally-ho," the four-horse stage, with seats on high, as if you were riding on the roof of a house. It is an illuminating voyage, through the air almost, I might say. I could take only two of them, as my time was short. I arrive at Llandudno from Liverpool, Wednesday, May 29, at noon, and immediately take the trip through Synchant Pass to Penmaen Mawr. We travel through the old town of Conway, about five miles distant, and view the ruins of its once magnificent castle, which for ages has towered upon this historic coast. With melancholy grandeur it greets the sun of to-day. It gives a noble idea of the massive structures of the old fighting times, when war was the normal condition of humanity. It would seem impossible to take this castle by storm, so impregnable are its defences, so strong its towers and walls, protected by precipitous shores and frowning hills. One can imagine how things were in those tumultuous and bloody eras, now forever gone, with their glory and their chivalry. Beyond Conway we sweep into an amphitheatre of magnificent hills, variegated with the splendor of modern thrift and invention. Every inch of ground is apparently used for man's benefit. There are no waste places. Even the Synchant Pass makes pasture for the wandering herds and flocks. It presents a grand a romantic appearance as we plunge down its tremendous grade. The coaches here, however, don't go with the thundering whirl of our Californian stages. They put on the brakes in Wales, while in California they bid "farewell to every fear," and urge the horses to a resounding gallop. People are more slow and cautious on this side, and the traveller does not feel every moment as if he were launching into eternity. After Synchant Pass we come to the charming village of Dwygyfylchi—pronounce it if you can; I can't. It is as much as I can do to spell it. Near by is the Fairy Glen, where, for the moment, as you gaze through the forest arcades and into the tumblings water, one seems to be a thousand miles from civilisation. On top of the huge hill which encircles the glen is the "Druid's Circle," an ancient temple of worship, one of the most remarkable remains of the dim and mystic past. The coach continues on to Penmaen Mawr, where the mountains reach down close to the sea, and where the sea stretches away with magnificent and ever-changing illuminations, sweeping to the horizon, or framed in with outlines of the vast and rugged coast. We return by a different route, where equally pleasing and exhilarating pictures adorn the pathway. In the evening thousands of tourists swarm along the sands or on the great pier. Music fills the air. The lights flare in a wide semicircle, the mountains glimmer in the dusky sky, the waters fling back the glow, and a scene of beauty and animation flows on until midnight. The morning hour is equally enchanting. The sun flashes over the surrounding pinnacles, the splendid buildings appear in gorgeous ranks, while the children and dogs and donkeys gather on the beach, and everybody seems to be in a mood of careless festivity, in unison with the magnificence of earth and sky. SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

July 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Religious Knowledge.

The general reader has probably had a surfeit of apocryphal specimens of "English as she is wrote," answers by school-children to questions in history, etc., but the following samples are genuine, and worthy of preservation. They are taken from recent Sunday-school examination papers, and were quoted last month before the Presbyterian Commission of Victoria by Mr. Wishart, the examiner in connection with the "Allan Bequest": Question—"What is effectual calling?" Answers—"Calling two or three times at once, or else calling all the time." "The work of God's grace whereby we are enabled to live more unto sin and die unto righteousness." "The work of God's grace whereby we are removed into another world." Q.—"What is urged in the Tenth Commandment?" A.—"Not to be thankful for what we've got." "To do everything without covetousness, and look upon ourselves with full contempt." Q.—"Give a proof text showing that we should pray for what is required for the support of life." A.—"We should pray that Christ would be kind to our parents, deliver us from evil, dinner, breakfast, bread and butter, and other requisites." Q.—"What two classes of men came to see the child Jesus at Bethlehem?" A.—"Wild men of the East." "Wise men of the East offered Jesus the franchise" (frankincense). Q.—"What cheering words did the Lord speak to Paul at Corinth?" A.—"You shall never see my face again." Q.—"Who was the first martyr?" A.—"Martin Luther." "Agrippa." Q.—"What were his last words?" A.—"I am the light of the world." "Be sure and kill David." Q.—"What would have saved Sodom from destruction?" A.—"Ten riotous persons." "Water—they had no fire brigade." Q.—"Why did God command Abraham to offer up Isaac?" A.—"Because he was not a good man, and did not keep the Sabbath." Q.—"Name three ways in which the Sabbath was broken in Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time." A.—"They married infidels, worshipped asses, and trod wine presses." "Hawkers ran about the streets.—"*X.*," in "*Harbinger of Light.*"

The Devil is called the "Father of lies." There is no instance given in the Bible in which he lied, but millions of people have told billions of lies on the Devil.—*Blue Grass Blade.*

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REJECTED LOVE.

The world is full of pain and woe,
But, lest their God be deemed oppressing,
Some pious Christians seek to show
That every seeming ill's a blessing.

They tell us that the Lord above,
By harm desires our welfare hastened,
And chastens those who've won his love,
Yet Christians don't like being chastened.

It's chiefly those he has not blessed
With tumors, cancers, gout, or blindness,
Who loudly state the Lord knows best
And advertise his chastening kindness.

This queer conceit, without a doubt,
Would make the most afflicted cheery,
If one strange fact did not leak out
That actions contradict their theory.

If for some purpose, good and wise,
The Lord should bless them with insomnia,
They steal the sleep their God denies
With chloral—*et hoc genus omnia.*

His blessing—small-pox—they would shirk
By laws enforcing vaccination;
His chastening cholera they burke
By quarantine and sanitation.

By poison God may bless in vain,
The favored foil him with emetics;
And baulk his "purifying pain"
With opiate drugs and anæsthetics.

And with his highest blessing—death—
The key to Heaven, believers own it,
They fight until their latest breath
In frantic effort to postpone it.

But still they prate and still believe,
Despite the favors they've rejected;
They little think how God must grieve
To find his chastening love neglected.

The view of evil thus supplied,
No doubt possesses great attraction,
And, just a little modified,
May yield a useful rule for action.

Behind the cloud there shines the sun,
So welcome pain since God has sent it,
And piously say "Thy will be done,"
When you have failed to circumvent it.

E. H. B. Stephenson.

A False Claim.

If not so false, it would be amusing to read in Church papers, and hear from pulpits, the indebtedness women are under to Christianity for their elevation from a species of slavery. Christians borowed their social institutions, according to their own representations, from the Jews. The only condition a woman could visit the synagogues was to go by side streets and alleys, and, when attending upon religious exercises, they were shut off from all intercourse with the worshippers by the interposition of a latticed partition.

Down to within fifty or sixty years women occupied separate places in Christian churches, seldom being seated promiscuously through the assembly. Here they must remain silent, and learn of the priests. We believe it was the Universalists, some fifty years ago, who made a place for her in the pulpit, the Unitarians afterwards extending to her similar privileges.

When we recall Paul's cruel restrictions relating to the fair sex, and the implicit observance of his petty meanness in regard to them by Christians of all denominations, down to so recent a period, we would suppose they would remain silent on the subject until the last man with recollections of fifty years ago was at rest.—*Progressive Thinker.*

If the story of the Fall is not the true record of an historical occurrence, what becomes of Pauline theology? Yet the story of the Fall as directly conflicts with probability, and is as devoid of trustworthy evidence as that of the Creation or that of the Deluge, with which it forms an harmoniously legendary series.—*Huxley.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

MADMEN OR CRANKS?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—As one of your regular readers, although not claiming to be of the fraternity of Atheists, I must really object to Mr. J. M. Wheeler, in his article upon F. Nietzsche, saying that "Jesus, Mohammed, Joan of Arc, Jacob Boehme, Francis d'Assissi, George Fox, and Emanuel Swedenborg were all insane." Surely no intelligent reader, having read the life-histories of such as Mohammed, George Fox, and E. Swedenborg, would believe them to be insane or mad, in the ordinary sense of those words. Take Swedenborg, for instance. I have been assured by a New Church minister (Rev. G. J. Woodford) that the "Memorable Relations," or supposed spirit communications appended to some of Swedenborg's works, were added after his death when the sect began to put forward his views for acceptance, and a Church was formed. It is certainly clear that Swedenborg was a learned man, a scientific inventor, and held high offices in the Swedish State somewhat analagous to our Mr. Gladstone to-day, and to call him insane is ridiculous.

Then, leaving out of the question the debatable nature—mythical or human—of Jesus, a study of the life of Mohammed will justify no one in calling him mad, as well style Cromwell or Napoleon Buonaparte mad, a remarkable and shrewd man; the legendary history, of course, has been added since his death by admirers and others.

As to Joan of Arc being mad, this person, also in her life, shows remarkable courage and intelligence of action; in fact, a high-minded patriot of the female order, whose heroic exploits have now become veiled in legendary lore, and expanded into much which is visionary and mythical; but why blame or asperse the maid for this? It appears to me that there was much method in the madness of these persons, and it is quite an abuse of words to style such great souls, as above mentioned, as mad or insane. Rather should their life-work receive our respectful homage, and, by placing ourselves *en rapport* with the men and the times in which they lived, seek to gain from their heroic actions some impetus or inspiration to animate the age in which we live and work.

Thomas May.

[The very purpose of my incidental illustrations was to show that Nietzsche could not be summarily dismissed on the ground of his madness. As to whether the persons I named were insane, it is a question for experts. If Mr. May denies they heard voices, saw visions, and exhibited other traits of insanity, he speaks out of the plenitude of his ignorance, and I advise him to read Maudsley's *Pathology of Mind*, and Ireland's *Blot on the Brain*. Instead of blaming or aspersing these ecstatics of genius, I said "I dearly love a crank," and argued that there was an insanity which rises above the common level, as well as an imbecility that sinks beneath it. I do not blame Mr. May, but I notice it is usual with him to catch hold of the wrong end of the stick.—J. M. W.]

PROFANE JOKES.

"Johnnie, why did not the lions eat Daniel?" "'Cause they didn't know he was so good."

Mamma (to little girl of four who has been naughty)—"You wicked girl! You know if I cannot see you some one can." Little Girl—"Who can, then?" Mamma—"God can." Little Girl—"Where is he, then? I can't see him. You know I'll have no peeping."

Aunt Dinah, the colored cook, was caught giving the fatest turkey to her friends. She substituted a leaner one, and said the fat all fried out.

The next Sunday was the first in the month, and Dinah, who was a professedly devout communicant of the church, was promptly in her place at the beginning of the services. Her mistress was also a communicant, and watched with interest to see if Dinah would partake of the holy communion.

But Dinah, apparently, had no conscientious scruples to keep her away. She knelt at the altar rail as devoutly as if her conscience had been devoid of guilt.

On their return home the mistress called her servant to her, and, in a tone of mild reproach, said: "Oh, Dinah, how could you go to the holy table with such a load of sin on your soul?"

"I ain't got no sin on my soul, Missy," was the reply.

"Why, Dinah, not after you stole that turkey and gave it to your friends, and then lied about it?"

"Oh, la, Missy!" exclaimed the impenitent cook, "do you s'pose I'se goin' to let that old turkey hen stan' between me and my bressed Lawd?"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Secularism and the New Parliament."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.45, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 9, dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Civilisation."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, open discussion—"Morals, the Outcome of Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. G. Hertzfeld, "The Real and Ideal Jesus."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity Critically Examined."

CAMBERWELL GREEN: Tuesday, at 8, a lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Curse of the Cross."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, S. R. Thompson, "Slavery." (Collection for Benevolent Fund.)

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11, debate between Lucretius Keen and Job Williams, "Atheism or Christianity—Which has Done Most for Mankind?" 3.15, E. Calvert, "Is the New Testament Worthy of Credit?"

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Evolution." Thursday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Evolution and Darwinism."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection"; 3.30, "The Bible and Evolution." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Evolution and Darwinism."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, a lecture.

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Tales from the Jew-Book."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, W. Heaford, "Bible Lessons in Morality."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Religion and Insanity."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, S. E. Easton will lecture.

TOTTENHAM GREEN: 3.30, S. R. Thompson, "The Origin of the Gods." (Collection on behalf of Sam Standring.)

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, R. Forder will lecture (collection for L.S.P.); 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. Guest, "Atheist or Theist: Which is the Fool?" 7, W. Heaford will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Museum Concert Hall, Bull Ring): 11, S. P. Putnam: "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 3, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century"; 7, "Christianity and Woman." (Friends from a distance can obtain dinner and tea.)

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, C. James, "Christianity and Civilisation."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, C. Doog, "Religious Materialism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 6.30, "Who Was Jesus Christ—God, Man, or Myth?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, J. P. Gilmour, "South Sea Mission Bubbles"; 3, "The Science and Superstition of Hypnotism"; 7, "The Natural History of the Christian Religion." Tea at 5.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dorecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Theosophy, a discussion.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, J. Kenst, "Christian Evidence."

CHATHAM (corner of the New Brompton-road, High-street): 11.15, C. James, "Christianity and Modern Thought."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

MANCHESTER (Stevenson-square): Saturday, at 7, C. Cohen, "Secularism." Sunday, at 3, "Christ as a Teacher."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Mr. Selkirk will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road.—July 20 and 21, Manchester; 23 to 26, Blackburn; 28, Stockton-on-Tees; 29 and 30, Middlesboro'. August 1, Wood Green; 4, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford; 6, Camberwell; 8, Wood Green; 11, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 15, Wood Green; 18, m. and a. Finsbury Park; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—July 21, m. Camberwell, a. Victoria Park, e. Camberwell; 24, Hyde Park; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m. and e. Wood Green.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—July 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Tottenham. August 4, Camberwell; 11, Westminster; 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 30. SUNDAY, JULY 28, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. STEAD'S "JULIA."

MR. W. T. STEAD is a characteristic figure of the present age. He typifies what we may call, for want of a technical name, the enterprise of common journalism. Board schools have taught everybody to read—and alas! too many of them to write; and all sorts of scribes are ministering to the literary tastes of the multitude, who require something to interest them without giving them the trouble of thinking. Amongst the purveyors of this mental pabulum, Mr. Stead is easily first. The work exactly suits his faculty and temperament. Mentally he is just on the level of the public he addresses. His advantage over them consists in a certain restless energy, which some people mistake for enthusiasm. He is interested in many things, and shallow in all of them. Even if he had the mental power, it is doubtful whether he could sit still long enough to *think*, in any proper sense of the word. He does not think, but he has thoughts; and as that is just the condition of the great mass of the public, it is not surprising that he is a very successful journalist. One might say of Mr. Stead's productions what Lincoln said when he was asked his opinion of a certain book in great temporary vogue: "Well, if people like that sort of thing, I should say that is just the sort of thing they'd like."

Now there is one thing your enterprising journalist never does. He never fights a forlorn hope. He has never any convictions which are not shared by a large section of the public. It may be a minority, but it is a minority large enough to keep him going. Your enterprising journalist is always on the look out for "a felt want," and eager to supply it; and this peculiarity is the key to all Mr. Stead's avatars. His genius has had many incarnations, and will probably have many more; but in all of them he will retain a keen eye to the main chance. He has a happy and profitable knack of leaping on to a movement which is attracting attention, and of becoming its spokesman. He is incapable of creating a wave of public interest, but no one equals him in riding upon its crest—until it is breaking, when he flies off to a fresh adventure.

I was once brought into close contact with Mr. Stead. It was at the time of the "Trafalgar-square riots." Much as I detested Sir Charles Warren, and was indignant at his dragooning the London Radicals, I saw that we could not fight the police, and still less fight the soldiers behind them; so at the risk of misunderstanding and misrepresentation I tried to drag the Radicals away from Trafalgar-square. Mrs. Besant shrieked against that policy, and was warmly seconded by Mr. Stead, who was then editing the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and who saw "good copy" in bloody rows between the people and the police. For my part, I should never have said to others "*Go* to the Square," I should have said "*Come*." Mr. Stead was full of "Go," but there was no "Come" about him. I soon saw that his place would be at a window of Morley's Hotel, while the men he egged on were being truncheoned in the roadway. And ever since then I have smiled at Mr. Stead's eulogists, especially when they have trumpeted his "courage."

Students of human nature will not be surprised to learn that Mr. Stead is a sentimentalist; indeed, he is almost a crank. Set anything "occult" before him, and his eyes widen like saucers. He sniffs up the mysterious as a devout Catholic sniffs up incense, and with the same mixture of spiritual and sensual ecstasy. He patronises Theosophy and goes maudlin over Mrs. Besant. He also dabbles in Spiritism. And in all this he is sincere—that is, as sincere as he can be. But the enterprising journalist is not suppressed. Many other people coquet with Theosophy and flirt with Spiritism. "Go to, then," says Mr. Stead, "I will start a magazine for them, and they shall buy it; and I will make it ghostly and creepy, so that other people with 'nerves' may buy it likewise." And the result is *Borderland*.

In the July number of this curious publication there is a heading "Is Man Immortal?" It appears that an American newspaper syndicate has been putting this novel question to a number of gentlemen who know nothing about it, although they pretend to know a great deal. One of these is Mr. Stead himself, and his answer to the question is printed in full, while extracts are given from the other answers, which are illuminating "seven millions of readers" in the land of Yankee-Doodle.

Mr. Stead does not know whether man is immortal, but he does know that the soul survives the body, which is really an "encumbrance." And *how* does Mr. Stead know it? Why, in this way. Suppose you had a friend who emigrated to America, and that your friend sent you letters and telegrams; would not that satisfy you that America existed, and that your friend was still living? Very well, then; Mr. Stead had a friend "Miss Julia ——" who "emigrated to the world beyond the grave scarcely four years ago." He has not seen her since, but others have. She appears to be shy of Mr. Stead, but she sends him "fair speechless messages," by using his hand as an automatic amanuensis. To look at him while he is scribbling you would think that *he* was writing, and your opinion would be confirmed if you saw the stuff afterwards. But you would (of course!) be mistaken. The hand is the hand of Stead, but the words are the words of Julia.

It is a common superstition that ghosts know what is going to happen; although our only definite idea of foresight is prediction founded on experience. Ghosts appear to know the future by intuition. Accordingly, Mr. Stead tells us that Julia has given him many a "tip." She has informed him "confidently of events which were to occur—events which were scouted at the time as impossible, but which nevertheless actually took place."

All this is very edifying, but it would be still more edifying if Mr. Stead would give us an opportunity of checking his prophetess. He is sufficiently cautious to disclose none of her predictions until they are realised. But it would be more satisfactory if he would disclose them beforehand. Our calculations would then be in no

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peril of disturbance by Mr. Stead's aberrations of memory. There are even other aberrations which are not beyond the limits of conceivability.

In another part of this magazine Mr. Stead refers to a prediction made two years ago that "the Liberals would be left in a minority of over 100." The same prophet predicted that "after Lord Salisbury got his three-figured majority he will in three years' time pass a measure of local government for Ireland, which will be Home Rule in all but name." Whether the bad grammar be Mr. Stead's or Julia's, we may reasonably assume that the predictions are hers. And what predictions they are! Why, hundreds of people have said that the Tories would pass a Home Rule Bill in disguise. It is almost a commonplace of political prophecy. The "minority of over 100" is a good guess, but it is no more. Had the prophet *known*, she would have given the *exact number*.

And this Julia-Stead nonsense is the world's new pledge of immortality!

G. W. FOOTE.

NAPOLEON'S RELIGION.

(Concluded from page 450.)

NAPOLEON'S phenomenal intellectual capacity is admitted on all hands. His words often have the sharpness of a sword. "Half measures are always dangerous." "Hazard nothing, gain nothing." "Speeches pass, actions remain." Scorn dominates sometimes, as when he says: "No government so tyrannical as one calling itself paternal." "The kitchen is a fine accessory to government." "Men are rare." "People in general are but big children." "There are rattles for all ages." "We must laugh at men to avoid crying." "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step."* "Fortune is an arrant courtesan." "Wash your dirty linen at home." "We can march quicker when we march alone."

His utterances on religion are of this serious cynical turn: "In all countries," he said, "religion is useful to the Government; it should be used to control the people." Again he said: "Nothing more debases a nation than religious despotism." "The decadence of Italy dates from the moment when the priests would govern the finances, the police, and the army."

The intimate alliance of the Christian religion with political tyranny he noted in saying: "The French people, in order to obtain a constitution founded on reason, had to conquer eighteen centuries of prejudices" (*Moniteur*, vol. xxix., p. 90). In Egypt he told his soldiers to co-operate as cordially with believers in the Koran as with Jews and Christians, and to show the same respect to their muftis and imams as to archbishops and rabbis. He himself observed the feast of Ramazan, realising the verse of Voltaire on Zaire, that he is "a Christian in Italy, a Freethinker in Paris, and a Mussulman on the banks of the Nile."

When First Consul, Lafayette urged him to give equal liberty to all sects, placing them, as in the United States, outside the Government, he observed: "Lafayette is right in theory, but he always believes himself in America. The Catholic religion prevails here. Moreover, I have need of the Pope, and he will do whatever I wish." He disliked sects, and idealogues were his *bête noire*. "An established religion," he remarked, "is a kind of vaccination, which, in satisfying our love of the marvellous, guarantees us against quacks and sorcerers; the priests are worth more than the Cagliostros, Kants, and the rest of the German dreamers."

Speaking of his soldiers wearing the turban when in Egypt, he said: "Collectively, an army may well pretend to be of any description of worship, but it should in this obey the orders of a general-in-chief, who is as much the organ of his country as the flag is its symbol. Yet it would be odious for the soldiers individually to each deny the beliefs and faiths of their fathers, to improve their own position." He found his own policy confirmed, not by the words, but by the deeds of priests in all ages.

At St. Helena he said: "Theologians of all religions are the same; they spare neither ink nor words to enforce, according to their passions, their authority, or their caprice, a certain elasticity to the law of Moses, to that of Jesus Christ, or of Mohammed."

Napoleon sought to, and did, utilise religion in the matter of his coronation, his divorce, and the conscriptions. He considered it as a buttress of his own power, and at the time of the Concordat observed: "Mark the insolence of the priests who, in sharing authority with what they call the temporal power, reserve to themselves all action on the mind—the noblest part of man, and take it on themselves to reduce my part to physical action. They retain the soul, and fling me the corpse." He wished to be head of the Church as well as of the State. "You will see," he said, while negotiating the Concordat, "how I will turn the priests to account, and, first of all, the Pope." Parodying Voltaire, he said: "Had no Pope existed, it would have been necessary to create him"—viz., to give a spiritual sanction to his own authority. He let the clergy know they were servants of the State. When the curé of St. Roch refused to bury an opera dancer, he published in the *Moniteur*: "The Archbishop of Paris orders the curé of St. Roch in a retreat of three months, in order that he may bear in mind the injunction of Jesus Christ to pray for one's enemies." The Church was made the hand-maiden of the State.

All Catholic children were taught to pray for and serve Napoleon. "For God has raised him up for us in times of peril, that he might restore public worship and the holy religion of our fathers, and be its protector." M. Taine says: "Every boy and girl in each parish recite this to the vicar or curé after vespers in their tiny voices as a commandment of God, and of the Church, as a supplementary article of the creed. Meanwhile the officiating priest gravely comments on this article, already clear enough, at every morning and evening service; by order he preaches in behalf of the conscription, and declares that it is a sin to try to escape from it, to be refractory; by order, again, he reads the army bulletins, giving accounts of the latest victories; always by order he reads the pastoral of his bishop—a document authorised, inspired, and corrected by the police. . . . . 'You must praise the Emperor more in your pastoral letters,' said Real, Prefect of Police, to a young bishop. 'Tell me in what measure.' 'I do not know,' was the reply. Since the measure cannot be prescribed, it must be ample enough."

Napoleon said: "Popes have committed too many absurdities to be believed infallible."* Yet it was his own attempt to subjugate the Pope which led onwards to the claim for infallibility. He has left on record his plans to be head of the Christian Church. "If I had returned from Moscow victorious," he said, "I should have exalted the Pope beyond measure, surrounding him with pomp and deference. . . . . I would have made him an idol. He should have dwelt beside me. Paris would have become the capital of the Christian world, and I would have governed the religious as well as the political world. I would have had my religious as well as my legislative sessions; my council would have represented Christianity; the Pope should have been only their president. I would have opened and closed these assemblies, approved and published their decrees, as was done by Constantine and Charlemagne." Here we see the quality by which Napoleon outshone the great generals of all ages—his imaginative daring. It may seem strange that a man of such soaring mind and dauntless ambition should never have questioned the great god-ghost bogie. But, in truth, with all his clear, direct view of the things before him, he was in matters of speculative philosophy but an uncultured Corsican. "Who made all that?" satisfied him as a complete answer to Atheism, just as it satisfies, for a time, the merest child. So he remained a Deist.

Las Casas reports him as saying: "Everything proclaims the existence of a God—that cannot be questioned; but all religions are evidently the work of man. Why are there so many? Why has not ours always existed? Why does it consider itself exclusively the right one? What becomes, in that case, of all the virtuous men who have gone before us? Why do these religions oppose and exterminate one another? Why has this been the case ever and everywhere? Because men are ever men;

* This was taken from Paine, who says in his *Age of Reason*: "One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again."

* *Les Papes ont fait trop de sottises pour les croire infaillibles.*

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because priests have ever and everywhere introduced fraud and falsehood." He said that his incredulity did not proceed from perverseness or from licentiousness of mind, but from the strength of his reason. Yet, added he, "no man can answer for what will happen, particularly in his last moments. At present I certainly believe that I shall die without a confessor." His doubt on the subject was warranted by self-knowledge. But it was rather his desire to die with all the *éclat* which the Church ceremonies could give than the return of faith which, after his trying illness, led him to receive on his death-bed the sacrament from Père Vignali. J. M. WHEELER.

OUR VIEW OF THE BIBLE.

THE severe criticism to which the Bible has been recently subjected has induced many intelligent professors of Christianity to considerably modify their opinions as to the nature and authority of the alleged "sacred writings." While many of the old orthodox believers still retain their fetish notions of the Bible, the more enlightened Christians refuse to accept it as "the very word of the very God." Modern thought has so impressed their minds that they cannot submit either to the authority of a tradition which has varied with all climes and ages, or to a Church whose history is a record of blunders, compromises, falsifications, and self-contradictions, which probably are unequalled in the annals of any merely secular institution. Such persons profess to remain Christians by believing that God's saving revelation to mankind is made in the Bible, and that every one may read it for himself if he studies the volume in a reverent and prayerful spirit. They admit many errors of copyists, reject many passages, and even books, as decidedly spurious, and regard many others as doubtful; yet maintain that, all deductions made, there is left a clear and sufficient divine message, whose essential character is untouched by any of the errors or defects, and unchanged by any of the various readings.

Now, although this is termed the "advanced view" to take of the Bible, it appears to us to be the most illogical theory which a Christian can hold upon the subject. The thorough Protestant bibliolater is consistent in his blind submission of reason to faith, and the Roman Catholics are equally consistent in their blind submission to tradition and ecclesiastical authority; for they both seek to reconcile things which are essentially irreconcilable—reason and faith, freethought and revelation, liberty and servitude, the natural and the supernatural. Such a theory is open to the fatal objection that it makes man the measure and standard of his God: setting up certain Scriptures as supernatural and divine, then subjecting them to the arbitrament of human nature and reason. Each of those who hold this theory says in effect: "Here are books purporting to contain the word of God, and I believe they do contain it, but mixed with it are many vain words of men; therefore what suits me I shall consider divine, and what does not suit me I shall reject." Numerous clever attempts have been made to smooth away this sharp self-contradiction; but, so far as we are aware, and as was to be expected, not one has been put forward that can be deemed even plausible by any candid outsider.

Personally, we regard the Bible as a merely human production, abounding in the faults, and errors, and superstitions common to ancient human works, the venerable days of old being the infancy of mankind. There is much in its pages that is very objectionable in phraseology, and decidedly foolish and vicious in sentiment. Still, being, as we believe, an emanation of the human mind, such a work must necessarily contain something of a useful character; and our duty is to examine its contents fairly, to accept the better parts, and to reject that which is not in harmony with the genius of the times. We should make our standard of judgment the value of the writings, not their supposed authority.

In reference to the Old Testament, it appears to us to be in one respect valuable, as representing the earliest traditions, and the gradual religious development, throughout several centuries, of a nation which seems always to have been peculiar, and whose religious convictions were, and are, unusually intense. The work of any one man, however great his genius, cannot have the historical interest of a national work like this, composed of treatises written at various periods, by men of very various minds, but all to a certain extent controlled by the same great national traditions and expectations. In many respects these various treatises are incongruous, for in the development and decadence of a nation, as of an individual, there are very incongruous phases; but inconsistencies fatal to the claim of Divine inspiration, which should have been immutable throughout, give the greater historical interest to these writings, as the productions of men whose leading inspiration in most cases was the destiny of their own people.

The great legislator who stamped this peculiar character upon the Jews—which, in spite of all aberrations and calamities, has preserved them a distinct people to this day, scattered among all nations for many hundred years, yet merged in none—appears to have been Moses, though we are by no means bound to accept the legends of his miracles and the forty years' wandering in the wilderness. And here it may be noted that those who see something miraculous, or, in other words, the hand of God, in this distinct preservation of the Jews conveniently forget that the ten tribes who were carried away by Shalmaneser, King of Assyria (2 Kings xvii., xviii.), so completely lost their characteristics, and blended with the nations around them, that not a sure trace of them can be found. Speculative writers, indeed, have identified them with nearly every later people, from the Aztecs and Red Indians to us English. But no satisfactory evidence of such an identification has been produced.

Two things are notable as pervading the Old Testament from beginning to end, equally conspicuous in Moses and David and the latest of the prophets. First, loyalty of the Jews to Jehovah was always to be rewarded by prosperity and dominion in this life, in their land of Palestine and its borders; disloyalty to Jehovah and the worship of other gods, by calamity and servitude. Secondly, the patriotism enjoined and cultivated in the Jews was so exclusive as to mean scorn and hatred of all other peoples about them, whom they were not only permitted, but commanded and urged, to drive out, to enslave, or even utterly to destroy. The old Jewish God was a jealous God, who hated all other gods with an abhorrence precisely proportioned to the abhorrence of the Jews themselves for the Gentiles. He was a stern and solitary autocrat, who would allow no rival near his throne; differing herein essentially from the social and easy-natured gods of the Greeks and other Polytheists. His character undergoes very considerable changes in the interval between the Pentateuch and the Prophets. In the former the sins of the father were to be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations; in the latter everyone was to bear only his own sins. But, in both alike, mankind are in his hands as clay in the hands of a potter; he is an irresponsible Eastern tyrant, savage and implacable against all who do not worship him alone; and the only people for whom he cared were the Jews. Such is the narrow, intense, pitiless patriotism of the Hebrew Old Testament.

Coming to the New Testament, we find remarkable changes. It professes to reveal to us the very Messiah whom the Jews certainly expected, and whom they expect still, and are likely to expect a very long while yet. They were undoubtedly right in rejecting Jesus of Nazareth as this Messiah, even if we allow that there was such an historical person as a nucleus around which the gospel myths gradually clustered. The Bible states that the promised Messiah was to restore the kingdom of the twelve tribes of Israel in glory and prosperity, in their own land of promise; and no one can pretend that Jesus did anything of the sort. He found the remnant of the two tribes, the kingdom of Judah, subject to the Romans, and left them subject to the Romans; and, so far from attempting to deliver his countrymen from the foreign yoke, his only political advice to them was the galling and absurd command: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." No amount of unsubstantial talk about a new Jerusalem in the heavens and a heavenly kingdom can remove this monstrous disparity. Let us do the Jews justice: their promised Messiah has certainly not yet come, and it is gross ignorance and insolence upon the part of the Christians to try to persuade them that he has.

The "higher criticism" has shown that most of the books of the New Testament are not trustworthy, either as

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regards their genuineness or their authenticity. Unaccredited and undated, many of these books were slipped into the Canon, while countless other gospels and epistles, with claims of equal worth or worthlessness, have been excluded. The books which composed this New Testament were first circulated at a time when the critical spirit was non-existent, and when true believers accounted all forgeries in favor of their religion not only permissible, but praiseworthy. The amount of falsification prevalent, which can be demonstrated even now, when so many of the required testimonies are lost, is astounding, and even appalling, to one who newly enters on the inquiry by studying the work of some competent and impartial scholar. Of these falsifications and uncertainties the ordinary Christians know nothing; and the learned Christians, who are thoroughly aware of them, are anything but anxious to point them out to their ignorant brethren.

Setting aside the absurd pretension that the New Testament is a "divinely-inspired" book, we acknowledge that it contains features deserving of admiration. Its two great drawbacks are, that most of its ethical teachings are impracticable, and that its writers held the delusion that the end of the world was at hand. Looking for this daily and hourly, they naturally gave no attention to the improvement of this world by social or political reforms, any more than one would plan repairs in his house if persuaded that it was to be burnt down very soon. Their only care was to be ready for the kingdom of heaven, and for this belief in the Lord Jesus Christ was all-sufficient. Hence, while we find in this book many noble moral sentiments, it is worse than neutral, it is bitterly hostile to that scientific Secular spirit of prudence, free thought, free action, social effort, by which we hope to make a happy life for man on earth. CHARLES WATTS.

TAMPERING WITH TRUTH.

"The profoundest of all infidelity is the fear lest the truth be bad."—*Herbert Spencer.*

AMONGST all disputants, and, in fact, amongst the mass of men in any community, there must be at least some common accepted standards by which differences can be measured. We must—all of us—have a definite starting point; we must build from some definite foundation. Thus, for instance, every man, whether he be an Atheist or a Christian, a Buddhist or a Bonze, accepts the proposition that things which are equal to the same are equal to one another. Each of them accepts, also, the proposition that two and two make four, and that murder is wrong. I merely instance these at random. There are thousands of other propositions we all agree on, and I am strongly inclined to think that the most extreme Atheist and the most devout Christian agree on infinitely more points than they differ on. That, of course, is no reason why we should not continue to investigate and compare our differences, however.

But in addition to the axioms I have enumerated on which we all agree, there is another most important proposition that we all should agree on, and the discussion of which is the object of this article. That proposition is, that demonstrated falsehoods must not be believed, and that the truth, when fully known, must be accepted. This proposition rests on another truth—viz., that the acceptance and the acting on the truth can never be otherwise than good, and can never cause evil or disaster.

Manifestly, it would be impossible to hold any disputation, say, with a man who did not accept the fact that two and two make four. Controversy would be out of the question. In the same way, how is it possible to discuss with a man who, when you have demonstrated the truth, will not accept it, on the ground that the falsehood is more consoling or more beneficial, and that the acceptance of the truth would cause unhappiness or ruin?

An Atheist, say, and a Christian argue on the assumption that when either has convinced the other—by appeals to reasons and axioms which both accept—that other will admit his error, and no longer hold the opinion he previously held. Otherwise the discussion would be objectless.

But there is a school which is making itself very important, and is attracting great attention latterly, which does not apparently accept the proposition that alone renders discussion possible or profitable. The leaders of this school are not, apparently, sure that demonstrated error may not be essential to race progress, and, in fact, that we must discuss and investigate, not with the object of arriving at the truth, but with the object of finding some belief which it is expedient to hold, whether it be true or false.

These remarks have been suggested by the interest excited by two recent books which have been hailed with acclamation by the religious world as apparently the most up-to-date expositions of the basis of religious faith. The books I refer to are Mr. Kidd's *Social Evolution* and Mr. A. J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*. Both of these works are ominous of the line which the defenders of religion are taking up, and it is a line which ought to make sincere religionists anxious for the future of their beliefs. Whether sincere rationalists either can rejoice at the weakness of the religious defence when that weakness is purchased by a wide dissemination of a distrust in truth, is questionable also. For the sincere religionist and the sincere rationalist—in fact, the sincere man of any school of thought—agree that the truth, when found, must be accepted, however disagreeable, or however it may clash with preconceived opinions.

Now, it is not my intention to review at any length the two books I have named, for that has been done already in these columns. But I merely wish to examine the gist of their teaching, in the light of the remarks which I have made. What, then, is the net teaching of Mr. Kidd's book? It is in reality that certain forms of belief fulfil an important function in helping the progress of mankind. As to whether any of these forms of belief are true or false, Mr. Kidd studiously avoids expressing an opinion, whilst some of them—viz., Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Mormonism, etc.—he would undoubtedly concede that he considered false. Here, then, we have put forward and accepted by the religious side, as the best modern "scientific" defence of religion, a book which admittedly discusses the utility of what the author considers to be some falsehoods, whilst it is very possible the author considers all the beliefs whose sociological function he is expounding are not true. The effect of Mr. Kidd's proceeding is naturally to suggest that falsehood may have a use, and a very good use. This is really tampering with truth, and the result of this mode of writing would be to shake all sincerity and the natural instinct in man which finds its highest satisfaction in knowing the truth. We are further, it seems, to pursue our studies into mythology and comparative religion, not by examining the genesis of the religions and seeing how they grew up and by what soil they were nurtured, always being helped in our research by the light of the real knowledge we now possess: we are, according to the fashionable process now in vogue, to begin—and end—by discussing what "function" the religious beliefs we are investigating played in the history of the people who held them. And if we find that a certain nation, under the influence of a certain belief, won military glory or commercial success, we are to write volumes on the "functions" of the said belief, whilst never hinting or concerning ourselves at all with whether it be true or not. Such, by implication, is the style which is suggested by recent developments. We are to take "beliefs"—no matter how absurd or false—as so many positive unchangeable facts, pretending not to see that any function—beneficial or otherwise—which they ever fulfilled depended on the fact that the people who held them held them as part of the truth.

Turning from Mr. Kidd's to Mr. Balfour's work, what is the underlying proposition of *The Foundations of Belief*, really, but an elaboration of Voltaire's *mot* about the necessity of inventing a God? Mr. Balfour is, in fact, so far from being sure about his "foundations" that he tells us he can satisfy himself of the inadequacy of Naturalism much more easily than of the adequacy of any of its opponents. "Man," says Mr. Balfour, "so far as natural science by itself is able to teach us, is no longer the final cause of the universe, the Heaven-descended heir of all the ages." But Mr. Balfour would like still to regard man as the Heaven-descended heir; so, instead of proving that "natural science" is wrong when it tells us he is not, Mr. Balfour says, in effect, "Hang natural science!" The lady

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who writes under the pen-name "John Oliver Hobbes," reviewing Mr. Balfour's book some time back in the *Weekly Sun*, put the case perfectly. "Mr. Balfour," she wrote, "may be compared to the Friar John in Rabelais, who encouraged his followers in going forth to battle by saying: 'I know of a charm by way of prayer that will preserve a man from the violence of guns and all manner of fire-weapons and engines, but it will do me no good, because I do not believe in it.'" That hits off Mr. Balfour to the life. And, indeed, it is noteworthy that these two books —Mr. Kidd's and Mr. Balfour's—should be of such a character. It has been well said that an interesting moment would be that in which a questioner should ask Mr. Balfour: "This religion which you defend, do you really believe it?"

But it is certainly memorable that the two works which have created most stir in religious circles, and have been accepted with acclamation by almost every religionist, from Mr. Stead to the editor of the *Tablet*, should be so questionable in logic and in sincerity. Mr. Kidd—possibly sincerely —tortuously reasoning on the folly of trusting to reason and "deciding by a process of reasoning that a process of reasoning cannot decide the question"; Mr. Balfour spinning a treatise in defence of that in which no one believes Mr. Balfour believes—they are pretty pillars of a faith which through history has been buttressed by ignorance and insincerity at every corner.

The fact really is, that religion has been fairly beaten on the ground of Truth. Putting simply the question, "Is religion *true?*" there is really only one answer that any candid man who examines the evidence can give. And by religion I mean the various beliefs in what is called the "supernatural" and the ceremonies flowing from those beliefs. But, seeing they are vanquished on the question of the truth or falsehood of their creed, the more clever if less sincere religionists are seeking to shift the ground of the dispute to the question, Is religion *expedient?* It is a shuffle that displays their weakness. Of course we know that religion can be beaten too on this ground, for it will not take much to show that, because religion is false, so it is expedient. But for the moment the religionist who adopts the Balfour-Kidd tactics will have a mass of existing prejudice on his side, and many otherwise straightforward people will begin to drug their intellects into the opinion that, after all, even if their childish beliefs be false, they may be very useful—doesn't Mr. Kidd say they keep society together, and doesn't Mr. Balfour argue that they supply the needs of man, and that what supplies the needs of man must be good?

It must be emphasised, however, that this tricking with what ought to be the most solemn truths is treason to the highest and best ideals of man. And it must be known as such and branded as such by everyone who values truth more than a petty victory for a petty creed. The best philosophy that ever sprang from the brain of man is not worth a single lie, and the philosophy which requires lies constantly to support it is a centre of intellectual and moral poison which saps and kills all vitality of thought or sincerity of action. This thing is true, or it is false. We do not want to know is it useful, does it "supply needs," will it "fulfil functions." We cannot hand these beliefs over to be played with by clever dialecticians, or made the subject of dull paradoxes by self-condemned "scientists." As Lowell has asked, in lines peculiarly appropriate to the present case:—

> Think you Truth a farthing rush-light, to be pinched out when you will
> With your deft official fingers, and your politician's skill?

Truth, however, the thing that is, is stronger than all the word-mongers and the argument-jugglers and the time-servers and the priests. And we might say, in conclusion, that the more the mass of men are true to themselves, the less chance will the word-jugglers have. It is an evidence of how far insincerity has eaten into our conventional thought, that the insincere book is praised. When thought is free, and things are known for what they are, politicians on a holiday will find some other recreation than writing books, the effect of which largely is to undermine the natural reverence for truth, and shake the inherent faith in man—the faith shared by every sincere human being—that the knowledge of what is true is right, is good, is useful and can never be an evil, and the instinct which rejects the slander that the race needs, or can ever need, an atmosphere of falsehood to enable it to live. FREDERICK RYAN.

NUDE WORSHIP.

THE thirteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John has an account of a supper at which Jesus Christ entertained his disciples. The same relates that, when he had eaten all he wanted, or all there was in sight, he laid aside his clothes, took a towel and girded himself, and proceeded forthwith to wash the feet of the brethren. Two customs of considerable antiquity are supposed to have their origin in the proceedings of this occasion, one being the communion and the other the washing of feet as a religious ceremony. Now another feature of the evening is found to have had a theological significance—namely, the removal of the clothes. And why not? The master of ceremonies evidently had some reason for appearing in the nude, and, whatever it was, those who cannot understand may at least imitate, as they do in many other instances. Hence it occurs that in Omaha, Neb., a sect has arisen which, while retaining the communion and pedobaptism, has added thereto the bath in the altogether. The New Testament account does not tell whether or not ladies were present at the doings described, but the Omaha sect takes it for granted that they were, and so the brethren and sisters worship together like Adam and Eve, and profess not to be ashamed to do so. Their rites consist of a bath, after which the souls of the worshippers repose together and drink in the love of God, as a devotee describes it to the newspaper men. A peculiar theory of this sect is, that the love of God emanates from neither the heart nor the brain, but has its rise in the bowels and in the adjacent organs of continuity; and they hold that, as brethren and sisters should bear testimony openly to what God has done for them, the nude exhibition and contact become a divine command. There is any amount of scripture to be quoted in support of the practice—twice as much as there is for some religious observances that are enforced by law—Sunday-keeping, for example, which is almost entirely destitute of Biblical authority. In the first place, the only perfect beings the Creator ever had the kindness to locate on this sphere were habituated to nudity all the time they were perfect; and it is plain enough that, if any would become like them, the first necessity is to strip. Again, when David blessed his household he wore no clothes. Likewise Saul, when the spirit of God came upon him, "stripped off his clothes," as the inspired book puts it, and did not resume them for twenty-four hours. Micah, too, believed that, by discarding the habiliments of civilisation, he could appease the divine wrath; and Isaiah walked naked and barefoot for years. Woman had not enough influence in Bible times to affect the destiny of the universe by anything she could do of her own motion; still, if Bathsheba had kept her bloomers on, there would have been no savior along the line of David. Passing thence to Solomon, observe the language of his Song. True, there is no doubt *(shellso)* that here we have Christ addressing his bride, the Church, and the Church responding; but at the same time their descriptions of each other are so minute and circumstantial that we know at once that their observations were not impeded by conventional attire.

The doctrines of this new sect are especially adapted to the purposes of seaside and arboreal camp-meetings, and also to the warmer latitudes, where its missionaries would find the timber peeled ready to hand.

—*Truthseeker.* GEORGE E. MACDONALD.

CHRISTIANITY, which, if our accounts be true, threatened to seduce large numbers of people from their allegiance to the orthodox creed, was practically extinguished among the Jews themselves by the death of Christ. They could not possibly believe in a crucified Messiah. Only a very small band of disciples persisted in adhering to Jesus, justifying their continued faith by asserting that he had risen from the tomb. But it was no longer among the countrymen of Jesus, whom he had specially sought to attach to his person and his doctrine, that this small remnant of his followers could find their converts. Neither then nor at any subsequent time has Christianity been able to wean the Jews from their ancient faith. The number of those who, from that time to this, have abandoned it in favor of the more recent religion has been singularly small.—*Viscount Amberley.*

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GOD AND NATURE.

Professor George John Romanes has left a palinody to the world—viz., *Thoughts on Religion*, edited by Canon Gore. Where the carcase is the vultures appear. He speaks of the religious instincts of humanity, and, treating them as scientific phenomena, he opines that their existence is an argument for an objective reason of religious *fact (!)*, because nature presents us with no analogy for such instincts existing *in vacuo*, and without reference to any reality outside the subject. Nature abhors a vacuum. We know what nature is, but who knows anything of God? They are not connected. "*Les deux ne se disent pas.*" Nature communes with all men, palpably; God communicates with a few favorites, schemers, and mystery-mongers, whose hybrid religions have well-nigh ruined mankind. Nature speaks to us in unmistakable accents; the lessons taught by her are salutary, and readily understood. Not so the so-called words of God. The very language in which they were uttered is a *dead one*. As to a correct translation and interpretation, the most learned men of all denominations differ more or less. The very origin of those so-called revelations—*cui bono?*—is doubtful. Honest thinkers, men not connected with clerical authorities, boldly assert that they are a fraud—a cruel fraud—for they have set millions at variance, and been the cause of diabolical cruelty and bloodshed.

Charles Kroll Laporte.

WHERE ARE THE WICKED?

A serious explosion on the footstool had occurred,
And the flames ran up his garment to the throne;
And though no personal damage was done unto the Lord,
The Recording Angel's office soon was gone.
And when he saw his day-books and his ledgers all ablaze,
He wrung his hands and cried, "What shall I do?
When Javeh comes to know it, the Devil he will raise—
I will go consult good Mo, the crafty Jew."

Soon to earth came the recorder, by advice of Holy Mo,
And visited the graveyards every one,
In hopes that he would find beneath the names of so-and-so
The evil and the good that they had done.
But behold, in ev'ry burial-ground from pole to pole, he found
No wicked person e'er had been interred,
For on ev'ry slab of freestone or marble above ground
Not a word to aught but upright lives referred.

"Alas!" exclaimed the registrar, "where are the wicked dead?
No stone records that they have ever been;
Yet sins by billions I have booked—where are the sinners fled?
Not a trace of their existence have I seen.
It seems to me Jehovah has been cruelly misled;
That wickedness was prevalent on earth;
I've read a trillion tombstones placed above the pious dead,
And every one records their honest worth.

"But where will God's chum, Satan, find the wherewithal to fill
The pit of which Jehovah made him king?
When old Gabe gets out his trumpet and tootles loud and shrill,
And Knox with Mary dance the highland fling?*
The Lord must start creating a diff'rent kind of folk,
And give them to the Devil as his due,
Wherewith the pit that's bottomless to plentifully stock—
That peace may ever reign between the two."

T. Clark.

Nature does not countenance any theory of the original perfection and subsequent degradation of the human race; and the supposition of a frustrated original plan of creation, and of later important endeavors to correct it, is as inconsistent with divine omnipotence and wisdom as the proposed punishment of the human race and the mode devised to save some of them are opposed to justice and morality.—"*Supernatural Religion*," iii., 572.

* John Knox, remonstrating with Mary, Queen of Scots, said: "There'll be nae dancin' in hell." To my thinking, she was a sensible lass to have her reel when she had the chance.

THE WOMAN'S BIBLE.

A Frenchman, having heard of Mrs. Stanton's projected *Woman's Bible*, jumps to the conclusion that it is a new version, and not, as it will be, a commentary. He expects it will read like this:—

"On the sixth day God created woman, and called her name Eve.

"As she was weary in the Garden of Eden, and fell asleep from fatigue under a palm-tree, the Lord took one of her ribs and made of it a man; and he called his name Adam.

"And Eve, when she had looked upon her husband, after she awoke, made a curious grimace which clearly signified, 'What is this fellow doing here?'

"And she added to herself, 'I was alone, and consequently tranquil, in this beautiful garden, all of whose fruits were mine; wherefore has this spoil-sport been sent me? Now I shall have to divide with him. A nice gift, surely!'

"And with a prophetic glance into the future she foresaw the quarrels, the hair-pullings, and the divorces that were henceforth to be the lot of coupled humanity."

A little further along we read this passage, which is at once a revelation and a revolution:—

"Nevertheless, on his part, the man became weary also. He had not yet invented baccarat and horse-racing; but bad instincts, rising perversities, began to agitate him.

"He had been given permission to eat all the savory fruits that Paradise produced in abundance, but he quickly grew tired of all these good things.

"Now he had been forbidden to taste of the fruits of a single tree, an ordinary apple-tree that produced acrid fruit of detestable flavor—which fact caused Adam to frequent the vicinity of that particular tree.

"One day, not being able to restrain himself, he plucked an apple, and, without even offering a single bite to his companion, he ate the whole himself.

"How well we recognise here the vile taste and the abominable egotism of man!

"In punishment for this disobedience they were both banished from the terrestrial paradise, and the innocent Eve suffered for the guilty Adam.

"So, during the ages, the woman shall pay for the pots that the man has broken!"

MIRACLES: LEGENDS OR MYTHS?

Dr. W. S. Crowe, in the *Non-Sectarian*, endeavors to explain the growth of the miraculous in the Christian system. Some of this he attributes to exaggeration, for even natural facts would, by exaggeration, assume a miraculous air; like the feeding of five thousand, or the killing of five hundred thousand chosen men in one day (2 Chron. xiii. 17). Dr. Crowe says: "Solomon made a great sacrifice of sheep and oxen at the dedication of the Temple, but he did not sacrifice a hundred and forty-four thousand. Moses led out a large number of Israelites from Egyptian bondage, but not three millions, and he did not support any such host in the wilderness forty years." He holds that there was a basis of fact at the bottom of the reputed "healings" by Jesus. But it is arguable that the basis of fact lay in the wonders ascribed to the sun. Dr. Crowe observes: "Having credited Jesus with all manner of healing, the idea was completed by crediting him with power to raise the dead." A resurrection was ascribed to all the sun-gods of antiquity, and the very core of the Egyptian religion was that, as the sun came to life after his descent into the underworld, so he had power to raise his worshippers. Dr. Crowe admits, in so many words, that "the story of Samson is an awkward Hebrew version of the universal sun-myth. His long, strong hair represents the burning rays of the summer sun. The Delilah, in whose lap he dallies, is the pleasant autumn, the Indian summer, emerging from which he enters the cold winter—his locks shorn, his strength gone. There he was in prison until his hair grew again, when he broke down the temple of the wintry ice."

Now, may not the gospel story be a Christian version of the universal sun-myth? The turning water into wine, the feeding of multitudes, the walking on the water, the descent into Hades, and the resurrection from the dead, while sheer nonsense if related of a human personality, as Dr. Crowe believes Jesus Christ to have been, are both natural, and, in a sense, true, when related of the sun.

MacSweeney Secundus.

There can be but little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

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ACID DROPS.

The *Methodist Times* notes, as we also noted, that Sir William Harcourt was turned out of Derby by Alderman Bemrose, President of the Young Men's Christian Association. Now the *Methodist Times* regards Sir William Harcourt as a Christian statesman. How, then, is the Derby disaster to be explained? Why, easily. Alderman Bemrose is not a Methodist: he is a Churchman. That accounts for his iniquity. How these Christians love one another!

Before the elections Mr. Hughes's paper chortled over the number of Methodists who were in the field under the Liberal banner. Alas! they have nearly all been defeated; and the "sacred cause" is under a cloud. And the worst of it that it is too late for praying. The mischief is done, and God Almighty himself cannot alter it.

The *Weekly Mercury* thinks the reduction of Sir George Trevelyan's majority at Glasgow "shows how feeling goes in the North against the party of Separation and Secularism." Fancy Sir William Harcourt belonging to the party of Secularism! Who would have thought it?

Mr. John Morley has lost his seat for Newcastle, and we are sorry for it. He is a man of intellectual distinction, and the House of Commons will be the poorer for his absence. But as Mr. Morley was to be defeated he might as well have fallen without a shadow upon his honesty. He is himself a Freethinker, and is of course opposed to political and social disabilities on account of religious or irreligious belief. But when he was heckled on the subject of the Blasphemy Laws and Liberty of Bequest he evaded the questions. Perhaps he thought it best to say nothing on such a ticklish subject, without meaning to desert the cause of freedom when it came to voting in Parliament. Yet he has lost his seat after all, so that he gained nothing by not being perfectly straightforward.

Mr. Fred Hammil, the Labor candidate at Newcastle, gave satisfactory answers to the questions put to him. He plainly declared his wish to see the Blasphemy Laws abolished altogether. No doubt there were some Freethinkers who voted for Mr. Hammil in consequence. And who can blame them for supporting candidates who recognise the iniquity of depriving them of the common rights of citizenship? If the Liberal party will keep Freethinkers outlaws until they make themselves "a nuisance," they will be forced to make themselves a nuisance. If it is useless to appeal to honesty, we must appeal to fear.

Mr. John Burns just managed to save his seat at Battersea. At one time he was a Secularist, and we do not know that he has ever renounced his old opinions. It seems to us, therefore, that Mr. Burns ought to be called upon to make some little stand for religious liberty as embodied in the "Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill." The Battersea Branch of the National Secular Society should really interview him on the subject. It is their duty to do so first. If they neglect it, outsiders may have to perform it for them.

Mr. James Rowlands has lost his seat in East Finsbury. Many years ago he was a frequenter of the Hall of Science, and we presume he has still some affection for Freethought, but it is of a very platonic character. He did not even avail himself of Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Act. Instead of affirming at the table of the House of Commons, as the new law allowed, he went up and took the oath. Yet he is called a "sturdy" Radical.

There never seemed to us to be much "sturdiness" about the London Radical members. Still, we did not weep over the spectacle. Courage is really the rarest of virtues. It does not require very much of it to go with a big crowd. True courage comes in when a man plants himself firmly on a conviction, and stands alone, if need be, against the world. At any rate, there is no particular courage in risking nothing.

London Radicalism is at a very low ebb just now, and it will probably ebb still lower unless we get a revival of the old Bradlaugh spirit. Men like Stuart, Cremer, and Rowlands are all very well in their way, but they are not heroic enough to excite enthusiasm in the people. Radicalism was sturdy in the old days, when it was headed by Freethinkers, with Bradlaugh at the top of all, inspiring the rest with his fine mixture of sagacity and boldness.

"Q" has been asking in the *British Weekly* why it is that for Burns Scotsmen everywhere prepare after-dinner speeches, and set up images and sing and cheer and even fall below tables. "Q" thinks they have a greater writer in Sir Walter Scott. "Deas Cromarty" ventures to say "it is the religious note in Burns that fuses and kindles all the rest, that makes him the voice of the race at its best." We venture to affirm the contrary. It is the note of humanity, the simple pathos and sublime of human life, the freedom from all cant and hypocrisy, the plain absence of all the humbug which goes to make up religion, and especially Scotch religion, which makes hearts feel akin to Burns as vibrate in sympathy with his words of melody all over the globe. Burns is not a religious, but a liberating, influence, and the Burns worship is secretly disliked by the men of God, who feel it has helped to emancipate the once clergy-cowed Scotch from their influence.

Dr. Parker, in a recent sermon at the City Temple, said he accepted the Evolution theory. He did not explain how this was reconciled with the stories of the creation of woman and the Fall. He combated the notion, which he attributed to "some men of science," that man was humbled and degraded by the animals that had preceded him in the process of evolution. He did not say who the "some men" were. And then there are some men who think with Huxley that it is the scriptural story, rather than the story of nature, which is really degrading.

Dr. Griffith John, a missionary in China, says: "It is a fact that cannot be controverted that both the appetite and the demand for opium in China have been created by the introduction of the foreign article." Again: "The opium trade has been forced by England upon the Chinese, and that in direct opposition to the moral convictions of the nation, as well as the honest and long-continued resistance of the Government." This must be pleasant reading to English Christians who send missionaries to convert the heathen Chinese.

"The Chinese," says Dr. John, "call us devils, and when I think of this unprincipled and destructive trade I cease to wonder at it." Well, the "devils" are Bible-readers and true-blue Christians.

"With unbelief," says Dr. Pulsford, "hardness of heart is always associated." Yes, in Dr. Pulsford's mind; but his mind is not the measure of the universe. One is tempted to exclaim to these Pharisaic preachers, Doubtless ye are the people, and virtue shall perish with you!

"The world can stand anything but a fire-baptised church. It can stand logic and philosophy, and oratory, and music; but it cannot stand plain, common Gospel truth, red hot." This appears in the *Methodist Times*, and we hope it is true.

Curate Jones has been found by a jury to have committed adultery with Mrs. Worrall, and Mr. Justice Lawrence has granted a *decree nisi* in favor of the husband, with custody of the children. According to the evidence in court, one meeting between the guilty pair was in a churchyard. Curate Jones, after osculating his inamorata, went off to conduct divine service.

"The name of God has fenced about all crime with holiness." This line from Shelley's *Queen Mab* would be a text for an eloquent sermon. How true it is let the history of persecution and oppression bear witness. We see an illustration of it in the remarks of a certain Russian paper on the frightful assassination of Stambuloff, the Bulgarian statesman, who, while wishing to cultivate friendly relations with Russia, was anxious to maintain the independence of his own country. Stambuloff was murdered at a time when a Bulgarian deputation was approaching the Czar, and the Russian paper discerned in this coincidence the manifest hand of God!

Mr. Balfour (not Jabez, but A. J.) recently congratulated a Lancashire town on having escaped a great danger. That danger was the threatened establishment of a School Board. So much for the nephew, who leads the Tories in the House of Commons. And now let us turn to the uncle, who leads the Tories in the House of Lords. Lord Salisbury told the Church party, only a few weeks ago, that it was their duty to capture the School Boards. Putting the two declarations together, we have a clear view of the Tory policy in regard to education. First, keep up the voluntary schools by hook or crook, and prevent the introduction of Board schools; secondly, when Board schools can no longer be staved off, pervert them to the advantage of the Church. There is no humbug about this policy. It is plain, straightforward, and unscrupulous.

Probably the Tories will use their majority in the House of Commons, without any fear of the House of Lords, to endow the voluntary schools out of the rates as well as out of the taxes. Meanwhile it is well to note what is going on in the London School Board. An effort is being made to let the schoolrooms *free* to ministers who wish to give the children religious instruction out of school hours. A motion to that effect has been made, and, although it was lost, it

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may be successful if it is introduced again when the Tories are settled down in office.

It is said that it takes more than three generations to get savagery out of the blood. This seems illustrated by a new religion started in Fiji, of which an account, evidently by Mr. Andrew Lang, is given in the *Daily News* of July 22. The prophet-founder calls himself "He who speaks once," and runs on well-worn lines. He promises immortality in heaven to those who believe in him, and lands here below to those who fight for him. He sells the boon of eternal life for whales' teeth, the rates varying from ten shillings to two pounds' worth. He thus financed his religious movement, whereof the doctrines were a blend of Fiji myth and Bible history, now for the first time correctly interpreted.

His story is that two unpronounceable Fijian heroes went to the white man's country, where they were named Jehovah and Jesus. They were now about to return, drive the whites into the sea, and redistribute white men's property—a most alluring "programme." Of course there is a hell for white heretics and unbelievers. Mr. Lang says: "The whole movement resembles that of the Hau-Haus in New Zealand, who made a religion (like the Covenanters) out of 'the fightingest parts of the Bible,' and gave a great deal of trouble." For our part, we discern a somewhat close resemblance between the new Fiji religion and primitive Christianity.

Mr. Gladstone, and, following him, many others, have spoken in praise of the Christian piety of the late Dr. Andrew Clark, who, we believe, was a good man, as well as an eminent physician. But now the Rev. Edward White writes to the *British Weekly*, pointing out that possibly Mr. Gladstone was not aware of his profound belief in the necessity of reconstructing the Christian faith, on what he believed to be the primitive belief of Christadelphianism. That is to say, Dr. Clark did not believe in Natural Immortality, but that it was a gift of Christ; nor in a personal devil or everlasting hell, but in everlasting destruction for all who do not attain immortality in Christ. This the Rev. Edward White calls "more Scriptural lines on the question of Immortal Life." All we say is, that the person who thinks he is going to be immortal, while the mass of people are going to be annihilated, must have cheek second only to those who believe they themselves are to have an immortality of bliss, while others have an immortality of woe.

The *Popular Science Monthly*, writing on "The Passing of Torture," says "King Menelek, who is said to have recently condemned a treacherous page to terrible sufferings by mutilations and exposure in the wilderness, calls himself a Christian. The Inquisition was in full blast under the ægis of the Church only two or three centuries ago, and *autos-da-fe* were festivals in Madrid down to 1780. Prisoners convicted of certain crimes were broken on the wheel only a bare hundred years ago in France." The *P. S. M.* does not mention that it was Voltaire who more than any other man contributed to the passing of torture from European law.

T. Ubsdell, a newsagent at Clacton-on-Sea, is determined to save Christianity, if one man can do it. He had been innocently supplying a customer with the *Freethinker*, but on learning the character of this publication—which, if he had any sense worth speaking of, he might have guessed from its title—he wrote to his customer as follows: "After this week I shall not be able to supply the *Freethinker*, as I find that it advocates principles that I cannot assist in circulating." We congratulate T. Ubsdell on the strength of his convictions. It is not every Christian who would sacrifice a farthing a week for his principles. We are sorry, however, that we cannot congratulate T. Ubsdell on the strength of his intelligence. It takes a fool in a newsagent's shop to see that he is responsible for the opinions of the various publications on his counter.

Our American contemporary, the *Progressive Thinker*, prints the following passage from a recent sermon by the Rev. A. A. Taylor, D.D., Chicago: "Hell is exactly fifty-two miles below the level of the sea, and my knowledge is based on the Bible, as Christ spoke of hell being below, and not above. The Bible also says that the sun moves around the earth, and does not say that the earth is round; for that reason I believe the earth to be flat; I have about concluded that there are many suns, and that we have a new one every day." Some Chicago asylum is evidently about to receive a new inmate.

Sabbatarianism is growing in Chicago. Barbers' shops are now closed on Sunday. But hair grows on human faces all the same, and the barbers are mocking the law by going round to their customers' houses and shaving them for twenty-five cents.

Rev. W. E. Broadhurst, pastor of a Methodist Episcopal Church in Arkansas City, being accused of immorality, has thrown up the sponge. "It is due to the public," he says, "that I make this confession. I am a fallen preacher, after twenty-one years of acceptable work in the Methodist Episcopalian Church. I have resisted thousands of temptations, but was caught at last." Parson Broadhurst is like old father Adam—"The woman tempted me, and I did eat." He hints that the women of his church were always after him. So much for the ethical value of Christian preaching! And so much for the gallantry of this pious tomcat!

"How long, O Lord, how long?" asks a writer in the *Twentieth Century* with reference to the wretched condition of so many of the workers. Well, we guess it will last as long as men are foolish enough to ask that question.

The reactionary Education Bill, put forward by the, for a while, triumphant clericals in Belgium, is occasioning much excitement there. When M. de Barlet, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, said he pitied parents who let their children wallow in a slough of Atheism, such a tumult arose in the Chamber that he was forced to resume his seat. Those who attend the Freethinkers' Congress at Brussels will have an opportunity of seeing how unfortunate are the children who wallow in the slough of Atheism, for a review of the infant troops of Freethought will be one of the features of the gathering.

We hear on every side that the Church has shown itself thoroughly partisan in politics, and that clergymen who once posed as Liberals have been working might and main for the winning side. This is all very well while it lasts; but when fortune changes the Church may find she has made a mistake in taking sides, and, if now triumphant with the winners, may some day be abased with the losers.

Father Joseph, a Capuchin friar, of the Church militant, has been in the habit of going about preaching in the South of France, and attracting attention to his open-air sermons by firing off a cannon. He has had the misfortune of killing a man therewith, and the too enterprising preacher has been fined two hundred francs for "homicide through imprudence."

Pilgrimages are not played out in Italy. More than ten thousand travelled from the province of Lucca, headed by their archbishop, to the shrine of the Madonna at Montenevo, where they made rich offerings in gold and silver. Ordinary waxworks are out of the running when priests take to the show trade; and they all are taking to it, more or less.

Dr. J. T. Reece, a medical practitioner at Ystradgyalas, Breconshire, had been called upon to attend a case of burning in a neighboring village, and, as he reached the top of the hill, he was struck and killed by lightning. Dr. Reece, and the horse he rode, were both discovered lying dead on the summit of the hill by the parent of the patient whom the deceased was about to attend. Providence thus interfered to thwart an errand of humanity. No wonder the old farmer said, "Drat that Providence!"

F. H. Groom, in *Two Suffolk Friends*, tells a good story of an old native who thought it "wrong of fooks to go up in a ballune, as that fare (seemed) so bumptious to the Almighty." It looked like an attempt to poach on the Deity's preserves.

G. W. N. Yost, the inventor of the typewriter, according to the *New York Herald*, got into the hands of a mejum, one Henry A. Rogers, who held out hopes of type-written communications from the spirit world. The result is that Yost is poor, and believed to be daft, while the mejum has a sumptuous house in West Fifty-Second-street. The *Herald* says Yost is as certain about "the lies which Rogers has told him as he is that there is a heaven." After all, Rogers only plays a certain phase of the racket which is the common game of all priests and charlatans.

An American bishop, B. Turner, has recently written at length in favor of the theory that Solomon was a colored man. We have not seen the work, but it certainly will prove curious reading. Possibly he attributes the words of the Canticles, "I am black, but comely," to Solomon, and not to his lady-love. King Solomon's mines, it is well known, are situated in Africa.

Christian Gent.—"What is your reduction for clergymen on books?" Shopkeeper—"Twenty per cent. Are you a clergyman?" Christian Gent.—"Not yet, but I expect to be. I'm half through my course at the theological seminary." Shopkeeper—"Then you can have ten per cent. Half clergyman, half reduction."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 28, Milton Hall, Hawley-Crescent, Kentish Town: 7.30, "The Bible and Local Veto."

August 4, Newcastle; 11, 18, and 25, St. James's Hall, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell; 18 and 25, Milton Hall, London.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

W. Strassheim.—Your letter arrived too late for notice in last week's *Freethinker*. Nor would a notice have been of any use, as the Newcastle polling was on Wednesday and our publishing day is Thursday. See this week's "Acid Drops."

J. Burt.—St. James's Hall is not in the centre of London, but it is remarkably accessible. 'Buses run from Piccadilly-circus to almost every part of London.

W. Stephens (Northampton).—As you are a reader of the *Freethinker*, it is best to answer your query in this column, instead of by post, as you desire. Mr. Foote has several times been questioned on this matter. Some months ago Mr. Johnson wrote to ask whether the rumor "all over Northampton" was true, that Mr. Foote was coming down to speak in support of Mr. Harford. The same rumor was "all over Northampton" during the recent election, and a friend of one of the candidates was commissioned to find out whether it was true. Mr. Foote has never been asked to speak for any candidate at Northampton, either by letter or otherwise. This was the answer Mr. Foote returned to Mr. Johnson; and this is the answer he makes now. All the non-Tory candidates were in favor of repealing the Blasphemy Laws; and, in the circumstances, it is difficult to see how Mr. Foote—as a Secularist—could discriminate between them.

G. T. Gibbons.—Close your ears to death-bed stories in Christian tracts. You will find the real facts about Paine's last hours in our *Infidel Death-Beds*. The story that he said the devil helped him to write the *Age of Reason* is one of the many lies told about this great Freethinker. The Christians, who could not answer him when living, slandered him when dead. It is a way they have.

E. G. Taylor.—We note that the Christian who, a few weeks ago, attend an obscene libel against Colonel Ingersoll has publicly apologised in the Manchester Secular Hall, and expressed his regret at having been misled by the wretch who originated that convicted libel on the Hall of Science.

A. Le Lievre, who has read Mr. Watts's "admirable articles" on Cromwell, points out that, according to Macaulay, the great Protector not only tried to obtain the readmission of the Jews to England, but actually permitted them to build a synagogue in London "in spite of the strong opposition of jealous traders and fanatical theologians."

L. Levine (Charleston).—Hearty thanks and greetings. We now exchange with the *Blue Grass Blade*, which we hope will flourish.

A. B. Price.—We have seen the statement again and again in the public press that Sir William Harcourt is not a teetotaler. As we do not know him personally, we are confined to public sources of information. If you are dissatisfied on the point, why not write to Harcourt yourself?

P. H. Echlin.—No good advertising in that way. Apply to Mr. Forder, who will find you a customer, if anyone can.

J. Gatley.—See paragraph. Thanks.

T. Wise.—We agree with all you say.

T. E. M.—Confucius taught the golden rule in China; so did Isocrates in Greece. The *substance* of it was taught by Buddha, and by most other ancient moralists.

J. H.—The Catholic Church is *one church* all over the world. Your question must therefore be answered in the negative.

H. Bryceson, late of Cook's-road, Walworth, is requested to send his address to William Simons, 12 Wolsey-road, Mildmay-park, N.

W. Waker.—It is a nonsensical evasion to say that the Church of England is not State-paid. All its property is held under a legal—that is, a parliamentary—tenure. Then look at *tythes*. Are *they* voluntary offerings? They are exactable by the same means as rates and taxes. We intend to deal with the whole subject shortly.

R. Hardy.—We can scarcely see the material for a paragraph in our special line of criticism.

J. Roberts (Liverpool) writes: "I hope Mr. Wise will not consider me tediously pertinacious when I ask him why he has not replied to the question whether opponents at his meetings have, or have not, been demanded their names and *addresses*. If he should now reply in the affirmative, we in Liverpool will know what reason to assign for his unconscionable delay."

J. G. Bartram.—Mr. Foote will have pleasure in "naming" the child at Newcastle. Send one of the lecture-bills when printed. We hope that sentiment, however justifiable, will not be allowed to stand in the way of the debate between Mr. Watts and the Rev. A. J. Walrond. All of us should keep an eye on the greater good, and subordinate our personal feelings.

Meredith (Birmingham).—Tuesday afternoon is too late. Still, we are obliged to you for the trouble you took.

W. T. Anderson (Sunderland) wishes to correct a statement in our last issue. It was not members of the Anti-Infidel League who disturbed Mr. Foote's meeting, but members of the Anti-Infidel Association. We should be sorry to do anyone an injustice, and we cheerfully publish the correction; but we wish these two bodies were more clearly distinguished.

James Garrow.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

H. Diner.—You do not seem to understand our paragraph. Satire must not be read like an affidavit.

Papers Received.—Progressive Thinker—Light of Truth—Light—Two Worlds—Blue Grass Blade—New York Tribune—New York Sun—Brighton Examiner—New York Herald—Accrington Advertiser—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Truthseeker—Morning—Twentieth Century—Independent Pulpit—Western Figaro—Glasgow Evening Times—Single Tax—Liberator—Progressive Thinker—Kew Mercury—Freethought Ideal—Isle of Man Times—Public Opinion—Crescent—Poet.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favor be marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

The three Sunday evening lectures I have arranged to deliver at St. James's Hall, on August 11, 18, and 25, are now being advertised, and Miss Vance has the tickets ready for sale. They do not allow a charge of less than one shilling for any assembly at St. James's Hall; and as the experiment will cost over twenty pounds, I must take reasonable precautions against a loss. The seats will be one shilling, two shillings, and five shillings. But for the sake of our own people I have had *course* tickets printed at the price of eighteenpence and three shillings.

It must be distinctly understood that no money can be taken at the doors, and I am not sure at present that it will be possible to have any free seats. Those who mean to attend for certain should secure tickets in good time.

I know that August is not the best time of the year for such an experiment, but the hall is engaged by others right through the winter, and I had to take the opportunity then or lose it altogether. May I therefore ask my London friends to make a special effort to fill the hall on these three Sunday evenings? It will be a kind of demonstration. While I am speaking in one part of the building the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes will be speaking in another part; and that in itself should be a kind of attraction.

One great advantage of this experiment will be that we may approach the proprietors or lessees of other halls afterwards with a better prospect of success. It will tend to break down prejudice against us and our propaganda.

While the pen is in my hand I venture to refer to the "Honorarium Fund" opened by a special committee for the National Secular Society's President. It would be silly to affect an ignorance of this matter. But all I have to say about it is this. I should not like to see the committee's appeal in the *Freethinker* for a long succession of issues. Those who intend to subscribe might do so promptly, so that I may look at my own paper without feeling uncomfortable.

G. W. FOOTE.

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THE HONORARIUM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

It will be remembered that at the last Conference of the National Secular Society a letter was read from Mr. George Anderson, suggesting that its President "should be recouped for his loss of time and money in serving the party's interests." Accordingly, the Conference appointed a Committee, consisting of Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Robert Forder, and Mr. George Ward, to consider the best plan to be adopted for carrying out the suggestion. The Committee met and drew up a circular, which probably most of the readers of the *Freethinker* have seen.

This Committee unanimously passed the following resolution, proposed by Mr. George Anderson, and seconded by Mr. George Ward: "That the sum to be paid the President of the N.S.S. for this year be £100, to be confirmed, augmented, or diminished each year by vote of the Conference."

By this resolution it was the desire of the Committee to carry out the object, for which it had been appointed by the congress of delegates, in the most satisfactory manner both as to terms and amount, leaving the Society to act yearly in future as circumstances might dictate.

It is to be hoped that what has been done will meet with the approval of the Secular party, and that its members will subscribe the required amount as promptly as possible.

CHARLES WATTS.

[Subscriptions can be sent to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., or paid to any member of the Committee.]

Subscriptions Received:—

Already acknowledged, £41 12s.

Per R. Forder: J. Denham, 2s. 6d.; D. Young, 1s.; Bolton Branch, 14s. 6d.; R. Green, 5s.; S. J. W., 5s.; J. Downing, £1; Seventeen Stone, 2s. 6d.

Per George Anderson: W. Cabell, 10s. 6d.; A. Stanley, 5s.

Per Miss Vance: W. H. Stevens, £1 1s.; C. Shepherd, 2s.; G. H., 2s. 6d.; W. Johnson, 5s.; G. W., 2s.; C. B., 10s.; A. F., 2s. 6d.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the heavy rain, an excellent audience met at Milton Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Secularism and the New Parliament." Many questions were asked in response to the chairman's invitation. This evening (July 28) Mr. Foote lectures again at Milton Hall, his subject being "The Bible and Local Veto." Freethinkers in the district should try to bring some of their Christian friends to this lecture, in order that they may learn how much the Bible is a friend of Temperance.

Mr. Foote lectures at Newcastle-on-Tyne next Sunday (August 4). On that occasion he will formally open the Branch's new hall in Northumberland-street. Local friends who have promised to subscribe towards the expenses of this meeting-place are requested to remit to the secretary forthwith.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures this Sunday evening (July 28) at North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road. Our South London friends should rally in full force and give Mr. Watts a good reception.

Mr. W. B. Thompson, a "Secular" member of the Gillingham School Board, has just had a good stand-up fight with his clerical colleagues. The Rev. R. Morris, the chairman, moved that the Board schools should be opened and closed with hymn and prayer, and grace or doxology be sung at the dismissal before noon. In his sky-pilotship's opinion, this would give a good moral tone, and also fit the scholars for their secular education. This was seconded by the Rev. W. H. Bowers, and partially supported by two other members. Mr. Thompson, however, protested. He maintained that there were other people besides Christians to be considered. He moved as an amendment that parents should be notified that the attendance of their children at religious instruction was purely voluntary. This was defeated by the casting vote of the chairman. Mr. Thompson then moved that one moral lesson a week should be given to the children. Parson Morris couldn't very well oppose that, so it was carried unanimously. Let us hope the moral lesson will counteract what Mr. Thompson rightly objected to, on ethical and æsthetical grounds, in many of the hymns taught to children.

Referring to the matter of heckling the candidates about the blasphemy laws, the *Two Worlds* says: "Reports reach us from all sides of satisfactory replies to the questions put to the would-be Parliamentary representatives. This matter *must* be *forced* upon the attention of Parliament. We hope to deal more fully with it in an early issue. Last week's *Freethinker* had a valuable article and series of questions on the same lines."

Mr. James Pender, M.P. for Mid-Northamptonshire, gave a favorable reply to all our "Questions for Parliamentary Candidates," and stated his willingness to support a Bill, no matter by whom introduced, with the object of securing religious liberty for all. This pledge was given at a Conservative meeting.

Mr. G. J. Warren wrote to all the candidates for the various divisions of the Tower Hamlets with respect to the Blasphemy Laws and Liberty of Bequest. Out of the fourteen only three replied, though stamped, directed envelopes were enclosed for the purpose. Mr. James Haysman (Mile End), Mr. J. W. Benn (St. George's), and Mr. W. H. Dickenson (Stepney) gave satisfactory answers. Unfortunately, neither of them secured a seat. Better luck to them next time.

Both the Liberal (A. H. Pollen) and Unionist (E. W. Byrne) candidates at Walthamstow agreed that legacies ought not to be withheld from Secular Societies. Mr. Byrne, however, most illogically said he could not support the Liberty of Bequest Bill; while Mr. Pollen thought that if God was spoken of irreverently, the law ought to put a stop to it. Of course Mr. Pollen meant *his* God.

Mr. A. M. Latham, Liberal candidate in the Altrincham division, answered all our "Questions for Candidates" satisfactorily, and added: "I am in favor of the fullest religious equality."

Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, in South-West Bethnal Green, wrote to Mr. J. G. Neate: "I am in favor of the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, and of the granting of Liberty of Bequest."

It is proposed in *Nature* that a national memorial to the late Professor Huxley shall be placed in the Natural History Gallery of the British Museum, South Kensington, where it will be beside the statues of Darwin and of Sir Richard Owen. A meeting has also been held to forward a memorial at the Charing Cross Hospital and Medical School, with which Huxley was connected in early life.

A very favorable report and balance-sheet were adopted at the half-yearly meeting of the Westminster Branch. Mr. W. Tanner was elected chairman in place of Mr. H. J. Stace, and it was unanimously agreed to present the late chairman with a written scroll as a mark of appreciation. Mr. Debley was elected delegate to the L.S.F., and it was decided that the Branch's Annual Excursion be by brake to Epping Forest on Sunday, August 25; tickets 3s.

A special entertainment and dance will take place this Sunday evening (July 28) at the Battersea Secular Hall, to raise funds for the Branch. Tickets are 3d. and 6d. each. Help is greatly needed just now, and members whose subs. are due are notified of the fact.

The Belgian Freethinking writer, Charles Lemonnier, is engaged on a work, entitled *La Légende de la Vie*. It will endeavor to give a picture of the progress of mankind onwards from the Stone Age.

The Freethought Ideal is a bright little paper published at Portland, Kansas. It announces itself as "the cheapest paper of its kind on earth." The price of a single copy is five cents. Our contemporary does not seem to know that the *Freethinker* is a much larger paper, and is published at four cents.

"Atheist" writes to the *Rangoon Times* taunting the ministers of religion with having failed to take up the gauntlet thrown down by "Non-Credo" in that paper. He says: "The weakness and absurdity of their cause are painfully dawning upon Christians. They too are beginning to doubt the divine plan of salvation, and are afraid to press the question home in their time. That the system is a doomed one their very evasion of the question tacitly implies."

The program of the International Congress of Freethinkers, to be held at Brussels September 22, 23, and 24,

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is now issued. The sittings of the Congress will take place in the Grand Hall of the *Loge des Amis Philanthropes*, 10 Rue du Persil, commencing at ten o'clock each day. The subjects have already been announced. The serious proceedings will be diversified with a children's *fête* organised by the *Cercle des Soirees Populaires Rationalistes*, and will close with a banquet to the foreign delegates.

Mr. S. P. Putnam lectured on Sunday at Birmingham. Mr. G. J. Holyoake presided at the morning and evening meetings, and Mr. Ridgway in the afternoon. We hear that the Birmingham friends were highly delighted with Mr. Putnam's lectures. Some of them went with him on Monday to Stratford-on-Avon, the birth-place of the mightiest genius that ever lived on this planet. Our American visitor is of course enraptured. He has seen something that, in a certain sense, beats Niagara; and we may look out for an eloquent letter in the *Truthseeker*.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (June 22).

My second day's drive is to Bettwys-y-Coed. We leave at 10 o'clock in the morning, and return at 6 in the evening. It is a forty-one-mile journey, and the same vast and wonderful views constantly charm the eye, only they are not really the same, for our road lies in a different direction. Again we see the old castle of Conway, Queen Elizabeth's palace, "Pean Mawr"; the Suspension and Tubular bridges, the estuary and Carnarvonshire mountains. Beyond Conway we wheel on a different course. We climb great hills, and thence proceed forward on a pleasant and elevated road, whence for fifty miles the eye can gaze upon the most stupendous scenery, conspicuous mountain peaks, whose names I cannot attempt to spell; tablelands and valleys, lovely lakes, and the winding glimmer of the river Conway, here and there. Sometimes the green forest wholly encircles our way, and the most brilliant emerald hues toss and roll away in the arching distance. Then we come to villages, nameless evermore, until more vowels are invented to fill in the battlemented consonants of the Welsh language, which I believe is the original language. Indeed, it does, in its rhythm and rolling pronunciation, fitly re-echo the wild and wondrous scenery from which it sprang. The Welsh language is a musical language, adapted to poetic fire; and if you could only pronounce the names of its mountains and villages, they would be most suggestive and beautiful sounds. About 50,000 people still speak the language, and it has a noble and charming literature.

Bettwys-y-Coed is reached about noon, and we have a vigorous appetite. By this time all the passengers are well acquainted, and we make a jolly company. I do not so far find any unsociability among English tourists. We were all strangers when we began this journey, but were ready to join in for friendly intercourse, and at the close greetings were exchanged and hopes for further acquaintance. I find the same hospitality and frankness here that I do in the great West of our own country. Of course I only meet the travelled public. They are generous and polite. If they know you are from America, they give you a hearty welcome, and treat you as their cousin from across the waters.

We stay at the Royal Oak Hotel for dinner, once the headquarters of David Cox, the famous artist. In the year 1847 he painted a sign-board for the hotel, which now hangs in the coffee-room, an object of great interest and a beautiful painting. It was the occasion of a remarkable lawsuit. When the hotel and its appurtenances were sold a few years since, the party selling endeavored to take away this picture as private property. The party buying claimed that the painting, being the sign-board of the hotel, was one of the appurtenances. The court sustained this view, and the picture, now valued at £4,000, is a part of the freehold of the hotel.

Swallow Falls is a beautiful place. The falls are not large at this season of the year, but the almost flying waters dash in silvery sheen over wild, precipitous rocks in infinite variety of motion; while the foliage of a magnificent forest on either side adorns the pathway of the bird-like cataract.

On the return journey we take the Denbighshire side of the Conway River; but time will not permit me to delineate the picturesque views that, with still different forms and colors, unfolded in panoramic beauty.

On Thursday morning I take the Marine drive about great Orme's Head, a vast promontory towering seaward from Llandudno. One of the finest highways in the kingdom has been carved, we might say, about this mighty abutment, hundreds of feet above the rolling waters. The sea, the islands, the mountains, the villages, castles, and dwellings, as you ascend and curve around this enormous crag, gather and multiply upon the view. A circuit of almost immeasurable expanse is filled like a sparkling cup with grandeur and delight.

At one o'clock the same day I take the boat for Menai Straits and Bridge. The bridge is a stupendous structure, from which a view can be obtained of the straits, of the surrounding country, the village itself, the great railway bridge, and other objects of interest. It was a mosaic of exquisite beauty compared with the vastness and grandeur of former scenes.

The same evening I return to Liverpool. I am met at the wharf by my good friends, Mr. Lawrence Small, Mr. John Roberts, and others, and we spend a happy evening together, not in Liverpool, but in Bootle, a town of about 60,000 people, which adjoins Liverpool, and which Liverpool is trying to incorporate into itself. It is really a part of Liverpool, but prefers its municipal independence. Mr. and Mrs. Small give a cordial reception to the Secular Pilgrim. There was a feast of reason and a flow of soul among these radical comrades. Mr. and Mrs. Tarleton and Mr. Roger Pride join the circle.

I arrive at Bristol Saturday afternoon and meet London friends, etc. The delegates to the National Conference are coming in, and there promises to be a notable gathering of the clans, the colors of Scotland mingling with those of England. I become acquainted with friends whom I expect to meet further on in the campaign.

Sunday morning the Conference comes together. They do differently here from what we do in America. They hold one day instead of three days. The morning and afternoon sessions are devoted to business, and the evening to speeches. I find the same elements here as elsewhere—plenty of individualism, some crankiness, hobbies occasionally, but, on the whole, frank sincerity, honesty of purpose, and when a question is settled a general determination to abide by the result and make the best of it. The main differences of opinion were about methods, and these will always occur. There was the largest latitude of discussion. Every one had a chance to talk. Quite a number of plans were presented, all of which received due consideration. From the beginning it was evident that Mr. Foote had the fullest confidence of the delegates, and there was no question as to his ability and fitness, or his heroic and generous devotion, and there was no thought of electing anyone else as President of the National Secular Society. A difference of opinion existed as to the best way of doing things. But Mr. Foote is one of those who is always ready to receive suggestions. He is open to conviction, and ready to accept any feasible proposition. He is exceedingly affable in the chair—patient, allowing the utmost liberty, while keeping strictly to the matter in hand. So that a most successful Conference was held, a large amount of business transacted, and amicable conclusions reached. By the wise and courageous and, at the same time, genial administration of President Foote, the National Secular Society is in a better and stronger position than ever to-day. It fronts the future with a noble captain and a gallant company. My staunch comrade of the American campaign, Charles Watts, is also side by side with Mr. Foote in this strenuous combat. No one could be a more able and brilliant supporter than Charles Watts. He is growing somewhat grey in the cause, but he has all the sparkle and vigor of youth, with the wisdom and the amplitude of age.

The society also did honor to itself by re-electing Robert Forder as honorary secretary. He has been a most faithful worker, an eloquent ally with Bradlaugh, Foote, and Watts. I am glad that women are also in the Freethought ranks, and willing and capable for frontier labors. Miss Edith M. Vance, the assistant secretary, has won the heartiest commendations of English Freethinkers by her loyalty, her activity, and her excellent business qualifications. Miss Annie Brown, secretary of the London Secular Federation, has shown herself a reliable worker in placing that organisation out of debt and upon a firm foundation for the future. I feel quite honored to be elected, with Charles Watts and others, as a vice-president of the National Secular Society. It is a proud position to occupy before the world, even if we are a poor and struggling host. I could not stand with a more royal company than the president, vice-presidents, and officers of the National Secular Society. I am quite sure that President Foote will receive the hearty support of all, and that there will be more enthusiasm and harmony than ever in the ranks of our English brethren.

There is no need in this report to give details of the Conference. I point out simply the results, that with the widest difference of opinion on some questions, and a momentary clash at times, there is among English Secularists a splendid brotherhood. They have the same difficulties to contend with that we have; there are rough places, but the staying power is present. The army will suffer defeat only in the end to attain a greater victory. This Conference was interesting to me in all its aspects. It was a sign of the times. There was a letting-off of steam, but, at the same time, there was a gathering of electric force, and the lightning blow will come.

At noon we all took dinner together at the expense of Mr.

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George Anderson, who is a Secular philanthropist of the first order. He believes in creating good conditions for humanity, and then virtue will prevail. I assure him that the Freethinkers present enjoyed that fine dinner. It was a delightful occasion for sociability and general good feeling, and no doubt contributed to the unanimity of the Conference.

The evening session was devoted to speeches, and I thoroughly enjoyed the varied and brilliant display of oratory. Mr. A. B. Moss did himself credit, and gave a splendid outline of the progress of Freethought. Mr. Parris was vivid and to the point. He was logic on fire, and roused the enthusiasm of his audience. Like myself, he has had a varied experience in the fields of orthodox and liberal Christianity. He has tried them all and found them wanting. He, like Harriet Martineau, desires "the unfenced universe" and the wisdom of science in the place of the ignorance of theology. He made a rattling good speech. Mr. Gilmour is a true Scotchman, with the humor and the imagination of Burns himself. His was a breezy address, and received a hearty ovation. Mr. Cohen was born to be a rabbi, but by nature became a Freethought lecturer, and a most successful one too. He is a man of promise. There was something of Hebrew poetry in his oration, the prophetic fervor; but all the superstition was gone, and it glowed with the hopes of humanity, the sublime and brilliant future of man. In my turn I did my level best to show that the supreme battle-ground to-day is the rights of man on both sides of the Atlantic, and that the most important and urgent reform is the secularisation of the State. Through this reform only can other reform be made triumphant and permanent. In this respect the English and American organisations are identical in their purpose. The manner in which my ideas were received convinced me of the noble friendship of our old-world allies. I was followed by Charles Watts, who spoke with his old-time eloquence and power, when he was wont to thrill and arouse the Freethinkers of America. The same impetuous oratory bore his audience to a splendid burst of enthusiasm. Mr. Heaford contributed a fervent discourse, which illustrated his excellent service in the field; and then Mr. Foote, as President, delivered the final address. Mr. Foote is one of those who have a great deal of reserve power, and he is ready for any occasion with unexpected abilities. He put the cap-sheaf to the speeches of the evening by pointing out the lines of present conflict; the inevitable battle that is to come between Rome and reason; that there will be a marshalling of hosts such as the world has never seen before, and that the banners of Freethought will shine victorious through the mighty struggle over a peaceful and happy world. Round after round of applause followed the utterances of the eloquent President, and the Conference closed with bright memories and unconquerable hope.

Bristol is an old city of evangelical flavor. Robert Hall and John Foster radiated here in somewhat brilliant fashion. Lady Huntingdon and Whitfield and early Methodism in this place exhibited fiery faith. It is an orthodox town still. There are a few earnest Liberals, who will not go with the majority, but stand by their convictions, and are ready to work. The churches, however, are numerous and solemn, and there is a somewhat slow appearance in the general aspect of the city. It has not the snap of a modern manufacturing town like Glasgow and Manchester. However, it is a charming residence city. There is an ample and fruitful country about it. On Monday, with my friends, I had a delightful drive among the environments of Bristol. Especially magnificent is Clifton and the scenery about it. Here is the great Suspension Bridge over the Avon. The view along this massive structure is superb. On either side, between precipitous green and wooded banks, flows the calm, bright river. In the distance is caught a glimpse of the majestic Severn, and a wide expanse of fields and hills rolls afar. It is Bank Holiday, and throngs of people are sailing on the waters or meandering along the verdant swards and the wide pathways, an animating picture of outdoor English life. There seems to be, after all, an immense amount of happiness in the British Isles.

We return to London on Monday evening. The coaches are crowded, and there was a rush and tumult constantly, so many excursion trains were thundering and flashing along. When we arrived in London it was almost impossible to secure a cab or omnibus. Some of the party did not get home until one o'clock in the morning, and had to walk at that. But finally the holiday is over, and all find rest and quiet.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

THE THREE CHINESE SECTS.

The Buddhist priests declare their Fo in the abyss to be,
Say Lao's followers, "Paradise lies in the Eastern Sea."
But great Confucius' pupils look on real things around;
Before their eyes the airs of spring, fresh-blowing, brush the ground.

—*From W. R. Alger's "Specimens of Oriental Poetry."*

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—X.

HENRY HETHERINGTON.

How many of those who enjoy the benefit of a cheap press know anything of the labors, dangers, and sufferings of those who made the cheap press possible? Not least among these must be counted the name of Henry Hetherington. Born in Compton-street, Soho, in 1792, he was apprenticed to Hansard, the parliamentary printer. He was one of the most energetic working men engaged with Dr. Birkbeck in establishing the Mechanics' Institution in London. In 1830 he drew up a "Circular for the Formation of Trade Unions," which formed the basis of the "National Union of the Working Classes," and led eventually to Chartism. On July 9, 1831, he first issued from his house in Kingsgate-street, Holborn, the *Poor Man's Guardian*, price one penny. On the title appeared the words, "Established contrary to the 'Law,' to try the power of 'Right' against 'Might.'" In place of the Government fourpenny stamp was a picture of a printing press, with the words, "Liberty of the Press," "Knowledge is Power." The *Poor Man's Guardian* was issued to fight the Battle of the Unstamped. It consisted of but eight small quarto pages; yet, immediately on its appearance, obtained a circulation of 50,000 copies, and when prosecution began it ran up to double that number.

Only those who know the tyrannical censorship exercised over the newspaper press when it first became an influence in this country can rightly estimate the work of men like Carlile, Watson, and Hetherington in establishing for us a cheap and free press. Little more than a century ago publishers of papers were fined and imprisoned whenever they as much as mentioned the name of a peer of the realm. Press prosecutions were numerous. Hardly any paper ventured to exercise independent judgment. Anything and everything relating to politics or religion was at the mercy of the Attorney-General, who had the power of summary arrest for seditious or blasphemous libel. As the demand for newspapers increased the tax upon them was enhanced. In 1765 the newspaper stamp duty was three-halfpence; in 1789 it was raised to twopence, in 1797 to twopence halfpenny, in 1804 to threepence, and in 1815 to fourpence. Here it remained until, through the agitation of Hetherington and his co-workers, it was in 1836 reduced to one penny, at which figure it remained until abolished by the exertions of men like Austin Holyoake and S. D. Collet in 1857.

Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* was the chief instrument in the battle for the removal of taxes upon knowledge. It was the first penny newspaper in the country, and was followed by *Cleave's Gazette* and other unstamped papers. The general price of newspapers at that time was sevenpence. The first number of the *Poor Man's Guardian* coolly cited the law under which it was liable, and which it defied. Three convictions were soon obtained against Hetherington; but the Bow-street magistrates were unable to enforce their order for some time. With provoking coolness Hetherington sent them a note to say he was "going out of town," and went on a tour spreading the *Poor Man's Guardian* in the provinces. On returning to London to his mother, who was dying, he was dragged off to prison while knocking at his own door; and in prison he was kept for six months. Hibbert, Watson, Cleave, O'Brien, and others, saw that the *Guardian* with its outspoken policy was maintained, and as soon as Hetherington came out he was again directing affairs.

Mr. James Grant, in his work on the *Newspaper Press* (vol. ii., p. 302), says: "Hetherington was in many respects a remarkable man. He was intelligent and clever, but it was in the qualities of determination and courage that he chiefly excelled. Nothing daunted him. He knew not what fear was. In the army he would have been a hero. Of all men in London at the time, he was just the man to fight the great battle of an Unstamped Press." To courage he added resources. He evaded arrest by disguise. To distribute his paper dummy parcels were made up, duly labelled "*Poor Man's Guardian*," and sent off in one direction by persons instructed to make all resistance they could to constables who seized them; while the real parcels were sent off by another exit. He got his friends to dress in his clothes, and again and again they were arrested in mistake for himself. In 1832 he was again convicted and imprisoned, together with his friend, James Watson, for six months. During the progress of the "unstamped" agitation fully five hundred persons were arrested for selling the *Poor Man's Guardian*. Their pertinacity gained the day in 1834.

The case came for trial before Lord Lyndhurst, who, says Mr. James Grant, was then a thorough Republican. In charging the jury he took up the copy of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, and, looking at it with an aspect of pity and contempt for its poor appearance, said, with a peculiar expression in his countenance, and no less peculiar in his tones: "Gentlemen of the jury, *that* is what *they*"—meaning the Government—"call a newspaper." All in the court then saw that the triumph of Hetherington, and the defeat of the Government, were certain. The jury returned a

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verdict that the *Poor Man's Guardian* was not a newspaper. No. 159 bore these words: "This paper, after sustaining a persecution of three years' and a half duration, in which upwards of five hundred persons were imprisoned for reading it, was declared in the Court of Exchequer to be a strictly legal publication."

The veteran William James Linton, in his *Memoir of James Watson*, has the following on Watson's friend, Hetherington: "For four years he bore the brunt of the battle for a free press. Ever busy in the interest of his class during the Whig Reform ferment, he was among the most zealous as well as the wisest leaders of Chartism afterwards. A ready speaker, bold and fluent, passionate, sarcastic, or humorous on occasion (he had a spice of fun in him through all his trouble), he was deservedly popular in those days; and in the Chartist Convention of 1832 sat as delegate for Stockport and for London." In 1840 Hetherington was again arrested for selling Haslam's *Letters to the Clergy*. To test the impartiality of the law, some of Hetherington's friends commenced prosecutions against four high-class publishers—Moxon, Frazer, Richardson, and Saunders—for the publication of *Queen Mab*. The law was clear. Shelley's poem was a blasphemous libel, and, despite the eloquent defence of Sarjeant Talfourd, Moxon was declared guilty. It remained for the prosecutors to call him up for judgment, which was never done, their object being merely to call attention to the state of the law, and to advertise *Queen Mab*. This course obtained for Hetherington the mildest sentence then given for blasphemous libel—four months' imprisonment. While in prison Hetherington wrote *Cheap Salvation*, a tract showing that all the advantages ascribed to religion could be retained, while dismissing priests and their theology. On coming out, Hetherington resumed Freethought publication, issuing the first translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, *The Existence of Christ Disproved*, by a German Jew, *A Few Hundred Bible Contradictions*, *A Hunt After the Devil and Other Odd Matters*, by P. Lecount, tracts by Emma Martin, etc. He also devoted himself to the spread of Chartism and Socialism. He died August 24, 1849, leaving a will, signed shortly before his death, in which he says: "I calmly and deliberately declare that I do not believe in the popular notion of the existence of an Almighty, All-wise, and Benevolent God, possessing intelligence, and conscious of his own operations; because these attributes involve such a mass of absurdities and contradictions, so much cruelty and injustice on his part to the poor and destitute portion of his creatures, that, in my opinion, no rational, reflecting mind can, after disinterested investigation, give credence to the existence of such a Being." He was buried in the unconsecrated portion of Kensal Green Cemetery, where lie the remains of many other worthy Freethinkers.

J. M. W.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

PROFANE JOKES.

He—"I hear you attend the Handel and Haydn performances. Were you present at the 'Creation'?" She (indignantly)—"I suppose you will next want to know if I sailed in Noah's ark."

Rev. Mr. Goodsoul—"Ah, my boy, that cigar will carry you to perdition. How can you travel to your end with that cigar in your mouth?" Boy—"Yah! in de smoking-carriage, of course, yer old chump."

Johnny was saying his prayers before going to bed, his slow thoughts helped out by his mother's suggestions "Bless all the lambs of the flock," said mamma. Johnny knew that meant him among the rest, and reasoned quickly and generously from the children to the parents. "Bless all the little lambs," he repeated, "and the old sheep too!"

A reverend gentleman was addressing a school concert recently, and was trying to enforce the doctrine that the hearts of the little ones were sinful, and needed regulating. Taking out his watch, and holding it up, he said: "Now, here is my watch; suppose it doesn't keep good time—now goes too fast, and now too slow. What shall I do with it?" "Sell it!" shouted a flaxen-haired youngster.

BOOK CHAT.

Humphry Ward praises Leslie Stephen's life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen as the memoir of a very remarkable man, set amid the records of a highly interesting family by a writer who is not only his subject's brother, but also one of the most skilled biographers, sanest judges, and keenest intelligences of our time. This is a good deal to say of any man, but it is certainly true of Mr. Leslie Stephen, a man whose services to English letters have never been recognised by the general public as quite so great as they really are.

* * *

Lord Acton's inaugural lecture as Professor of History at Cambridge will attract considerable attention, as he is a Roman Catholic with a reputation beyond any published performance. In his lectures he eulogises mental freedom, and acknowledges the triumph in modern times of the Protestant races. His distinctive note is that all historical judgments must be subordinate to ethical standards.

* * *

One of the latest and best of the series of "*Les Grands Ecrivains Français*" is the study of Diderot by Joseph Reinach. Diderot was one of the greatest and most fecund of French thinkers, and to compress an adequate study of such a man into a small book was no light task.

* * *

For over a dozen years the American translation of Max Nordau's *Conventional Lies of our Civilisation* has been sold in England, first by the Freethought Publishing Company, and then by Mr. R. Forder. Now Mr. W. Heinemann, doubtless impressed by the success of *Degeneration*, advertises a new translation of Herr Simon's old iconoclastic volume as "Max Nordau's New Book."

* * *

Another brilliant work by Max Nordau, not so iconoclastic or pessimistic as *Conventional Lies*, is *Paradoxes*, also on sale by Mr. Forder. It deals with such topics of modern life as optimism and pessimism, majorities and minorities, genius and talent, the influence of fiction, the natural history of love, evolution in æsthetics, the State an annihilator of character, nationality; and takes an imaginary glance at the future, in which the small and feeble peoples will disappear, and pressure of population will spread the dominant races all-over the earth.

* * *

The Humanitarian League is issuing a new miniature series of "Humanity" reprints, of which Nos. 1 and 2 are now ready. These are *The Humanising of our Prisons*, by Edward Carpenter, and *Experiments in Hospitals*, by Edward Maitland. The reprints, which may be obtained from the office of the League (79A Great Queen-street, W.C.) at fourpence per dozen, post free, are of the size of a square postcard, suitable for enclosure in letters.

* * *

J. Timewell, 141 Gower-street, W.C., publishes a penny pamphlet called *The State Carriage*, and with it a cartoon by "Cynicus." The idea of both is, that Charity in our present social system only balances the carriage which enables the rich and privileged to ride over the poor.

* * *

Mr. James Leatham writes in the July *Westminster* on "The Religiosity of the Scot," which he accounts for by Scotland having so long been a wild, lonely country, and the struggle with a poor soil and harsh climate.

* * *

Canon Cheyne, in the *Contemporary*, dwells on "The Archæological Stage of Old Testament Criticism," which he urges must come to the front. He endeavors to ascertain when the Genesis story of creation was evolved from the earlier Babylonian one, and concludes that it must have taken some hundreds of years. "It is not only Babylonian, nor wholly Canaanitish, nor wholly Israelitish, but has developed out of elements supplied by each nationality."

* * *

In an article on "The Mystery of Birth," in the current *Fortnightly*, Grant Allen contends that the real mystery is in the Not Me becoming the Me, a process carried on at every meal. "William Evans makes himself daily out of meal and mutton. There is the mystery." Mr. Allen tries a flank movement against Weismannism, and asks: "Is there any real and essential difference between the transmission of functionally acquired modification to offspring, and their registration or persistence in the individual organism?"

* * *

Esmé Stuart writes in the *Fortnightly* on the French academician and Atheist poet, Leconte de Lisle, and tries to make out that "the religion of the Christ won back his respect, though never his adhesion." Of course the poet was a man of many moods, but in his most serious work Christianity has not even his respect.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Bible and Local Veto."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, musical and dramatic entertainment. Tuesday, at 9, dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Does Death End All?"

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, adjourned discussion—"Morals the Outcome of Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Animal Development."

CAMBERWELL GREEN: Tuesday, at 8, a lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Prayer."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James, "Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress." Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Behold how the Gods Vanish."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11, debate between Lucretius Keen and Job Williams, "Atheism or Christianity: Which has Done Most for Mankind?" 3.15, W. Heaford, "Christ and His Teachings."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt"; 3.30, "How I Became a Secularist." Wednesday, at 8, T. Thurlow will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, St. John will lecture.

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, a lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, S. E. Easton, "Prayer."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Bible Lessons in Morality."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. J. Ramsey, "Immortality."

TOTTENHAM GREEN: 3.30, S. R. Thompson, "Christianity and Slavery." (Collection on behalf of Sam Standring.)

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, a lecture; 3.15, a lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Evolution and Darwinism"; 7, "Reason and Revelation." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Annie Besant, "The Uses of Evil"; 3, "The Place of Politics in the Life of a Nation"; 6.30, "The Evidence for the Supersensuous."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, Mr. Shaw will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Excursion to Wharncliffe Side; members and friends meet at 2.30 in Norfolk-street, near the corner of Arundel-street, to go by carriage.

STOCKTON (Borough Hall): 11, C. Cohen, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?" 3, "Religion or Freethought"; 7, "Who was Jesus Christ—God, Man, or Myth?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (Open Market, James Street): 6.30, H. Smith, "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, a lecture.

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell, "Providence."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market-place): 11, Hall Nicholson, "Christianity and Slavery"; 3, "The Established Church the Enemy of the People."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—July 28, Stockton-on-Tees; 29 and 30, Middlesboro'. August 1, Wood Green; 4, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford; 6, Camberwell; 8, Wood Green; 11, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 15, Wood Green; 18, m. and a. Finsbury Park; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—July 28, m. and e. Wood Green.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—July 28-28, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Tottenham. August 4, Camberwell; 11, Westminster; 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—August 4, Kingsland. Sept. 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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THE BIBLE AND LOCAL VETO.

IN our recent article on "Harcourt's Tumble" we adverted to the wretched hypocrisy of men who were not teetotalers *themselves* trying to force *other people* to be teetotalers, and of rich men with well-stocked wine-cellars trying to make it difficult for a poor man to obtain a glass of beer. One of our readers questioned whether Sir William Harcourt was "a drinker (not a drunkard)," as we stated him to be. We replied that we had no personal acquaintance with the fat Knight of Malwood, and therefore relied on public sources of information. Since then we have seen a strong corroboration of our statement. In the London *Star* for Monday, July 29, there appeared an article on "Beer and Democracy," by Mr. R. Wallace, the witty M.P. for Edinburgh, containing the following passage: "I once heard it stated of the late Ministry in their hearing, and not contradicted, that there was only one teetotaler among them, and that was not Sir William Harcourt." Now that settles the question, as far as we are concerned; unless a direct denial is forthcoming from the member for Derby—no, not Derby; it's somewhere else now—himself.

It is not our intention, in this article, to discuss teetotalism and moderate drinking. We have good friends on both sides. But we detest the teetotaler who wants to convert people to his way of thinking, or at least to his way of practice, by the strong arm of the law; just as we despise the moderate drinker who lets himself be taken for a teetotaler when the "great drink question" arises in public. No man ought to do, and do habitually, what he is ashamed of; and no man ought to make his own tastes, or even his own principles, a yoke for the necks of his neighbors. We are not concerned, at present, with the chemistry or physiology of stimulants; if we were, we should have a good deal to say about tea and coffee. We are merely standing up for honesty and liberty.

Some people will ask what this has to do with the Local Veto Bill. They will innocently inquire if the liquor traffic does not need some sort of regulation. Certainly it does. So does driving a vehicle through the public streets. Sir William Harcourt's Bill contained a provision, so to speak, for no vehicles at all; that is, it had a prohibition clause, by which two thousand out of three thousand people could banish drink altogether from their district, while nothing less than two thousand out of three thousand could ever bring it back again. In other words—to put it more concretely—ten people could say to four "You sha'n't drink beer," and then if nine wanted to drink it the other five could stop them from doing so until the day of judgment.

Such nonsense is too absurd for confutation. Yet it had the support of the Nonconformist Conscience—which has not turned out, after all, to be the winning horse in the Great National Steeplechase.

The fact is, the men of God spoil everything they put their hands to. They are taught fictions and not facts, then they mount pulpits and preach ridiculous doctrines, and their whole mode of life is a nurse of fantasticality. Is it any wonder, therefore, that they make an infernal mess when they meddle with practical affairs? They *overdo* everything, because they don't understand nature or human nature. Instead of recognising man as an improving animal, they look upon him as a fallen angel, and they are always trying to whip him back into paradise.

Look at the policy of the Christian Church in regard to illicit intercourse between the sexes. Ever since the days of Constantine it has been trying to suppress fornication by penalties, which were once of the severest description. And what has been the result? Not a diminution, but an aggravation of the evil. Wherever the clergy were most active the evil became most pronounced. This is why Scotland shows the largest percentage of illegitimate children.

Now let us turn to Temperance. At the beginning of the Temperance movement its bitterest opponents were the ministers of religion. They denounced teetotalers as fanatics who were wise above what was written. But when the movement became strong in spite of them, they began to patronise it, and now they are its "only true friends." Teetotalism, in fact, is almost an article of the Nonconformist creed; and it is to be forced, if possible, upon "the world," in spite of "the flesh and the devil."

The Christian Church is like a rusty old weathercock. It resists the wind till people laugh at it, and at last it lurches right round, when it is still more ridiculous.

Could anything be *more* ridiculous than an attempt by Christian ministers to make moderate drinking a crime. They preach from the Bible; they say it is the word of God; they maintain a law which renders criticism of it an offence punishable with imprisonment. Yet this very book abounds with passages in praise of drinking; indeed, in a certain sense, it might be called the drunkard's textbook.

There are, we believe, only two "prohibition" passages in the Bible, and they are not of general application. The first occurs in Leviticus x. 8, 9:—

> "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever through your generations."

This merely means that the priests were to be perfectly sober, beyond all shadow of doubt, when officiating at divine service; and the very fact that they were forbidden to drink on *this* occasion proves that they were free to drink on *other* occasions.

The next passage occurs in Numbers vi. 2–4. It simply relates to those who took vows as Nazarites, and who were forbidden, but only during the period of their separation—that is, while their vows were operative—to drink wine or strong drink. They were even forbidden to drink vinegar made of wine, or of any alcoholic liquor, nor were they to eat grapes, whether moist or dried.

Nothing of a general character can be deduced from such special instances. On the other hand, it is perfectly clear that the main body of the Jews were allowed to indulge in stimulating beverages. Take this passage from Deuteronomy xiv. 26:—

> "And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink."

Christian teetotalers are fond of citing this text from Proverbs (xx. 1):—

> "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

But at the utmost this can only be regarded as a warning against *immoderate* drinking. The very same book of Proverbs (xxxi. 6, 7) positively recommends boozing to a

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certain class of persons, who must have been pretty numerous then, as they have been ever since.

> "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."

Such a text shows the silliness—if not the hypocrisy—of the contention that Bible wines were non-intoxicating. *Strong* drink means *intoxicating* drink. And how much pure, unfermented juice of the grape would a man have to drink before he forgot his poverty or ceased to remember his misery? Would he not get the diarrhœa before he obtained any mental relief?

The book of Proverbs, according to the orthodox theory, was written by Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived. The same authorship is assigned to Ecclesiastes, in which (ix. 7) we read:—

> "Go thy way, eat they bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart."

Surely the wine referred to in this passage was a stimulant, and not a mere allayer of thirst.

The "wise king" is also said (wrongly enough) to have written the Song of Solomon, which is really an amatory poem, without the slightest theological allusion, except in the heads of pedantic divines, who "soil with inky fingers the hem of the garment of love." And in the Canticles (iv. 10) we read:—

> "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine!"

The "sacred" poet, in a vein of passionate hyperbolism, resorts to the most splendid comparison, and the utmost stretch of his fancy reaches to wine, which is still less sweet than the love of his imaginary heroine. Here again the wine must have been something more generous than a cupful of crude grape-juice. It must have been something commensurate with the flush of amorous emotion.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

IS CHRISTIANITY USEFUL?

THE publican cannot be expected to like the teetotaler, nor the butcher the vegetarian. Yet they do not usually vilify the characters of those who refuse to partake of their wares. But with the professional sky-pilots unbelievers are always a bad lot, wicked-hearted as well as wrong-headed. Sometimes it is our vile principles which occasion our wicked lives, and sometimes it is our sinful lives which lead to our bad principles. The priests claim a moral monopoly, and assert that, without them and their religion, the world would go to the bad. We do not believe it. Kindness, long-suffering, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, and all other virtues claimed as pre-eminently Christian, existed long before Christ, and would continue to exist though the belief in Christ were as extinct as the belief in Osiris. They have nothing to do with belief in the Trinity, Incarnation, or the Atonement. These virtues neither came in with Christianity, nor will they go out with it.

To us it is amusing to hear "solemnly-constituted impostors," who are sworn to defend dogmas they do not dare to preach, and who certainly contribute their quota to the criminal population, dilating upon the pernicious consequences of the views of such men as Helvetius, Bentham, Shelley, Clifford, Darwin, and Huxley. But there are numbers who, seeing that religion now identifies itself with morality, fear that the decay of the one must be accompanied by the dissolution of the other, and who accordingly maintain Christianity, not because they know it to be true, but because they fancy it is useful. To such it is necessary to make clear that, in opposing what we believe to be the errors of the Christian religion, we stand for intellectual truth and honesty, and in no way undermine the morality that is of real worth to society, and which is no less valuable because we esteem it to be a growth of earth, and not a gift of heaven; founded on the secure foundation of human needs, and not on the quicksand of the arbitrary will of an irresponsible personal God.

It is the fear of trusting natural morality which does mischief. Men palter with truth, and pretend to believe that they believe because they fancy danger lies in facing the facts; whereas it lies in shirking them. It is this dread of imaginary issues which keeps the old impostures in their places; and the hypocrites and time-servers, who fancy they must conform to the prejudices, absurdities, and even falsehoods and dishonesties around them, help to obscure the natural foundations of morality.

It is the palterers with conviction—the dishonest pretenders to piety—who put forward such a paltry and contemptible estimate of human nature as that it would sink to every kind of baseness without their creeds. "Virtue," said Rama, the hero of the Hindu epic, the Ramayana, "is a service which man owes to *himself*, and though there were no heaven, nor any God to rule the world, it were not less the binding law of life." The simple truth is, that all that is of worth in the old religions may be, and is, retained by Secularists. It is goodness which ennobles life, and goodness has no necessary connection with godliness whatever.

We do not antagonise aught that is good in religion. We rejoice to see that the Churches are being compelled to subordinate their creeds to conduct, and the vain worship of God to the much-needed service of man. Whatever piece of work is done for the betterment of humanity, be it by Turk, Jew, Sandemanian, or Salvationist, has our hearty applause, and even when we do not approve of their methods we can give religionists credit for good intentions. From their essential methods we utterly dissent. We hold with Jesus that no man can serve two masters, and that whatever is given to God is taken from the world. To us Christianity, with its doctrine of reliance upon God, its belief in devils, its miracles, its absurd heaven and atrocious hell, is a belief unsuited to a scientific age and unworthy of a cultured people. In our view it is Christianity which stands in the way of manly life. It teaches other-worldliness. Jesus said: "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew xix. 29). It teaches intolerance and the damnation of unbelievers. Its doctrine of atonement through the blood of an innocent person attracts the idle, ignorant, and selfish, and its teaching of salvation by death-bed repentance places a premium on crime. It offers a short and easy method to escape, not sin, but its supposed consequences.

But Christianity to-day is much mitigated, and, indeed, little better than a hypocritical pretence. No one thinks of regulating his every-day life and business by it. Society, while nominally Christian, is practically Secularist. Trust in God gives place to attention to material conditions, work is superseding prayer, science displacing theology. We ask that the facts shall be frankly acknowledged. There is, in our experience, no salvation in prayer or reliance on supernatural aid. It is to science, and not to Christianity, that we must look for aid to grapple with the difficulties which beset us, and which are lost sight of in a vain attempt to discover the secrets of the hereafter.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE DECLINE OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

IT has been frequently remarked that superstition dies hard, and that some persons never know when they are defeated. This is evidently true in connection with the orthodox superstition, and those who are its unfortunate victims. Despite the fact that, except in a very few isolated instances, practical Christianity no longer obtains, many of its professors still cling to the delusion that the "spirit of Christ" is an active factor in modern life. As a matter of fact, in no section of society are the teachings of Christ found to be in active operation. Wilberforce, in his *Practical View*, writes: "The title of Christian implies no more than a sort of formal general assent to Christianity in the gross, and a degree of morality in practice little, if at all, superior to that for which we look in a good Deist, Mussulman, or Hindu." The *Christian Commonwealth* also observes: "Real Christianity has not ruled the world. It is disregarded in all the relations of life."

When we speak of Christianity we do not refer simply to its ethical features, although most of these are ignored in the Christian community, but we include its doctrinal teachings. It is these which constitute the distinctive

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character of the orthodox faith. The morality of the New Testament, whether it be valuable or otherwise, does not belong exclusively to Christianity. It existed before the time when Christ is supposed to have lived, and the better parts of it are now practised by those who have no faith, either in him or his system. It is certain doctrines that have been associated with his name (such as the Fall of Man, Original Sin, the Atonement, and the emulation of the character of Jesus) that differentiate Christianity from other systems. And it is in reference to these very features that we recognise the decline of Christianity. The leading intellects of the present time do not regard these doctrines in the same light as those earlier professors of Christianity did, who composed the Prayer Book of the Church of England and the Westminster "Confession of Faith."

Some defenders of Christianity attach great importance to what they term "the continuity of the Christian faith." But we find no proof of such continuity in the records of ecclesiastical history. From these sources we learn that Christianity has at different times appeared in various forms, according to the education and the general conditions of the period. First there was "primitive Christianity," which, we are told, meant worshipping God and endeavoring to emulate Christ, irrespective of creeds and dogmas. By and bye this form of Christianity gave way to the age of ceremonies, the worshipping of images, and the introduction of formularies which supplanted the primitive purity of the new faith. In course of time the ceremonies were changed, and the formularies altered to suit the miraculous period and the doctrine of implicit belief. The pious Gregory, in his *History of the Christian Church* (vol. i., p. 379), says: "Let it be remembered that Christianity (in cent. iii.) no longer retained the same form it had assumed in the primitive Church; the substance had been lost in pursuing the shadow." In the progress of time the miraculous notions had to give way to the belief in what is termed the "spirit of Christ," and to the reception of doctrines modified by the "higher criticism," and interpreted by the enlightened thought of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

During this variety of changes, diversified, indeed, have been the doctrines professed—such as the divinity of the Virgin Mary, purgatory, infant damnation, the personality of the Devil, the existence of hell and its material fire, verbal inspiration of the Bible, predestination, and special providence. These doctrines are now mostly given up, or their exposition considerably changed, by the principal leaders of Christianity. The general lines of departure from pre-existing forms are associated with the rise and formation of the Latin, the Greek, and the Reformed or Protestant Churches, followed by the establishment of Nonconformity and Unitarianism. Even the views supposed to have been held of the nature and attributes of God—of the birth, mission, and death of Christ—have not escaped the law of change and modification which has always governed the Church. The only "continuity" has been in the retention of the name of Christian, and the existence of a number of conflicting Churches based upon varied forms of belief in Christ.

A similar change has taken place in modern days in the mode of advocating and defending orthodox Christianity. The controversies once prevalent as to images, saints, the Pope, the Trinity, prayer, miracles, prophecy, and verbal inspiration are seldom heard of now. The line of defence adopted by Paley, Watson, Wardlaw, Butler, and Pearson is now superseded by a mode of advocacy the very antithesis to that adopted in former times. The views which were held in the early ages as to the teachings of the New Testament are now practically endorsed only by Quakers, Moravians, and the "Peculiar People," and even by them only partially. But the members of these sects are comparatively so few that they cannot be said to represent the modern Christian Church. Where, at the present time, can clergymen or ministers be found who will defend in public debate such questions as the character of the Christian Deity, as given in the Old Testament, the existence of the Devil, the Trinity, the infallibility of the Bible, and the doctrine of endless torments? These subjects are preached upon from the pulpit, but they are seldom discussed upon the platform. Even the so-called Christian Evidence Society in London, with all its wealth and boasted influence, refuses to put forward a representative to defend Christianity in public controversy. Why is this? One would suppose, if the Christian faith were built upon a rock, that no amount of criticism could prevail against it. If Christian advocates really thought their religion invulnerable, why should they hesitate to submit it to hostile criticism?

The fact is, the old mode of expounding the claims of Christianity, and of defending its positions, has proved inadequate to meet the reasoning requirements of the present time. The rapid progress of general education and scientific knowledge has compelled Christian exponents to abandon their former strongholds, and to seek safer shelter than their divine pretensions afforded them. Freethought has proved a more trustworthy monitor than theological beliefs. In this age of reason and fearless inquiry, instead of boldly making an effort to defend "the faith which was once delivered to the saints," its expounders ignore many of its once-cherished features, while the small portion of the original article which they still profess belief in is retained by explaining away its true meaning, or by pruning it down to suit modern exigencies.

It must not be supposed that we consider that Christianity is destitute of all truth. In our opinion, no system emanating from man is entirely erroneous. Truth, however, is peculiar to no one faith; but, unfortunately, when it is allied with theology it is always accompanied by that which is erroneous. We desire to apply the eclectic principle to Christianity, in the same manner as it is applied to other religions. By so doing, the good and useful that it contains will be separated from the bad and the useless; the noble will be retained for the service of man, while the ignoble will be discarded as being detrimental to his welfare. The present age is pre-eminently Secularistic, and orthodoxy cannot withstand its intellectual force. Other systems have had to be extirpated by the sword, or have been proscribed by the State; but Christian orthodoxy is declining from its own inherent weakness—its inability to withstand the test of modern thought. Of course, it is not here meant that the whole of Christianity will disappear. It will be its errors, its creeds, and its dogmas that will fade before man's cultivated intellect; but its truths, like all verities, will remain and become allied with systems more practicable, and with principles more in accordance with the requirements of an advanced civilisation.

CHARLES WATTS.

GIVE THE DEVIL HIS DUE.

SATAN is probably the most calumniated person in the world. Everybody puts his own misdoings on that universal scapegoat, and then drives him into the wilderness. We wonder that, since Nero, Henry VIII., and Judas Iscariot have been whitewashed, no generous person has come forward to the rescue of Old Nick. The Devil's advocate would have a very good case. Milton, when he set out to assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to man, was nevertheless forced to justify the ways of Satan, who is the real hero of *Paradise Lost*, and in his high-minded rebelliousness represents some of the grand spirit of the English Republican, John Milton himself, who may be suspected of thus covertly protesting against divine despotism, as he openly did against human tyranny.

All the worst things said against the Devil by the religious really redound to his credit. He is said to have tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. But, had she not done so, a pair of ignorant fools would have remained in Paradise, and we should never have been born. We are told that he is the author of pleasure. He invented all kinds of dances, and laid the corner-stone of all the theatres and music-halls. It is he who gives us Sunday excursions and all kinds of freedom. Satan is the liberator and the emancipator, and to his enterprise and spirit we owe such freedom and pleasure as we enjoy. In representing the principles of doubt, individuality, criticism, and the breaking of conventional chains, Satan has been the great public benefactor.

Satan has been most vilely abused, and without cause. He is called in the New Testament "the father of lies," and "a liar from the beginning"; but honesty must return the verdict of "Not proven." If he was, as the author of Revelation makes out, identical with the serpent of Eden,

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it appears from the story that he told our first parents the simple truth. They did not die when they ate the fruit, but lived to a ripe old age. It was the other fellow who was a liar from the beginning. As but for Eve's transgression there would have been no culture or civilisation, the Devil is entitled to our gratitude for bringing it about. He was the first advocate of woman's rights, and introduced the sex to the means of education.

Then Satan is said to have made poor old Job boil over, but he did no more than the Lord permitted him to do—indeed, put poor old Job into his hands to do; and the story shows that Satan had sized up Job quite correctly, and the Lord made a mistake when he backed his constancy against the adversary.

Then Satan is represented as tempting Jesus Christ. But he did not tempt him to turn water into wine for drunken folks, or to curse inoffensive fig-trees, or destroy other people's pigs. Jesus had been anticipating Tanner and Succi by fasting, and the Devil made the sensible suggestion that he should display his divinity by turning stones into bread. To show his divinity was the very occasion of his coming to earth, and Satan deserves thanks for his assistance. Jesus at this time lost a magnificent opportunity of converting the Devil.

The defence of Old Nick might be elaborated into a volume. Nearly all the accusations against him stultify themselves. They say "lazy as the Devil," and at the same time admit his wondrous activity. What the enemies of Satan have denounced him for is really his glory. They have, as has been pointed out, unwittingly carved him out a great reputation as the champion of personal liberty and the purveyor of manifold terrestrial delights.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

ANGLO-ISRAEL.

"Was not Israel a derision unto thee? Was he found among thieves?"—*Jeremiah xlviii. 27.*

THIS is another phase of religious madness—the outcome of Bible reading. A Mr. Edward Hine has conceived the brilliant idea that the lost ten tribes of Israel, spoken of in the Bible as *spiritually lost*, are to be found *somewhere*; and the result is a crazy pamphlet, in which E. Hine states that the English are the lost tribes. He twists the most absurd Biblical quotations, gathered pell mell, to his own conceit, and defies contradiction. The crass ignorance of the man becomes patent to everyone who knows that ethnology and philology alone can decide the question which E. Hine wisely leaves out as stultifying his so-called proofs, of which he adduces forty-seven. *Un embarras de richesses.* Max O'Rell has found another irrefutable proof*:—

No. 48.—"Behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty" (Isaiah lxv. 13).

I continue:—

No. 49.—"And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury" (Isaiah lxiii. 6).

No. 50.—"Drink ye; and be drunken, and spue and fall, and rise no more" (Jeremiah xxv. 27).

No. 51.—Noah set the example of drunkenness (Genesis ix. 20-31). The English are the drunken nation *par excellence*.†

No. 52.—"Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Proverbs xxxi. 7).

No. 53.—The children of Israel despoiled the Egyptians and other nations. We despoil Indians, Africans, and Maories; *ergo*, we must be Israel (Exodus xi. 2, xii. 35, 36; Numbers xxvi. 52-56, xxxi. 7-19; Deuteronomy and elsewhere).

No. 54.—The children of Israel worshipped the golden calf; so do we to a man; *ergo*, we must be Israel (Exodus xxxii. 8).

No. 55.—"I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away. But I will have mercy upon the house of *Judah*, and will save them by the Lord their God" (Hosea i. 6, 7). The Jews rank highest as regards morality, the English lowest—*vide* criminal statistics; *ergo*, we must be Israel.

No. 56.—The children of Israel committed adultery with the daughters of Moab, etc. (Numbers xxv. 1, etc.); we commit adultery with the daughters of all nations—*besides our own*; *ergo*, we must be Israel.

* *John Bull and His Island.*

† Zechariah ix. 15; Lamentations iv. 21.

I trust Mr. E. Hine and his followers will duly appreciate these well-merited compliments, drawn from the sacred volume. "The words of the Lord are pure words" (Proverbs xxx. 5; Psalm xii. 6). So are mine.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (June 29).

AT last in Scotland, wonderful Scotland! the land of poetry and romance, where religion and whisky flow in equal quantities; where orthodoxy displays its most gloomy forms, and genius pours forth its sweetest gifts to mankind. My first point is Glasgow, and this city in itself is one of the greatest productions of modern times. The modern spirit is here displayed in superb achievement. In 1700 Glasgow was scarcely more than a village; now it has over 700,000 population, and is growing rapidly. It began with the tobacco and the sugar trade, thence branched into shipbuilding and manufactures, and has become the second city in the British empire, although it still finds a strong competitor in Liverpool. What has contributed most to the extraordinary growth of Glasgow is the river Clyde. This is perhaps the most remarkable river in the world, seeing that man himself has scooped it out and given it its majestical flow. Where once was a tiny stream that one could cross over afoot on a summer's day, now sweeps a deep course, twenty-four feet deep, upon which the largest ships of the world can float. No wonder the Glasgonian is proud of his river. It beats creation. An American, "once on a time," travelling along its tide and admiring its varied scenery, remarked that it wasn't much of a river after all; that there were far bigger ones in America. "But," answered the Glasgonian, "who made your rivers?" "God, I suppose," said the other. "Well," said the indomitable Scotsman, "God didn't make this river. We made it ourselves, and you can't show a river like this in all America." This is true. The river Clyde is unique in its pride and glory. God had nothing at all to do with it. While he was "resting" man was putting in his best licks, and creating a mighty and beautiful stream. And he has to keep at it; hundreds of barges and men are at work daily fighting the sea, keeping the depths clear and preserving the banks. Every stone is kept in its place. There is one thing, however, about the river Clyde that I can't recommend. It smells awful. The sewage of the city pours into it, and it is dirty and black, as if it flowed through Hades itself. Of course, there is no escape from this at present, but efforts are being made to disinfect the stream, and make it as clean and non-perfumed as it is useful. As a matter of fact, however, the problem is a very difficult one, for the city must disgorge itself, and there is no other receptacle. But they who made the river will certainly some time know how to purify it. Seeing they don't trust in God, there are hopes of success.

I arrive at Glasgow Friday evening, June 7; and am met at the station by Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Forrester, and other Liberal friends of Glasgow. The day following, Saturday, is a wonderful day, full of resplendent and incomparable views from beginning to end. No wonder that Scotland bourgeons into poetry and romance when nature extends in such scenes of grandeur and loveliness. Under the guidance of Mr. Gilmour and Mr. Black, I journey from Glasgow to Inverary. Mr. Black is a descendant of one of the Highland clans, and knows all about this legendary country. He has lived in it and is impregnated with its lurid and luminous history, and he could tell us many a tale as we swept along.

I leave Glasgow at 7.20 in the morning in the steamer "Lord of the Isles." On either side the vast city looms and pours its smoke, and the tramp of industry is heard. Then broad fields open on the view, and far away the lofty mountains. We see the building of great ships. A thousand hammers ring forth upon the air. Ships are built here for all parts of the world, of every fashion and size. Some are of enormous bulk. We pass the greatest war cruiser now on the waters, "The Terrible," of about 15,000 tons. It looks like a leviathan, indeed, as it stretches along the wharf, massive like a mountain, yet able to skim the deep like a bird.

We glide slowly along at first, by Govan, then Renfrew, one of the oldest burghs in Scotland, from which the Prince of Wales takes the title of Baron of Renfrew; by Ellerslie House, at one time the abode of William Wallace; and Dunglass, the termination of the old Roman wall. Here, also, is the obelisk erected to the memory of Henry Bell, who was the first to apply steam power to water navigation. I must confess that I always thought that Fulton was ahead of the world, but it seems that he was not. America must yield the palm to Scotland. Bell launched his steamer, "Comet," three horse-power, on the Clyde in 1812.

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Dumbarton Castle now comes in view, a height of three hundred feet above the water—a picturesque and historic spot. It is said that the Devil flung this mighty precipice after St. Patrick when he set sail for Ireland. There is a fort on it at present, and a few pieces of artillery and some ancient weapons, among them formerly the two-handed sword of Wallace. After Dumbarton Castle we behold afar the peak of Ben Lomond, and then Cardross Castle appears, where King Robert Bruce spent a few happy and peaceful days. Keeping on our course by Port Glasgow and Greenock, we arrive at Dunoon. This is one of the most ancient settlements in the kingdom, and there are evidences of a Roman encampment here. On Castle Hill are the ruins of an old castle. We here take the coaches for a trip *via* Loch Eck. We travel along the shores of Holy Loch and the banks of the river Echaig, into the steep-sided glens of the Ben More range. Through the immense mountain scenery, unfolding miles away, we wind along to Loch Eck, a lovely sheet of water extending through the picturesque hills for seven miles. Here we take a boat and, with a merry company, sweep over its sparkling length. A glee company happen to be on board, and they sing while we dash onward amidst the enlivening prospects. We reach the head of the loch, where we again take coaches for Loch Fyne. From secluded scenes and rugged heights we ride among well-cultivated farms, where modern improvements are seen. Near this route can be traced the line of ancient "duns," or forts, where it is told that the last stand was made against the tide of Roman conquest. At Loch Fyne we again go aboard the "Lord of the Isles" and voyage to Inverary, the ancient capital town of Argyllshire. The castle of the Duke of Argyll is here, and there is only one street in the town. It has not a very flourishing appearance. The castle grounds, however, are very attractive. There are several objects of interest, among them a cross said to have been carried from Iona, the old parish church, etc. From Inverary we make our return voyage by the Kyles of Bute. It is impossible to describe all that I witness on this tour. The Highlands of Scotland have their own peculiar beauty. They are not like the hills of Wales. The hills of Wales are like vast billows, sweeping away in majestic altitude; while the hills of Scotland are like breakers, sharp, precipitous, separate, each peak presenting a different aspect in its varying outline against the sky. The waters seem to flow in innumerable channels. They glitter in every direction; now they flow in a narrow channel, then broaden to a vast river; then spread out like a lake or sea, surrounded by every variety of landscape. The heights are mostly barren. Only sheep can find anything to eat there. At their base, however, are elegant farms and farm-houses. Everything presents a clean and thrifty appearance. Wherever there is a chance for a green thing to grow, it grows. Little bits of cultivated soil gleam like jewels amidst the grey spaces. The mountains have a spick-and-span look, as if somebody swept and dusted them every morning. There is no "careless desolation" about them, as in our own country. They have a habitable look even in their very bareness. All these varying shores have now become summer resorts. Villages are numerous, fine hotels and residences. The people of Glasgow take their "outing" in these splendid scenes. I catch a glimpse of the loch where Bradlaugh used to fish. He was very fond of fishing. It was a relief from toil and care. He would stick to it all day long, rain or shine. The fishermen still remember him as a wonderful man, genial, strong, ready, with a voice like a lion, and an arm like Wallace. With these hills and shining waters his memory will remain.

All the afternoon we speed along these radiant shores. A thousand objects attract the view, the adornments of art and the enchantments of nature. The shapes and dreams of the past possess us while the future unfolds its dancing colors. I can scarcely realise that Scotland's heights look down on me, freighted with centuries of mingling life and death. In the golden evening hour we plough the busy Clyde, and the great city presents another aspect from that of the brilliant and sunny morn, with the banners of twilight floating over it. The twilights here are wonderfully long and beautiful. Not until ten o'clock or later do the golden hues fade away from the horizon, and when they do disappear from the dim vision already the far-off faint lights of morn appear. Crowds are thronging the streets as we plunge again into the metropolis. It is Saturday night, and all is gay and festive, preparatory, I suppose, to the "holy Sabbath." They have the habit here, as in the towns of England, and in London, some parts of it, of walking in the middle of the streets—the sidewalks are so thronged. I have not noted the like in any American city, not even in the narrow thoroughfares of Boston, where it would be a convenience. Here the crowds fill street and all; and I have got into the habit myself now of "keeping to the middle of the road."

Well, Sunday comes, a real Scottish Sunday, or Sabbath, and I have the pleasure of speaking to three fine audiences of Glasgow Liberals. In the evening, especially, there is an excellent attendance. I have a warm greeting, and I thoroughly enjoy the occasion. Mr. W. G. Unkles takes the chair in the morning, and Mr. J. P. Gilmour in the afternoon and evening. In Scotland, as in England, I find an intense desire to hear Ingersoll. He would have an immense audience in Glasgow. Millions of copies of his lectures have been sold throughout these isles. No name evokes such enthusiasm as that of Ingersoll. The land of Burns would give him a royal welcome. The Glasgow Liberals believe in the good old Scottish doctrine of "the perseverance of the saints." They don't give up. They have kept the flag flying for many a year. They have splendid material, and are a power in the community. Of course Glasgow is a great church city, and the orthodox apparently rule. But still there is much of advanced thought even among the churches, especially in the Free Church. There are two main Presbyterian churches in Scotland, the Free Church and the Established Church. The Established Church will undoubtedly some day go, as it is now going in Wales. If left to the people of Scotland, it would be disestablished at once. But the clergy of the Church of England are in the way, for they see that if the Established Church of Scotland goes, although Presbyterian, the logic of events will make the Church of England go likewise. Some of the rigid orthodox have been endeavoring to expel Professor Drummond from the Free Church. But it wouldn't do, notwithstanding the glaring fact that Professor Drummond has knocked the story of Adam and Eve higher than a kite. But the wise ones in the Church have concluded to stand it.

I enjoyed Sunday afternoon the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. A. Forrester, who are staunch Liberals, and who have supported the cause for many years. The family are all Liberals, and I am indebted to them for many kindnesses.

Mr. George Gibson came over from Belfast, Ireland, to attend the lectures. I was in hopes to do some lecturing in Ireland, but probably shall not have the opportunity. There is a small society in Belfast, where lectures have been given by Foote, Forder, etc.; but it is found pretty difficult to keep the movement at the front. However, our friends don't propose to stop work. There are brave Liberals in Ireland, notwithstanding the black shadow of the cross.

I have not finished with Glasgow yet, for I shall return there after my lecture at Edinburgh, June 16, and visit the birthplace of Burns.

I leave Glasgow on Monday, June 10, for Aberdeen, in the north of Scotland. I have a lovely day's ride, and in four hours and a half reach my destination. Aberdeen is a magnificent city of nearly 150,000 population. It is called "The Granite City." The Aberdonians think it the best and handsomest city in the world. I don't blame them. It struck me at first sight as one of the most massive and beautiful of cities. It is built entirely of granite, so far as I can see; no wood or brick anywhere. The stone is not gloomy, but of bright colors, and it presents to the eye not only solidity, but brilliance. I lectured here last night to a full house, and had a lovely time, a glorious British cheer, and fair play. I shall have a good story to tell in my next of Aberdeen, of Dundee, of Edinburgh, and of Abbotsford and Melrose, haunted by the great Wizard of the North, the story-teller of the ages, who, next to Shakespeare and Homer, has given the past its most wondrous illuminations.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

BIBLES FOR CRIMINALS.

WE quote the following item of news from the *Boston Daily Globe* of the 18th inst.: "D. L. Moody is making an effort to place a Bible in the hands of each of the 750,000 criminals in the country. Mr. Moody is energetic, and he generally succeeds in what he undertakes."

We have no doubt that Mr. Moody thinks that he is about to confer a great blessing upon these 750,000 unfortunate criminals by placing in the hands of each of them a copy of the so-called "Word of God."

Whatever may be said of the wisdom or the folly of his proposed action, we think that all must give him credit for having good intentions; and we presume that his course will be quite generally commended as a disinterested effort to reform the criminals of the country. But we fail to discover how these unfortunate people are to be benefited by the perusal of a book which justifies and sanctions various crimes and vices, some of which have been committed in obedience to the express commands of Almighty God, if the book contains a true and reliable record of that period of the world's history which it professes to cover. In proof of this statement, we have only to cite the following verses from the book in question, as we do not wish to soil our pages by quoting them: Matthew i. 16-20; Exodus iii. 21, 22; 2 Kings x. 11-30; 1 Samuel xvi. 1, 2; Numbers xxxi. 17, 18. These are but a few of the many passages which might be quoted to show the grossly immoral teachings of the Holy Scriptures; and yet such is the character of the book which Mr. Moody proposes to present to the convicts

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in the various prisons throughout the land with a view to reforming them and converting them to Christianity. We are utterly unable to comprehend how these convicts are to be in any manner benefited by the perusal of such literature as that to which we have referred; but, on the contrary, we are certain that it will have precisely the opposite effect upon them, if any. Besides, Mr. Moody seems to assume that most, if not all, of the inmates of our prisons are ignorant of the Bible, and have fallen into crime because of that ignorance. If he were well acquainted with the prison statistics of the United States, he would know that almost all of the criminals now confined in these institutions are religious people, and that the number of avowed Freethinkers therein is exceedingly small. This fact would appear to indicate that Christianity has utterly failed to prevent crime; and, if so, how can it improve the moral character of these convicts? Experience teaches that some other remedy than this ought to be applied to the disease which now afflicts society, and that for the Bible some other book should be substituted. Of course, Mr. Moody has the right to squander his vast fortune in any manner in which he chooses to do so; but we will take the liberty to suggest to him that he can, and ought to, use his money to much better advantage.—*Boston Investigator.*

GOODNESS KNOWS.

Robed in gown of raven hue;
Snow-white linen; manner prim;
Dreamy eyes of heavenly blue;—
All the girls were mashed on him—
Spectacles with golden rim
Perched upon his Grecian nose;
Hair brushed carefully and trim—
Where his wits were goodness knows!

Every Sabbath day he came,
And he, lisping, meandered through
Platitudes both limp and lame,
Lacking aye a trace of new,
Nothing but unsavory stew
Cooked before by other beaus,
Who had made the same dish do—
Where his wits were goodness knows!

In each nicely-cushioned pew
Would be found some well-fed dame,
Or some squire whose eyelids drew
Close in sleep, as if the aim
Of the preacher was for fame
As a bringer of repose
To the tired-out, wearied frame—
Where their wits were goodness knows.

Envoy.

Both were frauds, to give them due;
Both were playing at a game:
One was prating for a screw;
Tother slept and earned a name
As a good and, I suppose,
Godly person—goodness knows!

The Gaberlunzie.

ACID DROPS.

Colonel Ingersoll was once involved in controversy with a Chicago editor who libelled Thomas Paine. When the editor found he could not prove his statements he tried to back out of the trouble by inviting the Colonel to dinner. "Sir," said Ingersoll, "I would as soon dine with Ezekiel." What sort of dinner *that* would be the reader may find out by consulting Holy Writ.

Colonel Ingersoll has had, if possible, a still worse invitation. "Come and join the Methodists, Robert," says the Rev. C. C. McCabe. We look forward with interest to the Colonel's reply.

It appears that the worthy McCabe was passing through a town where the Colonel was to lecture against the Bible, and seeing the posters on the walls (of course they are *flaming* posters in the *Methodist Times* account) he went to the office of a local newspaper and wrote a letter to the Freethought lecturer. It is a funny letter, and worthy of a Methodist.

"While you have been lecturing against the Bible," says the worthy McCabe, "the Methodists have built ten thousand new churches in this country." Have they? We venture to doubt it. Ten thousand is a very large number. Still, we are open to conviction. All we want is *proof.*

Colonel Ingersoll is told that he "has not overthrown the humblest altar upon the farthest frontiers of this Republic." Perhaps not; but he has changed the character of the worship at them. After all, a religion does not consist in buildings; it consists in the beliefs and sentiments of its professors; and Ingersoll has wrought a mighty alteration in that respect—which is really what he has aimed at doing.

"We are praying for your conversion," says the worthy McCabe. Let him pray. It is an innocent amusement. But *why* does he pray for Ingersoll's conversion? If the Colonel's lectures are so impotent against Christianity, it is a waste of time to trouble about him. Altogether, it does not seem that logic is the strong point of this praying Methodist.

"Take your Bible," exclaims McCabe. Well, that is just what Ingersoll is doing. He is taking the Bible round the United States and showing the people what it is, and those who hear him will probably smile at McCabe's hysterics. No doubt they will wonder why he does not answer Ingersoll, instead of telling him that there are a lot of Methodists about. Ingersoll knows it. That is one of the reasons why he is on the war-path.

"General" Booth's "shelter" in Blackfriars-road has come under the notice of the Health Committee. Dr. Waldo, the medical officer of health for Southwark, obtained a warrant to inspect the premises, but he was refused admission and met by forcible resistance. He was only admitted on threatening to seek the aid of the police. He found the place greatly overcrowded. It is asserted that several cases of small-pox have been traced to this "shelter."

Another Salvation Army "shelter" in Whitechapel has had to be closed. It is said to have been the originating centre of the recent serious epidemic of small-pox in the locality.

C. W. Freemantle, of the Charity Organisation Society, writes to the *Times* that between July 15 and 26 seventeen persons suffering from small-pox were admitted into the Whitechapel Infirmary, who state that they have been recently inmates of Salvation Army shelters, which, the C.O.S., urge, are "not only exercising an injurious effect upon the character of the population, but are centres of infectious disease." The members of the Board of Works for the Whitechapel district ask for a Bill to place the S.A. shelters under the provisions of the Common Lodging House Acts.

The *Irish Weekly Independent* (July 27) gives a cartoon exhibiting figures of Religion and Patriotism prostrate and torn by a monster labelled "Clericalism." The reports of the elections at Cork, Kildare, South Clare, Meath, Galway, Wicklow, North Mayo, Roscommon, and Sligo show that every species of priestly prompting and intimidation was used against the Parnellites. "This is not a political, but a religious, fight," said the Canon of Cork. Under the circumstances, the anti-clerical party did remarkably well.

At the church of Kill, county Meath, Father McDonnell, who took a prominent part in the Meath election in 1892, the proceedings of which afterwards formed the subject of a petition, went so far as to recommend from the altar that all should vote for Mr. Jordan. Hereupon a Mr. Larkin rose and said: "We will have no politics. Give us the Gospel of the day!" and somebody in the church called out: "Hurrah for Parnell."

The Rev. David Russell, of the Congregational Church, Maritzburg, received a call from Cape Town, and means to go, although his congregation unanimously resolves that his going would be disastrous to the Church. He says that the matter was determined by the will of God, but the amount of the call has not been specified.

One of the most extraordinary swindles on record has been unearthed in Russia. A rascal has been selling the peasants cheap tickets to the planet Jupiter, where he assured them of free land and a living without work. In packing up to leave, the peasants threw away their valued images of the saints, as the swindler assured them that the saints all lived in Jupiter, and there would be met face to face. This is a good deal like the Christian scheme of promising post-mortem felicity in return for good earthly positions and perquisites.

A striking instance, by the way, of one law for the rich and another for the poor is the application of the law against fortune-telling. If a gipsy promises a servant-girl a rich husband in return for having her hand crossed with silver, she stands a good chance of a fortnight in prison; but "Chiro the palmist" can read the hands of rich ladies

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in Bond-street with impunity, and priests of all faiths can get worldly possessions left to their church by threats of hell or purgatory.

The police in Manchester have arrested a Spiritist mejum, one Miss Smith, on the charge of fortune-telling by the professed aid of spirits. We do not know the merits of the case, but the local Spiritists hold that it means raid on their propaganda, and have formed a defence committee.

Borderland takes up the question of alleged spirit photography and "The 'Cyprian Priestess' Mystery," carefully avoiding the suggestion of "fraud," which to some minds, even of Spiritists, seems the only adequate one. A Mr. Glendinning published a book entitled *The Veil Lifted*, giving as frontispiece a spirit photograph obtained through the mediumship of Mr. David Duguid. It represented a beautiful female head, and purports to be the portrait of a girl who, centuries ago, was dedicated to the service of the temple of Venus in Cyprus.

This spirit photograph is proved to be a mere reproduction of the face of a female figure in a picture entitled "Night," by a German artist. Not only is the face the same, but also the disposition of the drapery, shadows, etc. How is it explained? Mr. Glendinning is ominously silent, and so is the "mejum" whose good faith is in question. An Edinburgh writer, Mr. Antonio, who calls himself "Edina," the credulous author of many cock-and-bull spiritist stories, excuses the "mejum" from defending himself on the ground that he is a poor unlettered mechanic. Our sub. met the same "mejum" at Glasgow over fifteen years ago, at *séances* held at the house of Mr. Bowman, photographer, of Jamaica-street, with whom the medium was an assistant and toucher-up of photographs. He used at that time to offer vile daubs, said to be by the spirits of Ruysdael, Jan Steen, or Turner, at prices ridiculously low if by these masters, and ridiculously high if by himself. Some semblance of a natural scene passed for a Dutch master, but mere dabs of paint or chalk sufficed for a Turner. It was through this same medium that were obtained the *Revelations of Hafed, Prince of Persia*, who lived at the time of Jesus Christ, and who talked and made Jesus talk in the Scotch dialect, and even copy sentences from Cassell's *History*.

The "mejum" gives no explanation, nor does the spirit of the Cyprian priestess; but Mr. Stead's "Julia" comes to the rescue. "Julia" dwells in the spirit-world, and tells us how it happened. It seems that when spirits want to appear to mortals "it is necessary for them to prepare what I may call a mould, by which they can impress themselves upon the photographic plate, or make themselves visible in a materialisation *séance*." Those who are satisfied that this explains the *shadows* being the same, and the medium sometimes calling his figure "Lily," sometimes "Marion," and sometimes the Cyprian priestess, should have no difficulty in swallowing the Gospel stories.

If Mr. Stead would tell us through whom he obtained this communication from "Julia" or her spirit, it might serve to unveil the mystery. There is nothing that so much assists a "mejum's" development as comparing notes with other "mejums." Examining tombstones or registers of deaths is not in it compared with this source of occult information, and when one "mejum" goes wrong a friend in the fraternity can always find an explanation.

In *Light*, for July 27, Captain G. W. Walrond, of Hamilton, Canada, who claims to be a "psychic lecturer and clairvoyant," is convicted of gross word-for-word plagiarism from the Rev. J. Page Hopps, whose ideas are given as Captain Walrond's own. This appears on p. 351 of *Light*, and on p. 360 we read that the Spiritualists' International Corresponding Society is represented in Canada by Captain G. W. Walrond, 198 Locke-street, Hamilton, Ontario. We suppose there will be some occult explanation of the plagiarism, similar to that of Mahatma Koot Hoomi having copied from Professor H. Kiddle. It is probably a case of telepathy or thought transference.

A Yankee humorist said that the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, but some Americans began to think it would have been better if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers.

American Puritanism is, if anything, a shade worse than English Puritanism. It seems to suffer from a chronic pruriency. Somehow or other, it is always thinking of "the flesh." It is afflicted with a furious hatred of the human form, and is bent on reducing men, and especially women, to mere bundles of clothing. Every part of their anatomy must be concealed. We shall soon hear that every person must wear gloves on his hands and a veil over his face. Even in the hottest weather, poor, perspiring human beings (to borrow a phrase of Bismarck's) will have to "stew in their own juice."

One hardly expected to read of a bad outburst of this spirit in such a city as Chicago. But you never know where to expect the "purity" craze; it crops up in unexpected places. And just now in Chicago it is "going a buster." The City Aldermen have had a solemn meeting on the great knickerbocker question, and have drawn up a new sumptuary law, which every free and independent citizen is bound to obey. Cyclists are strictly forbidden to expose an inch of stocking; they must not even wear knickerbockers; their costume must be baggy from the ankles, and their jackets must come right up to the throat. And to make the law complete, as well as impartial, it is to apply to men as well as to women.

Such is personal liberty in a leading city of the great American Republic, the land of the spread eagle, the home of freedom, etc. George Washington fought for this, and Abraham Lincoln died for it; but, after all, was it really worth doing? Well, we won't answer the question. We leave it open to discussion.

The *Outlook* says: "It is unfortunate that the hottest debates in the Christian Church take place on the most unimportant topics." But in theology, where nothing is known and all is speculative, all topics are equally important and unimportant. Eternal Salvation may depend upon a single misinterpretation of a letter in God's divine revelation. The *Outlook* has got sufficiently to the secular standpoint to see that the topics upon which Christians have usually quarrelled are of no real importance, but it would probably scout the idea that the health of a child is of more importance than the being of a God. Some day it may be seen that the so-called fundamentals of theology are of no more importance than the dogmas now discarded by liberal Christians of the type represented by the *Outlook*.

A correspondent of the *Daily News*, dating from Dunkirk, states that the belief in witchcraft still prevails in French Flanders. Some witches are reputed to enjoy the faculty of changing their outward appearance at will, and a certain old woman, who died but a few years ago, was stated to have occasionally transformed herself into a black cat. It happens, not unfrequently, that the victim of a spell appeals to the priest, and begs him to intercede and exorcise the possessing demon, as the faithful followers of Christ were given power to cast out devils.

In the poorer classes the women, when speaking of someone whose behavior they consider "uncanny," say "*Il est possédé*" (He is possessed). The influence of the "evil eye" is also firmly believed in, and, moreover, the fishwives have their "lucky customers." In Scotland, fishermen have a strong belief in lucky persons, and it is worthy of note that in our common expression, "He was *seized* by fever," we retain a survival of the old belief that disease was the work of evil spirits.

It appears from Millar's *Fife: Pictorial and Historical* that in Carnock parish, in the seventeenth century, one Agnes Fluckart was hailed before the "sessione" for carrying "ane can of water" on the Sabbath, and the poor creature, kneeling before the elders, "craves God's pardon," and shows "evident signes and tokens of her true and unfeigned repentance." Andrewe Andersone gets into trouble for going to the mill on the holy Sawbath, and "likewise James Stirkie for hanging a dog" upon that day—another day would not have mattered. Scotland, however, does not stand where it did on the matter of the Sawbath. The bicycle has made a vast difference within the last dozen years, and boating and yatching on the Clyde no longer excite universal comment and horror. Indeed, the company which first runs Sunday steamers from Greenock to Rothesay may occasion some outcry, but will certainly do good business.

Four children of a farm laborer at Rayleigh, who belongs to the "Peculiar People," have died within the last three months. No doctor was called in, but the children were anointed with oil and prayed over, as directed in the epistle of St. James. The jury gave their opinion that, had a doctor been called in in the earlier stages, the lives of at least two of the children would have been saved. James says that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the "Peculiar People" are those who believe him.

The mental power exhibited by some men in old age has been cited as proof that "the soul does not age with the body." Dr. Balfour has, however, recently shown that there are physiological reasons why the normal brain remains vigorous to the last, "because its nutrition is specially provided for." The arteries which supply the brain retain their elasticity, while the others give way.

A Nonconformist protests against "Beer and Bible" being assigned as the causes of Liberal defeat. Priests and publicans, he thinks, would more nearly hit the mark.

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Mr. C. C. Moore, editor of the Lexington *Blue Grass Blade*, an organ which combines the advocacy of Freethought with that of prohibition of the liquor traffic, states that there are in Lexington 275 saloon keepers, and not one of them is an infidel. The majority are Catholics.

God's mercies are abundant. Cholera has broken out with violence in Russia, and, as usual, is spreading westward. In the province nearest the Austrian frontier ninety-three cases and twenty-five deaths took place in one day. By landslips in Brux Bohemian over 2,000 have been left homeless.

Father J. S. Vaughan's declaration, that "men have no duties towards the brute creation," has created some consternation among humane Catholics like Dr. Berdoe.

James Harwood points out in the *Inquirer* that the teaching profession is largely closed to Unitarians, and that the great charitable foundations are equally sectarian. He gives an instance of a girl who was kept out of King Edward School on the ground that she attended a Unitarian Sunday-school.

The editors of *El Liberal*, Zacatecas, Mexico, have been excommunicated. The culprits are Freethinkers, whose crime consisted in not hiding their light under a bushel.

The *English Churchman* says: "The Rev. Arthur Stapylton Barnes, who has at last openly joined the Church of Rome, was promoted by the Bishop of Ely *after* publishing a book, *The Ceremonial of the Altar*, containing the full Mass doctrine of Rome, including prayers for 'Our Pope.'"

Some of the High Church Ritualists have, or profess to have, doubts as to the validity of Anglican orders—that is to say, whether they are in the true line of apostolical succession, with the descent of the Holy Ghost conferred upon them by their bishops' fingers. To stifle their doubts there are two secret societies, one called the "Order of Corporate Reunion," and the other the "Order of the Redeemer." There are Roman priests in these societies who will, for a consideration, confer the afflatus without asking applicants to go over openly to Rome.

Only two Roman Catholics have been returned for England, and one of them is somewhat shady. They are Lord Edward Talbot and T. P. O'Connor. The Catholics, except in the Scotland Division of Liverpool, have generally thrown in their lot with the Conservative party, in the hope of getting something out of the public purse for the support of their schools.

Pierre Loti, whose new book, *La Galilée*, is appearing as a feuilleton in the Paris *Figaro*, wonders that so much attention is given to Jerusalem, while "the mysterious Capernaum, Christ's own city," is so little noticed. But he assigns the reason himself. The site of Capernaum, like most Palestinian sites, is very doubtful.

Rev. Alan Grace, who stole articles from a Strand restaurant, wrote a pathetic letter to the magistrate, who remanded him with a view to his discharge under the First Offenders Act. His friends gave him a fine character, but it turns out that he has been twice suspended, and he is now doing six months.

In the shocking charge against a Bournemouth magistrate a book of prayers in the handwriting of the accused forms a material part of the evidence. The *Southern Echo* says: "Probably in no court in the world has such a mixture of religion, filth, and poetry been read together." But then the Bible is used in every court, and is not that a mixture that may be similarly described?

A curious advertisement appears in the *Literary World*. The party advertising requires books on schoolboy life of a religious character, and also medical books of a very peculiar kind. The combination is, perhaps, not so strange as it may appear at first sight.

The Conservative victories have been satisfactorily explained by the Rev. T. E. Cleworth, who declares they "are in answer to prayer. The archbishops and the bishops have prayed that their churches may be defended, and God has answered their prayers." Some sceptics may still think that the victory would have not been so pronounced if the Church had not had the alliance of the publicans.

We are glad to know what the *Methodist Times* regards as wisdom. "John Bright said very wisely," it remarks, "that you cannot drive half-a-dozen omnibuses abreast through Temple Bar." The statement was true enough, but where is the great wisdom? It is also true that you cannot put a quart of ale into a pint pot, or drive a camel through the eye of a needle. But nobody outside a gospel-shop ever thought these observations particularly wise.

We have recently chronicled some bad accidents in Germany and in America to trains loaded with pilgrims, and we have now to chronicle another in France. A train of twenty-four carriages, packed with pilgrims, returning from St. Anne d'Auray, left the rails near St. Brieuc. Most of the carriages were piled on one another and completely wrecked, six or eight being reduced to splinters. Twelve persons were killed on the spot, and fifty had to be taken to the hospital.

What a curious commentary on the *faith* principles of the Church! People go on pilgrimage to gain divine protection, yet "Providence" allows them to be smashed up as though they were blaspheming infidels.

Mrs. H. M. Walker, of Headingley, has obtained £300 damages and costs against Mr. J. Fowler Greig for seducing her daughter. The parties first met at the Congregational Chapel.

Alfred Braithwaite Emanuel was found guilty at the Central Criminal Court of obtaining money by false pretences. Although he had been previously convicted, he appealed for mercy on the ground that "there was another judgment to come," and whatever punishment he went short of in this world would be made up to him in the next. The Common Serjeant, however, was deaf to Emanuel's supplication, and gave him eighteen months.

Miss Bradford, of Great College-street, Westminster, engaged Elizabeth Brown as a Church of England servant—whatever that may be. Elizabeth, however, did not go to church, but to the Salvation Army. Perhaps she found it easier to talk to a "captain" than to a curate. Anyhow there was a quarrel over this point at Great College-street, and Elizabeth had to go. Afterwards she went to the County Court to get her wages. Such is the harmonious influence of religion, especially on female minds!

The priests of Quebec have announced that hereafter they will not give the last sacrament to one who was attended during his illness by a Protestant physician. This may lead to their bestowing extreme unction more frequently, for the Catholic physicians do not stand highest in their profession.

Something like a providential judgment is reported from Double Springs, Alabama, where the Rev. Greenleaf Lee, a Baptist minister, when in his pulpit, worked himself up into a fury on the subject of God's judgments against the wicked, and dwelt on the torments of hell. He concluded with the words, "There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," and then fell to the floor, and in a few moments was a corpse. Sensible people will say he overwrought his nervous system, and possibly ruptured a vessel of the heart; but as this explanation would not be admitted in the case of an excited unbeliever, it is open to the universalist to see in this case "God's warning against dishonoring him by preaching the doctrine of hell fire."

The *Girl's Own Paper* gives prominence to a Guild of Scripture Reading and Study. It is stated that the course will occupy three years and three months. Evidently the girls are to study the Bible pretty thoroughly. We hope they will use an expurgated edition.

Good old Leo XIII. has organised an Anti-Masonic Congress as a counterblast to the demonstration convoked by Signor Lemmi, Grand Master of the Italian Freemasons, for September 20, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the taking of Rome by the Italian troops. The Masons have a definite fact to celebrate, and the Anti-Masonic Union, started by the Pope's nephew, but initiated by the Pope himself, can only express its antagonism.

The *Freeman's Journal* states on "good authority" that the Conservative Government will bring in a measure to establish and endow a Catholic University in Ireland. This is in agreement with the views expressed some time ago in a magazine article by Mr. Balfour. Both the Church of England and the Catholic Church will have to be paid their price, and the Conservatives will pay it willingly. Our only consolation is, that the further endowment of religion will help to strengthen the Radical demand for religious equality.

Bishop Westcott was dining at a colliery-owner's near Durham. His host was profuse in addressing him as "My lord." The youngest at the table called out: "Papa, give God some more pie."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 4, Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street (near Grey's monument), Newcastle-on-Tyne:—11, "Secularism and the New Parliament"; 3, "How the Bible Stands Now?" 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

August 11, 18, and 25, St. James's Hall, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—August 4, Camberwell; 11, Camberwell; 18 and 25, Milton Hall, London.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

FRIEND.—Seeley's book to hand. Thanks.

PERPLEXED (Liverpool).—If you are bent on "accounting for nature," you have a big job on hand. Your funeral will take place before it is completed. Atheism, as we understand it, does not undertake that impossible task.

A BIRMINGHAM gentleman, who spells *support* "surport," and other words just as elegantly, is anxious to have a debate with Mr. Foote. Mr. Foote does not share his anxiety.

S. R. SIMMONDS.—Your order handed to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., to whom all orders for literature should be sent direct.

W. CASELL points out that the texts, 1 Timothy iv 1-4 and 1 Cor. x. 25, are opposed to vegetarianism, while Acts x. 13 may be interpreted symbolically.

W. H. PACEY.—Certainly no one can compel you to have the Christian superstition taught to your children at Sunday-school.

J. T. wishes to know in what collection of hymns appears a couplet attributed to Dr. Isaac Watts—

> This infant is the mighty God
> Come to be suckled and adored.

We should think the only chance of finding it is to go to the earliest edition.

A. W. STAVENS.—Thanks for the cuttings, etc.

J. G. BARTRAM.—Mr. Foote regrets his inability to join the Newcastle Branch's excursion on Monday. Very important business necessitates his return to London.

G. F. B. (Maritzburgh, Natal).—Thanks for paper.

C. WRIGHT.—In Bible times *servants* were *slaves*.

G. WARD.—We regret that the unofficial announcement for Finsbury Park was inserted instead of your own, and will be more careful in future.

G. S.—(1) A talent of gold has been variously estimated as worth from £5,475 to £7,280, and a talent of silver from £450 to £187 10s. Probably the latter is meant in Matthew xxv. A silver shekel is estimated as worth about 2s. 7d. The difference in value between gold and silver in ancient times varied; but the estimates of David's wealth in 1 Chronicles xxii. 14 and xxix. 4-7, and the statement of 1 Kings ix. 20 that silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon, are probably pure "brag." (2) The word "Samos" is not given in our Concordance.

LIVERPOOL.—Members of the committee are earnestly appealed to to attend the meeting this (August 4) evening, with a view to making arrangements for carrying on the propagandist work during the winter.

A. J. WHITE.—Better let Miss Vance have them for distribution. Thanks.

A. B. MOSS.—We are very sorry to hear of your wife's dangerous illness, but we hope she will soon recover. It is a hard life in this world at the best, and without sympathy it would be intolerable to most of us.

H. JONES.—Sorry to hear the Blackburn Branch is enrolling few fresh members. We hope all our readers in the locality will join, and thus bring about the union which is strength.

J. BROWN (Manchester).—Alas! there is too much truth in your letter. We are on the watch.

J. H. WIPER.—The subject is hardly worth more of our space. Certainly the row at Mr. Foote's lecture in Sunderland was disgraceful; but we do not care to spend time in discussing who was most to blame, though we believe the fellow Powell was chiefly responsible for the ill-temper displayed.

J. G. DIBSON.—Thanks for your cordial letter. Mr. Foote will be happy to pay Stockton a visit. The whole district should be thoroughly well worked. Branches alone and unaided are not equal to the task of doing justice to our cause. Mr. Foote cannot help seeing this, and he intends to organise a lecturing scheme himself, by which our principles may be far more extensively propagated. The subject will be dealt with at length in a week or two. Meanwhile, you may rely upon it that Stockton will not be neglected.

J. RITCHIE.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

R. DOWDING, Mayfield Villa, Gloster-road, Walthamstow, will be glad to distribute any Freethought literature that may be sent him for the purpose. This correspondent says he personally interviewed Mr. Pollen, the Radical candidate, who said he did not believe that anyone should be allowed to publish pamphlets ridiculing his religion. Poor man!

W. REID.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. J. VAUGHAN.—No offence, certainly. Why should there be? Without reckoning fish, cats are quite as honorable as the average parson, and rather better tempered with the "kids." Cats never put cats into prison for a difference of opinion; cats never burnt cats for the glory and honor of God.

G. CROOKSON.—A rare bird indeed! See paragraph.

J. MACGLYNN, president, Independent Literary Federation, 50 Mill-road-street, Calton, Glasgow, will supply Secularists on application with leaflets exposing the "Controversial Methods" of a certain foul-mouthed Christian-Evidencer who has lately been darkening their city.

R. CHAPMAN notifies that the South Shields Branch has no meetings to-day (August 4), in consequence of Mr Foote's lectures at Newcastle.

E. H.—(1) Don't you see that *faith* in the two connections has different meanings? Faith, in the religious sense, is a special faculty, or its operation; while faith, in the secular sense, is only belief founded on knowledge. Religious people say that we have faith that the sun will rise to-morrow. But that faith is based upon long experience and an acquaintance with the laws of astronomy. When they have faith that they will go to heaven, for instance, it is faith without any personal experience, or any sort of appeal to a natural law supported by general experience. (2) We cannot yet answer this question, though we hope to shortly.

F. S.—You may find something about Adam's first wife, Lilith, in Baring Gould's *Old Testament Legends and Characters*.

J. T. CARPENDALE.—Glad to hear the Bradford Branch is carrying on an active open-air campaign. Mr. Foote will offer you an early date shortly. He has lectured in the Oddfellows' Hall before.

W. PACE.—See paragraph. Mr. Foote is in excellent health; so are Messrs. Watts and Wheeler.

MR. PUTNAM stated in his "News and Notes," and it was reprinted in the *Freethinker*, that Mr. W. H. Lever, of Port Sunlight, the Radical candidate at Birkenhead, was a Freethinker and a supporter of the late Charles Bradlaugh. Mr. Lever's attention having been called to this, he states that he is and always has been a Congregationalist, and that he was never a supporter of Mr. Bradlaugh, who "maintained himself by his lectures." Of course Mr. Putnam did not use the word "supporter" in *that* sense; on the other point he was apparently misinformed.

J. M. R.—(1) Licensing laws of course involve a certain control, and it is reasonable that the control should be local; but the Local Veto Bill had a prohibition clause. (2) Please to hear that you derive "inspiration" from the *Freethinker*. (3) An Index would only be useful if printed separately for binding. We do not know whether there would be any general demand for it.

J. SCHOFIELD.—Thanks for report of Ben Tillett's speech, though it is too purely political for comment in our columns.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Echo—Light—Western Figaro—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Ironclad Age—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Accrington Observer—New York Public Opinion—Truthseeker—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Torch—Times of Natal—Diamond Fields Advertiser—Irish Weekly Independent—Isle of Man Times—Crescent—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Twentieth Century.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S lecture on "The Bible and Local Veto" drew a large audience (in spite of the rain) to Milton Hall on Sunday evening. Judging from the laughter and applause, the lecture was highly appreciated. Some questions were asked at the close, but no one offered opposition. The chair was efficiently occupied by Mr. James Rowney, who urged his auditors to do their utmost to make Mr. Foote's course of lectures at St. James's Hall a thorough success.

London Freethinkers should do their utmost to render Mr. Foote's lectures at St. James's Hall a thorough success.

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Full particulars of these meetings will be found in our advertising columns. Friends who can display a poster or circulate neat handbills are earnestly requested to communicate with Miss Vance at 28 Stonecutter-street. She will also be glad to hear from known friends who are willing to take tickets and try to dispose of them amongst their acquaintances.

Mr. Foote lectures at Newcastle-on-Tyne to-day (August 4), when he will formally open the new hall taken by the Branch in the heart of the city. His subjects are attractive, and no doubt the hall will be crowded. Mr. Foote will be happy to see as many as possible of his Tyneside friends on this occasion, as it is a considerable time since he last visited the district.

After the evening lecture the Newcastle Branch will hold its adjourned annual meeting of members, for the election of officers, etc. Mr. Foote will be present, and all members are requested to attend. On Monday (Bank Holiday) the Branch takes its annual excursion to Morpeth. The train leaves Central Station at 10.15. Gentlemen's tickets, 3s.; ladies' tickets, 2s.

Mr. Charles Watts is delivering three Sunday evening lectures at the Camberwell Secular Hall. He had an excellent audience last Sunday, when he dealt with the question, "Does Death End All?" A correspondent speaks very highly of Mr. Watts's discourse, and says the South London friends are looking forward to two further treats.

Mr. S. P. Putnam was not lecturing on Sunday, so he took a trip to Canterbury, and saw the old town and the older cathedral. His last lecture before leaving England will be delivered in London on the first Sunday in September. Mr. Foote will see to the organisation of this meeting, as he did on the occasion of the first meeting at the Hall of Science. He will also take the chair as before.

Acting on Mr. Foote's instructions, Miss Vance has engaged a room at the Holborn Restaurant for a farewell dinner in honor of Mr. Putnam a few days before he sets sail from Southampton. The tickets for this function are four shillings each. Mr. Foote will take the chair, and amongst those present will be Mr. Watts and probably Mr. George Anderson. Applications for tickets should be made to Miss Vance as early as possible.

Mr. William Heaford occupies the Milton Hall platform this evening (August 4), and speaks upon "The Problem of Evil." Much nonsense has been uttered on this subject, but Mr. Heaford will not add to the quantity of it. What he says is sure to be sensible. We hope he will have a good meeting and some good discussion. The admission at Milton Hall is free, a collection being taken to defray expenses. We are not allowed to charge at the doors. Freethinkers, at any rate, should therefore put into the plate as much as they would have paid elsewhere for their seats.

Mr. C. Cohen has visited Blackburn for a few days, and his lectures have produced a very favorable impression in the town. The Branch hopes to have him at Blackburn again for a few weeks, when it is hoped the local organisation of Freethought will be materially strengthened.

Mr. Cohen has also visited Stockton-on-Tees. His audiences were not very large, but they improved as he went along, and the Branch believes that a great deal of good will accrue if the effort is followed up.

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for August contains No. VII. of "Literary Chats" by Mr. F. J. Gould. This particular chat is with the President of the National Secular Society. Mr. Gould paid Mr. Foote a visit in his library, and he tells the reader about the books he saw there. The article is written in an interesting style.

The Failsworth Secular Sunday-school took its annual outing on Saturday, July 27. The teachers and scholars visited Hebden Bridge and the Hardcastle Crags, one of the most picturesque bits of scenery in the north of England. Musical selections were rendered by the Sowerby Bridge brass band. Altogether the excursion was most enjoyable.

The *Metaphysical Magazine*, the July number of which we receive from 503 Fifth Avenue, New York, is a sort of American *Borderland*; but, instead of being dominated by Stead's "Julia," it has a number of signed articles by contributors of various opinions. The writers are able, though of a mystical cast. Mr. C. S. Wake, the author of *The Evolution of Morality*, opens with a paper on "The Power of Concentration," which he regards as the secret of strength and of hypnotic power. Charles Johnston writes on "The Message of India." Dr. Elizabeth Hotchkiss offers a psychological study of "La Svengali," a character in Du Maurier's *Trilby*; and Dr. Brodbeck, of the Advisory Council of the World's Parliament of Religions, writes on "The Ideal of Universities." The *Metaphysical Magazine* is conducted by L. E. Whipple, and is stated to be "Devoted to Occult, Philosophic, and Scientific Research." If it would confine itself to the latter departments, it might do a useful work; but, in our experience, Occultism leads to cant no less than to charlatanry.

In Cairo not only is University education entirely free, but the students, numbering 10,000 a year, are also supplied with free meals. Yet Christians talk of the backwardness of Moslems, while the fact is that to them and to the Jews they owe the beginnings of European education.

The *Ironclad Age* says: "Paine and Wesley both came from England to America. Wesley labored to give us a creed, Paine to give us a country."

In *Open Court*, of Chicago, Dr. F. L. Oswald writes on Huxley as "The British Diagoras," and alludes to the practical character of his labors. He says: "He calls attention to the enormous amount of time, labor, and parchment which the scholastic visionaries of the Middle Ages wasted on purely fatuous topics. He mentions theologians who quarrelled like bull-dogs about the gala-day dress of the Holy Virgin, and the comparative speed of winged demons and heavenly messengers. He enumerates scores of theosophical problems that have been argued with battle-axes, though a vestige of common sense should have recognised them as more unprofitable than a dispute about the age of the man in the moon."

Public Opinion, of New York (July 18), devotes three columns to extracts from American papers on "Professor Huxley and Religion." The New York *Evening Post* says his greatest work was in the promotion of intellectual honesty. The *Critic* says: "When a few years have passed and the dust of recent struggles has been laid, the history of modern progress will be more clearly discerned. It will then become evident that our century has been the era of what Huxley emphatically styled a 'New Reformation,' in which he has been one of the most efficient leaders."

The New York Catholic *Freeman's Journal* speaks of him as a protagonist of the modern anti-Christian school of Darwinians. It says: "We have used the phrase, 'anti-Christian school,' in reference to these men designedly; for, though they did not attack Christianity with the directness and bitterness of Voltaire, Paine, and others of that class, they yet attacked it indirectly and insidiously; and, if their theories were once accepted as truths, the result would be the same—the overthrow of the Christian religion."

The *Outlook*, in an article on Huxley, says: "His ethical standards are noble, and part of his hostility to institutional religion is due to his conviction that orthodoxy gives the sanction of the Church and the Bible to low and false ethical ideals. As Mr. Morley in literature, so Mr. Huxley in science, represents with great ability, with absolute candor, and, we believe, with perfect sincerity of conviction, that modern humanitarianism which would divorce morals from religion and retain the former without the latter. In our judgment, the divorce is impossible—the moral life is the religious spirit applied to daily conduct. But we are quite willing to see the attempt made, and we recognise the sincerity and earnestness of the endeavor."

Dr. Heber Newton's heresy, that Christ was not physical, but only spiritual, whatever that may mean, is still exciting much controversy in New York. The *Sun* of that city very sensibly says: "We can only believe in the resurrection because we believe in revelation. It is a dogma, not a scientific demonstration. It must be given up altogether as beyond the reach of human knowledge, or it must be accepted on faith, as the miracle of the incarnation, equally opposed to all science, must be accepted. If God himself has not told men of the resurrection, they are absolutely and hopelessly in the dark regarding it. They cannot construct any reasonable theory of it. One man's opinion on the subject is as good as another's, for nobody's is worth anything." A daily newspaper could not be expected to go much further in the admission that the whole story is baseless.

Public Opinion, of New York, recognises the *Freethinker* as an independent organ of opinion, and quotes from our columns on the question of Herbert Spencer's Agnosticism.

As we expected, Mr. W. H. Burr, of Washington, the persistent advocate of the claims of Paine to be "Junius," shouts Hallelujah over the newly-discovered letters of Junius. He declares "the sentiments expressed in the letter on priestcraft are diametrically opposed to those of

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Philip Francis, and in entire accord with those of Thomas Paine."

Mr. J. E. Ellis has been returned for Rushcliffe. He promised to support the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. The Conservative candidate did not answer the questions put to him on this subject. Dr. Farquharson, member for West Aberdeenshire, said he would most certainly vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

Mr. Ashton, the new member for South Bedfordshire, satisfactorily answered all our "Questions for Candidates," after an interview with Mr. William Rudd, of Luton, one of the sturdiest Freethinkers in that locality. Mr. Ashton's answers were given in writing.

Mr. George Crookson, of Hoyland Common, near Barnsley, submitted our "Questions for Candidates" to Mr. F. S. Hatchard, a candidate in his division. This gentleman must have hatched very hard indeed, if we may judge by his reply. He says that Secular Societies are "not kept without legal security," that "Legacies left to Secular Societies are not withheld," that "Freethought is not a crime under existing laws," and that "You can bequeath what you like to Secular Societies under existing laws." Mr. Hatchard is either very ignorant (on this subject) or very—something else. We let him make his own selection.

Lord Morpeth and Sir James Joicey, in the Chester-le-street division, were both in favor of abolishing the Blasphemy Laws. The former was returned by a large majority.

THE HONORARIUM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

It will be remembered that at the last Conference of the National Secular Society a letter was read from Mr. George Anderson, suggesting that its President "should be recouped for his loss of time and money in serving the party's interests." Accordingly, the Conference appointed a Committee, consisting of Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Robert Forder, and Mr. George Ward, to consider the best plan to be adopted for carrying out the suggestion. The Committee met and drew up a circular, which probably most of the readers of the *Freethinker* have seen.

This Committee unanimously passed the following resolution, proposed by Mr. George Anderson, and seconded by Mr. George Ward: "That the sum to be paid the President of the N.S.S. for this year be £100, to be confirmed, augmented, or diminished each year by vote of the Conference."

By this resolution it was the desire of the Committee to carry out the object, for which it had been appointed by the congress of delegates, in the most satisfactory manner both as to terms and amount, leaving the Society to act yearly in future as circumstances might dictate.

It is to be hoped that what has been done will meet with the approval of the Secular party, and that its members will subscribe the required amount as promptly as possible.

CHARLES WATTS.

[Subscriptions can be sent to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., or paid to any member of the Committee.]

Subscriptions Received:—

Already acknowledged, £47 9s. 6d.

Per R. Forder: Mr. Waller, 5s.; J. Thackray, 2s. 6d.; B. Thackray, 2s. 6d.; G. L. Mackenzie, 2s. 6d.; W. W. Roberts, 5s.; G. F. Wenborn, 10s.; A Materialist, 5s.

Per Miss Vance: F. J. and G. Brady, £1; W. H. Stevens, £1 1s.; C. Shepherd, 2s.; G. H., 2s. 6d.; W. Johnson, 5s.; G. W., 2s.; C. B., 10s.; A. F., 2s. 6d.; A. Anderson, 5s.; Mrs. Penny, 5s.; H. Price, 2s. 6d.; H. S. Ashford, 3s. 6d.; W. S., 10s. 6d.; W. H. Morrish, £1 1s.

Per Mr. Watts: S. A. Gimson, £1; D. Baker, £1 1s.; R. Bulman, 5s.

Per Mr. Foote: G. R., £3; E. Truelove, £2.

A thief, who was tried on a charge of having stolen eight Bibles, valued at twenty-five shillings, had the impudence to tell the magistrate that he stole the books "to start a Sunday-school."

ANIMALS' RIGHTS.

THOUGH the general public is only now beginning to recognise that the lower animals, like human beings, have rights, the subject is one which has attracted the attention of many thinking minds. Thus, Emeritus Professor F. W. Newman, in a published letter, has said: "Evidently the reason why it is wicked to torture a man is not because he has an immortal soul, but because he has a highly sensitive body; and so has every vertebrate animal, especially the warm blooded. If we have no moral right to torture a man, neither have we a moral right to torture a dog." And again: "We have to add to our morals a new chapter on the Rights of Animals. Men who teach to trample them down are teachers of hard-heartedness, and are real enemies of mankind, while they undertake to promote human welfare."

Professor Youatt, one of the greatest of English veterinarians, and an exceptionally distinguished humanitarian, says, in his introduction to his work on *The Obligation and Extent of Humanity to Brutes, Principally Considered with Reference to the Domestic Animals*: ". . . . the claims of the lower animals to humane treatment, or at least to exemption from abuse, are as good as any that man can urge upon man. Although less intelligent and not immortal, they are susceptible to pain; but because they cannot remonstrate nor associate with their fellows in defence of their rights, our best theologians and philosophers have not condescended to plead their cause, or even to make mention of them, although, as just asserted, they have as much right to protection from ill-usage as the best of their masters have. Nay, the matter has been carried further than this. At no very distant period the right of wantonly torturing the inferior animals, as caprice or passion dictated, was unblushingly claimed; and it was asserted that the prevention of this was an interference with the rights and liberties of man."

Sir Arthur Helps, in his *Talks About Animals and their Masters*, quotes a remarkable passage, applying the principle of natural law to the rights of animals, from the works of that great writer of jurisprudence, Jeremy Bentham, who says: "The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. It may come one day to be recognised that the number of legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the caprice of the tormentor. What else is it that should trace the inseparable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is, beyond comparison, a more rational as well as a more conversable animal than an infant of a day or a week, or even a month old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what could it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they speak? but, Can they suffer?"

In the sense that men have rights, animals have rights (though in a smaller degree) which should be respected; justice requires it. Justice is due to all human beings; this being so, "how is it possible to evade the admission that we are bound also to act justly towards the races below us?" asks Porphyry, one of the finest humanitarian philosophers of the Roman Empire, who, along with Seneca and Plutarch, taught humanity on the broadest principle of universal benevolence.

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

Pious Unveracity.

The great body of men affecting the name of good and pious have unconsciously abnegated the sacred privilege and duty of acting or speaking the truth, and fancy that it is not truth that is to be acted, but that an amalgam of truth and falsity is the safe thing. In parliament and pulpit, in book and speech, in whatever spiritual thing men have to commune of or to do together, this is the rule they have lapsed into, this is the pass they have arrived at. We have to report that Human Speech is not true! that it is false to a degree never witnessed in this world till lately.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

Obituary.

DR. ROBERT LEWINS, who has recently died at the age of seventy-eight, was chiefly known as the advocate of Hylo-Idealism, and the introducer of Miss Constance Naden to the reading world. He had served in the army as medical surgeon-in-chief, in the Crimean War and in India, and was the author of many contributions to philosophy.

Pointing to another world will never stop vice among us; shedding light over this world can alone help us.—*Whitman.*

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BOOK CHAT.

Renie, by James Prior, is the pathetic story of an illegitimate child, who discovers her father in the person of the Rev. C. Millar, a popular Nonconformist sky-pilot. Her claim for recognition is refused, and the girl is led to believe her mother also desires to thrust her away. She dies of starvation, and her father is preaching to a wrapt congregation of heaven—"leading them down the golden street, like a beatific cicerone. . . . I see it! I see it! the Pearl of Cities! My eye is rich with its glory—" "Down from that pulpit, Clarence Millar! Down from that pulpit!" It was his wife's voice. She had found her daughter just too late. The story is sufficiently life-like to make some think it may be founded on fact.

* * *

Nature in Arcadia, by H. K. Swann (Swann & Co., 2 Bouverie-street, E.C.), is a description of Nova Scotia, dedicated to H. D. Thoreau. It possesses some of the characteristics of that author, Mr. Swann evidently being a keen student and lover of nature as well as an authority on one of nature's beautiful products—birds.

* * *

Mr. H. T. Finck, in *Lotos Times in Japan*, eulogises the heathen Jap. The crimes which in Christian lands have necessitated the establishment of Societies for the Protection of Children from Cruelty do not exist in Japan. There are no such societies in "the England of the East." It was Sir Rutherford Alcock who said that Japan was "the paradise of babies." We are also told that, unlike Christian nations, the Japanese have no need to establish Societies for the Protection of Animals. "The Japanese pray for the souls of their horses and cows."

* * *

Augusta Klein, in her description of scenes in India, entitled *Among the Gods*, mentions a visit to the tooth of Buddha. This tooth has suffered strange vicissitudes of fortune since it left Gautama's jaws, if it ever saw them. Concealed in the hair of the pious Princess of Kalinga, it arrived in Ceylon at the beginning of the third century of our era. Captured in 1315 by the Malabars, borne away to India, and thence recovered, it eventually fell into the hands of a Portuguese archbishop of Goa, who in 1560 pounded the same in a mortar, and burnt the dust thereof. From all which vicissitudes it miraculously recovered itself, to repose at length in the peaceful splendors of its illustrious Kandyan home.

* * *

Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam, of Liverpool, announces in the *Crescent* that his new work, *Studies in Islam*, is now in the press, and will shortly be published at the price of half-a-crown.

* * *

M. Théodore Reinach, himself a Jew, has published in French the texts of Greek and Roman authors relative to Judaism. The texts clearly show that anti-Semitism is no new thing. God's chosen race, by their exclusiveness, seem to have drawn upon themselves the odium of nearly all who knew them. A curious charge brought by several authors was, that they were really worshippers of Sabazius, a form of Dionysius or Bacchus. Their Sabbath and Feast of Tabernacles may have led to this, and the strange charge of ass-worship may have been connected therewith.

* * *

The *Edinburgh Review*, noticing Mr. Balfour's book, says: "The main outcome of *The Foundations of Belief* is the glorification of authority at the expense of reason."

* * *

A translation of Beyschlag's *New Testament Theology* forms the latest volume of T. T. Clark's Foreign Theological Library. Dr. Beyschlag holds to a sort of Conservative Unitarian standpoint, rejecting inspiration and toning down supernaturalism.

* * *

In the Catholic *Month* there is an article on "The Origin and Development of the Vatican Library," by Mr. W. Hone. He says the credit of being the real founder belongs to Nicholas V. (1448-1453), at whose death the number of volumes was 1,160, of which about 350 were Greek Mss. If Christians would reflect upon this admission that at Rome there was no great library, even for the Popes, until the fifteenth century, it might prove an eye-opener.

* * *

Mr. Putnam says that Ingersoll's poem on Robert Burns is kept in a case at the cottage near Ayr, with the inscription, "By an unknown American admirer." It will probably soon be known after this who the admirer is, and his tribute will be allowed to be one worthy of the great Scotch poet.

The *Daily News*, reviewing Mr. H. Somers Somerset's *Land of the Muskeg*, says that in the immense area of the Hudson's Bay territory the rival Catholic and Protestant missionaries seek to capture each other's converts rather than to convert the heathen Indians. Between the Anglican and the Romanist it is a game of pull-devil-pull-baker for the perplexed red man's soul. The Anglicans, giving more doles, generally get the pull in the winter-time; but in the summer the Indians revert to Catholicism, which has been longer established there.

* * *

Mr. Somerset tells the Cree Indians' legend of a universal deluge, in which the Wanderer builds a big canoe and takes in many kinds of animals. After he had been on the water many days, he got a young beaver to dive down to see if the water was still deep, or if the flood were abating. But the little animal was afraid to dive too deep, and returned, saying that he saw nothing but water and no land. Then the "Wanderer" was angry, for he knew that the little beaver had not done his best, therefore he cursed him, saying, "Cursed shalt thou be; thou shalt never grow, nor thy tail grow, but thou shalt only imitate the beavers." And this was the first musk-rat. Then he sent a big beaver, and he swam and reached the bottom, and brought a little earth up with him to the side of the canoe, and there he died. So the "Wanderer" took the grains of earth and blew upon them, and the world arose and was dry. And he blessed the beavers, and said that they should always try to dam the streams and stop them running, lest they might again flood the whole earth. That touch about the musk-rat would alone be enough to upset any theory about borrowing from Semitic legend.

* * *

In Sir Edwin Arnold's *Tenth Muse, and Other Poems*, there is "The Story of the Snake," from the Mahabharata. It well illustrates the Hindu fatalistic doctrine of Karma. A snake kills a boy, and is reproached. The snake lays the blame on Death, and Death on Kâla, the god of gods. But Kâla speaks, and declares that neither the snake, death, nor he is to blame. The boy killed himself.

> The Karma of this child did kill this child;
> No other cause was there that brought its end:
> Of Karma he did die. That which he wrought
> In many lives ere this, led hereunto
> Implicitly.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> For will makes deeds,
> And deeds make Karma, and the Karma makes
> The outcoming. As when ye press the clay
> This way and that, and see it harden, so
> Men for themselves shape Fate. Shadow and light
> Are not more surely tied each unto each
> Than man to Karma, and to Karma man;
> Therefore perceive and ponder. Therefore know
> Not I, nor Mrityu, nor the Snake, nor she,
> The Brahman mother, brought this death about;
> The child did bring it: it was his doing, his,
> Fixed from the flowing past, inevitable.

Science and Theology.

Theology of the old stamp, so far from encouraging us to love nature, teaches us that it is under a curse. It teaches us to look upon the animal creation with shuddering disgust; upon the whole race of man, outside our narrow sect, as delivered over to the Devil; and upon the laws of nature at large as a temporary mechanism, in which we have been caught, but from which we are to anticipate a joyful deliverance. It is science, not theology, which has changed all this; it is the Atheists, Infidels, and Rationalists, as they are kindly called, who have taught us to take fresh interest in our poor fellow denizens of the world, and not to despise them because Almighty benevolence could not be expected to admit them to heaven. To the same teaching we owe the recognition of the noble aspirations embodied in every form of religion, and the destruction of the ancient monopoly of divine influences; and it is science again that has taught us to accommodate ourselves to the laws in which we are placed, instead of fruitlessly struggling against them, and invoking miraculous interference to conquer them.—*Leslie Stephen's "Freethinking and Plain Speaking," pp. 353-4.*

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

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A KIRK MANAGER'S ESCAPADE.

An episode occurred the other Sunday, in the United Presbyterian Church here, which gave greater entertainment to the congregation than either the maunderings of the minister anent heaven and hell, or the melodious warblings of the choir as to Moab being their wash-pot, and Edom the most convenient place to cast their shoes; while, as an object-lesson showing the remarkable power of the gospel in keeping men sober and of good report, it stands as one of the brightest and most unique upon their records. This particular Sabbath there appeared at the kirk door one of the *leading managers* arrayed in the tall, but necessary *lum'*, hat, *full of the Spirit*, and worship written doggedly on his visage. In vain did the plate-watchers coax him to return home; inside the kirk he would go—his maker had need of him; and inside he went, stalking steadily up the aisle. Seating himself, he threw his head forward, leaning upon the book-board, *lum'* hat still on; and, before the shocked congregation could count six, he was locked in the arms of Morpheus. Immediately began the most frightful stertorous snores that ever emanated from a human nostril. The audience smiled, smiles became convulsive, smothered, choking laughter; in vain did the Rev. Mr. Leitch (the minister of that other religion called the Free Kirk, who happened to be officiating on this occasion) endeavor to bawl the sleeper down. Louder and louder grew the sound. The worshippers could have been tied with straws at thus witnessing the unequal match, till at last the man of God lost his Christian patience, and, in most un-Christian tones, roared out: "Stop that man." Methinks, if the delinquent had looked up, he might have proudly replied: "Man! Ca' ye me a man; I'm no' a man, I'm a manager of the Kirk!" However, at last a mild individual rose, and, touching the somnolent one, told him he was disturbing the people. I cannot exactly vouch what the reply was, but the *Glasgow Evening News* had a short paragraph in which it stated he testily yelped out: "Whaur's the fire? whaur's the fire?"

I may add that the erring gent has been seen at the worshipping business since, quite awake, so that "all's well that ends well."

S. C.

"THE" BOOK.

Oh, Blessed Book! Oh, Glorious Book!
Seeking to save our souls alive;
Why is it that our reason's glow
To stifle ever thou dost strive?

In thee, Oh Book of mystery vague,
We place implicit confidence;
With boundless faith absorb thy love,
And never ask for evidence.

'Tis said thou'rt written by the God
That guided Israel of old;
So if we ne'er let doubt creep in
We're sure to bring up "in the fold."

Oh, Book! thou'rt truly Godlike in
Thy wisdom and thy purity:
Which may explain why, of thee, much
Is best left in obscurity.

Thy contents point the inference
That he who's called thy author, Book!
In morals and in knowledge must
Up to the human being look.

This being so, we then declare
This earth has had enough of thee.
Hie thee hence! Thou art not fit
To be in our society.

Then, without thee, the throbbing heart
Of all humanity shall burn
With love of Truth, and Science grand,
And swift the wheel of Progress turn.

Our minds shall never crystallise:
Each opening thought shall welcome find.
All hail the day that ushers in
The Heaven of Reason for mankind.

THOR.

The divorce between Church and State should be absolute.—*Garfield.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

A RADICAL PROGRAM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I know yours is not a political paper, and that you seek rather to mould ideas than to model institutions. But at the present time, when everyone is talking politics, we Freethinkers might look round and see if the Liberal discomfiture cannot be made to subserve the interests of Freethought. I think it can. Let us point out to Liberals that the Church is practically united against them. Let us urge them to go for the Church. There is no more crying injustice than the absence of religious equality. Not only the Welsh and Scotch, but the English Church must be disestablished and disendowed before religious equality is won, and the attack should now be made, not on the outworks, but on the citadel. With this would be associated the beginning of reform of the Lords, by relieving bishops from their temporal duties in the Upper Chamber. A stout propaganda against the Church would attack the Conservatives on their weakest side, and if Sir William Harcourt is not the man to take it up I hope that John Morley or Mr. Asquith will. A propaganda for religious equality should be started, which will not rest until all churches are equal, blasphemy laws and Sunday laws are abolished, and theology is banished from the domain of politics.

PERKIN WARBECK.

PROFANE JOKES.

Sunday-school Teacher—"Can any boy tell me about Good Friday?" Little Boy—"He was the felly what done work for Crusoe."

Rev. Dr. Scowler—"What a large number of young men you have in your congregation. Do you always have so many?" Rev. Dr. Howler—"Oh, no. Last Sunday evening I announced that to-night I would preach a special sermon to young women."

"Suppose, Bobbie, that another boy should strike your right cheek," asked the Sunday-school teacher, "what would you do?" "Give him the other cheek to strike," said Bobbie. "That's right," said the teacher. "Yes," said Bobbie, "and if he struck that, I'd wallop him!"

"Beg pardon, sir," said the passenger in the skull cap, tired of the monotony of the journey, and desirous of scraping an acquaintance with the man in the next seat, "are you travelling for some house?" "No, sir," replied the other. "I am not in business. I am a Universalist preacher." "Shake!" rejoined the man in the skull cap, heartily. "I'm an agent for a fire-extinguisher myself."

Olive F. Gumby, in the New York *Post*, says: "Visiting in North Carolina some years ago, I was urged by a colored attendant to go to a camp-meeting near by to hear an 'edication' (educated) preacher. I went; and this was part of the sermon I heard: 'De Bible is a wery ole book, my brederin, a wery ole book. It neber was fixed no sich fashion as it is now een de old days. It used to be print on rolls what could be mash up een a mighty leetle size. Saint Paul, he lub de Gospel dat much till he swallow one ob dem rolls. Dat make de scribe certify dat de word of God was een him.'"

He reports another preacher who, with his eyes fixed upon the ceiling, appealed strongly to the Lord to appear before the wayward sinners, who would not hearken to the word and come forward to the mourner's bench. "Come down, Lord! Come down!" shrieked the preacher in an agony of entreaty; "we's a-'pendin' on you to come right now and convict dese hardened hearts. Come right down t'rough de roof; we'll pay for every plank you bus' off."

Theological Humility.

Theology crushes us into nothingness by placing us in the presence of the Infinite God, and then compensates us by making us divine ourselves. Man is a mere worm, but he can, by priestly magic, bring God to earth; he is hopelessly ignorant, but, set on a throne and properly manipulated, he becomes an infallible vice-god; he is a helpless creature, and yet this creature can define, with more than scientific accuracy, the precise nature of his inconceivable Creator; he grovels on the ground as a miserable sinner, and stands up to declare that he is the channel of divine inspiration; all his wisdom is ignorance, but he has written one book of which every line is perfect; and, meanwhile, that which one man singles out as the divine element is to another the diabolical, so strangely dim is our vision, and so imperceptible is the difference between the infinite and the infinitesimal.—*Leslie Stephen.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7, musical selections; 7.30, W. Heaford, "The Problem of Evil."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday, at 8.30, dance. Thursday, at 8, committee.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Charles Watts will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Is the *Jerusalem Star* Inspired?"

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss will lecture.

CAMBERWELL GREEN: Tuesday, at 8, a lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, a lecture.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. Cohen will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, a lecture.

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11, a lecture; 3.15, a lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, a lecture. Thursday at 8, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture; 3.30, a lecture. Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Is the Old Testament a True Record of Events?"

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, a lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, a lecture.

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, a lecture.

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.

TOTTENHAM GREEN: 3.30, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. Lewis will lecture; 7, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN: 3, business meeting at secretary's house.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, a reading.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, C. Doeg, "Genesis." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, T. Barlow, "The White Slaves of England and their Emancipation."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, G. W. Foote, "Secularism and the New Parliament"; 3, "How Stands the Bible Now?" 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" 8, adjourned annual meeting for election of officers. Monday, Aug. 5, Excursion to Morpeth, from Central Station at 10.15.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, select entertainment.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting—important.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, W. Treasure, "Christianity and Society."

CHATHAM (corner of the New Brompton-road, High-street): 11.15, A. Guest, "Bible Tragedy and Comedy"; 7, "Recipes for Happiness."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 4, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford; 6, Camberwell; 8, Wood Green; 11, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 15, Wood Green; 18, m. and a. Finsbury Park; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—August 4, Camberwell; 11, Westminster; 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—August 4, Kingsland. Sept. 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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THE BIBLE AND LOCAL VETO.

(Concluded from page 488.)

DAVID himself, the man after God's own heart—if he wrote the Psalms—pays a tribute to drinking. He speaks of "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man" (civ. 15). But the Psalmist is eclipsed by the writer of Judges, who celebrates "wine which cheereth God and man" (ix. 13). Wine which cheereth God! What a glow there must be in that liquor! Jehovah liked it, and insisted on having it sound and full-bodied.

> "In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering" (Numbers xxviii. 7).

Before leaving the Old Testament, we must refer to a striking passage in Amos. After bewailing the captivity of Israel, the prophet looks forward to her restoration. He depicts an ultimate state of peace, plenty, and happiness. But it is not a teetotaler's paradise. "The mountains," he exclaims, "shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." He continues:—

> "I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof" (ix. 14).

Under the restoration every Jew was to sit under his own fig-tree; but, at least in the opinion of Amos, he would have something better than cold water to sip as he enjoyed the shade of his broad fig-leaves. And as Amos was an "inspired" writer—certainly as much so as any other contributor to Holy Writ—we may conclude that the God of the Bible in no way favors teetotalism.

Let us now turn to the New Testament, and begin with Paul. The great Apostle always enjoins sobriety, but never teetotalism. Even when he specifies the proper characteristics of a bishop, he merely says "not given to wine" (1 Timothy iii. 3)—which of course refers to excessive drinking. No one would say that a man was "given to wine" who drank a glass or two at dinner.

In another epistle the becoming way of life is laid down for "aged" men and women. The men should be "sober," and the women "not given to much wine" (1 Titus ii. 2, 3). This is a reprehension of excess, and also a permission of moderate drinking. Indeed, in the first epistle to Timothy the Apostle distinctly prescribes the use of a stimulant.

> "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (v. 23).

It has been suggested that Timothy's wine was for external application; it was to be rubbed in; Paul was recommending an embrocation. But this suggestion is too facetious. The author of it was a sly dog, who wanted to throw ridicule on teetotalism or the Bible, or perhaps on both.

Jesus Christ was no more a teetotaler than Paul. There is no evidence that he ever drank water when there was anything better going. His enemies twitted him with being no Nazarite, and provoked him to the following exclamation:—

> "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. xi. 18, 19; Luke vii. 33, 34).

One of the miracles of Jesus Christ was turning water into wine. After his baptism, according to Matthew, he fasted forty days in the wilderness; but three days after his baptism, according to John, he was at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. The company, on this occasion, was numerous or thirsty, or else the host was too poor, or too economical, to provide a requisite quantity of liquor. At any rate, they soon "wanted wine," and Jesus Christ manufactured about seventy-five gallons for them. It was generously done. They had plenty, and it was first-class. The chairman of the function was loud in his praises of the "fresh tap."

> "When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John ii. 9, 10).

It is a natural inference from this passage that the folk at that marriage feast were "well on" before the miraculous wine was passed round the table. The little speech of the "ruler of the feast" is admirable. His accents are those of a seasoned old toper, who knew the ways of the world on such occasions. He had seen dinners and suppers open with good liquor, and poor stuff introduced when the guests were fuddled and incapable of discrimination. Of course *he* could discriminate, but what was one amongst so many? On this occasion, however, he was agreeably surprised. The wine positively improved just at the point where his experience led him to expect deterioration, and he thought it only an act of justice to make a flattering speech to the bridegroom.

According to John, this was "the beginning" of Jesus Christ's miracles. His very first performance was turning water into wine to keep a spree going. And the wine was not poor and thin, but good strong tipple, with excellent body and flavor. It will not do, therefore, to champion teetotalism, or even temperance, on Gospel principles. Jesus Christ would not be eligible as a member of any Christian Temperance Society.

The last supper that Jesus took with his apostles was seasoned with wine. Theology says that the bread symbolised his body, and the wine his blood. Protestants take the holy communion in both forms. Catholics are only allowed to eat the body of Christ in the form of a consecrated wafer. The priests, however, both eat his body and drink his blood. For the best part of two thousand years, therefore, Christians have used intoxicating liquor in the eucharist. It is only of late years—in fact, since the Temperance movement became important—that an attempt has been made to substitute a more innocent beverage. Here and there the attempt has been successful, but in the vast majority of churches and chapels the wine used is one that you might get drunk upon if you took a sufficient quantity.

Now this is not teetotalism. It is not even temperance. There can be little doubt that many Christians struggling against the lust for drink have had their appetites whetted at the communion table. Where all must drink out of the same cup the beverage should be adapted to the weakest and those possessed of the least self-control. On such an occasion it would be well to remember the counsel of Paul:—

> "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine,

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nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans xiv. 21).

If a meat-eater and a vegetarian must dine together on one dish, the dish must consist of vegetables; for the meat-eater can take them, while the vegetarian cannot take meat. In the same way, if a strong man and a weak man have to drink together, the strong one should remember his brother's weakness. It is a damnable sin to offer strong drink to all alike; to those who are safe in their self-control, and to those who are in peril through their frailty. Yet this is what the Churches have done, this is what they still do. And it is these very Churches that pretend to be the truest friends of temperance. The minister uncorks the port-wine bottle on a Sunday morning, and pours out the sanguine fluid to the devotees, whether men, women, or young people only just confirmed. In the evening he preaches a rousing sermon against drink, as the greatest curse of the nation, and alleges that the remedy is only to be found in the principles of Christianity.

Mohammedanism does not go to work in this way. Christians often speak of Mohammed as a hypocrite and an impostor. But there was no hypocrisy in his attitude towards drinking. He prohibited it altogether. Mohammedanism is a teetotal religion, and Christianity is not. How the son of the Ameer of Afghanistan must smile at the humbug of Christianity! Being a strict Mohammedan, he drinks nothing intoxicating; and here in England, the most Christian country of the European world, where they subscribe for missionaries to convert the poor Mohammedans and other "heathen," people calling themselves Christians, who would regard it as a deadly insult to be called unbelievers, go about reeling drunk—stinking, helpless, and quarrelsome.

It is a curious thing that some of the most famous drinks in Christendom were introduced to the world by the Church. This fact was boasted the other day by an American doctor, who is also an orthodox Christian. He indicated it as one of the things for which we ought to feel grateful. One liqueur is manufactured by the monks of Chartreuse, and another by a monastery of Benedictines. There is even a much-prized drink called (in Latin) the Tears of Christ. Surely this is a climax. To say anything after it would be superfluous. We therefore leave the Christian teetotalers with the Bible in one hand, and a glass of the Tears of Christ in the other, haranguing the world on the glories of Temperance.

G. W. FOOTE.

LESLIE STEPHEN ON THOMAS PAINE.

In Mr. Leslie Stephen's brilliant *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* he was guilty of a gross attack upon the memory of Paine. Oblivious of the obvious fact that a shortening of the Christian name often represents a term of endearment, as in the case of Colonel Ingersoll, who is familiarly known as "Pagan Bob," he declared that "good Englishmen expressed their disgust for the irreverent infidel by calling him 'Tom,' and the name still warns all men that its proprietor does not deserve even posthumous civility." This was specially bad from a critic who had gone far greater lengths in heresy than Paine ever approached, and induced a suspicion that he not only spoke "without due caution," but that he was anxious to curry favor with the orthodox by throwing abuse on a general scapegoat. Mr. Stephen was fairly called over the coals at the time, and we are content to let bygones be bygones.

In devoting twenty columns* to the life of Paine, in the last published volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (vol. lv.), Mr. Stephen has, if not made reparation for his abuse, at least treated his subject with the civility befitting the standard work which he himself at first edited, and has availed himself of the materials brought forward by Mr. Moncure D. Conway in his excellent and now standard *Life of Thomas Paine*, though, perhaps, not quite as much as might be desired. The notice of Paine is indeed somewhat sketchy and inadequate; but then Mr. Stephen had a vast deal of matter to boil down into reasonable compass, and in this he has succeeded as only a practised literary man could do.

* Paley has only eleven columns.

On the question of Paine's character Mr. Stephen remarks: "Paine was more or less 'ostracised' by society during his last stay in America. Political and theological antipathies were strong, and Paine, as at once the assailant of Washington and the federalists and the author of the *Age of Reason*, was hated by one party, while the other was shy of claiming his support. It has also been said that his conduct was morally offensive, and charges against him have been accepted without due caution. His antagonist Cheetham made them prominent in a life published in 1809. He accused Paine of having seduced Madame Bonneville, of habitual drunkenness, and of disgustingly filthy habits. The charges were supported by a letter to Paine from Carver, with whom Paine had lodged. Madame Bonneville immediately sued Cheetham for slander. Cheetham made some attempt to support his case with the help of Carver, but Carver retracted the charges; it completely broke down, and the jury at once found Cheetham guilty. Cheetham was sentenced to the modest fine of $150. The judge, said to be a federalist, observed in mitigation that his book 'served the cause of religion.' It is very intelligible that Madame Bonneville's position should have suggested scandal, but all the evidence goes to show that it was groundless. Paine's innumerable enemies never accused him of sexual immorality, and in that respect his life seems to have been blameless. The special charges of drunkenness made by Cheetham and Carver are discredited by the proof of their character; Carver's letter to Paine was written or dictated by Cheetham, and seems to have been part of an attempt to extort money. Carver afterwards confessed that he had lied as to drink."

Another point on which Christian calumny fastened was an alleged awful death-bed, Paine in this sharing the common fate of noted infidels, who are popularly supposed either to recant or suffer horribly when they come to die. All Mr. Stephen thinks necessary to say is that "various stories calculated to show that Paine repented of his opinions on his death-bed were obviously pious fictions meant to 'serve the cause of religion.'"

"Paine," says Mr. Stephen, "deserves whatever credit is due to absolute devotion to a creed believed by himself to be demonstrably true and beneficial. He showed undeniable courage, and is free from any suspicion of mercenary motives." He incidentally mentions that his pamphlets were published at prices too low to be remunerative, and remarks that his "singular power of clear, vigorous exposition made him unequalled as a pamphleteer in revolutionary times, when compromise was an absurdity. He also showed great shrewdness and independence of thought in his criticism of the Bible."

Mr. Stephen's concluding words are: "His substantial merits will be differently judged according to his reader's estimate of the value of the doctrines of abstract rights and *à priori* deism with which he sympathised. There can be only one opinion as to his power of expressing his doctrines in a form suitable 'for the use of the poor.'"

Inadequate, indeed, this must seem to those acquainted with the services of Paine as a pioneer in all modern reform. Mr. Conway justly remarks of Paine, that he was the first to speak for the independence of the United States; the first to urge extension of the principles of independence to the enslaved negro; the first to arraign monarchy, and to point out the danger of its survival in presidency; the first to advocate international arbitration; the first to suggest more rational ideas of marriage and divorce; the first to plead for animals; the first to demand justice for women. He would have received general applause had he not incurred theological odium by his attack on Bibliolatry. He attacked the forces of oppression in their stronghold—that of religion. It is to Paine, and to those who upheld his writings, that we are largely indebted for such measure of liberty in political and religious criticism as we enjoy. Mr. Stephen ought to know that Paine's services would outweigh a host of faults, and entitle him to something more than "posthumous civility."

J. M. Wheeler.

So late as in the year 1674 the clergy in Convocation insisted on a right to tax themselves, and this right was recognised by the Commons.—*Lord Camden*, "*Parl. Hist.*," *vol. xvi., p. 169.*

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THE VALUE OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

I HAVE been asked by "a constant reader of the *Freethinker*," who, through lack of leisure and access to necessary authorities, has not the opportunity of investigating the question of the modern criticism of the history of the Bible, to give a plain and popular explanation of what is known by the term "Higher Criticism." I readily comply with the request, and shall endeavor to show that this criticism completely destroys the old orthodox theory of the authorship and trustworthiness of the Biblical records.

The difference between the bold, rough-and-ready, but exceedingly effective criticism of Thomas Paine, and others of his day, and that of more modern critics of the Bible, consists not so much in its nature as in its style, and in the fact that much of it at the present time comes from avowed Christians. The *Age of Reason*, as a successful and vigorous attack upon Bible idolatry, will probably never be surpassed, and, although many attempts have been made to reply to it, the positions Paine took up therein against the dogma of Bible infallibility have never been refuted. The "Higher Criticism" may be regarded as a refined and scholarly confirmation of the trenchant work of Paine. Of course we welcome the new style, because it is not only "up to date," but it adds to the successful results of Freethought propaganda.

The authors of the books upon the Higher Criticism are not specially concerned with such aspects of the Bible as ordinary inquirers upon the subject are. The criticism is chiefly devoted to such questions as when, where, and by whom the Bible was written; while it has been discovered that, whatever value the Bible might otherwise possess, its history is doubtful, its contents contradictory, its chronology confusing, and many of its statements erroneous. Moreover, this criticism has clearly shown that the Pentateuch, now called the Hexateuch—for the book of Joshua is added to the first five books—was not written by Moses, nor, in fact, till hundreds of years after his death; that hardly any of the Psalms were written by David, but are the production of a much later age; that many so-called prophecies were given after the events described, and that the greater part of those hitherto supposed to predict the coming of a Messiah had no possible reference to Christ; that the book of Isaiah owes its origin to two different men, who did not live at the same time; that a large portion of the book of Daniel is not authentic; and that the inerrancy (this is the new word employed for truthfulness) of the Bible can no longer be maintained. In a word, it has made clear that the old and long-cherished notion that the book is the "infallible word of God" is thoroughly erroneous.

This criticism is valuable not only because it exposes the fallacy of the orthodox position as to the certitude of the "sacred writings," but for the reason that it shows the very doubtful character of the basis of Christianity. The Old Testament, as the Rev. Dr. Giles observes, "is a volume of the highest value to Christians, because its contents are essential to the existence of our own creed." If, therefore, the Jewish writings are proved to be untrustworthy, the faith based upon them is proportionately uncertain in its foundation. Dr. Giles distinctly says that "Christianity and Judaism are inseparably united; neither can exist without the other. . . . . The doctrinal parts of the Christian scheme, and all that gives to it the character of a divine revelation, become destitute of meaning until they are explained by the antecedents of the Jewish scriptures concerning the temptation of Eve, the fall of Adam, and his ejection from Paradise" (*Hebrew Records*, Introduction, pp. 18 and 19). Let us now see what the Higher Criticism has to say upon the authorship of some of the books and of the general contents of the Old Testament.

It may be here remarked that the various books of which the Old Testament is composed were not always in the separate form in which they now appear. When, however, the division took place is not known, but Bishop Tomline writes: "The beginnings of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are very abrupt, and plainly show that these books were formerly joined to Genesis." The first question to which modern criticism has been directed is, Who wrote the Pentateuch? Until recently the general opinion was that Moses was its author; and the same notion still obtains in orthodox circles. Even Dean Milman, in his *History of the Jews*, while admitting that many deductions may be made in consequence of alterations, additions, interpolations, errors in transcribing, etc., states that in the first five books of the Bible we have substantially the writings of Moses. The same view is expressed by many of the bishops and clergy when they address Sunday-school children, or when they preach from their pulpits, where discussion is not permitted. It does not raise those "spiritual guides" in our estimation as honest men to know that they thus mislead the young and also uninformed adults. The "lights of the Church" ought to know that the Higher Criticism, even when conducted by scholars of their own faith, has proved beyond all reasonable doubt that no evidence exists that Moses wrote the books which bear his name. On the contrary, as stated in the second edition of a work recently written by nine eminent Congregational M.A.'s, entitled *Faith and Criticism*, "we have no data to enable us to name, with any degree of probability, the authors of the Pentateuch, or of any other historical book, except the original Ezra and Nehemiah." Spinoza says: "Of the authors, or, if you please, writers, of many of the books [of the Old Testament] we either know almost nothing, or we entertain grave doubts as to the correctness with which the several books are ascribed to the parties whose names they bear. Then we neither know upon what occasion, nor at what time, those books were indited, the writers of which are unknown to us" (quoted by C. Bradlaugh, in his book, *The Bible: What it Is*, p. 56). Peyrere also wrote: "God suffered the autographs to perish, and only very imperfect copies to come down to us" (*ibid*).

This criticism has also shown that the Greek version, which is thought by some to give the clearest idea of the Hebrew scriptures, is enveloped in doubt and uncertainty. This version is termed the Septuagint, but the Rev. Dr. Irons observes: "No one knows who made it. It appears to be a growth of at least two generations; and, as might be expected, the style is not the same throughout" (*The Bible and its Interpreters*, p. 27). The Pentateuch was supposed by some to have been translated into Greek about 270 years before Christ, by seventy or seventy-two Jews who were shut up in separate cells, without communication with each other. But Hartwell Horne says that the learned men of his time were agreed that this story was "fictitious." Still, be the Septuagint what it may, it affords no evidence that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, which Bishop Colenso admitted could "not have been written in the age of Moses or for some time afterwards." In this opinion Sharpe agrees, for he says of Genesis: "We have no account of when this first of the Hebrew books was written, or by whom. It has been called one of the books of Moses, and some part of it may have been written by that great lawgiver and leader of Israelites. But it is the work of various authors and of various ages" (quoted by C. Bradlaugh in *The Bible: What it Is*, p. 57). Canon Driver rejects Ezra's account of how he was inspired to write the lost Bible, and also the Jewish account of who did write it. The Canon alleges that "no external evidence worthy of credit exists" as to the age and authorship of the Bible; that the writers of the historical books were compilers, not original authors; that Isaiah was not the writer of several chapters ascribed to him, for they were written by "another prophet writing towards the close of the Babylonian captivity"; that the Song of Solomon was a dream, and the book of Job a dramatic poem; that we have no authentic tradition respecting the authorship of the Psalms, many of which were written much later than the time of either David or Solomon; and that the book of Daniel was written not earlier than 300 B.C., and probably 167-168 B.C.

Further, it is admitted that the Hebrew Bible, as we have it now, is written in a character which was quite unknown to Moses and the prophets, and that in the style throughout there is a uniformity only to be explained, as the Jews themselves explain it, by the fact that at some time all the books underwent revision and redaction. And, again, the Hebrew Bible, as we have it, is written with certain Masoretic points, without which it could not be read with certainty, and those cannot be traced back beyond the seventh century of our era, before which time it was read in accordance with a merely traditional sense, termed the "Masora." The issue, then, of the Higher Criticism upon this point is, not that we can tell who the authors of the Bible really were, but that we may

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fairly conclude that many of the books were not written by the men whose names are now appended to them.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

BALAAM AND HIS ASS.

THERE is in Numbers xxii. the highly edifying story of Balaam and his she-ass.

Balaam was a prophet; that is, a medium. He speaks of himself as the "man who had his eyes shut"; and that when he fell down in ecstasy he had his eyes opened. He alone heard the ass talk. Neither his servants nor the Moabite princes who accompanied him at the time saw the angel.

All this goes to prove that Balaam was hypnotised, and his companions were not. Bible critics declare that "dreams and visions were the ordinary methods by which God made himself known to the prophets." That is, being inducted into the trance state, and then delivering themselves of inspired literature, like this asinine effusion, was called "God making himself known to the prophets." Thus the architect of the universe is made to dance attendance on this wizard as if the welfare of all the world was at stake; when, in fact, nothing was to be considered but whether or no Balaam should do some big swearing for cash in hand. As it promised to be very interesting as a business venture, Balaam did not care to undertake the job until he consulted his partner. So, when Balak's agents approached him he put them off until morning for his answer. In the meantime he telephoned God:—

"Hello! Central!"

"Well, what do you want?"

"Give me God."

"Who is this?"

"It is me, Balaam."

"Well, what do you want now?"

"Please to come down here; I want to get your opinion concerning a big job of cussing."

"All right. Be down in a jiffy." [Comes down.]

God—"What men are these with thee?"

[You see, reader, God, who is omniscient and omnipresent, had to come down unto Balaam, and had to inquire of him like the commonest mortal.]

Balaam—"Some princes that King Balak has sent to me, soliciting my cussing services for a consideration."

G.—"Whom do they want you to curse?"

B.—"They want me to cuss the Israelites."

G.—"Don't you go. I forbid you to do the job."

Then Balaam told the committee to go back home; the cursing aforesaid could not be done at any price. However, Balak persisted, and sent more messengers and more money. The king had plenty of cash, plenty of men, and plenty of war material; but he had made up his mind to "cuss 'em out," and nothing else would satisfy him.

Well, the telephone was again appealed to, and God visited Balaam this time after night; but, being worn out, we suppose, by their incessant interruptions, changed his mind and told Balaam to go, but that he would wire him as to the cursing.

Strange to relate, however, no sooner had Balaam saddled his ass and started on his journey than God changed his mind again; got himself into a towering rage, and sent an angel, armed with a drawn sword, after Balaam, with strict orders to kill him on the spot, which the said angel surely would have done if the ass had not had better use of her legs than the angel had of the weapon. The angel evidently was an awkward swordsman. Peradventure, his wings were somewhat in the way. Or, perhaps, he was out of practice.

Another remarkable feature is, that notwithstanding Balaam was a medium and a prophet, and the boss cusser of the universe, he did not have "spirit" enough about him to "recognise the spiritual" angel that was trying to kill him, nor sense enough to keep from cudgeling the ass for saving his worthless life. This is point blank proof that there is no such thing as "spirit recognising the spiritual," unless you are biologised. Here was a spirit chasing this fellow Balaam "up and down the road" with a flaming sword in his hand, and the ass dodging the licks, first to one side and then to the other side, squeezing Balaam's foot; and yet this greatest of spiritual mediums was as oblivious as an oyster as to what was going on right under his very nose.

Still another curious thing about this silly story is, from the twenty-second verse the word "God" is dropped, and the name "Lord" is used to the end of the chapter.

The angel made three diabolical attempts to assassinate the prophet, but in each of which he was frustrated by the agility of the ass. The angel attacked Balaam in the wide road. The ass dodged. The angel fluttered ahead to a very narrow spot in the road, sailed in on either side, and made another desperate lunge with his sword at the head of Balaam; but the ass hugged one of the walls so close that the murderous blow fell short, and the only harm done was that Balaam's foot was slightly damaged. Then the angel spread his wings and sailed to another part of the highway, which was so narrow that the dodging trick, *a la barre*, could not work; but again the beast outwitted the angel by falling flat down under Balaam.

For my part, I would have squandered more wealth to have seen that donkey-angel scrimmage than for a season ticket to a circus. But no spectators were allowed. The prophet, his two servants, and the Moabite princes were each and all as ignorant of this spirit manifestation as if they had been a thousand miles away. The ass alone saw the angel. Its spirit recognised the spiritual. At this juncture of affairs—that is, after three signal failures of God's authorised and inspired agent—the Lord interfered and opened the mouth of the ass, in order that the following divinely important dialogue might take place. Balaam, it seems, got tired of this continual dodging and falling about of the ass, and began to do some whacking.

Ass—"What have I done to thee that thou hast smitten me these three times?"

Balaam—"Because thou hast mocked me. I would there was a sword in my hand, for now I would kill thee."

Ass—"Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?"

Balaam—"Nay."

How sublime it all is, and how spiritual! That is, how like it is to all the heavenly literature of the present age and every age.

Is it not a little remarkable that a man like Balaam, who had such a national reputation for cursing, did not use some cuss words to his ass? I am not in favor of profanity, but must acknowledge that, if my ass was to fall down with me on a level road, I would do some tall swearing. I suppose cursing was a matter of business with Balaam, and he did not propose to fritter away his capital out there in the country, when there was no free silver in sight.

Here is some conversation which Balaam had with the angel. The Lord opened Balaam's eyes; that is, he inducted him into a trance state, just as he had a moment before hypnotised the ass.

As soon as Balaam saw the angel, but especially when he caught a glimpse of his big sword, he fell flat. All these second sighters in the Bible fall flat. It is the stock manœuvre. Peter fell flat; Paul fell flat; Balaam fell flat; the ass fell flat.

Angel—"Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times?"

[It appears to me this was an idiotic interrogatory for the angel to ask, he (the angel) knowing well why the prophet had whacked the animal; but of such stupidities is the kingdom of heaven!]

Balaam—"I have sinned. . . . . If it displeases thee, I will get me back again."

Angel—"Go with the men."

So Balaam went with the messengers of Balak.

Recapitulation: First, God says, "Don't go." Second, God says, "Go." Third, angel says, "Don't go." Fourth, angel says, "Go."

Great is the mystery of godliness—*i.e.*, besotted are the ways of superstition. That is, drivelling imbecility is called mystery; and lunatic raving with meaningless words is denominated godliness.

Interrogatory—"Why did the angel hypnotise the ass?"

This question is for the Sunday-schools. If the donkey had not been spiritually developed for that occasion, she would not have dodged, and Balaam would have been decapitated. For the life of me, there is no aspect in which this divine yarn can be seen that will allow it one particle

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of sense or decency from start to finish. Is it any wonder that the great Bishop Colenso, of the Church of England, should have denounced the entire Pentateuch as a fable, and Moses as a myth, after finding it crammed with such nonsense as this? The marvel is that rational beings, in this enlightened age, can have their reason so blinded by fear, so diseased by hope, so restricted by inconceivable dogmas, so warped by a mere rattle of theological terms, so poisoned by the self-appointed emissaries of an imaginary

. . . . Tom Noddy,
All mind and no body,

as to pretend to regard these absurdities as anything more than "such stuff as dreams are made of." PERSIUS.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

BROTHER PRINCE.

THE Americans have an abundant crop of Messiahs. There is Messiah Thomas Lake Harris, who, for a while, kept Laurence Oliphant under his thumb, and who, his devoted followers believe, will never die, but is rejuvenated, having the breath of God within him. There is Messiah Teed ("Koresh"), who holds the world is concave, and who is going to bring about a heaven upon earth, when no one will value gold and silver, and the Koreshans will possess all property. Then there is Christ Schweinfurth, who has set up, near Rockford, a heaven which is hardly distinguishable from a harem. Several women, too, have set up in the Messiah business.

In England we have had of late only one Messiah—namely, Brother Prince, the founder of the Agapemone, or Abode of Love, at Charlinch; and, owing to the paucity of his followers, he has attracted little attention. He is, if still living and unrejuvenated, now pretty old, having contracted matrimony in 1842, and been in the Messiah line ever since the following year. There are a few followers who assemble in the neighborhood of Stamford Hill, London, and the establishment at Charlinch is still maintained. Brother Prince was very religious from early youth. He held Theism as it should be held—as the very guidance of his life. If about to take a walk on a wet day, he would not carry an umbrella without first praying to God for guidance. He soon came to see that he was under special providence, and that all he did and said, and all he omitted to say and do, was, as he desired it to be, by express direction of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost having taken him in hand, he, of course, became a preacher. At Adullam Chapel, in Brighton, the ladies flocked to hear the young orator who was so powerful in prayer. One—a daughter of a wealthy clergyman in Ipswich—as I have said, he married in 1842. About three years later the strangeness of his views led to a rumpus, and he was compelled to leave Brighton. But he obtained a second curacy at Charlinch, a little village five miles from Bridgewater, and not readily accessible from anywhere else; and here he was followed by some of his Brighton admirers, and has stayed ever since. There was a good deal of money, whether his own or that of his followers, used in setting up the Agapemone, or Abode of Love, which was all under the direction of the Holy Spirit, of which Brother Prince was the living incarnation. The Holy Spirit developed most epicurean tendencies. The apartments were luxurious; flowers and singing birds abounded; Turkey carpets were on the floors, costly pianos and harps in the rooms; the windows were of stained glass, and, as the inmates were chiefly ladies, "'twas like a little heaven below." At one time the inmates of the Agapemone were about 160, of whom five were clergymen, who usually can appreciate a good thing when they meet it.

At this stage of his career Brother Prince always appeared to the Gentiles in almost royal state. He rode in a handsome carriage-and-four, with postillions, and was always preceded by a horseman, and followed by two others in white liveries and a couple of bloodhounds; and in this style he was in the habit of going to preach in the villages of the neighborhood. But troubles came. Wives entered the holy building without their husbands' consent; and once, when a wealthy farmer joined the Agapemone, his wife and two daughters fled to France.

Brother Prince, too, had a revelation from the Holy Ghost to "sanctify the flesh," and the way in which he did this—by taking up a young country girl—occasioned misunderstanding. In the *Voices*, which he published, and in which he explained his mission to the world, he very naively related the proceedings of the Messiah with the maiden. He says:—

> "He did not even consult, or in any way make known His intention to, the flesh He took [the girl]; in taking of it He left it no choice of its own; He took it in free grace—flesh that knew not God, and was ignorant of Him [Prince]; He took it in love, not because it loved Him, for it did not, but because it pleased Him to set His love upon it; and though He took it in absolute power and authority, without consulting its pleasure, or even giving it a choice, yet He took it in love, for, having taken it, the manner of His life with it was such as flesh could not but know and appreciate and love."

As the outward and visible sign of this inward and spiritual grace was that a girl rode about with Brother Prince in his carriage, there was considerable dissatisfaction among the women at the Agapemone, and the institution began to decline. Many left. One, who got over the high walls, is reported to have been hunted with bloodhounds. The women were watched with the utmost jealousy, and allowed to have no communication whatever with the outer world. Whenever they went out they were attended by an escort of male disciples, and were under as careful a surveillance as the inmates of a gaol or a lunatic asylum. Quarrels also took place about the women, and about money. The Agapemone was shorn of its splendor, but Brother Prince has lived on, a striking example of the real inwardness of religious love, and of what can be done in England in the name of religion. LUCIANUS.

SOME THEOLOGICAL MYSTERIES EXPLAINED.

OLIVE F. GUNDY reports the following in the *New York Post*, as portion of an actual discourse by the colored Rev. Zebra Hampton:—

"Moses take de son of man out of de bull-rush and put him on a tall brass pole; and while was a-gwine up a scorripin bite him. De scorripin sting neber hurt him much, do, knae he was pure een heart. De pure een heart shall see no evil, bless God! God tole Pharo to let de chil'un of Egypt go, and he wouldn't. Den God sen' down frogs and dey git een Pharo mouf and een his bread-tray, and 'sturb him turrible. Den Moses cum, when Pharo warn't a-lookin', and tole off de chil'un of Egypt wid manna, same like de farmer tole off a string ob hog wid corn. It take dem tree whole long days to git to de promis lan'. Den, fust t'ing, dey git hungry and want some water. Den de Lord he ride out on de heaven and holler to Moses to smote de stone (dat's a rock, my brederin, an or'nary rock), and, arter de stone been smote, dey all come to see, and God holler to Moses to smote her ag'in, and den all dem chil'un of Egypt come over, dry shoddy. Arter dat God tuk and tole Moses to strike de plum trees, and 'nough plums come down for forty thousand folks to eat and git 'nough.

"When Pharo 'scuvered dat de chil'un was gone, he gethered together his inimies and went arter dem, and when de day of judgment comes, my brederin, de Christians will be standin' about in squads of two and three, like blackbirds on a hill, and it jest make me smile to ponderate on it. Yes, my brederin! When Gabriel blow'd his horn he axed God if dat were loud enough, and God say, 'No, blow her louder dan seven claps of thunder to skeer de sinner, and blow her low and calm so as not to 'sturb my people.' Oh! my beloved! It don't make no differ wedder you die een de woods, or out een de field layin' to de hoe-handle; de ship of Zion will come to you wherever you is, and de trees will ben' to let her pass. My brederin! Dis yere fire we know een dis worl' is hot, but hell-fire kin burn dis fire to ashes. Brudder Hawkins will please lead us in prayer."

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

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THOUGHTS, WISE AND OTHERWISE.

Religion is the poetry of unpoetic souls.

The fear of the law is the beginning of wisdom.

The greater the miracle, the greater fool is he who believes it.

Some people make vows for the mere sake of breaking them.

The fool who said in his heart "there is no God" must have been a wise fool.

One tear shed in the cause of humanity is better than a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Life is at times so miserable that we are compelled to laugh in order to disguise our sadness.

It is a slight, and not a deep, study of philosophy that leads back to religion.

Parsons are like finger-boards—always showing the right way to other people, but never going themselves.

Noah was the grandest old boozer the world ever saw; he drank God's health for something like 350 years.

The victims of fanaticism are so numerous that a bridge to heaven could be built with their bones.

The history of Christianity will have to be written with blood.

It is easy to preach morality, but very difficult to live up to it.

Hypocrisy is about the best effort some people can make to become virtuous.

The more proofs the Christians bring forward for the evidence of their creed, the less inclined I feel to believe them.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes' nightmare: to dream he has been condemned to translate *The Atheist Shoemaker* into double Dutch.

Man proposes and—woman disposes; especially if she is your wife and keeps the "oof."

When the Lord feels bored, he sends for a couple of Freethinkers to tickle his fancy with their profanities.

If the dead did communicate with the living, Voltaire would have sent us long ago a parody on heaven.

"Marriages are not made in heaven." What a consolation this must be to the bigamist, and to those who have been plagued with bitter mothers-in-law.

A splendid narcotic and cure for insomnia: Hervey's *Meditations Among the Tombs* and Warton's *Death-bed Scenes*.

When I read Feuchtersleben's celebrated work, *Dietetic of the Soul*, it made upon me the impression of a book on therapeutics written by a quack.

A Christian never becomes liberal-minded until he begins to grow sceptical about the truths of his religion.

An overdose of religion either cures a man's fanaticism or sends him straight to the lunatic asylum.

The man who refuses to argue about his belief does so from fear of discovering his belief to be a false one.

A man's creed is generally given to him; he seldom chooses it. With the Freethinker it is different: he examines all religions, and rejects them for their lack of evidence.

The present crusade against vice is a sure sign that we are growing more immoral every day.

Dialogue.

Pious Mother—"Charley, you wicked boy, I never heard you say your prayers last night." Master Charley (an embryo Freethinker)—"How could you, Ma? I said them in the deaf and dumb language!"

The greatest miracle-monger was Santo Tomas de Aquino. This gentleman converted in one day ten thousand heathens upon an uninhabited island!

It was his first sermon, and his nervousness was so intense that he read—"and immediately the cock wept, and Peter went out and crew bitterly."

I was nearly in heaven once. I was being taken on a cloud by two beautiful female angels, when, unfortunately, I sneezed and fell—out of bed!

Holy water is not so good as ordinary water, for you cannot drink it or use it for washing the family linen.

The Earthly Triplets.

Faith.—To pretend to believe what you do not understand.

Hope.—A rope too short to let yourself down safely, or to hang yourself with.

Charity.—This wonderful little thing begins at home, and now-a-days stops there too.

"Come, Holy Ghost," the preacher was exclaiming, his hands extended heavenwards; "come, Holy Ghost, send down those beams"—when suddenly the roof fell in, and a beam smote the preacher in the eye. Let us pray.

The following question in arithmetic was once put to a candidate for honors: "If one apple produced the ruin of the whole human race, how many such apples would it take to make a barrel of cider?" As there was no stretcher handy, they brought the candidate home on a shutter.

The world is a large cornfield, in which God is the scarecrow and the men are the birds. Those birds which, while eating, keep their eye on the scarecrow, these are the Christians; and those birds which, after eating of the corn unconcerned, perch themselves upon the scarecrow—need I say that these are the Freethinkers?

F. Malibran.

ACID DROPS.

There has been quite a riot of death among the Peculiar People lately. They appear to congregate in a certain part of East London, and Mr. C. A. Lewis, the coroner who has to hold inquests over their unhappy bantlings, is loud in condemnation of their stupid inhumanity. If they had a sick jackass, he says, they would call in a veterinary doctor, but they will not call in a pill-and-bolus doctor for their sick children. Coroner Lewis calls for an alteration of the law, so that these misguided fathers and mothers may be punished for letting their offspring die without medical assistance.

Well, now, we have a word for Coroner Lewis. Is he a Christian? Does he use the New Testament as a swearing-block in his court? Does he believe that volume to be the Word of God? If he does, is it honest on his part to inveigh against the Peculiar People? They simply *act* upon what he *professes*. Nothing is clearer than the "divine" injunction which they obey when they oil the sick and call in the elders to pray over them. Of course it may be a very primitive form of medical treatment, but it is in accordance with the Bible.

What a curious condition the law will be in if Coroner Lewis should bring about his desired alteration. People will then be liable to imprisonment for denying the truth of the Bible, and also liable to imprisonment for believing it—or at least for acting on the belief.

The Church organs are rubbing their hands over the prospect of getting public money for their privately-managed schools. As Montesquieu remarks, "*L'Eglise a toujours peur ainsi.*" Others, however, will note that, if the State can be used to take public money to support the Church, it can also be used to take the Church endowments to support the people.

The *Firm Foundation* asks: "Who shall eat the Lord's supper?" If the Lord is hungry and can pay for his supper, let him eat it himself. If he does not want it, then let some one of his many starving followers eat it.

The increased strictness of the Sunday closing of saloons in New York is leading to the formation of numerous clubs to promote social intercourse and dispense supplies of all kinds. The recent revelations in the police department have shown that the law was only enforced against the poor who could not pay blackmail; and the respectable citizens are determined to have this altered. Mayor Strong has spoken in favor of the Sunday closing law being modified.

The town of Baird, Texas, has been struck with a tornado which killed several persons, among them Mitchell Mayes, the son of the Rev. J. Mayes, pastor of the Baptist Church.

At Chattanooga there is a sect of Seventh-Day Adventists, who adhere to the Bible teaching of keeping holy the seventh day. This riles their fellow Christians, and ten of them have been prosecuted for laboring on Constantine's venerable "Day of the Sun." They were honest, respectable citizens, and the judge, in passing sentence, paid a high compliment to the good character of the prisoners, and expressed regret that the law compelled him to impose a fine on them. The accused made no defence, and elected to go to prison and suffer the extreme penalty of the law rather than pay their fines. Such is Christian toleration in the free and independent United States of America.

The *American Sentinel*, alluding to the case of Seventh-Day Adventists, says: "On the one side is the express command of Jehovah to keep the seventh day holy, and opposed to it is the injunction of secular legislators to keep the first day holy. That is the difficulty in which the Seventh Day-Adventists find themselves, and, as we said they obey the voice of God rather than the voice of man,

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And in this age of boasted civilisation they are punished for acting up to their religious convictions! They are fined and imprisoned for conforming to a command of Jehovah, which a State law seeks to nullify."

The *American Sentinel* says that the Methodists have been foremost in these prosecutions. The spectacle of one sect of Christians persecuting another sect for its adherence to the teachings of the Bible ought to remind Americans that the founders of the Republic believed in universal toleration, and would have set their faces against the proceedings of the zealots who demand God in the Constitution, and who mean thereby that they shall have power to make others conform to their notions.

"General" Booth, before leaving for foreign parts, spoke at the Moravian Chapel in Fetter-lane in connection with the opening of a new "shelter," and in doing so he declared that the charges recently made against his "dosser" establishments "were entirely without foundation." *Entirely* is good! But the "General" was never short of what Cobbett used to call "face."

Dr. Waldo, the medical officer of health for Southwark, has been giving the Vestry some interesting figures about the Salvation Army shelters. In prison cells each adult is allowed 800 cubic feet of space, in military barracks 600, and in workhouses 300 feet. Keepers of common lodging-houses in London are compelled to allow 341 cubic feet. But at the Salvation Army shelter in Blackfriars-road there was only 90 cubic feet for each individual. Dr. Waldo declared that such a shelter was apt to become a hotbed of infection, and was a danger to the community that called for drastic action on the part of the Government.

There was a fuss made in the Jockey Club some time ago when someone named a horse Cockcrow out of Peter; but on the Continent, M. Wirz, of the Geneva Consul d'Etat, complains that stallions and racehorses are monopolising the names of all the saints, and "that it cannot but be a grievance to devout minds" to hear, for example, that St. Paul is suffering from spavin, or that the Nazarene, one of a sect who might drink nothing stronger than water, has been guilty of the strange solecism of straining his hock. But this is not the worst of baptismal eccentricities, for M. Nonnier denounces Anarchists and Socialists who will persist in civilly registering their children as Beelzebub, Lucifer, and Satan.

The Wesleyan Conference, assembled in the name of the Lord at Plymouth, and full of his holy spirit, obtained by many long and earnest prayers, has solemnly settled the great woman question. The men have closed the doors against the women, who are to remember that their duty, according to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, is to "learn in silence," and that, whether they learn or not, they must at least be silent, and give themselves a chance of acquiring a little knowledge.

The trouble arose in this way. At the last Wesleyan Conference a lady presented herself as a delegate. She was young, and perhaps good-looking, and some of the younger and more inflammable ministers would as soon sit near a petticoat as near another pair of trousers. But the older fellows were alarmed, and as the President would not decide the point himself, a special committee was appointed to consider the matter and report to the next Conference. Well, the committee considered and reported, and by a small majority it was in favor of admitting lady delegates. It coated the pill, however, by observing that in all probability very few ladies would be elected. The Conference, however, has refused to swallow the pill. By a majority of 187 to 169 it has resolved that women shall not be admitted. They may attend and decorate the chapel with their summer bonnets, and smile adoringly upon the lords of creation around them, but they must not speak or vote.

This decision is perfectly natural. In the first place, the men are in possession, and they don't mean to go snacks with the women if they can help it. In the next place, the Wesleyans are Bible Christians, and the Bible says that man got on very well until woman came and played the devil with him. The Wesleyan Adam doesn't intend to be deceived by the Wesleyan Eve. He was made for *God*, and she was made for *him*, and she must get behind him when he is on the Lord's business.

The funny thing is, though, that the original Adam, when the Lord appeared in Eden after that apple luncheon, got behind Eve, and whined, "She made me do it." The fellow hid himself behind his wife's petticoats; or, rather, he would have done so, only she had no wardrobe then—not even as much as an opera-bouffe ballet-dancer—nay, not even a fig-leaf in a hat-box.

Secularists can afford to smile at these Wesleyans. The pulpits are always declaring that the Bible is woman's best friend, whereas it is her worst enemy. Not being bound by the Bible, or corrupted by its influence, Secularists do not recognise the problem which has been agitating the Wesleyans. They never discussed whether women should be admitted to their Conferences. It never occurred to them that women had any less right there than men.

Slatin Pasha, having escaped from the Mahdists, attended the recent Geographical Congress in London, and gave an account of his captivity. In conclusion he said: "My thanks are due to God, whose protecting hand has led me safely through all the perils behind me"—whereat there was loud applause. Slatin Pasha did not explain why the protecting hand of God did nothing for him until human beings, including some faithful Arabs, came to his assistance; nor did he explain why the protecting hand of God did not prevent the murder of Gordon and the outrage of European women.

A telegram from Shanghai reports that ten British subjects were killed at Ku-cheng. The Rev. R. W. Stewart, Mrs. Stewart, and one child were burnt in the house. The massacre appears to have been done by a fanatical sect known as "Vegetarians." Only a little while ago the Rev. R. W. Stewart, who has now lost his life, wrote that their numbers had rapidly increased. He said: "Very disquieting rumors reached us. The converts urged me to organise them and procure arms. Of course I would not do this, and showed them how futile any such proceeding would be. The day arrived, an enormous meeting was held, but no injury was done. It was the 19th of the month; from early dawn that day a belt of prayer was encircling the earth for the Fo-kien Mission—prayer uttered by the thousands, from New Zealand round to Canada, who use the C.M.S. cycle of prayer." The belt of prayer does not appear to have proved efficacious.

In one of the Rev. R. W. Stewart's last letters from China he wrote: "Hezekiah's God is ours. One angel slew 185,000 men; so, with the Lord of Hosts of Angels on our side, there is nought to fear." The facts show how men can delude themselves with old superstitions and phrases.

"Clericus" furnishes some more particulars of remarkable church collections. He says: "At the church at which I am curate (diocese of St. Alban's), which holds 1,000 people, the collection at our Sunday afternoon services during May resulted as follows: May 12, 0d.; May 19, 3d.; May 26, 1d.; and during June, at our 7.30, Wednesday evening, services, we collected: June 5, 6d.; June 12, 3d.; June 19, 1s. 2d.; and June 26, 10d."—*Tit-Bits.*

The *Catholic Times* of July 26 says: "Speaking at the distribution of prizes to the Sunday-school children at St. Anthony's, Forest-gate, on Wednesday, Father Laurence, O.S.F., traced the depravity of the child-murderer to the godless education of the School Board." This is cheek. The School Boards teach not only Theism, but the Bible. Probably it would not be difficult to trace brutality to the teachings of the Bible.

According to a telegram received from Adelaide, Australasia, Infelix is shortly to be subjected to another "divine visitation." The Rev. Joseph Cook, of Boston, U.S.A., is expected to reach these shores late this month or early in August. He comes, it is said, by invitation of some of the Y.M.C.A.'s, who doubtless realise the necessity for doing something to revive orthodoxy, and hope for good results from the Boston Bombastes Furioso. Come along, Cook, there isn't quite so much cash current as when last you came here, but the supply of *gobemouches* and *claqueurs* has not yet run out. By the way, Joseph, we have still a copy of that article by Dr. Fiske on "Theological Charlatanism," which appeared in the *North American Review* of March, 1881. Have you forgotten it?—*Harbinger of Light* (July; Melbourne).

Mr. Cunninghame Graham writes characteristically in the *Glasgow Evening News*, under the heading of "Vox Populi, Vox Dei." He hits out right and left, and some of his blows fall upon pious gentlemen who have been wooing constituencies in Scotland. For instance, it appears that the new member for North-East Lanark is reported to have said that "his Master, Christ, called him forth" to the battle; and Mr. Graham conjures up a picture of "the worthy gentleman—no doubt as poor as ever was his Master—putting on his shiny hat, his long frock coat, and his elastic-sided boots" to enter the arena. "Take again," says Mr. Graham, "the pious editor who gave the seat in Greenock to the Unionists. One would have thought to read his speeches that he was a knight seeking the Holy Grail, and not a common carpet-bagger from Middlesex in search of notoriety." We suppose this is a hit at the late "Christian Socialist" editor of the *Daily Chronicle*.

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Harry Alfred Long, the modest infidel-slayer of Glasgow, writes to the local *Herald* that his "soul drinks in gladness." We should imagine that his body had drunk in something stronger. He rejoices that the London Hall of Science has become a Salvation barracks. Harry Alfred Long seems to have access to supernatural sources of information. His natural knowledge was never very great, and we presume he has found out that it requires supplementing. He has made a bad blunder this time, but we hope he will try again. Some day or other, by the aid of inspiration, he may say something really accurate.

Isabella Shiach, a domestic servant, suffered from piety, tuberculosis, peritonitis, and an ulcerated stomach. The four killed her, and she is now supposed to be with the Lord. She would not have a doctor, as she believed in faith-healing. "Have as much faith as you like," said the Brixton coroner, "but you must use the proper means provided." He did not say *by whom*. The Lord has provided *faith* as the proper cure of disease. Coroners recommend doctors, but the Lord was very angry with a certain king we read of in the Bible because he "sought after" physicians when he was ill.

After duly wrestling in prayer, weeping for a season, and petitioning the throne of grace for wisdom which they should have acquired at a woman's school, the members of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church resolved that they would exclude from the ministry all students of the Union Theological Seminary, where the enlightened Dr. Briggs is a professor. The young men who have provided themselves with a stock of Calvinistic theology, modified by the Higher Criticism which proves it to be a humbug, and who now find the way to the Presbyterian pulpit too narrow for their load, are in a fix something like Robinson Crusoe's when he had finished his boat and discovered that there was a hill between him and the ocean. Still, Dr. Briggs's pupils do not necessarily have to launch their craft in Presbyterian waters, for the sea of Rationalism is a big one, and its waves come pretty near to the foundations of the Union Theological Seminary. This way, boys! —*Truthseeker.*

The following cynical item is from the New York *Sun*: "Captain Moore, of the 'Mary Gibbs,' is home from a voyage to Africa with a cargo of rum and missionaries from Boston. He called at thirteen ports to unload rum, which was received with wild enthusiasm. At the thirteenth port the missionaries went ashore uninvited."

The London correspondent of the New York *Times* seeks to minimise the barbarity displayed in the case of witch burning in Tipperary by the remark that faith in witchcraft is very general among men in all parts of Great Britain where there have been no modern movements of population. Only five years ago an aged woman in Suffolk was openly charged with fatally bewitching her grandchild by its parents, who were greatly surprised to find that she could not be punished for it.

The editor of the *Two Worlds*, and other Spiritists, came forward to the defence of Margaret Hartley and Emma Smith, who were charged at the Manchester Police-court with fortune-telling. One of the witnesses for the defence volunteered, amid laughter, to give the Court a spirit message from her deceased son, and a Professor Ross, a hypnotist, said that those who attended *séances* were not "customers" or "patients," but investigators. Hartley was committed to prison for three months with hard labor, and Smith fined £5 and costs, or in default one month. The Spiritists preferred to pay the fine and costs rather than move the case to a higher court, which seems to indicate misgivings either of their own cause or of the law as it stands.

We do not see why there should be special laws against fortune-telling while religion is established to teach our fortunes in another world; and we have often adverted to the unfair way in which these laws are administered against poor gipsies, while the palmists, who live on the upper classes, are untouched. But if the Spiritists really credit the *bonâ fides* of Miss Smith and Mrs. Hartley—and by calling for a defence fund it would seem so—they surely ought not to allow the one to be fined and the other imprisoned without appealing to a higher court.

The Rev. Heber Newton holds that Christ appeared to his disciples after death in a spiritual form. He does not explain why a spirit wanted to eat fish and honeycomb. Now comes ex-Rev. Stopford Brooke and explains the matter by hypnotism. It seems that Jesus really was dead, only he had power to mesmerise his followers into the belief that he was still living. "They were swept out of the ordinary physical condition into an extraordinary one—that in which mental impressions are naturally translated into apparently sensible forms." This condition is known to modern physicians as lunacy.

Archdeacon Eyton says in the *Guardian*: "It is impossible to escape from the conviction that the practical alliance between the drink trade and the Church is, in all its issues and consequences, the most immoral thing of our day."

The Wesleyan Conference did one sensible thing. They resolved "that there should be no increased grant of public funds, either from the local rates or from the Imperial taxes, to denominational schools, unless that increased grant is accompanied by adequate and representative public management."

Mark Gibson, a local preacher at Steeple Barton, near Hanbury, committed suicide last week by blowing out his brains with a revolver. He was treasurer of a friendly society.

Lucius Ernest Cheyse, a religious maniac at the Essex Lunatic Asylum, Claybury, contrived to hang himself with a piece of string. The usual verdict was returned.

The Annual Report of the Education Department for 1894-5 shows, among other things, that the amount raised during 1894 in subscriptions for every child in voluntary schools was only 6s. 6d., a less sum than in any year since Mr. Forster's Education Act was passed. Denominationalists now obtain a practical immunity from outside control by paying just about one-sixth of the cost of the education given in their schools. The immense bulk of the cost is already defrayed from the public purse, and they are clamoring for more money to keep up the religious character of their schools. Surely it is time others clamored for a larger measure of supervision by the State.

At the California Universalist Convention a Mr. John D. Gaylord, of Pasadena, read a paper written with great force and ability, in the course of which he expressed the thought that the miraculous must be discarded, and the historic Christ rejected in teaching the young. The paper aroused much opposition, but one of the ministers, a Dr Conger, allowed that every man's Christ differed from every other man's. There are Christs many as well as "gods many and lords many."

Still another new sect, which in many respects resembles the Stundists, has been discovered by the Russian police in the district of the Kuban. For example, these new sectarians condemn the use of holy pictures and images, believe in adult baptism, and preach neighborly love as their leading tenet. But, besides all this, they accuse the orthodox clergy of certain gross abuses, and this has led to the summary banishment to Siberia, by "administrative order," of all the leading members of their congregation. How they love one another!

Floods, loss of life, and damaged crops are reported from Northumberland and Durham. According to the Old Testament, every calamity came from Jahveh in punishment for some wrong done or some duty neglected. The Rabbis went so far as to say that even the prick of a pin was the return of some sin; and Jesus said not a sparrow fell to the ground without his Father's direction. But they fall all the same.

The *Crescent* (July 31) reports "Shocking Outrages by Christians upon Muslims. Two True Believers Murdered for Making Wozoo." It appears that an Afghan Muslim in Western Australia, named Nur Mahomet, who wished to say his prayers, commenced by washing his feet in a dam of water. This offended two fanatical Christians named Knowles and Hatfield, who proceeded to abuse and maltreat the pious Mussulman. Other Muslims interfered, with the result that two were shot. The men were tried, but were acquitted by their fellow religionists of any intention to murder, and were set free. The *Crescent* says: "This is not in Armenia, it is in Australia. The son of the Ameer is at present the honored guest of England. While he is being *fêted* in England his brethren in the faith are being murdered by English people in Australia!"

Prophet Baxter has for the last thirty years been getting himself ready, or rather getting other people ready, for the end of the world. But the great event hasn't occurred yet, and the poor old globe seems likely to outlast all the idiots and impostors of millennialism. Indeed, the Rev. Edmund Ledger, who is a man of God like Baxter, but also Gresham Lecturer on Astronomy, in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* calculates that life will last on this planet for another ten million years. This is a dreadfully short space of time to the conceited religionists who regard themselves as the centre and final cause of the whole universe. Nevertheless, it is a pretty long spell to those who are genuinely interested in the fortunes of the human race. A man who can't do a good stroke of work to-day because the result will not last—say a million years, must be an insufferable prig.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 11, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, W.: 7.30, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible."

August 18, and 25, St. James's Hall, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—August 11, Camberwell; 18 and 25, Milton Hall, London. September 8, Sheffield. October 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Mr. and Mrs. Holmes.—Accept our best wishes.

J. Jones.—Pleased to hear you "like the *Freethinker* very much." See "Sugar Plums."

Johnson.—Thanks, but the enclosure is rather behind date. Before the elections is like before the deluge.

T. Clark.—(1) Your verse is meritorious. That might go without saying. But the subject is too personal. (2) Glad to hear you have obtained us four fresh subscribers, though sorry you cannot find a newsagent daring enough to show the *Freethinker* in his window. (3) No doubt some lecturers might be arranged for at Streatham, but some friends on the spot would have to co-operate. Can you tell us what halls are available?

J. G. Bartram.—The Newcastle Branch and yourself have our best wishes. The new hall should be a rallying centre for the many Freethinkers in the district. We hope to hear good accounts of your progress during the winter.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—Pleased to hear you think the *Freethinker* improves. It is a pity, as you say, that this journal is not read more extensively outside the actual ranks of Freethought. To some extent, however, the remedy is in the hands of our present readers, who might circulate the *Freethinker* by lending it to their friends and acquaintances whenever they see a favorable opportunity of introducing it. Thanks for the joke.

C. B. (Burmah).—Thanks for copies of the *Rangoon Times*. We are pleased to notice how Freethought is kept to the front.

Cicero in Defence of Cluentius.—Received with thanks.

J. C. Richards.—See "Acid Drops" and elsewhere in this column. You are quite right in saying that the influence of Secularism is not to be measured by its actual organisation. It is a permeating force even in the Churches themselves, to say nothing of the masses outside them.

E. James.—Thanks for cuttings.

Forward.—Your suggestion looks good enough, but it would not be necessary for the legatees to act; the trustees or executors might do so, and probably would. Thanks for cuttings.

A. Lievre.—We should have made the statement more definite. What we meant was that Scotland has the highest percentage of illegitimate children of any part of the United Kingdom.

H. Foster.—Glad to hear you think Mr. Foote's lectures at St. James's Hall "a step in the right direction." If you come up from Lincolnshire, be sure to introduce yourself after the lecture. We fear you will not be able to obtain tickets so late as 7 o'clock on Saturday night at Stonecutter-street, but you could obtain them at Tree's office, though it would make assurance doubly sure if you obtained them beforehand.

Geo. H.—Harry Alfred Long is an absurd person, and famous for inaccuracy. It is news to us that the Hall of Science is turned into a Salvation Army barracks. Evidently we must go to Scotland to learn what is really going on in London.

S. A. B. (Edinburgh).—There is not a word of truth in it. See reply to G. H. and "Acid Drops." Lectures *are* delivered in Edinburgh occasionally. Mr. Putnam was there a few weeks ago. Still, the propaganda of Secularism ought to be more active in the capital of Scotland.

Papers Received.—Crescent—Harbinger of Light—Two Worlds—Light—Progressive Thinker—Birmingham Argus—Rangoon Times—Homœopathic Review—Liberty—Liberator—Twentieth Century—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Newcastle Chronicle—Oxford Times—The New Unity—New York Public Opinion.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SPECIAL.

The President of the American Secular Union has been in this country three months, and his sojourn amongst us is drawing to a close. Before he departs we must give him a farewell reception in the metropolis. His last lecture will be delivered in London on Sunday, September 1. On that occasion I shall take the chair. Three days later, on Wednesday, September 4, a farewell dinner to Mr. Putnam will take place at the Holborn Restaurant. I shall take the chair again on that occasion, and I expect to be supported by Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. George Anderson, and other well-known Freethinkers. The tickets for this function are four shillings each, and are now on sale.

Let me now call attention to the course of three Sunday evening lectures I am delivering at St. James's Hall. Everybody says this is a step in the right direction. But it is a costly experiment, and I appeal to my London friends to make the meetings real demonstrations. I promise, on my part, that the lectures shall be as good as I can make them. West London friends, in especial, should bestir themselves in this matter.

We are not allowed to charge less than a shilling for admission to St. James's Hall, nor can we take money at the doors. Single and course tickets can be obtained at Tree's Ticket Office, at 28 Stonecutter-street, and of any London Branch secretary. Arrangements have been also made for their sale by Mr. Haines, 212 Mile End-road, E.; Mr. Munton, 6 Uxbridge-road, W.; Mr. George Ward, 91 Mildmay-park, N., and Mr. Miller, 76 Holloway-road, N. Late comers, who have failed to obtain tickets, will find Miss Vance outside the Hall in Piccadilly, who will inform them where tickets can be procured. G. W. Foote.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote opened the new hall of the Newcastle Branch on Sunday. Unfortunately it rained spitefully all day, and the morning and afternoon audiences were seriously affected, although the hall was filled in the evening with a most appreciative and enthusiastic meeting. At the close of the afternoon lecture Mr. Foote performed the ceremony of "naming" two babes. He was rather hampered by the smallness of the platform, but the ceremony seemed pleasing to the audience, and not the least so to the ladies. After the evening lecture Mr. Foote was present at the adjourned members' meeting, at which a committee was appointed to attend to the arrangements for the debate in October between Mr. Charles Watts and the Rev. A. J. Waldron. Mr. Mitchell, president; Mr. Foreman, treasurer; and Mr. Bartram, secretary, were unanimously re-elected. During the past year 75 lectures have been delivered under the Branch's auspices, 34 of which have been given out of doors, chiefly by Mr. Cohen and Mr. Mitchell. The year opened with a small deficit, which has been turned into a slight balance on the right side, after an expenditure of more than £100.

Mr. Charles Watts had another excellent audience at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, last Sunday evening. His lecture on "Trust in God a Delusion" was enthusiastically received. We are glad to hear that several new members were enrolled after the lecture. Mr. Watts speaks again from the same platform this Sunday evening, August 11.

Our American visitor, Mr. S. P. Putnam, attends to-day (August 11) the Annual Services of the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school, and delivers two addresses on "The Bible and Modern Thought" and "Freethought and Morality." Hymns and choruses will be sung by the choir, assisted by the Failsworth String Band. The schools have just been thoroughly redecorated, and it is hoped that there will be a bumping attendance and a magnificent collection.

Although Mr. Symes won his law case, he had to serve fourteen days' imprisonment for "contempt of court," for writing upon it in the *Liberator* while the case was *sub judice*, though the issue of the case proved that his remarks were justified, besides being written under provocation. We are pleased to note that Mr. Symes had visits from friends every day, books, writing materials, etc., and that the *Liberator* did not suffer by his absence. A banquet was given him upon his release, and a cheque presented, which we hope may in some measure recoup him for his many troubles.

Joseph said he hoped he had seen the end of his troubles. The *Sydney Bulletin* says it "sincerely hopes he hasn't, for Australia can't spare the combative old Atheist, who is, in his way, almost as obstinate as the bigots he attacks, but

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whose career is such a monument of industry and talent, used with single-purposed sincerity, that one glows in contemplating it. For some twenty years now, in season and out of season, with good taste, bad taste, and no taste at all, Jos. Symes has been doing every day of his life three men's work, with tongue and pen, to spread the truth as he knows it, the light as he sees it. He has fought continuously against calumny and misrepresentation; the defection of friends and the attacks of open and secret enemies; private affliction and public scorn; frowns, pity, and laughter."

The *S. B.* continues: "He has been poorer than Job all the time, his *Liberator* is hardly ever out of the valley of the shadow of death, and just now he badly wants £50 to pay rent and taxes, and give him a fresh start. Such a man can only reach the end of his troubles in two ways. One is to stop struggling and float with the conventional stream. The other way is that painted in the magnificent close of the magnificent *Beauchamp's Career*, when the great Lord Romfrey stands thundering on the beach to direct the search for the body of the drowned Radical, whose life has been so pathetically fruitless, so grandly unsuccessful. Perhaps the end of Jos. Symes' troubles may come when a long, loose-jointed corpse, with grizzled hair and furrowed face, is found floating on the peaceful bosom of the Yarra, to receive as guerdon and epitaph the title which Heine chose for himself —'A Soldier in the Liberation-War of Humanity.'"

Mr. A. B. Moss, at a meeting of the Camberwell Vestry, entered his protest against favors shown to religious bodies. Other members of the Vestry shared his opinion, and it was voted by 26 to 19 that the trustees or owners should pay for the paving in front of their chapels. But as 7 members took no part in the division the resolution was declared "not carried." Mr. Moss says he will demand exemption for the Secular Hall in New Church-street.

Mr. Clifford J. Cory, Liberal member for South Monmouthshire, in reply to a constituent who sent him our "Questions for Candidates," wrote: "I am decidedly in favor of the fullest extension of civil and religious liberty. I think all the other questions are answered by my reply to the first one."

The editor of a widely-circulated and influential English paper in India writes: "It is a pity the *Freethinker* is not better known in India. There would be thousands of Secularists added to the ranks among all classes, more especially the educated Hindoo, who, having learnt too much to accept the childish traditions of his own faith, refuses also to accept the superstitions of Christianity. Has Mr. Foote never thought of visiting India?" Mr. Foote has thought about it, but he gets busier and busier in England, and sees very little prospect of a foreign tour, at least in the immediate future.

The *Independent Pulpit* for July reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "A Jolly Japanese Religion"; Mr. J. P. Richardson writes on "A Parson's Talking Shop"; C. L. Edwards criticises the Decalogue in his paper on "Moses as a Legislator"; Dr. Smythe writes instructively on "The Mound Builders"; and both Mr. J. D. Shaw and his son carry on controversy with the *Blue Grass Blade* on the subject of prohibition.

A little-known Freethinker, noted rather for his Socialism than his Freethought, finds place in the new volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. William Pare (1805–1873) was one of those disciples of Robert Owen who were active in every movement in the direction of progress. He worked for parliamentary, religious, and social reform, advocated labor exchanges, and founded the first Birmingham Co-operative Society. From 1842 to '44 he was acting governor of Owen's community at Queenwood, Hampshire. He became Owen's literary executor, and by his own will he left his books, papers, pictures, and £50 to any institute or trust founded on the model of an Owen institute suggested by him. We do not know what became of this bequest.

Another heretic mentioned in the *Dictionary of National Biography* is George van Parris, a German or Flemish surgeon, who settled in London and became naturalised October 29, 1550. He seems to have been a Unitarian. At any rate, the London Dutch Church excommunicated him, and he was tried for denial of the divinity of Christ. His judges included Cranmer, Ridley, and Coverdale; the latter, it is said, acted as interpreter. "He appears," says the *Dictionary*, "to have been a man of upright life, and some efforts were made to secure a pardon for him. He was, however, burnt on April 25, 1551, in Smithfield." We do not know if our friend Mr. Touzeau Parris claims any descent from this martyred heretic.

Under the title of "A Famous Abduction," the Sheffield *Weekly Telegraph* for August 3 reproduces from the *Secular Almanack* the story of "The Abducted Female Infidel," Mrs. Rachel Fanny Antonia Dashwood Lee, as related by Mr. J. M. Wheeler. It, however, omits the most interesting particulars, those connected with the trial at Oxford in 1804 and the stoppage of the case owing to the lady's disbelief in Christianity.

Secular Thought (July 20) gives a portrait of a young and promising Freethought lecturer, Mr. Franklin Steiner, of Des Moines, Illinois, who has lectured with acceptance both throughout the United States and in Canada, where he is expected to attend the next Secular Convention at Toronto, in September.

The following number of *Secular Thought* makes good use of the *Freethinker*, reprinting Mr. Wheeler's article on "Rome in England," and Mr. J. A. Richardson's "Jeu d'Esprit" on "The Jew's Conversion." Mr. J. S. Ellis, the editor, writes on "A Clerical Curiosity," the Rev. A. Osborne, D.D., of Summerside, Prince Edward's Island, who is one of the old school of divines now nearly extinct.

One of the Fables by the late R. L. Stevenson, in *Longman's Magazine*, is short, pointed and secular in its application. "The Penitent" is its title:—"A man met a lad weeping. 'What do you weep for?' he asked. 'I am weeping for my sins,' said the lad. 'You must have little to do,' said the man. The next day they met again. Once more the lad was weeping. 'Why do you weep now?' asked the man. 'I am weeping because I have nothing to eat,' said the lad. 'I thought it would come to that,' said the man."

S. F. Benson writes on "The Legend of Paul and Thecla" in the *Boston Investigator*, contending that the story is a solar myth. He says: "The splendors of summer, symbolised by the sign Virgo of the Zodiac, following the sun in the drama of the year, would give us, when framed in the setting of Christian asceticism, the story of Paul and Thecla, or of Christ and the Magdalene Mary."

Professor Edward D. Cope, of the University of Pennsylvania, has planned a chain of eleven successive links, which, he claims, joins man to the earliest vertebrate. His chain begins with a creature similar to the amphioxus of the Mediterranean; the fish developed from this peculiar animal was modified to a salamander-like form. Then follow, in succession, the theromerous reptiles of the closing period of the carboniferous age and the paleozoic era; the protodonta, closely allied to the carnivorous reptiles; the pantotheria, similar to opossums; the credonta, carnivorous animals of the lower eocene period; the condylarthra; the pseudo or false lemur, which is allied to both the monkey and the fox; the anthropoid ape, which Professor Cope calls the immediate progenitor of man; and, finally, man himself.

On Sunday, August 11, the Chatham Branch of the N.S.S. take their annual excursion, going by coach to Stockbury Valley. They start from Luton Arches at 9.30. Tickets may be obtained from the committee.

SELF-RELIANCE.

THROW o'er thy God, O man!
Be dignified and true:
Stand thou apart, and aye
Dare to be with the few.

Give Truth the foremost place,
And let thy reason guide
Thee through the changing scenes
Of Earth, so much decried.

We know no other life;
Then make the most of this:
Waste no time seeking for
A mythic future bliss.

Shoulder to shoulder stand
With those whose aim is Right;
Scorn thou to lag behind:
E'er in the vanguard fight.

Then, when Death's shadows come,
With calm, unflinching mien
Right grandly shalt thou glide
Forth into the Unseen.

THOS.

A youngster, looking at the stars, said: "If those big bright nails, papa, were to come out, with what a thump God Almighty would come down!"

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (July 13).

ABERDEEN, Scotland, is a rich and comfortable place. Orthodoxy enjoys itself here. It is in the swim. But it is no bad place for a Freethinker. With a moderate fortune and a complacent mind, one can take life as pleasantly in this northern metropolis as anywhere on the globe. Aberdeen granite is celebrated for its beauty. It has a lightsome look, and as there is no smoke at Aberdeen, the stone always has a charming and cleanly appearance. The city has many noble structures, colleges, universities, hotels, etc. The church buildings are very elegant and massive. The Salvation Army warriors are in their pride and glory here. They are erecting a splendid fort of granite, and they certainly put on style, and begin to vie in magnificence with the more ancient ecclesiastical powers. They will eventually be at the height of fashion, no doubt.

Dr. Mortimer, of Turiff, was present at the lectures. He has for many years been an outspoken Freethinker in an orthodox community. It was a pleasure to meet one who has so bravely stood by his colors. On Tuesday afternoon he gave me a drive over Aberdeen in company with his son, William Mortimer, and his brother, Mr. D. A. Mortimer. I thus had an opportunity to see the renowned buildings of the city, the cathedral, King's College, and the Marischol College, also the old stone bride, Victoria Bridge, the park, harbor, etc. We visited old Aberdeen, which has, indeed, the aspect of moss-grown centuries. The modern Aberdeen is built between the rivers Don and Dee, and along its shores sweeps the great German Ocean.

On Wednesday I had a delightful drive with James Maitland, William Calder, James Greig, Robert Leith, and others, to Castle Mar, past Balmoral, the Queen's Highland residence, a magnificent palace in the heart of the mountains. We first take train for Ballater, forty miles out, and then a coach eighteen miles to Braemar. The Grampian Hills along this route stretch away in majestic amplitude, and valleys smile in summer glory, while above the vast woodlands are the still snow-capped peaks. I did not expect to behold such a contrast—against the splendor of summer the gleaming masses of winter's array. Along the towering Lochnagar, which Byron celebrates, dark and massive, and other lofty steeps, the white banners unfurl, while near around the glorious flowers and grass adorn the warm bosom of earth. The battle of summer and winter is still carried on among these Highlands, with blending and beautiful columns, as if somehow it were a lover's quarrel, and the seasons did not wish to part with one another. Thus in the chambers of the Highlands they mix in gentle warfare with delightful contrariety.

It is both sunshine and rain along the route. The rain is what they call in this country a "Scotch mist." It makes the journey only more enchanting, for over the peaks the clouds roll off, and a burst of sunshine contrasts with the dark environments, touching the mist with gold, so that the prospects were ever-varying, and the clouds seemed like castles in the air. Anon a brilliant rainbow would span the way, decorating the wooded heights with effulgent hues. One hung from the mountain right over Balmoral Castle as we passed along, ornamenting it as never before; and the Queen, with all her untold wealth, could not have given it such a lovely embellishment, nor could she have enjoyed its lustre any more than we strangers did, for our ownership was as legitimate as hers. I never saw a rainbow so close before. It seemed to drop some of its jewels at our very feet as it arched over our onward path.

Castle Mar is an old, old castle, built in 1483, and many a conflict has surged about its lofty walls. It is now occupied only by one old man, who takes care of it—a curious old man, contented in his loneliness amidst this decaying grandeur, and yet a jolly old soul, especially when the mountain-dew is sparkling. He says he wouldn't be married for all the world. He doesn't want a woman around. He can take care of himself, and be perfectly independent within the walls of this solitary structure. I wandered all over this somewhat ghostly relic of the past, that looks sad and riven against the bloom of to-day. From dungeon to battlement I looked over the desolate apartments, and strange figures and scenes haunted the inquiring mind. Around the castle in the sunny grass were beautiful wild flowers, which I gathered in remembrance of this charming and melancholy spot, thrilled with the romance of so many changing ages. We took our lunch here, on the greensward, and modern politics and progress mingled their flashes with the shadowy turrets that overhung our joyous "round-table."

We then walked to Braemar, a mile away, a handsome town on the side of the mountain among the ranks of trees. It is 1,100 feet above Aberdeen, and is quite a summer resort for invalids in pursuit of pure air. The prospects extending from this lofty hamlet are varied and delightful; the hills and vales, the elegant residences; the river, or mountain brook rather, at this place; the wide meadows, the cattle and sheep, the sky above with its silver or golden clouds, and the deep blue of the immensities beyond. Through this pomp we return while the sun hastes to its setting and the long twilight begins, and at nine o'clock Aberdeen again presents itself. I was pleased to meet at this time Mr. Charles Watt Daniel, and to spend with him the remainder of the evening in the company of Mr. Mann, of the Grand Royal Hotel. Both these friends are staunch Liberals, and their companionship was one of the most entertaining of my experiences.

James Maitland, William Calder, and Mr. Harkis are among the pioneer forces of Freethought in Aberdeen. They did their level best to make the lectures a success, and to enable the Pilgrim to see the best that was to be seen in this part of Scotland. Mr. Harkis presided at the first meeting and Mr. Maitland at the second, and the audiences on both evenings gave me a cheery welcome. There was some kind of a discussion after the lectures, but it did not amount to much, for the reason that no salient points were discussed, and the defenders of the faith ran off into individual idiosyncrasies that had no bearing upon the general question. It is pretty difficult to keep the Christians to parliamentary rules. Aberdeen friends have enriched the campaign with one of the most enjoyable of my experiences.

Dundee is next on the list, somewhat larger than Aberdeen, having, I understand, about 160,000 inhabitants. It has not the brilliant appearance of Aberdeen, for the stone of which it is built is of a darker hue, and the smoke of factories hangs over it. I am welcomed to the hospitable home of William McLean, who lives, and has his home and workshop, on an eminence in the suburbs of the city, and from them a fine view can be obtained of the surrounding country. Mr. McLean and Mr. D. F. Gloak meet me at the station, and the moment I strike their company I know I am in good hands. The audiences at Dundee are not so large as those at Aberdeen, but they are appreciative, and heartily welcome the American visitor. Mr. Gloak presides the first evening, and Mr. Sturton the second evening. A rambling discussion occurs after the lectures, but I found it pretty difficult to get hold of the ideas presented. They were cloudy and far-fetched. Indeed, I could hardly discover if there were any ideas at all, the words being so voluminous and the sentences involved. However, one genial critic I did understand—Mr. Scott, who is a Swedenborgian, and made some very sensible observations, in harmony with the general matter of my lecture, though from a different point of view, but with entirely friendly feeling, all of which is acceptable to the comprehensive Freethinker. Altogether, I enjoyed the lectures at Dundee. I liked the people I met, and am sure that, at another time, I shall have a much larger attendance. The summer weather is not favorable for good audiences. People like to be outdoors and enjoy the fresh air and beautiful scenery, and it takes quite a motive power to get them inside of four walls.

Dundee has many attractions. Among the chief are the Tay river and the Tay Bridge. The Tay is a broad, magnificent river nearly two miles wide as it flows by Dundee. The bridge over this river is the longest bridge in the world—about two miles. It is a massive structure, built for the centuries, to defy wind and tide. The piers of the old bridge are still to be seen, a melancholy remembrance. The old bridge was itself a great feat of engineering, but it was too narrow, and the railroad directors too economical; and one bright, moonlight night, when the wind was blowing a perfect gale, just as the train rolled on, the structure toppled over, and all on board were plunged into the river with the crashing timbers. Not one was saved. The new bridge is broader, with more massive piers, and a like accident will never occur. On Friday morning, with Mr. McLean and Mr. Gloak, I took the train over the bridge to East Newton, one of the elegant suburbs of Dundee, across the river, where it costs money to live. The views up and down the river as we crossed the mighty bridge were splendid in their variety, the waters spreading like a lake, the bonnie banks and braes, the far hills, blue and towering in the summer sky, while the clouds swept overhead. In the afternoon, with my two comrades and Mr. Cameron, we secured a "machine" and travelled into the ample country, climbing vast hills and beholding wide expanses. In this country they call a carriage or wagon a "machine," a new name to me. I didn't hear it in England, so I guess it is pure Scotch. At any rate, the "machine" did good service, and we went on a wide rambling excursion all the afternoon. We rose hundreds of feet above the river Tay, whose spreading waters seemed to be rolling from the heart of the mountains that lifted their massive fronts along the horizon. We travelled through forest glades, by great fields of green and yellow, a million buttercups besprinkling the grass. We pass by ancient houses, thatched cottages, the stately Insane Asylum appearing like a palace on a majestic height, and the school-house where the happy children shouted after our retreating machine, and the

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schoolmaster of Goldsmith's pages looked after us with dazed expression, and it may be "with words of learned length and thundering sound." It was a delightful drive. It seemed as if we were riding in a balloon, so lofty were some of the hills that we ascended. When the horse dashed along with extra liveliness, it seemed as if the "machine" had wings like one of the old dragons. At length we came to a most ancient church. Nobody knows how old it is. There is a tower in Dundee which dates, they say, from the seventh century, and perhaps the church does the same. Near the door is still inserted the old iron circlet which they once put around the neck of the rogue and heretic, and there he must endure the scoffs of the pious church-goers. Inside there is a dusky and mediæval appearance, with paintings on the wall, the stone altar, etc. I placed my name on the book—for no more can the old church crush the Infidel. The sunlight of to-day is triumphant, and over the almost forgotten graves are blooming the blue and golden flowers.

We have a mighty good appetite when we return to Dundee, and Mrs. McLean spreads for us the hospitable table. After the lecture that evening we have a jolly company at Mr. McLean's house, and I have a right good experience of Scottish life, such as we see glowing in the pages of Burns. The Scotch are a happy people, or else they never could have produced the poetry of this glorious bard.

It strikes one at first that the Scotch must be a solemn people, seeing they take so readily to Calvinism in their religious proclivities. But Calvinism is offset by whisky. I don't wonder the Scotch drink whisky. Any man who believes in the doctrines of Calvin must drink whisky in order to make life endurable. It is noticeable that, as Calvinism disappears, so does the much drinking of whisky. The Scotch are a temperate people so far as I can see, and there is a strong movement in favor of teetotalism. Many of our Freethought friends are disposed that way.

I am trying to learn the Scotch language, but I havn't got the hang of it yet. It takes a practised ear. The real old Scotch songs were sung at our last gathering, and they have a humor, a pathos, and a musical ring that are charming. The heart of Scotland beats to the rhythms of nature. Her dark religion cannot destroy the joys of human fellowship. "Auld Lang Syne" closed an evening of song and cheer; and long live the remembrance of this happy occasion! Scotland is Bonnie Scotland, and no mistake; and Calvinism has forever lost its grip. The heather blooms upon its loneliest crags, and so will reason and Freethought make glorious its humblest cottage.

Farewell to Dundee; and now Edinburgh, a great, busy, tumultuous, magnificent city, is about me, and it seems like a dream that I am in this historic place. Whose heart has not glowed at the name of Edinburgh? I arrived yesterday, Saturday. I was met at the station by Mr. John F. Dewar. The first thing I saw as I stepped forth from the station was the vast and famous castle on the hill. There is nothing in the world like it for magnificence and grandeur. Around its base are the public gardens, beautiful to behold. I saw, also, the marvellous monument to Sir Walter Scott, perhaps the most truly artistic and sublime monument ever erected to human genius. The first thing I did after tea was to mount one of the circular tramways and ride all over the great city with Mr. Dewar and others. Edinburgh is built on seven hills, and the views from its exalted streets are extensive and superb, like what we see in San Francisco. I am reminded somewhat of San Francisco as I climb these splendid hills, although Edinburgh has not the luminous appearance of the city of the Golden Gate. There is a deal of ancient solemnity about this capital of Scotland. However, I have caught but glimpses of it so far. I lecture to-day, Sunday, June 16, afternoon and evening, and, after a season of sight-seeing, I shall have more to write. I must pencil these notes at odd chances, for I have to spend most of the day looking about, and photographing on my brain the many and glorious pictures of this memorable land.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

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(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window

A MAGNIFICENT CITY.

FOR many years religionists have boomed Jerusalem as the greatest city of ancient times, and Palestine as a kingdom superior in importance to all other countries of the globe. We now know that Palestine is a mountainous region, with arable land not superior to Vermont; that the holy city, because of its hilly surroundings and deep valleys, never exceeded one mile in length and three-fourths of a mile in breadth; that good statisticians, taking the most populous cities as guides, are of the opinion that its greatest population was never greater than 30,000; that, in fact, it probably never held more than 15,000 permanent residents at any one time; that they were without commerce, the arts, learning, and scarcely civilisation; that the story of Solomon's temple is almost unquestionably fabulous, as no traces of such a structure can be found, though diligent search has been made for it; that the ancient inhabitants lived in small, low-roofed huts; that the streets were narrow alley-ways, not wide enough for two of our modern carriages to pass without colliding; that filth was everywhere, and the odors disgusting in the extreme. The smells arising from the valley of Himmon, always reeking with decaying bodies, where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," made the whole city, in summer-time, pestilential.

Well, now, that was the city and country where God dwelt (Psalm cxxxv. 31); his throne was there (Jer. iii. 17); and there, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, was to be his judgment seat (Joel iii. 12); and there he shall roar and shake the heavens and the earth (Joel iii. 16).

Honor bright, good reader, do you wonder at the scepticism there is in the world when the people are told of the gigantic wars waged against that city; of the vast multitudes, reaching into millions, who were slaughtered by the armies of Titus, else were led away into slavery?

The Greeks knew the Jews as temple robbers. Did they not, as such, steal a description of the temple at Tyre, and credit it to Solomon? We know the Tyrians had a magnificent temple which was dedicated to the worship of Baal. Was not that temple made to do double duty—in real service at Tyre, and imaginary service at Jerusalem?

A recent visitor to Jerusalem does not glorify the modern city. He says: "It has no clubs, no bar-rooms, no beer-gardens, no concert-halls, no theatres, no lecture-rooms, no place of amusement of any kind, no street bands, no wandering minstrels, no wealthy or upper classes, no mayor, no alderman, no newspapers, no printing-presses, no book-stores—except one outside the walls for the sale of Bibles—no cheerfulness, no life. No one sings, no one dances, no one laughs in Jerusalem. Even the children do not play."

It is to be hoped that the New Jerusalem, which is to come down from heaven, will not be a duplicate of either the ancient or modern city.—*Progressive Thinker.*

HELL.

THE *Boston Sunday Globe* had, some little time back, a symposium on the subject of hell, in which various men of God aired their speculations. The straightest words on the subject came from Mr. Ernest Mendum, of the good old *Boston Investigator*, who wrote as under:—

"Hell is a figment of the brain. It is located in the diseased and perverted imaginations of human beings. It is the dreadful nightmare from the overloaded stomach of an ancient savage masquerading as a reality in the nineteenth century. It is a scourge used to frighten the weak-minded and children of all ages into paying tribute to theological mountebanks. Without it churches and lunatic asylums, though escaping taxation, could never flourish. It is the great tithe collector that levies tribute on cowards for the benefit of ministers and priests.

"Hell is of little consequence to the average man now-a-days, except to swear by, and this is the most honorable office to which it has ever been elected. Savages, in the barbarous past, might be excused a belief in this horrible, brain-destroying fiction; but one is unable to respect the mind which, having access to the ordinary sources of information to-day, still holds any fealty to a belief in that misty, boiling, sulphurous pit of Calvin, Knox, and Edwards.

"Modern intellectual fire companies have 'turned the hose of common sense' against the Devil and his dominion, with such good effect that the poor gentleman's abode has been changed into a green garden, where the shades of Voltaire, Paine, Hume, and Volney now rest on 'beds of asphodel' beneath the verdant foliage of the trees in Sheol, instead of sweating and groaning in the seething caldron of hell.

"Hell has been the greatest curse the world has ever known. Let it forever pass to that realm of superstition and darkness from which it was evolved to craze, to trouble, and to agonise the human race."

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POWER.

WATCHING the never-ending shocks
Of the ever-restless sea,
Dashing against the dauntless rocks
With its wild and tireless glee.

Watching the earth-worm's winding path
Through the slowly yielding soil,
Aiding the earth to growth and math
By its dark and silent toil.

Watching the wanton zig-zag flight
Of the pollen'd flirting bee,
Whisp'ring to all the blossoms bright
That its roving eye can see.

Watching the printer's busy toil,
As he sets the deathless type,
Planting a tree in living soil,
With its fruit that's always ripe.

Wond'ring, as all these things I see,
If the wit of man can say
Whether the sea, worm, man, or bee
O'er the earth holds greatest sway.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

MEMS. FROM OLD BOOKS.

FATHER GARASSE, who in his *Doctrine Curieuse des Beaux Esprits* has some abominable lies about Vanini, Luther, Buchanan, and Theophile, gives a good story of a Jew who maintained that the sin for which the Jews were suffering was that so many of them had believed Christ to be God.

Another good thing in Garasse is his saying that women ought not to read the Bible, "for," says he, "the Bible makes ministers' daughters so liable to be debauched!"

Bayle (sub. *Castalion*) says of Garasse: "I cannot sufficiently wonder at the impudence of this calumniator." Yet should it be remembered of this intolerant bigot that during a plague he obtained permission to attend the sick at Poictiers, where he caught the infection and died in 1631. Besides his *Doctrine Curieuse* (Against the Freethinkers), he wrote *Elixir Calvinisticum* (Against the Calvinists).

Bayle (sub. *Aaron*) relates that, in a French Bible printed by Antoine Bonnemere in 1566, the fables have been inserted into the text about the golden calf (Exodus xxxii.), about the beards becoming gilt of those who drank the infusion of the calf, and of the Israelites spitting upon Hur when he refused to make gods for them, till they smothered him.

Lerinus Torrentus, Bishop of Antwerp, wrote a hymn to the pious memory of Balthazar Gerard, the assassin of William the Silent.

Bayle, in his *Pensées sur la Comète* (p. 356), mentions a man burnt for Atheism at Paris, 1573, who taught that cleanliness was the only essential religion. He had as many shirts as there were days in the year, and sent them to be washed at a fountain in Flanders, famous for the purity of its waters and for bleaching linen.

Darwinism appears in the Talmud. At any rate, it is there reported that God originally made Adam with a tail, and he cut it off because he looked better without it. (See Bartolocci's *Bibliotheca Rabbinica*.) Some say Lilith was made from Adam's tail.

Several of the Talmudical doctors held that the Messiah had come. Rabbi Hillel said Hezekiah was the man, others said Nehemiah, others Zorobabel, and yet others Cyrus.

Southey, in his *Common-Place Book* (2nd series, p. 389), speaking of the saints, says: "Even stupidity was curable. There was a canon, by name Martin, in the Monastery of St. Isidore, excellently pious, but an incorrigible blockhead. In vain he puzzled himself to learn, till the saint appeared to him in a dream, and made him eat a book. He awoke a learned man, and wrote good Latin. It was certainly a sure way of making him digest knowledge." Perhaps this was how Galilean fishermen got their learning. John relates how, when retired from the fish business to Patmos, he ate a little book which an angel gave him (Rev. x. 10).

BIBLIOMANIAC.

Joseph in Egypt.

The tombs of ancient Egypt have given to us not only a religious literature of the first order, but they have preserved the papyri containing many of the most interesting novels read or heard recited by the ancients in the palmy days of ancient Egypt. The earliest stories are mostly of a fabulous and marvellous kind; those, however, of a later date are more solid in nature, and have often historical facts for their basis. Let us take, for example, the tale of the two brothers, written probably for Seti I., about B.C. 1366, when he was Crown Prince. In this story, which forms a wonderful analogy to that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, we have a novel, a romance of the first order. It appears that the novel centres around the persons of two brothers, named Bata and Anpu. The latter has a house and a wife, and the former lives with his brother as a kind of companion. One day Anpu sends Bata to get some corn out of a bin, and, on his arrival at the house, finds his brother's wife at her toilet. He asks her to get the required grain, but, instead of doing so, the wife makes suggestions similar to those made to Joseph by Potiphar's wife. Bata, however, refuses to listen, and, getting the corn himself, goes away. The wife, now fearing that one brother would tell the other, pretends as though she had suffered violence, and, when her husband comes home, accuses Bata of misconduct. Anpu now goes in search of his brother, and, finding him, threatens to murder him. The story goes on to say that at the death of Bata his heart was placed in the sycamore tree, which, on being cut down and the heart mixed with blood, Bata comes to life again. On examining the papyrus containing this romance, one cannot but be struck with the similarity between the Biblical story and the romance of the papyrus. —*London "Echo," August 1.*

PROFANE JOKES.

"In what condition was Job at the end of his life?" asked a Sunday-school teacher. "Dead," answered the quiet-looking boy.

The Rev. McSneeshin cannot do without his Taddy. He always takes a pinch before commencing his sermon, and his favorite text is, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust."

A visitor to the Duke of York, seeing a violin on the table, asked if his Royal Highness played, like his uncle, the Duke of Edinburgh. "Not much," said the attendant, "only such simple airs as *God save his Grandmother*."

Sunday-school Teacher (to farmer's boy)—"Why did the shepherd leave the ninety and nine sheep in the wilderness and go after the one that was lost?" Johnny (with eager confidence)—"Please, miss, 'cause it was the prize ram."

"What is heaven's number?" said a little New York girl to her mother one day last week. "What do you mean, dear?" was the reply. "Heaven's telephone number. I dess want to ring up Dod and ask him to please send some other kind of weather. I'm tired of this," added the little maid.

Every night when she said "Now I lay me" she supplemented it with "God bless papa and mamma," and on through the rest of the family. One evening last week she added: "Please remember brother 'specially, 'cause to-morrow's his birthday, an', Lord, don't forget me next month."

Mrs. Gray—"Was your prayer-meeting good last night?" Mrs. Green—"Rather uninteresting. None of the men who spoke had ever done anything very bad." Mrs. Gray—"But wasn't Mr. Graybeard there?" Mrs. Green—"Oh, yes; but you don't expect he'd confess any of his real crimes, do you?" Mrs. Gray—"Well, he might run a risk of being arrested."

Widow Blueberry—"Yes, I kin never be too thankful that my poor John was baptised afore he died." Enoch—"He was a Baptist, was he not?" Widow B.—"Yes. He was immersed in the river in the afternoon, an' that very same night he died of newmony on the lungs from ketchin' cold. It was awful sudden; but, as I said, I kin never be too thankful that he was baptised afore his death."

"Six days shalt thou labor." This is given as a law of God, promulgated on Mount Sinai. It is of equal authority with "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Whoever heard a preacher declare that a man would be damned for not laboring six days? These servants of God repudiate the entire law. They do not labor themselves on week days, neither do they keep holy God's Sabbath. They change the day and then prosecute the Seventh-Day Adventists, who keep the whole commandment—work six days, including the first, and rest on the seventh.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday, at 8.30, dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Christianity: its Birth, Reign, and Death."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, J. Fagan, "The Life of a Poor Scholar."

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7, musical selections; 7.30, a lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. Guest, "Atheist or Theist: which is the Fool?"

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, a lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Secularism and Social Problems." Members' general meeting after lecture.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, H. Courtney will lecture; 8.15, A. Guest, "The Infinite."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, W. Heaford, "Prayer." Thursday, at 8.30, F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Voltaire."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Religious Consolations"; 3.30, "Theism Examined." Wednesday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, a lecture.

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "God so Loved the World."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Behold how the Gods Vanish."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 8, S. R. Thompson will lecture.

TOTTENHAM GREEN: 3.30, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Creeds and Dogmas"; 7, "How Christianity became Strong." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 2.30, S. P. Putnam, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 6.30, "Freethought and Morality."

IPSWICH (Mr. Bishop's, "The G. E. R.," Commercial-road): 7.30, members' meeting—all should attend.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Arthur Peterson, "Some Considerations between God and Men."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, R. C. Phillips, "The True Living Wage."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, R. Mitchell, "A Rationalist's View of Christ."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, "The Universe and its Processes: A Criticism of Dr. Dallinger's Fernley Lecture of 1887," by a Local Gentleman.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, D. B. Bon, "A Liberal Program."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (Open Market, James-street): 6.30, J. G. Fisher, "What Good is Sunday?"

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, J. Kenst, "Is Christianity True?"

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Carl Aarstad will lecture.

SUNDERLAND (The Green, Ryhope): 11, The Secretary, "The Teaching of Jesus."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 11, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 15, Wood Green; 18, m. and a. Finsbury Park; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—Aug. 11, m. Kingsland, a. Deptford; 18, m. Finsbury Park; 22, Hammersmith; 25, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Kilburn; 28, Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—August 11, Westminster; 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 33. SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

A REVOLUTION.

BEFORE the meeting of parliament is a favourite time for journalistic sensations. On a former occasion of this kind the *Daily Chronicle* started a discussion on "Is Christianity Played Out?" During the past week or so it has found room for another discussion, which was started by "An Unknown Quantity," under the heading of "Is it a Revolution?" As this writer was allowed two columns of the largest type, it is to be presumed that his letter was regarded as of considerable importance. His style is lucid enough, but his drift is rather obscure. Apparently—but we speak under correction—he wishes to congratulate English society on its passing through a beneficent revolution, which will bring it back to healthier views of human existence. The great sex problem, for instance, has been overdone, and sexual discussions are ceasing to command their former exaggerated attention. Levity and frivolity have run their career, and society promises to become more solid and serious.

All this is very edifying, and particularly so when we look into the writer's account of the origin of the levity and frivolity from which society is advancing.

> "Many men living can remember the time when the Agnostic was popularly imagined as a drunken, foul-mouthed tinker. But ere long it appeared that the Agnostic had been imagined wrongly, and was in reality a man of culture, a man of science, or a lady novelist. Disbelief was no longer socially ostracised. On the contrary, young people in drawing-rooms were almost morbidly anxious to tell you that they had lost their faith, and were unreasonably sanguine in their hope that the fact would interest you. I do not want to overstate the case, but I think it will be generally allowed that the great barriers of religion were at that time much weakened and broken down. What followed? Not the outbreak of crime that some expected, for the recruits of Agnosticism were not from the criminal classes. Not the rigid life by rule of reason that others had foretold—for the two primary instincts go for something. A spirit of restlessness followed, a spirit of inquiry, a hatred of fixed forms and traditional ideas. One thing after another was tried; nothing was too new, too wild, too extravagant. Reverence decreased. In the birthplace of this spirit of unrest something was done to keep reverence, and Positivists worshipped nothing in particular in a little place off Fetter-lane. But in spite of such efforts the general feeling of reverence did decrease. For the slavish feeling of fear that also decreased neither orthodox nor unorthodox are likely to feel any regret. The extravagance and levity which have been so noticeable among us may be traced, perhaps, in part to this weakening of the barriers of religion."

Now, if the writer means—and what else can he mean?—that disbelief led up naturally to Oscar Wilde, we beg to tell him that he completely misunderstands his subject. Oscar Wilde was never, we believe, an Agnostic. He represented absolutely nothing but himself. In literature or art he was merely an idiosyncrasy. The representative unbelievers have been men and women of great seriousness of mind and character. Who can associate frivolity with the names of Buckle, George Eliot, Mill, Clifford, Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer? Was there anything frivolous about the sayings and doings of Charles Bradlaugh? His personal appearance indicated intense earnestness. He was not "An Unknown Quantity." He was a great public force—a daring champion of unpopular ideas; and his courage and self-sacrifice brought him to an untimely grave.

It is good of this writer to admit that Agnosticism was not recruited from the criminal classes. But is it not precisely those classes amongst whom Christianity boasts its sublimest conquests? You are quite uninteresting in Christian circles if you have always been just and honorable. The son who stays at home, does his work, and looks after his father's business, is a commonplace character; but the prodigal son, who fools away his time with drunkards and harlots, is a great attraction. Christianity rejoices over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Go to the Devil first, if you want to make a first-rate Christian afterwards.

The *Chronicle* writer speaks pompously of "the barriers of religion." One would think they are the only real defences of morality and clean living, whereas many of the dirtiest and most villainous characters in history have been conspicuously pious. And what is the use of mouthing the word "reverence," as though it were of definite and unalterable value? Surely the value of reverence depends upon the worth of what is reverenced. And why this cheap sneer at Positivism? It requires neither valor nor wit to indulge in such a recreation. Positivism may be ever so wrong intellectually; that is a point which we need not discuss at present; but it certainly holds aloft an ideal which is far more rigorous than the ideal of Christianity. To say that the Positivists "worshipped nothing in particular" is sheer inanity affecting smartness. They worshipped Humanity. An abstraction, you will say; but what more is any god in the world's pantheon, even the god of Theism or the very god of the *Daily Chronicle*?

It seems to us that this "Unknown Quantity" must have moved among the virtuosi. He states that disbelief ceased to be socially ostracised: surely he refers to chatter about disbelief rather than to disbelief itself, the affectation rather than the reality. Social ostracism still continues for those who take any open and active part in the propagation of "infidelity," just as the law, which allows a certain individual freedom of thinking, interposes all sorts of obstacles the moment you set about advocating Freethought in a public way, and especially if you do so in concert with others of the same persuasion.

These very reasons, even if there were no others, render it extremely improbable that disbelief should lead to "extravagance and levity." When a man finds the world against him, not for any crime or vice on his part, but because he has honestly thought for himself, he is in danger of becoming *too* serious. It is fortunate, indeed, if he does not become a Pessimist. On the whole, therefore, the "breaking down of the barriers of religion" seems to us the very best guarantee of that beneficent revolution which the *Chronicle* writer is proclaiming.

G. W. FOOTE.

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MISSIONS IN CHINA.

THE massacre of Christians—one man, nine women, and a baby—at Kucheng has caused a thrill of horror throughout the land, and, what may prove more useful, has excited discussion on the utility of missions, and their political relations, in China. Mr. Eugene Stock, the editorial secretary of the Church Missionary Society, has himself, in a long letter to the papers, met a question, which should be solved, not in the hot blood of indignation, but in the calm light of reason. He says:—

> "I speak the mind of hundreds of missionaries when I say that they have no personal desire for anything in the nature of vengeance, even for such terrible outrages as we now deplore. But Great Britain cannot in China pass lightly over the murder of British subjects who have a right to be there. The British Government will, I doubt not, take all measures in this case that are right and necessary, especially with a view to the future protection of British residents; but the last thing we desire is that the Gospel should be carried into China at the point of the bayonet."

If Mr. Stock means that every effort should be made to bring the criminals to justice, we concur. Lord Salisbury has promptly demanded this, and it has been as promptly conceded by the Emperor of China. But Mr. Stock makes the demand, "missionaries must be protected." Does he mean they should be followed and protected by gunboats and soldiers? That is simply impossible. China will feel the results of her disastrous war with Japan for many years to come. Rebellion has been fomented, fanaticism fanned to a flame; disbanded soldiers rove the provinces, ready for any mischief; secret societies abound. These "Vegetarians" are twelve thousand strong. They are well armed and organised, and are able to withstand the Chinese troops. According to Mr. Waters, who has been British Consul at Foochow, and who has had thirty years' experience of China, they are no roughs, but abstemious and "peaceful, praiseworthy, and well-conducted people. They never drank or smoked, and were, in fact, something like a Band of Hope in England." We shall see presently that they have special causes of hatred against the "foreign devils," who, they believe, bring opium, war, and immorality in their train.

The missionary should know that he risks his life. If prepared to take all risks on himself, we might admire his zeal, even while lamenting it is not zeal according to knowledge. But this is just what he does not care to do. He claims the privileges of the *Civis Romanus*, and expects his country to back him in every difficulty. As a politician once said in the House: "Every missionary wants a gunboat at his back!" Worse, he insists on having his womankind with him, though he knows they are regarded by the Celestials as only the members of a harem. Young girls, fresh from home and school, are sent into the interior of a disturbed country, believing in the efficacy of prayer, and relying on the protection of a God who does nothing. The imprudence, nay, the cruelty, of those who urge girls to embark on such a career for the salvation of their souls is nothing short of scandalous. Mr. Eugene Stock says: "But what if women claim a right to a share in spiritual warfare?" He tells us "the men and women of the missionary committee dare not refuse to accept, and *even to call for*, such invaluable offers of service." Is this reason or fanaticism? Because some young girls, with inflamed religious feelings, and ignorant or oblivious of the condition of things in China, claim to share in spiritual warfare, do the men and women who stop at home, and the editorial secretary, who lives by sending others out, "dare not refuse them," but even call for others? Would Mr. Stock gave a free head to his own daughter if she wanted to go? Mr. Eugene Stock reminds us that the spread of Christianity has been "attained at the cost of many precious lives." It has, indeed. Those who know the real history of Christian missions know that it has not, however, usually been the lives of the missionaries. Christianity has been spread by the sword quite as truly as ever was Islam.

There is, it is said, monumental evidence that Christianity was preached in China before the seventh century. What has been the upshot of a thousand years, more or less, of missionary work? The missionaries have made themselves and their creed so abhorred that they are constantly in danger of outrages. The opposition to Christianity in China comes from the educated classes. It is said this is because Christianity tends to weaken their authority. But there are numerous other reasons, as anyone who has read the paper by Wong Ching Foo in the *North American Review*, entitled "Why I am a Heathen,"* will know. Wong Ching Foo says he retreated "shudderingly from a belief in a merciless God who had long foreordained most of the helpless human race to an eternal hell. To preach such a doctrine to intelligent heathen would only raise in their minds doubts as to my sanity, if they did not believe I was lying." The common expression used of missionaries by the shrewd Chinese is "Lie-preaching devils." Li-Hung-Chang, the Prime Minister, said to the Rev. Gilbert Reid, of the Presbyterian North China Mission, as he records in the *Forum* of June, 1893: "Well, you needn't come back to China; you had better reform the American people, so that they will treat our Chinese laborers a little better." In California these have often been stoned, mobbed, and murdered by fanatical Christians. In violation of the treaty of 1869, the United States has passed Chinese Exclusion Acts, designed "to prohibit the coming of Chinese persons into the United States." When they see their own countrymen persecuted and excluded abroad, can it be wondered the Chinese desire the white men to return to their own country? They cannot understand that holy avidity for the salvation of souls which is accompanied with the introduction of opium, rum, and rifles. They cannot appreciate the gospel of Jesus Christ and gunboats. The Rev. George Smith (*Visit to the Consular Cities of China*, p. 54) records that they thus express themselves: "Perhaps this doctrine may be very good, but we wish that you would first try it on the English themselves, for they are wicked men. When this doctrine has made them better, then come and speak to us."

Mr. Alexander Michie, in his work on *Missionaries in China*, notes that the recognition of Christian missions was forced on China. He says (pp. 5 and 6): "Toleration of Christian missionaries, extorted by force from China, placed Christians on a different platform from the other foreign religions, Mohammedanism and Buddhism, to which China of its own notion extended complete toleration. Christianity is therefore inseparably associated with the humiliation of the empire—a calamity which is yet fresh in the memory of the living generation."

The sole ground on which toleration was claimed for Christianity was that it taught men to be virtuous, and the Chinese, says Mr. Michie, "have some difficulty in recognising in the actual Christianity of real life the innocent disguise which theoretical Christianity was made to wear when presented to them at the point of the bayonet." Chinese society is founded on filial duty. When they hear that in the Bible there are such injunctions as to hate father and mother for the sake of Christ (Luke xiv. 26), and to let the dead bury the dead, they are astonished at any such creed claiming to be divine. Mr. Michie says (p. 67):—

> "It so happens that, impure as the Chinese imagination may be, the whole body of their classical literature does not contain a single passage which needs to be slurred over or explained away, and which may not be read in its full natural sense by youth or maiden. And to people nurtured on a literature so immaculate in these respects there are things in the Bible which are calculated to create a prejudice against its teachings, even in well-disposed minds."

Mr. R. S. Gundry, writing in the *Fortnightly Review* on "Missions in China," gives his testimony against the indiscriminate distribution of the Bible. He observes that the Chinese are apt to be offended at the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter. The proceedings of Ruth are open to question, and Samuel's treatment of Agag looks rather barbarous. Mr. Michie mentions that missionary tracts are coarsely illustrated by such scenes as Jonah being swallowed by the great fish, and Jael in the act of driving her tent-peg through the temples of her sleeping guest. The story of the Incarnation, which lies at the very foundation of Christianity, offends the sensitive heathen Chinee.

Mr. Michie's book is a valuable one, and in the following passage he throws some light upon the present massacre coming at the hands of the Vegetarians. He says (p. 57):—

> "Societies, whose bond of union is abstinence from flesh, alcohol, opium, tobacco, and impurity, and whose members are held strictly to their rules, are under the ban of the missionaries. They always pronounce such

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> kind of abstinence 'idolatry,' a verdict always ready to hand, which saves troublesome examination. One practice, which seems to be most obnoxious to the missionaries of certain sections, is Vegetarianism, which is rather common in China. This, it appears, is one of the subtlest wiles of the Devil to make the Chinese simulate goodness, even before the arrival of the missionaries, and accordingly the victims of this deadly delusion must be saved from their vegetarian diet at least, if not entirely from the vegetarian superstition. A single breach of the vow is all that is required to destroy the accumulated merit of half a lifetime, and the missionaries naively relate the snares they set for these pseudo-virtuous people to entrap them into transgression. The breaking of an egg, innocent as it looks, is sometimes the means blessed to this end; and we read of wily old converts laying earnest siege to new inquirers in order that, by some means, they may be seduced into eating pork in their company—a sort of equivalent of 'taking the shilling.'"

Those who wish to drive the Chinese out of America and Australia always complain of their immorality. We need not, then, be surprised that similar charges are made by the Chinese against Europeans, who are believed to introduce alcohol, opium, and impurity in their train. The missionary, if earnest, is as fanatical as the Chinese, and goes into danger as blindly. If a humbug, he lives, as according to the *Hong-Kong Daily Telegraph* most of them do live, in luxury and with a retinue of servants such as he could never hope to have at home. In either case he incurs the ill-will of the native, and he should do so at his own risk.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE VALUE OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

(Concluded from page 500.)

WHEN Christians put forward the Bible as being the very word of God, all-sufficient for revelation of himself and salvation of us, we naturally ask first for its credentials. When, where, and how did God give it to mankind? We, of course, should have thought that, in vouchsafing this unique document, on which the eternal destiny of our race is said to depend, he would have taken care to do so in such a manner that its origin and its communication by himself would be quite beyond dispute; as, for instance, by delivering it to the earliest men in a form which, being imperishable, should ever be preserved by the human family as the absolute and invariable standard by which all copies and versions could be tested, just as we, in our endeavors at accuracy, have ordained and preserved standards of measure and weight. And surely it would have been easy for God the omnipotent to distinguish this original standard by such a supernatural character as would make all future men who referred to it recognise, without doubt, that it was of him and from him. But we soon find that his ways are indeed not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. No such standard exists, because no such standard was ever given by him; except it is stated in the case of the Ten Commandments, which he himself, it is said, wrote on two tables of stone, and of which he made a duplicate when Moses had shattered the original; this second copy being preserved in the ark of the Covenant, which was afterwards conserved in the most holy place of the temple of Solomon (2 Chron. v. 10).

Certainly the many alterations which portions of the Bible have undergone do not evince any special care, either upon the part of God or man, to preserve what was originally written. The Rev. E. Myers, in his *Bible and Theology*, says that "no people could have been less careful of their sacred writings than the Jews." Modern criticism is most emphatic in its verdict against the notion that the writings of the Bible have maintained their original form. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Davidson, who occupies a front position amongst English Biblical scholars, in his *Canon of the Bible* writes: "As to Ezra's treatment of the Pentateuch, or his specific mode of redaction, we are left for the most part to conjecture. Yet it is safe to affirm that he added—making new precepts and practices either in place of, or beside, older ones. Some things he removed as unsuited to the altered circumstances of the people; others he modified" (p. 25). "The scribes who began with Ezra, seeing how he acted, would naturally follow his example, not hesitating to revise the text in *substance* as well as form. They did not refrain from changing what had been written, or from inserting fresh matter" (*ibid*, p. 34).

In referring to the New Testament, Dr. Davidson observes: "The exact principles that guided the formation of a canon in the earliest centuries cannot be discovered. Strictly speaking, there were none. Definite grounds for the reception or rejection of books were not apprehended . . . . If it be asked whether all the New Testament writings proceeded from the authors whose names they bear, criticism cannot reply in the affirmative" (*ibid*, p. 153). Thus Dean Alford was quite justified in writing in his book, *How to Study the New Testament*: "These Gospels, so important to the Church, have not come to us in one undisputed form. We have no authorised copy of them in their original language, so that we may know in what precise words they were originally written. The authorities from which we derive their sacred text are various ancient copies written by hand on parchment. Of the Gospels there are more than *five hundred* of these manuscripts of various ages, from the fourth century after Christ to the fifteenth, when printing superseded manual writing for publication of books. Of these five hundred, and more, no two are in all points alike: probably in no two of the more ancient can even a few consecutive verses be found in which all the words agree. . . . . It is not a word more than the truth to say that it [the New Testament] abounds with errors and inadequate renderings. . . . . A formidable list of passages might be given in which our version either has confessedly misrendered the original, or has followed a form of the text now well known not to have been the original form" (pp. 18–21, 22).

The Higher Criticism is valuable, inasmuch as it shows how fallacious the old orthodox ideas of inspiration were. It is no longer contended that the "inspired book" is perfect, for Canon Gore says "it is of the essence of the Old Testament to be imperfect" (*Lux Mundi*, p. 274). He quotes Professor Cheyne, who, speaking of certain Bible narratives, "protests against the supposition that they are true to fact" (*ibid*, p. 288). Now, if the Bible be "imperfect," and its narratives not "true to fact," as these Christian writers allege, what becomes of the orthodox claim that the Scriptural records are trustworthy? Truly Freethought investigation has borne its practical and useful results. The Bible has, indeed, failed to successfully withstand the attacks of the *Age of Reason*.

This criticism has, moreover, shown that the allegation that the Church of Rome has preserved the Bible intact is the very opposite of fact. The Rev. Dr. Irons asks: "Did she in truth, from the first, prize and preserve in some ark of safety the autographs of apostles, of evangelists, or make diligent search after the authentic manuscripts of the prophets?" "The earliest Christian writers," continues the Doctor, "strikingly exhibit that neither the Roman nor any other Church had critically or authoritatively, in any sense, settled the grave question as to what books should be admitted, or inquired at all, so far as it appears, for authentic copies. . . . If, then, any may be thanked for the Canon of the New Testament, it is the Church of Alexandria; but not even in that literary communion have we any attempt made to preserve or ascertain the originals of the Gospels or Epistles. . . . And what has been the condition of the Sacred Word since the third century (for all questions as to the correction of the text slept for at least a hundred years after Origen)? An uncritical Septuagint, and an uncritical Greek Testament in the Greek Churches; the common Syriac Version of the third century in the Oriental Churches; half-a-dozen different versions in the different African communions; the Vulgate in the West: these in some way sufficed the Christian world for many ages. With some of these—the Septuagint, the Peschito, the Syriac, and the Egyptian—the Roman Church had nothing to do. As far as we know, she never thought of examining them. If that was her duty, she was entirely unfaithful to it. . . . Such, then, are the facts bearing on the claim of the Church of Rome to rule over Scripture, and to subordinate it to herself. She did *nothing* to the Canon for 400 years; *nothing*, except by individual and much-neglected and opposed doctors, for 500 more; *nothing authoritative* till the sixteenth century; *nothing satisfactory to herself* even then; *nothing to settle* by authority either the Hebrew or Greek text, till this hour. Any claim on her part to paramount authority over the

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Written Word is contrary to every fact of history" (*The Bible and its Interpreters*, pp. 49, 50, 52, and 59).

As to the Biblical chronology, modern criticism has clearly brought to light the fact that it is thoroughly erroneous. The pyramids, temples, and tombs of Egypt, dating back five thousand years, with their inscriptions, their dynastic records, their pictures, and other works of art, prove that that country must have been populous, maturely organised, skilled in many arts and handicrafts, at a period when, according to the book of Genesis, humankind consisted of but a few families. Samuel Laing, in his *Human Origins*, says: "It is quite impossible that, if man and all animal life were created about 4,000 years B.C., and were then all destroyed save the few pairs saved in Noah's Ark, and made a fresh start from a single centre some 1,500 years later, there can be any truth in Darwin's theory of evolution. We know for a certainty, from the concurrent testimony of all history, and from Egyptian monuments, that the different races of men and animals were in existence five thousand years ago as they are at the present day; and that no fresh creations or marked changes of type have taken place during that period"(p. 6). The same writer also remarks: "The chronology from Abraham to Moses is hopelessly confused" (*ibid*, p. 241). Equally incorrect are the dates given of the birth and death of Jesus, and of many other events narrated in the New Testament.

The Higher Criticism is also valuable because it strikes a severe blow at Bible idolatry, substituting reasonable examination for the blind acceptance of traditional literature. It is this criticism which has destroyed the belief that whatever is found in the Bible should be accepted irrespective of its nature and tendency. More and more it is being recognised that all books, to be of practical service, should be our servants, not our masters. Let us, therefore, disencumber ourselves of all faith in a supposed supernatural revelation, and see what we can do with the revelation of nature as expressed in the living world of which we are a part, and expressed, likewise, more or less clearly, with more or less of human perversion, in the works of the men who came before us, among which the books bound up as the Bible have their due place. Surely nothing can be clearer to the unprejudiced judgment than the fact that we can never read and interpret anything aright, be it work of man or work of nature, while we in any sense count it fetish. CHARLES WATTS.

A USELESS GOD.

I DO not often agree with Roman Catholics. When I do our unanimity is wonderful. Yet I find myself in accordance with a part of the *Defence of Prayer*, by Father Barry, who, in the August *Nineteenth Century*, replies to Mr. Norman Pearson's sketch of a religion destitute of prayer, grace, miracles, and faith, as the religion of the future. Dr. Barry says such a religion is not worth having. I say ditto. The fact is, Theists have so attenuated their faith that it is neither worth blessing nor banning. Their central dogma made a big splash at one time, but, by broad spreading, it has dispersed to nought. God retires so rapidly at every advance of science that one cannot now get even the glimpse which Moses got in the clift of the rock. What does Humanity want with a God who sits apart where sounds of human sorrow never mount to mar his "sacred, everlasting calm"? Such a God will never have real worship. He is not worth his salt, and shall have no pinch of incense from me. A God who does nothing, as Dr. Barry says, is no God. Does the universe require a figure-head which sails with the ship, but cannot steer it? We have no use even for a Constitutional Deity, who reigns but does not govern, and has virtually abdicated in favor of natural laws. The once Absolute Monarchy, which never administers justice or listens to petition, is represented by a vacant throne, which might as well be removed, to make way for the Republic of Man. Nietzsche proclaims that God is dead. He died out of compassion for sufferings he neither could relieve nor cure. Who shall say Nietzsche nay? If God never shows himself, he may be, as Elijah said of Baal, asleep, or peradventure on a journey. At any rate, if he has no interest in my concerns, certainly I have none in his. What is God, what are gods, to us, if there is no eye to pity distress, no arm to save from disaster? Without this your God is but a word, excellent for priests to conjure with. The only God humanity can really care for is a special Providence—one who guards and guides his children, who never appeal to him in vain. Is there such a God? For the metaphysical figment offered us by Neo-Theists is not even worth swearing by. The best description I have seen of the Immaterial Entity of the metaphysicians is the following: "Take a box 12 feet by 12, exhaust the air, and then tell your friends you have 144 feet of solid deity." A God in the form of a wafer to put on your tongue is better than that; though a square meal is better than either.

Now, Catholics have a live God, who can make himself into a wafer, and puts in a miraculous appearance occasionally, just to show he has not burst like a bubble, and evaporated into thin air. Such a God is not as good as the old gods, who did everything; but he is certainly better than Carlyle's Deity, who "does nothing."

I agree, too, with Dr. Barry that, once admit a God, it is no use objecting to miracles. Swallow a deity, and you can swallow anything. Once open your gullet wide enough to gulp an Infinite Person who created all out of nothing, and you need not pause to strain out transubstantiation. Admit the big Magician in the skies, and you need not shy at any magic on earth. The more the better, for the less excuse will there be for scepticism.

Well, then, Dr. Barry, I concede your premises. If there be such a God as you proclaim, miracles are possible, prayer can be answered. But where is the evidence of such a God? I have seen no miracles. My prayers have not been answered. You trot me back to the lives of the saints; no first-hand testimony, but the lying legends of your Church. I smell a rat. Your corporation could never exist, and live without work, but for this belief in a God, who gives you your power, and can be approached through your ceremonies. All theological success depends upon telling people there is One—or More—who cares for them, that prayer will be answered, that every hair of our heads is numbered, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father's knowledge. But I notice that the sparrows fall all the same. Mr. Pearson says "natural causation prevails universally"; but he does not like to utter the inference I draw, that Theism is a worthless delusion.

Dr. Barry, instead of trotting out the sort of God I want, gives me a string of words about a spiritual world holding in its grasp the world of "natural causation," playing upon it as an instrument, guiding its powers to ends which of themselves they could not attain, etc. *Hypotheses non fingo.* Where is the evidence? Produce your God, and I will be ready to swallow all the rest, even down to Father Barry's power to create the Creator out of dough. UNCLE BENJAMIN.

BEGINNINGS OF SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE.

AT the base of the vast structure of the older Scriptural interpretation were certain ideas regarding the first five books of the Old Testament. It was taken for granted that they had been dictated by the Almighty to Moses about fifteen hundred years before our era; that some parts of them, indeed, had been written by the corporeal finger of Jehovah; and that all parts gave, not merely his thoughts, but his exact phraseology. It was also held, virtually, by the universal Church that, while every narrative or statement in these books is a precise statement of historical or scientific fact, yet that the entire text contains vast hidden meanings. Such was the rule; the exceptions made by a few interpreters here and there only confirmed it. Even the indifference of St. Jerome to the doctrine of Mosaic authorship did not prevent its ripening into a dogma.

The book of Genesis was universally held to be an account, not only divinely comprehensive, but miraculously exact, of the creation and of the beginnings of life on the earth; an account to which all discoveries in every branch of science must, under pains and penalties, be made to conform. In English-speaking lands this has lasted until our own time. The most eminent living English biologist has recently told us how, in every path of natural science

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he has, at some stage in his career, come across a barrier labelled "No thoroughfare.—Moses." A favorite subject of theological eloquence was the perfection of the Pentateuch, and especially of Genesis, not only as a record of the past, but as a revelation of the future.

About the middle of the twelfth century came, so far as the world now knows, the first gainsayer of this general theory. Then it was that Aben Ezra, the greatest Biblical scholar of the Middle Ages, ventured very discreetly to call attention to certain points in the Pentateuch incompatible with the belief that the whole of it had been written by Moses, and handed down in its original form. His opinion was based upon the well-known texts which have turned all really eminent Biblical scholars in the nineteenth century from the old view by showing the Mosaic authorship of the five books in their present form to be clearly disproved by the books themselves. But Aben Ezra had evidently no aspirations for martyrdom; he fathered the idea upon a rabbi of a previous generation, and, having veiled his statement in an enigma, added the caution, "Let him who understands hold his tongue."

For about four centuries the learned world followed the prudent rabbi's advice, and then two noted scholars—one of them a Protestant, the other a Catholic—revived his idea. Carlstadt was, for this and other troublesome ideas, suppressed with the applause of the Protestant Church, and the book of Maes was placed by the older Church on the *Index*. The new truth appeared but dimly here and there until the middle of the next century, when Hobbes in his *Leviathan*, and La Peyrère in his *Preadamites*, took it up and developed it still further. The result came speedily. Hobbes, for this and other sins, was put under the ban, even by the political party which sorely needed him, and was regarded generally as an outcast; while La Peyrère, for this and other heresies, was thrown into prison by the Grand Vicar of Mechlin, and kept there until he fully retracted; his book was refuted by seven theologians within a year after its appearance, and within a generation thirty-six elaborate answers to it had appeared. The Parliament of Paris ordered it to be burned by the hangman.

In 1670 came an utterance vastly more important, by a man far greater than any of these—the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* of Spinoza. Reverently but firmly he went much more deeply into the subject. Suggesting new arguments and recasting the old, he summed up with judicial fairness, and showed that Moses could not have been the author of the Pentateuch in the form then existing; that there had been glosses and revisions; that the biblical books had grown up as a literature; that, though great truths are to be found in them, and they are to be regarded as a divine revelation, the old claims of inerrancy for them cannot be maintained; that in studying them men had been misled by mistaking human conceptions for divine meanings; that, while prophets have been inspired, the prophetic faculty has not been the dowry of the Jewish people alone; that to look for exact knowledge of natural and spiritual phenomena in the sacred books is an utter mistake; and that the narratives of the Old and New Testaments, while they surpass those of profane history, differ among themselves not only in literary merit, but in the value of the doctrines they inculcate. As to the authorship of the Pentateuch, he arrived at the conclusion that it was written long after Moses, but that Moses may have written some books from which it was compiled. Spinoza then went on to throw light into some other books of the Old and New Testaments, and added two general statements which have proved exceedingly serviceable; for they contain the germs of all modern broad churchmanship, and the first of them gave the formula which was destined in our own time to save to the Anglican Church a large number of her noblest sons. This was that "sacred Scripture *contains* the Word of God, and in so far as it contains it is incorruptible"; the second was that "error in speculative doctrine is not impious."

Spinoza was, for this work, and for the earlier expression of some of the opinions it contained, abhorred as a heretic both by Jews and Christians: from the synagogue he was cut off by a public curse, and in the Church he was regarded as in some sort a forerunner of Antichrist. But the ideas of Spinoza at last secured recognition. They had sunk deeply into the hearts and minds of various leaders of thought, and, most important of all, into the heart and mind of Lessing; he brought them to bear in his treatise on the *Education of the World*, as well as in his drama, *Nathan the Wise*, and both these works have spoken with power to every generation since.

—*Popular Science Monthly.* ANDREW D. WHITE.

IN THE BEGINNING.

"ONCE on a time," in a certain locality—
And the date will be doubted by few—
A singular God with a spice of plurality,
The changeless, unknowable, well-known totality
Of fatuous wisdom and holy rascality,
Thought he'd like to have something to do.

Prior to "once on a time," this divinity
Had spontaneously managed to grow,
In some part of space, or at least its vicinity,
From "nothing to speak of," to three of the Trinity—
A firm in which many perceive an affinity
To a "sort of something," you know.

Tired of his somewhat protracted passivity,
He determined to work, for a change;
But just as a boulder bounds down a declivity,
He, novice-like, bustled with heedless activity,
And evidenced all a beginner's proclivity
For experiments foolish and strange.

God had been living in total obscurity,
So the first thing he made was the light;
For, though in the dark he could see through futurity,
He wanted a light to construct with security,
And give to his figures such outlines of purity
As would meet with approval at sight.

Oddly he fancied, with godly fatuity,
That he'd fixed the round earth as a plane—
Subjacent, and almost in close contiguity
To stars and such trifles of twinkling tenuity—
Upholding the firmament's wheeling circuity,
As the scriptures so clearly maintain.

Soon he exhausted, despite their variety,
His designs for bone, muscle, and blood;
But just ere he stopped through fatigue and satiety,
Stark naked he posed, with the gravest sobriety
(Remember, 'twas prior to sin and propriety),
And produced his own image in mud.

God, with his breath, gave the statue vitality—
Which resembled himself "to a tee"—
And called it a man; therefore, God, in reality,
Is manlike, has muscles, bones, lungs, personality,
Blood, whiskers, and toe-nails—in short, animality,
As displayed by us all—"he and she."

Life he created with wild prodigality,
On the basis of struggle and strife,
Whence spring, in their noxious but needful vitality,
The pestilent virtues that breed "nationality"
From personal, family, tribal brutality,
The destructive preservers of life.

God, in a week, with malign ingenuity,
Made a mess of sublunar affairs,
Got weary, relapsed into former vacuity,
Abandoned the badly-made world to fortuity,
And left the poor tenants of earth's incongruity
To attend to the needful repairs.

Such is the story of earth and its genesis,
As narrated to Jews by a ghost,
Which parsons (whose chief occupation lawn-tennis is)
Tell all to believe, under horrible menaces,
And threat'nings of hell—and you know what a den it is—
So believe it, ye cripples!—or roast!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

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ACID DROPS.

Hudson, the man who brutally murdered his wife and children, and buried their bodies on Helmsley moor, was executed on Tuesday morning. He slept well until six o'clock, and then dressed and had breakfast, after which he spent some time with the chaplain. We presume he was ready for heaven when Billington appeared to do the hanging.

Here is a curious corroboration of a point in our recent articles on "The Bible and Local Veto." The Independent Order of Rechabites has just held its thirty-sixth Conference at Brighton. Considerable discussion arose on the rule allowing the use of wine in the Holy Communion. It was proposed to expunge this rule, but the Conference decided to retain it. The Rechabites, therefore, are teetotalers everywhere except at the Communion table. They break their pledge every time they drink the blood of Christ.

Chinese Missions were the subject of a recent article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *apropos* of Dr. G. E. Morrison's book, "An Australian in China." It appears that the mission in Tongchuan was opened in 1891, and the results are "not discouraging." But very little encourages the missionaries, for, although the attitude of the Chinese is one of "perfect friendliness," not a single native has been baptised up to date. In Yunnan City a missionary has been laboring for six years, but "he has no male converts, though there are two promising nibblers who are waiting for the first vacancy to become adherents." There *was* a convert, a poor coolie, but he had to be expelled for stealing. In the whole province there are eighteen Protestant missionaries, and sometimes twenty-three; and in eight years they have converted eleven Chinese. That is, it takes two missionaries eight years to turn one heathen Chinee into a nominal Christian.

We say *nominal* Christian; for what is the character of these "converts"? This is what the *Pall Mall* says: "Money is poured out on them (the missions) like water; and the net result to date has been the 'conversion' of a handful of mission cooks and nurse-girls, foundlings dropped into the missionary compound and kept so long as they believe; loafers in search of missionary food, dipsomaniacs, and beggars, 'Rice-Christians,' and a promising assortment of ingenious thieves waiting for the first opportunity to loot."

In reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury's call at Croydon for rescue of Christians from the persecution of Mohammedans, "Sadek" writes a long letter in the *Croydon Advertiser*. He says that the cry of the heart-broken, degraded women, the woes of the drunkard's homes, and the bitter wail of the starving poor and of the unemployed, that rise unceasingly over the whole area of "Western civilisation," are things unknown in Islam.

In the last letter received from the Rev. R. W. Stewart, the martyred missionary, he speaks of "the many incidents which showed us that the hand of God was controlling everything." Pity the hand of God did not control the "Vegetarians," who, we suppose, were allowed to be under the control of the Devil.

Here, too, is Mr. Gladstone saying that, "by the help of God," the Turks must be taught to render justice to the Armenians. Would it not be better if the help of God came in to prevent the injustice and brutalities which rouse the indignation of Mr. Gladstone?

While there is all this talk about Chinese massacres let it be noted that at Sligo, on August 11, two Christian Protestant preachers were set upon by a Christian Roman Catholic mob, and it took two hundred men of the Royal Irish Constabulary to preserve them from the fury of the mob. Intolerance and fanaticism are not confined to the "Vegetarians."

The *St. James's Gazette*, writing of the Chinese massacres, says: "Experience has amply proved that, where Buddhism or Mohammedanism has passed, Christianity makes no real way." This is the most notable fact in connection with missions. Christianity succeeds against savage races, whom it exterminates. But civilised faiths like Islamism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Judaism, it assails in vain. The fact sufficiently stamps its real place among the religions of the world.

Dr. G. E. Morrison, F.G.S., in *An Australian in China*, says the missionaries show no results commensurate with the cost in human energy and in money. He says: "There are 1,511 Protestant missionaries, who have gathered into the fold last year (1893) 3,127 Chinese—not all of whom, it is feared, are genuine Christians—at a cost of £350,000, a sum equal to the combined incomes of the ten chief London hospitals."

At the present rate, it will take, to convert a population of 386 millions, just 123,441 years, at a cost of £43,204,350,000.

These missionaries, according to their own account, are employed in doing what?—in sending the heathen to hell wholesale. Here is what one of them says, as reported by Dr. Morrison: "Those Chinese who have never heard the Gospel will be judged by the Almighty as he thinks fit"—a contention which does not admit of dispute—"but those Chinese who have heard the Christian doctrine and still steel their hearts against it will assuredly go to hell." This is exactly what the Chinese do, so the missionaries are an agency for making hell certain.

Mr. Curzon, in his *Problems of the Far East*, refers to the difficulties arising from "the constantly-increasing employment of women, and particularly unmarried women, by the missionary bodies." He says: "Only last year, at the remote inland town of Kuei-hwa-cheng, a friend of mine encountered a missionary community, consisting of one male and of twenty Swedish girls. The propaganda of the latter consisted in parading the streets and singing hymns to the strumming of tambourines and guitars. The Society that had committed the outrage of sending out these innocent girls only allowed them 200 dollars, or £27 10s. a-year apiece for board, lodging, and clothing. As a consequence, they were destitute of the smallest comforts, and could not even perform their toilette without the impertinent eyes of Chinamen being directed upon them through the paper screens."

The Missionary Flad, a German, writing from Abyssinia, says that King Menelik, who claims to be a direct descendant of David and Solomon, intends, after having conquered the Italians, to set forth to Jerusalem to free the Holy City. He asks the help of Russia, and promises rich booty to his soldiers. He thinks he will do this as easily as he carried out a raid lately against the Gallas, killing the men and making slaves of the women and children, after the approved fashion of his ancestors. King Menelik is a Christian, and offers a strong proof of how invariably Christianity carries civilisation in its train.

Although ablutions form an integral part of the Moslem religion, it often happens that cleanliness comes into conflict with godliness on the crowded pilgrimages to Mecca. Among the pilgrims from India cholera often spreads, and they are believed to be a means of its propagation westward. The pilgrimage, it is believed, opens the gate of Paradise. It often opens the gate of death. If they die whilst in the performance of the religious haj, they consider themselves most lucky, and believe the special favor of God has descended upon them in consequence of their visiting the Holy Place.

But in some cases they do not reach Mecca. The *Daily News* says: "The survivors of one shipload last year, after suffering horrible privations for forty days on the quarantine island, were obliged to go back to India without making the pilgrimage, and this is not a very uncommon occurrence."

Pilgrimages are so popular because they satisfy the desire for change, and minister to the atavism of a nomadic state when those wandering in search of pasture for their flocks nevertheless liked to return to the graves of their forefathers or the scenes of the exploits of heroes. It is a curious fact brought out by William Simpson in his pamphlet on *The Worship of Death*, that all the old temples are built on tombs, and pilgrimages paid everywhere to the shrines of the dead.

The Father Guardian of Pantasaph Monastery finds a drawback to the revival of Catholic pilgrimages. He says: "Branches from the pine trees, ferns and flowers from Calvary and the gardens, stones chipped from the seats devoutly smashed to make relics, all are carried in triumph away." He announced that all such relics can be of no service to their purloiners unless they also anoint them with honey taken from the beehives.

Prosecutions of Seventh-Day Adventists continue in the States. In Mississippi, Colorado, Georgia, and Tennessee members of the sect who have persisted in obeying the Bible, and observing the seventh instead of the first day of the week, have been arrested, fined, and imprisoned, and a colony of them at Calverton, Maryland, has now been pounced on by their fellow Christians. The persecutions, as usual, result in the spread of the principles of the sect.

Father Enright, a Catholic priest, asks: "What right have the Protestant Churches to keep Sunday? None whatever. You say it is to obey the commandment, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' But Sunday is not the Sabbath according to the Bible and the record of time."

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This is indisputable. Yet Protestant ministers have prosecuted the Seventh-Day Adventists, who keep the Bible injunction to observe the seventh day, and also the injunction, "six days shalt thou work," for working on the day not commanded in the Bible; and the Christian State of Tennessee has now ten men imprisoned for this clerical "crime."

In the August number of the goody-goody paper, *Afloat and Ashore*, which Miss Weston gets up for the delectation and reformation of sailors, a sermon by Dr. Parkhurst on "Atheism and Anarchy" is inserted. Dr. Parkhurst has discovered a league between Atheism and Anarchy, and laments that "we still go on hanging the Anarchist, and saying little or nothing about Atheism and the Atheist." Probably he would give Atheists a short shrift and a long drop. But what is the secret? Anarchists attack the State, which can well take care of itself; but Atheists undermine the authority of the men of God, who levy heavy contributions on this world, on the pretence of piloting to a better one. Naturally the men of God think any prejudice useful to excite against those who would destroy their authority.

Count Leo Tolstoi, says the *Daily News*, on the last occasion that he was summoned to sit upon a jury, declined to be sworn, and was mulcted in a fine of five hundred roubles. Christian governments all the world over punish those who consistently follow the plainest teachings of Jesus.

Stories of Jowett still continue to circulate. One relates that Farrar was once complaining of getting only £300 from Cassell's for his *Life of Christ*. "Three hundred golden sovereigns," said Jowett; "why, the other fellow only got thirty shillings!"

An Ohio preacher tells his congregation that "Chicago is the nearest approach to hell that we have upon this earth." This is about correct, since the aldermen have taken to making sumptuary laws; but, should any Chicago congregation extend a call to the Ohio preacher, at an increased salary, the haste with which he would go to the terrestrial hell would mitigate, to an extent, the superstitious horror of the credulous Buckeyes.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes preached at St. James's Hall on Sunday. For the first time in their lives he and Mr. Foote were discoursing in different parts of the same building. Mr. Foote was in the thick of hard work on the following Tuesday, while Mr. Hughes was off with Mrs. Hughes to Grindelwald for four or five weeks. Gospel-grinding is a more comfortable occupation than preaching Freethought.

"An amusing incident," according to the *Methodist Times* occurred at the recent Wesleyan Conference. Two ministers in the Liberal Club lavatory put on each other's coats, and it was some time before they discovered their mistake. "These little episodes," it is said, "give zest to Conference life." How dull must Conference life be if it derives zest from such trivialities!

The principal speaker who opposed the admission of women to the Wesleyan Conference was the Rev. W. L. Watkinson. This gentleman is the author of a ridiculous book on *Scepticism and Character*, in which he endeavors to expose the domestic transgressions and unhappiness of renowned Freethinkers. Mr. Watkinson was facetious about women delegates. He spoke as a man to men, where the women couldn't answer him. But the cream of his speech was the discovery of a new argument against the participation of the other sex in public affairs. Some people might say that women were not good enough for Conference work; Mr. Watkinson, however, contended that they were too good. Their "delicate goodness and serene wisdom" unfitted them for the "strife" of such an assembly. How pretty! And how hypocritical! It must be a very silly woman who could feel flattered by such a dubious compliment.

The Wesleyan Conference devoted a part of one sitting to Lord's Day Observance. The committee's report on this subject, which seems to have been unanimously accepted, expressed delight at the refusal of the late Liberal Government to do anything towards opening the national museums and galleries on Sundays. It also rejoiced at the withdrawal of Lord Hobhouse's Bill in the House of Lords. Glad reference was made to several towns which had shut up all places of culture and put down boating on the Lord's Day. Finally, the Conference warned Methodists all over the country against the action of Sunday Societies, and called upon them to do their utmost in "defence of the Holy Day"—in other words, to keep it as the exclusive property of the men of God.

It is amusing to see the Churches slowly and reluctantly adjusting themselves to modern progress. We have already referred to the Wesleyan Conference voting against the admission of lady delegates, although the respectably large minority promises in the near future to be transformed into a majority. We have now to draw attention to the solemn consideration of the telephone and the electric light by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in Rome. They instinctively hate scientific improvements, besides knowing that a display of the conquests of Science throws Theology into the shade. It is not surprising, therefore, that their decision is a most laughable compromise. The telephone may be introduced in a religious house, such as a convent, but it must only be used on "grave occasions." The electric light may also be used in churches, but only to illuminate the building generally. In all ceremonies of worship, whenever a light is prescribed by the liturgy, candles must be employed. Good old candles! Why not stick them in hollow turnips, and thus secure the requisite dim religious light?

The funny man on the American *Catholic Review* says of Huxley: "He is no longer an Agnostic; he knows now that the Christian revelation is true, and that the Catholic Church is the kingdom of God on earth. But that knowledge may have come too late to profit him." This is worth preserving as a sample of Christian humor and good feeling.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* says: "Our inquiries show that, whereas the Churches—except in two instances—were only one quarter filled, the theatres were in nearly every instance thronged to their fullest holding capacity." It concedes that the influence of the Church is declining, while that of the stage is increasing. It might have added that the Church largely holds its own by adopting histrionic methods and becoming a cheap entertainment.

George Müller, of the Bristol Orphanages, claims to have received, on an average, £21,000 a year in answer to prayer. Brother George never begs, and fancies he lives by faith. But he advertises the fact largely, and we fancy the advertisements are more efficacious than prayer.

Nothing like enterprise. A Jaffa hotel-keeper booms his business by appearing in *tableaux vivants* as David slaying Goliath. The giant having been disposed of, the lady lecturer announces to the audience: "If you want to go to Palestine, Mr. —— will conduct you; here is his address."

Dr. Davidson says that he only goes from the bishopric of Rochester to that of Winchester because he is ordered by his medical attendant to get an easier billet. But the people of the Winchester diocese say they need as hard a worker as does Rochester, especially as he is paid a great deal more. But this question of cash, of course, did not influence Dr. Davidson, who had the luck to marry an archbishop's daughter.

In connection with Dr. Davidson taking up his abode as the Bishop of Winchester at Farnam Castle, it is said that the late bishop, Dr. Thorold, spent close on £10,000 on improving and furnishing the castle. A tenth of the sum would have maintained all the apostles for the whole of their lives.

Miss Müller sends the following to the *Bombay Times*: "I wish to inform friends in India that I am leaving the Theosophical Society. I have a vital reason for resigning. Further, I regret to say that I do not esteem the opinions of the leaders of the Society, and find myself unable to respect their methods of work."

Mr. Price Hughes has a Sunday show at St. James's Hall. Besides the oratory, there is the attraction of a brass band and a big choir. But, of course, this is not an "entertainment." If it were given in connection with a Secular lecture, it *would* be an entertainment! And the men who keep up this hypocritical law, entirely for their own advantage as public caterers, give themselves the most grotesque airs of moral superiority.

Says the Bishop of Salford (R.C.): "We have 278 religions in existence, every one appealing to the Scriptures, and declaring that they were founded on Holy Writ." He wanted to know what was the good of a revelation if, in its interpretations, we are placed at the mercy of every private judgment. Thus the Church sees, in the break-up of bibliolatry, an opportunity of once more asserting its own claims.

Edward Peacock, F.S.A., writing in the *Tablet* (August 10), says witchcraft is still a vital belief among large sections of the people. He says: "My own personal knowledge of a great part of two large counties, and information from trustworthy people dwelling in widely-separated places, justifies me in saying that the belief in witchcraft is still as firm a fixture in the rural mind as ever it was." What else can be

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expected when the only pabulum offered the rural mind is that in the old book, which says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"!

Talmage says the first gateway to hell is impure literature. Why does he not get the Bible expurgated?

In the *Academy* for August 10 Mr. F. P. Badham gives some reasons for thinking that the first two chapters in Matthew were prior to Mark, as was held by Strauss. Alluding to the opening verse, he says: "An evangelist writing for Gentiles might well change 'Book of generation' into 'Gospel,' but the reverse process is inconceivable." He contends that the second Gospel has a distinctive style, which, had it been infiltrated into Matthew, would have shown there. The duplication of demoniacs at Gadara and two blind men at Jericho is, says Mr. Badham, corrected in Mark; but may it not have been that when Mark said "one," Matthew said "two," to make the miracles look bigger?

The *Daily News* reports that "instructions have been received by the Governor of Vladivostock to expel all Jews resident in that far Eastern entrepot. No time of grace is allowed to the expelled beyond such short periods as are necessary for winding up their business affairs and disposing of their immovable property and household chattels. There are several hundred Jews in Vladivostock, all of whom will be now compelled to return to their native domiciles in European Russia."

A church at Quakerstown, Pennsylvania, has been struck by lightning, and twenty of the congregation seriously injured. Divine Providence has also been manifesting itself in Russia in sunstrokes and cholera. In the districts around Odessa prayers for rain are daily offered, both in the churches and in the fields. No rain has fallen there for nearly six weeks.

Moody, the revivalist, says: "If you throw over Jonah and the whale, you throw over the doctrine of the Resurrection." For this the *Congregationalist* reproves him. But does not Jesus endorse it by saying, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew xii. 40)?

The Rev. Joe Cook got stopped by Minister Wills, at Honolulu, in the midst of a red-hot party speech, and walked out at once, with his clerical chin in the air. The San Francisco *News Letter* says: "The lesson will do him good. On his voyage to Australia he will be less inclined than usual to go out every night with his oil-can before retiring, to see if any of the bearings of the universe need attending to. Brother Cook is a very confident, loquacious, and impudent person; but in justice it ought to be admitted that twenty years of preaching in Boston without contradiction is partly responsible for his unpleasant traits."

Talmage's gospel-shop has several times been destroyed by fire. The last time was in 1893. On that occasion his wife received a great shock, which brought on nervous trouble, from which she has just died at Danville Sanitarium. It does not appear that Talmage is a particular favorite of Providence. Had these calamities happened to an infidel, they would have been "judgments."

A Madras paper gives a shocking account of the death of a woman in the jaws of a crocodile. The reptile went under water with its prey, but rose again in order to make its meal. It was then shot at, and the woman's body was recovered. "The *swagger* had evidently dragged her away by the arm, for that limb was fearfully shattered, and all but torn off. The face bore a terribly agonised expression, the teeth were clenched and the features set, in a look of absolute horror." We commend this to the attention of believers in Providence. It is difficult to see the wisdom and benevolence of making crocodiles to eat women.

A Catholic, writing from the Playgoers' Club, addresses us in this fashion: "No doubt you will curse me for troubling you with a letter, but I am cheeky enough to think that your article is not quite fair. I may be wrong—I generally am—but you're not right."

We really have no desire to curse the gentleman. He has a perfect right to think us mistaken, and a perfect right to say so. At the same time we do not share his opinion. He says it is not a fact that "the last supper that Jesus took with his apostles was seasoned with wine." Well, the word *wine* does not occur in the text, but "fruit of the vine" does; as it was passed round in a cup, and was therefore a liquid, it was just what we called it.

This Catholic gentleman sends us a little New Testament, in order that we may consult it and see that he is right. We beg to assure him that we have seen the volume before. Sending the Bible, or any part of it, to a Freethought writer is like sending coals to Newcastle.

One of our readers at Greenwich has received a begging letter on behalf of "the New Church at Heck," near Snaith, Yorkshire. Parson Bryan enclosed a directed envelope and a postage stamp for a donation. As our reader did not wish to keep the postage stamp, he sent the reverend gentleman a copy of the *Freethinker* in his own envelope. We don't know whether there was any weeping and wailing at Heck, but we dare say there was some gnashing of teeth.

Dr. Donald Macleod, speaking in connection with a fancy bazaar at Rothesay, said that Scotland was drifting too much into pure voluntaryism. Seat-letting was all very well, but it made the Church the property of the seat-holdings. What he proposed was "increased endowments." Quite so. The churches have always found that they flourished best on dead men's money. Yet they refuse to let Secular Societies receive endowments or hold any sort of property.

Professor Monier Williams suggests a fresh explanation of the "missionary massacres" in China. He thinks the Vegetarians are a band of fanatical Buddhists who regard flesh-eating as a crime. Professor Williams says he has met with the same bitter feeling against meat-eaters in his travels in India. If this explanation is correct, the murdered missionaries have paid the penalty of their New Testament principle of "kill and eat."

Rev. Robert Meares, minister of the second Presbyterian Church, Cookstown, County Tyrone, has been arrested on a charge of criminally assaulting Bridget M'Conaghy, a young domestic servant. Of course the reverend gentleman may be able to establish his innocence. If he does not, it will be bad for the Bible. Men of God are likely to feel the promptings of what they call "the flesh" if they happen to read the story of King David and his peculiar warming-pan.

ALL DAYS HOLY.

Every day, from the rosy babyhood of dawn till wrinkled and weary it falls forever asleep in the soft arms of the night, is a sacred day, if around its busy hours has twined a garland of kindly thoughts; if it wears on its still breast the white lily of one loving deed. The flowers of kindness shall never fade. In every day of the world's to-morrow that will dawn and die, they will shed their subtile sweetness in some sorrowing soul. The day on which we have overcome some fault made by habit dear; the day on which we have ascended even one rung of the ladder of progress; the day on which we have been happy, when the birds of joy and peace have sung in our hearts; when our spirits, like thistle-down, have waved through the corridors of our being; the one on which we have sorrowed and suffered and grown strong through suffering; the days free from envy, selfishness, slander, revenge, and hate; the one filled with high-born thoughts, duties performed, aspiration and inspiration; when the horizon of universal life, reflecting our own hearts, seems to be already glowing with the roses of universal love; when the spirit, slipping from its carnal chains, forgetting the limitations of being, floats on the waves of infinite possibilities—are sacred days. They are living jewels set in the golden band of time; they are luminous, shining with human exaltation, and reflecting images of the divine. Should not all days be sacred? Time is so precious that every ticking minute and shining hour is a priceless gem, to be rimmed by us with the gold of constant endeavor and profound meditation, brightened by wholesome recreation and needful rest.—*Bertha J. French.*

London Secular Federation.

Miss A. Brown, Secretary, begs to acknowledge:—Mr. John Samson, 10s. 6d.; West London Branch, 10s.; Tottenham Branch, 5s. 6d.

Obituary.

Frederick Engels, who died on August 5, at the age of 74, was chiefly known as a Socialist and co-worker with Karl Marx. He was, however, a Freethinker. His cremation at Woking, on Saturday, was conducted without religious ceremony, speeches being delivered by friends and followers, in German, English, and French.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 18, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, W.: 7.30, "George Meredith: Writer and Teacher."

August 25, St. James's Hall, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—August 18, Milton Hall, London; 25, Milton Hall, London. September 8, Sheffield. October 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. M. R.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

J. J. R.—Your little paper is sensible, but hardly well enough written for publication.

A. Hindley.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with our articles on "The Bible and Local Veto." We are reprinting the Bible Temperance part of the articles, revised and amplified, as a pamphlet for general circulation. Our promised articles on Free Trade in Drink will be published at the earliest opportunity.

W. Fleming.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. B.—Mr. Wheeler returns thanks for the paper, which will be utilised.

C. W.—You will find an account of the early American Freethinkers in Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Among them were Ethan Allen *(Oracle of Reason)*, Elihu Palmer *(Principles of Nature)*, Abner Kneeland *(Review of Evidences of Christianity)*, J. S. Hittell *(Evidences Against Christianity)*, D. M. Bennett *(The Gods, etc.)*.

President's Fund.—Per Miss Vance: Well-Wisher, 3s.; M. Du Bois, 5s.; C. H., 1s.; C. Pottage, junr., 5s.; S. Alward, 5s.; E. Belcher, 5s.; C. Thomas, 5s.; John Trueman £1; J. Leiper, 5s.; T. Campbell, 3s.; Miss Hodgson, 3s.; Mr. and Mrs. Samson, £1; F. Martineux, 5s.; T. Batchelor, 5s.; Mrs. E. Norton, 5s.; W. F., 2s. 6d. Per C. Watts: W. Bailey, £1; J. Umpleby, 10s.

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks for cuttings.

R. S. Pengelly.—Much obliged.

R. M. P.—Mr. Putnam cannot visit every place during his present sojourn. His time is mapped out until his departure for America. We fear he will have to postpone a visit to Thetford—Thomas Paine's birthplace—until he comes to England again.

W. Treadwell.—Your verse is all right, but Harcourt isn't worth any more of our space.

R. Gardner.—Christian Evidence journals are never able to maintain themselves. They are always subventioned or kept alive by egotists or fanatics. We have never known one that was really worthy of existence. But this is regrettable. We should like to see a journal conducted by a sincere and reasonably polite Christian, with the object of maintaining Christianity against the intellectual attacks of Secularism. It might be worth our while to reply to such an organ; but we never have replied, and we never mean to reply, to the gutter organs of what passes in this country as Christian Evidence. Principles are worth discussing; mere personalities are only contemptible.

Inquirer.—See Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds*. Byron was certainly not a Christian, in any honest sense of the designation, nor was Keats, and Shelley was a professed Atheist. It is a piece of orthodox impudence to claim the greatest poets as "all Christians." Shakespeare himself was clearly an unbeliever in the cardinal doctrines, not only of Christianity, but of Natural Theology—as it is paradoxically called.

R. Trenchard.—Dr. Martineau does not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. He does not even call himself a Unitarian. He has written some trenchant criticism of the Christian documents.

Miss Vance will be near the Regent-street entrance to St. James's Hall this evening (August 18) to inform late comers who happen to be without tickets where they can obtain them.

J. Umpleby (Blackburn), one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, and a veteran of the Old Guard of Freethought, in sending through Mr. Watts a subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "I am surprised that out of the 5,000,000 people in London there are not sufficient Progressives to afford him a bishop's salary. Mr. Foote's work is more severe and deserving than Canterbury's."

Papers Received.—New York Public Opinion—Isle of Man Times—Birmingham Argus—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Referee—Morning—Fur Unsere Jugend—De Dagsraad—Der Arme Teufel—Freedom—Liberty—Sheffield Weekly Telegraph—Nineteenth Century—Rangoon Times—New York Sun—Blue Grass Blade—Philosophical Journal—Times of Natal—Two Worlds—Light—Progressive Thinker—Liberator.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 6d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

I intended to write at some length under this heading, but I am detained at the Law Courts, and must defer writing until next week. In the next issue of the *Freethinker* I shall have to make a statement of considerable importance, and an announcement as to the future affairs of our party organisation.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HUXLEY.

The *Fortnightly Review* for August has four papers on Professor Huxley. The first, by the Hon. G. C. Brodrick, Warden of Merton College, Oxford, gives "Some Personal Characteristics"; the second, by Professor E. B. Tylor, considers him "as anthropologist"; the third, by "A Student of Science," "as biologist"; and the last, by W. L. Courtney, "as philosopher."

The Merton Warden gives some interesting particulars of Professor Huxley's last appearance at Oxford. He remarks that the beauty of his character consisted in being perfectly natural. "He possessed in a high degree that rare but open secret to which General Gordon owed so much of his marvellous influence; he was always himself, the same to young and to old, to rich and to poor, to men and to women; and had his lot been cast, like Gordon's in Asia or in Africa, he would doubtless have been the same to Orientals as to Europeans. He was frank because he was fearless; he inspired confidence because he was evidently a true-hearted man; his native self-respect was set off by a respectful manner towards others; his intolerance of sophistry sometimes betrayed him into undue vehemence in controversial writing, but there was no pettiness in his *odium scientificum*, and a pure love of truth shone through all his most trenchant diatribes, political or theological."

The contribution by Dr. E. B. Tylor is especially interesting. He notices how theologians discredited anthropology as "a study leading to unauthorised views as to the place of man in the universe," and dwells on Huxley's services, mentioning in particular the meeting of the British Association at Exeter in 1869. Close upon the end of his life Huxley did his best to promote the scheme for making anthropology at Oxford an examination subject for Honors Degree in Natural Science. Writing to Dr. Tylor, he said: "If I know anything about the matter, anthropology is good as knowledge and good as discipline." But Convocation thought he did not "know anything about the matter," and threw out the proposed statute.

The "Student of Science," writing on Huxley "as biologist," endorses the remark of Ernst Haeckel, that "he was one of the few investigators who had thoroughly mastered the whole range of biology."

Mr. W. L. Courtney occupies the longest space in considering Huxley "as philosopher." The essay is not very satisfactory. He shows that he repudiated both the titles, Materialist and Spiritualist, and he tries to make out that because he set the ethical progress of man against the cosmic process, which "has no sort of relation to moral ends," he was something more than an Agnostic. But since the cosmic process, on the Theistic hypothesis, represents the method and work of God, he was here pitting man against God, and might even be described by the Theist as an Anti-Theist.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

The St. James's Hall experiment promises to be a complete success. The Banqueting Room was very nearly full on Sunday evening, people being seated even on the orchestra platform. Of course there were many familiar faces present, but there was a considerable contingent of strangers, including a respectable sprinkling of ladies. Mr. James Rowney occupied the chair, and neatly introduced the lecturer. Mr. Foote was received with great enthusiasm, and his address on "The Use and Abuse of the Bible" was followed with the closest attention, and frequently punctuated with applause, which rose to an ovation at the finish. A few questions were asked, and a good-looking, smiling Hindoo made an attempt at opposition. A polite and reasonably-spoken minister said that he had listened to the lecture with much admiration and a good deal of sympathy; but he wanted to know whether the old Bible, with all its disadvantages, should not be kept in the schools until the better Bible of Humanity, which Mr. Foote referred to, was actually forthcoming. After the lecturer's reply to this question the meeting dispersed amidst a lot of handshaking and congratulations.

Friends going to St. James's Hall this evening (August 18) will please go to the *Regent-street entrance*, which has been specially opened for our convenience. The staircase at that entrance leads straight up to the Banqueting Hall. Some of our friends, last Sunday evening, went into the main Piccadilly entrance, and found themselves in Mr. Price Hughes's meeting. The look of disgust on the faces of the Methodist officials, when tickets for Mr. Foote's lecture were presented, may be left to imagination.

This evening's lecture (August 18) is on "George Meredith: Writer and Teacher." It will be very different from the lecture, with lavish selections, which Mr. Foote gave at the Hall of Science some months ago. It has been advertised in literary organs, and will probably attract a good number of outsiders. Freethinkers also should find this lecture particularly interesting. In the first place, it is something out of the common; in the next place, its subject, Mr. George Meredith, is the greatest living English novelist, a fine poet, a most brilliant wit, and a Freethinker and Humanitarian in the loftiest sense of the words.

The secretary of the Failsworth Secular Schools reports that, notwithstanding the heavy rains on Sunday, Mr. Putnam's lectures were a complete success, the school being full both afternoon and evening. Mr. Sydney A. Gimson made an excellent chairman, and friends attended from all parts. The collection amounted to over £15. During the last year over £50 has been spent on the school in repairs and decorations, and it is the intention, as soon as funds will permit, to enlarge the building, it having become too small to carry on the affairs of the school to the satisfaction of the committee.

Mr. Putnam lectures at Leicester to-day (August 18). One lecture only—in the evening. Local Freethinkers will have to hear him then, or not at all, so of course the hall will be crowded.

The farewell dinner to Mr. Putnam will take place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, September 4, a day or two before he sets sail from Southampton. The tickets (4s.) are now on sale, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or of any Branch secretary. Mr. Foote presides at this function, and hopes to meet a large number of London "saints." It will be their last opportunity, for some time at least, of doing honor to the President of the American Secular Union.

Mr. Putnam's last lecture before leaving will be delivered in London on Sunday, September 1. Miss Vance is making arrangements for it, under Mr. Foote's instructions, and due announcement will appear in our next issue.

Mr. Charles Watts gave his third and last lecture (for the present) at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, last Sunday evening. The audience was large and very enthusiastic.

This evening, Sunday, August 18, Mr. Watts lectures at Milton Hall, when, by request, he will speak upon the question: "Does Death End All?"

Mr. Cohen lectures for the Battersea Branch this Sunday evening at the Park Gates. As this is Mr. Cohen's first appearance in South-west London this season, he should have a very large audience. If wet, the lecture will be in the hall.

Mr. A. Prusser Chanter, a member of the N.S.S., was returned as a representative of Godalming Parish on the Guildford Board of Guardians. He has taken the place of a local Tory brewer.

Miss May Collins, a Freethinking girl of nineteen, is carrying on a discussion on the truth of the Christian religion, in the *Blue Grass Blade*, of Kentucky, with the Rev. President J. A. Williams, one of the best theologians of that State. To her contention, that the matter of the Gospels was involved in obscurity, he replied by saying it would be very unwise to decline to receive Euclid's mathematics because there were uncertainties about his life. To this Miss Collins replied that the mathematics of Euclid demonstrate their own truth, so it makes no difference whether any such man as Euclid ever lived. But the very foundation of the Christian religion requires that Jesus should have lived, and as the teachings attributed to Jesus do not demonstrate their own truth, like those attributed to Euclid, it is of fundamental importance that such a man as Jesus should have lived in order to establish the truth of what is attributed to him. The discussion is not ended, but as far as it has gone Miss Collins takes the biscuit.

"Theological Pessimism" is the title of Mr. Frederic Harrison's reply to Mr. W. H. Mallock, in the *Nineteenth Century*, and the Positivist certainly makes some good hits. Mr. Harrison repudiates the title "Optimist," and says: "If any religion is to be styled 'the creed of Optimism,' it is not the religion of Humanity; it is rather Neo-Christianity, or Neo-Catholicism, according to which not a hair of our heads can fall without the loving care and forethought of an Almighty Creator; all is for our real and ultimate good, even if it seems painful now; Virgins, saints, and at least two Persons of a Blessed Trinity are constantly at work to guide, protect, and inspire us; and, however vile or sinful we may be in life (hell being now practically abolished), we shall all live again in transcendent and infinite bliss."

Mr. Harrison, too, makes a good retort on the theologians, who, with Mr. Balfour, wail over the helplessness of man, the visionary nature of his so-called knowledge, and the infinitesimal littleness of his earthly abode. He says: "It is strange! For it is considerations like these which, I should think, were the despair of theologians. It is Divine Omnipotence, not Humanity, which has to answer this dilemma. Did God make us in His image, after His likeness, and yet we are such worthless, vile brutes! Did He, then, die for us wretched mites on this microscopic mote of dust, and all, as you theologians say, for nothing! It is very wonderful! And all this, you say, is to prove the infinite goodness of Almighty Wisdom! Such is Theological Optimism and its message of great joy to man." Well may Mr. Harrison say that "Scientific Optimism seems to me, on the whole, a more cheerful, as well as a more sensible, creed than the theological pessimism of Neo-Christianity."

Mr. H. Brockhouse sends a very sensible letter to the Birmingham *Daily Argus* on the subject of voluntary schools being supported from the public purse. He points out that this is opposed to fair play and common sense: "1st—Because Board schools are under the direct control of the people, but 'voluntary' schools are governed by small self-elected cliques not amenable to anyone, and public control must go with public taxation. 2nd—Because it is the duty of the State to supply secular education, and of religious denominations to supply religious teaching, each in their proper sphere and time. Secular education is a public duty, but religious education is a private matter, resting with the individual parent or guardian. 3rd—Because, if the schools of powerful bodies as the Established Church, Wesleyans, or Catholics, are supported by the public purse, you do an injustice to members of minor bodies, or no religious body, who should have the same rights as a Catholic or Wesleyan. 4th—Because the so-called voluntary schools are not truly voluntary, but supported almost entirely, even now, out of the Imperial Exchequer."

The prosecution of Freethinkers for blasphemy in Sweden has not resulted as the fetish men wish. One of them, the venerable A. Wilberg, of Stockholm, long a Baptist missionary, writes: "Never before has infidelity so daringly attacked the Bible, even in our own country, as at the present time. It is our duty to raise our voice of warning, especially to the young, not to suffer themselves to be carried away by the flood of infidelity that like a deluge sweeps over so many nations of our world."

The British Museum has acquired some valuable Gibbon documents, including the great historian's journal from 1762 to 1764, an account of his journey in Switzerland in the autumn of 1755, two journals of his tour in Italy in 1763-4, and his remarks upon Juvenal after finishing the perusal of the "Satires." It is to be hoped that steps will be taken to make these documents accessible to the reading public.

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THE CHINESE MASSACRE; OR, CHRISTIAN FORGIVENESS.

"A Conference between officials of the C.M.S. and the Foreign Office was held on Monday, and instructions were at once telegraphed to Sir Nicolas O'Conor, Ambassador at Pekin, to demand a military escort for him to attend the scene of the massacre to hold an inquiry; and, further, demanding an Imperial decree ordering capital punishment for the offenders, and the issue of stringent orders for the protection of all British missionaries now in China."—*Christian World, August 8, 1895.*

"'Conclusion of Armenian Petition Entrusted to Dr. Dillon. Is European sympathy destined to take the form of a cross upon our graves?'—Mr. Gladstone has answered this last despairing question, and his answer will, we hope, rouse the Christian world. To think otherwise would be sheer infidelity, the denial of all moral power to the religion of Jesus."—*Ibid.*

Words like these are always significant to the Freethinker, and should be suggestive to all Christians not steeped in prejudice. These occasions form our opportunity for plainly exposing the ignorance and deception of orthodoxy. We take Christians on their ground of appealing to the "Word of God" as their authority, attested, as they say, by the "Spirit." By the way, this spirit must be very vague in its teaching when we notice that Christianity is divided and subdivided to such a great extent, even exhibiting this lack of unity in its foreign missions. However, as some of us know, to our cost, Christians are unanimous on one question—the persecution of "infidels," and here they are Turks and Chinese. Shade of Jesus! It seems incredible that the above quotations should coexist with the Sermon on the Mount. It is evident that in this boasted enlightened age those professing discipleship to the Nazarene are either dupes or hypocrites *in excelsis*. What do they mean when *praying* "as we forgive them that trespass against us"? Can any intelligent reader of the New Testament conceive of Jesus attending a "conference" between the Roman officials and his disciples, and "instructions" being at once sent to have Herod put to death for the murder of John the Baptist; or Peter taking part in a similar affair and "demanding" Herod's life for the murder of James? Candidly, though, is it too much to ask (assuming these persons ever lived) whether they would *not* if they could? Times *have* changed! But this is not a question for a Christian to ask. She or he is bound by "belief" to obey the "word of God."

Presuming all Christians possess knowledge of the existence of the Sermon on the Mount and its corollaries scattered in the Gospels, we have only too good reason for believing the majority are unaware of its character in detail. The "men of God," except a very small minority, evade the matter. As far as we are aware, with the exception of Tolstoi the Russian, this minority "explains" the teaching away. It is far from our intention to vindicate these ultra-altruistic teachings of Jesus, but we plead strongly for honesty and justice. Those calling themselves Christians should act up to the profession, or candidly admit their inability and resign. Instead of which, they dub as "infidels" those who are honest enough to renounce allegiance to this impossible religion. We are also eager to express horror at the massacre and outrages, and to sympathise with survivors and friends; but at the same time it is only just to express our strong disapproval of orthodox "heathen missions." Their history shows plainly that the intrusion of an incomprehensible and absurd religious system, combined with a lamentable inaptitude to reconciliation with immemorial and proper manners and customs, has naturally resulted in disaster. How would "Christian England" like bands of foreigners insinuating their (to us) out-of-place notions and practices? The experience of the Moslem establishment in Liverpool is sufficient answer.

It is only fair to notice the letter of a Mr. Lloyd, missionary, in the *Daily News* of the same date, who deprecates the idea of reprisal. This is admirable from a New Testament standpoint; but why does not Mr. Lloyd carry the protest to its logical conclusion and sever his connection (with its individual responsibility) with a party which violates an essential of duty, and whose existence well-nigh destroys all sense of truth in this and other countries? He would then be at liberty to tackle the other essentials of New Testament Christianity, and, seeing the utter impossibility of their performance, would inevitably renounce the profession.

Our contemporary may smile at the difficulty raised, and refer us to the long list of "worthies and divines" who have "satisfactorily explained" the Sermon on the Mount. We answer, such tricking, dodging, and evasion don't go down with a Freethinker in these days. The teaching is there, and it is the Christian's simple duty to obey.

"Sheer infidelity" consists of contradiction to the letter and spirit of this teaching; and, since we know it cannot be practised, Christianity does not exist; therefore, to talk of *its* moral power is absurd. Whatever of moral power may be connected with British civilisation seems ineffective when dealing with crime at home and abroad; and secular "providence," in the shape of "military escort, official inquiry, capital punishment, etc.," is relied on, to the practical exclusion of him who is declared to have said: "Lo, I am with you alway."

We hope the time is not far distant when thoughtless, superficially-minded persons will be compelled, by the spread of Freethought, to look this matter in the face, and have the choice of deliberate hypocrisy or renunciation of an impossible religion.

Jos. G. Briggs.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (July 20).

How much I have to write about this week—Edinburgh, Abbotsford, Melrose, Glasgow, Ayr, Loch Katrine, and Loch Lomond. What a procession passes through the mind, majestic, beautiful, fairylike, that cannot vanish from the halls of memory, and glorifying this wonderful human life of ours.

For grandeur I do think the city of Edinburgh wears the palm; it is lovely, it is ancient, it is romantic; and other cities are so likewise; but where, in the heart of a vast metropolis, is beheld such a mighty castle towering on such a mighty hill? Two hundred trains rattle by it every day. The foliaged valley glitters beneath, edged by the busiest thoroughfare of the city, Princess-street. The Castle seems like some giant of the past, huge and battered, reclining with a kind of imperious disdain of the new life that surges at the feet of its dead empire, an enormous relic of the embattled ages.

On Monday morning, June 17, in company with Mr. Brown, president of the Secular Society of Edinburgh, and Mr. Dewar, Jr., I climb the precipitous eminence. As I enter the parade-ground the Highland regiment is at drill, with the music of the bagpipes. The costume is picturesque, and the marching ranks present an animated spectacle, with a dash of old-time war emblazonry. I enter the frowning portals, and wander through the halls, chambers, passage, and dungeons of this memorable stronghold. I look upon the kings' regalia, the swords and armor of celebrated warriors, the great gun built in 1486—a ragged-looking monster compared with the polished and gorgeous emissaries of death we now manufacture—and the tattered banner, in whose silken folds were once the fall and rise of kingdoms.

Time will not permit the enumeration of the hundreds of mementos that adorn this grim sentinel of the ages. From the castle I take my way to Holyrood Palace, at the other end of the long, descending street called High-street and Canongate. I pass St. Giles Cathedral, where John Knox preached, and the house in which he lived, gloomy as his own religion. I did not care to go in and view the remembrances of his fanatical career; I have no love for the theological termagant, who, if he had been a woman, would no doubt have enjoyed the Puritanic ducking-stool. Holyrood, however, is a poetic place, witnessing in its decaying grandeur to the tragedies of kings and queens. Especially is the brilliant and sorrowful life of Mary mingled with these palatial remnants. The bare walls of the old abbey are all that is now left of that structure in which the beautiful queen was married to the unworthy Darnley, whence began those cruel misfortunes which, crushing to death, have lifted her name into the immortal romance of history, where love and pity forget error and weakness. The dark and terrible crimes of those tumultuous days have left their record athwart the walls and floors of Holyrood, and we traverse the footsteps of royal murder and conspiracy. In the sunlight of to-day float the dim tapestries that might have drank the blood and tears of centuries ago. Near by the palace is Arthur's Seat, a promontory-like hill, whence is a specious view of the city, and the vast surrounding country, now glistening in summer's green and flowery pomp.

In the afternoon, with Mr. Brown and Mr. Dewar, I visit the Forth Bridge. This is the largest and tallest bridge in the world. It is a mile in length; with three mighty arches it spans the waters. It looks like a triple mountain in its

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symmetrical and massive sublimity. It is built for the ages. It cannot be blown down by any wind that these regions can produce. The enormous blast that tumbled over the Tay Bridge would not shake this an inch. It would require an earthquake to dissolve its stupendous frame. Its iron arms might hold a million tons in their clasp. We sail around the bridge and enjoy a full view of its piers, buttresses, and columns that defy the most furious storm. The view from the top of the bridge, which lifts its arches 150 feet above the water, is extensive and varied. The broad Forth is lined on both sides with wooded and mountainous shores gleaming near and far in the golden sunlight. We return by stage to Edinburgh, and along the route see new and attractive pictures of the city and its suburbs.

Tuesday unfolds a wondrous treasure house, Abbotsford, and Melrose. Melrose is forty miles by rail from Edinburgh. At the station the stage is ready for Abbotsford, about three miles away. We travel through a lovely country, the river Tweed glancing upon our vision with the same radiance that enchanted the poet's soul when he lived and loved on its gentle banks. Dismounting from the stage, we plunge down through a walled pathway into the delightful valley where the Wizard Scott built his picturesque home according to the fancies of his exuberant genius. We see the very walls he looked upon, the books he read, the window whence he saw, while at his task, the shining meadow and river; the chair he sat in, the desk over which wandered his marvellous pen, the little room in which he found rest at midnight's hour, the pipes he smoked as dreamland hovered about him, and the many treasures he had gathered, illustrious with memories of the past. The noble face of the poet—no canvas and marble declare the intellectual wealth of his gifted brain. How that brain teemed with the wonders of the world—a colossal power making rich forever the pathway of man. And Melrose, fair Melrose, I did not see it in the "pale moonlight," but in the soft and gorgeous summer afternoon; for clouds were in the sky, and a mellow lustre fell from the sun, and clothed the old abbey with a tender radiance; and the scenes all around harmonised with the melancholy beauty of the ruins. A graveyard is about the Abbey, beautiful with blue and golden flowers and a carpet of grass. I walked among these grey sepulchres, beside the grey walls of the shattered and mossy temple, plucking the flowers just bursting into bloom. The majestic past for the time possessed my being, and the dead centuries became alive and their glory thrilled my heart. I am glad, however, that I did not live when this old abbey was in its prime. I am glad that I have the privilege of looking upon its ruins, and wondering what its history might have been in the forgotten ages. I have photographed its picture in my mind, and its sad and sweet desolation becomes an intellectual joy.

I return to Edinburgh and pass the night at the home of Mr. J. F. Dewar, naturalist. He enjoys rural felicity if any one does. He lives in a farmhouse, old and solid as the hills almost, and surrounded with gardens, green fields, and beautiful trees. Birds of various plumage are gathered here, and other species of life interesting to the student of nature. It is a delightful place for dreams and reveries, away from the busy multitude. In the evening we enjoy the music of the violin and the piano and the melody of favorite Scottish songs. Mr. Dewar has for years been a staunch supporter of Freethought in Edinburgh, and at the last National Conference he was elected vice-president of the National Secular Society in recognition of his eminent services. As a naturalist and man of science he has no use for the supernatural. I enjoyed the campaign at Edinburgh. There is a fine society here; the audiences are good. The hall is well filled in the evening. Mr. Brown presides at the afternoon lecture, and Dr. Crawford at the evening lecture. Dr. Crawford himself takes the platform occasionally and speaks a word for reform, although occupied with the cares of a busy profession. He is associated with the great medical colleges of Edinburgh. The Secular Society has much local talent. J. M. Wheeler, Mr. Robertson, and others of renown in the Freethought ranks, began their work in this city. Edinburgh is the seat of learning. Over five thousand students are at its university. It might well be called the modern Athens. It is an ideal place for study and philosophy. Here is the tomb of David Hume, and his spirit still reigns in the schools, and even in the churches. With the charm of the past, Edinburgh has still the inquiring mind. The warm welcome I have received here, the many beautiful and grand scenes I have witnessed, make Edinburgh a memorable experience in this summer's journey.

On Wednesday, June 19, I take the train early for Glasgow, for now the Pilgrim would wend his way to one of the sweetest spots in all of Bonnie Scotland—the birthplace of Robert Burns. I met at Glasgow James McGlashan, president of the Glasgow Society, and Mr. Leiper, and they are my companions for this day's journey. Ayr is about forty miles' journey from Glasgow, on the Firth of Clyde. It is now quite a prosperous and fashionable resort, and has but little of the simplicity and rural quietness of Burns's time. The old landmarks are almost covered up. Tam o' Shanter's Inn still abides, but it has a brusque and modern appearance. At the Plough Inn is the drinking-cup of Souter Johnnie, and some of the furniture of the cottage where the poet was born. They used to allow strangers, and especially Americans, to drink out of that famous cup, the source of so much happiness to Souter Johnnie; but now it is put under lock and key. It is too valuable to be handed promiscuously about. We can only take a look at it, and dream of its sparkling glory in the dim past. The birthplace of the poet is about three miles from the city—a low, long cottage. The poet was born in a little square corner of what I suppose was the kitchen. There seems hardly room enough in that bed for a woman to give birth to a child, but so it was that Scotland's greatest genius saw the light of day, and not much light at that, for there are only two windows in the room, one in front and a very small one in the rear, close by the bed. So the little fellow did not look upon a world of very great promise as he opened his eyes and the tragedy of existence began, mingled with flowers of love and flashes of wit and humor that will cheer to the end of time. In another room, which was perhaps the best room, or parlor, are relics and treasures of the poet's changeful life, his letters, manuscript of "Tam o' Shanter," etc. Among these, on a newspaper cutting, was "A Stranger's Tribute to Robert Burns," and signed "An American." To my surprise and delight, these verses, thus treasured in the poet's own home, were the beautiful stanzas written, I believe, in this very house, by Ingersoll—the sweetest tribute ever given to Burns from a kindred heart and genius. But it struck me as wonderfully incongruous that these noble lines should be "The Tribute of a Stranger." I was wondering if those who placed the lines here really know who wrote them, and were a bit afraid of the magic word, Ingersoll; or did they select them for their simple beauty, without any reference to the greatness of the author? It certainly, in this latter case, would show a fine appreciation of a poem that flows like a fountain from the pen of America's most renowned representative. Burns and Ingersoll! how much alike they are in their broad and universal manliness, in their open-hearted recognition of whatever is good and beautiful in the humblest lot. He who loves the poet of Scotland must love the gifted singer of America, who breaks into melody beneath this lowly roof.

From the cottage we wander to Kirk Alloway, where the witches danced, and we stand by the window through which Tam o' Shanter looked and watched the show, while Old Nick played his liveliest tunes. Then we traversed the road along which Maggie did her level best. We loitered on the arch of the "old brig," where Maggie saved everything except her tail. An enthusiastic Scotchman was reciting the poem as we arrived, and the whole picture was placed vividly before the mind. We could see Tam as he whirled the corner and rushed down the road. We could see Maggie as she made that tremendous jump and won immortal fame. Beneath flowed the beautiful river, the river Doon, which Burns has so often celebrated in his songs. Dreamily we watched its limpid course; the green banks, the rose, the woodbine, and the trees glittering in the sunlight. At the monument are the marvellously life-like statues of Tam o' Shanter, Souter Johnnie, and Nance, and it seemed as if we could hear the very music of their laughter and see the humorous light dancing in their eyes.

Returning to Ayr in the afternoon, we went to the shore, where there are beautiful prospects of the Firth of Clyde, the Arran mountains beyond, etc. In the evening we are in Glasgow. With Mr. McGlashan I take a long ride through the city on a tram-car, and view some of Glasgow's most fashionable streets, its elegant residences, the Botanic gardens, the cathedral, the university, the tall chimneys, etc. There is much magnificence about Glasgow, notwithstanding its smoky atmosphere. The Great Western-road is especially attractive, with its noble mansions and lovely gardens. It extends straight as an arrow for many miles.

Thursday, June 20, is another eventful day. The weather is brilliant indeed; clouds and sunshine mingle in glorious array, and add to the attractiveness of each. The Trossachs tour is on this day's program, and it is crowded with romance from beginning to end. The splendor of Scott's poetry is over all this region, and we seem to be travelling through enchanted land. I take the train from Glasgow to Callender. Here I mount the stage for the Trossachs. We pass by the foot of Ben Ledi. On our left is Collantogle Ford, where Roderick Dhu was wounded unto death. Then the sparkling Loch Vennachar spreads before us; and beyond that is the Brig of Turk, and Lock Achray, and towering wild and grand is Ben Venue. Then we plunge into the Trossachs' rugged glen, and, coming forth, Loch Katrine dances on the view. We leave the coaches, and are soon on the bosom of the waters, and the great blue mountains appear, the grey hills, Ben Ann, Ellen's Isle, etc. I am reading the "Lady of the Lake" as the boat moves along the wondrous scenes. I see the very rock where the huntsman's gallant steed breathed his last. I see the precipice which the bold knight ascended, the silver strand where the lady found her prophetic guest. Each glowing line reminds of the brilliant world through which I am

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passing. The poet's genius glorifies the vast expanse. From Loch Katrine we take stage to Loch Lomond. Ben Vorlich and its companions lift their massive walls before our path, and we seem to be dashing into their rocky chambers. But from their base flows Loch Lomond, and on its fair bosom we pursue our journey. Ben Lomond rears its majestic crest, and crowns the vast and splendid scenery. It is afternoon now, and the golden color is shining along the changing heights and the fields and the valleys. It is a marvellous picture, infinite in variety.

From Loch Lomond we take train to Glasgow, and arrive at eight o'clock. Mr. James Baxter meets me, and we visit South Side Park, the Langside monument, on the spot where the troops of Queen Mary were defeated, and Camp Hill, upon which are some remains of the ancient Roman intrenchments. From this place there is a magnificent view of Glasgow. For miles around we behold the populous city.

I must thank Mr. McGlashan and other Glasgow friends for their generosity and hospitality. Mr. Leiper has presented me with some beautiful views of Scotland, which he has taken in his many travels as a matter of pleasure and art, and these will remind me of the beauty and glory of Scotland. My whole visit has been one of constant delight. The people are sociable and cultivated. They are patriotic, and may well be proud of what Scotland has done in the history of the world, in philosophy, in literature, and in Freethought. Scotland is progressive. She is not bound to ancient creeds. Her stores of romance do not chain her to the past. Her splendid mountains, her beautiful lakes, her fair fields, her shining shores, crowded with memories of heroic ancestry, are busy also with the life of to-day and resplendent with the triumphs of man's noblest genius.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

BOOK CHAT.

In a certain literary circle the knighting of Sir Walter Besant was being discussed, and by some disapproved. "Knight!" broke in a vehement Freethinker, "he ought to have been made a lord at the least." "Why?" was asked. "Why, for creating Valentine Eldridge in *Children of Gibeon*. The Lord God Almighty, with all eternity to work in, has not yet succeeded in creating half so good a woman."

* * *

Humanity, the organ of the Humanitarian League, for August opens with a biographical notice of Francis William Newman, who has reached the patriarchal age of ninety. This is followed by an excellent article on "Humane Nomenclature," by Howard Williams. Walter Lewin contributes a thoughtful article on "The Making of Criminals," which ought to be read by every magistrate in the kingdom.

* * *

Light Through the Crannies: Parables and Teachings from the Other Side, by Emily E. Reader (London: H. A. Copley, Canning Town, E.; 6d.), is evidently written by a highly imaginative lady, who describes life in other planets and on the plains of Hades as glibly as John on Patmos did the New Jerusalem. There is a Christian air about the book, and yet its teaching is not belief in the atonement, but working out good or evil deeds through metempsychosis.

* * *

In Leslie Stephen's account of Paley, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, he says: "Paley advised his pupils, if they should have to preach every Sunday, 'to make one sermon and steal five.' He apparently acted upon this principle. His son, in publishing some posthumous sermons, says that only one is 'stolen,' but adds that three are said to be founded on sermons by Fleetwood; and a correspondent of *Notes and Queries* states that another is slightly altered from a sermon by Bishop Porteus." The famous author of *Natural Theology* and *Evidence of Christianity* said himself, "We could not afford to keep a conscience."

* * *

Judging from extracts, Pierre Lotî's *Jerusalem* is a very French and very sentimental performance. The plain, ugly facts about "the golden city" are veiled in much fine phraseology. The average Frenchman peeps out in what he says of Bethlehem. "The beauty and costumes of the women are the special charm of the place." Of one of these women, "in the calm and pretty attitude of the Madonnas," he says: "Now one would say that the Virgin Mary in person is coming towards us with the infant Jesus in her arms." The book should help the French pilgrimages to the Holy Land, but we guess the pilgrims will come back disappointed, not having viewed the scenes through the roseate *pince nez* of M. Lotî.

* * *

Mr. Stead deserves all credit for bringing out *The Penny Poets*, and we hope the sale will recoup his enterprise. But his last issue, "Robert Burns," cannot be commended, save on the ground that to have any snatch of such a poet is worth the money. It purports only to be "Selected Poems and Songs," so we were prepared to find it open with "The Cotter's Saturday Night," and omit the characteristic "Holy Willie's Prayer." The editor was justified in omitting what was not to his taste, but not in altering words in what he did select, as he has done in more than one instance. To put "middle" for "midden" is over-fastidious in one who explains "houghmagandie" by "fornication," and d——d only calls attention to the fact that the word should be spelled damned. The first verse of "Afton Water," too, is divided wrongly. Mr. Stead calls this "The Masterpiece Library." The office boy, with scissors and paste, might achieve a better masterpiece.

ONE WORLD AT A TIME.

ONE world at a time is all we can carry,
All we can manage or hold;
Then why should we seek, while on earth we tarry,
More worlds than one to enfold?

One world at a time, with all its rare graces,
Sweet as a vision of love;
Its glorious showing of wonderful places,
Fairer than any above.

Beams on our sight in its clear placid glory,
A gem in white splendor set;
Its pages record a beautiful story,
Which learned, we ne'er can forget;

A story of joy and a story of peace,
Bound in a volume sublime;
Where joys grow larger and sorrows decrease,
In one great world at a time.

No tongue hath counted the years that are given
To dolorous fancies and sighs;
Or told how wearily mortals have striven,
On wings immortal to rise;

To soar far away to some fanciful land,
In some rare and roseate clime,
Forgetting that man can reasonably stand
In but one world at a time.

One world at a time—although it hath sorrows,
And fond hearts burdened with grief;
Yet hath its seasons of joyous to-morrows,
Bright with the buds of relief.

One world at a time—and its exquisite grace
Flowers and unfolds in the sun,
While in her dear bosom we readily trace
The text and the words, "Well done."

Well done for us all if we would but hasten
To catch its wisdom and weal,
Its infinite strength upon which to fasten
All that is lovely and real.

One world at a time—'tis all we can carry,
All we really can hold;
Then let us try, while within it we tarry,
Our lives by its truths to mould.

SUSAN H. WIXON.

PROFANE JOKES.

"What made Samson weak?" asked the Sunday-school teacher. "A home-made hair cut," promptly replied a boy in the front row.

"Do you think woman will ever successfully fill the pulpit?" "I see no reason why she should not. It ought to be easy with the sleeves she wears."

Mary had a little hen
With feathers white as snow.
The preacher paid a visit: then
The chicken had to go.

Bright Boy—"Ma, you know the Prayer Book says Jesus Christ descended into hell?" Mother—"Yes." Bright Boy—"Well, our rector this morning read about Jesus saying to the thief on the cross, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'" Mother—"Well, what do you want to know?" Bright Boy—"I want to know how in hell the two could meet in paradise."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "George Meredith: Writer and Teacher."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): Monday, at 8, musical and dramatic entertainment.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Conversazione.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "Does Death End All?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Beautiful Bible Stories"; 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, St. John, "Religion and Morality."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Our Lord, Jesus Christ."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, S. B. Thompson, "Slavery." (Collection for Benevolent Fund.)

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, C. Cohen, "Jesus as a Teacher"; 3.15, "Is Belief in God Reasonable?" (Collection for London Secular Federation.)

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "Antidotes to Superstition." Thursday, at 8.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Evolution"; 3.30, "God and Evolution." Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, H. Courtney, "Belief and Conduct."

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton, "Where will you Spend Eternity?"

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and Slavery."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Life and Teachings of Buddha."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Rome, Reason, and Revelation."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, S. E. Easton will lecture.

TOTTENHAM GREEN: 3.30, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, S. B. Thompson will lecture; 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Fables"; 7, S. B. Thompson, "The Bible and Total Abstinence." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, Gymnasium class; 7, club and social meeting.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, L. Keen will lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Hammond, "Metamorphoses of Christianity."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. G. Taylor, "Private Ownership of Land a Social Wrong."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 3, members' monthly meeting; 7, J. L. White, M.Sc., "Bible Science."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Lecture or reading—see Saturday's local paper.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King street): 7, adjourned discussion on "A Liberal Program."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (82 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, J. Watts Treasure, "Christianity and Society."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell, "The Atonement."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 18, m and a. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—Aug. 18, m. Finsbury Park; 22, Hammersmith; 25, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Kilburn; 28, Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—August 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

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Half Width of Back		Inside Leg Seam		Round Chest over Vest		Hollow Waist or not
Centre of Back to Elbow		Full Length of Trousers		Round Waist over Vest		Corpulent or not
Centre of Back to Full Length of Sleeve		Round Thigh		Please say if Vest is to have Collar, or not		Short or Long Neck
Round Chest, close to armpits, over vest, NOT COAT		Round Knee				Full or Narrow Chest
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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 34. SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY'S LATEST STATEMENTS.

Now that Professor Huxley has unfortunately been taken by death from the battle-ground of controversial contention, it may be of service to note his latest expressions of opinion upon topics with which his name has been more or less associated for nearly the last half century. It is to us gratifying to know that he did not reserve the final statement of his views for the last hours of his life, but that he made it in 1894, when he was in comparatively good health, and in possession of his mental vigor. From this statement, which appears in the ninth volume of his *Collected Essays*, we learn, without doubt, what his matured ideas were upon many of the most important subjects which agitate the advanced minds of modern times. His public career was a grand specimen of moral and intellectual consistency, and his death was a noble example of a peaceful resignation to "nature's stern decree." When the hour arrived for his final parting from those he loved, he had no misgivings, no anxiety as to any future life; that faith in honesty of purpose, in sincerity of profession, and in integrity of conduct, which was the charm of his useful life, adequately sustained him upon entering the portals of the "great unknown." As he lived, so he died, an Agnostic, leaving behind treasures of thought that can be utilised in the endeavor to solve some of the problems of human existence.

Professor Huxley was regarded as an authority, upon the side of Freethought, in reference to several disputed points, and no doubt his writings will still be frequently quoted in debate against orthodox conclusions. It will therefore be useful to bring to the notice of our readers his latest declarations as to the position he occupied towards some existing theological theories. In the last volume of his *Collected Essays* he makes allusions to what he had repeatedly urged in various publications which he had issued during the previous forty years. "If I may speak of the objects I have had more or less definitely in view since I began the ascent of my hillock," he says, "they are briefly these: To promote the increase of natural knowledge, and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction, which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is."

In reference to the present state of nature, he describes it as fleeting—"merely the last of the series of changes which the earth's surface has undergone in the course of the millions of years of its existence." He points out that "the trail of the most ancient life remains hidden, or has become obliterated." Now, the scientific opinion here expressed is quite opposed to the orthodox notion that the earth is only a little over six thousand years old, and that the origin and path of life have been revealed by God. To speak of the earth having been in existence millions of years, as Huxley did, may be scientifically correct, but it flatly contradicts the account given in Genesis. The Bible writer might have thought that he had discovered the "trail" of primitive life; time, however, has shown that he was mistaken. The one fact bearing upon this subject in which there is reason for believing is, that "at some period in the history of the earth, far more remote than any of which organic remains have been discovered, they would merge in those low groups in which the boundaries between animal and vegetable life became effaced."

The Professor states very clearly his views upon the theory of Evolution. He did not regard it as an explanation of the cosmic process, but rather as a method of nature's operations, and he adds, "evolution excludes creation, and all other kinds of supernatural intervention"; and it "no less excludes that of chance." Moreover, his opinion was that scientific knowledge tends to support the belief that the principle of evolution applies to all existing things—not merely to plants and animal life, but to the solar system. Terrestrial life, he urged, exhibits "the tendency to vary, the causes of which have yet to be ascertained." Undoubtedly, to his mind, the theory of evolution was reasonable, while that of sudden creation, or the shaping by supernatural power, was contrary to our present knowledge. This testimony in favor of evolution is the more valuable, because it comes from one of the most competent judges upon the subject that the world has produced. He says: "I do not know that anyone has taken more pains than I have, during the last thirty years, to insist upon the doctrine, so much reviled in the early part of that period, that man, physical, intellectual, and moral, is as much a product of nature, as purely a product of the cosmic process, as the humblest weed." The changes observed in animals and plants, he thought, must not be attributed only to selection and the struggle for existence. "In discussions on these topics it is often strangely forgotten that the essential conditions of the modification, or evolution, of living things are variation and hereditary transmission." As an illustration of this, he instances that "the wild kale becomes a cabbage, or the wild *Viola tricolor* a prize pansy."

His views upon the Population Question deserve serious attention, for, in our opinion, whatever tends to throw light upon this all-important subject is of practical value to suffering humanity. The question really deals with what Huxley aptly calls "the serpent that enters every Eden." He points out that, in the struggle for existence, "the survival of the fittest" may be of the lowest, as well as of the highest, forms. "The fittest" are those best adapted to changed conditions, and as such they will survive. He maintains that, so long as man naturally increases without restraint, the struggle for existence will go on; and, in his opinion, no social organisation has ever been devised that will meet the difficulty. This is not our view, for it appears to us that the trouble is not so much in discovering a plan to check over-population as in inducing the masses to act upon it. This is the real difficulty, and we agree with Huxley that "it is the true riddle of the Sphinx, and every nation which does not solve it will, sooner or later, be devoured by the monster itself has generated. Judging from an ethical standard, nothing can be less satisfactory than the position in which we find ourselves."

True to his Agnostic principles, he refuses to dogmatise upon either Materialism or Spiritualism. He repudiates the popular exposition of both. Still, as we understand his philosophy, it is thoroughly Materialistic in its basis. He holds it "quite correct to say that material changes are the result of psychical phenomena." Further, he professes to have no knowledge of anything beyond or apart from the material universe. As to whether consciousness can exist apart from matter and force, he writes: "As Kant said on a like occasion, if anybody can answer that question, he is just the man I want to see. If

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he says consciousness cannot exist except in relation of cause and effect with certain organic molecules, I must ask how he knows that; and if he says it can, I must put the same question." We may remark, in passing, that in our judgment the two cases are not analogous, inasmuch as we have undoubted experience that consciousness does exist in connection with organic molecules, while we have no evidence that it can be found without them.

The Professor maintains that the bickerings of theology about things of which nothing is known are the prime cause of that "scepticism which is the Nemesis of meddling with the unknowable." "Orthodoxy," he says, "is the Bourbon of the world of thought. It learns not, neither can it forget; and, though at present bewildered and afraid to move, it is as willing as ever to insist that the first chapter of Genesis contains the beginning and end of sound science, and to visit with such petty thunderbolts as its half-paralysed hands can hurl those who refuse to degrade nature to the level of primitive Judaism." Finally, he submits that the safety of morality does not depend on Christian inheritance, for, "if the Stoics and the Jews revoked their bequests, the moral property of Christianity would realise very little." He was a firm believer in "that fixed order of nature which sends social disorganisation upon the track of immorality, as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespasses."

As to the future of mankind, he held that evolution does not lead to any final state of permanent bliss; but he was no misanthrope; he saw no limit to intelligence, investigation, and combined effort, in modifying the conditions of existence, and even the nature of man himself. In trying to solve the problems of life he advises that we should take the good which falls in our way and bear the evil with stout hearts, while endeavoring to diminish it. "So far, we all may strive in one faith towards one hope:—

> It may be that the gulphs will wash us down,
> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
> . . . . . but something ere the end,
> Some work of noble note may yet be done."

CHARLES WATTS.

BURNING THE BIBLE.

THERE is a common myth that Freethinkers burn their Bibles, and desire all others to do so. I have never come across such a case, or even read of an authenticated instance; though it may possibly have happened when, at the French Revolution, churches were desecrated and bells taken for cannon by infuriated mobs. I have found English Freethinkers well acquainted with the book, and anxious to enlighten others as to the real contents of a volume far more reverenced than read. But Freethought works have often been put under the ban of the Church, and burnt at the hands of the public hangman. Nay, their authors have sometimes shared the same fate. The Church has burnt rival Bibles wholesale. In Spain, Cardinal Ximenes had every copy of the Koran that could be procured taken from their owners and the libraries, and destroyed. Five thousand are said to have been burnt in one holocaust. But this was outdone by the collection and burning at Cremona of twelve thousand copies of the Talmud. At this period, be it remembered, the Moslems and Jews were the chief cultivators of literature.

The attempts of the oldest and greatest of the Christian Churches to suppress the circulation of the Bible is matter of history. In the twelfth century Pope Innocent III. prohibited the reading of the Bible in the common tongue. The Council of Toulouse (1229) forbade the reading of the Bible in any vernacular language, and decreed that no layman should have in his possession any of the books of the Old or New Testament. The Council of Terragona orders that any priest or layman, who possesses a translation of the Bible and does not surrender it within eight days to be burnt, shall be deemed a heretic. The famous Council of Trent affirmed that no Bible should be held or read except by priests, and this canon remains unrepealed. This Council condemned wholesale the works of the most notorious heretics, *i.e.* reformers. In 1557 Paul IV. published at Rome the first official *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. His Index includes all Bibles in modern languages, enumerating forty-eight editions chiefly printed in countries still under the jurisdiction of the Church.

I have recently come across a pamphlet, entitled *The Trial and Conviction of a Franciscan Monk at Mayo Spring Assizes, 1852, for Burning and Blaspheming the Holy Scriptures; with Observations on the Fact, and the Defence Made for It*, by the Rev. P. M'Loskey, A.B., Curate of Castlebar (Dublin: George Herbert; 1852). I shall not trouble much about the reverend gentleman's observations on "this horrible transaction"; but the trial itself is, for several reasons, of interest to Freethinkers, and, I think, has not yet been noticed in any of the publications on the law, and legal aspects, of blasphemy.

The Franciscan monk in question is given in this report as "John Syngian, *alias* Brother John." His real name was John St. John. The case came before the Ballinrobe Petty Sessions, March 1, 1852. The charge was that the defendant, "on the 23rd of November last, at Cappaduff, did burn a copy of the New Testament, and did, at the same time and place, profanely scoff at the Holy Scriptures." It was thought that the prosecution was under what the late Sir James Fitzjames Stephen called the "ferocious statute" of 9 and 10 William III.; but, as in all other cases of blasphemy, the common law was relied upon, as this statute demands, among other matters, that information should be made within four days of the offence. The counsel for the complainant relied on 1 Hawkins, c. 5, Nunn and Walsh, 445, to show the monk had committed an offence at common law. Callaghan McCarthy swore that he saw two monks at the bridge of Cappaduff, and one of them in the act of burning the New Testament. When he asked whether he was burning the Word of God, he said it was not the Word of God, but the Word of the Devil, and he would burn every one he could lay hold of. J. Sheridan, in corroboration, described the monk's putting the covers back to back, holding the open leaves over the fire. "The monk said it was the Devil's Book—a damnable and heretical book; said he would burn thousands of them if he could get them." The Rev. Hamilton Townsend, rector of Ballyovey, also testified to the fact. "He said it was the Devil's Book—Luther's book—damnable and heretical, and that he would burn every one he could get." The monk was sent to trial. "For some time after the excitement was very great, and Protestant clergymen were very grossly insulted in the streets."

The monk was brought up at the Mayo Assizes on March 6, before Baron Lefroy. The proceedings awakened vast interest and excitement. The indictment set out that, not having the fear of God before his eyes, but contriving and intending to scandalise and vilify the true Protestant religion as by law established within these realms, and to blaspheme the Holy Gospel of God and of our Lord and Savor Jesus Christ, did, etc., to the great dishonor of Almighty God, and in contempt of the Protestant religion, etc. Mr. Keogh, Q.C., defended, and severely cross-examined the witnesses on many points, such as the differences between the Authorised and the Douay versions. He elicited that the Rev. Mr. Townsend said that the Church of Rome was damnable and idolatrous. This was after the traverser said the Bible was the Devil's Book. This clergyman was asked: "Do you, sir, believe that it is a Christian thing to go amongst a Catholic people and tell them that their religion is idolatrous and damnable?" He fenced with the question a good bit. Mr. Keogh said: "Now, sir, if you were to remain at that table until you were made a bishop of, I will make you answer my question." And at last he did answer: "I do believe it." Mr. Keogh: "Then go down, sir."

Mr. Keogh, Q.C. (afterwards, I expect, Judge Keogh), made a spirited defence, which was frequently applauded. He attacked the Church Missionaries and Bible Societies, who, he said, "clubbed their money together to prosecute this man." His client believed the Authorised Version to be a spurious version, etc. "You will not send the traverser to gaol for burning what in his conscience he believed was not the word of God, while other men return to their homes to enjoy the honors and emoluments conferred upon them for doing that which, if it be not a violation of human law, is undoubtedly a breach of that law which is above all human statutes, and by which you and I shall be tried at the bar of judgment," etc. He appealed to them to heal the breach between Protestants and Catholics by showing justice in mercy to one who conscientiously differed from them in belief. It was evidently a rousing speech, eliciting a loud burst of applause. But Baron Lefroy told the jury they must stick to law and fact, and they returned a

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verdict of Guilty. The prosecuting counsel said the Crown did not wish to press for punishment, the object being to put a stop to such acts; and his lordship sentenced the prisoner to give bail, himself in £20, and two sureties in £10 each, to keep the peace for seven years, and to come up for judgment when called upon, getting ten days' notice.

And so the majesty of the Protestant fetish book was vindicated, and thus ended the case of Bible burning in Mayo.

J. M. WHEELER.

TOLSTOI AND THE GOSPELS.

TOLSTOI, though a Christolater, is not a Bibliolater, or worshipper of the letter of the Bible. In his preface to his annotations on the Gospels he says: "In the civilised world to-day there is no people except our Russian people who, thanks to the censor, are able to ignore the labors of historical criticism during the last century, and to retain the ingenuous belief that the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written exactly as they are, each one separately and entirely by the author to whom they are attributed. The reader must not forget that such an opinion is based on an ignorance of all the labors of science, and possesses to-day about the same value that the opinion held in the last century possessed, according to which the sun revolved about the earth. The reader must not forget that the Synoptic Gospels in their present form are the fruits of a long evolution, of an indefinite series of additions and omissions; that they are the product of the imagination of millions of different men, and not at all the product of the Holy Spirit, which might have spoken by the voices of the evangelists. The reader must not forget that the Gospels in their present form are in no wise the testimony of the Apostles and the immediate disciples of Jesus; that such an assertion is a fiction which will not only not stand against criticism, but is based on nothing, unless on the desire of pious souls that it might be so.

"During the centuries the Gospels have been collected, purged, enlarged, explained. The most ancient manuscripts that we have date from the fourth century, are written without spaces between the words, and without punctuation—in such a way, indeed, that, even directly after the fourth and fifth century, they were the object of the most divergent interpretations, and gave rise to variations of which about 50,000 are counted. The reader ought to have these things present in his mind in order to avoid the opinion, which is so popular with us, that the Gospels came down to us in their present form from the Holy Spirit."

Going so far, it is a wonder that Tolstoi does not go further, and admit we have no historical certainty about Christ; but, instead of this, he proceeds to evolve a Christ out of his own inner consciousness, like the German philosopher who thus evolved the camel.

ADVENTURES OF A PARABLE.

IT has long been suspected that the New Testament parables migrated from further east, and some close ones have been found in the Buddhist books, for Gautama Buddha spoke in parables to enlighten the wise, and not for the ignoble reason ascribed to Jesus. "That seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark iv. 12). In Mr. A. Lillie's little book on *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity* he gives (pp. 70–76) Buddha's parables of the Prodigal Son, the Woman at the Well, and the Blazing Mansion.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway, in the *Open Court*, of Chicago (July 25), writes on the Parable of the Talents, which, he says, is believed by Professor Jacobi to have originated in India. In volume xlv. of *The Sacred Books of the East*, devoted to Jain Scriptures, the Professor translates the *Uttarâdhyana*, which contains a parable of the Three Merchants. Of this Mr. Virchand Gandhi, the representative of Jainism at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, made for Mr. Conway a more careful translation, as follows:—

> "Three merchants set out on their travels, each with his capital. One of them gained much; the second returned with his [original] capital; the third returned, having lost his capital.
>
> "The capital is human life, the gain its perfection. Losing that capital, man must be born the denizen of a degraded world, a brute animal. There are two paths the evil man must tread—physical degradation, moral misery. For the slave of lust forfeits both outer and inner life: having forfeited these, he must suffer those two conditions of unhappiness; and it will be difficult for him to attain an upward course for a long time. He who returns with his capital unincreased is born again, an unimproved man. Those who, through exercise of various virtues, become religious householders are the twice-born men; for all beings reap the fruit of their actions. But he who increased his capital is to be compared to one who practises eminent virtues. The excellent man attains with joy the state of the most perfect beings in the universe."

Such is the Jain parable, and, as Jainism is older than Buddhism, which is older than Christianity by five hundred years, it was pretty certainly uttered before our era. The next trace of it is in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the earliest Christian Gospel of which we have any record. The exact words are lost, but the substance is preserved by Eusebius (*Theophania*):—

> "The Gospel which comes to us in Hebrew characters has directed the threat, not against the hider [of his talent], but against the abandoned liver. For it has included three servants, one which devoured the substance with harlots and flute-women, and one which multiplied, and one which hid the talent: then that one was accepted, one only blamed, and one shut up in prison."

"There is here evidence that in one, and," says Mr. Conway, "I have no doubt, the earliest, use of the parable by Jesus it contained a feature of the Prodigal Son." In this earliest Christian, or Essene, version the Prodigal was not welcomed home again, but imprisoned. This (says Mr. Conway, whose article we follow and condense) continues the moral lesson of the Jain parable. But when we next meet the story it is strangely altered. This is in Matthew xxv., where neither of the three servants has lost the money entrusted to him; punishment is awarded to the servant who was given least, and who merely kept that without increasing it. The ethical significance of the Hindu and Hebrew versions, which applied the parable to personal conduct, is in Matthew detached by the curious order that the one talent shall be taken from him who did not multiply it, and given to him who, with five times as much capital, had doubled it. But the servant with two talents had also doubled them, and why was the larger capitalist favored? It is no explanation to say: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath." Why? This version of the parable diverts it from equitable human affairs, and the only thing it seems to fit is the issue between the Jewish and the Gentile converts. Matthew was written in the interest of the Jewish Christians, who claimed supremacy in the coming Messianic dominion. They were the servant given five talents, the Gentile converts, not being under the Abrahamic covenant, receiving only two; while the unconverted Gentiles, who were given one talent, in being offered the Gospel, but did not improve their opportunity, must be cast into outer darkness. This unimproved talent is transferred to the Jewish Christians, because they added acceptance of the Messiah to the advantage of being the chosen people. That the Matthew version was aiming at something of this controversial kind is confirmed by the fact that the parable is here connected with descriptions of the coming of Christ to judge and rule the world. These notions and issues belong to a time long after the death of Jesus, and he could not have spoken any such parable as that recorded in Matthew.

In Luke, written in the interest of Gentile Christians, the parable presents another remarkable change. Here we find human equality; each servant is entrusted with the same sum—one *mina*. One increases it by ten, and rules ten cities; another by five, and rules five cities; while the third, who hid his *mina*, simply loses it. Here also the unincreased money is given to the servant who had earned ten, but in this case there is no unfairness: this one had

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received no more than the others, and had shown twice as much industry as the servant who, with the same capital, had earned only five *minas*. In Luke the Gentile Christian reminds the Jewish that if he receives more it must not be by favoritism, as the version in Matthew implies, but by larger service: the tribal Jahveh has given way, under the influence of the Roman Empire, to a wider conception.

It is noticeable that in the three Christian versions given above the number of traders in the Hindu parable persists—three. In Luke the parable sets out with ten servants, perhaps a relic of some version of the Ten Virgins which immediately precedes it in Matthew; but only three are called to account. The accounts of the parable are manifestly discrepant, but Mr. Conway seems to think that the real Jesus did in some form use this ancient Oriental parable of the Three Merchants, and that the real version lies between—that is, the Gospel according to the Hebrews and that according to Luke. We prefer to believe that it was the utterance of no particular man, but has gone through many hands, being redacted in the interest of various doctrines. If the real Jesus be discoverable at all, it is far more probable he was the narrow Jew, who said he was but sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, rather than like the travelled Paul, who had imbibed some of the principles of Roman civilisation.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—XI.

John Stewart.

John Stewart, commonly known as "Walking Stewart," and in his own day characterised as "Philosopher Stewart," has been several times written about, yet remains very little known. De Quincey consecrated an article to his memory, but dwelt rather upon his eccentricities and exploits than his opinions. It is, of course, chiefly as a Freethinker that he is here considered. Of Scotch origin, though born in London in 1749, John Stewart possessed characteristic Scotch hardihood, restless energy, and independence. Educated at Harrow and the Charterhouse, at the age of sixteen he entered the service of the East India Company, and went out to Madras. Disappointed of advancement, in two years, he quitted this employment, writing to the directors that "he was born for nobler pursuits than to be a copier of invoices and bills of lading to a company of grocers, haberdashers, and cheesemongers." Smitten with what Leslie Stephen ventures to call "the characteristic passion of the wise and good—the passion for walking," which perhaps is mainly atavism from a nomadic state, he went on foot all over Hindostan "to become acquainted with the customs, laws, languages, and temperament of the inhabitants." He entered the service of Hyder Aly, first as interpreter, and afterwards as military officer, rising to the rank of general. He was wounded in battle, and applied for leave of absence to consult a surgeon at one of the European settlements. The request was acceded to by Hyder, after some hesitation; but his escort had orders to kill him, which design Stewart penetrating, he made his escape, seizing a favorable moment to plunge into a river and swim across. His swiftness of foot enabled him to outstrip his pursuers. He subsequently entered the service of the Nawaub of Arcot, became his private secretary, and eventually Prime Minister. He was not paid at the time, but many years after, when the East India Company liquidated the Nawaub's debts, he received £10,000 for his services. He walked from India through Persia, Armenia, and Turkey, to Europe. Crossing the Persian Gulf, a storm arose, and the crew were for casting him overboard like Jonah, but he persuaded them to compromise by immuring him in a hencoop, and suspending him at the yard-arm till the storm abated. He had many adventures, and gave his testimony that, in all countries, it was safer to travel unarmed. To the credit of human nature, he relates that whenever he made people understand that he trusted them they showed no disposition to do him injury. He travelled on foot through Germany, Italy, France, and Spain, settling for a while in Paris. Having walked through England, Scotland, and Ireland, he crossed the Atlantic in 1791, and perambulated the United States and Canada.

When he came into his fortune, he settled down in Cockspur-street, Pall Mall, that he might be "in the full tide of existence," and gave private Sunday evening concerts. Among his personal friends and acquaintances were the Freethinkers, Thomas Paine, Clio Rickman, William Godwin, and Robert Owen.

Hogg, in his *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (ii., 328), mentions the famous "Walking Stewart" as "a tall, hard-featured, middle-aged man, impatiently forcing his way through the crowd that commonly impedes the passage across Westminster Bridge," and says "his chief delight was to walk at the rate of five miles an hour, straight on end, as long as it was light. In the evening he sought literary and scientific conversation, and the commerce of wits." Hogg gives what is probably a highly-colored anecdote concerning his parties. He says: "He complained to William Godwin: 'You, and the other great wits of the day, seldom come to my evening parties, and I know why you do not come. It is because you are afraid that the good things which you say will be lost; but, I assure you, you are mistaken. Not a single word will be thrown away; nothing will be lost. I have taken effectual precautions to prevent it. I have engaged twelve eminent shorthand writers; they are placed behind screens in different parts of the room very judiciously posted. They take down whatever they hear, and report it to myself; nothing can escape them. So fear not; not a word will be lost; talk your best!'"

A more veracious account is given in *The Reminiscences of Alaric Watts*, who describes him as an ascetic epicure. He was a vegetarian, eschewing, like the Brahmins, meat and intoxicants, yet concerning himself with the delectation of his guests. Watts says: "One of his most cherished friends was Robert Owen, of New Lanark, who was always welcomed with great cordiality, and was a general favorite with the younger guests. His manners exhibited the beau ideal of *bonhomie*, genial to all, and to the young most kind and paternal." Stewart in 1803 gave "Lectures on the Human Mind and the Study of Man," and he wrote numerous books expounding his philosophic views. They had strange-sounding titles, such as *The Sophisometer*, *The Poesis of Social Life*, *The Revelation of Nature*, *The Revolution of Reason*, *The Book of Intellectual Life*, and *Opus Maximum*. The books were as strange. A solitary thinker wandering among many nations, Stewart had acquired a thought and language of his own. As De Quincey remarks: "Potentially, he was a great man." But he lacked power of popular exposition and expression.

De Quincey, who was much struck with the eloquence of his conversation, lays his finger on a damning fault of his writings, in saying "he was everlastingly metaphysicising against metaphysics." A few quotations may illustrate both his views and his style. "With what weakness is it asserted that matter is inert, while each atom proves to the contrary! Where do we discover matter destitute of power? Is it in the minute particles of the virulent poisons? or is it in the atoms of inflammable air buried in the earth, which precipitates whole cities into ruins? And where is the particle that does not possess electrical power, chemical affinity, and gravity? And this partial power, multiplied and combined with organic power, is the great energy of nature—the great whole of power in its component parts." Speaking of man, he says: "Man is formed of particles of matter, organised so as to resemble a corded instrument of music of five strings, which correspond with the five senses. The intellectual faculties hold the bow and play, and the passions form the stops upon the handle of the instrument; and if just tones are produced, simultaneously or successively, their harmony or melody forms what is called an agreeable tune or air, or well-being and happiness, of which man himself possesses consciousness; and in this power he is superior to, and differs from, the inanimate instrument." He advocated what he called "the philosophy of Materialism" and the "perfectibility of human nature." De Quincey says: "Like the late Mr. Shelley, he had a fine vague enthusiasm, and lofty aspirations in connection with human nature generally and its hopes; and, like him, he strove to give steadiness, a uniform direction, and an intelligible purpose to these feelings, by fitting to them a scheme of philosophical opinions."

Alaric Watts (ii., 282) gives the following account of his opinions: "His theory seemed to involve the rejection not only of revealed, but also of natural, religion, truly so-called. Kind-hearted and benevolent to the highest degree, it was his whim to ascribe his sympathies for his race to feelings of mere selfishness. He supposed that there was a continual transmutation of constituent atoms between all bodies brought within the sphere of reciprocal influence, and that the process was regular and invariable. He denied that there was any manifestation of intelligence in the structure of the globe, or of the bodies on its surface, and disclaimed wholly any belief in the existence of a superintending deity." De Quincey said in *Tait's Magazine*, though he did not reprint the observation in book form: "In fact, he was as deliberate and resolute an Atheist as can ever have existed; but for all that, and although wishing, for his own sake, that he had been a more religious man, or at least had felt a greater reverence for such subjects, and a closer sympathy with that which for so vast a majority of the human race must ever constitute their sole consolation under sorrow and calamity, still I could not close my eyes to the many evidences which his writings and his conversation afforded of a true grandeur of mind, and of a calm Spinozistic state of contemplative reverie."

Amid his eccentricities, both of thought and diction, are many good things. He said with Spinoza: "To think is to identify ourselves with nature." He was himself a thinker,

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at times original and deep, but without method. He insisted that the mind should be regarded, "not as a sack of science, but as an instrument of sense." Travel and observation he preferred to books and knowledge. He says: "The most important action of my life was to meducate myself and wipe away the evil propensities and erudite nonsense of school instruction. I soon discovered that the maxims of virtue would avail little against the tutored dispositions of violence, fraud, cruelty, falsehood, and superstitious insanity." He thought that most minds carried over-much sail with too slim a rudder. So he says: "The human mind should be taught to think before it is taught to know, and the rudder of reason should be fixed before the mind is launched into the ocean of life." Virtue and vice, he said, are synonymous with wisdom and folly. Christianity he calls a more ridiculous system of superstition than the Pagan Pantheon. "This Christian superstition," he continues, "brought on the long period of the dark ages, which now exists in defiance of all the progress of science, and the intercourse of civilised government in commerce, literature, and travels." He says: "All appeal to supernatural or universal power is downright insanity. Man can profit only in an appeal to the intelligible and communicative powers of reason in his own species." "Intellectual discernment," he says, "would avoid the excess of wealth, which always produces corresponding poverty, and often the most frightful evils. It would seek to deduce good from evil, so to modify war that it may become the means of peace, coercion that it may become the means of liberty, and civil government that its power may become the means of national prosperity in reconciling public interest with private good."

Sometimes he shows a touch of wit, as when he says the Irish Catholics have "only Father Murphy's supper in the clouds to allure them." His travels gave him a good opinion of his own countrymen. He disputes their being phlegmatic, and says "an Englishman would buy a house before a foreigner would finish the bargain of an egg." He divided society into seven classes—viz., savage, pastoral, agrestic, scientific, confederate, and perfectible life. He advocated missions to the lower classes from the superior ones, "not to teach them, as has been the practice, the silly doctrines of mythology and metaphysics, to make fools of them, but practical secular education in useful arts and sciences." He notes how the offer of a reward for a chimney-sweeping invention did away with the cruelty of children sweeping chimneys, which religion was unable to effect. "Religion," he remarks, "demands implicit assent to all propositions upon pain of punishment, which disposes the mind to indolence of examination, ignorance, and a breach of probity." "Reflection, rising superior to the narrow confines of religious creeds and mythological dogmas, and comprehending the vast circle of nature's laws relative to man, discovers the end of his being to be the improvement of the mundane system in time and futurity."

De Quincey, who knew him well, says: "He was a man of very extraordinary genius. He has generally been treated by those who have spoken of him in print as a madman. But this is a mistake, and must have been founded chiefly on the titles of his books. He was a man of fervid mind, and of sublime aspirations; but he was no madman, or, if he was, then I say that it is so far desirable to be a madman." De Quincey describes his countenance as striking, and as expressing "the union of benignity with philosophic habits of thought." In describing his own characteristics, Stewart, in his *Opus Maximum*, says: "I have learnt to pity, and not to resent, the passions of others; and when to an angry or illiberal observation I reply with complacent language, it is but marking my own superiority of moral temperament, and showing that I am not to be infected with moral as with physical contagion. A philosopher may catch the small-pox from a conversant, but if he catches his passions, he must be a fool." Stewart died February 20, 1822, and left by his will a thousand pounds to Edinburgh University, which he esteemed the most liberal institution of the kind. His works remain a curious, ill-shapen, rugged mass of unrefined ore, whence, with much smelting, precious metal can still be obtained.

J. M. WHEELER.

Ideas of God.

As Hume says, truly enough, it is a mere fallacy, because two people use the same name for things, the ideas of which are mutually exclusive, to rank such opposite opinions under the same denomination. If the Jew says that the Deity is absolute unity, and that it is sheer blasphemy to say that he ever became incarnate in the person of a man; and if the Trinitarian says that the Deity is numerically three, as well as numerically one, and that it is sheer blasphemy to say that he did not so become incarnate, it is obvious enough that each must be logically held to deny the existence of the other's Deity.—*Professor Huxley, "Hume," p. 160.*

FRENCH VIEWS OF ENGLISH RELIGION.

MAX O'RELL and his opinions on *John Bull and his Island* are pretty well known; but as it is always well to see ourselves as others see us, we comply with the suggestion of a friend across the Atlantic to reprint some passages exhibiting his views of John Bull's religion.

"Those agents of the Bible Society, with their tracts, are terrible bores. You meet with them in omnibuses, in trains, in the streets, everywhere. With a hypocritical smile they beg you to accept a tract. Your best plan, if you would quickly have done with them, is to accept the piece of paper, put it in your pocket, and say, 'Thank you.' I met with one once who made quite a dead set at me.

"'Sir,' he began, 'God commands every man to repent.'

"'I thank you for reminding me, but I had not forgotten it,' I said.

"'Ah! sir, you are a foreigner; seek salvation, save your soul, whilst you are in this country.'

"'Have you the keys of Paradise, then?' I asked him; 'and is that your calling to bother people in this manner? Leave me alone.'

"'Sir, believe me, all men are sinners. David himself was one.'

"'I agree with you,' I exclaimed.

"'Yes; but he repented.'

"'There was room for repentance.'

"'The repentance should make us forget the crime.'

"'Exactly. But why, then, do you hang your criminals?' I added, for I was beginning to be amused at the turn the conversation had taken.

"'Because, by executing them, whilst they are in a state of repentance, we send them to Paradise. If we set them at liberty, they would return to a state of sin.'

"'Now, tell me,' said I to him, 'for you seem to be an intelligent man, would you receive in your house, at your table, with your good wife and children, a man who had caused the death of another in order to make love more easily to his wife, but who had afterwards repented? Would you not welcome more warmly one who had never had occasion to repent of such crimes as those of David?'

"'Ah!' he replied, 'your levity is out of place. Laugh at me, if you like; we shall see in the end who will be on the laughing side. We shall meet again on the Last Day.' After giving me this appointment he left me, with a look more jeering than Christian, I am sorry to say."

A little further on he observes:—

"Among the other Sunday heroes, the street preachers must not be forgotten. They are generally conceited workmen, who, having received from Heaven a mission to go and convert their fellow-creatures, relate their experience of life to the public; how they were once nothing but miserable sinners, how they have seen the error of their ways and become converted, and how easy it is for others to do likewise. They take up their stand in some open place, in parties of five or six, accompanied by one or two old maids. Here, more than anywhere, old maids offer to God that which they have had no chance of giving to men—a pure and loving heart. A circle is formed, and a monotonous hymn sung; this is to attract the passers-by. One of the party steps forward, takes off his hat, collects his thoughts in it, and commences his discourse. The theme never varies. 'My dear friends, death is at hand: are you prepared to meet it?' A crowd soon gathers round, silent and respectful. It is not a religious silence, but a simple mark of that boundless respect which is entertained in England for the liberty of meeting. The men smoke their pipes and listen; it is the only distraction to be had on Sundays, so they avail themselves of it. They do not pray, but, on the other hand, neither do they mock. The sermons are dull twaddle, and generally full of personal experiences. 'My dear friends,' said one of these street evangelists, 'I am happy to be able to say that I am saved; that I am now on my way to heaven. A month ago I could not have said this; I was the slave of the Devil.' Indeed, it was easy to see he was telling the truth, for *le diable ne en met avait maryne ses exploits.*"

HUXLEY AND POSITIVISM.—In the interest of scientific clearness I object to say that I have a soul, when I mean all the while that my organism has certain mental functions which, like the rest, are dependent upon its molecular composition, and come to an end when I die; and I object still more to affirm that I look to a future life when all that I mean is that the influence of my sayings and doings will be more or less felt by a number of people after the physical components of that organism are scattered to the four winds. —*T. H. Huxley.*

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THE LATTER-DAY SAINT.

I'm a Protestant high-croaker, wearing broadcloth and white choker,
And each Sabbath-day I pound the pulpit well;
You ought to hear me howling, bull-bellowing, and yowling,
While I'm sending all the sinners' souls to hell.

The Creation and the Flood, holy Jesus and lamb's blood,
Is the lingo that I din into their ears;
And if that won't keep them civil, then I soon trot out the Devil:
It's the way all parsons play upon their fears.

Blessed Jesus, hear me pray; oh, take my sins away,
And souse me with the Holy Ghost and fire;
Snatch me up to Kingdom-come, by the power of Jumbo-jum;
Let me join the blessed tantra-raring choir.

I'm a sanctimonious duffer, a hocus-pocus bluffer,
A ranting, roaring cock-a-doodle doo;
In a fisticuffing bout I can knock the Devil out—
I'm an ordained, very Rev'rend Bugaboo.

I live on cake and pie that the willing fools supply—
They don't know that I'm a consecrated fake;
So, sinners, bow the knee, and hand your cash to me,
Or I'll chuck you all into the burning lake.

—*Ironclad Age.* ANNA K.

ACID DROPS.

ACCORDING to the Bible, the mother of all mankind, Mrs. Eve, was presented to her husband in a state of complete nudity, and as Mr. Adam was in the same condition there was nothing to shock his modesty. When they took to eating apples—whatever that may mean; and all sorts of dirty conjectures have been hazarded—they became ashamed of their nakedness and commenced tailoring. Ever since the men have been very much concerned about the women's clothing. They are even now kicking up a fuss about their riding bicycles in a rational dress. They have been doing it, of all places, in Paris, and a rumor got abroad that the Prefect of Police intended to issue an order prohibiting women from wearing masculine attire within the fortifications. But the professors of the great teaching institutions have begged that the order may not be made operative in the Latin Quarter. They declare that since the ladies dropped their coquettish costumes, and took to wearing knickerbockers, they have lost all charm for the students, who are now attending to their classes with unwonted assiduity. This should be an eye-opener to the Philistine busybodies.

Lady cyclists are numerous in Paris, and many of them adopt the rational dress, which gives great offence in clerical circles. A Church dignitary tells an editor of *Gil Blas* that he is determined to refuse every sacrament to women coming to ask it in a lady cyclist's dress. "This," says the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, "is serious news for cycle manufacturers, but they must not despair. Priests are now forbidden to go on cycles through their parishes, not that the bishops think it wrong to do so, but it may shock strait-laced Catholics, and set Freethinkers laughing."

The priests may preach as much as they like, but they will never affect female fashions. They will no more put down knickerbockers than they put down low bodices. Molière satirised the priesthood in making Tartuffe pay such attention to bare bosoms. The clergy were constantly exclaiming, "Hide, oh hide, those hills of snow." Probably the poor wretches knew their own weakness.

Mr. Lewis Morris contributed a poem on "Armenia" to Monday's *Daily News*. It contains two good lines—both borrowed; one from Milton and Wordsworth, the other from Isaiah. The rest is the poet's own, and it strikes us as rather wooden. Mr. Morris is nothing if not pious, yet he puts the following questions without answering them:—

> What? Has God's thought forgot
> His people's woes? Doth His averted ear
> No more their cries of hopeless anguish hear
> The wail for precious lives, which now are not?
> Shall not the all-seeing Eye
> Look downward from the dumb, unheeding sky,
> And with a glance confound the might of Ill?

Mr. Morris's "God" is apparently too lazy to exert himself. A single "glance," it seems, would suffice to settle the Turk, but "the one above" doesn't even wink.

Really the *Star* should be more careful. It reprinted the concluding lines of Mr. Lewis Morris's poem, and gave the author's name as "Mr. William Morris." Fancy the Atheist and Socialist poet—who *is* a poet—writing stuff like this:—

> Arise, oh puissant Christendom, be strong!
> God's voice within you calls, the voice of Fate!

Calling upon a "puissant" thing to "be strong" is a sad tautology; and how can a voice be at the same time God's and Fate's? One or the other, Mr. Lewis Morris, if you please. It can't be both.

Christianity is a glorious religion, and oh how it loves liberty! Over at Boston, the hub of the universe, a Mr. W. T. Curtis, who advocates "The New Brotherhood" on "infidel" lines, applied to the mayor for a permit to speak on Boston Common, where religious orators hold forth to crowds of people. The permit being denied him—or rather no notice being taken of his application—Mr. Curtis went without one, and was arrested, fined, and sent to gaol. And now for the opposite side of the picture. "Eight honest and reputable citizens of Ithea County, Tennessee," says the *Boston Globe*, "are now working side by side with convicts in a chain-gang on the public highway." They believe the seventh day of the week to be the Lord's Day, and accordingly they go quietly about their business on the first day. That is their crime. Which shows that ordinary Christianity is perfectly impartial in its intolerance. It smites as hard as it can all who differ from it. Believe or be damned! And the damnation is always kept handy.

A curious case was lately brought before the Bristol magistrates, sitting at Lawford's Gate Police-court. An old man, an inmate of the workhouse, was charged with being "disorderly." When they inquired what the disorderly conduct consisted of, the Master replied that he had refused to attend church on Sundays, and preferred stopping quietly in his ward. Some years ago this old man would, doubtless, have received a dose of hard labor for this heinous crime, but in this broad and tolerant age he fared better, for the magistrates declined to punish him. In a leaderette on the subject the Bristol *Daily Press* says: "As the old man seems to be well behaved, and to be in earnest in dissenting from the teaching of the Church, public opinion will uphold the latitudinarianism of the bench."

Profanity is spreading. At the annual dinner of the Omar Khayyam Club, to which we have previously referred, Mr. Harry Cust provoked much mirth by his quips, amongst which was a parody of a much-quoted verse in one of Mr. Davidson's "Ballads":—

> She cares not for her broken vow,
> Though God himself come down to slate her;
> She's mother-in-law to the North Pole now,
> And maiden aunt to the Equator.

Some of the Nonconformist papers are complaining that the P.S.A. movement, while designed to aid the churches, is really crippling them. Each is trying to outdo the other in attractive services, and the soloists have cast the men of God and their blessed Gospel into the background.

We never heard of the East London Protestant Youths' Mission before, but its Report has reached us for the year 1894-5. Its operations appear to be carried on at Salisbury Hall, Old Ford-road. It was assisted in its infancy by a Bethnal Green clergyman, whom we suspect to have been the late Brewin Grant. He is described as "the ablest advocate and defender of our common Christianity against infidel attacks and perversions." It is added that he "completely vanquished Atheism in his lifetime and closed up infidel halls," but it is not stated where he achieved these remarkable successes. We should like to know the name and position of one (only *one*) infidel hall that was closed by Brewin Grant. We heard him speak several times, and he was the worst clown we ever listened to. Thrusting out his tongue, and putting his finger to his nose, were his wittiest ebullitions.

A writer in the *Lindsey and Lincolnshire Star* rejoices over the recent closing of the London Hall of Science. He pretends to know a great deal, but he speaks from an abundant ignorance. For instance, he says that the Hall was used after the lectures on Sunday evenings as a boxing saloon! He also states that "before he died Mr. Bradlaugh dropped Biblical criticism for politics," whereas the very last lecture he delivered was anti-theological, as was the course of lectures he had arranged to deliver at the Hall of Science in February, the month following his death.

Messrs. Foote and Watts are allowed to be "good speakers,' with "an impressive manner," but "their occupation is gone." The writer is really "too previous." He fancies that Secularism begins and ends with the Hall of Science. As a matter of fact, there were more people, and at much higher prices, listening to Mr. Foote at St. James's Hall last Sunday

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evening than there would have been at this time of the year in the Hall of Science. Mr. Watts was also lecturing in London the very same evening, at Milton Hall; and another Secular congregation was assembled at Camberwell.

Grant Wilson, who was hanged for murder at Vicksburg, was afterwards restored to animation. It appears that he owed his escape from death to a throat disease which had produced a bony growth in the windpipe. His case is attracting much attention in scientific circles. He states that he had no sensation whatever after the drop, and that he remained in a perfectly unconscious state until he was wakened in the coffin. Asked whether he had any visions or dreams, he replied that he had none whatever. It would be difficult to imagine a more conclusive demonstration that the "soul" is no more than the functioning of the brain. Had the man been left in his coffin and buried, he would in all probability have never regained consciousness. For all practical purposes his "soul" was settled by the hangman's noose. It came back again when science restored his organic activities.

In Burmah some seventy thousand cattle have been lost through a plague. God said: "The cattle on a thousand hills are mine"; but he takes precious little care of some of them.

The following curious advertisement appeared in the *Daily News* of August 17: "'The Gods of Homer,' their worship to be restored. There is a deep longing and yearning for a religion which is really beautiful and true. Co-operation requested. Write Julian, 31 Lavender-street, Brighton." Perhaps "Julian" is identical with the person whom we called attention to some time ago as proposing to restore "the religion of Hellas." He might as well try to bring back the mastadon. What people want is, not to restore the old gods, but to get rid of all traces of them on the life of to-day.

Ecclesiastical Market: Closing prices. From Saturday's *Times* (advertising columns): "Advowsons.—Purchase before the rise in prices that will assuredly result from the destruction of the Disestablishment party." It is a pity, as an evening contemporary observes, that the prices of the cure of souls cannot be quoted on 'Change like the brewery shares.

John Walker, a painter, aged forty-two, described by Mr. Denman, a London magistrate, as "a canting, hypocritical, professional beggar," on being arrested for soliciting alms in a public thoroughfare, exclaimed: "I shall trust in the Almighty; he will see me through." John Walker is doing a month's hard labor, and we presume the Almighty is seeing him through it.

A little fellow, giving evidence before the Coroner as to the drowning of a boy in the Regent's Canal, said he didn't know where he would go to if he told lies; whereupon the Coroner asked him, "Do you know where hell is?" The little fellow said "No," and the Coroner was surprised at such ignorance. For our part, we should like the Coroner to impart his own knowledge—for such it must be—to the world. The situation of hell has been much discussed, but has never been decided. We are all agog, therefore, to get the straight tip from that Coroner.

The *Methodist Times* (Mr. Price Hughes's paper) hopes the Lord's Day Observance Committee of the Wesleyans will go on the war path against Sunday Societies and other associations that desecrate the Sabbath. Our pious contemporary takes the position that religious bodies are the only ones that have any right to charge for admission to their meetings, and that it is blatant impudence for non-religious bodies to demand the same privilege. Churches and chapels are holy. Let secular halls be taught their inferiority—if needful by pains and penalties. Such is the fair play of Methodists who talk so "blatantly"—to use their own word—about the grand principle of religious liberty.

Robert Heseltine Hudson, who brutally murdered his wife on the Yorkshire Moors, left a letter to his family in which he said: "I can only hope to meet you all in heaven, where I trust we shall all meet soon or late, to the glory of God, and through His Son Jesus Christ." He wound up this letter with the following verse from a hymn:—

> The pains of death are past,
> Labor and sorrow cease,
> And life's long warfare closed at last,
> My soul has found its peace.

Hudson will find congenial company in the "mansions of the blest," where there is more joy over one repenting sinner than over a hundred just persons who need no repentance.

The *Progressive Thinker* says: "Statistics show a terrible increase of insanity all over the country. A joint meeting of the trustees of insane asylums, just held in Kalamazoo, Michigan, revealed the fact that in Michigan alone there were 4,352 in insane asylums, and that the cost of maintaining them had increased during the last few years from $100,000 per annum to $380,000. When we remember the most fruitful cause of insanity is religious excitement, and the fear of an endless hell, either for themselves or loved ones, we feel more zealous than ever in combating a system responsible for such cruel results."

The Rev. John Whitehead, of Allghany, has been preaching against the New Woman, and in favor of the sumptuary law of Chicago. He took for his text Deuteronomy xxii. 5: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garments; for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." If this man of God knew the history of the ideas which underlie his own fetish book, he would know that this text was directed against a religious rite in which the sexes changed garments at a festival. He should know, too, that it is priests who to this day dress in petticoats, and with feminine emblems. The New Woman may not know this, but she has generally got beyond caring for laws enacted for a Semitic tribe emerging from barbarism, when both sexes wore very similar robes, if they wore anything.

The Rev. S. Baring Gould, at a recent meeting of the Folk Lore Society, reported as to certain superstitions still prevailing in Devonshire. He knew a certain Dartmoor farmer who, having sickness among his cattle, sacrificed a sheep, and burnt it on the moor above his farm as an offering to the pixies. Of course this is very sad; but is it any sadder than offering up a human sacrifice (say Jesus Christ) to save people from sins?

As luck would have it, that farmer's cattle at once recovered, and did well afterwards, whereas the world did not recover after the sacrifice of J. C., nor has it recovered yet. After all, the pixies seem more business-like than Jehovah.

Catholic Dublin is following the example of Protestant Glasgow. The authorities of the Irish capital have removed some pictures from shop windows as indecent. The said pictures were engravings of Sir Frederic Leighton's "Psyche." It will be news to artists that the President of the Royal Academy is a painter of indecent pictures. For our part, we think his "Psyche" quite as decent as a naked Jesus on a cross, and ever so much more beautiful.

The New York *Tribune* says: "A wealthy Birmingham man, who made most of his fortune manufacturing idols for the people in India to use in worship, is going to give a handsome sum of money, after his death, to help the missionaries in India make war against idol worship."

It is always interesting to come across a fossil representing the survival of a common form now almost extinct. Such a fossil is the Rev. Dr. Henson, of Elgin, who is reported in *Public Opinion* (N.Y.) as saying: "By the fall of Adam man became sensual and devilish. Human nature became depraved by being deprived. We are children of Adam, and not children of God, by nature. We are nothing like the creature God created in his own image. The doctrine of the fatherhood of God is a devilish lie, and its outcome is Universalism pure and simple." This is good sound doctrine, and more logical than that of the modernisers who offer us all treacle and no brimstone.

The Rev. Dr. W. H. Brooks, the scholarly pastor of one of the largest negro churches in Washington, declared from the platform of the rally of Christian Endeavorers that negroes had been officially notified that they are not welcome at the meetings of the Baptist Young People's Union.

Professor W. de Witt Hyde says: "The old view of the person of Christ sees his divinity chiefly in consequence of the miraculous foretelling of his coming, his miraculous resurrection. The new view sees his divinity chiefly in the profoundness of his insight into spiritual truth." We should hardly think this profound insight was shown in ascribing diseases to the agency of evil spirits.

"Turn the other cheek" is not the philosophy of the Rev. Freeman Dudley, rector of Kilcel, County Down. Finding a burglar in the house, the man of God seized a chair and knocked the intruder down, and detained him until the police arrived. The man was Herbert Stone, of Derbyshire. He had come all that way to be floored by a parson. Evidently a born fool.

This story is related of Tolstoi. Seeing a police officer take an individual into custody the other day, he at once walked up and said: "Can you read?" "Certainly, sir," the officer replied. "Have you read the Scriptures?" "Yes, sir." "Then you forget that they command us to

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resist not evil, and to love our neighbors as ourselves." The myrmidon of the law, taken aback for a moment, stared at the Count; but, recovering himself quickly, asked: "And, pray, can you read?" "Yes." "Have you read the police regulations?" "No." "Then read them."

Canon Harper is dead. We do not know his present residence. Preaching in York Minster, on June 10, 1877, this man of God remarked that "the Bible and Beer, taken rightly, were the Lord's. The Beer would not do without the Bible, and the Bible would not do fully and perfectly without the Beer." Perhaps in his present abode the reverend gentleman would find a glass of beer a great relief.

The Tory Government is not true to its best friends, the Church party. The Queen's Speech ended without the usual invocation of the Almighty. Perhaps the Premier thought it impossible for Omnipotence itself to bless his party with wisdom.

Among recent items in an American paper was the following: "Talmage has lost his wife, and has bought an English bull-terrier for £100." He is a fortunate man to have so much money to pay for a dog.

Canon Ryle says it is a great mistake not to acknowledge that the Bible is primarily a human book. Put "totally" for "primarily," and we agree with him. But does he think that, if people generally looked on it as "primarily" a human book, they would subscribe to send thousands of copies yearly to the heathen? No. It is because they are taught that it is the infallible Word of God, the one only divine revelation to man, that they support the fetish book and the fetish preachers. Once let them see it is indeed the words of men, and barbarous men at that, and the occupation of Bible societies and of canons, and other Church dignitaries, will be in danger.

August 24 is remembered in France as the anniversary of the day in 1572 when the evidences of Christianity were most strikingly displayed. It fell on a Sunday, and on that day sixty thousand evidencers, all with white crosses on their garments, and with the palpable evidences in their hands, submitted them to all heretics, men, women, and children, in Paris. "Mass or Massacre" were the terms offered to heretic nobles, but the common people only got the latter. For three days slaughter went on in Paris, and for above a week it was followed in the provinces by the imprisonment, massacre, and pillage of the Huguenots. The power of religion has been undeniably displayed on some occasions.

Referring to the scramble for New Testaments at the table of the House of Commons, the *Morning Leader* writes: "We are glad that nowadays this oath-taking ceremony is allowed to proceed without any of the pseudo-religious agitation which some years ago raged round the name of Mr. Bradlaugh. A man may now affirm if he likes, none daring to make him afraid. This, we fear, does not necessarily imply that the members of to-day are better than those of ten or twelve years ago. The reason is that there is now no opportunity of making political capital out of so-called religion. Mock piety no longer means votes in the House, no longer embarrasses a Government, and therefore it is no longer paraded."

The *Morning Leader* might have added that it was Charles Bradlaugh who carried the Bill enabling members to affirm instead of swearing, though very few avail themselves of the privilege.

The controversy on Missions continues in the *Morning*. The Rev. J. D. Mullins tries to minimise the damaging statements in Dr. Morrison's book. One of the naivest letters is from "An Earnest Christian," who writes: "I showed the letter of W. C. Wickham, which appeared in your issue of August 12, to a sceptical friend of mine. He staggered me by declaring that the passage was an impudent interpolation, and that none of the oldest manuscripts, including the Codex Alexandrinus in our British Museum, contained it. He went further, and said that all the concluding verses of the last chapter of Mark—nine, I think—were interpolations. I am familiar with the ingenious arguments of our sceptical friends who say 'that, as no good God could possibly damn any nation for not believing in a religion they had never heard of, it would be better that they should be allowed to remain in ignorance of its existence,' and, as I am a regular subscriber to missionary funds, I should like the truth about the passage in Mark to which I have referred. I do not believe the Christian Church would deceive its followers."

To this the editor of the *Morning* appends the note: "Biblical critics think it not unlikely that 'editorial insertions and alterations' have been made throughout the whole of the narrative of Mark. The portion, Mark xvi. 9–20, in which occurs the verse quoted by 'An Earnest Christian,' is confessedly of late origin." So that it appears the Church has deceived its followers.

Henry Bullard, a Salvationist, has been fined forty shillings and costs for riding down a lady at the corner of a street in the City of London. He will probably be in less haste over "General" Booth's business in future.

Dr. Waldo, of Southwark, has gone the length of summoning the captain of the Salvation Army shelter at Blackfriars-road. Dr. Waldo, who had to obtain a large force of police to gain entrance to the building, which was persistently refused, despite a magistrate's warrant, said he found it in a fœtid, ill-ventilated, and dangerous condition. Some 1,028 men were in the place where there was only cubic air space for 401. In one room he found 501 men where the cubical space only admitted 150.

Booth says the S.A. can supply China with missionaries. We pity the missionaries, but still more we pity the Chinese.

People do not usually relish having their bubbles pricked, and we notice that the editor of the *Open Court*, which was formerly "devoted to the reconciliation of religion and science," and is now "devoted to the Religion of Science," gives much space to the "misconceptions" of "Corvinus," who took the trouble to show him that he mixed oil and water, and put the oil on top. Dr. Carus gives up all that gave life to the old religions, but persists in retaining their catch names. He insists that "the reality of God is an undeniable fact"; but then God is not a person distinct from the universe, but a principle. Dr. Carus is still half deep in metaphysical mud, and does not appreciate the efforts of "Corvinus" to help him out.

The Bishop of Liverpool is a theologian of the good old sort, now nearly extinct. He says the Bible is "the only test of right and wrong." This claim for the fetish book, which sanctions slavery, polygamy, and persecution, is almost out of date. Bishop Ryle presumably cares nothing for the claims of reason or conscience.

The parsons are agitated at the uses of the bicycle for obtaining Sunday freedom. Several ministerial conferences have denounced the ungodly practice of taking exercise on Sunday. It is praiseworthy to use the muscles to walk to church, but to ride from church is altogether abominable. There is nothing like leather.

There is a rare illustration of "Providence" in the following, which is, after all, but a published episode in the great unwritten history of human misery. Dr. Wynn Westcott, the Hackney coroner, recently held an inquest on the body of Marion Starck, aged 47, the wife of an engineer, of Weston-place, Mare-street. Her husband had long been out of work, and for twelve months she had worked hard at boot machining to support herself and him. One day, about noon, she was found sitting in her chair at her machine in front of her work, quite dead. Stitch, stitch, stitch! work, work, work! till at last the tired-out body could stand it no longer, and refused to second the poor woman's heroic will. She is buried, and in time she will be forgotten; and the great world will rush on in completion of its destiny; and priests will live by preaching the benevolence of God, whose tender mercies are over all his works.

Professor Baird states that a pike in the Imperial Aquarium, St. Petersburg, is about 400 years old. Other fishes in the same aquarium are over 200 years old. Only think of it! "Providence" kills off Bradlaugh at fifty-eight, and keeps a pike going for four centuries. Wonderful wisdom! Wonderful beneficence!

Obituary.

MR. HANS JOHNSON, a well-known and respected member of the South Shields Branch of the N.S.S., was buried at Harton on Sunday, August 18. The local *Daily Gazette* says: "By his own and his widow's request his remains received a Secular interment. In the unavoidable absence of the president of the local society, Mr. R. Chapman, secretary, read impressively the beautiful service of Austin Holyoake. There was a large attendance of relatives, friends, and members of the Secular Society at the graveside."

MR. A. B. MOSS's friends throughout the country will be sorry to hear that he has just suffered a painful bereavement in the death of his wife from pneumonia. The deceased lady was herself a Freethinker, and some years ago a contributor to Freethought journals; but the cares of a young family diverted her energies in other directions. Mr. Moss is left with three motherless children. We tender him our deepest sympathy in his hour of trial.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 25, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, W.: 7.30, "Religion in the Light of Science."

September 8, Glasgow; 15, South Shields.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—August 25, Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, London, N. October 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

F. L. Wilson.—We read your letter as stating that you would not see any reference in the *Freethinker*; otherwise we should have said that the letter was rather out of our line.

T. Dunbar writes: "I disagree with your statement that the St. James's Banqueting Hall was *nearly* full, for I was pleased to notice it was *near* full. I was present myself with my wife, and a Christian friend whom I had induced to accompany us. My wife and I were delighted with your masterly lecture. My Christian friend was surprised at its high moral tone, his idea being that Atheists were a low class.....I congratulate you on your opening-up of West London."

J. Partridge.—We wish the Birmingham Branch all success in its new venture. Mr. Foote will pay you a visit as early as possible.

Joseph Hill.—Thanks for distributing copies of the *Freethinker* during the Chatham picnic.

President's Fund.—Amount acknowledged, £68 8s. Per R. Forder: A. George, 1s.; F. Voisey, 2s. 3d.; J. Slater, 2s.; W. Stewart, 1s.; A Silent Worker, 10s.; W. H. Harrap, 10s.; G. G. Ross, £1; W. Barks, 2s. 6d. Per Miss Vance: C. Smith, 3s. 6d.; W. Tipper, 2s. 6d.; J. Yates, 2s. 6d. The donation acknowledged last week to C. Thomas, 5s., should have been £1.

G. Crudgas.—(1) We believe there are Church of England curates receiving less than £100 a year. (2) Perhaps Dr. Wallace's *Darwinism* is the best single book, but the price is 7s. 6d. Dr. Aveling's *Darwin Made Easy*, published by Mr. Forder, price 1s., is an admirable summary.—This correspondent writes: "I got through to Newcastle the other Sunday to hear you lecture for the first time in my life, and I must say that, with all the trouble, the walk of eleven miles each way, and the drenching we got, I never enjoyed anything better than your lectures, and I only wish I could hear you a little oftener."

A. W. Staveri.—A paragraph was already in type on the subjects. Thanks all the same.

Papers Received.—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Freedom—Church Reformer—Torch—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Isle of Man Times—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Crescent—Two Worlds—Islamic World—Progressive Thinker—Shields Daily Gazette—Brighton Observer—Referee—Morning—Post—Boston Investigator—Twentieth Century—New York Public Opinion—Glasgow Herald—Lindsey and Lincolnshire Star.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, [illegible]d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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[illegible]ry to Post-office regulations to announce on the [illegible]the subscription is due, subscribers will receive a colored wrapper when their subscription

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to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and [illegible], guaranteeing to take the copies that [illegible]/ (or more), and circulate it among your [illegible]

Freethinker now and then in the train, the [illegible]us.

layed, one of our contents-sheets, which are [illegible]size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will [illegible]plication.

SPECIAL.

The Hall of Science and Other Matters.

In the *Freethinker* of June 2 I made a long statement with respect to the London Hall of Science. Everything of importance was disclosed, and the shareholders in particular and the Secular party in general were put in possession of the facts of the case up to date. In the June 23 issue I wrote that my appeal for £600 had not been adequately responded to, and I added that, if the requisite amount were not made up within the next few days, "I must let the matter drop, for this is the last appeal I can make upon the present basis."

Since then I have been silent, though not inactive. The situation was an awkward one, and I was obliged to consider it all round. Evidently the party was not prepared—either through unwillingness or inability—to find the money required to clear off the mortgage; and I asked myself this question: "If it takes so much time and trouble to raise a few hundred pounds for this preliminary object, what prospect is there of raising the few thousands that will afterwards be necessary to rebuild the premises as an Institute worthy of our movement and of the memory of Charles Bradlaugh?"

It was terribly galling to reflect that thousands of pounds were being lost to our movement meanwhile, owing to the infamous laws which deprive Secularism of the commonest rights of citizenship. I had taken great pains, and incurred some expense, over several projected wills in the interest of our cause, one of which would have brought us a considerable bequest; but the testator in this case either procrastinated too long, or was unable to overcome his apprehensions; at any rate, he died rather suddenly, and his property went into alien hands.

Such facts as these were in my mind when I wrote as follows in the *Freethinker* of June 16:—

> "The bigoted Christian law is the secret of all our difficulties. We have lost thousands of pounds during the brief term of my presidency, and we shall go on losing until the law is altered. Meanwhile, we may dodge the law, but we have no real security; for even if property itself is secure, we have no guarantee that it will not be alienated from its original purpose. Mr. Joseph Symes built a hall at Melbourne, and other people are in possession. He denounces them as tricksters and thieves—as they are from a moral point of view—but they laugh at him, for the law is on their side. Yes, we shall never do great things, as an organisation, *until property can be dedicated to, and held in trust for, our special objects*—that is, until we enjoy the advantages of endowment like other bodies."

Reluctantly, but decisively, I am driven to the opinion that, until the law is altered, it will be best to aim no more at the acquisition of property. Building after building has been entirely alienated, while others are but rarely used for the purposes that governed their erection.

I will now return to the point at which I left off on June 2. Owing to the unsatisfactory nature of our negotiations with Mr. Smith, and the financial embarrassments entailed upon us by the failure of the Club, we were unable to meet our liabilities or to enter upon fresh operations that might have enabled us to meet them. Obviously we could not build on what might soon prove to be a quicksand. The landlord had already distrained for rent, but a part of the furniture had been purchased at the public auction, and this was used to accommodate the Sunday evening meetings until June 24, when a fresh distraint might have been levied. The furniture, therefore, had to be removed; and this was the reason why the place was closed and the lectures were transferred to Milton Hall.

As it was essential that we should retain possession, if anything was to be done with Mr. Smith, I kept a caretaker on the premises day and night. Some curious visitors (I will not mention them) attempted to get in, but the caretaker understood his instructions to admit no one but myself or Miss Vance.

Mr. R. O. Smith, who had tried to frighten the Club committee, by a perfectly illegal notice, into handing *him* the keys of the building, demanded possession of the Directors when the hall was closed. He repeated his demand, but of course it was unsuccessful. The landlord

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then sued Mr. Smith and the Hall Society jointly for the rent due to Midsummer. This brought matters to a crisis. Accordingly, I instructed our solicitor to write to Mr. Smith's solicitor, asking whether he was willing to reopen negotiations on the old lines. A reply came to the effect (it was the old story!) that Mr. Smith was in a position just then to consider a cash offer, though it was impossible to say how long he might be in that position, as "other negotiations were pending"—that is, he had been trying to sell the premises to other parties. Our solicitor then offered £525 in cash and £75 in shares, the transaction to be completed within a month from the date of acceptance.

Meanwhile the landlord had obtained a judgment, and, in spite of our solicitor's representations, had presented a petition in bankruptcy against the Hall Society; which petition I instructed our solicitor to oppose.

Mr. Smith's answer, through his solicitor, arrived after this bankruptcy petition was presented. It was certainly a curiosity. He agreed to take the £525 in one month, but he made three stipulations. He has all through been strong on stipulations, and he must have known that they were fatal to any real contract. The stipulations in this instance were (1) that we should pay him down the sum of £25 for the trouble and expense he had been put to; (2) that his brother's fifty shares, on which £25 was owing, should be transferred to him as fully paid; (3) that we should pay the landlord's entire claim, a part of which (the insurance) was quite prospective. Our solicitor replied (1) that we declined to pay Mr. Smith £25, as we were not aware of his having incurred any such expense on our account, and if he had it was not to be compared with the monstrous expense he had put us to by his vacillation; (2) that the amount due on his brother's shares was an asset, and could not be dealt with by the Directors in view of the bankruptcy petition; (3) that if the negotiation were carried through with Mr. Smith the landlord's claim would of course be satisfied. Mr. Smith's solicitor replied that his client would not in any way alter his terms.

Mr. Smith must have thought himself very clever or us very foolish. We were to find some £150—which he knew we had not—entirely for his relief, on the mere chance of the contract being carried through; and behind him was the sub-mortgagee, who might at the last moment decline to honor Mr. Smith's bargain and release his security.

A few days afterwards Mr. Smith was seized with a peculiar desire. For many months he had not attended a Directors' meeting, just as he had ceased to attend the N.S.S. Executive meetings. But all at once he wanted to see his fellow members of the Board. Instead of saying so, however, to the Chairman or the Secretary, he went to work after the fashion of Polonius. Finding a rule to the effect that three Directors might instruct the Secretary to call a meeting of the Board, he signed such an order himself, got his brother to sign it too, and procured another signature to complete the trinity. But the conditions of the rule were not properly complied with, after all, and the order was merely a piece of waste-paper. However, I had a meeting convened on other grounds. Mr. Smith attended, but as by this time he was a litigant against the Society I declined to let him take part in the business, though we would listen to anything he had to say as vendor and mortgagee. Mr. Smith then told us the object of his visit; he requested us to give him immediate possession of the hall. I produced a writ, with which he had just served us, to recover possession; and asked him what he meant by going to law first and approaching us in "a friendly way" afterwards! In the course of the conversation, he was good enough to say that if he had £1,400 of our money, and his premises back again, he would still be a much injured man.

The landlord's solicitors agreed to a month's postponement of the bankruptcy petition, if I would deposit a certain sum as security for the costs of such action. I deposited the money to gain the time, but we were sold at the last minute. Something happened, at which I can give a shrewd guess, to make the landlord's solicitor unfriendly, and the winding-up order was made absolute.

Mr. Smith attended the Directors' meeting at the Official Receiver's office, and brought with him his solicitor, being evidently afraid to trust himself alone. I objected to this person's presence, as he represented Mr. Smith, not as a Director, but as a litigant against the Society. The Official Receiver, however, overruled my objection—wrongly as I think. Mr. Smith and his solicitor were there to serve the mortgagee's interest, and their conduct provoked my friend Mr. Watts to a display of manly indignation.

A special meeting of the N.S.S. Executive was held last Monday evening. Mr. Smith attended—the first time for many months—and posed as an unfortunate and injured man. A stranger would have imagined that we had £1,400 of his money, instead of his having £1,400 of ours. With amazing fortitude he told the Executive that what he sold was well worth £3,000, after all that had been said and done. Thereupon I asked him: "Do you mean, then, that when you consented to take £2,000 in full discharge of your claim, you were actuated by a spontaneous motive of benevolence?" Mr. Smith's fortitude—to give it the mildest name—did not desert him. He answered: "Yes." And the Executive laughed.

Unfortunately there is a *record* on this matter which Mr. Smith has never attempted to contradict. I refer to the *Freethinker* of March 24, in which I made a statement under the heading of "The Hall of Science." It will there be seen that Mr. Smith did not act spontaneously, but under pressure. It was the state of the premises, disclosed by two builders' surveys, which excited Mr. Smith's "benevolence." He told the Board (I quote from the aforesaid statement) that "the report was as much a surprise to him as to the other Directors." I have only to add that the survey which resulted in the most damaging report was *made in Mr. Smith's presence.*

It is impossible to deny Mr. Smith's contention that he is only exercising his legal rights. But did not Shylock say "I stand here for law"? Morally, he has betrayed his party throughout these negotiations. Without resigning as a Director, he considered his own interest exclusively; and by his own admission his interest only amounted to £525, while ours amounted to £1,400. Perhaps I ought to have said as much at the Conference, but I thought it best to leave the door open for a possible settlement.

I see now that Mr. Smith has condescended to approach us from time to time as his negotiations with other parties proved abortive. I have been on the heels of one or two of these "benevolent" efforts, and several persons (so well are secrets kept!) know with whom he is now negotiating for the sale of his lease.

For the present, I have only to say that I have warned the Official Receiver against giving up possession of the Hall to Mr. Smith, or even to the landlord who is now claiming entrance, no doubt in Mr. Smith's interest. Whatever may be the value of our interest in the lease, it must be conserved to the Society. When the shareholders' meeting is held the whole matter can be definitely decided. Meanwhile the N.S.S. Executive, by special vote, leaves *its* interest entirely in my hands. Altogether, my position is, and for many months has been, one of great trouble and anxiety. I have done my best, and I cheerfully submit to the candid judgment of the party—now and in the future.

Some little time must still elapse before I deal with the money actually sent in, and which I promised to return. I will explain that in due course. Meanwhile, those who have trusted me so long will doubtless trust me a little longer. Some of the donors told me *not* to return their money, but to use it for other purposes; and perhaps there are others who would wish their donations used for a fresh enterprise.

As the Executive is not ready to face the labor and risk, I have launched out myself. I take the entire responsibility of the Milton Hall meetings and the St. James's Hall meetings; and it is my intention to arrange for other West-End lectures during the winter. I have also engaged the fine, large Foresters' Hall, in Clerkenwell-road, not very far from the Hall of Science, for thirteen Sunday evenings; beginning with the first Sunday in September, when Mr. Putnam will deliver his farewell lecture. Unfortunately we cannot charge for admission, but we shall get over this difficulty in some way. I hardly need say, however, that I shall require some support in these enterprises. It seems probable at present, that all the surplus on my lectures will be absorbed in making up the deficiency on others. It is a point of honor with me to pay the other lecturers, whether I can get paid or not.

Practically, the whole burden of our special lecturing organisation will for some time rest upon me. It is true

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duty of the President to act in grave emergencies, when the direct influence of one man is more effective than that of numbers. The Executive has been apprised of my policy in this matter, and is ready to give me every possible support. The Committee appointed by the Conference on Mr. Cohen's motion met on Tuesday evening, and, after a conversation with me, resolved to adjourn *sine die*, so that I might have a perfectly free hand in this enterprise.

Until our party organisation is stronger and more perfect, I am confident that a committee in any one place cannot control, or even wisely assist, our propaganda throughout the country. One who visits all districts and understands their conditions and necessities; one who also occupies a position of much influence; such an one may do something to bring a little order out of chaos, and afterwards the Society may be able to take the matter under its collective management and responsibility.

With respect to the provinces, what I have in my mind may be illustrated by my arrangement with Mr. Charles Watts—whose sympathy and loyal support in all recent troubles I take this opportunity of acknowledging. I have authorised him to form week-night engagements when he goes to the Tyneside and to Scotland in October. The local friends can take a hall and throw it open free; their own subscriptions and the collection should defray the local expenses; and I will pay the lecturer out of whatever funds are at my disposal. I shall do the same with Mr. Cohen, and in time, I hope, with other lecturers. The accounts will be kept for me by Miss Vance, who is working so ably and well over these London enterprises; and in due course a financial statement will be sent to all subscribers. It is not my intention to be vexed and worried by the free and independent "criticism" of persons who do nothing and give nothing.

This is a big undertaking, but I shall do my best to carry it through, and there is no possibility of *losing* anything, unless I lose it *myself*. Every penny I receive will be spent on Freethought propaganda; or, to borrow a Christian phrase, and give it a higher meaning, in the salvation of souls. The time has evidently not arrived for what some call a "constructive" policy, nor can it arrive until the Blasphemy Laws are abolished. The great work immediately before us is *propaganda*, and I appeal to our party to assist me in carrying this on with vigor, thoroughness, and success.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's second lecture at St. James's Hall, on "George Meredith: Writer and Teacher," drew a still larger audience than the first. Seating accommodation had been provided for nearly a hundred more persons, and, in spite of the tropical weather, the Banqueting Hall was crowded. An unusual number of strangers were present, and the summer costumes of many ladies gave a certain brightness to the assembly. For an hour and a half, notwithstanding the heat, the attention of the close-packed meeting was thoroughly rivetted, and the applause at the finish was loud and continuous. Mr. James Rowney once more made a capital chairman.

This evening (August 25) Mr. Foote delivers the last of this course of lectures at St. James's Hall, his subject being "Religion in the Light of Science." Probably the Freethinkers will make a special effort to render this meeting a splendid success, even beyond that of its predecessors. They should seize the opportunity of bringing their more orthodox friends to hear the President of the National Secular Society.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured last Sunday evening at Milton Hall. He will occupy the same platform this Sunday evening, August 25, taking for his subject "Christian Evidences: Their Utter Fallacy."

Mr. Sydney A. Gimson informs us that the Leicester Secularists had a good time with Mr. Putnam on Sunday. In the afternoon over a hundred friends met our American visitor at tea in the Secular Hall. After the repast and some music, Mr. Putnam addressed the assembly in a brief but earnest and eloquent speech. The lecture in the evening drew a capital audience, and all were delighted with the way in which Mr. Putnam dealt with the subject of "Christianity and Woman." Leicester Secularists will keep very pleasant recollections of Mr. Putnam's visit.

Mr. Putnam's last lecture before sailing for America will be delivered in London next Sunday (September 1). Full details will appear in our next issue. Meanwhile we beg all our London friends to remember the date, with a view to rallying round our American visitor on the last occasion (for the present) of his addressing a public meeting in the old country.

The farewell dinner to Mr. Putnam will take place at the Holborn Restaurant on the following Wednesday (September 4). The tickets are four shillings each, and are now on sale at 28 Stonecutter-street, as well as by the London Branch secretaries. Mr. Foote will preside at this function, and will be supported by Messrs. Charles Watts, George Anderson, R. Forder, J. M. Wheeler, and other well-known Freethinkers. All who intend to be present should secure tickets by Monday, September 2, at the latest.

The Birmingham Branch has engaged the Alexandra Hall in Hope-street for the winter's operations. The inaugural assembly takes place to-day (August 25). It will be of a social character. Tea will be served at five o'clock, and followed by an entertainment. The tickets are ninepence each, and can be obtained from Mr. Partridge, 65 Cato-street. Messrs. Snell, Armfield, and Cohen are announced to lecture during September.

Mr. Symes, in the Melbourne *Liberator*, noticing the case of witch-burning in Ireland, says: "Mr. Wheeler, of the *Freethinker*, sends us a capital pamphlet upon this incident, and dealing with Bible witchcraft. It cannot be out of place for us to furnish a few facts now the subject is before the public, and to show how fully the Bible is to blame for the witchcraft horrors the Churches inflicted when the Churches had their own way, and when there was little science, truth, common sense, or humanity to check the diabolical influence of Theology—the most murderous madness ever known."

The cyclone at Cherry Hill, New Jersey, which killed several people and destroyed much property, elicited from the Rev. Mr. Duryee, pastor of the church there, the opinion that the cyclone was one of God's ingenious methods of chastening his beloved. A German Freethinker, whose barn had been spoilt, exclaimed, "Humbug," and the Freethinkers of New Jersey obtained the use of his barn on Sunday, August 4, to discuss the "Causes of Cyclones." G. Macdonald, who was present, writes an interesting account of the demonstration in the *Truthseeker*.

Forty-three members of the House of Commons affirmed instead of taking the oath. There were plenty of Testaments knocking about for all who chose the fetish form.

Professor Banks, in a speech at the Wesleyan Conference at Plymouth, differed from some of his brethren, who thought Sacerdotalism the great religious evil of the age. The chief danger of these days, he said, was scepticism. According to the report in the *Methodist Times*—"He believed we underrated the force of scepticism which was spreading over all classes of society. Going up and down the Leeds district, he was constantly meeting the sons and daughters of their own people who had given up all profession of religion, and who disclaimed any desire to worship, and said that they could do without the life of the church altogether. They saw the effect of that spirit in many directions—in literature, in fiction, and in the dreadful notions of morality which were disseminated by brilliant writers, and which were extensively read by their young people." We presume the "dreadful notions of morality" are no more than the freer and nobler views of love and marriage. Old-fashioned people think it dreadful when women learn that, while they may be born to love man, they are not born to obey him.

Supposing the Christian God to exist, it would be impossible for human ingenuity to invent anything more blasphemous towards him than an ordinary church, not to mention the Popish and Anglican Churches. The light in which these sects exhibit God is the worst conceivable. The world is bad enough; the Church millions of times worse. To me, if I felt any doubt on the subject, if my Atheism ever felt shaky, the existence of the Church would soon satisfy me. A God that could endure the sight of this world must be a contemptible thing; a God that could endure the Church and its so-called worship, its greed, imposture, pretence, and unutterable cruelty, would be transcendently more contemptible than could be conceived. The Church perpetrates all its foolery and crimes in the name of God! If God lives, the priests must have driven him stark mad centuries ago.—*Joseph Symes.*

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (July 27).

FROM the romance of the North—its mountains and lakes, the spirit of Burns and Scott, the flowers and the heather—I come to the enormous city of Manchester, which seems to represent everything that is practical—facts, facts, facts—industry, commerce, machinery, cotton—pounds, shillings, and pence. I enjoyed the contrast. It added piquancy to this wonderful journey of human life. There is romance and poetry in Manchester mills if we could only get at them, if we only had the myriad-minded vision.

I suppose that the goods of Manchester are sent to every quarter of the globe. Manchester, like London, is an original centre of business. It is a fountain-head. It is not a reflex or a dependency. If London were swept out of existence, Manchester would not feel the shock. She would still go on her way rejoicing. Manchester really claims to be as large a congregation of the world's traffic as London itself. She will not yield the palm to Glasgow as the second city in the empire. Manchester proper contains about 650,000 people, and Glasgow proper nearly 800,000. As a matter of fact, however, the Manchesterites claim Salford, since only a narrow stream runs between the cities; the business is all one; and a stranger can't tell whether he is in Manchester or Salford, so intimately are the two cities combined; and Salford has a population of 250,000, which makes the population of the "living whole" of this immense metropolis 900,000. Furthermore, it is stated that within a radius of ten miles of Manchester Exchange is a population as large as that of London itself—that is, taking a space of ground in Lancashire as large as that of total London, it contains an equal number of people. Whether these statements are exaggerations or not, they tend to give some idea of the enormous and multiplied activities of this mighty city. Vast and amazing are the channels of life that flow and intermingle. Crowds flock from every point of the compass. The Manchester Exchange is the largest in the world. On Tuesdays and Fridays 6,000 people throng there simply to do business, and the transactions run up into millions. It is a picture to look upon, that changing multitude on the vast floor of this tall building, the surges of which, we might say, are felt to the uttermost corners of the earth. Looking through the huge thick glass plates of surrounding rooms and corridors, you can scarcely hear a sound of that living sea. You would think that nothing was going on. They simply seem to be walking, talking, laughing, and having a good time. Nevertheless, more business is transacted on this one spot than upon any other spot of the same size on the globe, London and New York not excepted, for the time being. When one strikes Manchester he feels the "thrill of life," as when he strikes Chicago, or any other big place; he knows that something is going on. He feels an electricity in the air, which only numbers and world-wide movements can give.

The Ship Canal, about forty miles in length, I believe, is a wonderful achievement, and adds greatly to the commercial facilities of Manchester, since goods can now be shipped directly to all parts of the world. The canal cost $80,000,000. In the nature of things it can't be a paying investment for many years to come. It requires vast traffic to pay the interest of such an amount of money as the canal cost. But Manchester, after all, is a prophetic and exuberant city, notwithstanding its purely business nature. It is no Gadgrind. It has boundless faith in the future and the glory of its canal, which will no doubt some day bear a thousand ships upon its bosom. I admire the magnificent energy of a people who will bank $80,000,000 on the possibilities of to-morrow. There is a poetic grandeur in the creation of such a splendid pathway of commerce.

I enjoy the comfortable hospitality of William Westwell, who lives in the suburbs of Manchester, in a quiet retreat, where no throb of business ever disturbs the calm and beautiful atmosphere. There are flowers and grass and trees to charm the eye, and lovely roads over which to drive, and fair prospects in every direction. There is the splendid horse, Robert, and the faithful dog, Wallace, and in the morning and the evening air we enjoy the delightful sceneries with the swift motion and music of the flying wheel. Elegant villas and residences adorn the country, which is rich with groves and luscious hayfields, in some of which the harvest is already filling the air with sweet perfumes and the laborers cheerily sing. At Bolton I saw two of the finest draught-horses, I believe, in the world; one was valued at £1,000, and the other at £800. They seemed almost strong enough to draw an earthquake, and make no fuss about it. England surpasses America in draught-horses, although the latter may produce the more lively and handsome trotters. But when it comes to work, England attends to business. There are draught-horses in Manchester that will each pull five tons easily. It seems merely child's play as they place their enormous hoofs on the ground and swing along almost like a planet.

The Secular Society of Manchester is in a flourishing condition. It has strong elements, and fine local talent. It has a hall of its own, which was once a chapel. There is a moral in this, and rather opposes the notion that Christianity is taking the lead of Secularism, for here is a church actually transformed into a Secular hall.

The first time Mr. Foote lectured here the baptismal font was in front, as yet unremoved—a relic of the past fronting the glory of the future. There were no haunting spirits of orthodoxy about, however, as I spoke within these four walls. The building was thoroughly regenerated and prepared for the service of humanity. I had fine audiences, and cheerful English enthusiasm. The evening attendance was especially large. In every way I have enjoyed the Manchester campaign. I have met numerous friends. All give hearty welcome to the American visitor, and make him feel entirely at home. It is an inspiring thought that in such a great centre of the world's business our flag is kept flying. Such earnest workers as Mr. and Mrs. Pegg, and others, insure the continued success of our cause. Mr. E. G. Taylor, author of *Shall Thought be Fettered in England?*—a most excellent pamphlet—presided at the morning and evening meetings, and Mr. Hurd at the afternoon. Quite a number of friends were present from Failsworth, a bright centre of Freethought work, where I expect to be August 11, and of which I shall have a good story to tell, for a really splendid constructive enterprise has been carried on here of great interest to all advanced thinkers. I cannot name all I met at Manchester, but I must thank them one and all for their kindness and generous support.

With Mr. Westwell and Mr. Robert Ainsworth I visited the Exchange, the Municipal buildings, the Art gallery, St. James's Hall, Belle-Vue, and other places of interest and enjoyment. Belle-Vue is one of the old and celebrated curiosities of cosmopolitan Manchester. Excursions from all over the kingdom come here for a day's outing. There are large zoological gardens, extensive lakes, upon which steamboats are plying, concert hall, and a band of music, and at present a huge panorama of Port Arthur—a wonderful affair, giving a most vivid impression of that place. In the evening there is a magnificent display of fireworks, the "Storming of Port Arthur," reproduced in a grandeur and brilliancy which is indescribable. Belle-Vue was started over fifty years ago by one man in a very small way, and has grown to its present colossal proportions as a place of varied amusement and instruction by the energetic genius of the founder and his sons. The railroad company has offered, I understand, £250,000 for the place, but the proprietors refuse to dispose of it for that or any other sum. It is their pride and glory to make this the best thing of its kind in the kingdom.

St. James's is one of the largest halls in the world, capable of holding 8,000 people. Westwell once held a big auction of goods in this place, and sold in one day merchandise to the value of £27,000. I think this is one of the largest business transactions on record.

On Sunday evening I was pleased to meet, at the home of Mr. Westwell, Mr. Karsa, a Mohammedan gentleman, who was present at the evening lecture. I was gratified to find that advanced believers in the Koran are, upon the broad and universal platform of Freethought, cordial[illegible] in touch with science, progressive philosophy, and radical literature.

My visit at Manchester was one of great stimulation. In this hive of human industry there were still music and poetry, hope and encouragement.

On Monday I reach Derby, where I give a lecture in the evening at the Athenæum Hall. This is quite full. I have already mentioned Derby. The debate was held here between Foote and Lee. I gave a review of that debate, entitling my lecture "Man and the Universe." I presented the salient features of both sides of the debate, which debate certainly has resulted in great good to Secularism. I could see that Mr. Foote's argument had lodged in many an intelligent mind, and that the community was not so densely orthodox as in days gone by. There has been a hard fight at this point. The Sabbatarians endeavored to enforce the old pious laws, and for a time succeeded; but public sentiment is now pronounced against them, and the principles of Freethought are prevailing. The only notable thing about the debate after the lecture was that a woman took part in it, in a very courteous and gentle manner. I could not make out what her position really was, but it seemed more like Swedenborgianism than anything else. It was a vague and indefinite defence of Theism, but not by any means on the orthodox lines. I see that very few are disposed to defend "Christian" Theism. It is Theism pure and simple upon which they rely.

Mr. Henry McGuinness presided at my lecture. I find he is an old army comrade, and fought beneath the Stars and Stripes. I am glad that, on a larger and grander field, we are contending for universal freedom. At his home, after the lecture, with Mr. Whitney and other Secular friends, we had a delightful sociable time, and closed with singing "Auld Lang Syne." Derby is quite a contrast to Manchester, with its tremendous bustle. But I shall not forget

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the former's rural and stately beauty, its appearance of comfort and wealth, its growing light of Freethought, its cheerful companionship, and splendid band of earnest reformers.

Nottingham is next on my route, and I lecture here Tuesday, June 25, to a fair audience. There is a very large Liberal element in Nottingham, but somehow or other it is rather indifferent to distinctive Freethought work, and much of it is absorbed in the Socialistic and Independent Labor party. The purely Secular movement is not what it should be in its own field, but there are sturdy supporters here, and I do not think there will be any ultimate failure, for there are those who know that Freethought is the vital spirit of reform, and must be maintained at all hazards. In times of real stress and battle Nottingham has always been a great rallying place, and there is no doubt that, if anything special should occur, Nottingham would fill its quota. At present it is a kind of reserve corps.

I remain until Saturday at Nottingham, and have a good rest at the home of Mr. James Stapleton, president of the Nottingham Secular Society. Mr. Snell, one of the best speakers and workers in the English advance movement, introduced me at the lecture, and made a very interesting address of welcome, in which he stated that in a certain way Nottingham was the hub of the universe; and that is about so. The New England Pilgrim movement started from near Nottingham. Nottingham Castle dates back to the time of the Britons, and then, as for Nottingham lace, there is nothing like it in the wide world, and the Nottingham girls adorn themselves like queens with the chief productions of their ancient and majestic city. Lace manufacture in its present wonderful skill and variety originated here. This is the only place where they can make the machines, which are indeed like "a thing of life." My friend, Mr. Parrott, who owns one of them, took me to view its marvellous evolutions. I can no more explain them than I can explain the universe. There is an infinity of movement, all prearranged so that at one stroke it seems as if a million fingers were set at work to deftly weave the gorgeous fabric. Fifty-two yards of the finest lace, of any pattern desired, are made on one of these machines every half hour. You might watch the mechanism all day long, and yet not penetrate its mystery. Only in Nottingham can the genius of man produce these superb, tireless creatures that labor day and night with the force of a human intelligence and fill the world with beauty.

Passing from these miracles of modern progress, we take our way to Nottingham Castle, in whose dim recesses the "dark backward and abysm of time" is quaintly revealed. Mrs. Stapleton and my artist freind, Mr. Story, are my companions. Mr. Story has painted some of the pictures now hanging on the walls, and is well up in the history of this famous castle. Of course, only here and there do we find remnants of the original structure, which was built nobody knows when. Some say that the citadel on this rock was reared about the time of King David of scriptural memory—a thousand years before Christ. Others go back only to the ancient Romans and Britons, but there is no doubt that this great rock which towers above the city has been a battlemented fortress in one shape or another for many centuries. At present the main structure is a castellated mansion of comparatively modern date, having itself suffered mutilation in the days of Chartist reform; but still to be seen is Mortimer's Hole, where the wicked earl courted the amorous queen, to be finally detected and executed at Tyburn. There is also the "New Jerusalem," where beer is still vended to the thirsty wayfarer, and which was furnished centuries ago from the same place to the holy crusaders; hence its name. In the mansion as it now stands are the art gallery and museum, and one can spend a whole day viewing the treasures of this unique and memorable castle. SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

A MIRACLE AT LOURDES.

On the eve of the great annual pilgrimage of the faithful from Paris to Lourdes it is unfortunate for the credit of this famous shrine that the Assize Court of the Seine should have had to convict, of a series of remarkable impostures, one of those professing to have been "cured" by the waters of the holy spring. The pious portion of the career of Pierre Delanoy, who yesterday received a sentence of four years' imprisonment with hard labor, does certainly afford a rebellious and a stiff-necked generation a pretext for scoffing at the miracles alleged to be performed at Lourdes. After a successful career of fraud as a sham paralytic, it occurred to Delanoy to trade upon the credulity of the Church. Accordingly he repaired to Lourdes in the season in the character of a cripple hobbling on crutches. He was dipped in the holy well at the spot where the Virgin Mary is supposed to have been seen by the ecstatic Bernadette, and, marvel of marvels! he rose from the water cured, and at once threw away his sticks. Great was the joy among the poor pilgrims seeking relief from their maladies; for here was one of their number, and not the least afflicted, confessedly made whole. The local clergy allowed themselves to be imposed upon. They took Delanoy up, starred him as a living proof of the miraculous qualities of the holy spring, and finally installed him as a keeper of a home for invalids. This last was an honor which the impostor had not counted upon. He was not averse to being fêted as an example of the Divine mercy, and to living at free quarters. But the duties imposed upon him by his new office proved irksome. At all events, he fell from grace, stole all the money in the "home" that he could lay hands upon, and disappeared. Such a thorough-paced scoundrel was bound to be heard of again, and he was. He turned up in Paris as a sham lunatic. This time, however, the medical authorities upon whom he had previously imposed as a pretended sufferer from locomotor ataxy were too many for him. His *dossier* was compiled for a number of years, covering his experiences at Lourdes, and society has at length scored its first success against one of the most accomplished impostors of the day.

The ingenuity with which Delanoy has deceived medical experts at different times in his career is remarkable, and there is just that amount of excuse for the clergy, whose zeal to present an authentic miracle so sadly outran their discretion. But the case shows how necessary it is to be careful in accepting stories of the miraculous at Lourdes or elsewhere, however well attested by persons acting in all good faith. If Delanoy had only been a less incorrigible rogue than he really was, if he could have contented himself with the position he had won in the esteem of the faithful, there could not have been a more authentic miracle than his. For he had been through the hands of medical experts who had pronounced him to be suffering from one of the most hopeless of nervous disorders. The real miracle in the case is that this arch impostor should at length have been exposed. It is a case of the pitcher going too often to the well.—"*Morning*," *Aug. 14.*

The Ascent of Man.

Either man was created and placed in the Garden of Eden something less than six thousand years ago, as narrated in Genesis, or he was not. If the statement made in Genesis is not true, or if man did not fall in consequence of the transgression of a law of God, then the whole scheme of Christianity, as promulgated by Churchmen, is false; for, if there was no fall, there was no need of redemption, no vicarious sacrifice, no atonement, no Savior, no death on the cross to placate the anger of the Almighty Father.

If man did not fall, but has been advancing from age to age, ever increasing in knowledge and goodness, then it is false to attempt his elevation by the methods of the Church. He must be lifted up by education, not by somebody's death.

Every trace of pre-historic man, the rough stone axe, the arrow-head of flint, the rude tracing of aboriginal artists, the resurrected cities and monuments, show that man has come up from a savage condition, advancing step by step, as does the child in its growth and development, until he has attained his present enlightenment. Instead of a fall, it is, then, in truth, an ascension, and it is an insult to his intelligence to intimate the need of an intermediate to restore him to a condition he never occupied.—*Progressive Thinker.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Teacher—"What is a miracle?" Boy—"Please, sir, it's a thing that happens in America."

A boy was reading from an old-fashioned primer, in which the letter "s" in the body of a word was printed very much like the letter "f." He read the sentence, "Solomon was the wifest man that ever lived." "True, my boy, true," said his father, who was listening; "he had a thousand of 'em."

During a recent vacancy in a Highland parish church a preacher was urgently required one Sunday. The local teacher telegraphed to a minister in Oban as follows—"Mr. M'Nab, Oban. Can you supply us on Sunday?" The following reply came: "Can supply you any day except Sunday." There were two M'Nabs in Oban, one of whom was a fishmonger, and to him the message went.

"Why, deacon, what are you looking for?" asked Golightly, as he observed the deacon examining his wood-pile the other evening. "Well, I'm just examining this last load of wood to see if it is all right. You see, I bought it from Brother Brown yesterday, and in prayer-meeting to-night he called himself so many kinds of a miserable sinner, that I thought it just possible it was the quality of this load of wood that was weighing on his mind."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Religion in the Light of Science."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8, select entertainment and dance. Tuesday, 8.30, social gathering.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, a lecture.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "Christian Evidences: their Utter Fallacy."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH: 9, Excursion by brake from Old Pimlico Pier to Epping Forest. Tickets (3s.) can be had of Secretary, J. Borrell, 6 Possonby-place, Westminster.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Animal Development."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "The Decay of Christianity."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Gospel of Evolution."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "The Garden of Eden."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15 and 3.15, St. John will lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (Middlesex side): 7, Lucretius Keen, "Free Will a Delusion." Thursday, at 8.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Free Will a Delusion"; 3.30, "The Four Gospels." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, E. Calvert, "The Soul."

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, Stanley Jones will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Life and Teachings of Buddha."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity Critically Examined."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, a lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "He that Believeth"; C. James, "The Philosophy of Atheism." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, Gymnasium class; 5, tea; 7, entertainment.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, S. P. Putnam, "Freethought in America"; 3, "Freethought and Morality"; 7, "Christianity and Secularism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer"; 6.30, "Does God Exist?"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Land for the People"; 3, "The Population Question"; 7, "The Gospel of Freethought."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, annual meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, W. Heaford, "An Hour with the Devil"; 3, "The Futility of Prayer"; 7, "The Doom of the Gods." The morning lecture, weather permitting, will be near the Monolith.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, a lecture.

BRADFORD (Open Market, James-street): 6.30, A. W. Oxley, "Inconsistencies of the Pulpit."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

MANCHESTER (Stephenson-square): 3, C. Cohen—see Friday's *Evening News* for subject.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market-place): 11, Hall Nicholson, "Christianity and Slavery"; 3, "Christian and Secular Morality."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—Aug. 25, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Kilburn; 28, Hyde Park. Sept. 1, m. Kingsland, a. Finsbury Park; 8, m. Camberwell, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell; 15, m. Finsbury, e. Edmonton; 22, m. Kingsland, e. Deptford; 25, Hyde Park; 26, Hammersmith; 29, m. Victoria Park, a. Finsbury Park, e. Kilburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—August 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 250 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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BLOOD FOR BLOOD.

THE "missionary outrages" in China still figure on newspaper placards. Some disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus are almost foaming with rage at the obstinacy of the Chinese officials and the inactivity of the British government. Methodists, in particular, are calling loudly for a more vigorous policy. Vengeance, of course, belongs to the Lord; nevertheless it is sweet to his devotees. Blood for blood is the natural craving of the old savage, who is still lusty under the thin disguise of religion.

With curious inconsistency—or rather with inconsistency that would be curious in other people—these irate Christians rejoice over the fact that their murdered missionaries have gone to glory. They are now treading the golden streets of the new Jerusalem, drinking the water of the river of life, basking in the smiles of the Lamb, and loafing around the great white throne. Suffering can never touch them again; they are happy—oh, *so* happy!—for ever and ever, yea and a day after that. Why, then, all these tears? Why all these cries for vengeance, or, as they euphemistically style it, *satisfaction*? Christians should really be grateful to the Chinese "murderers." Preaching to the Chinese, indeed, ought to supersede suicide as a quick emigration route to heaven. If the Almighty has set his canon against self-slaughter—which, by the way, he has not done in the Bible—there is no law against holding out your throat for his enemies to make incision; and while you secure a prompt passage to heaven you have the added delight of knowing that one of the Lord's enemies has involved himself in the guilt of murder, and is thus booked in all probability for the opposite establishment. The ice cream dissolving on your palate will be all the sweeter as you think of his roast sulphur.

This may be objected to as the blasphemous jocosity of a hardened sceptic. Very well then, let us appeal to Scripture. In the lauded Sermon on the Mount we find a most apposite beatitude:—

> "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The missionaries in China have been reviled and persecuted, and they have their reward in heaven. What more do they want? They have earned the supreme blessing. Yet their friends over here are not exceeding glad; they are in a passion of anger; and they display the utter hollowness and hypocrisy of Christian profession when brought to the test of its own standards.

In that same Sermon on the Mount we find another pertinent text:—

> "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Is this the attitude of Christians towards the Chinese? Nothing of the kind. Let the truth be told after all these centuries of hard experience. The mild and merciful texts of the Bible are only used by Christians to fling at opponents, and are without the slightest influence on their personal lives or national policies.

Let the missionaries go to China if they will, or to any other part of the globe. Where they go is their own business, as long as they take the risk themselves. But when they clamor for protection, we have a right to see whether they deserve it. If they go into the mission-field in the spirit of martyrdom, we shall respect their motives, however we may suspect their wisdom. But they cannot enjoy the double privilege of martyrdom and citizenship. Let them make their choice. If their attack on the heathen has to be supported by gunboats, it is obvious that their enterprise is not "spiritual." They must be enrolled as ordinary traders.

The fact is, the missionaries are not invited, and are not welcome. They *force* themselves upon the heathen. And in doing so they expect—and when possible *exact*—a tolerance which they would never exhibit themselves. Just imagine what would happen if the Chinese sent missionaries to England! Brutal attacks have been made at Liverpool upon a little body of Mohammedans, who do not go out into the streets to proselytise, but confine themselves to their own mosque. And it must be remembered that nearly a hundred million Mohammedans are subjects of the British Empire! Nay, we need not take such an extreme illustration. Christians here, in the United Kingdom, brutally ill-treat each other. Take the following newspaper report of an occurrence in Ireland on Sunday, August 25:—

> "On the street preachers making their reappearance at Sligo yesterday they were beset by a large and violent crowd, and, despite the efforts of a hundred police, they were assaulted with stones, rotten eggs, and filth, so that in a short time time their clothes were completely spoiled. Several policemen were struck by stones, but not seriously injured. After three-quarters of an hour the missionaries were escorted to their lodgings by the police."

Rotten eggs and ordure show contempt, stones show hatred, and bloodshed shows the spirit of murder. Only withdraw the police, and dead bodies would strew the ground.

Suppose the preachers at Sligo were foreigners, with strange dress and manners; suppose they spoke in ridiculous broken English, and at the same time gave themselves airs of immense superiority; suppose they told the people that they would all go to hell unless they accepted the preachers' creed, whether they understood it or not; and suppose they broadly hinted that they had powerful friends in the country they came from, who might come with warships and big guns if the people did not behave themselves. Does any man in his right senses imagine that this would not incense the people terribly, and that some of the most fierce and fanatical would not be provoked to deeds of violence?

> Oh wad some pow'r the giftie gie us
> To see oursels as ithers see us!

Christianity is the most intolerant religion that ever disgraced the earth. It has shed oceans of blood, and it still persecutes wherever it has the power. What right has such a religion to make such a fuss about the consumption (as Gibbon would call it) of a few missionaries? And when the consumption occurs in China, where Christian England has forced a big opium trade in spite of the protests of the Chinese government, the howling of the Christians is enough to shake the world with laughter.

G. W. FOOTE.

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VIRGIN BIRTHS.*

THE history of the evolution of human ideas has yet to be written. The material is being collected by the anthropologist from every quarter of savage life. The folk-lorist is gathering it from the olden sagas, the ballads and stories of the peasantry, and the fairy tales of childhood; and, as the history unfolds itself, it becomes a romance of greater interest than *Robinson Crusoe*, for it tracks the path of mankind from helpless savagery to the triumphs of civilisation. Among the *débris* of this long, toilsome, and devious path is a curious superstition, enshrined in many a story and exalted in man's highest religion. It is the story of virgin birth. To this myth Mr. Hartland, who, by his *Science of Fairy Tales*, has already displayed his competence, devotes a study which shows in how thorough a way a little section of anthropology is now being investigated.

As the nucleus of his theme, Mr. Hartland takes the classical *Legend of Perseus*, as Mr. Frazer took up *The Golden Bough*. Mr. Hartland has the advantage in his subject. Mr. Frazer had only the killing of the god and his resurrection, or survival; but he brought such wide knowledge of archaic faiths that his work marks an epoch. In the story of Perseus Mr. Hartland has not only the virgin birth, but the fight with the dragon, and the rescue of the captive woman. He has not yet completed this portion of his task, but, if followed up as the first part of the story, it will be extremely interesting.

Mr. Hartland has gone the right way to work. He has formed a vast collection. He has given a simple classification. He illustrates the supernatural birth, in fairy tale and saga, by all sorts of superstitious customs in regard to the nature of life, pregnancy, and sterility, taking us back to the time when the solution of the problem of generation was simply the transformation of life, and beyond this he leaves us to form our own deductions.

My interest here is with the development of the Christian myth, which is no singular revelation, but the descendant of a long line of similar stories. The virgin births of Osiris, Horus, Buddha, and other sun and culture heroes, have long been pointed out by men like Dupuis, Higgins, and Bonwick. Dr. Waitz long since said in his *Introduction to Anthropology*, part ii., sec. 3, p. 373:—

> "The reception of human individuals among the gods becomes particularly important in relation to their teachings, which we find in every mythology. They are either considered as incarnations of a god or as the sons of the highest god, born of a human mother or a virgin, and miraculously conceived. They become then the mediators between gods and men, and the benefactors of the latter as the founders of a new religion, the inventors of important arts, the founders of agriculture and social order, and the promoters of civilisation. Squier gives as examples Buddha in India, Fohi in China, Zoroaster in Persia, Osiris in Egypt, Odin in Scandinavia, etc. In the New World belong to this category Quetzalcoatl in Mexico; Manco Capac in Peru, the founder of Cuzco, sent by the sun; analogous heroes we find among the Muyscas in Yucatan, in Nicaragua, and even among the Natchez; Hiawatha among the Iroquois, the founder of their confederacy; Manabozho among the Algonquins; Tamoi among the Guarayos."

Dr. Waitz mentions that miraculous conception is related of Fohi, Codom, Archer, Huitzilipochtli, etc. These and other instances will be found cited in Mr. Foote's tract on "The Virgin Mother" in *Bible Romances*.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in his *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (ii., 22), says of Heitsi Eibib, a Hottentot prophet: "By another account he was born of a virgin, who tasted a certain kind of grass. This legend is of wonderfully wide diffusion among savage and semi-civilised races." Now Mr. Hartland has collected an immense number of such instances, and comparing them with the fairy tales and customs of peasantry and savages enables us to trace their development. To all interested in the study of folk-lore and the early history of mankind, the facts gathered are of great interest. I should like to dilate upon them, but the same matter is dealt with in my *Footsteps of the Past*, and I must here confine myself to Mr. Hartland's references to Christianity. At p. 103 he says:—

> "The mystery taught by the creeds of the Church, however, is believed to be something apart from all the other beliefs of the world, something altogether above them, alike in its evidence and its consequences. Christians in thus thinking overlook the fact that to the believer in any religion its evidences are undeniable and its claims are supreme. The fact is that the incident in question is part and parcel of many other religions than the Christian, and is also gravely accepted among what we may call the secular and quasi-historical traditions of tribes in various parts of the Old and New World. Beyond this, as we shall see in another chapter, pregnancy is held actually producible by means analogous to those described in the legends, means outside the ordinary operations of nature. Into the bearing of these facts on the dogma of the Supernatural Birth of Jesus Christ, or on the historical evidence on which that dogma rests, it is not my purpose to inquire. This is a question of apologetics, not of folk-lore."

Dealing with the legends of impregnation by an unusual part of the body, Mr. Hartland remarks that in the Middle Ages a similar idea was current respecting the conception of Jesus Christ, though he does not mention that it finds place in the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*.* He says (p. 131):—

> "Sometimes painters represented the Holy Ghost as entering his mother at her ear in the shape of a dove. In the Church of the Magdalen at Aix, in Provence, is a picture of the Annunciation attributed to Albert Dürer, wherein waves of glory descend from God the Father, and in the midst of them a microscopic babe floats down upon the Virgin. During the fifteenth century the opinion seems to have been common that Our Lord entered already completely formed into the Virgin's womb—an opinion which orthodox theologians, in their perfect acquaintance with the divine arrangements, were able summarily to pronounce heretical. But a remarkable parallel to the story of Buddha's conception is presented by a picture of Fra Filippo Lippi, painted for Cosmo de' Medici, and now in the National Gallery. The Virgin is seated in a chair with her Book of Hours in her hand, and the angel Gabriel bows before her. Above is a right hand surrounded with clouds. A dove, cast from the hand amid circling floods of glory, is making for the Virgin's navel, which it is about to enter; while she, bending forward, curiously surveys it. The picture is well worth studying, not merely for its exquisite grace, coloring, and finish, as one of the masterpieces of Tuscan art in the earlier half of the fifteenth century, but also as an exposition of the ideas which were prevalent at that time under the sanction of the Church, and for the purpose of comparing them with Buddhist legends and other stories of supernatural birth, such as we are now considering. Mohammedan tradition ascribes the miraculous conception by the Virgin to Gabriel's having opened the bosom of her shift and breathed upon her womb."

Mr. Hartland has not noticed that in the curious *Livre de vaillant Perseus* (Paris, 1572) the virgin birth from Danæ, and the slaying of the serpent by Perseus, are directly identified with Mary and the Savior of the world. But probably we shall get that in his next volume. Mr. Hartland knows his subject so well that I am surprised to find no mention of the profound work of Gerald Massey on *Natural Genesis*, which, I take leave to say, is not to be dismissed unstudied, whether one agrees with his conclusions or not.

It is curious that, almost simultaneously with Mr. Hartland's work, there appears *Le Folk-lore Dans les Deux Mondes*, by Count Hyacinthe de Charencey (Paris: C. Klincksieck), in which a long chapter, entitled "Lucina sine Concubito," is devoted to stories of supernatural birth, which are illustrated from all parts of the world. Count Charencey's earlier work is in the list of authorities, but not this. A more notable omission is that of reference to Theodor Waitz's *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*. The anthropologist, of all men, must not forget the labors of his predecessors. But these are not grave faults. What one man esteems another thinks not worth mentioning. For his pains in collection and his skill in exposition Mr. Hartland deserves the praise of every student of that great eye-opener, comparative mythology.

J. M. WHEELER.

Two little children looking at the moon one evening, the younger asked—"Is the moon God's wife?" Older Child (patronisingly)—"No, you silly child; God is a bachelor."

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* *The Legend of Perseus: A Study of Tradition in Story, Custom, and Belief.* By Edwin Sidney Hartland, F.S.A. Vol. I., "The Supernatural Birth." (London: D. Nutt.) 7s. 6d.

* See *The Jewish Life of Christ*, edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, p. 19.

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THE GOSPELS AND DRAMATIC LITERATURE.

CANON GORE, in *Lux Mundi*, states that modern criticism asks us to regard certain books of the Old Testament "as dramatic compositions worked up on a basis of history." On reading this statement, the question occurred to us, May not the Gospels be considered also as dramatic literature based on the traditions of Palestine? Of course the ordinary orthodox believer may consider that to attempt to connect the drama with alleged sacred writings is very reprehensible. We would, however, remind Christians that the origin of the drama of India is attributed to a sage who was inspired by Brahma, that in Greece it originated in the national religion, and that the performances were given in what were termed the sacred places. History informs us that, for a long period after the Norman Conquest, dramatic performances took place in the churches at certain Christian festivals. In the Middle Ages the Church imitated the Roman dramatists, and enacted, in Christian "places of worship," plays founded on the incidents of the Old and New Testaments, the performers being Churchmen. About the time of the Reformation the drama was the medium selected for the purpose of exposing the vices of the Roman Catholic clergy, and checking their ecclesiastical power. At the present day, in some countries, plays are performed that are based upon Scriptural incidents. And the dramatic element is now retained in the mass that is performed in Roman Catholic cathedrals, and also in certain ceremonies gone through by the High Church Protestant party.

The orthodox view of the Gospels is, that they are the productions of supernatural inspiration, having no parallel in the history of literature. This view of the unique character of the Gospels is persistently maintained by certain Christian sects, despite the fact that eminent Bible scholars and Christian teachers acknowledge that the date of their origin is uncertain, that their authorship is unknown, and that their teachings are doubtful and contradictory. We admit that, if the claim of their divine origin and unique nature could be demonstrated, they would be something more than mere dramatic compositions. But, notwithstanding repeated efforts, this claim has not been proved. The once-cherished idea, that the New Testament is verbally accurate in the sense of its being infallible, is now abandoned. It was found that in the production of such a work clerk-like precision and freedom from the possibility of error would have been necessary; but this was not the case with the Gospels, which were evidently written by fallible men, who held most erroneous ideas upon even the ordinary affairs of daily life, and who committed palpable mistakes in history, in science, and in morals. It is obvious that one historical error, one contradiction, or different versions of the same event, are sufficient to dispose of the theory of inspired infallibility. But when these incongruities are multiplied by the hundreds, as they can be in the Gospels, it is folly to suppose that these so-called sacred writings are aught else but ordinary productions of writers who were far from being infallible.

Moreover, as other books were found that contained statements as wonderful and as inexplicable as any recorded in the Gospels, the claim for the unique character of the latter can no longer be consistently sustained. If it be asked, Will not the objections here made against alleged divinely-inspired books equally apply if the books are regarded as dramas? the answer would be no, inasmuch as the elements which orthodox believers claim as being essential to establish the divine origin and nature of the Gospels are not required in acknowledged human works, however lofty they may be in conception, or brilliant in execution. The finest work in all literature is only called "divine" in a conventional sense—such as we mean when we speak of Shakespeare as "the divine William." The expression is not intended to refer to a power above nature, but to a superior genius in nature. Books that were once called "divine" lost, as time rolled on, the distinctive character originally assigned to them. It is conceded by many writers of Christian apologetics to-day that the Gospels are but human productions, and therefore any speculation as to their origin, character, and purpose is legitimate. Although this may be granted by the intelligent few, there are many others who will not accept our contention without questioning its correctness. They will, no doubt, consider that the consequences of agreeing with us would destroy their old faith in Bible veracity. It may be an advantage, therefore, to refer to instances of the marvellous found in books which are not claimed to be more than human.

In "Plutarch's Lives," which may be readily consulted in the English language, wonderful events are recorded of a far more imposing character than anything found in the Gospels. We are not here concerned as to the causes assigned, or the explanation given, of such marvellous events. They may be ascribed to God, the devil, magic, a perverted imagination, or to any other agency. In any case, it would not affect the position here taken. Our object is to show that incidents which appeared to many to be of a "supernatural" character have occurred in all ages and among all nations; and, therefore, they were by no means limited to the Gospel writers. In a later age than either that of Plutarch or of the writers of the Gospels, "supernatural" characters have appeared, surrounded by all the embellishments supplied by the master-mind of "the immortal Shakespeare," who depicts all kinds of heroes, and makes them illustrate in their sayings and doings the various phases of actual life. He presents truths with dramatic accessories; why may not the same principle be applied to the incidents which are said to have taken place in Palestine? We hope to show that the Gospels furnish just the materials suitable for the application of such a principle. In all superstitions there is, probably, some element of truth; but that is no reason why we should believe all the absurdities associated with grains of fact.

If we admire a drama, it is not necessary that we should regard all its characters as being historical. For instance, Shakespeare gives us a noble picture of Roman life in his play of *Julius Cæsar*, but some persons will not agree with him that Brutus "was the noblest Roman of them all." His action, according to the play, involved the death of one of his most illustrious countrymen, and ultimately he killed himself. Now, whatever opinion may be entertained as to the accuracy and morality of these acts as recorded, the dramatic halo of the play is not destroyed. In like manner, because we discover in the Gospels much that is evidently untrue and opposed to ethical science, we need not necessarily allege that the whole of the narratives are false. It is quite possible that the writers of these Gospels drew upon their imaginations and invested Christ with fictitious qualities, and gave a "supernatural" color to events in his life, as authors of dramatic literature did before, and have done since, with their heroes. Read as mere dramas, much in the Gospels can be understood that otherwise would appear to us quite inexplicable.

A striking parallel exists between the criticism of the history of the Gospels and the study of the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. The question as to when, where, and by whom these Gospels were written has been discussed again and again. Disputes have also been frequent as to their true meaning. The early career of their hero, and his domestic associations, have been subjected to disputation. Similar controversies have taken place as to the writings of Shakespeare. Such questions as, Was he the author of the plays that bear his name? were the originals of his characters his own creations? and what was the meaning of his language? have all been subjects of controversy. The history of his early life, and of his family relations, has been freely discussed. It may be asked what bearing these points have upon the Gospels? Simply this: that, instead of the Gospels being unique in their nature and history, as they are thought to be by orthodox believers, it is easy to show that in many respects the marvellous features in their narratives have an approximate parallel in Shakespeare's literature. Of course it is not intended to compare, intellectually, Christ with Shakespeare, for no such comparison could be made. "The Bard of Avon," in mental capacity, in sublimity of thought, in genius of conception, in grandeur of expression, and in practical useful teaching, towers mountains high above the "Reformer of Judea."

If it be true that Jesus achieved a high position despite his humble birth and lack of early education, it is also true that Shakespeare, having to encounter similar drawbacks, gained a much higher position, and gave to mankind a legacy of intellectual worth, unequalled by anything found in the New Testament, or in any other literature in the world. What could be more extraordinary than the success of Shakespeare in the path of true greatness? He

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was born of illiterate parents, he was self-educated, and he appeared amidst a galaxy of mental geniuses and brilliant wits; and yet he outshone them all in intellectual glory. It might be said, to use a form of speech known to theologians, "Never man wrote like this man." Truly, he was "not of one age, but for all time."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

WOMAN AND THE CHURCH.

ONE of the most common claims of the Christian Church is that the present improved condition of woman in our country is owing to its influence and its teachings. It is often asserted by the clergy that her high development and her position of honor and influence to-day are due to the Christian religion. This, like most of the proud boasting in which they are accustomed to indulge, has little or no foundation in fact. So far as our knowledge extends, there is absolutely no evidence that Christianity has been of any benefit to woman; but, on the contrary, we think that it can be shown that, for whatever progress she has made, she is in no wise indebted to the Church. It is a matter of common knowledge that in her efforts to secure her political rights she has always encountered its persistent opposition; and, with few exceptions, the advocates of this great reform have been found in the Rationalistic ranks. The eminent women who have been the leaders in the movement for the enfranchisement of their sex, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Frances Wright, Ernestine L. Rose, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Helen H. Gardener, and Susan H. Wixon, have never held allegiance to the Church, but, on the contrary, have always been pronounced Freethinkers; and whatever progress woman has made in this direction has been in spite of the most bitter opposition from Christian theologians.

This is not strange when it is remembered that the book on which their theology is based nowhere recognises woman as the equal of man, but, on the contrary, regards her as his soulless slave. What can be more degrading than the teachings of St. Paul in regard to woman; such, for instance, as the following?—

> "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.
> "And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35).
> "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.
> "For the husband is head of his wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the savior of the body.
> "Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Ephesians v. 22, 23, 24).
> "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection.
> "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.
> "For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Timothy ii. 11, 12, 13).

With what reason can it be claimed that such commands as these have an elevating influence upon the female sex? If they were rigidly enforced to-day as they were in the early history of the Church, no woman would ever be allowed to speak in a public religious meeting, but would be compelled to remain silent; and if she has acquired any liberty in this respect, she has done so in opposition to the teachings of the Church, and not because of them. According to both Christ and Moses, a husband had the right to divorce his wife at any time, but the poor wife had no redress for her wrongs. How, then, can a religion, which permits or sanctions such gross injustice as this, be of any benefit to women? Had it not been for Christianity, we believe that the women of the United States would long since have been enfranchised, and would to-day be enjoying not only equal political rights and privileges with her brothers, but also equal opportunities in the struggle of life; and it is our profound conviction that they will never possess the rights to which they are justly entitled until the Christian religion, and all other forms of supernaturalism, are utterly destroyed.

—*Boston Investigator.*

FROM DARKNESS UNTO DARKNESS.

A CERTAIN king, grown old and feeling death drawing nigh, became uneasy about his soul.

He walked feebly amidst the flowers and statuary and glistening fountains in his pleasurance, but found therein no more delight. He sat in his great chambers of carven rare woods and many-colored marble and wrought gold, while musicians of wondrous skill played, and maidens, beautiful exceedingly, danced to him; but unto him came no joy.

"All these things are become as the foolish playthings of children unto me," he cried, "for I am come near the grave, and am sick from fear of what cometh."

And he gathered about him all the men of his kingdom reputed wise.

And he said unto them: "O ye wise ones! I am soon to leave this world of brief vanities. Whither goeth I, and how *then* shall it fare with my soul?"

The wisest of the wise answered: "Out of the grave cometh no voice, O King."

"Say you then," cried the King, "that thy wisdom teaches ye nought concerning these things?"

"The grave is jealous of her secrets, O King," answered the wisest. "Who of the living can say of them, *This I know?*"

And the King was yet more troubled and afraid.

And there came unto the King one day a woman deep bent with the burden of her years.

"O, King!" she cried unto him, "why troublest thou about thy soul?"

"Thou, too, art near death," said the King; "hast thou no trouble nor any fear? The grave is a place of dread surmises; the wisest even cannot say '*It is well.*'"

The old woman answered nothing, but lit a waxen taper.

"*It lives*," she said.

The taper burned with a steady light and clear, until it was almost consumed; then it flickered.

"*It dies*," she said.

The taper was consumed and the light vanished.

"It is dead," she said. "Whither goeth the light, O King?"

The King sat awhile in silence, deep in meditation. Then answered he: "From nowhere, whence it came. From darkness unto darkness. It was not; it became; it is not."

"Thou hast said all, O King," said the old woman; "for that which was not, can I regret? For that which cannot be why should I trouble, why be afraid? Let the taper be a parable unto you, O King!"

The woman departed; and the King died, fearing nothing.

HARRY H.

CONSOLATION; OR, RUM AND RELIGION.

THE drunkard feels a "sinking,"
Which he tries to cure by drinking,
But the soothing-seeming antidote is vain;
The "sinking" prompts to drinking,
But the drinking *caused* the "sinking";
Yes, the *cherished consolation* is the *bane!*

The Christian feels a "sinking,"
Which he treats with *mental drinking*,
But the Bible-seeming antidote is vain;
The "sinking" prompts to drinking,
But the "drinking" *caused* the "sinking":
Yes, the *cherished consolation* is the *bane!*

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Keep Church and State forever separate.—*Ulysses Grant.*

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CHRISTIAN INFIDELITY.

The word "infidel" undergoes a strange transformation from its original signification when applied by professors of any religion to those who differ from them in belief. Etymologically its meaning is "unfaithful," and in that sense it is always used in speaking of secular affairs. To charge infidelity upon husband and wife, upon parent or child, upon citizen or friend, as such, is not to attribute to any of these an absence of belief in their obligations, but a violation of known duty. In religion this is changed, and he is called an infidel whose ideas concerning God and futurity are not in unison with those of the pious speaker.

In the primary and natural sense of the word, infidelity is a contemptible meanness and a detestable crime. In its theological application it becomes a virtue and an honorable distinction. According to their own definition, we will accept this title from our Christian friends with thankful acknowledgment. The cap fits exactly. We will put it on and wear it with becoming pride. In return we will present our believing brother with a cap which we think will fit equally well.

Believing friend, what a terrible infidel you are! We will not say you do not believe as you profess, because, although your favorite book says "all men are liars," and you agree with that sentiment in a general way, we know that you are painfully sensitive when a particular application of it is made to yourself, and we do not wish to wound your feelings if we can avoid it. We will stifle the misgiving which will sometimes, in spite of our human charity, arise within us, and admit that you believe all that you say you do. We will not charge you with infidelity to Noah's ark or Jonah's whale. We sympathise with the weariness which you must feel on hearing those tales of ancient mariners referred to with merciless frequency. Besides, you probably accept those tales only in their "esoteric" meaning, and as that, for aught we know to the contrary, may mean that there was no Noah, no ark, no Jonah, and no whale, there may not be much difference between us on these points. But, at least, you believe that the Sermon on the Mount is good sound teaching, the very essence of pure and undefiled Christianity, and that New Testament morality is good for mankind. Then, Christian, whatever may be your station in life, whatever your occupation, whatever your intellectual capacity, whatever your moral character, you are, we repeat, a terrible infidel, for you daily and hourly live your infidelity. You believe that the poor are blessed. If you are wealthy, you strive to add to your riches, or, at least, to retain your grasp on all that you possess. You take pride in adorning your persons, your dwellings, and your churches; in surrounding yourself with the evidences of your opulence, and in dishonoring your supposed master by the most flagrant violations of the principles you say were his. The elegant temple of worship, the stained window, the jewelled mitre, the richly carved altar, the luxuriantly cushioned pews, are all costly professions of infidelity to the manger and the cross in which you believe. You believe that your great teacher said, "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven"; and, infidel to his teaching that you are, you sell the very life blood, the bone, nerve, muscle, sinew, brain, of the poor, that you may add to the treasure on earth, of which you already possess more than your just share.

If you are poor in this world's goods, we do not wish to speak severely, for poverty and Christianity together are two terrible burdens to carry. Still, if you make an attempt to lighten me of these burdens, if you ask for a fair wage for a fair day's work, if you take one thought for to-morrow's needs, or endeavor to provide for the future of your family, you are acting wisely and doing your duty as a man, but are a living infidel to the religion in which you believe.

If you occupy a pulpit, if you write "Rev." before your name, and, perhaps, "D.D." after it; if you call yourself a Christian clergyman, and claim to be a teacher of the Gospel, under whom the laity should sit and submissively learn, you are the most outrageous infidel of all, for you demand respect and distinction for belonging to a class described by your own high authority as "whited sepulchres" without, but "within full of dead men's bones and all manner of corruption." The dead bones of dogmas slain by the sword of reason long, long ago, the fetid corruption of superstition and hypocrisy, are within you, and when you speak it is that which is within that proceedeth out of the mouth. The priestly caste is the same here to-day as it was in Judea two thousand years ago, as it always has been in every land and at all times—the representative of the dead past crushing the living present. Whether the infernal tortures you most dread are to be found in a lake of fire and brimstone, in agonies of conscience, or in the just execration of mankind, you who, from your untaxed pulpits, would stop the wheels of human progress and bid freedom succumb to tyranny, answer this question, as pointedly addressed to you as it could at any time have been to your predecessors, the sacerdotal infidels of ages gone: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Christian infidel, your kind of infidelity is bad for your moral nature. If Christianity is good to believe, it must be good to practise. If you think it is true, honestly try to live accordingly. If you find that impossible, confess that it is an impracticable system, and try another. Cease to be an infidel in fact, and accept the name gracefully. It is sure to be applied to you if you practise fidelity to your own reason. It will not hurt you. It is an honorable distinction.

In conclusion, I will give two definitions of the word, perhaps as a specimen of what might be done in the way of a much-needed "Dictionary of Exoteric and Esoteric Meanings." Infidel—Exoteric: Unfaithful, false, treacherous, deceitful, one who fails in the fulfilment of obligations. Esoteric: One who is faithful to the principle of truth, declining to profess religious belief which he does not possess.

E. J. Bowtell.

—*Boston Investigator.*

THE BIBLE.

The very strangest facts in the world are perhaps seen in the life of religious people. Mohammedans believe most ardently that the Koran is of supernatural origin; the Hindoos believe the same of their holy books, as do Buddhists and certain others; and Jews and Christians believe the Bible to be a book of unity and of divine origin. Even educated laymen will still talk to you as if doubt or disbelief of the origin and authority of the Bible had never been heard of; just as, when I was in New Zealand, a young popish barrister spoke to me devoutly, reverently, believingly of the miracle of St. Januarius' blood—the transparent, impudent trick perpetrated at Naples yearly! I see no difference worth naming between the man who believes the Bible and him I have just named. Each can give his paltry reasons for his belief; and the reasons of the one are quite as good as those of the other—quite. Early bias decides the faith of each and all believers. There is nothing else in it. No free and unprejudiced man could believe the Bible to be anything above human, or anything to boast of at that. No unbiased man ever believed the Naples miracle-trick, or any other miracle. Scholars must write and speak for many a year yet before human ignorance and prejudice drop the Bible. Of course, we know its fate well enough. The Bible is a doomed book, which by-and-bye will no more be reverenced than other antiquities, or than other things which have played a noted part in the world's affairs, for good or ill. Dr. Wildboer has recently published *Origins of the Canon of the New Testament*, which the *Westminster Review* thinks finally disposes of the traditional theory of the supernatural origin and unity of the Old Testament. People, in other respects rational enough, will still believe in the book, for logic plays no part in most people's faith. They were trained in a certain course, and they stick to it, no matter how ridiculous. But we Freethinkers must lose no opportunity of turning the Bible into ridicule, for so long as it rules it cheats, and the cheat perverts the world and produces much mischief. Let us carry on the fight.

Joseph Symes.

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IN AND OUT OF CHURCH.

Dogma dealer, talking treason,
Spurning truth, perverting reason
In and out of folly's season
Year by year.

Oh, a plague on all the twaddle
In your hum-drum niddle-noddle,
Mammon's law-paid molly-coddle,
Limp with fear.

Is there "sin" in worldly leaven?
Yet there's not one day in seven
When you fail to sell your gammon—
All for pelf.

"Heaven to let" to paying lodger;
Ah, you canting devil-dodger,
Damn not us who spurn your Mammon—
Damn yourself!

If I've done some bad behaving,
And I don't deserve the saving,
Then 'tis honor bids the braving
Of my dues.

Pilot souls to your sky places
Who are full of Sunday graces,
And with sweat from poor men's faces
Pay for pews.

Call the purse-proud from their blisses,
Call the fashionable misses
From "advisers'" holy kisses—
Call and call.

Call the people's sly mind-shapers,
Call the kings of daily papers,
Cutting "law and order" capers—
One and all.

Here's my Lord Archbishop, mind you,
Paid to gorge himself and blind you,
Till your very self can't find you
Anywhere.

Simple Jesus! See the old 'un!
Why, his dinner-plates are golden!
May the sight our hearts embolden
In our prayer.

Ah, dismiss them with a "blessing,"
All intoning and confessing;
Never more our souls distressing
With their cant.

Help to silence priestly mumble,
Help the Mammon-temples tumble,
Freedom's banner o'er the jumble
Firm to plant.

Come, dear toilers, stained and weary,
Come and help the world grow cheery,
Come from out your prison dreary—
Built by greed.

You who labor heavy laden,
Slaving mother, trampled maiden,
Ever preached to, ever preyed on,
In your need,

Let your winters grow no colder,
Rise at last and dare be bolder,
Setting shoulder firm to shoulder
For a thrust!

Yokes be eased, and burdens lighter,
As the great Hope warms the fighter,
And the broad New Day grows brighter
And more just.

L. S. Bevington.

The Delight of the Gods.

Sacrifice, under its varied forms, in its manifold conceptions—sacrifice is the fundamental doctrine of religion. "Slay! slay!" This word of the bishop who massacred Béziers might have been inscribed upon the pediment of certain edifices, which have less deserved the name of temples than of slaughter-houses. The flesh of men, the meat of beasts—for these the appetite of the gods has been insatiable. —*Elie Réclus*, "*Primitive Folk*," *p. 304*.

ACID DROPS.

Matilda Perz is a Mexican washerwoman, inhabiting the town of Anahuac. Of course she owns a collection of flat irons. She kept them in a basket, together with a little image of the Virgin. One night—it was the seventeenth of June—Matilda was astonished to see a light issue from the basket. Examination proved that the flat irons were innocent; it was the image of the Virgin that had taken to illuminating. Being placed on the wall, this wonderful image was visited by a multitude of sick people, who were all healed. This beats Lourdes hollow. Evidently the American continent, even in the matter of miracles, doesn't mean to be beaten by "effete Europe."

After the recent exposure of Lourdes miracles, through the confession of the impostor, Delanoy, it is not surprising that the priests should try to drown the voice of criticism by shouting "More miracles! More miracles!" Father Bailly, Superior of the Pères de la Croix, who organised the new pilgrimage to the Sacred Grotto, assures an interviewer that this year's miracles are extremely numerous. Telegrams announcing cases of healing pour in daily. Hundreds of cripples have thrown away their crutches. Poor fools! They'll want them again very soon.

Twenty-five thousand pilgrims have visited Lourdes during August. Think of it! In the land of Voltaire! Is it not absurd to say that the work of "destructive" Freethought is completed? So far as the masses are concerned, science has only spread a thin veneer of common sense over their coarse credulity.

The recent revelations of the prize Lourdes miracle seem to have little effect on the minds of the Catholic sick, who of course are kept in ignorance by their priests. Trains full of the sick and dying have poured into Lourdes during the past few weeks. "Their wretched occupants," says a correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, "are lying helplessly about the railway station clamoring to be carried to the sacred grotto."

The *New York World* (August 5) has the following: "Macon, Ga., August 4.—'He has come to see me, and I know he forgives me now,' said old Mrs. Nobles this morning, who is under sentence of death for the murder of her husband. She had helped to put him out of the way because, as she said, he 'pestered' her. She says the old man came to her bed-side last night, and together they discussed their children. 'We didn't say nothin' about the killin', but I jes' know he forgives me, or he wouldn't hev cum.' It is generally believed that she will escape the gallows, as the sentiment here against hanging a woman is very strong. She is very illiterate, the lowest type of the 'cracker.'" Persons of Mrs. Nobles' type usually do see ghosts, and ghost-worship lies at the bottom of all religion.

The believer in prayer who some time ago suggested that the occasion for floods was the many petitions for rain, now attempts an explanation of cyclones. So many people are at once praying for those at sea, who are going in opposite directions, that the Almighty, to oblige them all, sends the winds in a circular direction. We have advised the believer to communicate his views to the meteorological office.

In connection with the Church of St. Raphael, where the marriage between Hélène de France and the Duke of Aosta took place, there is a *story* not generally known. It was built with the moneys of a converted Jew named Raphael. Just after the building was completed, Raphael had a dream that he would die within a week after the consecration of the place of worship. As a matter of course he endeavored to delay the consecration by fair and unfair means, until a priest, with the help of a licensed victualler from the neighborhood, who procured a bottle of absolutely pure wine, consecrated the edifice. Then he told Raphael, who took to his bed and died three days afterwards!

Thirty-nine Christian congregations in Japan claim to be self-supporting, and, as they pay for themselves, desire native teachers, without outside rule, from Europeans. The home missionary societies do not see it. They have a shrewd suspicion that Christianity, left to the Japanese themselves, may take new and surprising developments.

According to the religious papers, the missionaries lately killed in China have attained to the glory of martyrdom, and are presumably enjoying most excellent positions in heaven. But, somehow or other, there is no gratitude shown towards the Chinese who have conferred these benefits upon them. The British Government is called upon to adopt a more "vigorous" policy, and we all know what that means—

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bullying, gun-boats, big guns, and wholesale slaughter, ending up with wholesale theft.

It is really time to tell these missionaries that they have a perfect right to go to China, if they can; and a perfect right to get killed there, if they must; but no right whatever to demand assistance or protection except from the Lord; and if he chooses to let them be slaughtered, let them be duly thankful for his kindness in calling them to paradise, instead of screaming for vengeance and somebody's blood.

"Christ has commanded us to preach the Gospel to every creature." So says the *Methodist Times*. Very well then; let the missionaries preach it, and let Mr. Price Hughes join them; but let them also look to Christ, whose commands they are obeying, to take care of them while under service. It is certainly a strange thing to see a British redcoat, with a rifle and a hundred cartridges, helping the Lord Jesus to protect his employees.

William Ferguson, aged twenty-six, appeared before the Glasgow Sheriff on a charge of stealing butter and tobacco. He said he was glad to find himself there, as his apprehension had brought him to the feet of Jesus. The Sheriff gave him six months to study the feet of Jesus thoroughly.

The steeple of Croyland Abbey, one of the oldest in the kingdom, has been struck by lightning. The rector appeals for £1,880 for repairs.

A number of deaths by lightning are reported as occurring during the recent storms. Doubtless such phenomena contributed to the superstition of the past, and perhaps some of the judgments of God which we read of in the Old Testament may have happened in this way.

At Quakertown, Pa., lightning struck the Methodist church, killing one young lady and melting her gold watch into a solid mass. The pastor, the Rev. L. F. Bowman, had most of his clothing literally torn from his body, and all down his face, chest, and the whole front part of his body the lightning made a frightful burn. Seventeen others were stunned, and lay in heaps on the floor. The church was turned into a hospital, and a miracle of Providence was discovered in that the 600 pound bell had not fallen to crush the congregation. "He is a rum un, is Providence," as the rustic remarked.

The New York *World* reports that at Bay City, Michigan, "James Burgess, in a fit of despondency over inability to get work, prayed publicly and privately for death. His prayer not being answered, he tried to starve himself to death; but the starving process became tiresome. As a last resort he tried to brain himself with a hatchet. His head was badly cut, but the doctors think he will recover."

Strong-minded Freethinkers have often been a bit plagued with the sentimental piety of relatives. When a Freethinker is dying and cannot help himself, these well-meaning impertinents sometimes bring in a member of the Black Army to mumble a little nonsense and depart full of cake and sherry. Sometimes they print sloppy verse on mourning cards, and sometimes they carve imbecilities on tombstones.

Professor Huxley was apparently allowed to die in peace, but his relatives gave the great Agnostic a Christian funeral; and, according to the *New Age*, they have engraved the following lines upon the stone which marks his grave:—

> And if there be no meeting past the grave;
> If all is darkness, silence, yet 'tis rest.
> Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,
> For God still "giveth his beloved sleep,"
> And if an endless sleep He wills—so best.

These are not the sentiments which were expressed in Huxley's writings. He never prated about "God," nor spelt his pronouns with capitals. This is the unconscious betrayal of piety speaking through the dead Agnostic's lips.

One of the strangest coffins ever told of is that for which the British war department is said to be responsible. The story is that a workman engaged in casting metal for the manufacture of ordnance at the Woolwich Arsenal lost his balance and fell into a cauldron containing twelve tons of molten steel. The metal was at white heat, and the man was utterly consumed in less time than it takes to tell of it. The war department authorities held a conference, and decided not to profane the dead by using the metal in the manufacture of ordnance, and the mass of metal was actually buried, and a Church of England clergyman read the service for the dead over it.

The General of the Order of the Brothers of Charity went from Rome to Erlau to inspect the convent there. While the General was examining the books, a maid-servant entered the room with some refreshments. Female servants are against the rule in convents of this Order, and the General immediately dismissed the Prior and confiscated all his private property.

Belief in possession by devils is not yet extinct. A writer in the *Tablet* (August 24), speaking of the Luciferans, says: "A far worse case is that of Phineas Walder, who died in London some years ago. He succeeded in getting his daughter, Sophia, so completely possessed by a demon that she is now in hopes that Antichrist may be her great grandson." The curious thing is that Sophia is not in a lunatic asylum. According to the writer, she "generally is either in America or on the Continent, not in London."

Harry Alfred Long is going on to fresh conquests. After apprising the Scottish people of what is unknown in London—namely, that the Hall of Science has been turned into a Salvation Army barracks—he got into a debate with that unutterable blackguard who started the filthy libel which we ran down a few months ago in a court of justice. Long and Powell met in the City Hall to show how Christians love one another. Here is one incident of the encounter, described in the *Daily Mail*: "Shouting and bawling were engaged in. A large number of those present got up on their seats and hurled threats and epithets at the principals and the chairman." By and by there was something like a free fight, and the police entered to restore order. And the whole blessed lot were Christians!

The clericals have put out three schemes for getting more public money for their schools. (1) That of the archbishops and bishops, asking that funds shall be provided by the Education Department. (2) The scheme of the National Society that the State should fix the teaching staff and pay the teachers in all schools, and (3) a scheme of paying for voluntary schools out of the rates. The *Times* calls on them to coalesce their schemes, but as plunder is the object of them all, we sincerely hope that, while the thieves fall out, honest folks will keep their own.

The *English Churchman* says that the Church at Stratford-on-Avon "appears to be more of a Shakespeare Show House" than the House of God. It would not have so many visitors were it otherwise.

The *Difesa* is the official organ of the Roman Catholic Church in Venice. This paper contributes towards peace on earth and goodwill among men by declaring that, "besides being perjurers, forgers, thieves, and swindlers, the Jews are also assassins for religious purposes." Mrs. Robertson, the wife of the author of *Fra Paolo Sarpi*, who records this, and much else in the same strain, remarks: "In England such articles would have no effect on the public mind, save to despise both writer and publisher; but in Venice, where there are, unfortunately, too many 'clerically' disposed families, the effect has been to close a number of doors against Jews seeking employment, and to render the life of those who hold places and offices almost unbearable."

W. J. H. Traynor, the President of the American Protective Association, writes in the *North American Review* on the menace of Romanism. He points out that all good Catholics hold that the Pontiff is delegated with supreme temporal power from a divine source, and that this claim is not put forward in America simply because the civil law is in blank opposition to ecclesiastical law. He claims that the A. P. A. keeps the Catholic Church in check. Pius IX. thundered anathemas and bulls at all liberty whatsoever. Leo XIII. and his lieutenants in the United States approach the same end wrapped in the mantle of American liberty, and with speech softened by the oil of diplomacy. All Papal policy is directed to one end—an end that outlives all popes; and, when Leo goes the way of all flesh, will be followed with the relentlessness of a sleuthhound by his successor. This end is the restoration of the temporal power, the bringing of the whole world to the foot of the Church, the exaltation of the Holy Father into the Sovereign Pontiff.

A gentleman in Shakespeare remarks that the Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. You can prove almost anything from the Bible, if you only go the right way to work. Its contents are so vast and various that you can find a text to countenance nearly every craze that arises in the addled brains of superstition. Take the following illustration. One of the Messianic texts, according to Christians, is this: "He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken." This is said to refer by anticipation to Jesus Christ. The two thieves who were crucified with him are related to have had their legs broken by the Roman soldiers, but J. C. was spared this outrage, as it was thought that he was dead already.

But now come the Peculiar People, whose peculiarity is that they try to *act* upon what they consider the Bible

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means. One of them has just told an East-end coroner that Peculiar People never break an arm or a leg; if they do, it proves they are not Peculiar People. Being asked for a reason, the "Peculiar" elder, who was giving evidence at the inquest, cited this very text about keeping his bones. Any strong fellow with a big iron bar could demonstrate on the legs of all the Peculiar People that there was not a Peculiar Person amongst them.

These Peculiar People preserve some old superstitions. The early Christians believed their bones were the seeds of the resurrection, and hence objected to cremation. Bastian tells us that the natives of Bamba say their great Fetish dwells in the bush, where he cannot be seen by anyone. When he dies the priest carefully collects all his bones, so that he may preserve and nourish them that they may revive again when they acquire new flesh and blood. The legend of Jesus escaping the practice usual with criminals is founded on this superstition.

In their doctrine of oiling and laying on of hands, the "Peculiars" also maintain the express injunctions of St. James. Yet the bishops who lay their hands on the heads of all the priests they ordain, saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost," doubtless deride the superstition of the Peculiar People, who are not quite so anxious to escape from kingdom come as themselves.

A new Messiah has sprung up in New Mexico. His name is Francis Schlader. Like the old one, he has spread his fame by his mighty deeds. A string of people follow him, praying to touch the hem of his garment. Blind, deaf, and halt are led or carried to him; women with tiny babes bring them to him to be healed of ailments real or imaginary; old, middle-aged, young, ignorant, and educated Mexicans, Americans of the highest standing in the community, visit him at the lowly homes he most frequents, or in the homes of the rich and prominent, in which he is a welcome guest. One prominent and wealthy citizen has promised to build a church to Schlader if his wife be cured of an affliction. Schlader must look out. He may get too popular, and then perhaps he will be run in by the authorities, if not served like his prototype.

How does this Messiah work his miracles? They follow from his appearance. He is a native of Alsace and Lorraine, and is said to bear a remarkable resemblance to the pictures of J.C., and arranges his hair in a similar manner. This is all the secret. The result is he is followed about by devotees praying him to heal them, and many declare they are healed. Great is the power of faith, as the advertisers of pills well know. It may carry a colocynth concoctor to fortune, as, in the old days, it turned a successful medicine man into a god.

More than one fetish man in Africa, and fakir in India, has gone far on the road to godhead by knowing the occult properties of croton oil. He writes a prescription therein or smears the paper, tells the patient to swallow the charm, and, when it operates, the patient declares, "Here is an exorcisor of demons worthy to rank with the gods."

The Methodists of Colorado are a little ahead of those at home, and have voted in favor of admitting women as lay delegates to the General Conference. Whether the women or the Church will gain by the change is a question.

Mrs. Gregory, who obtained a decree nisi for a divorce on the ground of the cruelty and adultery of her husband, a Manchester clergyman, has had the decree made absolute.

The most Christian and Catholic Emperor of Austria does not want any real disciples of Jesus in his dominions. Dr. Bela Skarpan was serving his second half year at the garrison of Kashan, and six weeks before the termination of the time wrote a letter to the Commander, declaring himself as a disciple of Count Tolstoi, and that his principles now forbade him to serve any longer in the army. It was at first believed that Skarpan was disturbed in intellect, and the matter was treated as if nothing had taken place, But the Doctor persisting, he was placed under arrest, examined as a lunatic, and, finally, sentenced to the loss of his rank, to three months' strict imprisonment, to serve all the lost serving time, and to the loss of his medical diploma. He cannot practise in the Austro-Hungarian kingdom, or in any other State in alliance with that kingdom.

Dr. Griffith John, of the English mission in China, says: "The opium trade has been forced by Christian England upon the Chinese, and that in direct opposition to the moral convictions of the nation as well as the honest and long-continued resistance of the Chinese Government." This must be pleasant reading to English Christians who send missionaries to convert the heathen Chinese. "The Chinese," says Dr. John, "call us 'devils,' and when I think of this unprincipled and destructive trade I cease to wonder at it." Well, "the devils" are Bible-readers and true-blue Christians.

The aim of the new Curates' Movement is, we are told, to bring about these two reforms: (1) The entire abolition of the present system of patronage in the Church of England; and (2) the abrogation of all the existing distinctions between incumbents and curates by the substitution therefor of parochial colleges of priests. If, says the Rev. Dr. Thackeray (Greenwich), these reforms can be obtained within the Church without the necessity of Disestablishment, well and good. If not, then some amongst us will know that that policy, to which we are at present disinclined, will not be without its very valuable compensations.—*Daily News.*

The Spiritists of the Manchester district had a meeting in regard to the recent conviction of Miss Smith and Mrs. Hankey for professing to tell fortunes. They did not resolve to carry the case to a higher court, leaving the suspicion that there is something shady in the case; but they petitioned Mr. Balfour, "as a recognised friend of psychical research," to repeal the obnoxious enactment by which the convictions were obtained. They also submitted a memorial to the Home Secretary for an inquiry on behalf of Miss Smith, making no mention of her co-defendant. The meeting also passed a resolution, necessary for its own credit, denouncing those who practised mediumship for purposes of gain.

By the Act of George IV., chap. 83, sec. 4, every person pretending or professing to tell fortunes, or using any subtle craft, means, or device, by palmistry or otherwise, to deceive or impose on any of Her Majesty's subjects, is punishable as a rogue and vagabond; and liable, on conviction, to commitment by *one* Justice for not exceeding fourteen days, or by two Justices in petty sessional court for not exceeding three calendar months. The words "or otherwise" were, in the Slade case, construed to cover pretence to hold communication with the spirits of the dead, the Act being interpreted by the light of 9 George II., chap. 5, which repealed the Acts against witchcraft, while making its pretences a felony. The penalty of three months' imprisonment with hard labor was given in the case of Slade.

The practice of astrology, for the purposes of gain, is an offence against the statute, and even the *offering* by advertisement in newspapers to cast nativities and answer astrological questions, and pretending by circular letter, in return for certain remuneration, to furnish a description of the person, liability to disease, marriage, occupation most suitable, etc., by the position of the planets at nativity, without proof that anybody has been told anything, has been regarded as ample legal evidence of a pretence to tell fortunes.

We are totally averse to any attempt to stamp out old faiths or new by legal penalties. Every form of opinion and practice should have a fair field and no favor, unless it is a manifest breach of the peace or incitement to crime. No one is obliged to pay mediums or astrologers, any more than to consult a phrenologist or physician; and it is always the poor ones, who in some cases manifest very interesting survivals of ancient faiths, who are dropped upon. It is time this Vagabond Act was repealed. Obtaining wealth by false representations of another world is too old a game, and one too consecrated in high places, to die out by any other force than that of education.

A writer in the *English Churchman* on "Are Missions a Mistake?" says that Christ's commands, for which he cited the Apocryphal Mark xv. 15, are addressed, like the claptrap sermons of devil dodgers, "to men only." Therefore missionary women had no business in China.

Sixteen thousand deaths from cholera are reported from Japan. Of course, the Christian God cannot be expected to look after heathens.

Thaddeus McCarthy, Bishop of Cork, 1490–1492, has had his cultus confirmed by the Roman Congregation of Rites. His funeral is said to have been marked by miracles, and there are plenty of priests who hope to get some good out of the old bishop yet.

The *Journal of Education* gives the following among actual children's answers:—Q.—Give a proof of the earth being round. A.—It says in the Bible, "World without end." Q.—What happened to the Israelites after they ate the quails? A.—They had indigestion. Q.—On what occasion did our Lord use the words, "With God all things are possible"? A.—To the woman who had seven husbands. Q.—How many Apostles were there? A.—Thirteen. St. Matthew tells the names of twelve, and St. John gives us the name of the other one—"Verily," that Jesus used to talk to so much.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 8, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—Sept. 1, Plymouth; 22, Sheffield. October 6 and 13, Foresters' Hall, London; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh. November 17, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—Thanks for the enclosures. Scotland is still much darkened by Christian superstition, but the light of Freethought is gradually spreading.

W. Bennett.—You may well have knowledge enough to be a Freethinker—as it is evident you have—without having acquired the art of writing good verse. The composition of poetry does not come by nature, like eating and drinking; it comes by close study and long and careful practice. Take our advice and stick to prose.

London Secular Federation.—Miss A. Brown, hon. sec., begs to acknowledge 13s. 6d. from Finsbury Park Branch, and requests that all communications, for the present, be addressed to her at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

G. H. Rush.—We have handed your letter to Mr. Forder, who attends to all orders for literature. Mrs. Besant's *Law of Population* has been withdrawn from circulation. She is no longer a Malthusian.

J. Seddon.—See paragraph. We hope Mr. Cohen's labors in Manchester will be crowned with success.

A. J. H.—Mr. Armstrong's letters may deserve all your praise, but we cannot adopt your opinion without seeing for ourselves. Why not send us the correspondence?

W. T. Griffiths.—We have no right to reprint the lady's article, much as we might like to. Glad to hear you are so pleased with Mr. Foote's success at St. James's Hall.

Stanley Jones, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, N., is wishful to obtain lecturing engagements during the winter in London. He is booked up to the end of September. Metropolitan Branch secretaries will perhaps note, and communicate early with Mr. Jones.

J. G. Bartram (Newcastle).—Sorry to hear Mrs. Thornton Smith disappointed you on Sunday. It is a serious matter when a hall and advertising have to be paid for. We hope there is a satisfactory explanation.

C. S. Dodd.—The circulation of Mr. Engström's pamphlet will do us no harm; quite the contrary. Mr. Foote is now making fresh country engagements, and will offer Liverpool a date.

J. P. Gilmour.—Sorry the Glasgow *Evening News* published such a slanderous statement without inserting your correction. Long and Powell are a curious couple. Strange fruits of Christianity after nearly two thousand years' culture.

J. Morrison.—Cuttings are always welcome.

A. G. Levett.—Received with thanks.

W. Agnew.—Mr. Foote has many pamphlets to publish as soon as he gets rid of his present worries. His presidential duties, by preoccupying his time and attention, have been a serious hindrance to his literary work.

Enquirer.—We have not compared any of the English translations of Renan with the French originals. No edition of the *Vie de Jesus* is valuable unless it be the thirteenth or a later one. Renan's preface to the thirteenth edition shows a great advance on the path of heterodoxy. In particular, he gives up the Johannine authorship of the fourth gospel entirely. The book itself, apart from that preface, has very little value except as a literary composition. It is not history, but elegant religious fiction.

Papers Received.—Glasgow Evening Citizen—Port Elizabeth Telegraph—Crescent—Open Court—Christchurch Times—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Boston Investigator—Morning—Truthseeker—New York Public Opinion—Isle of Man Times—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Twentieth Century—Diamond Fields Advertiser.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

My experiment at St. James's Hall has been a striking success. For the time of the year the audiences have been simply wonderful. One of the most gratifying features has been the attendance of many strangers, including a considerable proportion of ladies. As soon as I am free to do so, which I hope will be shortly, I intend to organise another course of lectures in the West-end of London, either at St. James's Hall again, or in a still larger hall in the immediate vicinity.

For the present our Sunday evening meetings will be held in the fine, large Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, within three minutes' walk of Aldersgate-street Station. Cars from the East-end, and from Holborn and Bloomsbury, pass the door. The first lecture will be delivered this evening (September 1) by Mr. S. P. Putnam, his subject being "Colonel Ingersoll and American Freethought." This is Mr. Putnam's last appearance on a public platform during his present visit to England, and there should be a large gathering of London Freethinkers. I take the chair myself on this occasion.

I have engaged the Foresters' Hall for thirteen Sundays at my own risk, undertaking to pay everything, including the lecturers' fees. We cannot take money at the doors, but tickets are printed as for the St. James's Hall lectures, only at a lower figure. The prices are one shilling, sixpence, and threepence. Friends can purchase tickets, which bear no particular date, and use them at any time, giving one up to the attendant when they choose to come. They are obtainable at 28 Stonecutter-street. Friends who come to the hall unprovided with a ticket will find Miss Vance outside, and she will inform them where tickets can be procured.

One friend who had sent a cheque for the Hall of Science fund not only desires me to keep it, but has sent a further cheque for the same purpose. I shall be glad to hear from others as to whether I can use all or any part of their donations, or even of money that was intended for shares—which is, of course, otherwise returnable. I have undertaken a heavy responsibility. Time and energy I am ready to give, but others should help me financially.

The rank and file of our party ought to do something. They may be able to give little, but that little should not be withheld. I propose to open a "Shilling Fund" the first week in October. My readers who desire to see the torch of Freethought carried over London and the provinces should send me during that week postal orders for one or more shillings. At least a thousand ought to subscribe in this way, and if they do so they will be investing a trifle, most practically, in the propagation of their principles. And what is the value of a man's principles if he will not back them up with a shilling?

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's experiment at St. James's Hall came to a most successful close on Sunday evening, when another splendid audience assembled at his lecture on "Religion in the Light of Science." Many ladies were again present, and a considerable number of strangers. The lecture lasted nearly an hour and a half, and the meeting was keenly responsive to the end. Mr. James Rowney presided again. He is an excellent chairman, and has been very active in promoting the success of this venture. The little discussion which followed was hardly worth a mention.

Plenty of handshaking went on before the meeting entirely dispersed. It was generally agreed that the "attack on the West-End" should be continued. Mr. Foote was asked what he meant to do next. He replied that he intended to organise more lectures during the winter, either at St. James's Hall or at some other hall in the neighborhood of Piccadilly. "The sooner the better" was the general cry.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured at Milton Hall to an enthusiastic audience. To-day (Sunday, September 1) Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth.

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Mr. S. P. Putnam has been amongst us for four months. He has had a good time, as the Yankees say; and if money is far from plentiful, he has experienced no lack of hospitality. Wherever he has gone the "saints" have endeavored to make his visit interesting and enjoyable. He has thus seen more of Great Britain in four months than many visitors contrive to see in a year. At the same time he has made acquaintance with the Freethought party in this country, and he will be able to tell his own party in America something of our spirit and methods.

Mr. Putnam's first lecture was delivered in London. His last lecture will also be delivered there, and Mr. Foote will take the chair, as he did on the previous occasion. The subject of the lecture will be "Colonel Ingersoll and American Freethought." London Freethinkers should make a big rally this evening (September 1). The meeting will be the first in the fine, large Foresters' Hall (Clerkenwell-road), which Mr. Foote has engaged for thirteen Sundays.

The farewell dinner to Mr. Putnam takes place on the following Wednesday (September 4) at the Holborn Restaurant. The tickets are four shillings each, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote will preside, and will be supported by Messrs. Charles Watts, George Anderson, G. J. Holyoake, J. M. Wheeler, R. Forder, and other leading Secularists. Those who intend to "assist" (as the French say) at this function should obtain tickets by Monday, otherwise a hitch may occur in the arrangements. The Holborn Restaurant people must be informed on Tuesday how many they should provide for. There is sure to be a good dinner, some brief if not good speeches, and some cheerful music to season the whole entertainment. All that is wanted is a good company—that is to say, good people and plenty of them.

The *Universal Republic* (Portland, Oregon), in its August number, says: "The *Freethinker*, published in London, England, stands at the head of the list of Freethought journals. It is ably edited. It teaches the Brotherhood of Man, in place of the creeds and dogmas taught by the Christian world."

We do not think it necessary always to return a compliment, even to a lady. But we may say why we appreciate this one. The *World's Advance Thought* and the *Universal Republic* are two monthly journals in one. They are each of eight pages, mostly written by the editor, who sets up the matter in type, carries formes to the press, prints, and publishes the paper. The editor is a woman, Lucy A. Mallory. She lives mainly on biscuits, cheese, and raisins, and devotes her surplus to feeding and educating other people's children. When we heard this from a vegetarian paper we sent her a copy of our own.

The August 5 number of the New York *World*, sent us by Mr. L. Levine, is quite a Freethought number. It gives long extracts from John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Jefferson, and others on Liberty. The enforcement of Sunday laws is opening eyes in America to the natural alliance between religion and tyranny.

One would expect a Christchurch paper to be very ecclesiastical. But the *Christchurch Times* is anything but that, and has an excellent article on "Agnosticism" in its issue for August 23. It deals mainly with the views of Professor Huxley, of whom it says: "The truth never had a more fearless and noble champion." "Huxley," it adds, "has taught us that philosophy is, after all, only a purified form of common sense. We must all learn to say we 'don't know.' Like the mongoose of Kipling's delightful tale, the human race should have for its motto 'Run and find out'; but we must consent to be Agnostics until our inquiries are satisfied, instead of jumping rashly at the conclusions we happen to deem convenient or comforting."

The members of the Westminster Branch had their annual excursion by brake to Epping Forest last Sunday. The weather was all that could be desired. After a delightful ramble through the forest the party all sat down to tea at "The Robin Hood." All expressed themselves as having spent a most enjoyable day. Large quantities of old *Freethinkers* were distributed on the down journey.

Mr. C. Cohen is conducting a week's Freethought Mission at Manchester. Sunday mornings and evenings he lectures in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints. Saturday evening (August 31) at 6.30 he delivers an open-air lecture in Stevenson-square, and on the following Tuesday (September 3) another near the Labor Hall, Gorton. The latter is a new station, and we hope the local Freethinkers will rally to Mr. Cohen's support there.

We are pleased to notice that the case of the Seventh-Day Adventists, who are in prison in America because they obey the Bible injunction to work six days and rest on the seventh, is to be brought before the Supreme Court of the United States. If it does nothing else, it will serve as an eye-opener to the hypocrisy of the Sabbatarians.

It is gratifying to see a paper like the *Glasgow Herald* allowing space to a correspondent like "Neuron," who argues powerfully against the existence of "soul" or "spirit" independently of the body. The same paper inserts a letter from "Essayist" chaffing the ministers who let ladies read essays before Bible classes, and asking them why they don't stick to the inspired teaching of St. Paul, who said: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach." Good old Paul! Cock-a-doodle-doo!

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (July 27 and August 3).

FRIDAY is a brilliant day in the annals of the Secular Pilgrim. I visit Newstead Abbey, the home of Lord Byron. Mr. Stapleton and Mr. Parrott are with me on this trip. Newstead Abbey is only about eight miles from Nottingham. It was in Nottingham that Byron lay in state. I was pointed to the very room, in an ancient building, where he thus lay. An immense procession followed the funeral *cortège* to Hucknall Church, where the poet was buried with sixty of his ancestors. There is nothing more beautiful in any land than Newstead Abbey. It is now owned by Mr. W. F. Webb, a friend of Livingstone, and himself a renowned traveller and hunter. He must possess great wealth, for the Abbey is kept in a most noble and attractive condition. It is approached from the station by a wide gravelled road, through green fields and beauteous groves. We pass over the river, alongside a dashing cataract which flows from the lake above. The Abbey is of the loveliest architecture of the Middle Ages. It is grace itself, and indicates the wonderful poetic feeling of that awakening time, a dawn gemmed with a thousand stars. Only the front arches of the church itself remain, with the windows and the portal, giving a weird, faint picture of immemorial years. The habitable part still endures, in which are hundreds of relics of the poet and his ancestors; the rooms where kings have visited and slept; portraits of beauties and heroes; swords and helmets; and the table where Byron wrote his immortal verse, in which there was more concentrated energy of genius than in any other poetry of his time, and which was ablaze with revolutionary thoughts. We see the surroundings that nurtured the mental life of the fitful bard; the ruins of the past and the beauties of nature; the fields and groves and waters; the Annesley Hills, where brooded the spirit of his fatal love. We can imagine the poet amidst these variable scenes, so many pictures of which abide in his glowing melodies. Newstead Abbey is rich with treasures, and the gloomy history of man is here recorded, together with its most marvellous romance and illustrious genius. Here is the oak which Byron planted, and which, once on the point of dying, now flourishes green and beautiful. Here is the tree on which he carved his own and his sister's name when he bade farewell forever to Newstead Abbey; and here is the monument to his dog, who possessed all the virtues without the vices of man. About the Abbey are extensive and magnificent gardens, in which are flowers of all hues, spreading along the wanderer's path with oriental luxuriance.

From Newstead Abbey we go to Hucknall, a colliery town, smoky and dirty, and busy with marketing; an uncouth place, it seemed to me, for the ashes of the immortal bard. The church is a solemn but not very imposing structure. A melancholy graveyard spread around it. No one of distinction is buried here. Within are the immortal dead. The bones of Byron lie beneath the stone floor. We read the inscription, and muse in the shadow of the grey walls. An unpretentious mansion of the dead is this—a gloomy place to quench the fires of the human mind that flame to the stars, then sink to earth. All this, and nothing more! was the refrain that rolled through my mind as I gazed upon the dim relics of the dead. No voice can utter anything more. The darkness abides while we love and honor the heroic spirit. Byron perished in the glorious effort to win liberty for Greece; and more than this, be it spoken to his undying praise, Byron's maiden speech in the House of Lords was for the defence of the Nottinghamshire workmen, among whom he then lived, against the death penalty which the aristocrats were endeavoring to inflict upon those poverty-stricken men who in their blind wrath, destroyed some machinery, thus putting the rights of wealth above the rights of humanity. Against this Byron protested with all the ardor of his soul and the eloquence of his tongue.

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Besides the memory of Lord Byron in Nottingham, there is the house where Henry Kirke White was born; and also, in the process of demolition, the birthplace of Phillip James Bailey, who, half a century ago, at the age of twenty-two, wrote "Festus," a most extraordinary and brilliant poem, and, although living to this day, he has not again penned a line worthy of preservation. There is also a house on one of the main streets, still standing and used for a hotel, in the same shape it was in 1400, years before the discovery of America. For over 400 years no alteration has been made in its appearance.

On Saturday morning Mr. J. R. Anderson accompanied me to the university, which is a notable and flourishing institution. It has over 1,700 students. It has a machinery and engineering department connected, so that the student can have a practical and industrial education if he wishes. It has also a very valuable museum.

Mr. Anderson is a prominent citizen, a member of the Common Council, and a pronounced Freethinker. Among other friends here are Mr. and Mrs. Marriott, formerly of America. Mr. Marriott was in the army under the Stars and Stripes. I had also the pleasure of meeting Mr. Amos Waters, a busy contributor to many literary periodicals, and a philosophical Freethinker. He is known on both sides of the Atlantic.

Mr. Jackson, Mr. Murray, Mr. and Mrs. Burton, with others, are friends that added to the pleasure of my stay in Nottingham. I had a varied and entertaining visit, which, while restful, was animated and instructive. I must thank Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton and the little children for their cordiality and goodwill, and the enjoyment of a happy home, and I heartily reciprocate the wish of my host that I shall see Nottingham again before I surrender the ghost.

On Saturday afternoon, June 29, I leave Nottingham for Sheffield. I am accompanied by Mr. Snell, who, I hope, will sometime visit me in America. He would like Yankeeland, I am sure, for a change. And the Freethinkers of our country would find in him a bright and brave champion.

The first impression one gets of Sheffield, as he rolls through on the railroad train, is that of a smoky, dingy manufacturing city, where it is impossible for anything like beauty to flourish. I was told when I came to Sheffield that there was nothing to see, only long rows of tenement houses and vast and gloomy buildings, lighted with the glare of furnace fires, in which a thousand busy hands sharpen cutlery for the world. But, as a matter of fact, Sheffield is a handsome city, when you travel out of the smoke to the surrounding hills. There are five valleys in Sheffield, and five meandering streams here unite into the river Don. Quite a variety, therefore, appears in Sheffield. It is not a monotonous manufacturing place, where only smoke and steam fill the air, and nothing is heard but the rumble and roar of myriad machineries. From the crowded valleys where the vast business of the city is transacted, and where indeed the blue light of heaven is often shut out by the murky clouds that encircle the heart of the fiery metropolis, from these steaming and rushing centres of activity you come upon ample hills, beautiful green fields stretch away, groves and gardens glitter, and nature puts on her most alluring robe; and as you wander over these hills you advance into magnificent prospects, and no scenery in the world can surpass the loveliness and grandeur of what greets you in the vicinity of Sheffield. Somehow or other, Ruskin seemed to see the point, and he placed here one of the most charming, instructive, and valuable museums to be found anywhere. It is worth crossing the Atlantic just to view these wonderful treasures. And why did Ruskin place these priceless exhibitions of nature and art alongside the rush and bustle and dirt of Sheffield? Why not at Oxford or other quiet town with educational and artistic associations? Ruskin himself supplied the answer. He said that ironwork was a necessary art; that the cutler's art at its best, as manifested in Sheffield, is "unsurpassable by that of any living nation," and also "because Sheffield is within easy reach of beautiful natural scenery."

The Sheffield Corporation, not unmindful of the honor bestowed upon the city by Mr. Ruskin, purchased Meersbrook Hall for the home of the museum—a beautiful estate with old trees, and walls gay with roses and clematis, and in summer the haunt of blackbirds, thrushes, and rooks. It is in perfect accordance with the glories of the museum, which, though small, contains the most precious wealth of nature and of art. One could spend days in these little rooms, and yet ever find something new and entrancing to study and muse over. Every picture and cast on the walls, every book and print in the library, every stone in the mineralogical gallery, is selected for a special purpose, and in its own peculiar department each is the best that could be procured. The object of Mr. Ruskin was to educate the people in art. The mineral room simply astonishes one with its crystal splendors. There are "precious stones," from sapphires to diamonds, and from topazes to emeralds and opals. There is a unique example of a pale-blue form of topaz from the Ural mountains, associated with smoky quartz and mica. Perhaps there is nothing like it in the world. The iridescence of the opal is amazing, and you wonder that in the heart of nature, in "the dark unfathomed caves," such glorious hues could flash and flame. As you look into these beautiful crystals there seem to be opening upon you depths of color shining far away in ever-changing lustres while you pass from point to point and gaze into the resplendent chambers. I know of no place where more wealth of natural beauty is revealed.

The books are ancient—going back to 1100—and they display the exquisite art of those old days, and indicate with what a religious fervor the printers must have labored. These books are enriched with miniatures, scroll-work, and ornamental borders. Here are also many of the original drawings of Turner; a painting of the front of St. Mark's, which it took the artist three years to complete, and many of the works of ancient Italian masters which cannot be found even in their own land. I was surprised to find such a wonderful display, amidst such beautiful surroundings, near the grimy machineries of toil. It shows that Ruskin had some deep insight into the heart of man, and that he saw the latent poetry and romance of human toil; that where man labors, even in dust and darkness, there are the possibilities of noblest things. One might spend days in Ruskin's museum and find instruction, for, though the collection is not imposing, yet it is infinitely suggestive, and leads one into a thousand pathways of thought and investigation.

Sheffield is not simply a hive of industry—a black mass of manufacturing facilities; it is a city with noble and magnificent surroundings, and whichever way you journey a wide and splendid country appears. Sherwood Forest, now no more, except in patches, once waved its endless branches from this vicinity to Nottingham. A cultivated land takes the place of the "boundless contiguity of shade." The harvest field shines, and the elegant dwelling. I only have the opportunity to enjoy one drive, and that is to Chatsworth Hall, the home of the Duke of Devonshire. This is about twelve miles from Sheffield. On Monday we set forth, a somewhat cloudy day, but now and then the sunshine burst forth in brilliant glory, and all the distant heights catch the changing lustre, and a scene of enchanting variety is presented. We travel over immense hills. There are no sharp ascents here. It is mostly like a vast table land, teeming with harvest, while yet the moorlands offer a bare and solitary appearance, so that we see nature in majestic contrast. The scene on every side is ample. As we roll alongside Froggatt Edge, one of the most lovely and stupendous landscapes in the world unfolds from the valley beneath to the mountainous horizon. Embosomed in the valley, hundreds of feet below your flying vehicle, is a charming ancient village, over which hovers the atmosphere of golden romance. The valley, rich with fields and groves, opens and spreads away in gorgeous loveliness, while the shining river Derwent, celebrated in song, like a ribbon, ornaments the long-extending prospect. Above the valley stretch the vast hills in sombre columns, edged with wild precipitous rocks and dusky forest. On the side whence we view this resplendent panorama the walls seem to go sheer down to the valley itself. Almost from our very feet and the banks of the luminous river, swells above and beyond the village, that hangs like a jewel on the scene, the enormous height, whose verdant fields sink into desolate spaces.

From this attractive point we sweep on to the great hall, around which are so many memories of the past. Passing through the delightful park, where the deer are grazing, we see Queen Mary's Bower, a lovely island, and yet a prison for the imperious queen, where her heart must have poured itself out in useless lamentations. Here she could enjoy the sunshine and the flowers, look upon the bright, blue sky, but round about her rolled the relentless waters, and there was no escape. Beautiful were the scenes she gazed upon in her captivity—the great hall, in the midst of massive foliage, where royalty was wont to spend its hours of luxury. Within its spacious rooms are some of the finest pictures and statues in England, rare china and porcelain and treasures of the olden time. The garden attached is a marvellous profusion of riches, pomp of color, with fountains and glades and cataracts in the gloom of wood and steep. The hot-house is the largest in the kingdom. It has taken the painters three years to re-decorate the roof and sides. It shines with tropical splendor. Alas for the fortunes of the day! just as we left this luxurious abode, to see new curiosities, a sudden shower descended upon our troop, and we were obliged to find refuge wherever we could, for the stately footman had forbidden the use of umbrellas while in these palatial regions, and so we had to dive under the bushes, and it was a somewhat disconsolate scene for about ten minutes, the rain pouring in torrents. Well, we were repaid for the momentary discomfort. After the shower the sun came out more gorgeously than ever, and the afternoon was simply superb. Everything was fresh and glittering. We visit the church and churchyard, where is buried Lord Frederick Cavendish, who was murdered at Phœnix Park. It is a quiet place, surrounded with a model village. If one might find, outwardly, a paradise on earth, it would be on this spot, where everything seems so

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harmonious. All the dwelling-houses have a supreme aspect of utility and elegance. But I suppose I should get tired of such a comfortable existence in about a day's time, and should want to fly off to the turmoil of London. There is such a thing as life flowing along so smoothly that death would be welcomed as a change. However, these placid scenes remain in the memory with a charming and romantic perspective, and we dream of these mild resting-places when "life's fitful fever" is over. Amidst the glory of the descending sun we return homeward, climbing great hills and plunging into deep valleys, with the moon in queenly lustre along the radiant heavens, and then the innumerable lights of Sheffield, as we drive into its smoky and resounding realms, and one more beautiful picture is added to the gallery of memory.

S. P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

BOOK CHAT.

THE *Psychic Mirror*, which is sent to us from J. Thomas, 10 Sefton-street, Longsight, Manchester, is a curious publication. It deals in the occult, and its assertions are sufficiently startling. The writer says (we quote *verbatim et literatim*): "My first point is, that there are, at this day, Ten thousand men—Androginous—now on this earth, who have not tasted death, who live the life immortal, in bodies that have never seen corruption!" After this we are not surprised to read of the common lime tree: "My soul perceives a hallowed mystery about this tree, which renders it uneque" (*sic*). Certainly the *Psychic Mirror* is "uneque."

* * *

Gems of Thought, by Jos. M. Wade (H. A. Copley, Canning Town, E.; 2d.), is another strange production. It takes as its motto: "Believe nothing, accept nothing because another says it is true. Follow no one. Do not accept what I write; but you will either search all things, the inner consciousness being the judge, or you will remain in occult darkness." This is a pure gem, so we must give another as a touchstone of the writer's quality: "There is no more relationship between a mother and her son than there is between her and a Hottentot; we come direct from mother earth." We have never doubted that there were minds around us in the animistic stage ready to receive Theosophy, any more than we doubt that others are in the stage of fetishism, prepared to believe in spells and amulets. Indeed, all religion is but a survival of these old-world faiths.

* * *

Passages of the Bible Chosen for their Literary Beauty and Interest, by J. G. Frazer, is notable on account of the author, whose *Golden Bough* shows he is in a position to understand the underlying superstition of Jewish literature. The interest of the book is increased by Mr. Frazer's erudite notes, giving numerous references to parallel stories and passages found in ancient and modern literature, and illustrating some Hebrew legends and customs from the folk-lore of other peoples.

* * *

The *Bookman* announces that a biography of the late Professor W. Robertson Smith, author of *The Religion of the Semites*, has been undertaken by one of his most intimate friends.

* * *

The *Academy* (August 24), noticing under the head of "Regeneration" the new edition of Max Nordau's *Conventional Lies*, says the book "seems to be well worth reading," and mentions that the reader should remember that it has been published for some ten years, in order to do it the full justice which it deserves.

* * *

The *Hamilton Advertiser* mentions Mr. David Dall, of Motherwell, as having in the press a work on *The Mistakes of the Bible*. If he goes into his subject fully, we should say it would make a considerable volume.

Sunday Amusements.

The only ground on which restrictions on Sunday amusements can be defended, must be that they are religiously wrong—a motive of legislation which can never be too earnestly protested against. "*Deorum injuriæ Diis curæ.*" It remains to be proved that society, or any of its officers, holds a commission from on high to avenge any supposed offence to Omnipotence which is not also a wrong to our fellow creatures. The notion that it is one man's duty that another should be religious was the foundation of all the religious persecutions ever perpetrated, and if admitted would fully justify them.—*J. S. Mill "On Liberty."*

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

THE gaols, penitentiaries, and asylums are full to overflowing in all Christian countries, and the great majority of their inmates profess belief in the Christian religion. The questions might probably be asked: Why so much godlessness in that which claims to be Christian? Where is the divinity of a religion that does not save its members from a hell of mental chaos here, and what warrant have they, therefore, that it can save them from hell hereafter? It is plain that Christianity has not substantiated its claim to divinity.

Christians think that they are sanctified and holy because they have avowed "Christ and him crucified," and attend church regularly, and observe its ordinances. It never strikes them that the ignorance of their preachers in joining together lust-and-sin-cursed people in the bonds of wedlock, for a fee, is responsible for many of the existing evils; and that the superstitious and incomprehensible dogmas inculcated by them, which keep the people from thinking for themselves, and realising their responsibility for everything they think and do, are largely responsible for the remaining evils. The intelligence and judgment of the age have advanced too far for people to be satisfied with the ignorant claim that a God or Devil outside of man shapes the destinies of the individual and the world.

The claims of orthodoxy have, in these latter days, been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Its power henceforth must wane, for the Light of Truth has judged its claims and found them wanting.

—*World's Advance Thought.* LUCY A. MALLORY.

A Chinese View of Christian Missions.

A Washington telegram states that Mr. Moy, one of the secretaries of the Chinese Legation, in an interview with a reporter respecting recent events in China, said: "While we have no statistics available, I believe, and so does the minister, that there are few, if any, converts to Christianity among the higher class of Chinese. Our religion is that of Confucius, and that is good enough for us. No decent Chinaman will have anything to do with the missions. The missionaries cannot talk the language, and none of the better people of China speak English. Only criminals have learned it whom the missionaries have engaged as interpreters. There are only two ways to get converts in China. One way is to hire them, and then they are converts as long as they are paid; the other way is the kidnapping of children. The hiring of converts is an expensive business, but the missions are well supplied with money, and hire and kidnap, and show the results. The interpreter will find a girl whose parents are poor. He persuades the child to visit the mission, and then tells the missionary she desires to be a Christian. He is unable to talk to her, but keeps her secluded, and the interpreter bullies her. She practically becomes the latter's slave, and remains so until he sells her, perhaps for a vile life outside. This is the reason for the belief among the Chinese that the missions kidnap the children."—*Dalziel.*

Children and Early Faiths.

The following actual conversation, recorded when it took place (August 20, 1895), may possibly throw some light upon the faiths of early man. At any rate, I think it worth preserving. *Scene*—Atop a tramcar; a starry night. *Dramatis Personæ*—A boy nearly six years old and a child-like lady. Boy (after looking at the stars)—"Who keeps all the world?" Lady—"What do you mean?" Boy—"There must be a man to look after it." Lady—"It must be a pretty big man." Boy—"Who looked after the world before we came here? If papa kept the world, he'd have lots of money." (He looked pleased, as if he thought "I should share.") Lady—"Yes." Boy—"How many measures would measure to the stars?" Lady—"I'm sure I don't know. They are very, very far off." Boy—"If I had all the measures in the world, could I measure to the stars?" The lady said she did not know, and the conversation changed to mundane matters, much to the regret of the lady's husband, who is not the boy's father, but who is anxious to know if he will turn out a theologian or a philosopher. He seems to be getting through the theological stage early.—J. M. W.

They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

—*James Russell Lowell.*

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CORRESPONDENCE.

"ANANIAS AGAIN."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A correspondent forwards me a copy of the *Freethinker* of June 30, headed "Ananias Again," in which Mr. Hugh Price Hughes is violently attacked. The paragraph professes to be taken from the *Liberator*. There is an error here which I cannot explain, but I shall be obliged if you will allow me to inform your readers that the paragraph in question never appeared in the paper of which I am editor. Thanking you in advance for making the correction,

HOWARD EVANS (Editor of the *Liberator*).

[There is more than one *Liberator* in the world. The paper we quoted from is edited by Mr. Joseph Symes at Melbourne, and is well known—at least by name—to most of our readers.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

WHERE IS GOD?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In May, 1882, I had a brush with the leading Anglo-Israelites, whose operations I designated as a *swindle*. They were then raising money by subscription in order to dig for the Ark of the Covenant in the potato fields at Tara, Ireland. The Ark may be there with old Yaveh inside (*qui sait*), *for God is everywhere*. At any rate, thirteen years have elapsed, but all the digging has produced neither God nor Ark, which is more than passing strange. I summed up the whole thing in a few words, which were reproduced in *British Israel and Judah's Prophetic Messenger*. "Bamboozling the residuum of society and dragging money out of the pockets of the silliest of silly yokels." Dr. C. Hodson Rugg, of 1 Grove-road, St. John's Wood, gave me the following terrible warning: "One can imagine what the shrieks from his sufferings will be when the horrible abyss opens out and engulphs him (Laporte) in the realms of Pluto. Further comment is unnecessary, more than to pray that such a character as Charles Kroll Laporte may be brought to repentance; if not, prevented from infusing his malignant venom in the blood of truth" (*sic*).

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

Christian Results.

After nearly two thousand years of Christian teaching and discipline, how much nearer are we to that ideal life which Christian leading was to bring us to? What must we think of the sentiment implied in the saying of a glorified prince, repeated by a popular emperor, lauding "blood and iron—a remedy which never fails?" . . . . How much moralisation can we trace in the contrast between the practice of savages whose maxim in their inter-tribal feuds is "Life for Life," and the practice of Christian nations who in their dealings with weak peoples take as their maxim "For one life many lives"? Towards the foretold state, when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, how much have we progressed, now that there exist bigger armies than ever existed before? And where are the indications of increased brotherly love in the doings of Christian nations in Africa, where, like hungry dogs round a carcase, they tear out piece after piece, pausing only to snarl and snap at one another?—*Herbert Spencer*.

An account of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, given by Mr. T. C. Owens, an eye-witness, in the *English Churchman* (August 22), cites an incident that has not always been mentioned: "About a score of women, 'saints,' so called 'cousins,' taken from the fishwomen of Naples, who pretend to trace their genealogy from the saint, and who are considered as having his blood flowing in their veins, assembled at the high altar rails and occupied themselves in loud cries and entreaties. By degrees they became very vociferous, calling furiously on the saint in tones of anger and despair."

Some specimens translated from the Italian by a Neapolitan are given as illustrations of these primitive prayers: "'Champion of Christ, you are a pretty saint; make your blood melt.' 'You yellow-faced rascal, why don't you make your blood melt?' 'You yellow-faced scoundrel, how spiteful you are!' 'What is the use of my having prayed to you all my life, if you don't make your blood melt?' 'I'll never pray to you again if you won't make your blood melt.'"

A Little Omission.

What! the legislators of the Indians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans all taught the immortality of the soul, which we find in twenty places even in Homer, and yet the pretended Moses does not speak of it. Not a single word is said of it, either in the Jewish Decalogue or in the Pentateuch. It became necessary for commentators, who were either very ignorant or more inclined to knavery than folly, to twist some passages of Job, who was not a Jew, in order to make it believed by men more ignorant than themselves that Job had spoken of a future life, because he said: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job xix. 25). What connection is there, I pray you, between a sick man who is suffering, but hopes to be cured, and the immortality of the soul, hell, and paradise? If Warburton had contented himself with proving that the Jewish law did not mention a future life, he would have rendered a very great service. But, by the most incomprehensible madness, he wished to have it believed that the stupidity of the Pentateuch was a proof of its divinity, and his excessive pride supported this chimera with the most intolerant insolence.

What! the innumerable number of citizens that have been injured, excommunicated, reduced to beggary, killed, and their bodies cast on the highway; the number of princes dethroned and assassinated, has not yet opened men's eyes! And when we do open them, we perceive that this fatal idol is not yet demolished!

But what shall we substitute in its place, say you? What? A ferocious animal has sucked the blood of my relatives. I tell you to rid yourselves of this beast, and you ask me what you shall put in its place! Is it you that put this question to me? Then you are a hundred times more odious than the Pagan pontiffs, who permitted themselves to enjoy tranquility among their ceremonies and sacrifices, who did not attempt to enslave the mind by dogmas, who never disputed the powers of the magistrates, and who introduced no discord among mankind. You have the face to ask what you must substitute in the place of your fables? I answer you, "God, truth, virtue, laws, rewards and punishments." Preach probity, and do not preach dogmas; be the priests of God, and not the priests of a man.—*Voltaire*.

PROFANE JOKES.

A Rev. Dr., introducing a brother reverend to his congregation, said: "Our brother will now address you on 'Hell,' and it affords me pleasure to say he is full of his subject."

"Did you enjoy the services at church to-day?" "Very little. The music wasn't a bit catchy, and there were no clever lines in the sermon. The minister threw in a little bright business, however, and that saved the entertainment from being utterly stupid."

A Scotch wife, whose man had recently died, was urged by her minister to dry her tears and reconcile herself to the loss. "You know," said the minister, "that we must all die, even Christ had to die when he took upon himself our mortal flesh." "Dae ye tell me," said she in dismay, "that Christ's deid. I never knew that till the now." "Dear me," said the minister, "to think that in the nineteenth century it would be possible to meet with such ignorance." "You see," said she, apologetically, "John was aye that hard that he would never spend a ha'penny on on evening paper, and a body never had the chance o' kenning wha wis deid."

On Missionary Ground.

Good Lady—"Now, little boy; who made you?"

First Kinky-headed Boy (with a charming, toothy smile)—"Dunno'm."

Lady—"God made you, child."

First Boy—"Yes'm."

Lady (to Second Boy)—"Who was the meekest man?"

Second Boy—"Dunno'm."

Lady—"Why, Moses! Moses was the meekest man. You must really try to remember Moses, for I shall ask you again."

Second Boy—"Yes'm."

Lady (to Third Boy)—"Who was the strongest man?"

Third Boy—"Dunno'm."

Lady—"Why, I told you last Sunday! Samson! Samson!"

Third Boy—"Yes'm."

Lady (recapitulating)—"Now, tell me who made you?"

Second Boy—"Moses."

Lady (in despair)—"Oh, no! no!"

Second Boy—"Yes'm, Moses did make me. Dat ar boy what Gord made, he done gone to get er drink."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Forresters' Hall (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, S. P. Putnam, Colonel Ingersoll and American Freethought."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 8, social gathering for members and friends.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, J. Rowney, "Prophecy."

Islington (19 Alwyne-road): 3.15, members' quarterly meeting.

West Ham Secular Ethical Society (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Stephen H. Alison, "Darwinism and Design."

Open-Air Propaganda.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.30, A. G. Hertzfeld will lecture.

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, James Rowney, "Waldron's Blunders."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "How Christianity Became Strong."

Deptford Broadway: 6.30, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Hereafter."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.15, W. Heaford, "The Doctrine of Prayer"; 3.15, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Civilisation."

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 7, W. J. Ramsey will lecture. Thursday, at 8.30, St. John will lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, S. E. Easton will lecture.

Islington (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, St. John will lecture.

Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road): 7, F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist."

Kingsland (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity Critically Examined."

Lambeth (Kennington Park): 3.30, E. Pack will lecture.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, R. Forder, "Religion and Progress."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Voltaire."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester Gate): 8, W. Heaford, "Christianity or Secularism—Which?"

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, S. R. Thompson will lecture; 3.15, Mr. Vining will lecture.

Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection"; 7, S. R. Thompson will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, H. Snell, "Was Christ a Socialist?" 7, "The Gospel of Freethought."

Blackburn: 3, business meeting at secretary's house.

Chatham Secular Hall (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

Derby (Pullicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, H. McGuinness, "The Unemployed."

Liverpool (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Sam Reeves (Fabian), "What Capital Is, and What Capital Is Not."

Manchester Secular Hall (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "The Great French Revolution—Part I., The Night"; 6.30, "An Hour with the Devil."

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, George Selkirk, "The Bible against Itself."

Plymouth (Co-operative Hall, Frankfort-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 3, "Christianity: its Birth, Rise, and Death"; 7, "Does Death End All?—with Special Reference to the Fallacy of Theosophy."

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, select entertainment.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King street): 7, business meeting.

Stockton-on-Tees (53 Dovecote-street): 3, important meeting.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Bradford (Open Market, James-street): 6.30, John Grange, "Can Christ Save Us?"

Bristol (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, a lecture.

Chatham (corner of the New Brompton-road, High-street): 11.15, C. James, "The Decay of Christianity"; 7, "God at the Bar of Humanity."

Derby (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

Manchester (Stephenson-square): 3, C. Cohen will lecture.

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—Sept. 1, 8, and 15, Manchester; 22 and 29, Birmingham.

Stanley Jones, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 1, m. Kingsland, a. Finsbury Park; 8, m. Camberwell, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell; 15, m. Finsbury, e. Edmonton; 22, m. Kingsland, e. Deptford; 25, Hyde Park; 29, Hammersmith; 29, m. Victoria Park, a. Finsbury Park, e. Kilburn.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—Sept. 1, m. Wood Green, e. Tottenham; 8, Westminster; 15, Mile End; 22, Camberwell; 29, Westminster. October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

T. Thurlow, 250 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 8, m. Kingsland, e. Edmonton; 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 29, e. Edmonton.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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CORONERS AND ATHEISTS.

ENGLISHMEN are constantly told that they ought to obey the laws, as the laws are of their own making; not directly, but through their representatives in parliament. They are also told that they should cheerfully, or at least resignedly, obey even bad laws, while agitating or waiting for their improvement. We are reminded that Englishmen have always been a law-abiding people, and we are exhorted to maintain our ancient reputation. All which, of course, is extremely edifying. But what if those who administer the law violate it themselves, even in its very administration? Does not that bring it into the grossest possible contempt? Common people may sin in ignorance or inattention, but those who are appointed to preside over courts of justice cannot plead such an excuse. They are presumed to know the law, and if they do not they are unfit for their offices.

Sometimes, however, the law is deliberately violated by its administrators. Many such cases have arisen under the Oaths Act, which Charles Bradlaugh succeeded in carrying through the House of Commons, and which was promptly agreed to by the House of Lords. According to this Act, every person who was previously required to take an oath, as witness, juror, legislator, or officer of state, is now entitled to make an affirmation instead, by simply declaring that he has *no* religious belief, or that the taking of an oath is *contrary* to his religious belief. It is not competent for a judge or counsel to make any sort of inquisition. The person's declaration entitles him to the privilege of the statute. He is not bound to add another word, and the court is bound to let him affirm. Such is the law. But judges who take their religious prejudices into court have a way of defying it. A common practice is to order a juryman, who says he has no religious belief, to stand down; another juryman is taken in his place, and he is told to wait, as he "may be wanted"—the judge all the while being perfectly resolved that he *shall not* be wanted, at least as an actual juryman. The trick is a contemptible one, and would never be successful if it were not for the absurd and perfectly unconstitutional power exercised by the superior judges under the practice of "contempt of court." Kings and queens must knuckle under to Habeas Corpus, but not so the superior judges. In a fit of temper they can send a man to gaol, and keep him there as long as they please. It is a monstrous survival of the violent old times, when it had a kind of justification. Courts of justice are no longer in any danger, such as that of a prince slapping a judge's face on the bench; and it is simply infamous that a legal officer, however exalted, should be able to accuse a man, try him, and sentence him, all at once—especially when the offence is one against the judge's own "dignity."

Some day or other we hope to have an opportunity of publicly exposing this disreputable trick. It will require a little tact and self-possession, but it is really necessary that someone should have the courage to tell a bigoted judge that if he does not let a man serve as a juryman he has no right to keep him in court as a spectator.

Coroners have not the same power as the superior judges, but they are sometimes as bigoted, and just as apt to be insolent. Witness the following report which appeared in the London newspapers on Saturday evening, August 31:—

> "As the jury were about to be sworn in prior to an inquiry before Mr. Wynne E. Baxter, at the Mile-end Vestry Hall to-day, one of the men summoned avowed that he was a Freethinker. The Christians and Hebrews then took the oath, and the officer said to the Coroner: 'This gentleman is an Atheist.' The Coroner: 'Well, we must find him some place of honor. I should think that corner would do (pointing to a corner away from the jury). You won't feel contaminated by the rest of us now, I should think.' (Laughter.) A Juror: 'I should think not.' The Freethinker made no answer, but smiled. At the termination of the inquiry, in which the isolated one took no part, the Coroner expressed his usual thanks to the jury for their services, and, turning to the Freethinker, said: 'And much obliged to you for your attendance.' (Laughter.) The Freethinker (banteringly): 'You are quite welcome.' (More laughter as the jury left the court.)"

The only gentleman in the company seems to have been the Atheist. Probably he did not know how illegally he was being treated; still he must have known that he was being treated badly; but he kept his temper, and smiled at the cads who were so proud in the consciousness of their numerical superiority. Most likely he reflected that it was the way of religionists to prate of charity on Sunday, and to be malicious every other day in the week. Christians and Hebrews combined against the "infidel." They were ready, on occasion, to quarrel with each other over their gods; but here was a thorough-going wretch with no god at all; so they agreed to "let him have it," just to show that "God is love."

Coroner Baxter played the leading clown in this sorry farce. "You won't feel contaminated by the rest of us" was doubtless meant as a splendid witticism; anyhow it provoked an outburst of laughter. But, after all, it was lucky for the Atheist that the joke was put in that way. A couple of hundred years ago it would have taken another turn. He would then have contaminated *them*, instead of their contaminating *him*, and they would have made a big fire and burnt the contamination out of him. Yes, sarcasm does not bite as deep as the flames of the stake.

All the while that Coroner Baxter was pouring out the small beer of his wit he was openly flouting the law of England. It was his duty to administer the affirmation to that Atheist, and to let him serve as a juror. And when the jury was empanelled he had no more authority over that Atheist than he had over any man in the street. The Atheist could have walked out of court, and knocked down anybody who tried to stop him.

Should this article meet the eye of that Atheist juryman, we hope he will communicate with us immediately. If he does so, we will have an affidavit prepared, which he can sign; and we will then see whether any Member of Parliament has the courage to raise the matter by question in the House of Commons. If not, we will lay the matter before the Home Secretary or the Lord Chancellor. It is simply intolerable that Atheists should be the victims of gratuitous outrage in courts of justice. The law is the law, whether Christians like it or not; and it is high time that they were compelled to recognise the fact.

The incident we have been criticising is a very significant one. It shows that Christianity is essentially a religion of insult and outrage to all who differ from it. Even when the law is made fairer, by the herculean efforts of a great Freethinker, the devotees of Christianity take advantage of their numbers and persecute unbelievers in every way their malignity can suggest. And the moral is, that all we have to do with Christianity is to exterminate it.

G. W. FOOTE.

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CURIOUS RELIGIOUS SURVIVALS.

THE recent case of the Peculiar People, in which an elder declared that the Peculiars could not have a bone broken, or, if they did, they would cease to be Peculiars, instances how deeply some superstitions are embedded beneath the thin veneer of modern civilisation. The superstition in question the elder defended by referring to the Christian fetish book: "A bone of him shall not be broken" (John xix. 36). This saying is founded on the fact that the passover lamb must not have its bones broken (Exodus xii. 46), and this on the earlier fact that the human sacrifice for which the lamb was a substitute was thought to join his totem kindred if the bones were unbroken. Bastian tells us that the natives of Bamba say their fetish dwells in the bush invisible. When he dies the priest collects his bones, so that he may preserve and nourish them that they may revive again when they acquire new flesh and blood. Thus, when a man touched the bones of Elisha, "he revived, and stood up on his feet" (2 Kings xiii. 21); and Ezekiel saw a valley full of dry bones come to life (xxxvii.).

Such bone superstitions might, to-day, be as harmless as wrapping a tooth in salt or carefully burning it—relics of the old faith in sympathetic magic, which held that persons could be affected by getting hold of any article pertaining to them; though the belief would be inconvenient if put to a practical test. Not so innocuous is the Bible-grounded superstition that the only thing to do for a sick person is to send for an elder to lay on hands, anoint with oil, and "the prayer of faith shall save the sick" (James v. 15). The laying on of hands takes us back to the time when this was thought to communicate life, as with Eskimo tribes: and the bishop who lays on his hands and says "Receive the Holy Ghost," and the archbishop who uses holy oil at a coronation, may ridicule and punish Peculiar People, who keep up in ordinary life the very superstitions they themselves reserve for special high and holy occasions.

The case of witch-burning this year in Ireland is another survival of a belief once common, and which, as I show in my pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*, saturates the pages of the "sacred" scriptures. It is only the outcrop of a delusion fostered for ages by medicine-men and priests that they might have the advantage of selling their charms and relics as a specific against witchcraft and possession by devils.

Curious survivals of this same superstition continually turn up in mention of a sect of devil-worshippers—Luciferans—found in Catholic countries. Only a short time ago a lady in Paris brought a criminal action for libel against the *Revue Anti-Diabolique*, a publication regularly issued for the purpose of combating the literal Devil and all his works. The lady was accused by this periodical of having stolen consecrated vessels from different churches for the purpose of using them in "the black art" at a place of Devil-worship near the Rue Cadet. She obtained a verdict, and the editor was punished.

As such cases are continually referred to in Catholic papers as the result of the spread of Atheism, I have taken some pains to unearth the facts about them. The truth is that such vessels are occasionally stolen, and more often wished for, by women. Why? The priests declare they are holy, and must not be touched. They are taboo, like the tree of knowledge of good and evil. More, they contain the god—the very blood, bones, and divinity, with miraculous powers, especially, in the old belief, of removing sterility; for which, by the way, far dirtier emblems have been offered by Catholic priests.

The thieves said to be devil worshippers, and who do have their secret rites, are never unbelievers. They believe too much, or they would never concern themselves about consecrated vessels. They, in fact, retain beliefs which the priests have given up.

Now, good Christian, answer me this: Who are the real devil-worshippers—the poor woman, who, swayed between two faiths, imperils her soul to get a few drops of the holy oil that will bring her love, offspring, and affection; or the Christian priests, who, in the name of their blood-requiring God, have hounded such poor wretches (whom they have kept in ignorance) to death by myriads, under the imputation of witchcraft, because they have practised the rites of the old religion?

A yet darker, deeper strata of superstition is unearthed in the accusation continually brought against the Jews that they steal children, and stab or crucify them, to celebrate their Passover. This very year the *Difesa*, the leading Catholic paper in Venice, specially blessed by the Pope and commended to the faithful, has had a series of articles inciting hatred against the Jews as "religious assassins." Now, nothing is more certain than that, if the Jews ever had any such custom, it is in blank opposition to the Torah, to which their lives are conformed. In my essay on the Passover, in *Bible Studies*, I have ventured to suggest that that institution really was a substitutionary offering for a more ancient and horrible rite of human sacrifice. But this substitution is made by all peoples when they pass out of the hunting into the pastoral stage, though recrudescences of such customs may occasionally survive in mania. But the Jews, as a race, were civilised long prior to the Christian nations, and cases of human sacrifice are frequently brought home to the latter. But in no single instance have they been proved against modern Jews, whose exclusiveness and secrecy of their religious rites have alone continued the old accusation, that has cost them myriads of lives and long ages of persecution at Christian hands.

It is only about a dozen years ago since a superstitious Bible believer named Freeman, in Pocasset, Massachusetts, thought he heard a divine call to imitate Abraham and offer up his only child, a young girl. He called his neighbors together, read the Bible to them, talked with them freely on the subject, and afterwards killed the girl with a carving-knife. But for our lunatic asylums we should hear more of such cases of religious survival. Christianity perpetuates the belief in the efficacy of blood, and in its central doctrine of the Atonement represents God as an old Shylock who will have his pound of flesh.

Quite recently Russia sent a story of a farmer selling his wife, who was in a delicate condition, to a band of robbers. The purchasers bought her because of a superstition that blood taken from the veins of a woman in that condition renders thieves invisible. Here the underlying savage idea is that expressed in the Bible, that "the blood is the life"—the blood which goes to form the hidden new life being supposed of special magical efficacy.

Most curious of all the superstitions is that of self-crucifixion. Not long ago a case cropped up in Hungary where a man took most elaborate pains to crucify himself, and carried out his object. In a recent article I gave a description from Mr. Lummis, an eye-witness, of how the Penitent Brothers of Mexico every Good Friday have an actual flesh-and-blood crucifixion of one of their order, who is selected by lot to bear the sins corporate. In his presidential address before the Folk-Lore Society this year, Mr. Edward Clodd mentions a survival in the Abruzzi mountains of South Italy, where the young men draw lots who shall die for Christ, and the victim is secretly killed. The notions upon which this depends will be found detailed in my new book, *Footsteps of the Past*.

Such instances of outbreak of old superstitions—and I have not given a tithe of those that have come under my own notice—indicate that the scientific civilisation of which we boast is, after all, only a young plant, sometimes growing on a thin top soil, while a little below the surface lie rank weeds of superstition—scotched, but not killed, and ready to grow again could they find fitting opportunity.

Superstitions are not harmless. I have heard it often said: "Well, even if it is not true, why not leave it alone? Where's the harm in believing it?" But there is harm. All falsity shuts out some truth, and carries wrong in its train. Every grain of supernaturalism in a faith means less devotion to the needs of man and the duties of this world. *Ecrasez l'infâme!* J. M. WHEELER.

Gospel and Creed.

Our Creed, called by the Papists *Credo*, which was attributed to the apostles, though evidently fabricated more than four hundred years after these apostles, acquaints us that, before Jesus ascended into heaven, he went on a tour into hell. You will remark that not a single word is said about this journey in the Gospels, and yet it is one of the principle articles of the Christian faith. We cannot be Christians if we do not believe that Jesus descended into hell.—*Voltaire.*

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THE GOSPELS AND DRAMATIC LITERATURE.

(Concluded from page 548.)

CHRISTIANS allege that, if the character of Christ is not real, the Gospels lose all their value. Probably this may be so if we look upon them as historical narratives; but such is not the case if we regard them as dramatic literature. Suppose it could be proved beyond all doubt that the character of Hamlet never existed outside the brain of Shakespeare, that would not destroy the sublime conception given us of the "Prince of Denmark," or lessen the philosophic beauty the conception presents to our minds. If we grant that the Dane is only a fictitious character, the profound wisdom of the following advice remains:—

> This above all: to thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Shall we persist in being impervious to the immense delight which is evoked in most persons on reading the *Tempest*, unless we are assured that Prospero was intended as a delineation of Shakespeare himself, or that Ariel ever existed? The excellence of poetic genius consists in so clothing imagination that its truths shall appear to us as palpable as the various phenomena by which we are surrounded. As the great Master himself declares in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:—

> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.

Is it not possible that the Gospels are pictures of human life, founded on fact and fancy, as most dramatic literature really is? The Gospels exist, and that they are not strictly historical records is clear; it seems, therefore, to us feasible to assign to them a place in dramatic literature. Heretical critics may object to our view, and urge that they are an invention by the priests for the purpose of deceiving the weak and the credulous. But it would be doing no violence to accepted history to have a preference for another interpretation of their presence amongst us. Can we not reasonably admit that the priests have used the Gospels for purposes of deception, without being compelled to grant that they were originated for that purpose? There are two objections to the theory that the Gospels were "an invention" of any particular period. In the first place, it prevents us from applying to the Gospels the law of evolution, which is perceptible in most literature; and, secondly, it implies a conspiracy among the writers, of which we find no evidence. Besides, the four Gospels are not precisely alike in their style, and the authors do not all say the same thing. Each writer tells his story in his own way, and introduces into his narrative features not to be found in the others. It is not at all improbable that they all had an original, like it is thought Shakespeare had, to work upon—some ancient gospels containing the plot which they used for the drama of the Cross. There appears to us ample evidence to justify the belief in the common origin of all literature—namely, the mind of man. To this we think there is no exception, either in the Bible or elsewhere. There was nothing miraculous in the appearance of a collection of Christian literature nearly two thousand years ago, any more than there was in the advent of the literature that adorned the age of Augustus or that of Elizabeth.

It is a curious fact that in all ages endeavors have been made to find some hidden meaning in literature. The Bible has been by some interpreted as an allegory, the key to which, it is said, has been discovered by some man of genius. In the case of the writings of Shakespeare, it is thought that indications are given of many of the inventions of a later age. As the Bible is the fountain from which all Christian sects derive what their members call "the waters of life and the everlasting truth," so Coleridge describes the writings of Shakespeare as "the well of English undefiled." And from this well all classes of men have drawn water to fertilise their brains and enrich their minds, in order that they may give to the world treasures of wisdom and legacies of noble thoughts. It seems as if the spirit of great writers had access to minds inferior to their own in power of conception and expression, and that they developed and utilised the germs therein discovered. Especially was this so of him who found "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

There is quite sufficient material in the Gospels for dramatic treatment. We have the story of a carpenter's son, born amidst angelic salutations, performing wonderful acts in his youth, proclaiming the gospel of poverty, and denouncing the arrogance and affluence of the rich. He rebels against the Government, casts out, in a forcible manner, the money changers from the temple, and drives, as a king, in a most dramatic fashion into Jerusalem. He is arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced to death, and crucified upon the cross. At his death "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the rocks rent. And the graves were opened, and many of the bodies of the saints which slept arose." After all this he appears to his friends, here and there, like Banquo's ghost, and ultimately he is "carried up into the heaven." Associated with him was the multitude, who cried: "Hosanna to the Son of David." He also had with him two prominent characters who were essential to the drama—Judas and Peter; he was betrayed by the first, and denied by the second. Now, we submit that in this story ample material for a most exciting drama is supplied, which, if properly stage-mounted and acted by able artists, would doubtless prove a "draw" at the Adelphi, or at other theatres where melodrama is patronised.

Our view, that the Gospels are dramatic literature, may be objected to on account of their supposed lack of real imaginative and comical elements. But the force of this objection depends upon the way the contents of the Gospels are looked at. An orthodox believer may not see the imaginative in the most marvellous incidents of what he deems divine literature, any more than he may regard them as being of a comic character. To other persons, however, who are not influenced by theology, the movements of the "star in the east," the songs of the angels, the descent of the dove, and the Devil taking Christ up into a high mountain and showing him all the kingdoms of the world, will appear very imaginative; while Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a colt and an ass at the same time, and the sending of thousands of devils into swine, causing them to rush madly into the sea, seem to us quite enough to furnish the comic element for any one drama.

Students of ecclesiastical history will be aware of the fact that three different interpretations have been given by theologians to the story told of Christ in the four Gospels. Briefly they are these: That Jesus was only a man, that he was God, and that he was both God and man. Each of these views has been defended with fervor, eloquence, and scholarship. We are not at all concerned at present as to which of the three interpretations is the correct one, or if either one accords with fact. Certain it is that all cannot be true, and no one has, so far as we are aware, tried to prove them so. All that has been attempted is to defend each separately.

The reader who has carefully followed us in the two articles upon this subject will see that our aim has been to show that, from a dramatic standpoint, each view could be maintained. We formed the idea here expressed upon this subject through studying the elements that are necessary to dramatic literature, and by comparing them with the incidents of the Gospels. The contention we have put forward must stand or fall by an appeal to that literature, and by comparing it with the Gospel narratives. If others fail to accept our conclusion, we ask them to state their reasons for rejecting it. In the words of Milton, we say: "Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do ingloriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple: who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

CHARLES WATTS.

Let us all seek truth as if none of us had possession of it. The opinions which to this day have governed the earth, produced by chance, disseminated in obscurity, admitted without discussion, credited from a love of novelty and imitation, have, in a manner, clandestinely usurped their empire.—*Volney.*

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THE BIBLE IN THE SCHOOLS.

It is exceedingly necessary that a clear and definite statement of the position which the Secularist takes up in reference to Bible teaching in public schools should be made. At the last School Board election both parties fought for maintaining the Bible as an instruction book for the children. There was really no difference of principle between them. And as, therefore, the attention of the public was centred on a fictitious quarrel, the real factors in the question were ignored.

The Secularist, then, takes his stand on the principle, accepted in other matters by the Nonconformists, that the State has no concern with religious beliefs, and has certainly no right to apply public funds to the purpose of maintaining specific religious beliefs. That principle, it seems to me, is just. To ask or to expect persons to subscribe to the teaching of opinions they do not hold is in the very highest degree unjust. Of course I am not discussing now the legal right to tax for the purpose of teaching religion. It may be alleged that people often are taxed to carry on a war they disapprove of. Quite so. The majority, of course, have the legal right to do whatsoever they choose. But we are discussing the matter from the ethical point of view, and if we can convince the majority that they are acting unjustly and unwisely, then our object is achieved. The majority can alter the system.

As to the injustice, then, I think it is plain. The State contains people of various beliefs. To use the money of all, therefore, to teach the beliefs of one section is not right. Christians would object to being taxed in order that other persons' children should, say, be taught Mohammedanism or Buddhism. They would object, and rightly object, to be taxed so that the children of others should be taught Secularism. But many of them cannot yet understand—or do not pretend to understand—why Mohammedans and Buddhists and Secularists should object to pay for teaching their children Christianity.

It will be said, perhaps, that they do not teach dogmatic Christianity in the schools. They only teach a Christianity so watered down that no one can object. The fact, however, is that they teach just so much as the various Christian sects can agree on. They teach as much dogma as they can, consistent with the religious truce which obtains between the rival sects of Christians. But it is too much for the non-Christian. Is not the teaching of the existence of a god a dogma on which all are not agreed? Is not the teaching of the inspiration of the Bible a dogma? Is not the story of the "creation" a dogma? If children are taught these as true, they are given dogmatic teaching; if they are taught that they are exploded fables, there is an infringement of the legitimate rights of Christians. The only equitable way, therefore, out of the dilemma is not to teach or deal with them at all.

The injustice, then, of Bible teaching is easily seen. But another, and as important a, reason why the Secularist desires the exclusion of the Bible from the schools is because it is unwise to put it into the hands of children.

Let us examine, for a moment, the claims which even the fair-minded Christian—and, indeed, sometimes the non-Christian—puts forward for the use of the Bible. In the first place, then, it is claimed that—even waiving the question of its inspiration—the Bible is *par excellence* the moral text-book for men. Even a Rationalist like the late Professor Huxley has spoken of the "vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur" in the Bible, when you eliminate everything that "it is not desirable for children to occupy themselves with." Well, of course, really the remark is capable of various interpretations. When you take away from a book all that is "not desirable," presumably the remainder is desirable. But whether in the case of the Bible this remnant is truly described as "vast" is exceedingly questionable. Professor Huxley did not detail the items of "moral beauty" referred to. But of course that the Bible *does* contain some moral, and even beautiful, teaching in places, is not to be gainsaid. So, however, do nine out of every ten books in any literature. Thomas Hardy's *Tess*—at least, it seems to me—contains a "vast residuum" of moral teaching, and needed warning and useful and guiding pictures of life. But who would propose to put the book into the hands of children, and teach it them chapter by chapter at the public expense? When an exceptional claim is made, an exceptional case is required. And anyone who sanely looks into the matter will agree, I think, that that exceptional case can hardly be made out on behalf of the collection of Hebrew writings called the Bible. It is certainly not more moral than many books that could be named; it is considerably less moral and humanising than, say, Marcus Aurelius, or our own Shakespeare. No one would propose to put Shakespeare, wholesale and unabridged, into the hands of children; much of it they would not understand, some of it—a very much smaller percentage than that in the Bible—would be, perhaps, "coarse," though "coarse" is not quite the word to use. It would prematurely introduce them to experiences and facts of life and the world not necessary or needful yet. But what can be said of teaching the Bible wholesale? Beside the Bible the works of Shakespeare are simply not to be named. To say they are more beautiful and more moral, a greater culture-force, is, after all, to pay a very poor compliment to the immortal poet who wrote his name in music unsurpassable on the hearts of every succeeding generation of men. Really one is tempted to say that, if Jehovah took the trouble to inspire Leviticus or Numbers, and left Shakespeare to produce *Hamlet* without any such assistance, the guidance of Jehovah—at any rate, in matters literary—would seem to be a dreadful affliction. But to return to the Bible, it seems to me no case has been shown on behalf of its surpassing excellence as a *moral* text-book.

Then as to its value as a *scientific* text-book—well, that is *nil*. The Bible, from a scientific point of view, is perhaps the most false and ignorant book which could be put into the hands of any child learning the rudiments of science. And even the "new Christian," who is always "reconciling" the Bible and science, must admit this. Even allowing for the moment that his harmonising is conclusive, he will concede, if he is at all fair, that some of it is considerably involved, and could hardly be comprehended by children without very great effort. It appears to me that, even from the Christian point of view, it would be much better not to have to explain to children that in the "Word of God" "days" does not mean "days," and "waters" does not mean "waters," and "fruit" is not actually to be taken to imply what we mean by "fruit." It would seem even better tactics to wait till the child had grown up before presenting to him a book involving these niceties of interpretation. And, mark, you must interpret it for the children somehow. If you teach it to them and let them innocently imagine that the thing is to be taken literally, that "days" does actually mean days, don't you see that you are putting a nice rod in pickle to be used against you when the child grows up and finds out the truth? One would imagine, therefore, that from the religious standpoint, if the religionist really believed in these tortuous explanations, very grave reasons would present themselves for not teaching the Bible to children.

As has well been said: "Children are habitually encouraged in the love of war, and in the spirit of cruelty, by the prevailing ferocity of the Old Testament, and by the general representation of the Hebrew God as a blood-thirsty and malignant being." "Children are taught by the Bible to regard murderous intolerance as a divinely-ordained virtue." And, in fact, the net outcome we know of Bible-teaching in the past has been to cultivate bigotry, persecution, and ignorance. Certainly it has not been to produce a race of freedom-loving, scientific, clear-headed people. The typical man who was Bible-fed in youth is generally a narrow-minded and rather intolerant person. This is not a one-sided or exaggerated statement. Let any fair-minded investigator look round for a man really saturated with Biblical teaching, and, in nine cases out of ten, he will find an ignorant thinker, a stickler for petty forms and a mere letter of things when it suits; in short, a fundamentally insincere type of mind.

But as to Bible teaching in public schools, there is no case. And it should not be forgotten that the burden of proof lies on the defenders of the book. It is for them to show why this special book should be taught with public money; they must produce the proofs logically then. But, of course, as the Bible is being taught, really it is necessary for those who object to make their voices heard. To sum up, then, the Bible is objected to because it is the text-book of one particular section of religionists; because it makes claims which large sections of the nation cannot allow; because, in short, it is not such a book as can be universally

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acceptable. And, furthermore, it is specifically objected to because of its unscientific, unhistorical, unethical teaching, in many parts. And, lastly, because much better books can be found. We have produced scientific manuals for children that no teacher would set aside in favor of Genesis. We have history books more profitable for the study of children than the records of a rather uncultured tribe, whose importance in the world's story has been scandalously exaggerated. Surely there can be had, too, if necessary, ethical text-books containing superior lessons, say, than the commands to Moses to butcher wholesale the Midianites, or any of the filthy and blood-reeking stories that abound in the book which is declared to be the sheet-anchor of morality. Besides, why should we perpetually delve in the past for our ethics? As a writer in the *Free Review* some months ago admirably asked: "Is it an understood thing that moral authority is the peculiar appanage of antiquity?" Surely we could get a modern manual containing the best teaching on the duties and rights of life suitable for children in the schools, on which all sane people could agree, if really it be considered necessary at all to teach morals by precept. But that we should use for the training of children a "book" which, apart from its associations as the sacred book of one particular religion, has really rationally nothing to recommend it, is a proposition which can only be maintained by religionists, heedless of the real justice of the case. Those people really do not care how their religion is propagated so that it *be* propagated, and will gladly take the Atheist's money to teach their own children the wickedness of Atheism. The best commentary on the character of the Bible as an ethical text-book is the ethics of its most ardent devotees.

FREDERICK RYAN.

THE CHURCH THE SOURCE OF IMMORALITY.

THE Church is the great source of immorality. Its doctrine that woman was made for man, secondary and inferior to him, and that she brought sin into the world, is the origin of all injustice to woman, and the prolific source of pauperism, insanity, prostitution, and crime. Class legislation for woman, laws of the State inimical to her, were first doctrines of the Church. Even where Church and State are not united, it is impossible for any peculiar religious teaching to prevail without its influencing legislation. From the time the earliest Christian council convened, Church canons began to affect the civil law. Under the old common law of England the husband was obliged at death to leave his wife one-third of his property, and was permitted to will her as much more as he pleased. As soon as the Christian religion became dominant in Great Britain, a husband was forbidden to will his wife more than one-third, and could leave her as much less as he pleased.

In olden Egypt, in Rome, and other ancient civilisations, the wife possessed right of person; this right was destroyed wherever Christianity became the ruling religion. As in slavery, the child ever follows the condition of the mother. So, under Christianity, the mother, possessing no right to her own person, has none to her child; and in but four States of the Union has this gross perversion of natural right been overthrown by statute. So true it is that the legislation of the State conforms to the teachings of the Church.

It is of no avail for woman longer to petition the State for a redress of grievances without at the same time proving the Church in the wrong. Wherever the much-praised old common law, as manipulated by the Church, exists, unchanged by statute, woman's inferior position is maintained by the State, and the last half of the nineteenth century is still disgraced by class legislation making woman a victim of the diabolical morality taught through the ages by the Church.

The fact that the wife possesses no legal right to her own person; does not retain her own name in marriage, but ever, as in slavery, takes that of her master, changing name as she changes husband; possesses no legal control over the home or the earnings of the marital firm; has no right to her own child, which can be bound out or willed away without her consent, even before its birth, is due to Church teaching that woman was made for man, is secondary and inferior to him, her condition one of subordination to him, that she brought sin into the world and thus drove him from Paradise. This theory, affirmed by the Church as of divine origin, has frightened thousands from an investigation of its truthfulness, and thus a system of falsehood has been perpetuated to the destruction of women and injury of the world. This falsehood has kept woman enslaved; it has robbed her of the most primitive right of womanly self-ownership; it has not alone affected actions, but also thought, and, while making woman amenable to the will of man, has annihilated his sense of justice.

"Here, wolf, take thy lamb!" a marriage-form prevalent in some parts of Russia, could with propriety be used over Christendom.

While Church teaching has instituted a degrading form of mental slavery bearing most heavily upon women, it has also destroyed the moral sense of both sexes in every country, creating a class of professional outcasts, demanded by man as a sacrifice to his baser passions, and declared a necessity for the safety of wives and daughters.

Aware that ignorance is bondage, and that superstitious belief is ever united therewith, the Church has strenuously opposed woman's efforts for freedom and enlarged opportunities in life.

Broader educational facilities, new forms of industry, better pay for work, more humane laws, wider religious liberty—each in turn have met with bitter opposition from the Church. Unsparing ridicule, false teaching as to divine displeasure, have been the style of opposition. To think for herself has ever been deemed the greatest sin for woman. Even Luther said: "No gown or garment so ill becomes a woman as that she shall be wise."

Robbed of herself, the mother of humanity has bred the world full of woe and crime. As a slave-mother cannot give birth to pure-souled children, we wonder not at the low ebb of morality in Christian lands. To drink, to gamble, to lie, to steal, is part of every human being's proclivity who looks to slave parentage. Robbed of all that makes life worth the living, woman has unwittingly revenged herself upon Church and State. With every generation new forms of fraud arise, and each census shows an increase of alms-houses, insane asylums, brothels, and prisons, all directly traceable to that teaching of the Church which has made woman but a supplementary part of creation, looking to man for headship and law.

Original sin is an original lie, yet one is sometimes tempted to believe in its existence, not with individuals, but as part of the Church itself; its teachings have sapped the probity of the universe. No sin so great as the teaching which, first robbing the individual of self-right, has turned the current of human life into a channel which perforce creates criminal classes of every grade. Of all has the Church been guilty.

And now that woman's growing rebellion against self-constituted male authority is everywhere apparent, the Church, perceiving danger to its continued existence, plans to give woman constant employment within its ranks. Church societies of every form make increasing demands upon her time and thought. "Home duties," an olden scarecrow, is no longer held aloft. "Work if you will, but work for us," is now the Church cry. Organise! Keep together! Do not lose yourself from the ranks!

For a time this plan will succeed, but it is merely a phase of woman's evolution. The responsibilities thrust upon her are fitting her for fuller freedom. She is fast learning to think for herself. With free thought for woman, the Church, that great source of immorality, crumbles to the dust, the State and the family are purified, and the world built anew.

MATILDA J. GAGE.

—*Twentieth Century.*

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THE DESIGN ARGUMENT.

NOTHING could have come by chance, it is said, and, therefore, it is inferred that this universe must have been created by a God.

Let us view this famous argument for a moment. God is something or nothing. To say he is nothing is to say there is no God. If he is something, he is not merely a property or a quality, but an existence *per se*—an entity, a substance, whether material or immaterial is unimportant. If he is a substance, a material or spiritual being, there must be order, harmony, and adaptation, or fitness, in his divine nature to enable him to perceive, to reflect, to design, and to execute his plans. If Deity does not reason, does not cogitate, but perceives truth without the labor of investigation and contrivance, he must still possess an adaptation or fitness thus to perceive, as well as to execute his design.

To say that God is without order, harmony, and adaptation, or fitness, is to say that he is a mere chaos—worse than that imaginary chaos which theologians tell us would result if divine agency were withdrawn from the universe. If a being, without order, harmony, and adaptation, or a divine chaos, can create an orderly universe, then there is no consistency in saying that unintelligent matter could not have produced the objects which we behold. If order, harmony, and adaptation do exist in the divine mind (or in the substance which produces thought, power, and purpose in the divine mind), they must be eternal; for that which constitutes the essential nature of a God must be the eternal basis of his being. If the order, harmony, and adaptation in God are co-existent with him, and are eternal, they must be independent of design; for that which never began to exist could not have been produced, and does not therefore admit of design.

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

ACID DROPS.

EMPEROR WILLIAM of Germany is a pious gentleman, who fully believes that he rules by divine authority. His wife is as pious as himself, and perhaps even more so. She has built several new churches in Berlin, and we dare say she is sorry that she cannot compel the people to attend them. Her latest addition to the empty gospel-shops of her capital is a Memorial to the Emperor William, which has cost five million marks. It was opened with great pomp by the young emperor himself on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the battle of Sedan. Religion and Militarism are thus beautifully associated. Everybody can see how true it is that Christianity is a religion of peace and goodwill. Meanwhile the relations between Germany and France are considerably strained, and the French ambassador at Berlin is taking a holiday until the blood-and-thunder celebrations there are concluded.

Mdlle. Lebrauchu claims to be a heroine of Zola's *Lourdes*. She also claims to have been just miraculously cured of consumption. Zola replies that the characters of his novel are purely imaginary. With respect to the lady's recovery he says: "I was at the bureau when she entered screaming that she was cured. But I had never seen her ill. What proof have I that she was ever consumptive? Indeed, if I should see all the sick recover their health, I would not even then believe in a miracle."

A ghastly sight was seen a few days ago in the Thames. A woman's body was floating near Blackfriars Bridge, and two little children were bound round her waist. A steamboat was seen to pass slowly over them, and the corpses did not reappear.

"God's in his heaven, All's right with the world." Thus sang the optimistic poet. But that drowned mother, and those two drowned children, tell a different tale. Who knows the awful tragedy that was behind that plunge into the dark-watered Thames? Human beings need not always die to find out hell.

The progress towards Church unity which is being made in this day and generation is admirably illustrated by the Pan-American Religious Congress at Toronto. The Catholics agree that everything would be all right if the church-going people would acknowledge the Pope's authority; Bishop Gilbert declares that all the churches would do better if they acknowledged the historic episcopate. A Jewish rabbi present advocated Judaism as the panacea. It was pretty much the same at the Parliament of Religions. Volney, in his *Ruins of Empires*, imagined such congresses, to point out the moral that there can be no unity on fictions, but only on facts. It is something, however, that the clericals can now keep the peace when they meet.

The good old Bible preachers used to stick to the doings of the Lord with Moses and the prophets, and their congregations had little more concern with the secular problems of the world than was expressed in the prayer of the man who retired with the magnanimous appeal to the Deity: "God bless me and my wife, our John and his wife, us four and no more, for Christ's sake, Amen." But a change has been forced upon them, and on Trades Congress Sunday at Cardiff there was a special importation of Christian Socialists and others, who preached on the relations of religion to social questions in eleven Christian churches. As brother Jasper said: "The world do move."

Mr. E. L. Garbett, who published a pamphlet on *Hurley's Ferocity*, has a fling at the late Dean Alford in the *Weekly Times and Echo* (Sept. 1). It seems he sent the Dean his interpretation of the number of the beast. But, when Alford issued a new edition of his annotated New Testament, he repeated verbatim all that he had said in 1861 upon this 666 riddle. Whereupon, says good Christian Mr. Garbett, his statements "became wilfully mendacious. Possibly, not wilfully on his (Alford's) part, but on his inspirer's part. Moreover, their tendency is to make the Holy Ghost appear a fool. Now, my contention is that the same power who once proved Ananias and Sapphira liars dead was pleased, for your information on the 12th of January, 1871, to strike Henry Alford dead in his devilish lies." We look on Mr. E. L. Garbett as an interesting relic of old times, a survival of the degree of intelligence which originated, and made people believe, such stories as that of the murder of Ananias and Sapphira by the Holy Ghost.

In darkest Africa, although not far from where British authority is supposed to hold sway, there recently existed a society of cannibals who called themselves by the pleasant title of "human leopards," dressing in the skins of the wild beast whose name they borrowed, and which they evidently exceeded in ferocity. Their mode of operation was to secrete themselves in the bush near the native villages, and pounce down on any unwary straggler. The victims were afterwards killed and eaten. One of this murderous gang had formerly, it is stated, been a Sunday-school teacher at Sierra Leone, which would tend to show that in some cases at all events the Christianising influence of African Missions does not penetrate far beneath the surface. The "Society" has, happily, now been broken up, several of the miscreants having been hanged. It is strange to reflect that in this nineteenth century such horrible practices should have been possible.—*Birmingham Daily Mail.*

The New York *Evening Post* says that "the romance of missions has worn out. We have come down to the hard, matter-of-fact conditions of heathen life, at home and abroad; we have seen that printing Bibles, and singing hymns, and distributing tracts, and preaching sermons, have very little effect upon the enormous aggregate of heathenism, prejudiced in ignorance or conceited in learning, upon which our missionary enthusiasm has been spent." The next step should be to see that the only missions needed are secular ones to teach the best methods of work in the world.

The New York *World*, also writing on missions, deprecates "the apostles of all the false religions of the world" having been invited to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. It says: "Returning home, these represented Christianity to be a failure in the countries they had visited, and in one case, we believe, missionaries were sent to America to convert our benighted people." It considers this, too, a cause of the falling off in subscriptions which the American missionary societies lament.

M. Trouve, the well-known electrician of Paris, has brought out a tiny telephone no larger than a franc piece, and, in conjunction with Rostoff, the "wizard," has applied it to clairvoyance. The telephones attached to the ears of the blindfolded performer are hidden by a wig, and connected by fine wires, also invisible, to a transmitter behind a screen. A confederate behind the screen, who can see and hear all that passes, prompts him by means of the telephone. Such an instrument, in old days, would have made a god out of a conjurer, and would have been acclaimed, like Elijah's petroleum trick on Mount Carmel.

At the Birmingham Balloon Society, Mr. Lewis Appleton gave an address on missionary enterprise in China, and a resolution of indignation at the recent massacres was moved. Mr. Maxim moved as an amendment: "That this meeting

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regrets exceedingly that English and American missionaries will persist in going to China and attacking the ancient and highly developed and orthodox religion of the Chinese." The amendment was seconded by Captain Lemon. There being a tie, the chairman gave his casting vote for the amendment.

They are actually trying to form a Curates' Union, and there is considerable talk of it in the papers. The *Freethinker* does not pose as an oracle, but in January, 1890, Mr. G. Standring, who is not, so far as we are aware, a prophet, or the son of a prophet, wrote a humorous article in our columns, entitled "The Curates' Union." Can some pale young curate have picked the grains of wheat out of his chaff, and, with prayer, fasting, benediction, and holy water, have ripened the good seed?

From Southampton the following paragraph is sent to the London daily press: "The Borough police have recovered the crucifix and image alleged to have been stolen from St. Joseph's Roman Catholic church by an Irishwoman, named Mary Ann Lahee. When arrested, Lahee admitted taking the things to bless her house, but stated that she did not know what had become of the crucifix. The police will give it up to Canon Scannel on his return from his trip to the Continent." This confirms the contention in Mr. Wheeler's article this week, that the sacred vessels and fetishes are not stolen from churches by any sect of devil-worshippers, but by poor women, in whom the Church has inculcated a superstitious reverence for such articles.

Parson Bowman, who was struck down with others by the lightning at the door of his church at Quakertown, New Jersey, says: "When I got up there was but one person standing, and, curiously enough, he was not a Christian." Probably he was the only person who was not afraid of the Devil, for to this useful scapegoat the accident is attributed.

Bishop Turner (colored?), of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, has some new ideas in ethnology. He has been three times to Africa, and has discovered that Adam and Eve were black; that they lived not 6,000, but 150,000, years ago, and that King Solomon was "a full-blooded negro." We do not know about the much-married sultan's negritude, but expect that the bishop is right in describing him as full-blooded.

Godfrey Higgins, early in the century, when ethnology was in its infancy, put forward the view that man was originally black, and found in the black Madonna and Child in the crypt at Chartres Cathedral a confirmation of the idea that the earliest Christ was a sable one.

They have the temperance question in a funny form in Hungary. The Minister of Finance has asked the Minister of Worship whether priests may make their congregation swear in church to abstain from spirits. Some priest in the south of Hungary did this, and the local publicans sent a protest to the Finance Minister, as they cannot fulfil their contracts to pay so much tax.

There was a circus at Montpelier, Bristol. It was acquired by the Salvation Army and turned into a barracks. On Sunday morning it was burnt down. We presume this was an "act of God." Unfortunately a number of cottages were burnt down also, and the cottagers rendered homeless. It is dangerous to be near when Jahveh is destroying one of his own buildings.

According to the religious press, Khama, the famous Christian chief of the Bamangwato tribe, is coming to London. The Rev. J. D. Hepburn, who writes *Twenty Years in Khama's Country*, describes him as a good Christian and teetotaler, who deposed his heathen father, and burnt his brother's house down because he gave native beer to a stranger. These gentlemen must not be judged exactly according to European standards.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, the author of the "Athei-t Shoemaker," is a very reckless person. He is constantly starting some *canard*, which he always alleges some "good authority" for. A few months ago he published the startling information that "Nunquam" of the *Clarion* had been captured by the High Church party. "Nunquam" chaffed him unmercifully, and it turned out that all the ground Mr. Hughes had for his startling announcement was the fact that Mr. Blatchford had dined with three High Church parsons. In last week's *Methodist Times* Mr. Hughes came out with the following: "We have just learned, on what seems unquestionable authority, that Mr. Chamberlain has been seriously considering the possibility of introducing into this country the military Conscription as an agency by which he can get money to float his scheme for Old Age Pensions." It is difficult to conceive anything more ridiculous, yet Mr. Hughes took it seriously, and made it the subject of nine long paragraphs.

This Price Hughes bubble was pricked on Monday morning, when the newspapers published Mr. Chamberlain's letter in reply to a correspondent who inquired as to the authenticity of the Conscription announcement. Mr. Chamberlain's letter is brief and pointed. His private secretary writes: "I am directed by Mr. Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th inst., and to say that the statement in the *Methodist Times*, to which you call his attention, is absolutely untrue. Mr. Chamberlain advises the writer to call upon the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes to state what is the 'unquestionable authority' on which he has given currency to this falsehood."

We know enough of Mr. Hughes to feel pretty confident that he will not give an answer to this pertinent question. He has a habit of ringing bells and running round the corner.

Customs vary as much as religion. The *Crescent* quotes the following about the Shahzada, and, as Mr. Quilliam, the editor, was in attendance upon the young prince, we suppose he endorses what is said: "Nasr-Ullah Khan, on his side, looks upon the English as a people lost to all sense of decency, without religion, morality, or hope for heaven. The sight of their women with faces, necks, and arms exposed shocked him unutterably. Nasr-Ullah is a good young man, and when he looked upon the sea of shameless exposure at Lady Tweedmouth's reception he could hardly believe he was in a place where he ought to be. He very naturally administered a rebuke to Lady Lansdowne, and would not permit her to touch his arm."

Cardinal Moran boasts that the Catholic missions have in Corea over 20,000 converts, while the Methodist congregations have only 177 members. We cannot check his figures, but there is no doubt that the Roman superstition more readily accommodates itself to various forms of Paganism than does the Protestant superstition.

In Japan, Cardinal Moran says there are 50,000 Catholics and 35,000 Protestants. In China he boasts of a million, while the Protestants are put at 33,000. Mr. Michie reckons them at over 37,000. The Rev. Dr. Williamson, a veteran Scotch missionary, said: "Something must be done. In our present divided state we shall never Christianise China, never!"

In Africa, out of a population approaching two hundred millions, the Catholics claim 600,000, the Protestants 101,212, and these are questioned. Dr. Ingham, Protestant Bishop of Sierra Leone, in his recent work, *Sierra Leone After a Hundred Years* (1894), refers to the unblushing immorality that prevails, and adds: "Is it a wonder that kings and chiefs around Sierra Leone, instead of wishing their people to come and see how well we do things, dread for them to come to this colony on account of the danger to their morals!" Cardinal Moran quotes a German traveller as writing of the Methodist missionaries: "How can ex-machine greasers or ex-cobblers preach a faith they do not understand? They are a disgrace to civilisation."

In India the Catholic missionaries boast of over 1,620,000, the Protestants 559,661, half of whom were Europeans or of European descent. The total number of communicants was only 182,722. The Baptists, says Cardinal Moran, show a falling off of more than thirteen per cent. The Church of Scotland had declined from 3,683 to 2,970, and unspecified Christians had decreased from 20,216 to 7,078. In Tinnevelly, where Christian missions had so much success among the devil-worshipping Shanars in the decennium from 1881 to 1891, Protestants decreased eight per cent., while the Catholic increase is registered at twenty-two per cent.

The *Jewish Chronicle* mentions a curious theory of the cranks who are always searching for remains of the ten tribes of Israel. According to a book entitled *Palingenesia*, published at Erlangen twenty-seven years ago, it is a mistake to imagine that the drama of the early books of the Pentateuch was enacted in Western Asia and Eastern Africa. It all took place in America. Eden was somewhere in the Eastern Pacific; Noah lived in Cuba; Nimrod was an American prince; and Sodom and Gomorrah were not far from Chicago. Furthermore, there was an American Assyria where the Antilles now peep out from the sea, and an American Egypt in the highlands of the Andes. The scene of the Exodus was Behring's Straits, where the Israelites trekked across the ice into Siberia. All this nonsense arises from not seeing that the Jews were once in a similar stage of development to that now found among savage nations, and that, consequently, these nations must have manners and customs similar to those recorded of the old children of Israel.

Judge Chalmers contends in the *Law Quarterly Review* that there is so much petty perjury that it would be better if the oath were abolished for simple affirmation, and all

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witnesses warned of the human punishment meted out for giving false evidence.

Mr. Paul Taylor declined at the North London Police-court yesterday to avail himself of the First Offenders' Act in the case of a clerk who had stolen a bicycle. It was said that the accused had asked to be allowed to try a bicycle advertised for sale, and then, riding away on it, never returned. He had been a popular member of the Church of England Young Men's Society, whose assistant secretary now offered to become responsible for him. The magistrate, however, passed sentence of a month's hard labor.—*Daily News* (August 30).

Mr. Sarat Chandra Das Mitra, who has travelled widely in Northern India and Tibet, has written a paper dealing with North Indian folk-lore concerning thieves and robbers. All these, it seems, have their own particular goddesses, whom they worship in the belief that success or failure in their thieving expeditions depends on the favors and frowns of these female deities. To this end they offer sweets, cereals, and sometimes animal sacrifices, and in the old days human ones, before starting.

A member of the Westminster Branch of the National Secular Society (Mr. Worster), who has unfortunately been lying ill for some time, has a next-door neighbor who is also on the sick list. The latter is a Christian, and a pious lady in the vicinity sent him a basin of nice mutton broth; but the messenger made a mistake and took it to the wrong house. The Atheist consumed the broth and sent his thanks to the lady, who was horrified to learn that she had unwittingly ministered to the wants of an "infidel." Her indignation was quite amusing, and furnished the sick Atheist with a little medicinal laughter, which was almost better than the mutton broth.

A special correspondent of the *Daily News* (August 30) says that comparatively few persons are aware how little Churchmen really pay for the enormous influence their educational position gives them. Out of every £2 paid for a child in a voluntary school, the country provides all but about six or seven shillings. Church voluntary contributions provide about three and sixpence in the pound, and it is by no means certain that the whole of what little money they have voluntarily contributed should all be accredited to elementary education.

It gives the following instances:—"For many years there appeared on the balance-sheet of a voluntary school the sum of £32 for cleaning, etc. The man to whom the pound a week was paid had not been on the school premises for two years, and his whole time was occupied as vicar's odd man and sexton."

"The rectory of a certain parish needs repairs, but the low state of the ecclesiastical funds does not permit that this shall be done. A happy thought occurs to the rector. 'The schoolmaster shall occupy the rectory for a time, and we will call it the schoolhouse. Out of the funds provided for the school I will, as school manager, repair the rectory, entering it in the accounts as repairs to the schoolhouse.' This plan has been carried out, and nearly £200 has been expended on the repairs of property which belongs to the rector of the parish for the time being."

Cases in which the Church has got its work done free by foisting duties upon the school teacher supported by Government grants are exceedingly common. A letter addressed to the principal of a training college, asking for a student to act as schoolmaster, is cited. It says "he must be able to play the harmonium, and will be expected to do so on Sundays twice a day, to lead the choir, and also to act as clerk. He will be expected to train the church choir one night in each week. The aforesaid is part of his duty as well as keeping the school, and no extra salary is given for it." In other words, the duties of clerk, choirmaster, etc., are paid for out of funds which ought to be devoted solely to educational purposes. And these thieves are clamoring for more public money!

One of the funniest documents we have read for a while is the address of the Dean of Norwich at the anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He declared that "the nerve of the Ascension Evangel is the great principle that every human being is entitled to know the mind of God in his own language." If we presumed to think that every human being was entitled to know the mind of God direct from God himself, probably he would think we had a nerve like the Ascension Evangel.

The Dean went on to say that the various tribes of men were not to have each a distinct evangel suited to their respective capacities, but all were to have the Bible which Jesus received, which the holy apostles were commissioned to write, and which the authority of the Church had stamped. Well, we never heard that Jesus received the New Testament, or commissioned anybody to write it. The only thing in which the Dean is correct is the authority of the Church, and that has been stamped with a vengeance against all opposition.

The Dean of Norwich said that antiquarian researches had thrown light on our Scriptures and ecclesiastical history. They have indeed. Says he: "They have diluted the strong statements that are made in the interests of a narrow and dwarfing ecclesiasticism; they have blasted, as I believe, the unwholesome pretensions and the superstitions of an Italian sacerdotalism. But there is one thing these discoveries and manuscripts have not done. They have not caused us to withdraw one single article from the creeds of the Church." Doubtless the Dean has substantial reasons for not withdrawing even the article which declares that "works done before the grace of Christ are not pleasant to God, but have the nature of sin." But some people who have done a little antiquarian research fancy that it demonstrates the savage superstructure of the Dean's entire faith.

The Dean says: "We are asked now, however, to think of the first chapters of Genesis as mythical; but I cannot accept as mythical what Christ regarded as fact." We suppose he follows Jesus also in believing in possession by devils. It is a comforting belief when you know that devils never enter deans.

The Dean concluded with an exhortation to diffuse the Bible: "Circulate it broadcast from one end of the world to the other. Let no soul for whom Christ died moan out his life knowing nothing of the God who made him, nothing of the God who loved him, nothing of Jesus Christ who shed his precious blood for him, nothing of the Holy Ghost who comforts and who enlightens, and who educates and who inspires, invigorates, radiates, and blesses him; nothing of the means of grace, nothing of the hope of glory." So Christians are to take all the trouble about the precious Trinity which they have never taken for themselves, although, as the Dean set out by saying, "every human being is entitled to know the mind of God in his own language."

Bishop Tugwell, of West Africa, says that the gin trade is demoralising the natives. It is pointed out to him that the gin is introduced by the Christians, and that the best remedy is the spread of Mohammedanism, with its strong influence in favor of abstinence. The Governor of Lagos avers that the Mohammedan negro is a much cleaner, soberer, and more dignified and self-respecting person than the Christian negro, who adds the white man's vices to his own, and wipes them all out in the blood of Jesus.

David, or somebody else for him, said in his haste that all men were liars (Psalm cxvi. 11). We often find pious people giving evidence that the Psalmist was not so very hasty. Here, for instance, is a story from Middletown, New York, about Hiram Hornback, who ran from home, spent his cash in riotous living, and, like others who have run that course, returned penitent, when sunk in poverty. The story given in the *New York Sun*, August 11, says: "Shortly after Hiram's arrival a terrific thunderstorm passed over the farm, and lightning struck and killed a calf in the barn yard. From there the same bolt entered an open window of the house, hit the family Bible lying on the parlor centre table, and opened it at the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, leaving a black mark opposite the twenty-third verse, which reads, 'And bring hither the fatted calf and kill it: and let us eat and be merry.'" This is worthy of "Dod Grile."

Dr. Susan R. Pray, who went as a medical missionary to Foo Chun, gives the following explanation of the outrage. She says a strong native party is making an effort to overthrow the present Chinese dynasty, and, in attempting to make it appear that the outbreak against Christians is really the fault of the government, hopes to make the latter so unpopular with foreign powers that none of them will interfere in its possible downfall.

Paul Kruger, the President of the Transvaal, often takes to the pulpit. The *Port Elizabeth Telegraph* says: "Preaching on Sunday week, the President undertook to explain the doctrine of the Trinity—a subject which, the speaker went on to say, the Holy Book did not throw much light upon. With that aptitude for simile which forms one of the most striking features of his honor's public utterances, the preacher likened the Triune Deity to a candle. 'There is the fat, the wick, and the flame—three in one; and if the explanation is not sufficient,' continued Mr. Kruger, 'anyone who wishes may come and speak to me at the conclusion of the service!' Possibly the President may be able to find some other means of converting them.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, Sept. 8, Brunswick Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow: 11.30, "Freethought in Robert Burns"; 2.30, "Religion in the Light of Science"; 6.30, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible."

Sept. 15, South Shields; 22 and 29, Foresters' Hall, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—Sept. 8 and 15, Foresters' Hall; 22, Sheffield. October 6 and 13, Foresters' Hall; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. November 17, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Louis Levine (Charleston).—Many thanks. We shall use some of your well-chosen extracts. You are doing capital work. Hearty greetings.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie points out that in "Rum and Religion," p. 548, "soothing-seeming antidote" should be "soothing seeming-antidote"; and "Bible-seeming antidote" should be "Bible seeming-antidote"—the idea being that the antidote is only seeming. Sorry we did not send proof. Hearty greetings.

L. W. Balk writes: "With regard to the £4 that I have paid towards eight shares for the Hall of Science, I beg that you will apply the money at your discretion towards any purpose for the furtherance of our principles; and I should prefer the application of the same to the fund for your personal benefit, for I feel it my duty to at least help keep the man alive who keeps our party alive."

R. E. Holding.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with the success of our experiment at St. James's Hall. We have ventured to write a "Sugar Plum" on the *Indicator* article, which we hope you will not find displeasing.

H. Snell.—See paragraph. We should like to see you busier in the lecture-field.

W. Cabell.—We had seen it and written a paragraph upon it already. Thanks all the same, though, for your kind attention.

T. Hinton (Manchester).—There must be some mistake. John Heywood could hardly have refused to supply your newsagent with the *Freethinker*. He, or rather the firm, has supplied the trade ever since our first issue, and continues to have a regular account with our publisher. Will you see your newsagent again on the matter? We thank you for your efforts to promote our circulation, and are pleased to hear that you enjoy Mr. Cohen's lectures.

J. Burrell.—We have dealt with Coroner Baxter in our leader. See paragraph for the other matter.

J. Keast.—See paragraph. Will the large Shepherds' Hall be available for Secular lectures this winter?

President's Fund.—Per R. Forder: H. Sesemann, £2; E. L., £1; C. Deane, 4s.; H. A., 2s. 6d. Per Miss Vance, collected by E. Finder (Leicester): A Friend, 10s.; Another, 2s.; One More, 1s.; A. Hunter, 2s.; C. Rell, 1s.; T. Allen, 1s.; — Bailey, 1s.; — Hopkins, 1s.; — Woodford, 1s.; Alpha, 1s. R. Webster, 4s. Per R. Cameron (Glasgow): Hugh J. Duncan, £1; Duncan Sinclair, 10s.; Robert Smellie, 5s.; A Friend, 5s.; Daniel Fyfe Sandback, 5s.; Samuel Roger, 5s.; Thomas Reid, 5s.; Another Friend, 5s.

A. T. Barnard.—Shall appear.

A. J. H.—Mr. W. Armstrong's letter in the *Hackney Gazette* is a very good one. Such correspondence is of great service to Freethought.

Papers Received.—Halifax Labor News—Post—Secular Thought—Belfast Northern Whig—Portsmouth Times—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—New York World—Progressive Thinker—American Sentinel—Isle of Man Times—Liberty—Esoteric—South Wales Echo—Freedom—Blue Grass Blade—Twentieth Century—Public Opinion—Two Worlds—Manchester Evening Mail—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

Readers of the *Freethinker* are requested to remember that the first week in October is "Shilling Week." During that week all who desire to aid, however modestly, in the active propaganda of Freethought during the winter, should send me one or more shillings. Every subscription will be acknowledged. I have to add that lecturing engagements, under the scheme I outlined a fortnight ago, are already being formed by Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. C. Cohen; and that the services of other lecturers will be utilised as soon as possible.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (September 8) at Glasgow. On the following Sunday he lectures at South Shields. During the interval he hopes to take a little holiday.

The accounts of the St. James's Hall venture are nearly made up. There are only a few tickets still unaccounted for. It was a costly experiment, the rent alone being five guineas per night, and the advertising in proportion. Happily, however, there was no loss. Four or five pounds will remain on the right side of the balance-sheet. But this and more has been lost at Milton Hall, where "free admission" was compulsory, and Mr. Foote is responsible for the deficit.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Plymouth last Sunday. In the afternoon the Rev. A. J. Waldron attended, and a very pleasant and interesting debate took place between the rev. gentleman and Mr. Watts.

Mr. S. P. Putnam delivered his farewell lecture at the Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening. Considering the wonderful weather, and the difficulty in organising for a fresh meeting-place, there was a very gratifying attendance. Mr. Foote took the chair, and made a brief speech in introducing the lecturer. Mr. Putnam was accorded a most enthusiastic reception. He was in first-rate form, and his discourse was both instructive and entertaining. It was followed with close attention and evident pleasure. At the close our American visitor had quite an ovation, the audience cheering lustily and unanimously, many rising to their feet, the men waving hats and the ladies handkerchiefs. Mr. Foote wound up the proceedings with a farewell to the lecturer in the name of the Freethinkers of England. This elicited another outburst of applause, and the meeting came to an ideal conclusion, with plenty of hearty handshaking and fervent good-speeds.

Our next issue will contain an account of the farewell dinner to Mr. Putnam at the Holborn Restaurant.

Foresters' Hall is a fine one, and will hold a large number of people. As the weather gets cooler, and the long evenings draw in, we hope to see it filled from floor to ceiling. Mr. Charles Watts lectures there this evening (September 8), his subject being one of burning interest—"Missions to the Heathen." Mr. Watts occupies the platform again on the following Sunday, after which Mr. Foote takes two Sunday evenings. Mr. C. Cohen will lecture at the Foresters' Hall on an early Sunday, probably in October. We hope our London friends will do their utmost to bring their Christian friends to these meetings.

Mr. Putnam has seen something of English seaside life in the height of the season. For a couple of days last week, in company with Messrs. Foote and Watts, he enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. Munns, of the Terrace Hotel, Margate. Mr. Munns is a veteran Freethinker, and remembers Charles Bradlaugh when he was a boy-lecturer.

The *Halifax Labor News* contains an account of an interview with one of the old guard in that town, Mr. Thomas Riley, Chartist and Freethinker, who has carried on business as bookseller and newsagent for many years.

Goldwin Smith was always a sort of half-and-half evolutionist; yet, in an article on "Guesses at the Riddle of Existence," in the current *North American Review*, he shows he is not prepared to follow Mr. Kidd, Mr. Balfour, or Professor Drummond, each of whom he criticises from a rational standpoint. Professor Smith takes up a practical point when he challenges Mr. Balfour to provide us with some analysis of authority, and some test by which genuine authority may be distinguished from ancient and venerable imposture. As it it, Mr. Balfour fails to present any such

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criterion, nor is it easy to determine what is his view of belief in miracles.

Professor Smith concludes that there can be no hope of laying new foundations for a rational theology in any direction excepting that of the study of the universe and of humanity as manifestations of the supreme power. The study, moreover, must be pursued in that spirit of thorough-going intellectual honesty whereof Huxley was an illustrious example. If revelation is lost to us, manifestation remains; and great manifestations appear to be opening to our view. The sum of it all is that Agnosticism is right if it is a counsel of honesty, but not if a counsel of despair.

The *West London Indicator* devotes a eulogistic column to "The Queen's Park Naturalist"—Mr. R. E. Holding, a brother of the artist who chiselled the marble bust of Bradlaugh in the Manchester Secular Hall. Mr. Holding is a splendid draughtsman, and has illustrated biological works by Dr. Sutton, Professor Romanes, Dr. Seebohm, and other famous writers. He has recently completed a series of pictures of Indian animals, under the direction of the Indian Education Council, for use in British India. He has now in hand a fine series of school pictures to meet the recently issued code as to object-lesson teaching in natural science. This work will be published shortly by Messrs. Gill and Sons. The *Indicator* remarks: "But for his Secular proclivities, he would undoubtedly have now occupied an honorable seat [on a local body], yet it is to his training in a large Secular and Science School that Mr. Holding attributes his present position." He gives a good deal of time gratuitously to the local schools, but when he was proposed as a member of the Board of School Managers the local parsons swamped the meeting and kept him out. What a blessed thing is Christianity! How just! How tolerant! How benign!

Herbert Spencer opens the New York *Popular Science Monthly* with the fourth of his papers on "Professional Institutions," in which he show that the functions of the orator, poet, actor, and dramatist are all developed from the acts of the primitive tribesman in welcoming his victoriously-returning chief. Andrew D. White, writing on "The Continued Growth of Scientific Interpretation," describes the battle by which reason conquered tradition in English theology. Gustave Le Bon discusses "The Work of Ideas in Human Evolution," showing their immense power in the form of traditions and their tremendous force when newly accepted.

The American Unitarians established at Tokio, Japan, a "Senshin Sakuin," or "School for Advanced Learning." The school shows signs of becoming a Freethought seminary, the graduates reading papers on such subjects as "Japanese Ancestor Worship," "Occidental and Oriental Ethics." The superintendent of the school, Mr. McCauley, is a broad-minded man, and says a student is there afforded an opportunity to know and study every known creed. He is left free to judge as to the faith he requires. No question of orthodoxy is raised. He will find good in all. With crystallised Truth in his hand he selects or rejects.

The Bristol Branch concluded its open-air meetings in Eastville-park on Sunday, the final lecture being delivered by Mr. Dorne, a Hebrew gentleman, who formerly opposed the Secularists in Finsbury Park, London. Mr. Keast, the secretary, has labored hard at this enterprise, and has been well supported by Mr. Bracey, the treasurer. Several ladies have assisted; in fact, they seem to have taken more interest in the work than the men. To-day (Sept. 8) the Branch has its last country ramble. On the first Sunday in October it begins its winter's work in the Shepherds' Hall.

Freethinkers in North London will be interested to learn that a tea and garden party has been arranged for Sunday, September 15, by the Islington and Finsbury Park Branches, to take place at The Nook, 19 Alwyne-road, Canonbury, the residence of the secretary of the Islington Branch, Mr. A. Guest. Given fine weather, this should be a very enjoyable reunion. The situation is very pretty—a charming spot on the banks of the New River. The garden will be illuminated, and an entertainment will follow the tea, which will be served at 5.30. The tickets are one shilling, and may be obtained of branch secretaries. The proceeds will go to the funds of the Islington and Finsbury Park Branches. A meeting of members of the two branches respecting above will be held at Mr. Ward's, 91 Mildmay-park, Newington Green, on Monday, September 9, at 8 p.m.

Mr. Harry Snell writes:—"The Birmingham friends are to be congratulated on the promising start they have made at the neat little hall in Hope-street. In spite of the tropical weather of last Sunday, two good audiences assembled. I was much cheered to meet again the old veterans, Daniel Baker, C. C. Cattell, and J. Ridgway, all of whom are armed *cap-à-pie* to do battle against the common foe. I pointed out that September 1 was an auspicious day. We were assembled as a rational shooting party to bag the partridges of the Church. There is a fund of unused energy in Birmingham that needs manipulating, and it seems to me that all that is needed to insure success is the energy of the recruiting sergeant. The capital of the Midlands should be, as it used to be, the centre of the great work in the Midland counties. I shall be both surprised and disappointed if this venture does not result in a real forward movement. What is most essential is that comrades should not look back, but go full steam ahead."

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM IN JAPAN.

In the *Open Court*, of Chicago (August 5), Captain C. Pfoundes, who has long been in Japan, and is a duly initiated member of the most important Buddhist sects of that country, has some observations on Christianity and Buddhism in Japan. He says that the missionaries are mainly successful in destructive criticism levelled against the old faiths, but which the Japanese have the nous to turn equally against the Christians. He remarks: "Real converts are rarely met with, while perverts to materialism, scepticism, and irreligion are many—not quite the chicks the missionaries desire to hatch. During the present century very large sums have been expended annually in Asia, as well as elsewhere, in mission work, and a great many more or less competent and enthusiastic men and women from Europe and America have devoted their lives to the work of proselytising. Others enter upon the work with less noble and more mercenary motives. Of late years much of the money and material hitherto devoted to the Pacific Islands, etc., has been diverted to Asia. Japan and other countries, having a civilisation, religion, and literature of their own, are receiving much attention, to the neglect of other lands where none of these good things exist. The needs of those 'nearer home' have been ignored, whilst those afar off are courted and petted. Foreign missionaries in Asia, in Japan, for instance, are now very numerous, and representatives from nearly every civilised nation and of nearly all the numerous Christian sects are competing keenly for converts. The inducements held out to the young of both sexes are too attractive, the temptation is too strong, especially to the indigent classes, to be resisted. The opportunities for obtaining an education, which is in itself a sure high-road to lucrative employment, attract the young Japanese, especially the scions of old feudal retainers, who still cling to the traditions of superior birth, and whose pride makes them unwilling to learn a trade or to keep a shop, and whose ambition is official employment, military or civil, as school-teachers, interpreters, or clerks. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if the mission schools are crowded with pupils, and if more applicants than can be accommodated wait outside. Of the pupils, however, it is an admitted fact that but a tithe really become sincere converts, though many, for the time being, profess to believe. A constant weeding out of the less zealous and suspected pupils makes room for others; and those so turned adrift become the most active and bitter opponents of the introduction of the alien creed."

Captain Pfoundes points out that the doctrine of salvation through blood is a barbaric stumbling-block to all educated Buddhists. He says, too, "Puritanism will never get a footing in the Far East." He declares that the Christian missionaries are making a bid for popularity by loudly applauding the warlike spirit lately aroused, and he asks: "Do these missionary people hope, and really expect, to benefit by the defeat of the Chinese government, that they are so ready to go out of their way, and, instead of being men of peace, turn their coats inside out and assume the Jingo character? Whilst the Christian clergy expend much time and energy on polemics, in attacking not only Buddhism, Hinduism, Mohammedanism, etc., but also in controversy among themselves, the Buddhist bonze of each sect attends to his own duties, and, with rare exceptions, is on friendly terms with the bonzes of other sects, as well as with those of his own. It is all too true, and more the pity it is that it is so, that the converts (nominal) to Christianity are largely natives whose conduct is such that by the general opinion of foreign residents such converts are not the most desirable to employ."

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Captain Pfoundes draws a distinction between the comparatively useless work of the missionary abroad and that of the poor curate at home. He says: "Personal observation of the relative position of the missionary abroad and the worker at home (say the curate of an East-end parish, of such a district as, unfortunately, may be found in any large city in Europe, America, or the Colonies) enables a comparison to be drawn. The missionary, invariably well housed, and, with few exceptions, well paid, duties light, away from irksome observation and criticism, and with ample leisure for study and recreation. Such conditions of life are infinitely superior to those of the poor curate, ill paid and overworked, neither too well clothed nor too well fed, working amongst the lowest of his race, amidst constantly harrowing scenes, squalor, want, wretchedness of the most abject kind, where indescribable filth accumulates, and sickness, contagions, and infections abound. The missionary and his family, sent out at great expense, maintained for years whilst gaining experience and learning the vernacular, and finally, frequently just when he may begin to be useful, returning to his native land, and dropping into a 'fat' living, a good income, and comfortable home, with congenial surroundings. The poor curate, too often an early victim to the life led during his apprenticeship, as a worker in slums. And of the two which has been the most useful? Is it really not a matter for public consideration, this misdirection of means and work?"

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker"
(August 3).

I ENJOYED my work in Sheffield. There are sturdy workers here. Mr. Nelson, Mr. Lill, and others too numerous to mention, gathered on this old-time battle field. There was a noble delegation from Barnsley. They walked in, a distance of about sixteen miles. I was presented by these comrades with a photograph of the soldiers at this point, while on campaign duty—Mr. and Mrs. Addy, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Dyson, who occupies the lecturer's desk, and is one of our busy workers; Harry Addy, young, but ready to do his duty; Mr. Wombwell, and Mr. and Mrs. Wadmore. I thank these friends for their handsome gift. We all had tea together at the hall in the afternoon, and this enabled me to make acquaintance with the Freethinkers of Sheffield and vicinity, and it was a most enjoyable occasion. I gave three lectures that day—morning, afternoon, and evening. The attendance was fair, considering that we are the frontier force; and the enthusiastic welcome was cheering to the heart of the Pilgrim. I was glad to greet new friends from near and far, and to place their names and features upon the tablets of memory; but if I began to enumerate I should not know where to end, for the friends of our cause rally by the score. Sheffield Secularism will continue to hold the fort for many years to come, as it has already held the fort for half a century.

Yes, Sheffield has, I think, the oldest Freethought hall in England, and perhaps in the world. It was built over fifty years ago, especially for Secular and reform purposes, and it has been kept to the original aim through many changing fortunes. I felt that it was an honor to speak in a building so consecrated by human genius. Owen, Holyoake, Bradlaugh, Annie Besant in her palmy days, Foote, Watts, and many other stalwart defenders of liberty, have spoken from the platform. Therefore, we might say that here in this time-worn building is the oldest battle-ground of English Secularism, an unpretentious building, but mighty in the thoughts that have glowed and thundered within its walls. Sheffield gives a priceless inheritance to the struggle of to-day from the dark yet glorious fields of the past.

I had the great pleasure, while staying at Sheffield, of enjoying the hospitality of American friends, Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Matthewson, formerly of Philadelphia. They have been in England for over twenty years, but they were born beneath the Stars and Stripes, and have not lost the love of native land. They gave me a delightful welcome, and the hours sped merrily along, the glories of England mingling with reminiscences of the great Republic of the West—not that we love England less, but that we love America more, because in America we were born, and the homeliest spot is rich and beautiful because in it we first saw the light of day, the tenderness of human love mingling with the wonder and delight of nature. Mr. Matthewson is a true-blue, go-ahead American citizen. He is an inventor and a business man, and he has built a great factory in Sheffield, and his trade extends to all the world. We are constantly learning something new, and the "sand-blast" is something new to me. And it is a wonderful power. Remarkable it is that human ingenuity never discovered what sand could do until within a few years. General B. C. Tilghman is the original inventor, and Mr. Matthewson has added many patents, so that now the "sand-blast" has become a marvellous instrumentality. It is not only a worker, but an artist. It can produce in glass the most beautiful results, and the whirling sand-particles become as cunning as the human hand. They chisel with wondrous rapidity, a million of them working in harmonious combinations.

Professor Tyndall has eloquently described the "sand-blast," and it is worthy of note, so beautiful and so extraordinary is the process. Professor Tyndall says: "The Sphinx of Egypt is nearly covered up by the sand of the desert. The neck of the Sphinx is partly cut across *by the eroding action of the fine sand blown against it.* This action of sand has recently been turned to extraordinary account in the United States. When in Boston I was taken by Mr. Josiah Quincy to see the action of the 'sand-blast.' A kind of hopper containing fine silicious sand was connected with a reservoir of compressed air. The hopper ended in a long slit, from whence the sand was blown. A plate-glass was placed beneath this slit, and caused to pass slowly under it. It came out perfectly depolished, with a bright, opalescent glimmer, such as could be produced only by the most careful grinding. But this was not all. By protecting certain portions of the glass and exposing others, *figures and traceries of any required form could be etched upon the glass.*" Perhaps from this brief description one can catch some idea of the variable potency of the "sand-blast." For ages it had been working away upon the Sphinx, upon the stones of the desert, and yet no one had ever utilised this "sand-power" until the invention and patents of General Tilghman and Mr. Matthewson, and now it is world-wide in its uses. All the files of Sheffield are sharpened by the "sand-blast." Glass is polished by it, and all kinds of figures, the most beautiful possible, can be cut in glass. Also tombstones are engraved by the same process. What was once done by hand is now done by the "sand-blast." The sand can cut into the hardest substances, for it is the concentrated energy of millions of particles of sand that does the work. Sand is also used for cleaning purposes. It is better than water. The fine sand, whirling from a tube, will knock the dirt out in no time. It will clean a building as no human hand could possibly do. It will thus be seen what a manifold power has been developed by the skill and perseverance of Mr. Matthewson, whose inventions must certainly take a front rank with the glories of modern industry. Mr. Frederick Matthewson, his son, is also devoted to this important enterprise. Miss Charlotte Matthewson, the daughter, is a member of the Royal College of Music, an honor which but few comparatively attain; and she is an exquisite player upon the violin, attesting the genius of woman and her capacity to do anything that man can do, give her a chance. So, mingling with the arts and industry of Sheffield, were the delights of music. I visited also the gallery and museum in the park, and here are many valuable paintings, also curiosities for the scientific. Near Sheffield is Queen Mary's Tower, where she was for some time incarcerated by the Earl of Shrewsbury. On the last night of my stay, Wednesday, I went to hear a lecture on new developments of steam power, and here I learned something I did not know before about steam. I suppose that engineers will understand me when I write of "superheating steam." That was a new phrase to me. In this, however, is one of the gigantic problems of the age. Its solution means a vast increase of steam energy. To roughly suggest, it is this: Ordinary steam, or "wet steam," as it is called, when it enters the cylinder is condensed more or less into water, and thus much of its power is lost. The problem is to "superheat" the steam—that is, to make "wet steam" "dry steam," so that when it enters the cylinder it will not become water at all, but remain steam and do the work of steam. It is claimed by the lecturer, Professor Ripper, one of the most experienced engineers of England, that this problem has been solved, and that from 25 to 50 per cent. of steam energy is saved. If this is so, then there is to be a new and wonderful evolution of engine and steam power, and Sheffield has the honor of its initiation in this country.

It will be seen, by what I have tried to tell, what a varied experience I had at Sheffield; what contrasts I met with in this metropolis of iron; that alongside its smoke and dirt are glittering expanses of art and poetry, and it is well worth a visit of many days. It has a population of about 350,000. I hope I shall see it again, and my Freethought friends also, who have treated me so generously.

From Sheffield, on Thursday afternoon, July 4, without any accompaniment of patriotic fire-crackers or cannon, I take my way to York, to famous York, which indeed has a solidity of ancientness about it that is truly magnificent and somewhat appalling. Here is the old wall of the Romans and the gateways, etc. Mr. William Johnson, who came from York to Sheffield to attend the lectures, met me at the station, and the first thing we did was to take a walk around the old city on the lofty stone battlements that had

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witnessed many a fierce and bloody encounter. York is now a railroad town with railroad shops. Two hundred trains pass every day. It has a population of 60,000. The largest part of the city is now outside the walls. The river Ouse runs through its centre. At the end of the southern wall are the Castle and Clifford's Tower, in the latter of which two thousand Jews were once slain. We visit the municipal buildings, and also the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey and the ancient hospital near by. These are interesting ruins, dating back several hundred years. The Abbey was destroyed by Cromwell. It was once a stately building, as large, apparently, as the present cathedral. There are many things to be seen in York. There are old-fashioned buildings still standing. There are still the narrow streets and over-hanging walls, so that from the second story one could almost shake hands with his neighbor across the way as he leans forward from his chamber window. I enjoy perambulating the streets of this quaint city, traversing its walls, looking at its great cathedral, and watching the moonlight and the shadows on the river and the parks, and the masses of people as they throng the central avenues. Friday morning I visit the cathedral. This is the largest Gothic cathedral in England, and said to be the largest this side the Alps. It is larger than Westminster Abbey or St. St. Paul's. It is an immense and imposing structure. It has two great towers in front, with a vast central tower 213 feet in height. Its entire length from east to west is 524 feet; its extreme breadth, north to south, 250 feet. We wander through the vast spaces of this temple, which has stood for centuries. The present structure was begun in 1070. But below in the crypt can be seen the remains of ancient walls which go back to the seventh century. The window at the east end is considered the largest illuminated window in the world. It is seventy-six feet in length and thirty-three feet in width, and wonderfully illuminated. It is impossible to convey an idea of its radiant splendor. After traversing the depths of this great cathedral, and looking upon the graves of warriors and kings and bishops; after looking at its marvellous walls and windows upon which so much labor has been expended at a penny a day, we climb the massive tower itself, 65 feet in breadth, and with 273 steps from the bottom to the top. An extensive view is presented from this lofty station.

The country about York for miles away is level. The city lies at our feet, the quaint old houses standing among those of modern style. The vast roof of the cathedral itself extends a hundred feet beneath. It was a place for imagination to revel in the greatness of the past and the wonder of the future. Other places of interest are the Bootham Bar, with Norman tower erected about the end of the thirteenth century; the Manor House, once a royal residence; the Lendal Bridge, whence can be seen a long sweep of the winding Ouse; the Mansion House, the walls of which are ornamented with historical portraits of great value; the Guildhall, dating from 1446, with its beautiful colored windows; the Theatre Royal, erected in 1765, over the site of St. Peter's church—a great improvement. It is said that Constantine the Great was born in York. Not much credit that to the city. He was also invested here by the Roman legions with the imperial purple.

I thoroughly enjoyed my few hours' visit at York. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson gave me a hearty English welcome. Two of their sons are now in America, and expect to make that country their home; and so my friends have a fellow feeling for those who come from the Western shores, seeing that they have given their quota to the population of the great Republic. Mr. Johnson was once an earnest Christian, and wrote a pamphlet in support of the faith; but he is now a thorough Liberal, and always ready to do his share of pioneer work. Mrs. Johnson is a born Freethinker, and has never passed through the clouds of superstition. I shall not forget the hospitality of these friends in this ancient cathedral city, which is one of the most superb monuments of a religious and barbaric past, combined with the splendor and industry of the nineteenth century. Within a stone's throw of the cathedral rolls the railway locomotive and flames the electric light. SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

CALUMNY is the homage which dogmatism has ever paid to conscience. Even in the periods when the guilt of heresy was universally believed, the spirit of intolerance was only sustained by the diffusion of countless libels against the misbeliever, and by the systematic concealment of his virtues. How sedulously theologians at that time labored in this task; how unscrupulously they maligned and blackened every leading opponent of their views; how eagerly they fanned the flame of sectarian animosity; how uniformly they prohibited those whom they could influence from studying the writings or frequenting the society of men of different opinions from their own, is well known to all who are acquainted with ecclesiastical history.—*W. E. H. Lecky.*

THE HEATHEN IN HIS BLINDNESS.

MR. W. E. CURTIS, the correspondent of the *Chicago Record* in Japan, reports an interesting conversation with a Buddhist priest. The heathen said: "No one can understand or appreciate Buddhism without serious study, any more than any other religion. I understand that the comparative study of religions has been introduced into some of the theological schools of your country, which is a wise thing; and I hope your teachers will adopt such text-books as do justice to the Buddhists. The comparison of religions is necessary for a man to understand and appreciate his own."

Evidently this heathen needs the enlightenment of the blessed gospel, which proclaims there is no salvation in any other name than that of Jesus Christ. He went on to say there was much he could admire in Christianity and the character ascribed to Christ. "His teachings," he said, "do not conflict with those of Buddha. You will find a very striking similarity in their teachings. Buddha preceded Christ by five hundred years, and if Christ was not familiar with his writings—it is entirely possible that he may have been—there is a most remarkable parallel in their lives, the channels of their thought, and their code of morals."

This vile sinner could not understand the holy doctrine of salvation from all sins through the atoning merits of the precious lamb of God. He said: "I do not understand your doctrine of the atonement. I never could understand it. It does not seem logical. I cannot see how the blood of one man can, as you say, wash away the sins of multitudes of millions of others who have the same intelligence and the same opportunities to practise good morals and live sinless lives, but have neglected to do so. What is the use of a man trying to be good if the blood of Christ is sufficient to save him from the penalty of his sins? All he has to do is to be as wicked as he likes up to a certain period, when the termination of his life is approaching, then repent of his evil ways and accept what has cost him nothing. It does not seem fair to those who have lived correct lives and done great good at the cost of years of labor and suffering and self-denial to have some rascally fellow share the same blessings, just because Christ was crucified. Still, that is one of the many points of theology upon which Christians differ, and I may be pardoned for not understanding it."

The pretence of politeness in this canting rejector of the central doctrine of Christianity must be insufferable to the real Christian, imbued with the true spirit of the holy gospel: "Have not fellowship with unbelievers, but those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them bring them hither and slay them before me."

This godless wretch went on to palliate idolatry. First he said: "Nor do we worship idols. Your missionaries have misrepresented Buddhism in this respect ever since they first saw our form of worship. The image is nothing of itself—a block of wood or an ordinary stone would answer the same purpose—but it is a symbol of an invisible being, sometimes beautiful and sometimes rude, according to the art and intelligence of the man who makes it. It represents the object of our worship, just like your cross and the image of Christ and the Virgin Mary." Afterwards he observed: "The African savage who worships a fetish is inspired by the same motive, and is just as sincere as the Pope when he says mass in Peter's. The only difference is in the degree of civilisation acquired by the worshipper. Your own Church was once in the same condition in regard to intelligence as the Buddhist believers are now. Perhaps it was worse than we ever were, because our priests have always taught peace and love, while millions of innocent persons have been sacrificed in supporting theological controversies in the Christian Church. I believe a long and bloody war was once fought to decide whether the sign of the cross should be made with three fingers or two, and, if I am not mistaken, the good Puritans who settled your own country believed in witchcraft, and not many years ago were burning people who were supposed to be possessed of the Devil."

The wicked Buddhist further said that Buddhists who visited Christian lands were compelled to report that "there is no such folly and wickedness and degradation in Tokio or in any of our other cities as they would find in London and Paris, New York and Chicago; and when the statistics of poverty and crime were compared, I am very sure the Emperor would be convinced that Buddhism was better suited to the warfare of Japan." Evidently this vile heathen wants his own people to go their own way to the everlasting bonfire. LUCIANUS.

A gentleman gave a party in honor of a celebrated missionary lately returned from his field of work. The ladies appeared in very *decollete* dresses, and as the host feared the style might shock his reverence he apologised to him for it, saying that fashion demanded it. "Oh, I don't mind it at all," replied the missionary; "I've been ten years among the savages!"

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THE SALVATION ARMY AND MR. HOLYOAKE.

We have received the following letters for insertion :—

Sir,—Please excuse the liberty I am taking in writing to you, but we (the Salvation Army), being £12 in debt, are making a special effort to raise this amount, but, in consequence of the poverty of our own people, we are appealing to a few outside friends in the hope that they will assist us in this effort.

If you will do so, we will esteem it a very great favor.—I am, yours faithfully, W. A. Munro, Captain.

70 Cowper-street, West Brighton, August 10, 1895.

G. J. Holyoake, Esq.

Dear Captain Munro,—You are aware I am not much your way of thinking, and wish your addresses were more in favor of the improvement of this world. A man has no claim to admission to another world unless he has improved the secular condition of this. Your bands do make piety a little more cheerful in the streets than it used to be. But, if honest opinion in which I do not concur needs help to maintain itself, I am willing to aid it as far as I have means, and enclose 2s. 6d. If every one who differs from you as much as I do sends you but a similar sum, you will soon be out of your difficulty.—Yours faithfully,

Here and hereafter, if it can be so arranged,

G. J. Holyoake.

Eastern Lodge, Brighton, August 12, 1895.

—*Brighton Herald.*

THE DEMISE OF DEITY.

God's dead! Serenely man beginneth life anew,
Free from the fears that once did dominate his mind:
The ghosts from out the lonely night are vanished;
No evil spirit now shrieks in the stormy wind.

The planets in their orbits swing, needing no power
To guide their courses through the brightly star-gemmed field;
On man and beast, e'en as of yore, the sun's rays shine;
Yet none a deity conceive and homage yield.

O'er all the universe law now hath sceptred sway;
Naught can escape the reign of iron consequence.
For all we know, cause and effect account in full,
And thus we banish mystery, cant, and vile pretence.

Laud to the heroes who this great millennium gave,
Bringing us forth from out the night of priestly creed.
Sing of the conflict our sires did wage for the Truth;
Steadfastly, likewise, we will the battle-front lead.

Thor.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

It is not often that we have occasion to feel grateful to the clergy. For some reason or other, their attitude and their conduct, as a general thing, inspire us with emotions of a far different nature; and we have little cause for anything but censure in so far as they are concerned. But now all of this is changed; and we think that our readers will unite with us in henceforth blessing the name of T. De Witt Talmage, D.D., for the great boon which he has conferred upon the human race. He has solved the riddle, he has settled the vexed question, which has driven many people into infidelity or into the insane asylum. No more do poor servant girls nor hypochondriac men need to worry and to wax lunatic over the great puzzle of the unpardonable sin. Dr. Talmage has set our minds forever at rest on this subject by explaining in a recent sermon that the unpardonable sin, the commitment of which doomed forever the evil-doer to a hopeless, eternal hell, is a sin against Mr. Holy Ghost, which consists in "the ascribing of the works of the Spirit to the agency of the Devil in the time of the Apostles." How deep is our gratitude to this man for this profound information, which will forever still the anguish of trembling souls! Murderers, thieves, assassins of lives and reputation; thugs, human brutes, burglars, and the most terrible human fiends who have ever disgraced the name of man, thanks to Brother Talmage, are now all right. They can go on in his work, assured of their final well-being, provided that they have not "ascribed to the Devil the work of the Spirit in the time of the Apostles." How wonderful! What feelings of gratitude should pulsate in the criminal breast at this, the greatest discovery of this wonderful age. Henceforth, he who fails to commit this unpardonable sin can rest easy in his criminal career. Even Talmage himself is safe.—*Boston Investigator.*

PROGRESS IN SPITE OF LAW.

Legislation should be an aid to knowledge. It exceeds its mission when it attempts to suppress it. Take the statute of William III., of Great Britain, which made it unlawful to deny the truth of the Christian religion, or the divine authority of the Scriptures, and punished offenders with fines and imprisonment. Here investigation is prohibited by Act of Parliament. That body chanced to be controlled by a majority who inherited their religious views; who had made no investigation for themselves, and, in all probability, they had neither education nor capability for the task. They enacted a law prohibiting other men from giving their conclusions after critical research.

No unaided mind is capable of investigating all subjects. Many men, by long study, assisted by the labor of others particularly adapted by genius and learning, may reach a given conclusion; but, if obnoxious to the Christian religion, or the heavenly paternity of the Bible, imprisonment must follow if a man announces his convictions.

The older American States passed similar laws to those of Great Britain to suppress inquiry. Their origin can be traced to the priest, who lacked ability to defend his creed by logic, so he enlisted legislation in his service.

The world owes its advancement to the law-breakers; to those who defied laws and prison-bars, and told the truth, regardless of consequences. To them is due the honor of lifting humanity somewhat out of the rut of ignorance and superstition, and the hope of final success is contingent on their continued disregard of prohibitory legislation to entail ignorance on the race.—*Progressive Thinker.*

Scientific Materialism.

We have come to consider life as the sound of a harp, of which death will cruelly break the cord. Then, in order that it may subsist, metaphysics are obliged to grow more and more subtle. The soul ceases to be an ethereal image of a real body, a shadow; it becomes the verbal entity of metaphysicians, a nothing so impalpable and inconceivable that every strong and free mind refuses to believe in it. The human being then knows that his poor personality is but a passing existence, since it springs from the ephemeral grouping of indestructible atoms, which the shock of death will one day disperse. From this moment man is really a man; the field of his activity becomes heightened and smaller in extent; he brings his dreams of happiness and his aspirations of retributive justice down from heaven on to the earth; he knows in what direction he ought to aspire, and he manfully resigns himself to that which is inevitable. —*Dr. Charles Letourneau, "Sociology Based upon Ethnography," book iii., chap. xv., p. 273.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Minister (to Sunday-school class)—"Yes, all you little children are made of dust. Now, what am I made of?" Class—"Mud."

Clergyman (severely to small boy fishing on the Sabbath)—"My lad, do you want to go to hell?" Small Boy—"What! in the summer? Don't yer think it's warm enough here?"

Minister—"And so you say your little prayer every night before you go to bed? That's right. And now, tell me, why do you do that?" Little Ethel—"Because mamma says she'll spank me if I don't."

A little girl in the art gallery, after studying a "Magdalen" represented weeping, suddenly exclaimed: "Mamma, I know why Mrs. Magdalen is crying. She wants Mr. Magdalen to buy her some more clothes."

Sunday-school Teacher (who has been explaining the blessings of Christianity)—"What is it, now, that binds us together and makes us better than we are by nature?" Girl—"Please, miss, it is our stays."

Of course, old Mother Eve was ne'er
Behind the footlights seen;
But the act that made her famous
Was a sort of serpentine.

The Sunday-school teacher had been expounding the International lesson, and, to see if the youngsters understood it, asked: "Well, now, tell me why we are commanded to gird up our loins?" "To keep up our breeches, sir," was the first answer.

Host—"Oh, don't go to bed just yet, captain. We shall have prayers as soon as the parson returns." Captain—"Thanks very much; but I had enough of his prayers to-day when I happened to trip him into the pond. He prayed for my soul to go to hell, and I don't suppose it will be any more effective if he now prays for it to go to heaven."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Missions to the Heathen."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8, select entertainment for benefit of Branch. Thursday, at 8, important members' meeting; ex-members and friends invited at 9.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "The Doctrine of Evolution."

CLUB AND INSTITUTE BUILDINGS (Clerkenwell-road): Thursday, Sept. 5, at 8, Executive meeting.

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. C. Lyons, "Christianity's Debt to Paganism."

ISLINGTON AND FINSBURY PARK BRANCHES: Monday, at 8, meeting at Mr. Ward's, 91 Mildmay-park, to arrange for garden party.

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, G. C. H. Carter, "Atheism and Ethics."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Gospel of Freethought."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Bible and Science."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.15, F. Haslam, "Beautiful Bible Stories."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, T. Thurlow, "Good and Evil in the Bible."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, C. James, "Now is the Accepted Time"; 3.15, "Come to Jesus."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, St. John will lecture. Thursday, at 8.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, St. John will lecture; 3.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Immortality."

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Prayer."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, a lecture; 3.15, Robert Forder, "The Jesus of the Gospels."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Where Will You Spend Eternity?" 7, "The Advance of Freethought." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, Gymnasium Class; 7, S. Armfield, "Questioning the Christian Creed."

BRISTOL: 9.30, meet at Arley Chapel for ramble to Axnt.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, G. W. Foote, "Freethought in Robert Burns"; 2.30, "Religion in the Light of Science"; 6.30, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Ernest Newman will lecture.

MANCHESTER LABOR HALL (Grey-street, Hyde-road): Saturday, Sept. 7, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity the Enemy of Progress."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution—Part II., The Dawn"; 6.30, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, Torrens Parris, "Some Bible Symbols: their Origin and Meaning"; 3, "Man: Whence he Comes and How"; 7, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, H. Snell, "How Man has Grown"; 7, "The Story of the Sceptics of the French Revolution." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King street): 7, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, David Nicoll, "Some Remedies for Poverty"; 6.30, "Freethought and the Bible."

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, a lecture.

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

MANCHESTER (Stephenson-square): 3, C. Cohen, "Missionaries." Open Space, Choriton-road, Brooks' Bar: Tuesday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Is Christianity True?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—Sept. 8 and 15, Manchester; 22 and 29, Birmingham.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 8, m. Camberwell, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell; 15, m. Finsbury, e. Edmonton; 22, m. Kingsland, e. Deptford; 25, Hyde Park; 26, Hammersmith; 29, m. Victoria Park, a. Finsbury Park, e. Kilburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 8, m. Westminster; 15, Mile End; 22, Camberwell; 29, Westminster. October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

T. THURLOW, 356 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 8, m. Kingsland, e. Edmonton; 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 29, e. Edmonton.

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MR. PUTNAM'S FAREWELL.

EARLY in May I went down to Southampton with Mr. Charles Watts to meet Mr. S. P. Putnam, the President of the American Secular Union, who had come over from the great Western Republic to see this little isle set in the silver sea, and to salute his Freethought comrades in the land which produced Thomas Paine and Charles Bradlaugh. On the first Sunday in May I took the chair at Mr. Putnam's first lecture; on the first Sunday in September I took the chair at his last lecture. During the intervening four months he had "done" England and Scotland as few Americans have the opportunity of "doing" it in such a brief time. He had visited most of our principal cities, from Plymouth to Aberdeen; he had seen a great deal of our finest landscapes; and he had inspected many places of ancient historic interest, from a crumbling old Durham church to the stately fane of Westminster, where lie the ashes of old kings and warriors, and men of light and leading, whose names sparkle for ever like jewels on the forefinger of time. He had lectured to enthusiastic meetings of Freethinkers, and had everywhere been received with the most generous hospitality. And everywhere he had made friends by his geniality, good-fellowship, and racy Yankee humor. And when the last few days of his stay with us arrived, it was but fitting that we should entertain him, as Britishers love to entertain their friends, at a good dinner; not the paltry dish of herbs which Solomon thought better than a beefsteak with wrangling, but a real square meal, ample and satisfactory, such as might prompt a man to say—

> "Not e'en the gods upon the past have power,
> And what has been has been, and I have had my hour."

Well, the dinner to Mr. Putnam came off on Wednesday, September 4, at the Holborn Restaurant. The repast was, of course, all that could be desired. There is nothing shabby at that establishment. And the company was representative. Naturally, most of them were Londoners, but a few were up from the country. Mr. Gilbespie came from Newcastle, and Mr. Sidney Gimson from Leicester. Mr. G. J. Holyoake, the veteran, came up from Brighton. But he was not the only veteran present. There was Mr. Edward Truelove, a hero and a martyr of free speech, born in the same year as Mr. Gladstone. There was also Mr. George Anderson, a rare mixture of shrewdness and benevolence, whose memory goes back to the days of Robert Owen. He loved and admired Charles Bradlaugh, but he is broad-minded enough to continue his support to the movement under new conditions. Mr. Charles Watts belongs to a younger generation, though time is thinning his locks and sprinkling them with grey, without quenching his eloquence or dulling his fire in debate. Mr. Touzeau Parris was there, with his well-stored mind, his ready tongue, and his sagacity enlivened with smiles. Mr. Robert Forder, the faithful old secretary of the National Secular Society; Miss Vance, his new and energetic colleague; Mr. A. B. Moss and Mr. W. Heaford, who have fought so long and gallantly in the open-air lecture-field; Mr. James Rowney, who is winning laurels in the same warfare; and last, but not least, my dear old friend and co-worker, Mr. J. M. Wheeler: all these and scores of others met around the festive board, which was graced by the presence of well-dressed, smiling ladies, who were brave enough to be Freethinkers. Mr. Putnam sat on my right, looking plumper and jollier, if that were possible, than when he landed on the shores of old England.

After the dinner came the speech-making. My own address as chairman was, I trust, suitable to the occasion. Mr. Holyoake followed in a speech marked by felicitous diction, and containing a highly-finished eulogy of Colonel Ingersoll, as well as a handsome tribute to Mr. Putnam. Mr. Sydney Gimson, who spoke for the provinces, was bright and telling. He also hoped that Colonel Ingersoll would come over to England, but, whether he came or not, the Freethinkers of this country had learnt to admire and love Mr. Putnam for his own sake, and did not merely regard him as a John the Baptist to a Jesus Christ. Mr. Parris was wise and witty. His brief speech bristled with good points. Mr. Watts finished the flow of English eloquence with characteristic dignity, and then Mr. Putnam rose to respond to the toast of his health. The whole company rose with him and cheered him to the echo. It was impossible for flesh and blood to be unmoved at such a greeting. Mr. Putnam was visibly affected, but his platform training served him in good stead, and he launched out into a really brilliant speech, abounding in humor, pathos, and nervous eloquence. When he sat down the applause was worth hearing. I only wish it could have been heard by our comrades in America.

Some music on the piano, a few capital songs, and an inimitably-rendered satirical reading by Mrs. Charles Watts, added to the general enjoyment. Finally, there came an impromptu addition to the official program. Mr. George Anderson proposed the health of the President of the National Secular Society, in a generous little speech, which was heartily applauded. After the President's response, the company broke up with "Auld Lang Syne." Then came a lot of handshaking; in fact, it must have made Mr. Putnam sore for several days.

Mr. Watts and I spent Friday evening with Mr. Putnam, and the next day Mr. Watts saw him off at Waterloo Station, I having to travel to Scotland.

Thus ends a most interesting episode in the recent history of the Freethought movement in England. Mr. Putnam has returned to the land of his birth, but he has made an indelible impression upon the Freethinkers of England. They like his eloquence, and they love his personality. He carries with him their unanimous good-wishes. They hope he will live long to lead the army of Freethought in America, and they also hope he will come over again to old England. Whenever he comes he will find a host of eager hands stretched out in glad welcome.

G. W. FOOTE.

After four months' sojourn amongst us, Mr. Putnam sailed on Saturday last for New York, in the s.s. "Paris." With other friends I saw our friend off from Waterloo Station at 9.40. Mr. Foote, having to start for Glasgow, could not be at the station. At 12.30 I received the following telegram:—"On board 'Paris.' Good-bye. Freethought always.—S. P. PUTNAM."

I am sure the readers of the *Freethinker* will wish our American visitor a safe and pleasant voyage. During his stay with us he has made many friends, who will be glad to give him another welcome to old England.

CHARLES WATTS.

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HUTTON ON HUXLEY.

THE article on Professor Huxley, by Richard Holt Hutton, editor of the *Spectator*, in the September *Forum*, seems to me remarkably like the dirge set up by the donkey over the dead lion. He was a mighty lion, but he never would listen to the donkey's reasons, and when he encountered the donkey's brethren he only tore them to pieces. Huxley, says Mr. Hutton, "was undoubtedly a man of genius. But I doubt whether his speculative genius was as great as his genius for debate, for exposition, for attack and defence," and so on. Hutton met Huxley at the Metaphysical Society, and he says: "I shall never forget the dismay with which many of us heard his paper on the question, 'Has the frog a soul, and of what nature is that soul, supposing it to exist?'" He pointed out that, if the frog has a soul at all, it must have two souls, for, if the spinal cord is divided, both parts exhibit the same kinds of purpose and action, though they do not co-operate. Mr. Hutton says: "I need hardly say that the discussion on this paper was not very 'nutritive.'" Probably this was because the donkeys could not be expected to see the lion's drift.

Worse follows, for Mr. Hutton says: "The real object of Huxley's paper was to bewilder"; whereby Mr. Hutton writes his own name as fully as ever Dogberry wished his to be written. Huxley's object, as a fool who was not an opponent might see, was to induce the members of the Metaphysical Society to think; to just consider the difficulties of their soul-theory in relation to a man with a broken spine, or a frog with a divided one. But they were sunk too deep in metaphysical mud to do aught but squirm, bewildered.

Mr. Hutton says:—

> "I remember another paper of his which was, I think, much less successful, as in it he travelled a good way beyond the region where he was master of his ground. It was a paper, conceived in a very reverent and even tender spirit, stating his views very frankly, though with great delicacy, on the miracle of the Resurrection. His object was to show, and undoubtedly he did show, that the disciples of Christ had, and could have had, no *physiological* evidence that what we now mean by death had ever taken place in the body of our Lord at all."

As Mr. Hutton tells us afterwards that Huxley rejected the supposition that Jesus recovered in an ordinary way, and died a natural death after all, we doubt if he saw Huxley's real drift, which, I take it, was not to bewilder, but to suggest to the metaphysicians that they were dealing with a myth.

Mr. Hutton goes on to say:—

> "I do not suppose that any one—even if he held, as I do, that the Gospel of John is not less trustworthy, or is even more trustworthy, in its account of the historical facts [!] than any of the Synoptic Gospels—would deny this. It is perfectly evident that, if the supposition, that our Lord never died at the time when he was believed by the Church to have died, were otherwise tenable, we neither have, nor could have, any proof that death in the physiological sense had really taken place, since at that period the physiological evidences of death, as we now understand them, were not formulated at all. But what Professor Huxley entirely ignored was the impossibility of the supposition that our Lord could have recovered consciousness and the power of movement in the maimed and wounded condition in which the crucifixion had left Him, without his intimate friends and followers knowing perfectly well that He was corporeally, at the time of His so-called resurrection, a mere resuscitated and helpless invalid, and that, if He subsequently lived, for a number of days or weeks, or months or years, on this earth, and then died, the stress which they laid on His resurrection was a mere fraud—a conviction that would have put a final end to all that enthusiasm of faith on which the spread of His gospel wholly depended."

Mr. Hutton apparently still cannot see that the object of Huxley's paper was to show the metaphysicians that they receive the central mystery of their faith on evidence which no one would think worthy of the name in scientific discussion. He regards it as "written to seize an opportunity for a very eloquent apology for the incredulity of men of science." I should say it probably proved this and something more.

Mr. Hutton says he could never understand the reverence Professor Huxley expressed, and certainly felt, for Jesus of Nazareth. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. Mr. Hutton asks: "Did Jesus Christ ever conceive the duty of scepticism as to the love and guardianship of God? And how, then, could Professor Huxley reverence so profoundly the man who taught the creed most opposed to his own, that 'scepticism is the highest of duties, blind faith the unpardonable sin'?"

Is it so hard, then, to see that a person might be the ideal of a bygone age and a bygone condition of society without, therefore, being suitable as an ideal of our own? But if a Freethinker says a word for Jesus as a man, he is rushed upon to ask, How, then, can he deny that he was God and turned devils into pigs?

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES NOT UNIQUE.

IN dealing with the principles of any system it is necessary to consider their probable value as guides in human life. It is assumed on behalf of Christianity that its moral principles are unique, and that they harmonise with progressive knowledge. This is the leading position taken by modern exponents of the alleged evidences for the ethical claims of Christianity. Now, we submit that such claims are mere assumptions, and that, in any case, both cannot be logically maintained, inasmuch as whatever harmonises with progressive knowledge must have something in common with it, and cannot therefore be unique. Besides, before it is proved that Christian principles *are* unique, it must be shown they are unlike all others. But this is not so with the ethical principles of the New Testament, for no scholar questions, for a moment, the similitude existing between the teachings of Buddha, for instance, and those ascribed to Christ. Max Müller remarks: "Between the language of Buddha and his disciples and the language of Christ and his apostles there are strange coincidences. Even some of the Buddhist legends and parables sound as if taken from the New Testament, though we know that many of them existed before the beginning of the Christian era" (*Science of Religion*, p. 113). Professor Beal observes: "The points of agreement between the two are remarkable. All the evidence we have goes to prove that the teachings of Buddha were known in the East centuries before Christ" (*History of Buddhism*). It may also be mentioned that the claims now set up on behalf of Christ are very similar to those which were urged in the interest of Buddha. Self-assertion ("I am the Light of the world"), self-assumption ("unequalled in perfection"), being "without sin," the possession of purity, and great personal influence are features ascribed to Buddha as well as to Christ. The belief in the originality of the Gospel precepts has long been abandoned, even by Christian writers. Jesus himself acknowledges that the doctrines of "love to God and love to man" are the compendium of the ten commandments, which existed long before his time.

The great consolidating power which is said to be peculiar to Christianity is "love for Christ." But surely love for the originator of a system is by no means a unique feature of the Christian faith; for the weight of personal influence has been visible in all the founders of the great religions of the world. Here, however, a most important question arises: Does conduct, which is the result of personal attachment, indicate the highest form of morality? We think not; for the ignorant and the savage may have great veneration for their religious heroes, and yet do nothing themselves to promote the general welfare. In our opinion, the really moral man is he who follows truth for its own sake, and pursues a moral course because it tends to his own good and also to that of others. The welfare of man is a nobler motive for good actions than love for Christ. This latter incentive is too frequently fostered through a selfish desire for mere personal reward in some imaginary future life. Conduct based upon the intelligent perception of right and justice may, and does, vary from that which is prompted by devotion to either Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, or Joseph Smith. The moral value of the motive which springs from indiscriminate veneration for any religious leader may be estimated by its results. In the case of Jesus it has, in innumerable instances, led to narrow-mindedness, bigotry, fanaticism, the subjection of the intellect, and a relinquishment of manliness and self-

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reliance. Of course there are many exceptions to these evil results of hero-worship; but the history of Christian theology affords ample proof that an impassioned love for the name of Jesus has allured millions of devotees from the path of rationality, and placed them in the vortex of uncontrolled enthusiasm. It was so with the fanaticism of the seven crusades, the cruelties of the Inquisition, the persecutions of the Star Chamber, the slaughter of Protestants in Paris in the fifteenth century; and it is so to-day in a lesser degree, as shown by the fanatical spirit of the members of the Salvation Army, and other Christian sects of low intellectual calibre.

Another favorite claim that is put forward to prove that Christianity is unique is the teaching that God is one. But this idea did not originate with Jesus, for it was the view entertained by the Jews long prior to the Christian era. Besides, the supposed followers of Christ profess to recognise in God three divisions—the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Comforter, or, as the Prayer Book of the Church of England puts it, "The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate." It is true attempts are made to reduce these three to one, but it is sought to be done only with the aid of a kind of arithmetic that is peculiar to theology, and which would not be accepted in any elementary educational institution of the country. Still, this does not divest Christianity of Dualism, for God and the Devil yet remain, and the Evil One has by far the greater influence in the world, while his abode is more easily found and more extensively patronised than the home of the "most high" (Matthew vii. 13, 14). It is further asserted, as a virtue of the Christian conception of God, that it assimilates fresh elements from the discoveries of astronomy and biology. If this be so, the conception of God must have been very different after the discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin to what it was before. One of those conceptions must, therefore, have been wrong; and it may be fairly asked why God allowed a false conception of him to obtain through lack of materials by which a correct one could be formed?

Finally, we are confronted with the following query: How can we account for the youthful, unlettered Jesus having such profound views of God? Our answer is: Whatever views Christ entertained of God—profound or otherwise—he found existing in his time. Then we are told that he outstripped all the productions of the great philosophic geniuses of the ancient world. This is an assertion destitute of proof. In fact, judging from the New Testament, he did nothing of the kind, for much that he is credited with teaching is inferior to many of the inculcations of the old philosophers. The morality of Christ, as J. S. Mill observes, "is, in many important points, incomplete and one-sided, and unless ideas and feelings, not sanctioned by it, had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse condition than they now are" (*Liberty*, p. 29).

It is worthy of note that most of the ancient philosophers put morality upon the right basis, which is its relation to man, not to God; they made its incentive good results in this life, not hope of reward or fear of punishment in another state of existence. Granted that their morality did not become universal, neither did the ethics taught by Christ. Ancient morality was effectual among those who regulated their lives by it; what more could be expected? We learn from the Gospels that the teaching of Jesus had little or no effect upon his family, his fellow villagers, or his nation. It failed to induce his relatives to believe in him; it did not inspire his beloved disciple, Peter, to tell the truth, any more than it won to his belief those who crucified him. It is easy to say that the morality of Christ rapidly influenced all minds; but it has never done so, and even to-day the great majority of the human family are still not affected by it, while most of those who profess to accept it practically ignore its influence.

The fact is, with all the drawbacks of Pagan morality, it broke down the power of Grecian mythology, just as Secular morality is now refining many of the teachings, and destroying much of the superstition, of Christianity. There is no doubt, in our mind, that Christian England is indebted to Pagan Rome and classic Greece for much of the morality, culture, and heroism which give the prestige to modern society. As Dr. Temple, the present Bishop of London, writes in his *Essay on the Education of the World*: "To Rome we owe the forms of local government which in England have saved liberty and elsewhere mitigated despotism. . . . . It is in the history of Rome rather than in the Bible that we find our models of precepts of political duty, and especially of the duty of patriotism. . . . . To the Greeks we owe the corrective which conscience needs to borrow from nature."

CHARLES WATTS.

EUSEBIUS AND THE GOSPELS.

THE seventeenth chapter of the second book of *Ecclesiastical History*, attributed to Eusebius, gives an account of the ascetics of Egypt, known as the Therapeutæ. Whether these were identical with the Essenes of Palestine or Buddhists from India has excited a deal of controversy, into which I shall not here enter. What I wish to point out is that, according to this, the first-known Church history—the sacred ancient writings of these Therapeutæ—were the very Gospels. This testimony is sought to be obscured in the translation of Eusebius given in Bohn's Ecclesiastical Library. This translation is by the Rev. C. F. Cruse, D.D., and was originally published in six volumes.

The passage in question reads, according to this worthy divine:—

> "But it is highly probable that the ancient commentaries which he [Philo, who was a cotemporary with Christ] says they [the Therapeutæ] *have*, *are* the very Gospels and writings of the apostles," etc.

I italicise the words which bring out the dishonesty of the translation. Let us turn to the latest translation—still done by men of God, the eminent divines, G. H. Wace and Dr. Philip Schaff (Oxford, 1890)—and we read:—

> "But it is very probable that the works of the ancients, which he says they *had*, *were* the Gospels and writings of the apostles," etc.

Again I italicise the words noting the contrast of tense. If, however, we wish to get at the correct meaning in English, we must go back to the time when only the ministers, and not the common, vulgar populace, were expected to read books of Church history. Thus we read in the translation by Meredith Hammer (London, 1619), p. 28:—

> "It is also very likely that the Commentaries which he reported to have been among them *were* the Gospels and other works of the apostles, and certain expositions of the ancient prophets, such as partly that epistle unto the Hebrews, and also the epistle of Paul."

But, to get the real gist of this important passage, we cannot do better than go back to the first folio translation published at Cambridge in 1603. Here we read (and the passage must be given in full):—

> "They have writings of some ancient persons who have been heretofore famous leaders of their sect, and have left many monuments of their learning which consist in dark and secret expressions, which they use as original expressions, do imitate thereby the course of study. These certainly seem to be the words of such a man as had heard some one of our religion expounding the Holy Scriptures, *and it is very likely that the writings of those ancient persons, which he says they had, were the Gospels and writings of the apostles, and certain expositions of the ancient prophets, of which sort many are contained both in other gospels of Paul and also in that written to the Hebrews.*"

The meaning, despite the old style of construction, is plain. It is very likely that what Philo called the ancient writings of the Therapeutæ were the Gospels, etc. This meaning has been sought to be obscured by translators, who saw the damaging consequences of such admissions. I am not a Greek or Latin scholar, but a friend has submitted the foregoing versions to several scholars, who agree that the Cambridge translation of 1603 is best. What does Professor Edwin Johnson say?

LUCIANUS.

A poor Highlander, near his end, asked the minister, in the midst of his consolations, whether there would be any whisky in heaven. "Oh no, Donald," was the reply, "there will be no occasion for that." "Ca'sion or no 'casion," persisted Donald, "'twad be but decent to hae it on the table."

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THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLE.

A PRIESTLY RULER, weary for a while of ceremonial, the tasks and fret of his daily life, rode one day alone far beyond the city walls.

Until he came at last to a green place far from the habitations of men, and sat him down amidst trees near by a brook of clear, swift-running water. No sound could he hear but the little noise of the waters, the wind in the trees, and the piping of mateing-birds.

And in a little while a great peace came into his soul, and he was rested in spirit.

A great cloud came sublimely out of the West. It was whiter in the sun than drifted snow, and its mighty approach was like the coming of the chariot of the Eternal.

"Glory to God," cried the Priestly Ruler.

Soon there came unto his ears the soft sound of a lute, and a strong voice singing—the voice of a young man singing of love and the joy of life.

The Priestly Ruler arose, frowning, and went towards the place whence the music was coming. And through the lacing leaves and branches he beheld a young man and woman reclining upon a bank soft with moss and young grass. And they were very beautiful. Adorned were they with field-flowers and leaves twined about their garments, and in their flowing hair were flowers, saffron and crimson and gold, the fresh leaf of the vine, and the poppy—the poppy red as blood. The young man was luting and singing, and his voice was filled with the very joy of song. He sang of this world only, of the earth and things earthly; most of all he sang of love. And the young woman was looking into the face of the singer, and in her eyes was the light of a great love.

The Priestly Ruler was angered that they praised the earth and the joys of earth, and remembered not God nor the things of God. And he broke into upon them, crying: "O children of sorrow, cease thy vain glorying of the things that pass. Know ye not God—that the day of his wrath draweth nigh? Life is brief and all uncertain; cease, therefore, thy sinful dalliance, and haste to make thy peace with him."

The lovers stood and listened amazed. The young woman, suddenly afraid, clung to her lover, saying: "O beloved."

Her lover put his arm around her, and drew her to him and soothed her, saying: "Beloved, be not afraid."

And he turned unto the Priestly Ruler, crying: "Who art thou who seest evil in love, need of repentance in joy, daring so rudely thus to break in upon us?"

"I am a Ruler, and a Priest of God," answered he.

"Then begone! back to thy altar, thy chanting, thy incense, for we are not of thy world," answered the young man. "We are children of earth, and it suffices us."

"What of to-morrow? Will the earth endure for ever?" replied the Priestly Ruler. "O fools! Ye are bartering the opulence of eternity for the bitter-sweet pleasures niggardly given in life's scant time."

"Nay, tell not thine ancient tale, priest," said the young man. "We are of those who have heard and have not believed. *Life* is still ours, the *earth* is still ours; no shadow of the temple dims for us the manifold glories of the world; no sinister creed is ours to make the sweet unclean. We have no gods, no priests. You say we are fools. We would fain be wise; we would have both wisdom and courage—wisdom to live aright, courage to face unflinchingly whatsoever befalleth us. We want neither thy God nor thy priestly wisdom. For where the priest is there are sorrow, vain guessing, and futile strife. Aye! and the very name of 'God' calls out of the past a vision of blood and agony. What sayest, my beloved?"

"Thou hast spoken my thoughts, beloved," answered the young woman; then gently, but unafraid, she said: "O, sir priest, it is but simple truth that the dear earth is ours but a very little while, and that there is much sin and sorrow in the world. My lover and I cannot always fill the sunny hours with luting and with song. Troubles we have, bitter thoughts and grievous discontentments. But should we, then, be always sorry because we are sometimes sad? Should we close our eyes against the dawn because soon the night cometh? Nay! but the knowledge of the sure-coming night constraineth us to gather in our daytime all we can that this our earth yields for our joy. Should we mourn the speeding time? Nay! for each season hath its peculiar joy, and we speed into the evening of life even in the present, without vain regret for the inevitably past. Now is with us the season of youth, of youthful love, and of hopeful work. And, sir priest, we are very happy, my love and I."

The three stood awhile in silence, the Priestly Ruler viewing with eyes of angry reproach the flower-decked worldlings; they, with clasped hands, looking with quiet disdain at the sombre priest.

"So be it," said the Priestly Ruler, and turned and silently went his way. As he rode citywards he heard faintly, and ever fainter growing, the sound of luting and of song.

"They have their day," said he musingly.

At the setting of the sun the Priestly Ruler sat upon a parapet of his palace overlooking the city. And the temple of his God was betwixt him and the sun; and over the city was the shadow of the temple. And the city was silent; no sound of lute or song came thence to his ears. But out from the temple swelled the great sound of chanting—of people and priests chanting—supplicants at the feet of God.

And the Priestly Ruler arose, saying deeply unto himself: "Even so!—*there is no hope for earth in the shadow of the temple; and the fear of God drieth up the wells of earthly joy.*"

HARRY H.

A LANTERN WITHOUT THE CANDLE.

IT seems rather surprising that, in all the veering away from theology which we have witnessed in our time, men, otherwise sceptical enough, should still profess faith in Jesus. They have given up his divinity, but still cling to his name, or the former half of it, as to that of a most extraordinary man. To my thinking, a greater fallacy or superstition never possessed men. To give up Christ, the son of God, and stick to Jesus, the son of Mary, seems to me to be an evidence of imbecility or excessive sentiment, in which reason plays no part at all. Jesus without the Christ is a lantern without the candle, and a poor lantern too. If Jesus was the Christ, God's anointed, the Son of God, and God himself, there is some slight modicum of sense in respect shown to him. But if Jesus was a mere man, Jew or Gentile, there is nothing in that fact to call out our reverence or to lead us to worship him.

Of course, those who so excessively crack Jesus up say they do so because of his wonderful character; but, in sober truth, the boasted character of Jesus is all the invention of his worshippers, and especially of those who have made money out of puffing him. Nor is that all; the boasted character of Jesus was concocted and put upon him or attributed to him, as the son of God, or while he was too exalted to be regarded in any other light than that of divinity. In a word, if the Churches had from the first treated and regarded Jesus as a mere man, as the Unitarians do, he never would have had any character to boast of, for there are no materials out of which to weave it. This is literally true. Why, "Paul" was far more prominent as a man than Jesus ever was. There is no ground of comparison between them. And if you take any one of the prominent martyrs mentioned in Christianity, you will find a character transcendently more striking than that of Jesus. Ignatius, Polycarp, Andrew, Peter, St. Simeon Stylites, the hermit Anthony, and a dozen others, showed self-denial far superior to anything Jesus exhibited. And this must be clear to all who are unprejudiced enough to examine for themselves.

I, of course, do not regard any of those names as representing a real man; but we have to discuss character in fiction as in real life. Shakespeare's characters, for example, are quite as much distinguished from each other, and must be regarded as quite as moral, immoral, great, little, and middling, as real men and women. So must it be with Jesus and his followers. And it seems to me unquestionable that Jesus has been, and is, completely eclipsed by many of those who have followed him. That is, unless you throw into his scale the element of Godhead, he is outweighed immensely by many a character in Church story.

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Consequently, to take away the divinity of Christ, or rather of Jesus, is really to logically fling him up altogether. For the elements of greatness are entirely wanting. Whoever sketched him relied for effect upon his divinity, and nothing else. Take, as an illustration, pictured saints, such as we see them in Christian art; there they appear with their saintly insignia. But just obliterate the nimbus or the ring of glory over or around the saint's head, and he appears as ordinary a being as you could well imagine. The painter relies upon the trappings of divinity for all the effect he would produce upon the spectator. So with Jesus—the writers depend upon the marvellous, the impossible, for effect. And Jesus, once reduced to mere manhood, is no better than a sucked orange. That is the logic of the position taken up by the Unitarians and by others in the present day. Jesus is all or nothing. Let them have their choice. He is the impossible or the contemptible, like a pope without his infallibility or a priest minus his "reverence," or a rose destitute of color and scent. They may strive while they may, but they must make Jesus everything or nothing at all.

—*Liberator.* J. SYMES.

HUXLEY'S POSITION.

"The world is poorer by the death of Huxley; but the greatest must pass, sooner or later, from the stage of existence, and, as they pass, the lesson of their lives comes out with great distinctness. Of Huxley we may truly say that he enriched the life of our time by his thought and by his example, and that the forces which to-day make for progress in the world are better organised for victory, and move forward with steadier hope, through the help and inspiration which he afforded."—*W. J. Youmans, in "Popular Science Monthly," August, 1895.*

WHEN I reached intellectual maturity, and began to ask myself whether I was an Atheist, a Theist or a Pantheist, a Materialist or an Idealist, a Christian or a Freethinker, I found that the more I learned and reflected the less ready was the answer, until at last I came to the conclusion that I had neither art nor part with these denominations except the last. The one thing in which the most of these good people agreed was the one thing on which I differed from them. They were quite sure they had attained a certain "gnosis," had more or less solved the problem of existence; while I was quite sure I had not, and had a pretty strong conviction that the problem was insoluble. So I took thought, and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of Agnostic. It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the Gnostic of Church history, who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant.

To my observation, human nature has not sensibly changed during the last thirty years. I doubt not that there are truths as plainly obvious and as generally denied, as those contained in *Man's Place in Nature*, now awaiting enunciation. If there is a young man of the present generation who has taken as much trouble as I did to assure himself that they are truths, let him come out with them, without troubling his head about the barking of the dogs of St. Ernulphus. *Veritas prævalebit*—some day; and, even if she does not prevail in his time, he himself will be all the better and the wiser for having tried to help her. And let him recollect that such great reward is full payment for all his labor and pains.

We are daily, and by rough discipline, taught to attach a greater and greater responsibility to the utterance of the momentous words, "I believe." The man of science who commits himself to even one statement which turns out to be devoid of good foundation loses somewhat of his reputation among his fellows; and, if he be guilty of the same error often, he loses not only his intellectual, but his moral, standard amongst them.

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game of chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn upon the father who allowed his son, or the State which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight? Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man or woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse. My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life. Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game.

THE HYPOCRISY OF THE WELSH PRESS.

IN the July number of the *Welsh Pioneer*, a small monthly devoted to the cause of religious freedom and inquiry, "Delta" says, in his "Notes by the Way":—"Welsh editors are always considerate—and consistent; especially those reverend editor-proprietors who are so callous to the just and fair claims of the producers that they think nothing of pocketing with one hand big payments for quack advertisements in the guise of news, while with the other they do all in their power to grind down to the utmost farthing the already underpaid 'devils' who set them up in type. The vernacular newspapers of the Principality, all of which represent some aspect of religious sectarianism, are invariably produced by boy-labor, or at best by 'men' for boys' wages. Yet these papers, week after week, contain notes and leading articles ostensibly written for the benefit of the toilers, and they are the loudest in their demands for the passing of measures tending to improve the condition of the working classes. Is it not high time that this miserable hypocrisy should be exposed?" *We* think it is.

In another note "Delta" says:—"I understand that Principal T. C. Edwards's *Davies Lecture* is to be published with the least possible delay. Some 'striking passages'—*vide* Welsh press—of the lecture were read at a meeting in connection with the C. M. Assembly, and, judging from what has already transpired of it, I should imagine that this lecture is a *chef d'œuvre* of mystical composition. To give one or two choice specimens of the 'striking' points: 'The idea of trinity in God arising from the idea of love'—I am translating literally from a Welsh report—'*y dryeh fehlel am ddrindod* (sic) *yn. Nuw yn cedi o'r dryeh fehlel am gariad*?' 'The special characteristic of the Second Person in the Trinity is that he is a divine model of a man, in two views: (1) that, although co-eternal *with* the Father, yet he emanates *from* the Father; (2) that, although he is in his nature co-equal with the Father, yet he is subordinate to the Father.' The report before me contains a long list of similar apparently illogical and self-contradictory propositions concerning that which, at least to all ordinary men, is absolutely unknowable. But Dr. Edwards is no ordinary man; therefore his utterances may demand attention, and yet prove nonsensical when subjected to analysis, although his followers regard them as infallible oracles."

An origin of nature is inconceivable; the existence of nature is evident. The manifestations of nature can be observed; the ultimate causes of these manifestations are yet untraced. The students of a "First Cause" have as yet announced no indisputable result. The theological alchemists have been at work in the laboratories of the churches for ages; they are engaged in their incantations and compoundings still. Every seventh day the crucibles are held over the fires of a hundred thousand altars, but the Philosopher's Stone of Creation has not yet been produced.—*G. J. Holyoake, Preface to "Trial of Theism."*

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THE SALVATION OF GOD; OR, A NARROW SQUEAK.

THE notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith threw the Bible in the fire!
What a very dreadful act;
What a truly awful fact—
The BIBLE mind; not Shakespeare,
Or some scientific pest,
But God's own Word—nay, God himself,
For elsewhere God's non est.
O why doth woman ever thus
Defy the pow'rs that be?
Is it because no female sits
Upon the Trinitee?

The pit and stalls were thunderstruck,
The boxes held their breath;
The gallery went pale with fear,
And waited sudden death.
The orchestra were mute, and all
Their instruments were dumb;
The call-boy dropped upon his knees
And prayed to kingdom-come.
In short, for one appalling moment all the house was sunk
In abject, breathless, craven, hopeless, knock-kneed, palsied funk.

Thus Mrs. Ebbsmith flung God's revelation to the flames,
Unnerving male playgoers, and prostrating pious dames.
But ah! she turns! and, shrieking, hauls
God's Word from out the fire,
And saves herself post-mortem squalls
From omni-potent ire.
Down came the curtain midst a storm of violent applause,
Grotesquely reminiscent of vociferous "he-haws."

Oh, Mrs. Ebbsmith, how could you such profanation offer?
You know, of course, that burning books is joy to every scoffer;
That Atheists have bloodshot eyes, dishevelled hair, and long nails;
Grim squints and rudimentary horns, and even sometimes prong-tails.
Your mother, doubtless, taught you so when you were a mere baby;
She told you Thomas Paine was vicious, and believed it, may be.
Your infant mind was oft engaged in learning how a horrid,
Unbridled wretch, named Voltaire, died and went to regions torrid.
You often listened awe-struck to some squalid death-bed story,
And hoped that when you died you'd go to pantomimic glory.
At Sunday-school you learnt, by heart, some lame lugubrious sonnets;
Or went with ma to church when she required to see the bonnets.
And now these moral crutches you would wantonly abandon,
Although without them you have not a moral leg to stand on.
Thank goodness, just in time, you snatched the brand from out the burning;
And let us pray that, contrite, to the fold you are returning.
For where are justice, love, and honor, save in God's anointed?
And where are purity and truth, except as God appointed?
In his own Word, the Book of Books, cram full of holy writing—
Espousing lies, and lust, and filth, and red with blood and fighting.
'Tis meet that gentle woman should admire this volume gory;
Well might you burn your hands to save the Whale and Jonah story.
That sun and moon stood still for Joshua no one would credit,
Were it not in the Bible, proving God himself hath said it.
'Tis of the first importance that these wonders astronomical
Should be preserved along with other marvels anatomical:
As witness: Balaam's ass, which talked with eloquence pathetic;
And Jonah's whale, whose throat enlarged to fit with things prophetic;
Four-headed fowls, a talking serpent, armor-plated locust,
Are Bible truths, on which all good believers' eyes are focussed.
Gentle Jesus curse'd a fig-tree, for the cogent reason
That it obstinately bore no figs at the wrong season.
Time after time the men of God betrayed their morbid morals;
But Abram, Lot, and David now enjoy their well-earned laurels.
To cheer themselves at woman's cost these worthies faltered never;
Their names should surely be enshrined in woman's heart for ever.
Ezekiel, chapter four, describes—but stay! the "Rock of Ages"
At this point gets too dirty for our Editor's clean pages.
Oh, Mrs. Ebbsmith, how could you, for Thespian notoriety,
Have set your heart 'gainst all that's good, with female contrariety?
Reflect, ere deadly sceptic words you utter from the forum;
Let Balaam's ass and Jonah's whale restore you to decorum.

C. D.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Methodist Times* devotes an article to the Moral of the General Election, and finds that the main opposition to Liberalism was furnished by the Liquor Trade and the Established Church. The parsons are referred to as marching to the polling-booth "with a hiccuping drunkard on one arm and a sporting tipster on the other." How beautiful and kind! And only to think that the editor of the *Methodist Times* is a gentleman who cannot bear strong language—when applied to himself.

This precious article describes the Book of Revelation as "the true key to human history." Bishop South understood it better when he said that the subject of prophecy, to which it belongs, generally finds a man cracked or leaves him so. We do not feel called upon to say which alternative is applicable to Mr. Hughes.

But just fancy a man at large, at the end of the nineteenth century, finding the key to human history in St. John's Nightmare. Methodism and madness sure are nearly allied, at least in historical criticism. Gibbon and Comte and Buckle and Mommsen, and other masters of the philosophy of history, spend years on years in elucidating the past of mankind. But it is all a waste of time, for in comes Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, the greatest philosopher of all, with a little dream-book in his hand, and exclaims: "Here is what you have all sought and missed. The secret of human history is the woman sitting on the scarlet-coloured beast, with seven heads and ten horns." How true is the old text about truth being hidden from wise men and revealed to babes and sucklings!

Professor Slater, in the *Methodist Times*, plays for a moment the part of a candid friend to his own side. He tells a story of a woman in a London court who was worried by tract distributors. "Away with you!" she exclaimed; "it is only eleven o'clock, and I have had five religions at me already."

Another writer in the same journal says that Dr. Lunn has "transformed Switzerland." This sudden announcement made us tremble. Had he rolled out the Alps and filled up the Lakes? But we were soon reassured. Switzerland stands where it did. Dr. Lunn has "transformed" it in this way: his "Reunion Conferences" have brought over a lot of pious picnicers, so that during the summer months Switzerland "literally swarms with Methodists." Ah well! Switzerland will survive that. The Alps will lift their snowy summits to the sun long after the last Methodist is dead and buried and forgotten.

We have not quite done with the *Methodist Times*. It actually condescends at last to notice the death of Professor Huxley. A paragraph on the subject is written by the Rev. W. Spiers, who deals out science to the readers of that journal. He remarks that Huxley denied the possibility of revelation (which he didn't), and "hence was able to treat Biblical narratives with mirthful irreverence." We presume this refers to the bedevilled Gadarene swine. Poor Huxley! Being a plain man of science, he could not get up any reverence for that pig story, and now he suffers the fate of the scorner.

Huxley met a good many pigs on earth—some of them in clerical attire. Since his death he has (of course!) met many devils in Hades. (We were going to write Hell, but that word sounds too much like swearing.) And by this time he probably understands that devils and pigs can easily lodge together.

"Happily," says the Rev. W. Spiers, "the race of scientists who regard it as their duty to attack the Christian faith is becoming extinct." Suppose this were true, might it not be because Christianity is becoming extinct? Science has killed the Christianity of fifty years ago, and why should men of science slay the slain?

Mr. Price Hughes gives his "unquestionable authority" for the startling statement that Mr. Chamberlain was bent on introducing the military conscription in this country in order (by some recondite means) to find the wherewithal for

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his Old Age Pensions scheme. This "unquestionable authority" turns out to be a nameless speaker at the Grindelwald Conference. Mr. Hughes had better have stood upon his dignity and kept silent. Is he not a gentleman entitled to be believed upon his word? Is it not enough to declare, "Thus saith Mr. Price Hughes"?

Ananias, according to the *Independent*, backed out of his charge by putting it on to the late Dr. Dale, and connecting it thus: "We need scarcely add that Dr. Dale was greatly under the influence of Mr. Chamberlain." To this "J. G. R.," one of the editorial staff of the *Independent*, says: "I knew Dr. Dale, perhaps, as well as one man could know another, and I can only meet this assertion with an emphatic denial." So Ananias, who only got the challenge from Mr. Chamberlain, now gets the lie direct.

The latest feature of modern invention, says the *Twentieth Century*, was the substitution of a phonograph at a recent funeral in place of a clergyman. The instrument on this occasion gave out prayer, an address, and the hymn, which did not seem to repel the religious sentiment of the mourners, but was rather received with much fervor. This substitution of the machine for the clergyman will be cheap, effective, and just likely to suit the wants of a go-ahead materialistic age.

The *Two Worlds* (Sept. 6) gives prominence, under the heading "Spirit Identity," to "The Case of Thomas Paine," who, it seems, wrote "in a round, school-boy hand," through a "mejum," to the writer "Elina," whose knowledge of Paine before getting the "message" was "that he was said to be an Atheist, and had written a notorious book, the *Age of Reason*, which I had never read." He might have added, "and which age I have not yet reached." After giving some facts about Paine's life that can be found in any biographical dictionary, the message concluded: "I suffered, dear lassie, from poverty, and died a poor man." Paine had a grant of three thousand dollars and a large house and farm of more than three hundred acres, where he died in comfortable circumstances, leaving money by will to Mme. Bonneville and others. We fear the spirit is a mendacious one—a Diakka, as A. J. Davis called them. Possibly the Diakka got hold of a copy of the *British Workman*, in which a story something like this appeared many years ago.

There is one way of looking at the outrages committed against the missionaries in China which, perhaps, has not suggested itself to many. It is this: that while the Chinese are ignorant of their future condition they are not responsible, and, consequently, their chances of salvation are good; but when the missionaries go there the desire to kill them seems to be one which the heathen cannot resist, and they are, therefore, guilty of murder. Can the missionaries be said to be entirely guiltless in the matter? Had they turned their attention to fields nearer home, which need cultivation far more than those of China, results might be different.—*Twentieth Century.*

A story which comes from Ispahan, Persia, illustrates how the Christian missionaries draw on themselves the ill-will and odium of those among whom they dwell. At Julfa, near Ispahan, the head of the English mission is a Mr. Tisdall. About a month ago Mr. Tisdall took home to his house a young woman, the wife of a peasant, who, he said, had become a convert to the Christian faith. Her relatives, finding where she was, asked that she should be given up, but this the missionary refused to do, with the result that an angry demonstration of hostile feeling was stirred up. A large crowd of Mohammedans gathered round the mission-house, and it was only by the interference of the Prince Governor, the Shah's son, who heard of the disturbance, that violence was not resorted to. The Prince requested the missionary to give up the woman, but he persisted in his fatuous line of conduct and refused, even though the British Agent asked him to give up the woman to her husband. The people were exasperated, and, but for the British Agent's prompt action in ordering the woman's removal, the most deplorable results might have been expected.

The *Straits Times* (Singapore) looks with little favor on the missionaries, and, in an article on the murders in China, points out that they wilfully defy the warnings given, and accept the precarious conditions of existence which they know must follow their temerity. It surmises that the result will be that "a dozen or two of natives will be executed, and it will be rare perspicuity and unexampled 'cuteness, to say nothing of honesty, on the part of the local officials if the majority of these victims are not entirely innocent of the missionaries' blood." It hints that the Chinese authorities may be rather pleased at the opportunity of getting rid of a few objectionable men.

The Rev. Mr. Donehoo, a Presbyterian pastor of Pittsburg, who has had much experience of the Chinese in America, says: "I have never yet found one who gave evidence of thorough conversion to Christianity, though I have known a large number who have been in our Sabbath schools, and a few who have professed conversion." On this the New York *Sun* remarks: "The inference from this statement is that, if the evangelisation of the Chinamen is so hopeless here, where they are surrounded by the influences of Christian civilisation, it must be still more hopeless in China itself."

The priests in Hungary are so afraid of the law permitting civil marriage, that they assemble their parishioners in the churches and make them swear, before the cross, that they will never take part in a civil marriage, nor allow their children to do so; and they even declare the civil marriage is no better than concubinage. And all this pother is just because the good priests don't like the prospect of losing their fees.

A committee of the Romewards-wending English Church Union has given its opinion that marriage without the priest's blessing is, ecclesiastically, no marriage at all, and startled Church circles by declaring that civil marriages were an offence against Church discipline. Parties who had incurred censure by entering into such marriages ought, according to the committee, to obtain absolution before being admitted to communion. The further ceremonies of the ring and the joining of hands ought to occur, and the benediction be given. The report staggered even the council of the Union, as throwing doubt on the validity of the civil contract. The matter was again referred to the committee, who now report that they did not mean to suggest the necessity for a religious renewal of the marriage contract, but only a solemn acknowledgment in face of the Church by the parties who had contracted civil marriages. Some of these gentry would like to take us back to the time when the priest always claimed the first kiss from the bride, or to the yet earlier custom of which that was only a relic

In the current number of the *English Historical Review* the Rev. Nicholas Pocock illustrates "The Conditions of Morals and Religious Belief in the Reign of Edward VI." The laxity of morals is shown by the proclamation of April 24, 1548, against such as putting away one wife, marrying another, or keeping two wives at once. "Some taught that this was lawful for the husband, and some went the length of advocating the same license for the wife."

The Association for Promoting the Unity of Christendom—i.e., return to Rome—of which Athelstan Riley, Esq., is Master and President, had prayers put up for their purposes last Sunday in two dozen London churches and over fifty provincial ones. Mr. Riley, however, is too cute to depend solely on the power of prayer.

Christian Reunionists on another tack have been having another nice picnic Reunion at Grindelwald. The ministers all agree that, if the laity defray the expenses of these little excursions, they form the best guarantee of Christian Reunion.

Cardinal Vaughan has also been discoursing on Reunion at the Roman Catholic Conference at Bristol. He says he does not expect a national act of submission will be the means chosen by Providence to bring the English people to Rome, for they are, individually and collectively, marked by a singular independence of character. But he does look forward to wholesale individual conversions, and meantime urged upon his hearers constant prayer. Romanists, Anglicans, and Methodists may pray as long and as loud as they please. Their prayers will only be an incentive to Freethinkers to *work*.

The National Total Abstinence Society, of New York, has made a protest to Monseignor Satolli, the Papal delegate, against the maintenance by the Benedictine monks at St. Vincent's Abbey, Philadelphia, of a brewery established there by the monks, who, we suppose, distil there their famous Benedictine, for the service of the Lord and the Benedicts. It is believed that the monks will sell their property as soon as an opportunity presents itself.

Mr. H. P. Hughes is reported as proposing, as a basis of agreement with the Church of England on the school question, the teaching of the Athanasian Creed. Once stultify the minds of children with the three-in-one puzzle, and that will suit all parties who want to live on their credulity.

It seems that there is a Russian Lourdes in the Crimea, which is visited by thousands of pilgrims. The water from the healing spring is drank and bathed in by young and old. Such shrines probably preserve remnants of old well and grotto worship.

Zion's Watch Tower says: "The term 'infidel' will probably soon die out; it is being replaced by 'higher critic,' 'doctor

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of divinity,' etc." Of course the pious organ laments this state of things, but facts are thrusting themselves before the eyes even of the bigots and myopes.

The *Blue Grass Blade*, alluding to a lightning-struck church, remarks that the Bible says if you ask God to give you bread he will not give you a stone, and if you ask for a fish he will not give you a serpent; but right here, just as plain as you can see anything, you see that you can ask God to give you a blessing and he gives you a streak of lightning. "What fools these mortals be!"

Some self-styled National Reformers in the United States seek to put God into the Constitution, and have asked Roman Catholics to aid them in overthrowing the "atheistical" Constitution of the United States, and in building one that should recognise Jesus Christ as the Sovereign Ruler of the United States. Of course the Catholics are willing to help, but when they have got the control they have in South America, these National Reformers will have no one to blame but themselves if the Roman Catholics attempt to compel them to bow down to a bread-god sovereign as they are now doing with Protestants in Ecuador.

Church and Stage have never loved each other. The clergy have always dreaded the more popular entertainment of their rivals. William Law, the author of the *Divine Call*, wrote a long tract on the Absolute Unlawfulness of Stage Plays, and Jeremy Collier lashed the playwrights with his big clerical whip. Nowadays, however, a change has come over the scene. There is actually a Church and Stage Guild, and the lion and the lamb (we don't know which is which) are going to lie down together. Parsons are even getting up theatrical entertainments to raise the wind. One is advertised to take place in the Parsonage Music Room, Southbourne. Of the two farces on the bill, one is called "Popping the Question," and as there are "family tickets to admit seven" the young people will be able to learn how it is done.

We should like to have the opinion of Jesus Christ and the Twelve Apostles on "Popping the Question" as an adjunct to Evangelicalism. But

> John P. Robinson, he
> Says they didn't know everything down in Judee.

The Vegetarians of China, who were responsible for the murder of Christians, are, according to Dr. von Hesse Wartegg, a secret society, whose object is, China for the Chinese. They therefore aim, not only at the expulsion of foreigners, but of the old Mantchu dynasty. The pigtail being the symbol of Mantchu domination, they go about with scissors, and have despoiled thousands of this much-prized ornament. They are allowed only a life-interest in their property, which passes to the order at their death, so that the heads of the society have immense wealth at their disposal.

Mahmond Essad, a judge at Smyrna, translates and publishes in the *Islamic World* what purports to be "The Decree of the Prophet [Mohammed] granting toleration and protection to a Christian Monastery in Syria." This document takes these Christian monks under Mohammed's protection. It says: "If one of their priests or travellers pass through a plain, go over the mountain, find himself in a chapel, pass through an arid plain or desert of sand, through villages or cultivated plains—in a word, in every place whatsoever in which they may find themselves, I and my disciples are there to help and protect them, and take them out of all difficulties, because they are my people and protected by me. I dispense them from all taxes that are imposed on my other non-Muslim subjects, and allow none to molest them." Now, what was the return of good Christian monks for this enlightened tolerance? They preached the Crusades, which led to the loss of myriads of lives in a vain attempt to rescue a mythical sepulchre out of the hands of the Muslim.

Pious lies that would hardly thrive in a place where the facts can be known, yet spring up like toadstools in places where they may not so easily be cut down. Thus the *African Critic* reports that, at Alieval North, an ignorant bigot writes protesting against the admission of certain works into the local library. Darwin is one of his bugbears. He says: "Anyone would have thought that we had heard the last of him and his bad teaching; he was known to disbelieve in the origin of the universe, and died wretchedly after a long life in his bed." That in the present day people can be found to write, and editors to publish, such wretched stuff should be a sufficient warning as to the character of the calumnies circulated about the old Freethinkers.

The London *Echo* recently had a choice correspondence on the subject of "Where is Heaven?" opened by "Polyglott." Batches of letters proved there was a deal of interest in the subject. But its ventilation was a little unsettling, and in fact raised hell—*vide* the question, "Where is Hell?" A little bird tells us that just as they were getting in full blast a peremptory order came from Mr. Passmore Edwards to print no more. It is said the stoppage was due to a couple of men of God, in whom a holy horror had been excited by the breadth of treatment accorded by the writers.

For some years past the *Echo* has done something towards acting up to its mottoes, "Be just and fear not," and "Hear all sides"; and when topics have turned up in which the masses take but little concern, heretical sentiments have been accorded a fair hearing. But a request for information as to the whereabouts of heaven led to all sorts of speculations; the funny thing being that nobody thought of asking the clergy their information upon the question, and the general drift of the answers indicated that heaven had followed hell, upon which latter place Lord Westbury and Dean Farrar contributed to put the extinguisher.

Sometimes a church notice will reveal more than is intended. This was the case with one brought before our attention. It read:—

> "*Morning Service*—Evidences of a God.
> *Evening Service*—None."

In Allendale Churchyard there is an epitaph on the five sons and five daughters of one John Clark. This a correspondent sends us because it "has cured many of infidelity." Here it is:—

> Bold Infidelity, turn pale and die;
> Beneath this stone ten infants lie.
> Say, are they lost or saved?
> If Death's by sin, they sinned, for they are here.
> If Heaven's by works, in Heaven they can't appear.
> Reason, ah! how depraved.
> Revere the Bible's sacred page—the knot's untied:
> They died, for Adam sinned; they live, for Jesus died.

If his religion had taught John Clark to avoid having ten children, all of whom died in infancy, it might have been better for him than either throwing blame on Adam or seeking consolation from Jesus.

At Chiaramonte Gulfi, in Sicily, a shepherd of the name of Riggio Sebastiano is giving some trouble to the authorities by trying to found a sect, both religious and political, among the ignorant people around him. This man, who can read and write, calls himself the Messiah, and preaches Mormonism and a division of the land. A band of men and women have gathered about him from the neighboring districts. The Archbishop of Syracuse, Monsignor la Vecchia, has excommunicated both this *soi-disant* Messiah and his followers; but it is said that they do not care, and only laugh at the intended punishment.—*Daily News.*

Another serious religious riot has occurred in India, between Hindus and Moslems, the latter of whom declared they would rather die than allow an idolatrous Hindu bullock-procession to pass. 'Tis religion that can give sweetest pleasure while we live. 'Tis religion can supply solid comfort when we die.

According to the *Wimbledon News*, Mr. Clarke, the gentleman who debated some little time ago with Mr. Rowney, has been given notice to quit his tenancy of the "Hope" Coffee Palace, which he has made successful in a commercial sense, because he has "insufficiently attended to the spiritual and philanthropic needs of the institution." The *W. N.* asks, Would the landlord have preferred that Mr. Clarke should attend solely to philanthropy? "We trow not, as in that case where would his rent have come from?"

Three times within the past week has the German Emperor called on his faithful subjects to resist "unpatriotic enemies of the divine system of order in the world," by which he means the Socialists, or any who question his right to rule as he pleases. These outbursts seem to betray a sense of weakness.

Keir Hardie has not met with a very flattering reception at Chicago. He attended the weekly meeting of Methodist ministers, and was invited to address the audience. He took occasion to denounce the execution of the Chicago Anarchists, eulogising the latter as the pioneers of the new religion. This tirade elicited a storm of disapproval, and half-a-dozen preachers, springing to their feet at the same time, denounced the speech and the speaker in scathing terms. Mr. Hardie was compelled to abandon the floor, and left the hall in high dudgeon.

PRIESTS.—To make a kingdom flourish, there should be the fewest priests and the most artisans possible. The ignorance and barbarism of our forefathers, far from being any rule for us, ought rather to be an admonition to us, to do what they would do, if they were in our place, with our improved light.—*Voltaire.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sept. 22 and 29, Foresters' Hall, London.

October 6, Wood Green.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—September 15, Foresters' Hall, London; 22, Sheffield; 29, Camberwell. October 6, Foresters' Hall, London; 13, Foresters' Hall; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. November 17, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

President's Honorarium Fund.—Per Mr. Foote: Mr. Williamson (Glasgow), £2; T. Watson, 5s.

President's Propaganda Fund.—Collected at Mr. Foote's lecture at Glasgow, £1 1s.

Mr. Foote is absent from London, and beyond the reach of work and worry. Correspondents must excuse him until his return.

Harry H.—Pleased to hear from you.

A. J. H.—Surely there are not several *Hackney Gazettes* in Hackney. We omitted the "Kingsland" for the sake of brevity.

Qui.—See paragraph. We believe Mr. Auberon Herbert is a Freethinker.

J. Easton.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. W. Ley.—All Freethinkers should claim to affirm. As you mention, Dr. Danford Thomas, and, indeed, the other London coroners, with the exception of Baxter, accord gentlemanly treatment to all who prefer this method.

E. G. Taylor.—The text which Mr. J. B. Wise, of Kansas, was prosecuted for sending on a postcard to the Rev. Mr. Venom was Isaiah xxxvi. 12. The same words occur in 2 Kings xviii. 27; but we believe Mr. Wise gave the reference to Isaiah.

Th. Fellner.—Thanks.

Mason.—Freemasonry has been denounced by various Papal Bulls—Pio Nono, in an allocution, Sept. 25, 1865, anathematised it, and Leo XIII., in his *Humanum Genus*, of April 20, 1884, and his Encyclical of October 15, 1890, warned the faithful against the order. Yet the Jesuits have not only joined but founded lodges.

Papers Received.—Remarks—Daylight—Southwark Recorder—Two Worlds—Wimbledon News—Islamic World—South Place Magazine—New York Public Opinion—Isle of Man Times—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Freedom—Lucifer—Liberty—Universal Republic—World's Advance Thought—Crescent—Echo—African Critic—Birmingham Daily Mail—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette—Progressive Thinker—Northampton Daily Reporter—Western Daily Press—Leek Times—Leek Post.

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

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

Readers of the *Freethinker* are requested to remember that the first week in October is "Shilling Week." During that week all who desire to aid, however modestly, in the active propaganda of Freethought during the winter, should send me one or more shillings. Every subscription will be acknowledged. I have to add that lecturing engagements, under the scheme I outlined a fortnight ago, are already being formed by Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. C. Cohen; and that the services of other lecturers will be utilised as soon as possible.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote opened the "winter session" of the Glasgow Branch on Sunday. There were three capital audiences in spite of the fine weather, many ladies being present, which is a sign of the progress of Freethought in Glasgow. In the evening a collection was taken for Mr. Foote's lecture-scheme. Mr. Gilmour, who presided, expressed a belief that the scheme promised to be of great utility in the propagation of Secularism. We are happy to learn that the Glasgow Branch is well and strong, with a large and growing membership.

The last N.S.S. Executive meeting, held on Thursday, September 5, unanimously passed a resolution approving of the President's new lecture-scheme, and promising him not only a free hand, but all possible support, in his enterprise. We commend this to the attention of our readers in view of the appeal headed "Special" in this week's *Freethinker*.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured last Sunday evening in the Foresters' Hall, London. The exceedingly fine weather prevented a very large audience. Mr. James Rowney presided. The lecturer's indictment of "Missions to the Heathen" met with enthusiastic applause. This Sunday evening, September 15, Mr. Watts again occupies the same platform, taking for his subject: "Secularism in Modern Thought."

The 20th of September will be celebrated in Rome, throughout Italy, and wherever Italians congregate, as the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry of Italian troops into Rome. We do not prophesy, but we doubt if all the Popes's asses and all the Pope's men will ever undo the work of the past quarter of a century.

The International Congress of Freethinkers open on Sunday, September 22, at the Loge des Amis Philanthropes, 10 Rue du Persil, at 10 a.m., and continues three days, after which there will be a banquet. We understand that Messrs. Forder and Ward are going, and Mr. Foote is also endeavoring to arrange for further official representation of the N.S.S. If pressure of business does not prevent, he will endeavor to attend personally.

The September *South Place Magazine* reports, too briefly, a discourse by Mr. Conway on Charles Bradlaugh. He remarked: "With the exception of Paine, probably no man was ever subjected to more pious falsehoods than Bradlaugh, or more hated." Mr. Conway intimated that he would give a further study of Mr. Bradlaugh at some future time, and we hope he will not forget to carry this out as speedily as possible.

A project is afoot for a Thomas Paine Exhibition, to be held next December at South-place Chapel. Those with any interesting relics of the man, or the times in their relation to him, might put themselves in communication with Mr. Conway.

Mr. Grant Allen contributed a capital article on "The New Heterodoxy" to the *Westminster Gazette* (Sept. 7). Mr. Allen points out that archæologists are showing "that Christianity was not in any sense a new religion—that every one of its principal beliefs and stories, its root ideas, existed in the East, and often elsewhere, from time immemorial."

The *Southwark Recorder* mentions, with much sympathy, the recent severe loss sustained by Mr. A. B. Moss. It says: "A few years ago, when less tolerance in theological matters was prevalent among us, a number of people looked askance at Mr. Moss's determined advocacy of Freethought and opinion in relation to every subject dealt with by the human intellect. But now his position is better understood as a thoroughly honest and worthy one, and, besides, Mr. Moss has for years been one of our most popular entertainers as reciter, actor, and playwright. Furthermore, he has written several clever books and pamphlets, has lectured and debated in all parts of the country with considerable success, and is now doing good work on the Camberwell Vestry."

Ernst Haeckel writes in the *Fortnightly Review* on "Thomas Huxley and Karl Vogt," comparing the work of these two great zoologists and advocates of evolution. He concludes by observing that, "as long as Darwin lives as a reformer in the history of biology, so long will Huxley be celebrated as one of his most faithful friends and most successful fellow workers."

Mrs. J. A. Heavisides Simpson writes in the *Westminster Review* on "Thomas Henry Huxley in his Relations to Science, Education, and Sunday Observance." She says:

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"His *Elementary Physiology* is a book worth its weight in gold to women, and might well lead to a memorial from women in the shape of an institution where physiology would be taught as a necessary part of the education of responsible beings." She recalls how, when in 1866 Huxley ectured at the old St. Martin's Hall on a Sunday, the Lord's Day Observance Society indicted the proprietor for keeping a disorderly house. The case led to the foundation of the Sunday Lecture Society in 1869, Professor Huxley presiding at the first meeting at the Freemasons' Tavern; and Mrs. Simpson cites at length a fine speech on the Sunday question delivered by Professor Huxley in 1877.

THE REV. W. W. HOWARD AGAIN.

SINCE Mr. Foote's absence from town I have received copies of the *Leek Times* (September 7), and also of the *Leek Post* (September 7), in both of which the Rev. W. W. Howard challenges Mr. Foote to debate "the question of mental phenomena, I bringing forward the soul theory, and he the materialistic theory." I notice, however, that Mr. Howard assumes that he can state his adversary's position, and what he ought to defend; and he states it in a way that I, for one, would not endorse. But my purpose is not controversy with the Rev. W. W. Howard, but simply to let those interested know that Mr. Foote will not this week see these bold but belated challenges sent to the local newspapers. When he sees them, on his return, he will doubtless deal with them as they deserve. J. M. WHEELER.

EXTRACTS FROM HERBERT SPENCER'S WRITINGS.

"To sum up Mr. Spencer's position, he writes for mankind at large, not for powers or principalities, for courts or for coteries. If his labors bring him the honor of his fellow-men, that is the highest reward he craves; to *honors* as commonly understood he is indifferent. He is the 'Great Commoner' of philosophy, and without the aid of titles sways the thought of the world more potently than any other man of this generation."—*William Jay Youmans.*

THE profoundest of all infidelity is the fear lest the truth be bad.

Precepts often heard and little regarded lose by repetition the small influence they had.—"*The Study of Sociology*," *chapter xv.*

Every man has freedom to do all that he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man.—"*Social Statics*," *First Principle.*

What is science? To see the absurdity of the prejudice against it, we need only remark that science is simply a higher development of common knowledge; and that, if science is repudiated, all knowledge must be repudiated along with it.—"*First Principles*," *sec. 5.*

Necessary and eternal as are its truths, all science concerns all mankind for all time. Equally at present and in the remotest future must it be of incalculable importance for the regulation of their conduct that men should understand the science of life, physical, mental, and social; and that they should understand all other science as a key to the science of life.—"*Education*," *chapter i.*

Table-talk proves that nine out of ten people read what amuses them rather than what instructs them; and proves, also, that the last thing they read is something which tells them disagreeable truths or dispels groundless hopes. That popular education results in an extensive reading of publications which foster pleasant illusions, rather than of those which insist on hard realities, is beyond question.—"*The Man v. the State*," *The Coming Slavery.*

To the mass of people nothing is so costly as thought. The fact that, taking the world over, ninety-nine people out of a hundred accept the creed to which they were born exemplifies their mental attitude towards things at large. Nearly all of them pursue mechanically the routine to which they have been accustomed, and are not only blind to its defects, but will not recognise them as defects when they are pointed out. And the reluctance to think which they show everywhere else is shown in their dealings with children.—"*The Principles of Ethics*," *sec. 435.*

This law of organic progress [evolution] is the law of all progress. Whether it be in the development of the earth, in the development of life upon its surface, in the development of society, of government, of manufactures, of commerce, of language, literature, science, art, this same evolution of the simple into the complex, through a process of continuous differentiation, holds throughout.—"*First Principles.*"

—*Selected by Louis Levine.*

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (August 10).

CHESTER-LE-STREET is about the oldest town in the North of England. It dates back to the time of the Britons. Its church is over a thousand years old—the oldest but one in the United Kingdom. I visited it immediately on my arrival, Saturday, July 6, with Mr. Thomas Birtley and other Freethought friends. It is indeed a venerable institution, and the air of the centuries is brooding about it. Here are the graves of mighty warriors. Here are their stone effigies, ranged alongside the walls of the church in everlasting silence. The trump of Gabriel will never arouse them. The ancient records of the church are a somewhat curious sign of the times. One man burned out of house and home received the munificent sum of one shilling and sixpence to help him out of his difficulties. This, however, might count more than at the present day, seeing that the daily wage of a laborer was only one penny. But in the same record it is also stated that the parson received one pound and six shillings for the purchase of a new umbrella. It seems that an umbrella was far more valuable than the whole possessions of the ordinary farmer. Those were queer times indeed, when saints were innumerable, and rags also. Chester-le-Street is the mother both of Durham and Newcastle. It was about 635 that the Episcopal See was established which afterwards was transferred to Durham. In 883 the cathedral building was founded at Chester-le-Street, in which were placed the sacred remains of St. Cuthbert. In 995 these remains were miraculously "deposited where the Cathedral of Durham" now stands, and the ecclesiastical glory and wealth of Chester-le-Street forever departed.

Chester-le-Street has a wonderful record of saintly holiness. Godric lived in Finchdale Priory on the river Wear, and practised unheard-of austerities. He wore an iron shirt next to his skin night and day, and is said to have worn out three; he mingled ashes with the flour from which he made his bread, and, lest it should be then too good, kept it three or four months before he ventured to eat it. In winter, as well as in summer, he passed whole nights up to his chin in water at his devotions. He was haunted by beautiful damsels, and so visited by evil concupiscence that he cured himself by rolling naked among thorns and briars. His body grew ulcerated, but to increase his pain he poured salt into his wounds. He finally was admitted into the calendar of saints. I should say that these old monks were fools, if it were not that, as the result of their renown for holiness, the monasteries became enormously rich. I think there was a method in the madness of these ulcerated saints. If they did not get the heavenly crown, they surely received from credulous votaries the gold and silver and precious stones of this earth, and I shouldn't wonder if they repaid themselves amply in secret for their austerities in public.

At any rate, they have left behind churches and cathedrals which even to-day reveal the pomp and splendor of ancient worship; that humanity was crushed in order to give God the glory.

After visiting the church, dim and vague with memories of the superstitious past, I direct my footsteps with my comrades across the green fields to old Lumley Castle, towering magnificently among the groves beyond the river Wear. Over this we ferry in old-fashioned style, and, for the time being, with the moldering and majestic building in the distance, the meadows and forests around the quiet, meandering stream, over whose glassy tide we softly sweep, it seemed as if the nineteenth century melted into the lands of dreams, and the reality of the knightly ages was in the very atmosphere we breathed, and the verdant scenes in which the smoke and noise of industry have not yet prevailed. A grand old building is Lumley Castle, partially inhabited at present, but filled with the dust of ages, with wide, desolate rooms, in which once was heard the tramp of armed soldiery. We stood on the top of the towers whence the archers hurled their deadly weapons. We

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peered into the gloom of the prison cell, and the awful dungeon; we saw the great kitchen and the enormous fireplace by which hundreds of troops could be fed; we viewed the remnants of ancient nobility mingled with the elegance of modern art. The Lumleys were a famous fighting race. They were with William the Conqueror, and among his most trusted councillors and defenders. They have left a brilliant record of devotion and daring in the annals of royalty. They belonged entirely to the old *régime*, and never had an idea of progress. The castle is a memorial of the past, glittering in melancholy grandeur amidst the festivities of to-day; a place where the traveller from the New World will ponder over the beauty and the sadness of the past; its wild strifes and awful crimes; its gloomy faith, mingled with brave and careless song; its reckless ardor that dashed into the lists of death without a thought save of honor and glory. Beautiful fell the sunshine on this old castle—on its mighty walls and towers; beautiful around it spread the vast and undulating country, with dark green forests and radiant fields; the river Wear shining along in wavering expanses; the city, a thousand years old, glimmering on the indistinct horizon, while the church-spire, hoary with time, attracts the dreamy view. It was a picture where past and present might mingle in poetic charm, and from the darkness and struggle of the one be seen emerging the bloom and brilliancy of the other.

I find a stalwart Freethought company at Chester-le-Street. I lecture at Pelton, about three miles away, for the accommodation of friends at other points. On the whole there is a fair attendance, and I am glad to meet so many ardent comrades. I name a little child, Anna Ellen Lowther, and I am sure, from the brightness of her eyes and the cunning beauty of her smile, that she will ever be on the roll of Freethought. On behalf of parents and friends of universal humanity, I welcomed the little one into the glorious comradeship of truth, of liberty, of justice, of human work and progress. I think it well to thus enroll our children's names on the banners of our marching columns.

I enjoyed Chester-le-Street. There were the freshness and the cordiality of the new, with the suggestive and moving associations of the old. Where kings and priests once ruled, the forces of Freethought now prevail. It was a contrast which, in the thoughtful mind, awakes a train of thrilling emotions.

I thank the Freethinkers of Chester-le-Street and vicinity for their generous support. In every way my visit to this most ancient spot was a delightful one. I could not have been treated better had I been St. Cuthbert himself.

Newcastle-on-Tyne is my Sunday's camping-ground. Here is a great centre of industry, shipping, coal, factories, etc. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, although a celebrated town, it had only 3,000 inhabitants. Now it has over 200,000. And these figures do not express the real growth of this country, which is the heart of the North of England, for practically there is a great city here of one million of people, with Newcastle, Gateshead, Tynemouth, South Shields, etc. This is one of the oldest civilised and inhabited portions of the kingdom. In the year 80 Agricola, the Roman general, built a fort on the present site of Newcastle, and here also passed the stupendous wall built by the Emperor Severus from the Irish Sea to the German Ocean. About three miles from Newcastle yet remains a curious fragment of Severus's wall. It is about nine feet in breadth. An apple-tree grows out of the middle of it. From Roman times onward, Newcastle has been connected with the battles and struggles of Danes and Saxons, Scots and English, the houses of York and Lancaster, etc. At Jarrow lived and died the venerable Bede, the best historian of his time. The castle was built during the reign of William the Conqueror. It was at times a royal residence. Afterwards, amidst changing fortunes, it was a place of refuge for thieves and vagabonds flying from justice. It is now the rag fair of the town, a more useful institution as such than when the abode of kings.

Newcastle presents many objects of interest, both in what it has been on the roll of history, and what it is to-day in the world of industry. It has a large radical and Freethought element. John Morley was the representative of this place, and he is well known for his non-Christian opinions, and they do not seem to trouble him politically. The liberal churchman will give him his vote. I find an excellent organisation of Secularists at Newcastle. They are active and hard-working, and cultivate the spirit of comradeship. On Friday evening, before the lecture, we had a social gathering for the purpose of getting acquainted. Mr. Bartram, secretary, Mr. W. Gilhespie, Mr. Carl Aarstad, Mr. Thomas Forman, Mr. Peacock, and others, were gathered together. There was a speech of welcome by Mr. Peacock, a response by the American visitor, songs and recitations, and the cheerful circle of an English high tea. It was a very pleasant introduction to the campaign labors. I give three lectures on Sunday, July 7, to good audiences. The weather was so fine that people would rather walk in the park, or wander by the sea-shore, than attend church, chapel, or lecture. They are beginning to enjoy the Sunday here in a somewhat continental way, and the ancient gloom is disappearing. I was satisfied with the result. Those who do identify themselves with the movement in Newcastle are sturdy in their support. They are jovial companions. On Monday I went over to South Shields, where I met some of the Secularists of this flourishing point. Mr. Peacock, the president of the society, Mr. George White, Mr. Sanderson, of Jarrow, Mr. William Gilhespie, etc., are gathered around the festive table. Afterwards we walked to the pier, from which, in the illuminated evening, is presented one of the most beautiful sights on the coast of England. The pier runs out one mile into the sea, and over it at times the waves break in giant fury. Here are the life-boat stations. Thousands have been saved from the stormy ocean. The two piers at South Shields and Tynemouth form an immense breakwater, and where once there was only danger to the tossing ship is now a secure harbor. One would hardly think as he walked along the placid shore where multitudes of people are flocking, where boats are plying, and waves roll softly over the wide beach on which hundreds of children romp, while the sea spreads afar like a mirror, and the banks of the Tyne glow resplendent like fairy halls—one would hardly think that the tempestuous ocean might rush in with ten thousand battalions and shake these colossal piers to their foundation, and thunder to the very streets of the city. But such is sometimes the vast velocity and terror of this now smiling expanse. Man, however, does not lose his courage or his skill, and battles victoriously with the elements. I understand that the modern life-boat, which plunges defiantly into the very jaws of death, and cannot be engulfed, but always comes right side up amidst the most whirling billows, was first invented at Newcastle. The impetuous bravery of the old Norse kings abides on the river Tyne, and the hero goes forth to combat the storm-god with joyous enthusiasm, not to destroy now, but to save.

The North of England makes a noble record for the Freethought campaign; and the time was all too short that I could spend in this varied metropolis, with its progressive spirit, its vast industries, its beautiful surroundings, its thrilling and splendid historic associations. In no part of England can one better observe the evolutions of the human race, its struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest.

On Tuesday, July 9, I am again in London, after an absence of about five weeks. I spend Wednesday evening with Mr. and Mrs. Foote, Mr. and Mrs. Gilmour, of Glasgow, and J. M. Wheeler, at the home of Charles Watts, where among congenial spirits, the life of London flows with the progress of the world. Watts is pre-eminently sociable. He does not reserve all his vivacity for the platform. He believes in good comradeship. And, indeed, we could not stand the tug of war, endure the battle with injustice and wrong, unless at times we did gather about the camp fire, throw our weapons off, and enjoy the pleasures of the hour with mental stimulation and happy impulse. Mr. and Mrs. Watts have the kindly art of making the fireside light genial to both friend and stranger. Old-time experiences in America come flashing along, while new fields open before. I was pleased to meet our brilliant representative in the North, Mr. Gilmour, who is one of our best-equipped men, a thorough student, and a facile and suggestive lecturer. He keeps things on the move, and Freethought in his hands will never lack a successful defender.

On Thursday, with Mrs. Watts and Mrs. Foote, and Mr. and Mrs. Gilmour, I visit for the first time the wonderful gloom of Westminster Abbey. Here is the buried majesty of the ages. Here are the tombs of kings and queens, of the "illustrious obscure," and of poets and philosophers who have given glory to the universal world. Here for hours one can wander among beautiful and solemn chapels, the sunbeams falling from windows of marvellous hues upon the white faces of the dead shining in statuesque glory; the gorgeous tombs, clothed with imperial regalia; the marble slab, silent over the ashes of immortal genius; along the old parliament house, small and barren, within whose walls once rolled and surged an imperious host, and the green sward contrasting with the desolation of decay. To the eye of imagination, the portals of the centuries seem to open; the dust awakes, and a multitudinous procession appears. The old minster appears to melt, and its "frozen music" becomes an abounding melody of life. The poetry, the art, the romance, the gallantry and splendor of a thousand years fill the venerable aisles, and the great city is forgotten in the thronging shadows of this overarching sepulchre, enriched with the pathos and sublimity of the dead generations.

Friday I had the pleasure of dining again at Simpson's, with Watts, Foote, Forder, and Mr. George Anderson. This time Mr. Anderson gives the Pilgrim a beautiful golden compass, so that wheresoever he may travel—on top of the Andes, or on Greenland's icy shores, or India's coral strand, or, it may be, Siberia's darksome plains—he will have, not the word of God, but the beautiful finger of nature, the unerring needle

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that is ever constant to the glorious shining star, to guide him to liberty and truth. I thank my friend for this magnet of nature—more faithful than any saint, more accurate than any Bible, more subtle than any god, more enduring than any church—that, ever pointing to the sparkling reality, is a thousand times greater blessing to humanity than a million golden crosses.

One would scarcely think that, among the crowding masses of London, one would ever meet by chance a friend from America. One might roam for a hundred years in these streets, and never come across another's track. But it happened that almost the first thing that Dr. Darrow, of Fargo, and Mr. Morton, of Minneapolis, did was to meet the Pilgrim on the Strand, one of the great thoroughfares of London. I couldn't recognise my transatlantic friends at first, it seemed so wildly improbable that anybody from Dakota or Minnesota would be in London. But so it was. I rallied to the occasion, and America for the moment was in the ascendant, and we hardly realised that we were on the oriental side of the "great herring-pond." We joined forces for the time being, and beheld the wonders of the Palace, and the delightfully-horrible wax-works of Madame Tussaud. It being a supreme necessity for all foreigners, especially Americans, to see these wax-works, we proceeded to do the business at the earliest moment. The exhibition is really no better than a ten-cent show in Chicago, except in the extent and the awful realism of its exhibits. There is quite a gorgeous display of the kings and queens of history, the great warriors, the successful statesmen; but to my mind the most interesting wax statue in the whole collection was that of Madame Tussaud herself—a little bit of a woman, but apparently full of grit and extraordinary energy; and it certainly must have taken an immense amount of enthusiasm and persistency to have gotten together a collection like this—the most varied and grotesque collection to be seen on the planet, especially the "Chamber of Horrors"—what a lurid fascination in these uncouth displays! Here is the identical trunk that held the murdered body, the identical knife that did the bloody deed, the identical dress worn by the victim, and so on to the end of the thrilling chapter. It was a relief to finish the round of this infernal curiosity shop.

Saturday I journey to Bristol. I am welcomed to the hospitable home of Dr. and Mrs. Stevens, and the days of work and entertainment pass delightfully along. The Doctor is an earnest Freethinker, and it would be a great help to our cause if a few more like him would stand in the ranks. He questioned the parliamentary candidates of his district as to their position in regard to the "Blasphemy Laws," by which the Secularists of England are at present outlawed. The Liberal candidate expressed himself as distinctly in favor of their repeal, but Michael Hicks Beach, the Conservative candidate, said that, while the law in its present form was a little old-fashioned, yet he was in favor of a blasphemy law of some kind. He was also opposed to the opening of museums, etc., on the "Sabbath," and expressed a great horror of the "continental Sunday." I think this is about the general position of the Tory party, and if that party wins, there is but little hope of the repeal of the "Blasphemy Laws," although it must be admitted, even by the Conservative, that these laws are an outrage on human rights. The parliamentary election is at present occupying the attention of the community to the exclusion of almost everything else; and so, for the time being, the Freethought audiences are not so large as they might otherwise be.

I must thank Mr. and Mrs. Stevens for their kind attention to the American visitor. I must record the smiles and beauty of the little baby—five months old—Dorothy Winifred, who contributed much to the enjoyment of the occasion, and who will, no doubt, ever illuminate the path of Freethought, if the laws of heredity prevail and the promise of a happy birth. SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

IRRELIGION is the end towards which we are hastening. After all, why should not humanity do without dogmas? Speculation will replace religion. Among the most advanced nations dogmas are already decreasing; by inward toil the incrustations of thought are bruised and destroyed. In France we are already for the most part without religion; the man of the world believes no more than the scholar; he has his small fund of ideas more or less simple or profound, on which he lives without feeling the want of addressing himself to the priest. In Germany the work of decomposition of dogmas is also very advanced. In England it only commences, but it goes fast. Christianity seems everywhere to be followed by Freethinking. With Buddhism and Hinduism it is the same. In India the majority of intelligent men are Freethinkers; in China there is no national religion. Yes, it will be a long time yet, but religion is passing away, and we can already imagine the time when Europe will be quite without it.—*Ernest Renan.*

BOOK CHAT.

WE have received from the Esoteric Publishing Co, Applegate, California, a copy of the *Esoteric*. Out of curiosity, we wasted some time over it, and it afforded insight into the lamentable credulity, superstition, and lack of real education which can lead people to write and read such a jumble of words without ideas as is displayed in this organ of Christian Theosophy.

* * *

Macmillan & Co. have published *The Sexes Compared, and Other Essays*, by Dr. Eduard von Hartmann, the German Pessimist. The New Woman is not likely to relish Dr. Hartmann. He defends the double standard in morals, and thinks that, "if we listened to the woman emancipationists, and deprived men of all their privileges in state and society, in law and morality, we should inaugurate a period of female rule unparalleled in history." Then what would become of poor, defenceless man? Probably the New Woman will think he is pretty safe while so much of the elementary savage shows beneath the surface of the cultured German doctor.

* * *

A penny *Life of Thomas Burt, M.P.*, by George Jacob Holyoake, has been published by Walter Scott, Limited. It was written for an American volume on the Burt family, issued at Springfield, Mass., who claim kinship with Thomas Burt, and is the fullest biography of him yet published.

* * *

The Humboldt Publishing Company issue this month *The Theory of Human Progression*, by Patrick Edward Dove. This work was written nearly half a century ago, and to it Henry George is said to have been indebted for his many ideas in his *Progress and Poverty*. Alexander Harvey, who edits the book, prefaces it with a life of the author and a mention of the circumstances that led to its suppression.

* * *

Patrick Edward Dove's book was praised by Sir William Hamilton and Thomas Carlyle. Charles Sumner had it stereotyped in America. Its main principle is that progress is conditioned by the acquisition of true knowledge. It maintains the doctrine of liberty and equality, and argues that rent ought to belong to a nation. Henry George praised it at a public meeting at Glasgow (*North British Daily Mail*, December 19, 1884). But Dove was of Mill's school, a strong Individualist and opposed to Socialism. Dove was at one time editor of the *Commonwealth* at Glasgow, and edited the *Imperial Dictionary of Biography*. He died in 1873.

* * *

M. Zola's novel of *Rome* is to be translated into English by Mr. E. A. Vizetelly, son of the publisher who was imprisoned for selling Zola's works.

* * *

The Hon. Lionel Tollemache, who writes an heretical work, privately issued, entitled *Stones of Stumbling*, is issuing a personal memoir of Dr. Benjamin Jowett, which Mr. Edward Arnold will publish.

* * *

The new Coleridge work which Mr. William Heinemann announces will be ready before the end of October. Coleridge was in the habit of keeping note-books, in which he chronicled table-talk and wrote finished prose. These note-books have remained unpublished in the hands of the Coleridge family until now, when Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge has prepared a volume of extracts. The title selected for it, "*Anima Poetæ*," represents the spirit of the book, as reflecting the poet's mind on various matters at various times. A Coleridge index, which should be very useful, is to be given at the end.

* * *

Frederic Harrison has, in the September *Forum*, a very discriminating study of "George Eliot's Place in Literature."

* * *

Mr. Heinemann will shortly publish the memoirs and correspondence of Ernest Renan, with a prefatory memoir of his beloved sister Henriette, to whom his *Vie de Jésus* was dedicated.

* * *

We read that *The Life and Letters of Thomas H. Huxley*, edited by his son, is soon to be published by Macmillan and Co.

If the intellect and judgment of mankind ought to be cultivated, a thing which Protestants at least do not deny, on what can these faculties be more appropriately exercised by any one than on the things which concern him so much that it is now considered necessary for him to hold opinions on them? If the cultivation of the understanding consists in one thing more than in another, it is surely in learning the grounds of one's own opinions.—*J. S. Mill, "On Liberty."*

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A LATE POPE AND ETERNAL REST.

POPE (*arriving at the gate of heaven*)—Ah! now for my well-earned rest—eternal rest. (*Sighs heavily, and taps gently at the gate.*)

PETER—Who is there?

POPE—The Pope.

PETER (*opening gate, refers to a voluminous pocket-book*)—Yes, let me see; the Father wishes to speak to you—the first door on the right, marked "private."

(POPE *follows the corridor and knocks as instructed.*)

THE FATHER—Who's there?

POPE—It is I, the Pope, your most merciful majesty.

THE FATHER (*from within*)—Oh, ah! my son would like to see you—the next door on the right.

(*The* POPE *moves with dignity, and knocks as directed by the* FATHER.)

J. C. (*opening same*)—Who might you be?

POPE—The Pope, Lord.

J. C.—Oh, yes! the Holy Ghost wants particularly to have a word with you. Ring next door.

(*The* POPE *gathers up his shroud, and rings with some trepidation.*)

HOLY GHOST—Who's there?

POPE—It is I, the Pope, most holy spirit, seeking admission to eternal rest. (*The door opens.*)

A VOICE—Come in.

(*The* POPE *enters.*)

HOLY GHOST—Oh! so you are the Pope; you are the man who has spread all those tales about me and the Virgin Mary! (*Calls lowdly for Attendants.*)

POPE—No, no; I—I only—

(*Enter Attendants.*)

HOLY GHOST (*to Attendants*)—To Hell with this man—the Island in the Lake.

(*Exit* POPE *and Attendants down the lift; the* POPE *shrieking vociferously.*)

ARTHUR T. BARNARD.

JEHOVAH'S MEMORY DEFECTIVE.

A GLARING falsehood occurs in Exodus vi. 2, 3: "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah (*i.e.*, Yaveh) was I not known to them." This assertion of the Bible God is easily disproved, although the word "Jehovah" has been carefully concealed by the pious translators.

Genesis iv. 26: "Then began men to call upon the name of Yaveh."

Genesis xiv. 22: "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto Yaveh, the most high God."

Genesis xv. 2: "And Abram said, Adonai Yaveh (rendered Lord God), what wilt thou give me?"

The word "Yaveh" (Jehovah) occurs also in Genesis ii. 4, 7, 8, 9, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22—Yaveh Elohim. In Genesis iii. 1, 8, Yaveh Elohim; but prominently in Genesis xiii. 4: "Unto the place of the altar which he had made there at first, and there Abram called on the name of Yaveh Elohim." There, between Bethel and Hai, Abram called (preached) the ominous name, *Yaveh!*

Yaveh, the Bible God, has a bad memory, to say the least of it. The Holy Ghost who inspired (?) the writers of the old Book clearly shows himself—infallible. *Apres tout* the Devil is *not* the father of lies.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

The wail of the curate is very pathetic. There are only 14,000 livings for some 24,000 clergy, and the incumbents of the livings protest they are little better off than the curates, omitting the fact that they are not liable to lose their situations as they get old. We confess our sympathy is not so very deep with those who find it hard to live on some £150 a year. The more they wail, the more likely sensible parents will be to educate their sons for a more honest business.

The British Museum authorities, having the fear of men of God like the Rev. Dr. Kinns and the Rev. Dr. Kitchin before their eyes, used to be very chary about dating any of their antiquities before the time of Adam. Even the Christy collection of prehistoric stone implements, etc., went without any sign of their vast antiquity. But this is breaking down. In the Official Guide we read of a "King of Babylonia, B.C. 4200," or 196 years before the creation of Adam, though on the case we read, "about B.C. 4000." Then we have the Egyptian sepulchre of Khufu-Ankh, a tomb having the Ankh cross as a sign of life, dated B.C. 3733; and the photo of the "Step Pyramid" appears as "built, probably, by Atta, King of Egypt, about B.C. 4300."

CREEDS.

LONG years I've spent in study over creeds;
Perplexed by questions deep beyond reply;
Now tempted to affirm, now to deny;
Sad, paralysing influence on good deeds.

What joy to follow where calm nature leads!
And roam in woods or fields which round us lie;
To gather flowers, or behold the sky;
And thence invoke that peace the spirit needs.

All nature speaks to man with tranquil voice;
He, too, her child, is nurtured on her breast;
She shows, full oft, for him a smiling face.
But not alone for him. The fields rejoice;
Birds sing, sun shines, vexed ocean sinks to rest,
Bright stars roll on in the vast sea of space.

—*Open Court.* E. EMERSON.

Was Not David Mistaken?

Either David was not a close observer, else the age in which he lived was very different from that of to-day, provided he always told the truth. He said: "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Fearing some critic would insist the word rendered "righteous" was not properly translated, we consulted the revised edition of the Holy Book, also the Jewish translation, and the Catholic. The latter substitutes the word "just"; but this is a synonym with "righteous" which is used in the other authorities. We determined to consult the commentators, who, the reader is aware, assume to know everything about Bible characters, as well as God; so we turned to Scott, who is an old standby. To our delight, we found he affirms our statement, using these words: "The Psalmist had never, during a long course of observation, known an instance of the kind." The conclusion is irresistible: all that vast array of unfortunates who find themselves seemingly forsaken by God and man, who are infirm with age, or are crippled with disease, who are destitute of the needs of life, and subsist by the hospitality of the charitable, wrung from them by importunate begging, are neither righteous of themselves nor descendants of just parents. We are right sorry to learn this, for it is a crushing blow at the poor and destitute, and, if properly understood and fully believed, it will operate severely to their prejudice.

—*Progressive Thinker.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Teacher—"What is man?" Boy—"Dust." "What is woman?" "Sawdust."

Teacher (to class)—"Who was the first man?" Little Boy—"Adam." Teacher—"Right. Now, who was the first woman?" Little Boy—"His mother."

Bobby—"Mamma, do the streets of heaven flow with milk and honey?" Mother—"So the Bible says, dear." Bobby—"And is that why the angels have wings, 'cause the walking's so bad?"

Teacher (to little boys)—"What is the shape of the world?" Little Boys—"Don't know, sir." "Well, what is the shape of my snuff-box?" "Square, sir." "No, no; I don't mean that one, I mean the one I use on Sundays." "Round, sir." "Now, then; what is the shape of the world?" "Square on week-days, and round on Sundays."

Hostess (to little six-year-old visitor at dinner)—"Why don't you ask a blessing at your house, Tommy? Don't you thank the Lord for what you eat?" Tommy—"No, ma'am; we don't have to. We pay for what we get." [Tommy was a philosopher. The habit of thanking the Lord for a meal naturally arose when a man had to go out and hunt for one before he got it.]

WHAT I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell road, E.C.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Secularism in Modern Thought."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Robert Shaw, "Some Facts about the Bible." Tuesday, at 8, social for members and friends.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, a lecture.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Open discussion—"Neo-Malthusianism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus Christ—God, Man, or Myth?"

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, St. John will lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.15, Stanley Jones, "Does Christianity Support Slavery?"

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones, "Our Lord Jesus Christ."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, G. Standring, "What is the New Testament?" 3.15, St. John will lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (Middlesex side): 7, W. Heaford, "The Doom of the Gods." Thursday, at 8.30, F. Haslam, "Mohammed and his Koran."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Sermon on the Mount"; 3.30, "An Hour with the Devil." Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "The Origin of the New Testament."

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, T. Thurlow, "Why I am Not a Christian."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Where will You Spend Eternity?"

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Meaning of Secularism."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Fire-dowers of Superstition."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Garden of Eden."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, a lecture; 3.15, S. R. Thompson, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?"

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, C. James will lecture; 7, W. J. Ramsey will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, Gymnasium Class; 7, Concert.

BLACKBURN: C. Cohen will lecture on Sept. 17, 18, 19, and 20.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "A Chemical Lecture, with Experiments."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. Roberts, "Reason Only."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "The Great French Revolution—Part III., Daybreak"; 6.30, "The Holy Bible."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, R. Mitchell will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Professor Huxley from a Freethought Standpoint."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King street): 7, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (Open Market, James street): 6.30, H. Smith, "The Higher Criticism."

CHATHAM (corner of the New Brompton-road, High-street): 11.15, J. B. Coppock, "Matter and Force."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Biggs will lecture.

MANCHESTER (Stephenson-square): 3, C. Cohen, "Belief and Conduct."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, a lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—Sept. 15, Manchester; 17 to 20, Blackburn; 22 and 29, Birmingham.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 15, m. Finsbury, e. Edmonton; 22, m. Kingsland, e. Deptford; 25, Hyde Park; 26, Hammersmith; 29, m. Victoria Park, a. Finsbury Park, e. Kilburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 15, Mile End; 22, Camberwell; 29, Westminster. October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 15, a. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 29, e. Edmonton.

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The day of emancipation is doubtless distant, and little hope of accelerating the dawn lies down the devious path of legislative endeavor.

Whilst each for himself or herself must weigh the personal damage—the ostracism of society, the detriment in business, and any other considerations of like character—all must realise that the line to be pursued is that which has led all other pioneers in history to attain their ends, the line of active or passive rebellion against the laws and customs of the time.

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We, William F. Dunton and Emma M. A. Dunton, formerly Emma M. A. Briggs, of 60 North street, Sloane-street, London, S.W., having since the 12th of November, 1892, lived together as Mr. and Mrs. Dunton, and being now so styled and commonly known, hereby give notice of our alliance.

We hereby also acknowledge the parentage of Millicent Louisa Dunton, born the 4th of February, 1894, and announce our determination to similarly regard as acknowledged children any future issue of our union.

We consent to the publication of this notice in such manner as the Honorary Secretary of the Legitimation League shall see fit.

Read by us this 19th day of July, 1895, and signed before Arthur Cornwell, Notifying Clerk to the Legitimation League.

W. F. DUNTON.
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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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THE CHRISTIAN HAPPY FAMILY.

CHRISTIANS were united only once in the whole course of their history, and alas! that single instance is recorded in a very doubtful document. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that soon after the disappearance of Jesus Christ his followers were "of one heart and of one soul." We venture to doubt the statement, but let it pass for what it is worth, and perhaps a trifle over. Once in nineteen hundred years the Christians were a happy family. It was just at the start, before they got into fighting fettle. Ever since they have been the champion disputants and quarrelers of this planet. Like some low organism, the early Church split up into a vast variety of sects, which were afterwards called heresies. In the fourth century the Church obtained the support of the imperial power, and then its bosses decided that they would stop this division. Persuasion had failed, so they tried force, and that succeeded. The heretics—that is, people with an itch for following their own opinions—were weeded out by exile, imprisonment, and death. By this means the Church secured a most admirable unity. People all thought alike because all who thought for themselves were exterminated.

This "peace of the Church" was artificial. It could not last for ever. The spirit of variety was bound to assert itself again, and it did so with a vengeance when the Reformation burst upon Europe. There was never a more delightful time for religious anarchists. Every conceivable fad had its innings. It was worse than the procession of heresies which Flaubert passes before the vision of Saint Antony. Some were communists, some were polygamists, some held women in common, and the Adamites took to walking the streets stark naked. Martin Luther was frightened by the spirit he had raised. He called upon the civil power to exterminate heresy with the sword, and the same policy was pursued by John Calvin, the long-nosed, bilious Pope of Geneva.

Protestantism appealed to the right of private judgment. That is an excellent thing in secular matters. Investigate and discuss, and by-and-bye you will come to an agreement. Certain things get settled in time, and are then taken for granted. They are fresh starting-points on the road of progress. But this is because there are facts to go upon; plain, durable, and unalterable facts. There are no facts, however, in religion. It is all fancy. And the more people discuss the farther they will be apart.

Catholic controversialists pointed out to the Protestant champions that unity would be for ever destroyed if people were allowed an open Bible and the right of private judgment. They remarked that the Bible was a big book, written originally in what to the people of Europe is an unknown tongue; that its contents are of various value; that its history, legend, poetry, parable, doctrine, and ethic, are all mixed up together; that it requires to be studied with knowledge and judgment, and that one man is not sufficient for the task of deciding what it teaches; that the inspiration of the Bible is one thing, and the inspiration of its readers quite another thing; and that there will be as many opinions as there are men, unless the living inspired Church interprets the dead inspired Book.

All this is unanswerable, and the history of Protestantism is a demonstration of its truth. We have hundreds of Christian sects in England alone, some of them with vile, outlandish names; and all of them base their peculiarities upon the Bible. What the Bible really means will never be settled until the God who inspired it condescends to tell us. Some of us, meanwhile, can afford to wait.

The existing division of Christendom is felt by many to be a scandal. Infidelity raises its bold head at home, and exclaims, "Go to, you Christians are all quarrelling over what none of you understand." And the heathen abroad, who are all going to hell unless the missionaries can keep them out of it, are told that Christianity means this, that, and the other, until they are ready to cry, "What the devil *does* it mean?"

This sad condition of things has touched the hearts of a number of Christian ministers. They want to bring about Christian unity; at the same time they want an excuse for a holiday; so they foregather at Grindelwald, where they spend most of their time in carnal recreation, and devote the rest to discussing the happy-family question. Every day they see a fresh principle of unity, but the next day it vanishes. If only the Christian sects would give way to each other a bit! If they would drop the points on which they differ, and unite on their points of agreement! What a happy family they would be! Yes, and if the sky falls we shall have plenty of larks without shooting them.

The Pope himself is anxious to bring about the unity of Christendom, and Cardinal Vaughan explains how it is to be managed. All the Protestant sects, including the rich, proud Church of England, are to fall into the arms of Rome. There will then be one Church, just as there was one serpent when Aaron's rod had swallowed the rods of the Egyptians. But the serpent-swallowing trick is not as easy in fact as it is in fiction. The Pope may lick them all over, but he will never get them down. Some of them swear they will swallow *him*, and look at him with hungry eyes and stringy features.

Freethinkers smile at this dream of Christian unity. The unity of Christendom will be brought about by the dissolution of Christianity. The Churches will be forced to work together for social purposes, as the secular principle prevails over the theological principle in modern civilisation. But this means their gradual destruction as Churches. Catholic will not swallow Protestant, nor Protestant swallow Catholic. Secularism is swallowing them both.

G. W. FOOTE.

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THE ATONEMENT.

"Ce Dieu qui fait mourir Dieu pour apaiser Dieu."
—La Hontan.

The present age is characterised by its researches into the past. We are, as Bacon remarked, really the antiques, and in searching into antiquity we trace the infancy of our race. Far back in the childhood of the world, and extending largely over its area still, is *theft*. The sugar is taken before given. Wives, cattle, and lands are got by capture before purchase. So the doctrine of *purchase* may be said to distinguish barbarism from savagery, as the doctrine of mutual help distinguishes civilisation from barbarism. The spirit of barter is typically represented by the Jews. "Blood for blood" was the motto of all their tribe. Every family had a "blood-avenger," whose duty it was to avenge wrong, raise up seed to a kinsman, and so redress the balance. Thus the avenger became the redeemer, as the word is translated in Job xix. 25.

The idea of substitution came early. "Take this victim instead of killing me, or this offering of food instead of hurting me," lies at the bottom of all sacrifice. With the early Jews, as with all tribes in a savage state, the notion of substitution was powerfully aided by another idea found in all tribal communities, that of joint responsibility. Achan stole, but not he only was punished, but his sons and his daughters, his oxen, asses, and sheep, were stoned and burnt with him (Joshua vii. 24). In the late Deuteronomic law (xxi.) we see a remnant of this. If a man was found killed, all within the city—or village rather—nearest, were to take an heifer, kill it, and wash their hands over it, saying: "Our hands have not shed this blood." Being jointly responsible, one victim made satisfaction for the rest. How deeply the idea of substitution lay in the Jewish faith may be instanced by the story of a ram being substituted for Isaac, when Abraham, like a true fanatic, was going to offer up his only son as a burnt-offering, because he heard a voice from the Lord. Another striking instance was placing their sins on the head of a scapegoat, and then sending him out to the wilderness.

Religion always preserves survival of ideas and customs which have otherwise ceased to influence the daily life of mankind. It is this which makes its study so interesting to the archæologist. Just as the word "host" tells us of an enemy that might be slaughtered, just as the bishop's apron and gaiters tell us of a time when the priest was the slaughterer; so the doctrine of the Atonement, of imputed wrath, and salvation through the blood of an innocent person, tell us of a savage time of joint tribal responsibility. God acts in a way common in savage life, but scouted by all civilised law. The judge who insisted that the utmost penalty of the law should be exacted, and who was satisfied with the life of an innocent man, would now be considered worthy of a lunatic asylum.

The old conception of God is that of a slaveholder who can do as he likes with his own. The idea being built upon that of departed chieftains, men of war who delighted in battle and the blood of their enemies, this powerful spirit must have blood. Human sacrifices were evidently once required in Judaism, but when, with the domestication of animals, the pastoral takes the place of the hunting stage, animals are offered instead of human life. With the advance of civilisation God's share ever tends to become less. Instead of flesh and blood he gets an offering of bread and wine. Instead of receiving the first fruits and tithes of all, he, or his minister—and these two are one—only gets a threepenny bit on Sunday. In Jehovah's Temple at Jerusalem a bullock and a lamb were hacked to pieces every morning, and a lamb every evening. Doubtless the partiality of priests for roast meat helped the superstition.

The most solemn day of the year to Jews is Yom Kippur, the day of Atonement. On this day they cleared off their old sins by putting them on Azazel, the scapegoat. In modern times, at least on the Continent, they kill a cock, saying: "This is my substitute. This is my commutation. This is my atonement. This cock goeth to death, but may I be gathered and entered into a long and happy life and into peace."

The Christian doctrine of the Atonement is just such another farce. God kills God to appease God. He is the author of evil, and needs another evil before he will forgive evil. If the Scapegoat son is a noble Curtius who dies for his people, the Father is a brutal Shylock who will have his pound of flesh, and does not care where he gets it from. If Jesus was a man, we may indeed pity him if killed, and admire him if he desired his death to be a blessing to others. But as man he could not atone; as God he could not die. If he was God, his sacrifice was like the "alarming sacrifices" advertised at bogus sales. When he died on Friday he knew very well he would rise again on Sunday. If in Adam we did not all fall, there was even no need of such a sorry redemption, redeeming us from nothing. For what is Jesus supposed to save us from? From the curse of Adam, death, disease, the pains of child-birth? Or is it from the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the pangs of despised love, the law's delay, the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit from the unworthy takes? No. He is supposed to save us from sin and its consequences. Is it so? The world's history proves far otherwise. It is those who have relied on Jesus and his blood who have done the most to hinder the world's progress.

The doctrine of the Atonement involves a double subterfuge. It makes God regard Christ, the sacrifice, as the sinner, which he was not. It makes him regard the sinner as freed from the guilt of sin, which he is not. This divine "Plan of Salvation" is false and immoral on either side. It is as absurd as it is atrocious, for the man God who comes from heaven on purpose to die cries out upon the cross, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

The gospel of the Atonement is a rotten gospel, corrupting all manhood and self-reliance. By absolving the believing sinner it places a premium on crime. "Jesus paid it all" is hardly a Protestant improvement on the Catholic doctrine of indulgences, which at least made people pay something for the privilege of sinning. The doctrine is fundamentally untrue. The murderer may go to heaven, but the consequences of his crime remain on earth. What is needed is not repentance, but right conduct. There is no undoing the past.

> The moving finger writes; and having writ
> Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
> Nor all your tears wash out one word of it.

When men realise that, with every thought, word, and action, they are moulding their own characters and that of their descendants, there will be a more powerful inducement to the vigilant, patient, painstaking, daily and hourly cultivation of the moral side of our nature than in the belief in all the dogmas or the recitation of all the creeds of Christianity.

J. M. Wheeler.

MORAL ASPECTS OF THE CREATION AND FLOOD STORIES.

The Bible stories of the Creation and the Flood have been frequently criticised from a scientific and historical point of view, with the result that no proof has been discovered that they have any foundation in fact. It is not, however, from the standpoint of either science or history that we intend here to deal with these stories; but we shall endeavor rather to ascertain whether or not they have any moral aspects. The value of fiction is considerably deteriorated if it lacks ethical features in its various delineations. The accounts, therefore, in Genesis of a creation and a universal flood can have no claim upon our belief if they are opposed to our moral sense. Of course we regard the stories as being merely repetitions of ancient myths, altered or modified in some respects to suit the Hebrew mind.

The Bible alleges that the creation and flood were events fraught with good purposes, hence the book says (Genesis i. 31): "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Canon Gore writes "that everything [connected with the creation] is in its essence good, as the product of the good God; that man, besides sharing the physical nature of all creation, has a special relation to God" (*Lux Mundi*, p. 287). Now, what is meant by the term "very good"? Learned expositors of Christian ethics tell us that the quality called "good" can be properly applied only to acts that are purposely performed to achieve a noble, just, and useful end. The

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question, then, is, if God "created the heavens and the earth, and all that therein is," did he intend them to be "very good"? Judging from the theological theory of the origin of evil, we should think not, for his plan of creation led to consequences of the most disastrous kind. We are told that every tree and every herb were given for food to every existing creature (v. 30), while science assures us that the consumption of some herbs would have proved fatal to animal life. Moreover, besides poisonous fruits and herbs, God made "very good" animals, with the power and propensity to torture and devour each other. Thus we arrive at the fact, from which there is no escape, that among the "very good" acts ascribed to God were those of providing agencies for the infliction of pain and the destruction of life. This may be Bible morality, but it is the very opposite of Secular ethics.

Again, where is the moral aspect of the declaration that man was "very good," when, on the first occasion his nature was tested, he proved, according to orthodoxy, to be very bad. The general aspect of the circumstances connected with this alleged act of creation is the antithesis of moral. There was, it is said, a tree which was capable of supplying to man a "knowledge of good and evil," and yet he was told "thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest of it thou shalt surely die." That God's command was not heeded, and that he was in error as to the results of the eating, can in no way alter the fact that the prohibition of the acquirement of knowledge was not a moral act. How could man, who was suddenly brought into this world, succeed without knowing good from evil? This story of creation represents God as a despot, who attempted to organise a system of government that would have kept people in a state of ignorance and made them subordinate to his rule. The story also gives encouragement to the perpetuation of delusions which cannot be said to be useful to mankind. To mention morality as being associated with such an event is worse than folly; it is an entire misapplication of language. It is clear, according to the story, that to the serpent we are indebted for the introduction of knowledge into the world; he appears to have been wiser than God, for he told the woman that she and her colleague would not die through partaking of the forbidden fruit, but, on the contrary, he said "your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil" (Genesis iii. 5). The serpent evidently was right, for after the woman and her husband had eaten of the fruit "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew they were naked." Thus modesty was awakened within them, "and they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons."

Fortunately, the serpent entirely upset God's arrangements, for he exclaimed: "Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil" (Genesis iii. 22). The centre of the fabled Garden of Eden was not only sacred, but the tree of knowledge, which grew there, was of an esoteric character, and there is no doubt that throughout all ages the Church has applied this story to its own purposes. For, whenever it has had the power in the past, it has done its best to prevent both the acquirement and the diffusion of knowledge; and even to-day many of its clergy and ministers condemn those who seek any knowledge that is at variance with the *ipse dixit* of the Church. What more humiliating picture is presented in history than Galileo dressed in sackcloth, doing penance before a set of bigoted judges, who were as much alarmed in case the eyes of the people should be opened as their God is said to have been in the primitive garden? Secular knowledge is dangerous to the pretensions of the Church, and it appears to be as much dreaded by many of its officials as dynamite is in the courts of despots.

But to return to the story of the creation. If we accept the orthodox theory of it, then we must arrive at the conclusion that what the effect of God's acts upon the destiny of the human race would be was known by him before he performed them. To speak of the morality of a deception that was planned and carried out for a purpose is, to say the least, paradoxical. The notion that Eve and Adam yielded of their own "free will" is farcical in the extreme. If the Bible be true, God had so planned the affair that they could not have acted differently to what they did. He caused a tree to grow that was "pleasant to the eyes"; he allowed the woman to have the desire for the fruit and to eat it, likewise to induce the man to do the same; and he created a serpent, "more subtile than any beast of the field," and then permitted him to do what God must have known would produce the moral ruin of the human race. The following questions may be here fairly urged:—(1) Did God intend the forbidden fruit to be eaten by Eve? If yes, she ought not to have been punished for eating it; if, on the other hand, he did not intend her to eat it, it was immoral upon his part to make her the victim of circumstances which he knew would be too potent for her to withstand. (2) Who created the serpent? Did God? Then he was responsible, whereas if he did not create the serpent he (God) was not the creator of "every living creature." (3) How could Eve, before the acquired knowledge, know that the tree was "to be desired to make one wise"? This would have been putting the effect before the cause. But, according to the New Testament, the plan was arranged "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians i. 4–7; 1 Peter i. 19, 20).

There is certainly no moral aspect in a story that represents a God whom we are all told to emulate as deliberately implanting in the hearts of his creatures those springs of evil whose natural and inevitable predestined and preordained fruit he afterwards chastises with all the rigor of his rule. He placed them in a paradise, where everything is described as being calculated to please the eye, cheer the heart, and enrich the mind, only to make the pangs and sufferings of the desert, into which they were afterwards driven, the more painful and severe. He creates within them the instinct of love and the holy feelings of conjugal and paternal relation, only to inflict the immediate keenness of the giving birth to a murderer and a fratricide; and the still further sorrow of the reflection that the parents are to be the progenitors of myriads of human beings, each one of whom shall be the inheritor of their curse, and from the seed of whom it shall never depart, even after the most painful and protracted probation. With a cruelty that is more ingenious, if possible, than all the rest, the very woman whom God sends as a helpmeet and a solace to man is made the cause of all his woe, the curse of the world, the introducer of evil, and the desecrator of the earth. "Better, far better," Adam might have said to God, "had it been that you kept me spiritless and unintelligent as the lowest and most despised of the brute creation than to have endowed me with rational curiosity and an inquiring mind, which, in combination with the allurements of the companion you gave me and the temptations with which you surrounded me, have been the cause of my moral degradation and physical suffering." Where is the morality upon the part of a God of infinite power who, instead of making his children recipients of happiness and comfort, concocted a plan which he knew would incur for them misery and woe?

The Bible story of creation is a sad record of blundering absurdity and injustice. For ourselves, judging from a human standpoint, and a knowledge of the physical, mental, and moral requirements of our nature, we think that God, if he created the world at all, should have made it the abode of general and real happiness, and have surrounded all his creatures with a sufficiency to supply their every want, and an opportunity to enjoy the blessings of existence; but we find that in many instances it is a place of oppression, where the weak have to yield to the strong, and where many have often to endure privations and cruel acts of persecution and injustice. He should have filled the minds of all men with the loftiest feelings, the sweetest contemplations, and the sublimest aspirations; but in many minds we discover that which is foul, atrocious, and revolting. He should have stamped upon the features of every human being the impression of dignity, comfort, and hope; but, alas! we recognise that upon the features of too many of his creatures are the indelible marks of sorrow, suffering, and despair. Finally, he should have made the giving birth to children the most beauteous and unalloyed incident in the drama of life, instead of allowing it to be accompanied as it is with pains and risks, which form one of the greatest and most inscrutable mysteries of nature.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

Minister (in his sermon)—"The Lord reigns." Deacon (waking up)—"And my thunderin' old umberill is at home!"

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A PORTABLE DEITY.

After all, it seems that Ireland is not the singularly unfortunate country we have always taken it to be. In spite of the natural propensity for whisky and shillalahs, and the apparently harsh treatment the people have received from nature and the English government, the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle have much to be thankful for, inasmuch as they receive blessings and live under circumstances which nations more favored in other respects would covet. For have not the Irish a priesthood, and do not the Romish fathers-in-God nourish the souls of their children to the utter neglect of their secular well-being? If the words of the Rev. M. M'Polin, Roman Catholic priest of Newry, are to be believed, we shall be surprised if in the future we hear anything of the sufferings or wrongs of our western neighbors; for the holy father has declared that through the blessed agency of the one and only Church the people can have God carried right into their homes, practically, in a wicker basket or a Gladstone bag.

For fear that any readers should suspect that a deviation was being made from the veracity which characterises all articles in this journal, an explanation may be here deemed desirable. The *Irish News* of a recent date reported a sermon delivered by the above-mentioned priest at the funeral of a brother laborer in the Lord's vineyard, in which this remarkable and interesting information occurs. Not unnaturally, the reverend father seized the occasion to eloquently dilate on the exalted value and dignity of the priesthood, and it was the dignity and power of this esteemed order and the disclosure of the exact relations of Irish priests with the heavenly king, which led him to speak with such religious fervor. The dignity of the priesthood, he declared, surpassed the powers and the dignities of kings and earthly rulers, whose domain only extended to temporal goods and the bodies of men, whereas the dignities and powers of the priesthood extended to spiritual goods and the souls of men, in which respect the preacher claimed advantage for the latter, though, had there been a sceptical auditor, he might have hazarded the opinion that nine people out of ten prefer the possession of the powers and dignities of kings and earthly rulers to those of the clerical parasites of society. And then the reverend father proceeded to emphasise the indispensability of his own profession, presumably soliciting the pecuniary support of his hearers in aid of the fortunate successor of the deceased priest. Without the priesthood, he asserted, men could make no offering to God worthy of his acceptance; but by means of the priesthood there was offered to him a sacrifice infinitely greater than if all men, by dying for God, thus offered him the sacrifice of their lives. For our own part, we entirely fail to see the purport of the argument, unless its validity consists in the intention to create the idea that the deity has preference for incense-burning by priests over a general sacrifice of human life, in which case we would readily concede that for once the almighty had displayed a particle of that infinite wisdom with which he is so much credited. Anyhow, the contention hardly establishes a staple reason for the maintenance of an idle class at the expense of the already impoverished, viewed in the light that seniority should be given to present-world welfare.

But now there are exhibited evidences of the spirituality of the priesthood, proofs that its attributes partake of the divine substance—if there is such a substance to partake of—and that its members are not as other men are, being one with the Father, and therefore considerably removed above the angels and archangels. "So great is the power of the priest over the real body of Jesus Christ that, when he pronounces the words of consecration in the Mass, the Incarnate Word obeys his voice and comes into his hands under the sacramental species." "But that is merely nothing to what we *can* do," we can imagine the worthy father adding, *sotto voce*. The conjurer's tricks, with his "Hey! Presto! and begone," fall into complete insignificance placed by the side of the sacramental performances of the skilled artiste of the Mass. The Rev. M'Polin went on to describe the following unparalleled feat of prestigiation, carefully prefacing the narration with a comparison to an incident, itself remarkable enough, but which was to be outdone by what followed: "We are struck with wonder when we read in the Scripture that God obeyed the voice of Joshua and made the sun stand still in the heavens; but it is immeasurably more wonderful that God, in obedience to the voice of the priest, descends on the altar, and, after descending there, remains entirely at his disposal, either to be shut up in the tabernacle, or carried about from place to place to be made the spiritual food and support of the sick and dying."

To an unprejudiced mind there must be something really fascinating in the possession of such an accommodating deity. Of course, the idea is not entirely new; but it is rarely that this particular doctrine is expressed in such explicit language. Certain of the High Church party in the Church of England are believers in "the real presence" on the altar; but whether they follow their Roman Catholic friends so far as to make their Almighty a portable deity we would not care to express ourselves definitely. God, according to this Irish priest, is easily prevailed upon by Catholic fathers. He can be brought down on the altar, and there dispensed at the sweet will of the priest; he can be shut up in the chapel cupboard, or placed in the priest's portmanteau for a journey round the parish. The ancient Israelites with their God in a box have been surpassed by Irish priests with God in their coat-tail pockets. Father M'Polin says that, after descending on the altar, God "remains entirely at his (the priest's) disposal." We tremble to think what might become of the holy spirit were its caretaker rendered joyful by Paddy's popular fluid, or what would happen were it to reach sceptical hands or fall in the possession of an indifferent world? God in the possession, and at the sole disposal, of an Irish priest is an event pregnant with alarming possibilities, which, though inviting, it were best not to dwell upon. But surely, if the Irish are so favored by the ruler of all the universe, they have little to complain of, and no more should be heard in the future of their sufferings and manifold misfortunes.

Evidently the object of Father M'Polin was to convince his hearers that the priests are the exalted of men, above the angels, and occasionally in priority to the deity himself; for his further remarks were in the nature of showing how only alone can the priests deliver sinners from hell, and make them worthy of Paradise, changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God. Such powers the angels themselves have never received from God, and on this account the father declared that the priests were even venerated by angels. Feared by men, venerated by angels, and obeyed by God, Catholic clericals must certainly be an enviable body of men, whose dignity and power eclipse those of kings and earthly rulers. "Even St. Michael, the archangel," according to Father M'Polin, "when he comes to a dying soul who invokes his aid, can chase away the devils; but he cannot free that soul from the chains of sin until a priest comes to absolve him. The priests are therefore, in relation to the faithful, the dispensers of the divine graces, the ministers and companions of God, the pillars of the Church as it were, and the door-keepers of heaven." If the latter clause be correct, Peter has evidently been deposed, or he has been made to share his old office with the ministers of the Romish Church. If it be true, Protestants, after all, will be debarred the everlasting joys, and their protestations of salvation and surety of heavenly bliss will avail them nothing when they find themselves outside the gates with the great crowd of unbelievers and scoffers. Father M'Polin may be right. He may bring God down on the altar every Sunday, and convey him from house to house during the week; there is more likelihood of the deity secreting himself in old crusted port than remaining in other abodes marked out as his dwelling places by thousands of Christians. Whether this be so or not, the deliverance of the rev. father is to be welcomed, as the ludicrous nature of religious tenets, when so divested of the halo of mystery and deception, will be more likely to open the eyes of the Irish people to the false and superstitious pretences of the priesthood.

F. Wilson.

Taboo.

To the mystery of revealed religion belongs Taboo, which might be defined as a silencing of the brain by the feelings—that is, by the will. It is a not-speaking-of, a not-thinking-of, a not-inquiring-into, the thing felt. So is intense and helpless reverence for the uttermost absurdities fostered; so does it grow up and remain.—*J. O'Neill, "The Night of the Gods," p. 6.*

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A PRAYER TEST.

The efficacy of prayer has lately undergone a crucial test in Dallas, Tex., and the residual calx is found to be wind. As related by Dr. George S. Lincoln, president of the Dallas Freethinkers' Association, the circumstances were that Mrs. S. J. Sweeney, president of the Dallas Women's Christian Temperance Association, attended a meeting of the local Freethought Society, and requested the name of the speaker in order that she might pray for his conversion. The name was given her, together with that of the secretary, the conditions being, according to Dr. Lincoln's account, that, if neither was converted within three months, Mrs. Sweeney should admit that there was either no God or no force in prayer. Mrs. Sweeney's version of the terms is that, if neither was "touched" inside of the specified time, then she was to allow them (the speaker and the secretary) to make the denial. The difference between admitting anything and allowing another to admit it is not conspicuous; but, as Mrs. Sweeney seems to think it vital, her amendment may be agreed to. The main point is that, in answer to her prayers, something was to happen inside of the three months beginning on June 4, the date of the meeting.

This interesting incident, which attained general publicity through the newspapers, came to the notice of the Rev. Dr. Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, who at once put himself in epistolary communication with Mrs. Sweeney, in order to find out what she had been doing. Her reply makes him very weary, for it confirms the report as given by Dr. Lincoln, with the exception, before noted, that she never agreed to surrender her faith in God, whether he paid any attention to her prayers or not. It would naturally be supposed that faith like this, in a sceptical age, must command the admiration of every believer; but Dr. Buckley fails to enthuse. While admitting that Mrs. Sweeney's moral courage may be commended, he regards the presence of Christians at Infidel meetings as of "doubtful propriety," and Mrs. Sweeney's indiscretion in being there at all is, on the whole, about as serious as the offence of appearing in bloomers. He says further that professional lecturers against Christianity are not worthy of reply. Perchance he means not susceptible of reply, but "worthy" is the euphemism he employs. "Moreover," continues the editor of the *Advocate*, "no positive promise can be found in the Bible that God will convert such persons in answer to prayer. On the contrary, it is explicitly stated that there are some for whom no prayer will avail." Again: "Others are described as 'past feeling,' whom it is impossible to renew unto repentance, as having committed sins that cannot be forgiven either in this world or the world to come." Let the speaker and secretary reflect on that, and then listen: "Brazen, fierce, profane opponents of all religion, as well as those who make it a subject of buffoonery, may be prayed for indeed; but they, their writings, and their speeches should be avoided as one would shun an infected district." Finally: "An excellent biblical prescription for dealing with such persons, when one finds himself unexpectedly in their presence, is this: 'Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.' The presence of Christian people in such places invariably makes capital for the blasphemer."

If Dr. Buckley had put his closing proposition first, the rest of his objections to Mrs. Sweeney's attending the meeting of the Dallas Freethinkers would not have needed to be written. The presence of Christian persons does, of course, make capital for the Freethought lecturer. That is why they are so cordially invited to attend. If you listen to a Christian person outside a Freethought gathering, especially in a pulpit or at an experience meeting, you will have to either doubt his word, or believe that he is simply in pain through his inability to meet and confound some denier of God and prayer. You know he is bluffing, but to call him is to call a policeman. When the Christian person enters a Freethought assemblage he leaves his power of arrest outside, and faces the audience on equal terms. His belief not being capable of either demonstration or convincing argument, he becomes capital, or at least raw material, for the "blasphemer." Dr. Buckley knows how worthless ordinary religious statements become the minute they are denied and proof called for. He sees with impatience that Mrs. Sweeney has taken the promises of God altogether too seriously, as though their fulfilment was to be expected, and hence the rebuke. Such a thing as her prayers being answered in this instance does not enter his head. In fact, he has a firm grasp on the truth that prayers are never answered, and ten days before the expiration of the time allotted to the test he writes in perfect confidence that God will pay no attention to Mrs. Sweeney's petition. A man of more faith might have hedged along towards the first of September; but while any chance remained that accident could bring about the result prayed for he would not have volunteered an explanation of the failure.

An event like the conversion of Mrs. Sweeney to unbelief through the non-success of her prayers is not to be looked for. She can never have had any reason for believing in prayer, and can therefore have no less. But, whether or not in this crisis she loses faith in God, it would be altogether surprising if she did not withdraw whatever confidence she may have reposed in the Rev. Dr. Buckley.

—*Truthseeker.* GEORGE MACDONALD.

IRISH NOTES.

In Irish politics the event of the past few weeks has been Mr. Healy's defeat. In South Kerry he played for a large stake, and he has lost. Moreover, he has shown his opponents his hand, without gaining the slightest point as a compensation. It is difficult, however, to know whether Mr. Healy's revolt betokens anything more than an ambition to figure as a leader on Mr. Healy's part.

Mr. Healy has made large bids for priestly influence. His organ in Dublin is the *Irish Catholic*, the name of which is sufficient to indicate its character. And there was some talk, a month or so ago, of Mr. Healy becoming the leader of a clerical party in Irish politics. But it would seem that in Kerry the priests were pretty evenly divided, and exchanged compliments in the most approved manner. On the whole, however, the preponderance of clerical influence is on Mr. Healy's side.

The *Freeman's Journal* had some comments on the British Association last week which are peculiarly in keeping with the simulated piety of that organ. "More and more," it says, "the evidences of design and order in nature are being borne in on scientific men who too readily took up the Atheistic hypothesis of exaggerated Darwinism. Evolution, as understood in an anti-Christian sense, has now, it may be said, no defenders."

What "exaggerated Darwinism" might be, who "took up" with it, why exaggerated Darwinism is Atheistic and the unexaggerated article Christian—all these are questions which the *Freeman* scribe doubtless would be at a loss to answer. The fact is, he probably knows as much about the hypothesis of Darwinism—whether exaggerated or otherwise—as he does about the archæological remains of Timbuctoo. It is, however, merely part of the evil of journalism that men must write pompous pronouncements on matters of which they are largely ignorant, and write down to the bias of the majority of their readers.

Mr. Tom Mann delivered a lecture in Dublin on Wednesday on "Trade Unionism and Socialism." Questioned at the close as to what relation clericalism had to Socialism, he is reported to have replied that "Socialists were only concerned with economic problems, and on theological matters every Socialist held whatever opinion he liked." Of course it would certainly be foolish for Socialists to tackle a number of questions at once. But if Mr. Mann or any number of Socialists imagine that the question of clericalism can be permanently shelved, they will be very sadly disappointed. It is a question which lies at the root of all reforms, and must, sooner or later, be faced by every reformer.

The *Irish Catholic* reports the sixteenth celebration of the anniversary of the Knock "apparitions." The Church, for a week previous to the annual celebration, is the theatre of religious gymnastics of various kinds, all for the

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glory of God and the material prosperity of—somebody else. The *Catholic* says that, "in spectacular display, in scenic effect, in devotional fervor, in all that wins the eye and moves the heart," this year's anniversary was remarkable. Evidently they are past-masters in the art of bamboozling at Knock, and they are also keen observers of human nature. "Spectacular display" and "scenic effect"—that is how the thing is done. Clever clerics of Knock!

F. R.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Methodist Times* has made a great discovery, on the nothing-like-leather principle. It appears that the Methodist schools, "unlike the Anglican and Roman Catholic schools, are in no sense sectarian; they are the very ideal of public elementary schools." Further on in the same article, Nonconformists are called upon to "present a united front to the intolerance of Clericalism and to the intolerance of Secularism." The intolerance of Secularism is distinctly good. We particularly like it. Secularists object to being taxed for the support of any sort of religious teaching, and such an objection is, of course, the height of intolerance. An unbeliever who won't pay for the religious education of his neighbor's children is a bigot of the first water.

Mr. Price Hughes, the editor of the *Methodist Times*, is enjoying a holiday at Grindelwald, where a number of well-to-do Christians have an annual picnic under the pretence of discussing the Union of Christendom. At one of these Conferences, quite recently, Mr. Hughes made a new proposal as to the future of National Education in England. The Church of England might free its schools from denominational bias, and on the other hand the Nonconformists might sanction the teaching of the Apostles' Creed in the Board schools. This would settle the whole matter, and outsiders might be told to go to the Devil—or, as Mr. Hughes puts it, to avail themselves of the conscience clause.

The *Christian World* ridicules Mr. Hughes's proposal, and laughs at the idea that he represents the Free Churches. Nay, more, it plainly confesses that the Apostles' Creed is a fraud, its apostolic authority being "based upon a silly legend."

Canon Scott Holland, according to a *Westminster Gazette* reviewer, calls Mr. Hughes's proposal "fatuous," even as regards Churchmen. He also smiles at Mr. Hughes's lofty disdain of outsiders. "Even supposing," says Canon Holland, "that it were wise or just to rule out the poor Unitarians and Agnostics, and others, they are too many to rule out. In fact, they would not be ruled out. It is, to say the very, very least, fatuous to suppose it for a single moment."

The New York *Sun* says that, while the religious bodies are making great claims of progress, it is nevertheless a fact that "church after church is going under." Mentioning that "the Church of the Annunciation, situated in West Fourteenth-street, on one of the leading thoroughfares of the city, has been sold, and the proceeds of the sale have been devoted to educational purposes," it gives several other instances, and cites a Baptist minister as saying: "It is almost a daily occurrence to see our churches leaving the place where God's work should be carried on for a place less effective, but more fashionable." The millionaire, continues the *Sun*, worships in a stately temple on Madison-avenue, while his clerks bow the knee in a modest prayer-house in First-Avenue. Such is Christian brotherhood in the nineteenth century.

As the snows on the Rhotang Pass melted, the fragments of the dead body of a man were found against the north wall of the refuge on the Lahoul side of the Pass. As he had been there all the winter, little was left save bones, rags, and a drinking-cup. He had evidently (thinks a Bombay contemporary) come there to die, as he had built two low stone walls some three feet apart, and then lain down to die with his head against the north wall of the refuge. This showed him to have been a "Khampu" or Spiti man, as the prevalent belief in Spiti is that the higher the elevation they die at the greater their chance of getting to a better world. They do not seem to hold the Buddhist doctrines of transmigration, absorption, and annihilation, but rather to look forward to a somewhat materialistic heaven, which seems to be situate in the air immediately above the Kailas mountain, with a vestibule or entry on top of the Kailas itself.—*Daily News.*

A book, full of learning, has lately been written by a Japanese scholar, Mr. John O'Neill, which tends to show that the superstition here referred to was at one time a very general one, of which he finds traces in the building of high towers, the erection of poles, and such stories as "Jack and the Beanstalk." The sky, to early man, may have really seemed more accessible than to us, and the legend of the Tower of Babel may have had some foundation in fact. The men who thought God had to come down to see what men were up to may well have thought, also, that they could scale to heaven.

Canon Duckworth has made an addition to the *Spectator's* anecdotes of "absent-mindedness." It relates to a clergyman of his acquaintance who, having been presented to an important living, preached his first sermon from the words, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." He was surprised and distressed when the churchwardens afterwards hinted to him that his choice of a text had been a little hard upon his predecessors.

We wonder what the Jews thought of Jesus calling Moses and the prophets "thieves and robbers," or of his saying, "A greater than Solomon is here." If truths, they were probably unpalatable ones. But such sayings certainly look more like the ascription of his followers than the actual utterances of any sane man.

The earthquake in Honduras resulted in the loss of many lives, 363 bodies having already been recovered, though the full extent of the disaster is unknown. A church tower in Yetapan crashed down, carrying with it the roofs of three houses. Nine persons were killed in this accident, and eighteen others were injured. The flames set fire to many buildings, and on the mountain side numbers of grazing cattle were engulfed by the lava, which continued flowing to lower ground in immense streams. The people rushed madly through the streets, praying and crying, and many were rendered frantic by their efforts to escape from the molten lava.

By an avalanche which fell upon the hamlet of Spittalmette, in the canton of Berne, at least ten persons have lost their lives, besides about 200 head of cattle. Divine Providence, as usual, is conspicuous by its absence.

There has been a rapid increase of cholera in the government of Volkhnia (Russia), and the deaths are now stated to be about 250 a day. Part of the neighboring government of Podolia is also seriously infected. From Tiflis it is reported that the epidemic has broken out at Erzeroum, and stringent precautions are being adopted on the Caucasian frontier to prevent the infection being imported into that province.

The use of phonographed prayers at funerals has led an American genius to invent an electric automaton clergyman, who, by a dynamo under the pulpit, will read, pray, intone psalms, and preach with the true nasal intonation. He says that, once he gets his machine in full play, the men of God may retire.

The *Shepherd's Voice* defends the extermination of the Canaanites, and other Bible atrocities, on the ground that God can do as he likes with his own. It says: "That any live for any length of time is of the grace of God. Now, unquestionably, God has what we may call a legal right to execute this sentence of death. He may do it, too, in different ways. He may send sickness; he may send storms or earthquakes; he may delegate authority to men to execute it. But whichever way the sentence is executed it is righteous." The *Shepherd's Voice* is remarkably like that of a wolf, and its God hardly to be distinguished from a devil.

The Papacy to-day is before all things prudent. M. Ribot having imposed a tax on the religious orders in France, which accumulate vast property from "the dead hand," and then wish all the burdens of property to rest on the living, the clericals represent this as a persecution of religion, and some religious bodies have tried to arouse popular sympathy by allowing their property to be sold up, rather than voluntarily pay the tax. The Pope was appealed to as to whether they should resist or submit. Cardinal Rampolla replied that it is a matter of prudence. He will not say it is their duty to obey the State or to resist, but tells them to do what they think best, knowing, of course, they will rather pay their taxes than have their wealthy properties sold up.

A remarkable tragedy has occurred at Friedheim, in Germany, the victim being the Catholic priest, Herr Wodda. After reading mass as usual in his church, he ascended the pulpit, but whilst delivering a sermon suddenly became unwell. Members of the congregation rushed forward and carried him from the pulpit; but before medical aid could arrive Herr Wodda had died, exclaiming, "I am poisoned." It is surmised that the wine used at the celebration of the mass was poisoned, and all the church utensils have been seized for examination by the police. There is, however, no clue to the perpetrator of the crime.

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Another burial dispute! The Rev. T. Wood, rector of Grimoldby, near South Lincolnshire, refused to allow of the interment of a parishioner, who owned a grave in the churchyard, because her friends desired a Nonconformist to conduct the service. The burial was, however, carried out, despite the prohibition of the man of God.

At Houghton, Huntingdonshire, on Rogation Tuesday, the villagers observe the old custom of beating the bounds and placing a man head downwards in the boundary holes. They then gravely tap him three times with the shovel, "earth fastening" him as a witness to this part of the boundary line. In days gone by the parish priest used to officiate. Psalms were sung, and much good to the crops was expected to result. Now the proceedings wind up at the local temple—the inn on the village green, where solemn beer communion is taken.

The Rev. W. Hind, vicar of All Saint's, Highgate, is charged with indecently assaulting little girls, aged ten and twelve, whom he invited to the vicarage. The father first applied to the court, and the application was taken *in camera*, and no process was granted. Then the matter was taken up by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Rev. J. Badenoch, of St. Augustine's, Highgate, attending. Again one of the magistrates suggested it should be heard in private, but this did not meet the approval of the court, and a summons is to be issued. Of course, as Mr. Bodkin observed, the Rev. W. Hind may have a perfect answer to the charge; but, if so, they have not acted as his friends who have put every obstacle in the way of this perfect answer being made known.

According to Mr. Sims, brigands are not yet extinct in Spain, though they are exceedingly courteous, refined, and truly pious. Lately a band of brigands stopped a train, "raised their hats" to the passengers, and invited them to part with their property. Thus spoke the leader of the band: "Ladies and Gentlemen,—Please deliver up your money and valuables of every description. We do not wish to put you to the indignity of a search, but shall rely upon your honor. But as soon as you tell us you have given up everything we shall search one passenger of each class. If upon either we find a single coin or a single valuable, we shall shoot one passenger in each compartment. Ladies and gentlemen, do not hurry yourselves. Our time is yours." Of course the passengers immediately evince the most absorbing interest in each other's personal affairs; the goods change hands, and the robbers, as they say goodbye, raise their hats and pray that "we may all meet again in God's big parlor." Doubtless they feel like Artemus Ward towards the Red Indian, who, after thieving from him, said: "We shall meet in the happy hunting-grounds." "If we do," said Artemus, "there will be a fight."

An amusing discussion on the Apostles' Creed went on last week in the *Daily News*. A Mid-Herts minister wondered "if the Free Church theologians at the Grindelwald Conference are able themselves to recite that well-known but most shocking sentence in the Apostles' Creed—viz., 'He descended into hell.' I have understood that in the Free Church Colleges and Churches, where 'the Liturgy' is used, there is a reverent omission of the said un-Scriptural impiety"; and he thinks Nonconformists will hesitate long before they compel Board-school children to utter what is shuddered at as almost a blasphemy.

Thereupon he was told on the one hand that hell was only "Hades," and then that the visit of Christ there is clearly taught in the New Testament (1 Peter iii. 18-20). To this the minister replies that the original authors of the Creed really meant "Hell," and not "Hades," and that they were as blissfully ignorant that "Hades" meant "Sheol," and not "Gehenna," as they were that "Hell" means a place into which English tailors throw shreds or printers broken type. He adds that "the very words, 'Apostles' Creed,' contain a most undesirable '*suggestio falsi*' to instil into the minds of the young. Even the Persians taught their children the love of 'truth.'" Of course the ascription of the nonsensical creed to the apostles is a pure fabrication. But those who want to impose it on children do not care a pin for that.

Owing to the long-continued drought, the New South Wales Government ordered Sunday, September 15, to be observed as a day of humiliation and prayer for rain. The wise men of the government ought to take warning by Queensland. They put up prayers for rain there, and got the floods at the wrong time, so that they had to solemnly petition the Almighty to stop it.

The newspapers of April, 1837, reported an interesting incident at a Paris theatre. "Some nights since," says the account, "at a moment when one of the actors at the theatre of the Porte St. Martin, Paris, said to another in the piece, 'Now you have nothing more to do than to recommend yourself to God,' someone amongst the audience cried out: 'There is no such being.' A violent tumult arose; cries of 'Turn out the Atheist!' 'Turn out the impious wretch!' were heard from all sides. The whole house was in an uproar until the author of the confusion had been removed from the box."

A superintendent of a Church Sunday-school writes to the *Daily News*: "I have been a Church Sunday-school teacher in various schools in the South of London and in the North of England for over twenty-five years, and I have no hesitation in saying that the average Sunday-school lesson of the average Sunday-school teacher is a perfect farce. I have been to clerical meetings where the clergy have made great fun of their teachers and their teaching, and it has made my blood boil when I have heard such contemptuous remarks made about them; for, after all, it is the clergy's fault that it is so. In the various schools that I have taught I have never found a single clergyman who has taken any practical interest in his own schools." He says it is because they know that Sunday-school teaching is unsatisfactory that they want the trained teachers of Board and Voluntary schools, who are paid by the State, to do the work their own Sunday-school teachers ought to do.

A Jewish gentleman summoned on a coroner's jury at Wood Green claimed exemption on the ground that he was a *cohen*, or of priestly cast, and a dead body was taboo to him (see Leviticus xi.). The coroner was evidently not well up in Jewish law, for he asked what a *cohen* was, and did not remind the *cohen* that there was a system by which he could be purified. He, however, said it was no valid claim for exemption, though, as he had sufficient jurymen without the *cohen*, he, on this occasion, dispensed with his services.

Touching a corpse was taboo among Greeks, Romans, Hindus, Parsees, and Phœnicians. Mr. Frazer says: "Those who have defiled themselves by touching a dead body are regarded by the Maoris as in a very dangerous state, and are sedulously shunned and isolated." Doubtless the belief that death was something which could communicate itself, as disease was seen to do, lay at the root of this Bible-enshrined superstition.

Another juryman, summoned at the Bethnal Green Vestry Hall, sent a letter saying that from conscientious reasons he could not serve, "being opposed to the government of force." It added: "I must now commit myself to Him who judges righteously." Dr. W. Westcott, the coroner, said that if the writer did not attend the next inquest he was summoned to he would be fined forty shillings.

The *Church Patronage Gazette* is a monthly journal established for the sale of presentation to livings and advowsons. It consists of forty pages, and shows what an extensive traffic in the cure of souls is carried on in the Church.

The Rev. R. R. Dolling, the Broad High Churchman, of St. Agatha's, Portsmouth, has been giving his views on the election of the new bishop of Winchester. He points out what a farce the election is. The Dean and Chapter are given leave to elect their bishop, but are told by the Crown whom they must elect. Then they retire to a room, and pray to God the Holy Ghost to direct them as to whom they shall appoint, knowing they must elect the Crown's nomination. Mr. Dolling doesn't like this farce, and points out that the cleric so appointed may be nominated by a person who is not even nominally a Christian. Well, there is an easy remedy if only the clericals will accept it. Let the Church be entirely separate from the State, and dependent on the voluntary offerings of Church people. There can be no objection then to letting the Dean and the Chapter and the Holy Ghost combine to elect as bishops whomsoever they please. But what Churchmen want is State endowment without State control.

In the case of the American barrister, charged with blackmailing, it transpired that the son of the Rev. F. Williams, himself educated for the Church, seduced a young girl in the vestry of his father's church. After this became known it appears that he went abroad, as it was thought, though he would not do for the English Church, he would do for the colonies.

Father Wilson, of St. Joseph's, is a priest who, while himself donning a feminine garb, objects to women assuming bicycle bloomers. He said it was not becoming to a young woman, according to his idea of a woman, and in the course of his remarks further said that the woman members of his congregation who preferred to wear the bicycle costume spoken of would not be recognised by him on the street, and that those who knew him and spoke to him would be ignored. Evidently all milliners and outfitters should be put under priestly regulation.

The *Daily Telegraph* gives currency to a report that the

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Papacy will pay over a sum of £200,000,000 to the Italian Government as the purchase price of a tract of Roman territory, to be made over to the Papacy in perpetuity. Money may do much, but it will hardly restore the prestige of the Papacy till it can buy the Eternal City outright.

At the Roman Catholic Congress it was frankly admitted that the Board schools are eating the Voluntary schools up, and, although the Catholic ones are managed very economically, they are confronted with an annual deficit. No wonder they are exerting themselves to dip their hands into the pockets of the general rate and taxpayers.

Attempts to give a novel pseudo scientific explanation to old superstitions are sometimes very amusing. Here, for instance, is Dr. Jane Elizabeth Hotchkiss writing in the *Metaphysical Magazine* that "prayer, especially before retiring to sleep, may be regarded, psychologically, as an excellent means for decomposing the muscular tension and inducing a complete relaxation of the nervous system." So prayer should be retained, not because you expect anyone to answer your prayers, but because it makes a cheaper nightcap than whisky toddy. We wonder if, when Dr. Jane Elizabeth gets a husband, she will convert him to this psychological view of prayer.

George Macdonald, of the *Truthseeker*, does not think much of Mr. Keir Hardie. He says: "Personally, he is commonplace; intellectually, considerably less. In addition to being sentimentally pious, the Socialist ex-member of Parliament is inordinately vain. Nordau would call him an egomaniac. Exhibiting his miner's cap to an audience, he related that this same piece of headgear had created consternation in the House of Commons, the members pretending, says he, that they objected to the cap; but, he adds, sententiously, 'It was not the cap they were afraid of, but the head inside of it.' Of such timber is Mr. Keir Hardie, apostle of Socialism and Jesus Christ."

The Rev. W. E. Broadhurst, late Methodist preacher of Arkansas City, Kan., has fallen a victim to the wiles of Satan. He has been convicted of improper conduct with one of the pious sisters, and has finally confessed the crime in these words, published in a local paper: "It is due to the public that I make this confession. I am a fallen preacher, after twenty-one years of acceptable work in the Methodist Episcopal Church. *I have resisted thousands of temptations*, but was caught at last. My sin is such that I make no defence."

Brother Broadhurst hints at a capital defence. Thousands of the sisters have vainly tried to lead him from the paths of virtue, and for twenty-one years he would not be enticed. Jesus Christ was only tempted of the Devil for forty days, and after that angels ministered unto him. But poor Brother Broadhurst has been tempted all this time by devils in the shape of angels of light. He was "caught at last." Can Brother Broadhurst mean that at last he was found out?

At the Festival of the Three Choirs, Wesley's splendid hymn, "I wish to tune my quivering lyre," was adequately rendered yesterday. The singer was not the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.—*Globe*.

The American eagle of freedom must surely be moulting, judging by the following paragraph from the New York *Truthseeker*: "Last Sunday, in this city, the fashionable clubs were wide open, and the hotels and leading *cafés* were selling all kinds of drinks, while the saloons in the tenement districts were tightly closed and a man was held for trial for selling five cents' worth of ice to a girl from a tenement house; another for selling three cents' worth of writing paper to a policeman; and still another for showing a policeman, at the latter's earnest solicitation, a pair of rubber shoes."

By a telegram from Macon, Ga., lovers of "civil and religious liberty" may learn that forty citizens of that place have been arrested for the crime of selling dry goods, groceries, meat, and bread on the day of the week that some of their fellow men have corrected God by declaring "holy." In Tennessee a little while ago a considerable number of persons, guilty of the same offence, were working in the public street, each with a ball and chain attached to his mortal part.

The barber shops are closed in Brooklyn to-day, and the soda fountains are forbidden to play in New York. Now, if we can have the street-cars stopped, the "L" trains suspended, and the holes in the slot machines stuffed up, we may get back to somewhere near the standard of the good old New England days, when the Yankee farmer used to throw his cider barrel out of the cellar if he caught it working on Sunday.—*New York Recorder*.

The Chicago Presbytery has improved on the practice of their Savior. He made some 150 gallons of wine for guests who had well drunk already. They have ordered that his communion must be celebrated only with unfermented wine, at all the churches within their jurisdiction.

But (says the *Progressive Thinker*) the proposition carries a lie on its face, which should be next remedied. Wine is the fermented juice of the grape. It is not wine until it is fermented. To that time, it is simply the juice of the grape, known in commerce as "must," from the Latin *mustum*. It was wine, and a very superior article, according to the statement of the governor of the feast, which Jesus made at Cana, and it was wine which was metamorphosed into his blood, which did service at the last supper. Churchmen now see the tendency of forming a drinking appetite by tampering with prayer-made "blood of Christ," out of spirit-proof wine, so they are improving on the teaching of "our Lord" by a non-intoxicating substitute. It is well.

Eight honest, conscientious Seventh-day Adventists of Rhea County, Tenn., have been condemned to serve terms of from twenty-five to ninety days in the county gaol at Dayton, Tenn., for the offence of doing common labor on Sunday—labor which disturbed no other person's private or public devotion. It has also been decided to work these honest men in the chain-gang, and by the time this reaches our readers this will doubtless be accomplished.—*American Sentinel*.

The case of a married couple in Youngstown, Ohio, warns husbands with believing wives that they had perhaps best go to church occasionally, although they may have to violate their inclinations in order to do so. A Mrs. Minnear, of that city, requested her husband on a recent Sabbath morn to accompany her to the house of prayer and worship, but found him obdurate in that respect. She went alone, and, returning only to find that he had retired for the night, she touched a match to his bed, and had made good progress towards cremating him when he awoke and put out the fire.

The couple appeared in court the next morning, where Mrs. Minnear alleged the refusal of her husband to attend church, and the man, apologising for harsh words used towards his wife, said that "the idea of being burned up made him a trifle angry." I take it that, if there were more women with Mrs. Minnear's stern austerity of purpose, and who would rather see their husbands warmed up here than in the great hereafter, there would be a better attendance at some churches. The inhumanity of man concentred all in self, and woman's devotion touched and made tenderer by the gospel of Jesus Christ, are constantly receiving fresh and striking illustrations.—*G. Macdonald*, in "*Truthseeker*."

A disciple paper, the *Christian Standard*, contains the remark, in the form of a complaint, that "nine-tenths of our young people, if asked why they were disciples, could not give an intelligent reason for the faith they profess." This growler does not seem to know when things are well enough and to be let alone. As many Bible readers testify, it is quite possible for investigators to inadvertently disprove the very thing they set out to demonstrate, and there is danger that, if the young people went to searching for a reason for being disciples or members of any other sect, they would discover that there wasn't any.—*Truthseeker*.

"Religion's Unusual Effect" is the head that the *World* puts on a dispatch from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, telling how Jesse Isborg, a negro, became crazed by religion at a revival meeting, prayed all night, and in the morning shot his landlady at the breakfast table, mortally wounding her, and finished his career by blowing out his own brains. Why did the *World* put such a misleading head on the dispatch? What is there "unusual" in the spectacle of a man driven crazy by religion?

The *Nonconformist and Independent* warns its readers that any reunion with the Church is likely to be the reunion of the lion with the lamb inside. It says: "To credit them with a desire for reconciliation is to fall into a grievous error. Alike as to Church and school we shall be wise to proceed on the assumption that by reunion ecclesiastical authorities simply mean Nonconformist surrender."

A. Le Lievre, who, we believe, is a curate, states in the London *Echo* that Mr. Foote was imprisoned for publishing "obscene caricatures." This is the common slander of Christian Evidence advocates. There was not a word about "obscenity" in Mr. Foote's indictment, which simply charged him with "bringing the Holy Scripture and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt." We might waste a good many epithets on A. Le Lievre, but we are content with saying that he is a *Christian*.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 22, Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C.: 7.30, "Bible or No Bible in the Schools."

September 29, Foresters' Hall, London.

October 6, Wood Green.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—Sept. 22, Sheffield; 29, Camberwell. October 6 and 13, Foresters' Hall; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. November 17, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

MISS VANCE has just returned from a much-needed holiday. During her absence N.S.S. correspondence has had to stand over, but she is now clearing off arrears.

C. GRAHAM (Egypt).—We are glad you like the *Freethinker*, and thank you for your endeavors to circulate it abroad.

F. H. HART points out that the Hon. Lionel Tollemache's *Stones of Stumbling*, originally issued privately, is now advertised regularly in the *Journal of Education*, as well as the companion volume, *Safe Studies*. We cordially agree with you that both are most interesting books.

A. ANDERSON.—Thanks for the mark of confidence.

W. H. ABBOTT wishes his cheque for the late special Hall of Science appeal to go to Mr. Foote's new lecture-scheme.

W. BENNETT.—Thanks. We note your wishes in the matter.

JOHN HOLCOMBE, the Freethinking juryman who was insulted and illegally treated by Coroner Wynne E. Baxter at the Mile-end Vestry Hall, writes us under date of September 13. He states that he did not know he was being illegally treated, and that he did not want to say anything which would have gratified the coroner, who evidently wished to turn him out of the court. We are in communication with Mr. Holcombe, and we hope to carry the matter further.

J. KEAST.—Thanks for note re Shepherds' Hall. Sorry it is not available for Sunday lectures.

J. SIDDON.—See "Sugar Plums." Glad to hear of Mr. Cohen's success.

JOHN TANNER (Liverpool).—Delighted to hear from you. Mr. James Read's letter in the *Mercury*, with regard to the Oaths Act and the action of Coroner Baxter, is calculated to be of considerable service to the cause of justice.

T. HOPKINS.—The subscription shall be used as desired.

E. DAVIES.—Price Hughes is caught again, as you say; and there is no Freethinker to defend him this time.

C. HEATON.—Your subscription will be transferred to the "President's Fund." Thanks for your kind note.

T. SEABLE.—The Rev. A. J. Waldron debated with Mr. Foote on the Resurrection. It was at New Brompton in April. Mr. Charles Watts, who was present, wrote an account of it in the *Freethinker*. We know nothing about Mr. Waldron's "winning his spurs" on that occasion. We did not see any such articles knocking about, but the *Western Morning News* writer was not there, and is perhaps better informed.

YACHTSMAN.—Thanks for cheque for one guinea in aid of the Foresters' Hall enterprise. The former donation shall be utilised as you direct.

W. C. STUART.—You are prompt as well as generous with your "Shilling Week" subscription, which shall be acknowledged in the published list.

J. E. A.—Mr. Waldron discusses with Mr. Watts in October at Newcastle. His views on Secularism will then be stated in the presence of a most competent opponent. Thanks for your trouble in the matter.

T. E. M.—Mr. Foote will be happy to visit Belfast if the Branch is prepared to make the local arrangements. We dare say the place needs stirring up. Your subscription will be acknowledged in next week's list.

G. FITZ-GERALD.—Thanks for your kind expressions and good wishes. There is no need to take counsel's opinion on the Oaths Act. We have Mr. Bradlaugh's careful statement to guide us, and no counsel could improve on his directions. You will see that we may have an opportunity of carrying the recent case farther.

L. G. (Leicester).—The Huxley epitaph is said to have been written by Mrs. Huxley. It was never "Huxley's Motto," as the reverend gentleman calls it.

W. J. GAINES.—The time of the first introduction of Christianity in England is much controverted. Mosheim and Jortin were both Protestants. On the whole, both are trustworthy, though of course not infallible.

H. JONES (Shrewsbury).—Pleased to hear you were treated courteously by the local coroner. It is gratifying to learn that a letter in one of your newspapers brought about a change in his former line of practice.

THE official address of the Battersea Branch is 4 Corunna-place, Stewart's-road, Battersea, where all communications should be addressed.

J. ROE (Bradley Green).—Mr. Watts has shown us your letter. It is not illegal to let a hall for lectures on Sunday. It might become illegal, when there is a charge for admission, if the lecture is followed by discussion. But that question is arguable, and has not been decided. The recent Leeds case, which was fought very badly, has frightened the proprietors and lessees of halls in all parts of the kingdom.

J. RICHARDSON.—Received. Shall appear.

H. ORGAN.—Many thanks for the box of flowers, which will please the lady you intend them for. Thanks also for your bright and encouraging letter.

E. P. PEACOCK (Chicago).—Glad to see the American Secular Union is actively opposing the Sabbatarian bigots. We will keep an eye on the paper you mention.

THE President of the National Secular Society is collecting evidence against a person who is privately circulating the vilest libels upon him. Meanwhile the President warns the London friends against this person's artifices.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Free Life—Joyful News—Two Worlds—Sun—Melbourne Herald—Standard—Echo—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Liberty—Lucifer—Strait Times—Daily Chronicle—Morning—Melbourne Argus—Irish Life—Crescent—Boston Investigator—Islamic World—Referee—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—Twentieth Century—New York Public Opinion—Ironclad Age—Blue Grass Blade—Metaphysical Magazine.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SPECIAL.

READERS of the *Freethinker* are requested to remember that the first week in October is "Shilling Week." During that week all who desire to aid, however modestly, in the active propaganda of Freethought during the winter, should send me one or more shillings. Every subscription will be acknowledged. I have to add that lecturing engagements, under the scheme I outlined a few weeks ago, are already being formed by Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. C. Cohen; and that the services of other lecturers will be utilised as soon as possible.

The last Executive meeting of the National Secular Society unanimously voted a resolution, expressing warm approval of my lecture-scheme, and promising me not only a free hand, but all possible support, in my enterprise.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE is back in London all the better for a brief holiday after his Glasgow lectures. This evening (September 22) he lectures at the Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C., his subject being "Bible or No Bible in the Schools," with special reference to Dr. John Clifford's recent argument for its retention.

So many difficulties have arisen that Mr. Foote has resolved to discontinue the sale of tickets for meetings at the Foresters' Hall. London friends will please note that the admission is now *free*. It is expected, however, that a silver collection will be contributed by persons occupying seats in the body of the hall, and a copper collection by those in the gallery.

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Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Foresters' Hall, London. The audience was evidently very pleased with the exposition given of "Secularism in Modern Thought." The various points were received with much cheering, and, on Mr. Watts resuming his seat, he had quite an ovation. Mr. John Grange, from Bradford, was present.

To-day (Sunday, September 22) Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Hall of Science, Rockingham-street, Sheffield. We hope our Yorkshire friends will rally in full force.

Mr. Charles Watts has issued his trenchant remarks on *Discreditable Tactics of Christian Disputants* in the form of a penny pamphlet. All interested in Mr. Watts's debate with the Rev. Dr. A. Jamieson (with whom it chiefly deals), and especially those in the neighborhood of the rev. gentleman, should give the pamphlet as wide a circulation as possible.

Mr. Wheeler has in the press a volume entitled *Footsteps of the Past*. This title was taken from a former volume, the entire stock of which was destroyed by fire. The work has been entirely re-written, and will deal with the groundwork of all religious ideas, tracing their development from the rudest savage notions to their expression in Christian doctrine and ritual. A large number of rare works have been consulted in this compilation, and Mr. Wheeler confidently states that *Footsteps of the Past* will be an eye-opener. The price to subscribers in advance will be 2s. 6d. for a volume of two hundred pages, but when the book is issued to the trade it will be 3s. Mr. Foote will contribute an Introduction.

Mr. Joseph Seddon, secretary of the Manchester Branch, writes: "Mr. Cohen's month's mission in Manchester came to a successful close on Sunday last. Open-air lectures in various parts of the town have been delivered to large crowds of people, notably in Stevenson-square and Chorlton-road, where some little opposition was met with. The lectures in the hall, too, have been well attended, and I think the result of the month's working will be found to have been not only a success from a propaganda point of view, but from a financial one also. The course of three lectures on 'The Great French Revolution' was particularly admired, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Cohen will have them printed at an early date. During his stay amongst us Mr. Cohen has made many friends, and the only cause for regret is that he was not engaged for a longer period."

Mr. Heaford pays his first lecturing visit to Newcastle this Sunday, and occupies the platform at Northumberland Hall, morning, afternoon, and evening. Friends in the district will do well to attend and take a taste of his quality.

A most enjoyable gathering of the members of the Islington and Finsbury Park Branches, to the number of nearly a hundred, took place last Sunday in the extensive grounds of Mr. Guest, at the Nook, Canonbury. A capital tea was provided on the lawn, Mr. R. O. Smith kindly furnishing tables and chairs. An entertainment followed, to which Mr. and Mrs. Guest, Mr. Ward, Mrs. Wheeler, and many others contributed. Dance and song were kept up in the illuminated grounds till a late hour, to the entertainment of a numerous auditory on the other bank of the New River. The reunion led to the discussion of some plans for winter work in the North of London.

The attempts of H. P. Hughes to curry favor with the Church will only lead more genuine Nonconformists to fall back on the independent position that the State has nothing to do with the teaching of religion. The *Daily News* of September 11 says: "We are, and always have been, in favor of confining to secular subjects the instruction of children in schools which the State supports. Such a law would, in our opinion, meet the ends of justice and serve the cause of religion. It would be just, because rates and taxes are paid by people of all religions and people of none. It would be, in the highest sense, religious, because it would separate from the formal routine of school life truths and sentiments which need to be handled with peculiar delicacy and reverence."

John Morley is engaged in writing a history of the present century. It is a stupendous undertaking, and has occupied his spare time for several years.

Irish Life, noticing Mr. Gladstone's preface to *An American People's Bible History*, says: "But why insist upon the inspired accuracy of the text? If Moses did the best he could for the Jews in accounting for our existence, what is gained by insisting on the inspired accuracy of the account, which is now made to clash with natural laws and natural data? Why insist that Moses, a learned man, who was giving his erstwhile enslaved and semi-barbarous fellows a feasible account of their existence, was necessarily directly inspired? Who will insist that, when Moses propounded the laws of slavery, of people who were to be slaves to the Jews, with the prelude—'Thus said the Lord'—that he was inspired to propound the mind of the Almighty in the matter of slave-making?"

"A man," continues *Irish Life*, "need not be inspired to write history. No one who undertakes now, or has ever undertaken, to write an account of St. Patrick and his sermons is supposed to be inspired. No one claims that Shakespeare and Tennyson were inspired, and yet they were philosopher and poet of far greater excellence, and purer lives, than either David or Solomon. A poet need not necessarily be inspired, as we know from our own Davis, and from the glorious crowd of British poets, ending with Tennyson, to write the most profound verse, and it is very doubtful if Solomon might not have learned a great deal from Shakespeare as a philosopher and poet."

The Liberal party in Mexico are seeking to enforce the laws framed by President Juarez to control the privileges of the clergy. They propose to suppress secret convents. The late revolution in Ecuador was largely a revolt against the domination of the Romish Church. Convents were thrown open, and such of the nuns as desired liberty were allowed to depart. A number of priests were forced to fly.

Colonel Ingersoll has begun his winter campaign against ignorance and superstition. He has a new lecture entitled "The Foundations of Faith." Ingersoll spoke in Atlantic City, N.J., August 4, on "The Holy Bible"; on August 8, 9, 10, and 11, at Burlington, Vt. It seems he held a kind of "protracted meeting" there. He lectured on August 16, 17, and 18, at Lake Pleasant, Mass. On September 7 he attended a reunion of his old regiment, the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry; on October 6 he is to give his new lecture in Boston. "The Lord permitting," the Colonel proposes to shake up the dry bones of orthodoxy this season.

MR. HOWARD'S CHALLENGE.

On returning to London I find two Leek papers awaiting me, containing letters by the Rev. W. W. Howard. I also read the judicious reference to them written in my absence by Mr. Wheeler. Mr. Howard gives an account of the failure of negotiations for debates between him and myself at Spennymoor and Liverpool. No doubt he means to be fair, but he manages to be very inaccurate. In each case, while I accepted Mr. Howard's proposition, as a matter in which he had a right to satisfy himself, he or his committee insisted on editing my proposition, which of course I declined to let them do. Personally, I do not see that a proposition is necessary. It is generally admitted that man has a body; the point in dispute is whether man has a soul. I am willing to debate that point with Mr. Howard at our mutual convenience. It is idle for him to "challenge" me. I am not a prize-fighter. I neither issue challenges nor accept them. Still, I am open to listen to a courteous invitation to public discussion; and if Mr. Howard really desires me to meet him I have no doubt that we can come to some arrangement. Why not discuss the plain question, "Has Man a Soul?" That could be done without my having to brush off tickets, such as "Materialist," which Mr. Howard is fond of trying to fasten upon me. I invite him to "end all quibbling"—to use his own urbane language—and to say definitely (1) whether he will discuss the aforesaid plain question, or (2) what proposition he wishes to maintain in debate with respect to what he calls "the phenomena of mind." I will then tell him, as I have done before, what proposition I will maintain in respect to those phenomena. But I must warn him that he wastes his time in telling me what I *ought* to maintain. It would be impertinent on my part if I adopted that attitude towards him.

G. W. FOOTE.

Obituary.

We notice in our American exchanges the deaths of two veteran Freethinkers. Jeremiah Hacker, of Vineland, New Jersey, at one time editor of a Freethought paper, the *Pleasure Boat*, and who reached the age of ninety-four, was buried without any religious rites. On his wife's tombstone was inscribed the query, "Where is God?" and on his own, "The angry, wrathful Bible God is a myth." Professor James H. Cook, of Columbus, Kansas, was also one who worked well for Freethought in the days of yore. He had reached the age of seventy-six, and was cremated without religious ceremony.

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (August 17).

PLYMOUTH is the great naval station of England. Here are the warships, the docks, and the great machine shops, in which about 5,000 people are employed. There are three municipalities which go to make up what might be termed Plymouth—Plymouth itself, Devonport, and Stonehouse. Stonehouse lies wedged in, as it were, between Plymouth and Devonport. These are in the county of Devonshire, and hence the name of Devonport for a part of the city. The total of this threefold metropolis is 200,000. It has advanced wonderfully since the time of Drake, who sailed forth from this harbor and conquered the Spanish Armada, and decided the fortunes of Protestant England. It is also illustrious as the point whence our Pilgrim Fathers tempted the chances of the unknown sea. I stood upon the very spot where they prayed for the protection of heaven and started on their momentous voyage. On the very stones at my feet are engraved the memorials of this one success amidst a thousand failures. I have much more kindly feeling for the Pilgrim Fathers than for the Boston Puritans. As a matter of history, we must distinguish between the Pilgrims and the Puritans. The Puritans came afterwards, and settled mainly at Boston. The annals of Cape Cod are not so dark and terrible as those of Boston. The Pilgrims were rather kindly in their religious disposition, and exhibited a tolerant spirit; and therefore I am able to render homage to the Pilgrims, while detesting the Puritans and their infamous despotism. Had the Pilgrims been the ruling power in New England history, I do not think we should read its pages now with such blushes of shame and indignation. I cannot believe that those who suffered so much for religious liberty would have ever been so treasonable to its principles as were the severe and cruel Puritans. I will not honor the Puritans. I will hate them with every fibre of my being, unworthy as they were of the leadership of America. Let not the dishonor of the Puritans fall upon the brave and noble Pilgrims. It was not Plymouth, it was Boston, that cursed New England for two hundred years with the reign of a barren and bloody theology.

Hence, as a Freethinker, I was glad to stand upon this historic spot, whence England gave its best life to America.

I enjoyed Plymouth and its surroundings. Here is one of the most beautiful portions of England. The sea views are grand and variable; the bays, the sound, the channel, and the vast, far ocean itself. The landscapes are equally magnificent—the hills stretching away in immense magnitude, fold upon fold, with fields and groves and fair dwellings to the distant horizon. I find a stalwart company of Liberals at Plymouth, who keep the flag flying rain or shine. I am entertained at the hospitable home of Mr. R. S. Smith, who, for many years, has been one of the leading citizens, both at Plymouth and Devonport. He was a staunch supporter of Bradlaugh, and here was the field of some of Bradlaugh's greatest combats and victories. In the early part of his career a warrant was issued for his arrest as a blasphemer while on the point of addressing an audience, but the police-officer was altogether too previous, and laid his hands on Bradlaugh when he had uttered only the customary expression, "Ladies and gentlemen." As this could not be construed into "blasphemy" by any court of justice, an action for "false imprisonment" was open, which Bradlaugh, of course, pushed with his usual legal acumen and success. Determined, however, to utter his sentiments in spite of police and church power, he secured a boat and stood out a little from land, and thundered his speech to vast crowds of people, while the officers of the law stood helplessly by; for it so happened that not Plymouth, but Saltash, by some ancient arrangement, had jurisdiction of the waters to within a few feet of the Devonshire shore, and hence Bradlaugh could not be arrested without a warrant from Saltash. The spirit created by Bradlaugh is prevailing in this community to-day. I gave two lectures on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, July 16 and 17. The weather was somewhat stormy, but I had fair audiences nevertheless. The reception was enthusiastic at both places, for America and England came together where, for the time being, in 1620 the ancestry of both separated for the sake of liberty; and liberty has triumphed, and the two countries are more united than ever, still carrying on the great battle for human rights. At Plymouth I lectured at the Co-operative Hall, a very handsome hall in a beautiful and commodious building. The working people have carried co-operation in England to a wonderful extent and business success. This co-operative society at Plymouth started only a few years ago with seven members and a few pounds capital. It has now a membership of 14,000, and does a business of hundreds of thousands of pounds yearly, and has a big bank account, and money enough to erect one of the most magnificent structures in Plymouth. It borrows money at five per cent. and loans at four per cent., the object of which apparently uncommercial transaction is to give the working man a good chance to invest his money if he has any, and, if not, to borrow at reasonable rates; and the difference in interest is made up by the profits of the trade on the funds invested. Mr. Goodenough is one of the original members of this Association, and has done more for its progress than any other. He is a staunch Freethinker, one of the first to take a stand with Bradlaugh and Holyoake, both for Freethought and co-operation.

With my host, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Pearce, a young friend, of Plymouth, I take a voyage over to Saltash, along the harbor of Devonport, which is alive with craft of almost every kind. But that which principally attracts my attention are the enormous three-deckers. These used to be the crack war vessels of the British navy. It was on one of these three deckers that Nelson went thundering against the enemy. They are no longer of any service, magnificent as they appear. They are now used as training ships. Saltash is a quaint old town, low buildings and narrow, steep streets. It was a climb to get to the top of them, but the open country was lovely, although it was raining at the time. We could see the misty ocean, the various shores, and Mount Edgecombe splendidly towering amidst the clouds and sunshine alternating. We travelled to an ancient monastery, entered the little church, and saw a cowled monk kneel before the crucifix and utter his *pater noster* and count his beads. How any man could be such a fool in this the nineteenth century I could not understand. It does convince one of the enormous foolishness of the human race to see such an institution as the Church of Rome, with its ten thousand monks and melancholy nuns, flourish and increase. What reward is there for its votaries except a bare and miserable life like that of the poor devotee I looked upon with pity and contempt!

In contrast with the monastery is the huge railroad bridge from Devonshire side to Cornwall, built by Brunell, 150 feet high, a tubular suspension bridge capable of bearing 1,000,000 tons. It is a brilliant triumph of engineering skill, and as we look upon its stupendous framework, so massive and so graceful and so useful, we recover our faith in human nature and its splendid possibilities. Rome must fail, and reason triumph.

Thursday, after the lectures, I had quite a day for sight-seeing with Mr. Smith. First we visited the government shops, where the machines cut iron as if it were wood, the knife going straight through the ponderous masses with irresistible keenness. In these vast shops are built the modern war vessels, the tower ships, the torpedo boats, etc. We are permitted to enter some of these tremendous enginries, and to see how the superb and destructive instruments work, so that no floating timber whatever can resist them, only solid iron and steel. In the afternoon I set sail from the Barbican, which the "Mayflower" touched with her keel, and, landing on the other side of the harbor, am met by Mr. Couch with his carriage, and together we take a drive over the Devonshire hills, where the famous cows roam that give eighteen quarts of milk per day. This is the finest country in the world for cows, the south of England, pleasant and comfortable, with the Gulf stream to keep it warm in winter.

We drive through many winding ways, up the hills, and reach Stadden heights; and here certainly is one of the most beautiful, extensive, and varied views to be seen anywhere on the globe. Before us is the great city itself, with its ten thousand dwellings, its fort, Eddystone light-house, Plymouth Hoe, the hotels, wharves, etc. To the right are Dartmoor and its vast ranges, whence comes the river Plym, which gives the name to the city, the mouth of the Plym. To the left are the vast sheets of water, the port of Devon, by the side of wooded Edgecombe, the outer harbor and the breakwater, which it took thirty years to construct. Beyond the breakwater the English Channel appears, sweeping into bays along the far-circling shores; and in the misty distance rolls the Atlantic itself. And all these shining liquid surfaces are covered with hundreds of ships, fishing-smacks, boats, steamers, sailing-vessels, ponderous ironclads, and magnificent floating palaces, that are voyaging to Australia and America. Fifty miles seaward and fifty miles landward the prospects crowd upon the view. It is not simply the magnitude, but the infinite variety, that attracts. The grandeur and vastness of nature are realised, with the art and glory of man himself. At one moment we can imagine ourselves in absolute isolation, and in the next we are enchanted with the elegance of civilisation.

The old Eddystone Lighthouse was rebuilt and placed upon a public square. I visited this and climbed to the top, and enjoyed the splendid outlook. I also wandered around the old port which held out against the king in Cromwell's time. I looked upon the statue of Sir Francis Drake, one of the mighty sea-gods, or "sea-dogs," of English history, the man of valor and genius, who did more than all the winds of heaven, or a thousand deities, to smash the Spanish Armada and save English soil from foreign foot.

I cannot describe all that I experience at Devonport and Plymouth. They are places of historic association and living beauty. I like the comrades here. Mr. Berry, Mr.

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James Couch, Mr. Pascor, Mr. Pearce, etc., all are ardent supporters of Freethought and willing to do their share. I must thank Mr. and Mrs. Smith for their generous entertainment. I leave Plymouth with delightful memories. It was the home of Mr. Foote in the days of his youth; and certainly Plymouth is a good place to cultivate the burning thought, and fit one for the arena of freedom.

After Plymouth is Birmingham, great, busy, massive Birmingham; a well-built city. Some say it is the best governed city in the world. However, it costs something. The rates are one shilling and sixpence to the pound. No Yankee could stand that. Birmingham is what you might call an all-round city. It has no specialty like Manchester, Liverpool, or Sheffield. It manufactures almost everything. There is an air of universality about it. It is a ponderous, prodigious combination of all sorts of industrial matters. I like it, and enjoyed my stay to the utmost. There was plenty of life about it. I felt that I was in the heart of a great commonwealth, in the midst of intelligent and go-ahead people. I know, of course, that Birmingham is not right on the political question. It has gone Conservative. But what is politics to business? Politics is on the surface, and there is not so much difference between the parties after all. We will let politics go, and study Birmingham from a business and social point of view; and I must say that, notwithstanding the prognostications of some of my Liberal friends, I have a great deal of faith in Birmingham. It has a population of 500,000. It is always on the increase. It has a vast and splendid country about it. It must ever be the centre of an immense business community. It has a basis of solid and permanent prosperity. Looking at it from a general standpoint, as a traveller and citizen of the world, I must admire Birmingham.

And the Freethinkers here are of the right sort. I never had a better time in my life. I arrived on Friday evening, July 19. I am met at the station by Mr. Taylor, president of the society, Mr. Partridge, secretary, and Mr. Ridgway, an old Freethinker, who has the look and bearing of Bradlaugh himself, and has really been taken for Bradlaugh at times. Mr. H. Lees Sumner, of Shirley, near Birmingham, is also at hand. My first welcome is a most cordial one. I am invited for the time being to accept the hospitality of Mr. Sumner, which I do, and we take an omnibus for Shirley, which is about six miles off; and I thoroughly enjoy the evening ride through the busy and amply-lighted streets of Birmingham into the quiet of the suburbs and the wide prospects of the expanding country. After the stage ride we have a walk through the woods and rural darkness to the bright and shining fireside of my friend, who, in the midst of his intense activities, enjoys the felicity of green fields and secluded gardens. He likes a good long walk after his day's work. I was indeed delighted to be so far out in the country, and revel in almost absolute repose. I was warmly welcomed by Mrs. Sumner; and the little baby, only five weeks old, did not seem to be at all afraid of the Pilgrim. I could rest to my heart's content in this genial home, and did so. I let the sun rise high on Saturday morn before I buckled on the harness. It was somewhat showery, and the masses of cloud hung along the horizon; but the blue sky was not altogether conquered, and dashes of sunlight checkered the scene. I was again on the top of the stage with four horses in front, and the chariot rolled along firmly with the best whip in the country to guide the mettlesome steeds, who seemed to delight in the freshness of the atmosphere and the occasional thunder and lightning.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

Ananias.

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes has made his bed, and he must now lie upon it. "A Wesleyan Trustee" pertinently observes in the *Times*: "As a member of the Wesleyan denomination, I beg to say—and I think most Wesleyans, of whatever party, aware of facts will agree with me—that the Rev. H. P. Hughes's treatment, in your issue of August 11, of Mr. Chamberlain's denial of the charge concerning 'conscription' comes far short of what the case requires. His letter seems an attempt to hide his gross unfairness behind the bugbear of the conscription; but I do not fancy he will succeed. The case against him is too transparent. Two motives obviously suggest themselves: (1) political spite, (2) an advertisement. As Mr. Hughes in his paper is fond, without authority, of speaking as if he were the mouthpiece of Methodism, I would ask outsiders to take his statements until proved representative as only his own. Only on September 10, in your columns, the Rev. Dr. Rigg had flatly to contradict a statement of Mr. Hughes at Grindelwald concerning both Dr. Rigg and the educational policy of Methodism. One so eager to find a common basis for 'Christian' education in our national Board schools should not shrink from boldly acknowledging and apologising for a wrong such as he has done to Mr. Chamberlain. The Wesleyan people have a claim that he will thus do what he can to retrieve his honor."

WHAT PRICE HUGHES?

WISHES are seldom fulfilled with the cheering rapidity which we have just experienced. In a paragraph in "Men and Matters" yesterday, commenting upon the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's statement that it was Mr. W. Pigot-Wood who first connected Mr. Chamberlain with conscription, we said: "We should like now to hear from Mr. Pigot-Wood." No sooner said than done. For in to-day's *Times* a straightforward letter appears over that gentleman's signature, in which once and for all the career of the idle and mischievous story is terminated. The incident is so instructive that we are tempted to recapitulate. At one of the sittings in the beautiful Swiss valley of Grindelwald, which, of a truth, Providence did not create as a meeting-house for hurried religionists, a discussion was held on old-age pensions. Among the speakers was Mr. W. Pigot-Wood, who made some more or less sensible remarks on the subject, saying, among other things, that he was confident that the scheme which he advocated would, being based upon the principle of self-help as opposed to State-help, receive the careful consideration of Mr. Chamberlain. No word, you observe, of conscription. In the next number of the *Methodist Times* the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes stated that he had it on very high authority that Mr. Chamberlain was seriously considering the question of introducing conscription into this country. The absurdity of the thing was almost beneath notice, but as the *Methodist Times* numbers a multitude of readers, not all of whom are thinking persons, its reverend editor was challenged. He, therefore, again repeated the charge, and affirmed that his authority was a speaker at the Grindelwald Conference. "What speaker?" was the next question. "Mr. Pigot-Wood," replies Mr. Hugh Price Hughes. "No," asserts Mr. Pigot-Wood, in this morning's *Times*, "nothing of the kind." That Mr. Hugh Price Hughes deliberately said the thing that was not, we hesitate to say; but that, in showing such haste to publish fiction and such reluctance to investigate fact, he grossly abuses his position as editor and leader, no one can deny.—*Globe*.

THE WIDOW'S DEATH-BED.

"In the resurrection, therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them, for the seven had her to wife?"—MARK XII. 23.

THE widow lay on her dying bed,
With candles at foot and candles at head,
And feebly turned to the priest and said:
"Father, good father, my soul to-night,
In an hour, perchance, takes its last long flight;
In an hour, perchance, I shall stand in the light
Of the great white throne, borne down with affright—
For the weight of my sins is crushing me quite;
But deeper than this is my present care,
Deeper the depth of my dark despair,
For my greatest trouble is how I shall fare
When I meet with my various husbands there.
For each of the seven—or was it eight?—
I promised to meet at the great gold gate.
Each, as the death-mist dimmed his eye,
Each, as his soul was about to fly,
With gasping sigh that was half a cry,
Said to me, "Sweetest, you and I
Must part, but 'tis only to meet on high'—
Or some such conventional bathos as this;
And then, with a lingering, ultimate kiss,
They successively started for heavenly bliss.
But, father, the thought that oppresses my soul
Is what will occur when I reach the goal,
And find eight cherubs, in white robes, wait
My coming, at old St. Peter's gate?
Will they, in the shocked archangel's sight,
Disgrace themselves by a stand-up fight?
And if they don't, but agree to share
My charms, will celestial society stare
And turn up its nose? And, oh, need I fear
The unmarried seraphim's maidenly sneer?
And if I flirt with each and all,
Will respectable angels refuse to call?
Will the inner circle around the throne
Begin to talk in a spiteful tone
Of fast young minxes, and purse their lips,
And gather their skirts round sanctified hips,
When we meet to drink water of life in sips?
Will——" here came a cough, a smothering sigh,
A moan—and the lady had gone to try.

—*Lucifer*.

J. W. DINSDALE.

Minister—"What is a hypocrite?" Boy (mournfully)—"A sky-pilot'."

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BOOK CHAT.

Books Fatal to their Authors (E. Stock, 1895) is the attractive title of a volume of the Book Lover's Library contributed by the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, M.A., F.S.A., Rector of Barkham. In his preface Mr. Ditchfield refers to his indebtedness to Bayle, Isaac Disraeli, Peignot, etc., but curiously he does not mention the English work, *Books Condemned to be Burnt*, by J. A. Farrer, nor Mr. A. Hart's *Index of the Works Prohibited in England*. Nonetheless, Mr. Ditchfield has compiled a book which is at once erudite and readable, and deserves praise for his industry, if not his impartiality, in setting forth his materials.

* * *

Mr. Ditchfield at the outset has to mention that "by far the larger number of fatal books deal with these subjects of Theology and Religion." "Liberty of conscience," says the writer, "was a thing unknown in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and while we prize that liberty as a priceless possession, we can but admire the constancy and courage of those who lived in less happy days. We are not concerned now in condemning or defending their opinions or their beliefs, but we may at least praise their boldness and mourn their fate."

* * *

After this we should hardly have expected to find that the next chapter is entitled "Fanatics and Freethinkers." Why these are lumped together, and Servetus ranked as a theologian, while Toland, Woolston, and Biddle are ranked among "Fanatics and Freethinkers," and Bruno, Diderot, and Vanini classed under Science and Philosophy, is, we suppose, to be explained from the author's clerical standpoint.

* * *

This comes out peculiarly in what he says of Diderot, and still more in his remarks on Vanini. He says of the latter: "Not content with his Christian name, Lucilio, he assumed the grandiloquent and high-sounding cognomen of Julius Cesar, wishing to attach to himself some of the glory of the illustrious founder of the Roman Empire." Had Mr. Ditchfield consulted Signor Palumbo's *Life of Giulio Cesare Vanini*, he might have discovered that Vanini went by his baptismal name; and, anyway, a gentleman of Mr. Ditchfield's learning should know that the name was not uncommon in that age. Really, a Christian minister might pause before sneering at an Atheist, even if the sneer be justified, when he remembers that Christians burnt him for his opinions. Mr. Ditchfield is also wrong in insinuating that Vanini was burnt by the Inquisition. It was not the Inquisition, but the Parliament of Toulouse, which was responsible.

* * *

If Mr. Ditchfield had consulted Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, he might have found many other cases of books fatal to their authors. Among names omitted there are, for instance, taking Englishmen only, Paul Best, Dr. William Coward, Colonel John Fry, Charles Blount, Peter Annet, George Houston, and Robert Taylor.

* * *

We do not like to leave a work like that of Mr. Ditchfield's in a fault finding spirit, and we must say that, notwithstanding some obvious defects, we regard it as an acquisition. Despite a light and almost jocular tone which pervades the work, the writer is evidently full of sympathy with the calamities of authors, and he concludes his book with expressing a hope that some day we may see a Literary College, where those who have borne the burden and heat of the day may rest secure from all anxieties and worldly worries when the evening shadows of life fall around.

* * *

Messrs. Methuen & Co. will publish next month Mrs. W. K. Clifford's *A Flash of Summer*, to which she has given the second title of "The Story of a Simple Woman's Life."

* * *

The editor of Blackie's Home and School Library has selected for the latest volume of the series Harriet Martineau's *Feats on the Fiord*. Though written many years ago, it is a story of perennial interest, and should find numerous admirers among the many thousands who have in recent times explored the land of the midnight sun. Norwegian life and character are vividly portrayed by Miss Martineau, who had the rare gift of describing with a graphic pen everything as she found it. Miss Martineau was one of the ablest of women Freethinkers, and, though her Freethought does not appear in this work, she touched nothing she did not adorn.

A little girl of four years, who was staying with an aunt, was made to eat something she did not like; and, on being told to give thanks for it, the child folded her hands and said, "Thank God it's over."

ABRAHAM AND EPHRAIM.

He sermonised industriously in his didactic way,
And moralised momentously with Ephraim every day,
And taught by tale and proverb and by every good device
The virtuousness of virtue and the viciousness of vice.

His hortatory homilies, intended to impress
The rightfulness of righteousness, the sin of sinfulness,
Were ever hurled at Ephraim throughout the whole year long,
That he might rightly comprehend the wrongfulness of wrong.

"A youth can grow up virtuous, if we but pay the price;
If we but saturate his soul with showers of advice;
If we instil," said Abraham, "perpetual truth in him—"
And so in truth perpetually he soaked young Ephraim.

The youth absorbed a sermon, every morning ere he ate,
On the awful reprobation of the awful reprobate;
And he swallowed moral theses that were meant to edify,
And he masticated maxims with his gingerbread and pie.

And 'twixt breakfast time and dinner the iniquity of sin
Was taught to him industriously and patiently rubbed in;
The turpidness of turpitude was duly analysed,
And the evil of depravity was loudly advertised.

And then, right after dinner, the enormity of crime
And the wrong of immorality was preached till supper time;
Then Abraham would sermonise through all the evening hours,
And drench young Ephraim's consciousness in moralistic showers.

Thus through cumulative precept did old Abraham desire
Accumulative virtue should young Ephraim acquire;
He taught him virtue endlessly, and waited long to see
How superlatively virtuous young Ephraim would be.

The maxim-goaded Ephraim found righteousness a bore,
For salve is but an irritant when jammed into a sore;
Even bread is innutritious if you resolutely cram
An indiscriminate bakery down the bursting diaphragm.

Thus by hortatory homilies did Abraham impress
The wrongfulness of righteousness, the good of sinfulness;
And taught by tale and proverb, and by every good device,
The viciousness of virtue and the virtuousness of vice.

Hence, Ephraim lived a reckless life and died a felon's death,
But gave this vindication with his latest dying breath:
"I have been sermonised to death; I die, to speak precise,
An unprotected victim of perpetual advice."

—*Boston Globe.* SAM WALTER FOSS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With respect to the Rev. W. W. Howard's "challenge" in last week's *Freethinker*, I have to state that the terms therein set forth are identical with those put forward by that gentleman in Liverpool nearly two years ago. By Mr. Foote's instructions, I informed him that Mr. Foote declined to label himself "Materialist," or to allow Mr. Howard to state his position for him. Consequently Mr. Howard knows full well that his present challenge would not be accepted. Probably that is the reason he throws it out. Mr. Howard has published a pamphlet at 3d. on the subject. If he charges for the blunders it contains, it is very cheap; if for its reliable information, then it is about the dearest threepennyworth I know of.

CHARLES DOEG.

Bishop—"Do you think it is right to partake of this hash on Friday?" Low Church Clergyman—"Entirely orthodox; it is composed of the thirty-nine articles."

St. Peter—"What have you got in that grip, young man?" New arrival—"Oh, I thought I would come prepared for anything, so I just brought an asbestos suit along."

Willy Wiggins—"Will you please tell me where the text was dis morning?" The Pastor—"Why, certainly, my little man. The second chapter of John, the fourth verse. I am pleased to know that one so young is so anxious to remember my text." Willy Wiggins—"Yes; I played hookey from church dis morning, and dad allers asks me der text, to see whedder I was dere or not."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Bible or No Bible in the Schools."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Lantern Lecture by L. Hewitt. Tuesday, at 8, social for members and friends. Thursday, at 8, business meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James will lecture.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, F. J. Gould, "William Blake, the Poet."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. A. Davies, "The Whitewashing of Jesus."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "A New Age of Reason."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.15, S. E. Easton, "Bible Celebrities."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, S. R. Thompson, "Is the Bible True?" Monday, at 8, debate between Messrs. Jones and Williams on "The Creation."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery, and is it Woman's Friend?" 3.15, "The Soul."

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (Middlesex side): 7, T. Thurlow, "Scepticism: Is it Criminal?" Thursday, at 8.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, T. Thurlow. "The Bible and Science": 3.30, "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, A. Guest, "The Two Adams."

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Fables."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, a lecture.

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, S. R. Thompson will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, St. John will lecture; 3, S. R. Thompson will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, C. James, "The Philosophy of Atheism"; 7, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution—Part I."; 7, "Is it Reasonable to Believe in God?"

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class—G. Faulkner. "Holy Moses"; 6.30, soirée in commemoration of the anniversary of Charles Bradlaugh's birthday.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, J. Roberts, "Reason Only."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): See Friday's *Evening News*.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, W. Heaford, "God and the Problem of Evil"; 3, "The Futility of Prayer"; 7, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, Charles Watts, "The Revolution of Modern Thought"; 3, "The Gospels as Dramatic Literature"; 7, "Christian Evidences: A Theological Fallacy." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King street): 7, a reading.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, important meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRADFORD (Open Market, James-street): 6.30, A. W. Oxley, "Jehovah and the Brotherhood of Man."

BIRMINGHAM: Monday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture at the Five Ways; Wednesday, at the Bull Ring; Saturday, at Smithfield Market.

DERBY (Market-place): 10.45, Mr. Briggs, "The 'Christian' Socialism Delusion."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 3, W. Cook, "Morality from a Freethought Standpoint."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—September 22, Birmingham.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 22, m. Kingsland, e. Deptford; 25, Hyde Park; 26, Hammersmith; 29, m. Victoria Park, a. Finsbury Park, e. Kilburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 22, Camberwell; 29, Westminster. October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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BLIND BELIEF.

CARDINAL MANNING was a bitter opponent of Charles Bradlaugh, who had committed the unpardonable crime of thinking for himself, and of thinking to considerable purpose. When the Atheist member for Northampton was endeavoring to take the seat to which he had an indisputable right in the House of Commons, and from which he was debarred by the mere brute force of a temporary majority of law-breakers, Cardinal Manning wrote the most passionate articles against him in one of the leading monthlies. The red-hatted Romanist implored the House of Commons not to admit an Atheist. He predicted something like national ruin if a notorious "infidel" were allowed to sit with "the gentlemen of England." The Cardinal, in fact, simply foamed with rage at the bare idea of an Atheist being entitled—even in this world—to the common rights of citizenship. In the end, however, the Cardinal had to digest the venom of his spleen as he could, for Charles Bradlaugh took his seat and filled it with great distinction.

Cardinal Manning was succeeded at Westminster by Cardinal Vaughan, who was previously Bishop of Salford. It was this gentleman, we believe, who, on the death of Darwin, rather rejoiced to think that the great evolutionist was "burning in hell." Such a bigot is capable of anything in the way of intolerance. If he had his way, the population of hell would soon be increased by the addition of every independent thinker on this planet.

"His Eminence," as they call this underling of the "Servant of the servants of God" at Rome, recently paid a visit to Formby, where he preached a special sermon at High Mass in the Church of Our Lady. His text was taken from the Romish edition of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "My just man liveth by faith." His first comment was an explanation of "just." What the world regards as a just man was not necessarily a just man in the eyes of God. "A man might be temperate, pure, just, and pay his lawful debts," he observed, "yet that man might be eternally lost." Men could only be saved by *faith*—which is evidently a very different thing from temperance, purity, justice, and honor. These are only "natural virtues," and without "supernatural virtues," which are born of faith, they lead us straight to the bottomless pit, which we shall find cram-full of people who were guilty of the one horrid and unpardonable crime of being unable to believe the teachings of Cardinal Vaughan. No doubt it was some such idea that prompted the judgment of the gentleman who was asked which of the two great places of future residence he preferred, and who replied: "Heaven for climate, and Hell for company."

This "faith" being so very precious—especially to the Church which lives upon it—ought certainly to be guarded with iron-clad shutters. Accordingly, the Cardinal told the faithful that, however wide they might open their mouths, they should take care to shut their eyes, or they might see things to give them "the headache called thought in the brain." Perhaps we had better give the Cardinal's own words, as reported in the *Southport Visitor*:—

> "He had heard many non-Catholic friends and some Catholics say: 'Why should I not read books written by Rationalists and Agnostics, and articles in various reviews written by men who professed to be perfectly hostile to the Catholic religion and to revelation? Why should I not read the works of Huxley, of Spencer, and of many others who might be named? They are written in the public journals of the country, and are found on the tables of nearly all educated men. Surely, if my faith is true, I can easily afford to read whatever may be written by the hand of man. Is my faith so feeble that it may not be exposed to the Rationalistic arguments and the Agnostic literature of the day?' This was an extremely fallacious argument. Why should they treat the virtue of faith in a way in which they would not dare to treat other virtues, say those of honesty and chastity? Would a merchant not at once suspect, and soon get rid of, a clerk who, while professing that his honesty remained perfect as proved by his record, yet persisted, as a new departure, in consorting with swindlers, gamblers, or pickpockets, just because he said their ways interested or pleased him? In the same way, would not parents remonstrate with, and feel poignant grief concerning, a daughter who, while declaring her intention to continue in the chastity to which she had been educated, resolved to pass her leisure in the company of so-called 'gay' companions of both sexes? The honesty of the clerk and the chastity of the daughter would each suffer under such habits and temptations, and so there was danger for the faith of those who permitted themselves to be entangled with the arguments and the doubts of the Rationalist or the Agnostic. It was all very well if, in the course of their duty, some of them were called upon to examine the writings of the Rationalist or the Agnostic in order to refute them; in that case God would protect their faith, but, otherwise, they would probably find themselves in a net from which extrication was well nigh impossible. They would begin by giving up this doctrine or that, until their faith might depart entirely, and, perhaps, never to be regained."

Practically, the Cardinal places Freethinkers in the same category with swindlers, gamblers, and pickpockets; which is the natural result of crying down *charity* and crying up *faith*. Practically, too, he admits the contention of the great Cardinal Newman, that faith can never withstand the solvent power of reason, and that the only way to save it is to keep it from all contact with its enemy. So far we thank him for his candor. It is a warning to all outsiders, that if they once become Catholics they must forswear the use of their reason for ever afterwards.

The rest of the Cardinal's argument is founded on the assumption that an inclination to reason on matters of religion is a kind of disease. He argues with people not to exercise their intelligence. He reasons against reason. He stimulates them to remain quiescent. He implores them to think of the evils of thinking. In short, he renounces his own principles in the very act of commending them; and thus, on his own showing, he was playing the fool from the beginning to the end of his sermon.

Perhaps the Cardinal reckons himself among those who are "called upon" to examine the writings of Agnostics, but *his* faith is under divine protection! We should rather put it in this way. A layman, who supports the Church, might have his eyes opened by Freethought literature; and that is a deadly danger. But a priest, who lives on the Church, is not likely to "blow the gaff," whatever he discovers.

Cardinal Vaughan's "disease" argument is a relic of the old "gangrene" theory, by which his Church justified the extermination of heretics, the burning of whom was only the amputation of a rotten member in the interest of the remainder of the body. Thus the language of faith is always the language of persecution. Those who trample on reason will also trample on humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

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HOLY KISSING.

"Salute one another with an holy kiss."—ROMANS xvi. 16.

"His kissing is as full of sanctity as the touch of holy bread."—SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It* (iii. 4).

"Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul!"
—MARLOW, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (last scene).

"'Tis certain," said Dick Steele of kissing, "Nature was its author, and that it began with the first courtship." But this is incorrect. 'Tis certain that to many human tribes kissing is unknown. Instead of saying "kiss me," they say "smell me," and this, doubtless, represents an earlier form of salutation. The kiss is much later than the dance. It is still unknown among many races, and may be called conventional. I am not sure that it does not develop from sucking, licking, smelling, and spitting. Some nations yet smell and rub noses, like horses, in salutations; and, where two Frenchmen will run and kiss each other, two Central Africans will deliberately spit, by way of friendly greeting. Dr. Tylor says: "The idea of the kiss being an instinctive gesture is negatived by its being unknown over half the world, where the prevailing salute is that by smelling or sniffing, which belongs to Polynesians, Malays, Burmese, and other Indo-Chinese, Mongols, etc., extending thence to the Eskimo, and westward to Lapland, where Linnæus saw relatives saluting by putting their noses together."

The kiss is the salute by tasting, and it has to be taught to children. Preyer, in his excellent book, *The Mind of the Child*, states that, at first, they are averse to, and even fearful of, the performance. However this may be, it is certain that Europeans speedily take to it as though to the manner born.

Osculations were far more common in the good old times than at present. The custom which most delighted Erasmus, when in England, was that the girls all kissed him. When ceasing to be performed, some of these ceremonies leave their trace in language. Thus both Austrians and Spaniards say, "I kiss your hands," as a polite term for returning thanks. John Bunyan was a very different man from Erasmus, and in his *Grace Abounding* he says: "The common salutation of women I abhor; it is odious to me in whosoever I see it." And to those who defended it as the holy kiss he pertinently asked "Why they did salute the most handsome, and let the ill-favored go?"

Sugar plums and sweets for perfuming the breath were formerly called "kissing-comfits." Falstaff alludes to them in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. When embracing Mrs. Ford, he exclaims: "Let it thunder to the tune of green sleeves, hail kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes."

It was an ancient custom to throw kisses towards the images of the gods, and towards the sun and moon (see 1 Kings xix. 18; Hosea xiii. 2). Job says he was never guilty of this last lovely rite of nature-worship. It would, in his eyes, have been an iniquity "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness. And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand" (xxxi. 27).

The early Christians kept kissing as a sign of fellowship. "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss," says Paul (1 Thess. v. 26). But Christians now-a-days no more think of conforming to this than to Christ's injunction to wash the feet of their fellow disciples.

Kissing in church, at marriage, was formerly part of the service itself, as appears from a Sarum missal. Thus Petruchio, in *Taming of the Shrew* (iii. 2),

Took the bride about the neck,
And kissed her lips with such a clamorous smack
That, at the parting, all the church did echo.

The parson used to claim the first kiss. "Please, sir," said a yokel who objected to "maimed rites," "ye've no kissed Molly." Sometimes brides have been known to take the initiative. This is a relic of a still earlier rite, that of the *jus primæ noctes*, and this again of polyandry. It's a long way off, too remote to be dangerous, but one who has traced the evolution of kissing along "footsteps of the past" will hardly permit a parson or a groomsman to kiss his bride. It calls up too many horrible reminiscences. In the sixteenth century balls were usually opened with a kissing dance. It was called "a brawl," and, like many other dances, really represented old rites of a day when gesture was the only means of transmitting knowledge. The brawl got broken up, and only relics can be found in children's games.

The Catholic Church, which preserves so many interesting relics of old superstitions, has many kissing ceremonies. Thus in the rite of High Mass the altar is kissed ten times, and nine times in Low Mass, the ten being a masculine, and the nine a feminine, symbol. In China the person admitted to the presence of the celestial emperor prostrates himself nine times, each time beating his head against the ground.

The kiss of peace was given by all communicants in the early ages of the Church, but it led to so many scandals that Pope Innocent III. abolished the rite, and to-day the priest kisses a metal plate known as *pax*, or peace, which is handed down to all the acolytes in turn. Those who will may trace in this a resemblance to Indian rites of the Sákti Puja, as performed by the ancient left-handed worshippers. When the Pope administers the Holy Communion, the partakers kiss the fisherman's ring before receiving it. Bishop's rings are also kissed at the rites of confirmation, when the girl receives her first communion. When cardinals receive from the Pope sashes or palm-leaves, they kiss his hands, and the priest kisses the palm branch as he passes it on. The aspersor of the holy water is also kissed. At grand masses the faithful used to kiss the hand of the priest when he brought the sacred wafer. Now they kiss the paten, but the deacon kisses the hand of the priest whenever he receives anything from him.

The emperor, Caligula, roused the spirit of free Romans by requiring the kissing of the foot. This, everyone knows, is done continually to the Pope. Of course the toe is not now kissed, but an embroidered cross on the slipper. But why is the cross there? Suppose it placed in the still less reverential part indicated by Rabelais. The kissing of the toe was an old rite paid to the Roman Pontifex Maximus, and in that capacity Julius Cæsar held out his foot to Pompeius Pænus to kiss in a slipper embroidered with gold. This, too, was the practice of the Arch Druid in Gaul.

The Persian kings in this, like the present Pope, only accorded the privilege of kissing their feet to highly-privileged persons. In the East the kiss of homage is usually given on the hands, sometimes on the knees. In Greece, in classic times, it was customary to kiss the hand, breast, or knee of a superior.

In Theophile Gautier's *Constantinople of To-day* there is an account of the ceremony of kissing the Sultan's toe, an honor which is reserved for the vizier, ministers, and certain privileged pashas. This act of homage is performed with the utmost solemnity, being, in fact, the recognition of the Caliph as God's vicegerent—the *Shadow of Allah* on earth.

Probably the most disgusting ceremony of fetish-kissing still extant in Europe is that of kissing, in courts of justice, the holy book, whose greasy covers have been thumbed and bealobbered by all the lowest rascals. Those with self-respect usually open the book at a clean page, if possible, and pretend to kiss it. There is a well-known dodge of intending perjurers to kiss their thumbs instead, there being a popular superstition that if kissing the actual book can be avoided the false witness escapes the risk of incurring the charge of perjury.

J. M. WHEELER.

MORAL ASPECTS OF THE CREATION AND FLOOD STORIES.

(Concluded from page 595.)

THE second chapter of Genesis informs us that God made Eve without endowing her with a knowledge of good and evil, the same as he had previously done with man. But she was more curious than Adam, and apparently went in search of what was necessary for the improvement of herself and her posterity. The serpent, beyond doubt, showed his good taste in making her the medium of introducing knowledge into the world. The superiority of some women's perceptive powers over those of many men is a well-known fact in the history of our race. Eve at once saw what was "good and pleasant," and, in spite of God's prohibition, she was not to be deprived of such a blessing as the tree of knowledge afforded. Thus, while God made

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the "mother of us all," it was left to the "evil one" to bring her intellectual powers into useful activity. This certainly was the noblest act recorded in this creation myth.

But we fail to see the moral aspect of a story which states as "God's truth" that woman was made from the rib of a man. The writer overlooked the fact that some day the anatomist would expose the fallacy of the allegation that God took from Adam "one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof." Had this been true, it is only reasonable to expect that the supposed descendants of Adam would either have one rib less than the daughters of Eve, or that some anatomical indication would have remained showing that a rib had gone. This, however, is not the case, for the number of ribs is the same in man and in woman, each having twelve on either side of the sternum, or breast-bone; and in the male body there is no evidence that it ever had less in number than it now possesses. It has been said that probably God had an extra rib, with which he replaced the one he had taken away. If this were so, it would make the story still more absurd, for in that case God might have made the woman from the spare rib, and thus have saved Adam from undergoing a surgical operation. But this delusion is on a par with the statement that man was made from "the dust of the ground," which chemists have shown to be untrue; and that the world was created in six days, which geologists flatly contradict. For ages these stories were believed to be true, but the facts of science have proved that they belong to the realm of theological fiction.

Of course scientific men may have sometimes been in error in their speculations, but no mistakes in the investigations of science can affect the lack of morality in the story of the creation. It comes to us, not as a guess at truth or as an approximate explanation of events, but as a record of verities given under the influence of "Divine inspiration." It surely cannot be moral to teach as positive truth that which is manifestly false. The pretension that this creation story is based upon fact can only be attributed to gross ignorance or to wilful fraud; and those Christians to-day who seek to perpetuate the error, when it has been amply demonstrated to be such, deserve the severest condemnation. It is a violation of ethical duty, and an unjustifiable attempt to deceive those who are, unfortunately, credulous and ignorant enough to believe the fictitious account.

The story of the Flood is equally false, and quite as destitute of moral aspects, as that of the creation. It presents a sad culmination of the first act in the God-created tragedy. The story is that God made man pure, and that he not only gave him the special advantage of divine superintendence, but subsequently he afforded him the "edification" of the preaching of Noah, who is described as being "perfect in his generation," although "he drank of the wine and was drunken," and when found by "Ham, the father of Canaan," in an immodest condition, he (Noah) exclaimed: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Evidently sobriety, decency, and justice were not necessary features of a perfect man in the days of Noah. Still, notwithstanding the precautions which the Hebrew narrative says God took to prevent mankind from degenerating, the race became so bad that the Lord repented "that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart." It is stated that God is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness; yet he either could not, or would not, devise a plan of reformation for the human race, but, instead, he resolved upon wholesale destruction, and drowned them all except one family. This was a terrible resolve, opposed alike to ethical justice and to every feeling of benevolence. No being with a spark of humanity in his nature would be guilty of voluntarily exposing millions of creatures—men, women, and children—to the agonies and struggles of a watery grave. Surely an omnipotent God could have found other means to correct the work of his own hands without bringing "a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven." Besides, as a remedy and a warning, the cold-water process proved a failure, for the people are reported as having been no better after the deluge than they were before it. What can be said of the God who was the chief actor in such a great calamity—an event so fearfully cruel and so revolting that one "cannot think of it without horror, nor contemplate it without dismay"? How can we reconcile the drowning of a whole world with the principle of goodness and morality? Suppose that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, was that any reason for destroying every chance of repentance upon their part? What should we say of an earthly despot who acted in a like manner? The cruelty and supreme wickedness of the action thus attributed to God has never been paralleled, or even approached, by the greatest monster the world has yet seen; and on the part of infinite power the action must partake of the character of the actor, and become infinite in its immorality. Because some men were wicked, was it therefore just to overwhelm in a common destruction the son with the sire, the little child who had not yet learned to do wrong with those who were alleged to be the real offenders?

The mere act of destroying "all flesh wherein is the breath of life" is immoral, by whomsoever it is performed. In the Bible story of the flood it was not a case of accidental drowning, or an unexpected downpour of rain, greater in magnitude than had ever before been experienced; it was a deliberately planned act of divine vengeance upon nearly all the unfortunate creatures who were then living. And what is the assigned reason for this inhuman slaughter? Simply that the people were no better than their God-made nature allowed them to be. If God's work did not prove to be as good as he expected, whose fault was that? Not man's, for St. Paul says: "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" (Romans ix.). But what of the lower animals? Was "every imagination of the thoughts" of *their* hearts "evil continually"? It appears that the only cause of their punishment was that they were found in bad company, and, therefore, they had to pay the penalty for being in that condition of life in which it had pleased God to place them. If in the days of Noah there had existed a society "for the prevention of cruelty to animals," its officials would have had just grounds for taking action against—well, someone. Truly the Lord "moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

The moral weakness involved in these stories of the creation and the flood is indeed great. They both present aspects opposed to reason and to the teachings of ethical science. Here we have an "immutable" God who repents, an "omniscient" God who is grieved, an "omnipotent" God who did not prevent an evil, and an "all-good" God who punished young and old, innocent and guilty, without any discrimination. Finally, we have the "great father of all" taking offence at the conduct of his own children, who were brought up under his own guidance and control, and, instead of tenderly and lovingly correcting their errors, drowning them as if they were so many vermin. If men to-day were no better than the Bible God is represented to be, we should have no faith in the service of humanity. We hope, however, that the growth of morality, based upon an enlightened view of man and of nature, will ere long entirely destroy the belief in such a God. And when the day arrives that this hope shall be realised, an unmixed blessing will be secured by the human family. Then moral men will no longer tolerate immoral gods.

CHARLES WATTS.

CASTING OUT DEVILS IN IRELAND.

ANYONE who knows what the Irish peasantry were, and are, was not surprised at the witch-burning atrocity which shocked the civilised world this year. The Catholic Irish, and indeed almost all the inhabitants of the Sacred Isles, are sunk in the most abject superstitions, and only want opportunity to revive the worst atrocities of the Middle Ages. Take the following case, which lies well within the present century: In 1820 much interest was excited in Catholic countries by the alleged miracles of Prince Hohenlohe, Bishop of Sardica. "In England a Miss O'Connor, a nun, had been cured of a swelling in her arms by the spiritual assistance of the prince, and some enthusiastic women in Ireland believed that they were

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relieved by a similar process. One young lady was restored to her speech, having been previously dumb; and another literally took up her bed and walked."

It occurred to the Rev. John Carroll, parish priest of Forth, in the County of Wexford, to rival the Episcopal prince. Carroll was a man of striking appearance and much intelligence. His error was that he believed his Bible, and wished to follow its teachings, which few Christians, happily for themselves and others, attempt to do. He read in Mark xvi. 17: "These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils." And he considered it his duty to obey the command. "He argued with subtlety upon wrong (!) premises, and his applications of various passages in the holy writings were ingenious, however mistaken. It was in vain that he was told that the power of Satan to possess himself of human bodies ceased with the revelation of Christian truth" (a doctrine certainly not consistent with Church History or Scripture). "He appealed to the Acts of the Apostles, and to incidents subsequent to the death of our Savior, to establish his favorite speculation." A medical man, with whom he was intimate, resorted to sedative medicines to avert the progress of what he considered incipient insanity; though why Carroll should be considered insane for following the example and commands of Jesus, "whose he was and whom he served," is hard to understand.

One Sunday, after performing Mass, he suddenly announced that he was endowed with miraculous powers, and demanded of the congregation whether anyone knew of a possessed person on whom he could test his powers. He was informed that a laborer named Neill was confined to bed, and, "being convinced that he was possessed by an evil spirit, proceeded to effect the removal of the enemy." Followed by a large crowd, he went to the sufferer's cottage, "which he had no sooner entered than he precipitated himself upon the sick man." . . . A severe pommelling was the process of exorcism, which he regarded as most effectual. After a long struggle he declared that he had secured the evil spirit, and would plunge him into the Red Sea; but, as that water was not handy, the reverend gentleman, looking, as one witness expressed it, "as if he held the devil by the tail," marched "with a measured pace and a mysterious aspect" to a bridge over the river Staney, where he buried the captive demon as Christ buried the possessed pigs in the Sea of Galilee.

Neill, however, like Mary Magdalene, had seven more devils, whom Carroll proposed to exorcise by similar means. "The operation was accordingly repeated with such success that Neill (who perhaps was more lazy than ill), after much strenuous expostulation, leaped out of his bed and declared that he was quite well." This success encouraged Carroll to perform other acts of mercy. "A poor woman happened to pass along the road, whom he had no sooner observed than he knocked her down and proceeded to exorcise her, to such good effect that one of the spectators cried out for the people to make way, 'as he saw the devil coming out.'" His next miracle, however, put a stop to his career as a thaumaturgus for ever. An unfortunate child in the neighborhood, named Sinnott, suffered from fits, which Carroll, like the founder of Christianity (Mark ix. 20), attributed to a devil. Followed by a crowd of admirers, he went to the cabin, and entered the room where the little girl was lying. He called for a tub of water, threw salt into it, and inverted it over the child, uttering the prayer: "Bury him (*i.e.*, the devil), Jesus, in the depth of the Red Sea." The monster then danced on the bottom of the tub, while the wretched victim shrieked, "Mammy, mammy, save me"; and all the people, including the child's father, "knelt down and prayed." The natural result was that the little girl, whose throat was crushed by the edge of the tub, soon died. "Why did you not interfere to save your child's life?" was asked of Sinnott at the trial. "I thought," said the wretched fanatic, "that, even if his reverence killed her, he would bring her to life again." But stay—was not this the faith of Abraham "accounting that God was able to raise" (his child) "up, even from the dead"! (Hebrews xi. 17). Sinnott was a true "child of Abraham," and a good Christian after all.

Carroll was tried for murder at the Wexford Assizes on August 24, 1824, and acquitted on the ground of insanity. Of course, this meant his incarceration for life in a criminal lunatic asylum. It is hard to see why Carroll was more insane than Jesus, who on one occasion nearly killed a boy by his incantations (Mark ix. 24); or than Peter, who struck two persons dead (Acts v.); or than Paul, who deprived a man of his sight (xiii. 11); but the Irish priest was unlucky in his environment.

The above narrative, contained in *The Newgate Calendar*, vol. iv., p. 378, etc., might have seemed incredible a year ago; but we have since seen a poor epileptic woman roasted to death by her husband in the presence of her father, relatives, and neighbors, in the same island, in conformity with the teaching of the same atrocious religion, which is still professed, though not practised, in all its enormities, in most civilised lands. We can only say with the Roman poet,

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum,

with the comment that the most atrocious "religio"—the "religio" of the Inquisition, whose victims numbered millions—was yet to appear when Lucretius wrote. Well does Bacon remark: "The poet, when he beheld the act of Agamemnon that could endure the sacrificing of his own daughter, exclaimed [as above]. What would he have said had he known of the massacre in France (St. Bartholomew's, or the powder treason of England)? He would have been seven times more epicure and atheist than he was" (*Essay on Unity in Religion*).

JAMES RICHARDSON.

SONS OF GOD.

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."—GENESIS vi. 1, 2.

DEARLY-BELOVED BRETHREN,—Several important inquiries are suggested by the profound text of Scripture which I have taken for the theme of my discourse. In the first place, who were the sons of God? How came it to pass that a bachelor deity had sons? Presuming they were sons by adoption, were they men or angels? Various learned theologians have given their views on these momentous questions, and, before passing my own judgment, these may be briefly adverted to.

The old Samaritan version of Genesis, supported by the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, represents the sons of God as really earthly high-born men, who took mates from women of the lower classes. It will be noticed the sons chose, leaving no choice to the daughters; the females were fair, but the males decidedly unfair. This view, which is powerfully supported by the fact that ancient chieftains and kings arrogated to themselves the title of God, is stigmatised as rank heresy by the bulk of theologians, who, in the good old days when angels were generally believed in, thought it nothing strange that they should take wives from among the children of men. The book of Enoch (which Jude appeals to as by the seventh from Adam), Philo, Josephus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and other early Christian fathers, say this is what happened. And among moderns Franz Delitzsch and August Dillman hold that no better explanation can be found. Dillman finds in the narrative a reminder of heathen mythology, and holds that the account has been drawn from ancient legends of the giants being half gods and half men. Do not the Sacred Scriptures declare there were giants in those days? Athenagoras (cxxiv.) says that the angels "fell into impure love of virgins, and were subjugated by the flesh"; while Justin (2 Apol. v.) declares they "were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons." It is rather curious that, whenever the angels did descend to earth to visit women, their visits were always followed by the birth of children, as in the case of Sarai, Manoah, and the Virgin Mary. It is true that Jesus says that in heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. But this is all the more reason they should marry when they visit earth, just as men of God do many things in Paris they could not think of in their own parishes. The sons of God, in other places of Scripture, are usually taken as meaning angels. The Bible angels, be it noted, were all male ones, though the only angels extant now-a-days are feminine. Jude, too, in his sixth verse, speaks of "angels who kept not their

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own principality, but left their proper habitation," which seems to glance at this legend in Genesis.

To settle the parlous question, whether these persons of divine taste for the daughters of men were themselves men or angels, there have been further controversies with regard to the offspring of the alliance. We have seen that, according to the early Christian father, Justin Martyr, they were demons; according to the Authorised Version, they were giants; and according to the Revised Version they were the Nephilim. Now, scholars trace the word "Nephilim" to the Hebrew *nephal*, which means a fallen, sinful being, analogous to *nephel*, which means an abortion or miscarriage. The Nephilim are also called Gibborim or Titans. The narrative goes on to state that the wickedness of man was great; so perhaps it was a case of miscegenation, in which, according to some doctors, all the bad points of both races come out in the offspring. Josephus says "the tradition is that these men did what resembled the acts of those the Greeks called Titans." Lenormant is more inclined to see the counterpart of the Hebrew myth in the Greek stories of the heroes, demi-gods, born of the love of a god for a mortal woman.

So much, dearly-beloved brethren, for the men of erudition, unenlightened, I fear, by the divine spirit, and relying rather on worldly learning than on the inspiration which comes from prayer and faith. To the man of God who has an understanding of things divine, our text presents no difficulty. Both parties are right, and both wrong. The sons of God are men, and they are angels too. They are the godly, divinely-appointed messengers or angels to men, and specially to women, whether known as priests, parsons, ministers, clericals, sky-pilots, black-beetles, parasites, or men of God, who in all ages have shown a partiality for the daughters of men, and mate with whomsoever they choose, quite irrespective of the choice of the female, who, however, is generally quite content to receive a visitation from the divine being. The sons of God were the Levites or priestly caste, who took tithes of all, and who have never been content with a tithe of the women; but when they see the daughters of men that they are fair, take them wives of all that they choose. They were, indeed, the Beni Elohim, for they were actually born to the Kadeshim, or holy women who visited the temples to be visited by the gods, and thus were they literally, not metaphorically, the sons of the gods, and, like chips of the old block, they followed the bad customs of their ancestry. Such, at least, is the interpretation granted to me after much prayer and pious meditation, and I believe it will commend itself to those acquainted with the sacred mysteries of the men of God in all ages.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

EARLY CHRISTIAN LEGENDS.

No grosser forgeries or more shameless prevarications have ever mystified the miracle gulls of this distracted planet than the Christian Evidence juggleries of the Patristic era.

> There are liars that lie for the fun of the thing,
> And liars that lie for a fee;

but they are eclipsed, very far eclipsed, by the *Mendax in majorem Christi Gloriam*, the professional liar for Jesus' sake.

"The fathers," says Lecky, "laid it down as a distinct proposition that pious frauds are justifiable, and even laudable; Paganism was to be combated, and therefore prophesies of Christ by Orpheus and the Sibyls were forged, lying wonders were multiplied, and ceaseless calumnies poured upon those who, like Julian, opposed the Church. This tendency triumphed wherever the supreme importance of these dogmas was held. Generation after generation it became more universal, till the very sense of truth and the very love of truth were blotted out from the minds of men."

Yet the prevaricators of the Middle Ages must have been past-masters of their art, indeed, if they could surpass the *Chef-Menteurs* of the early Christian era, the very era that evolved the "synoptic gospels" among a chimera brood of only slightly more preposterous spook-stories and biographies of the virgin-born anti-Naturalist. Nearly every larger colony of Christian converts had a legend manufactory of its own; hosts of distinction-greedy or vision-crazed fanatics vied in composing biographies of incredible saints and "acts" of imaginary apostles; there were eleven different "Acts of Barnabas," four crazy "Acts of St. John," numerous, different, and mutually contradictory Acts of St. Philip, of Peter and Paul, of St. Andreas and St. Bartholomew. There were seven supplementary Apocalypses (besides that of "Apocalyptic Jack," as a friend of mine calls the fever-patient of Patmos), there were Gospels of St. Thomas, a Gospel of St. James, a "Protevangelium of St. James," and countless biographies of St. Joseph and the Holy Virgin, most of them written in a style which the author of *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* would have eschewed as too extravagant, even for the purposes of plausible fiction. Some of these vagaries were, indeed, at once suppressed, as too apt to provoke the ridicule of the unconverted; but Professor Griesbach admits that the still extant MSS. of that sort contain not less than 76,842 variations—seventy-six thousand eight hundred and forty-two more or less irreconcilable passages. Griesbach and Baur agree that in the controversies of the second century no appeal is made to the apostolic originals of the "New Testament" Scriptures, and it is more than probable that the "gospels" which eventually obtained canonical authority had the same origin as the four "Acts of St. John," and were merely selected on account of the slightly less shocking extravagance of their miracle absurdities. The rest were gradually eliminated from the catalogues of theological literature, though not from the private libraries of miracle gluttons; and it is a suggestive fact that the name of the "Apocrypha" or "concealed" gospels was derived from the circumstance of their having been hidden from the sight of converts that had not yet quite escaped from the restraints of reason.

F. L. OSWALD.

A HINDU ON MISSIONS.

BABU K. CHAKRAVARTI, of Calcutta, India, has a word to say on Christian missions in his country: "The cases of conversion are becoming less and less every year, as the natives are understanding the worth of their own religion and the motive of the missionaries for advocating conversion. A case of conversion is looked upon as a calamity; a calamity to the members of the family from which a member is thus separated forever, and a calamity to the individual converted, who suddenly thinks himself free to eat, drink, and live as he pleases. I doubt very much if the converts improve any, socially or spiritually. They are obliged to marry among converts or very low classes, and thus degenerate very fast."

He says that, although the Hindus are poor, there are never such cases of starvation as among Christians. "In India one word only, 'atithi,' is sufficient for one to find temporary shelter and food in a fellow-man's house. The word is so much respected that, if there be not sufficient food in the house for the inmates and the stranger, the food there is is shared with him. Then, you see, there are numerous temples all over India where devotees and poor people find every day food and shelter. Our temples are not only places of worship, meditation, and prayer, but they are places where daily the poor are fed. We have no workhouses for the poor; no poor laws. Think what a national calamity it would be to introduce the Western system of living and religion, etc., in India. As regards Christian religion, I beg I may be permitted to say as I think, that it is a part of the ancient Hindu religion, enjoining love for mankind and forgiveness. Our religion, so to speak, is the complete religion. It not only improves morals, but developes the powers of the soul and inculcates love for mankind, spirits, and the spirit-world and God. It teaches how the body should be trained to ward off disease, and how temptations are to be withstood. If a tree is to be judged by its fruits, then Hindu religion is the best."

A JEWISH ADMISSION.—The patriarchal age of the Hebrews corresponds with the heroic age in Greece. As they are presented to us in Genesis, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons are not historical personages, but legendary heroes.—*C. G. Montefiore, Hibbert Lectures on "The Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews," p. 11; 1892.*

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ACID DROPS.

SABBATARIANISM is being carried to a monstrous length by the bigots of America. Justice Cornell, in New York, has just decided that it is illegal for any private person to have a guest to dinner on Sundays with wine on the table. Any such person, he held, was liable to be arrested and punished under a section of the Excise Law forbidding the giving away or selling of liquor on that day. It seems almost incredible that such a tyrannical law can exist in a "free" country. Yet it is said that the police are going to enforce it by a system of spies on private households.

The principle of this vile interference with personal freedom is of course religious. At this rate the very name of religion will soon stink in the nostrils of every person who values individual freedom. That is one compensation, anyhow.

While the Sabbatarians are invading the privacy of households in this fashion, another set of pietists are waging war against the "rational" dress for lady bicyclists. Brother James Catlin, a popular preacher in New Jersey, is crying "Woe!" to the ladies who commit the "abomination" of wearing bags and knickerbockers when wheeling. He says it is a direct contravention of the teaching of the Bible, and refers to the fifth verse of the twenty-fifth of Deuteronomy, where men and women are forbidden to wear each other's toggery.

What "cheek" some men have, especially when they get religion into them. If women told men what they should wear, the men would call them impudent hussies; and what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Women will never be able to live their own lives, free from male tyranny, until the Bible is swept away as a divine revelation.

It is amusing to read the *Methodist Times* article on why women should serve the Church as well as men. First of all, it makes the ingenious admission that the idea of the equality of the sexes only "dawned on the Christian Church" in the middle of the present century. In other words, the "infidels" were first in the field with this idea; and it only "dawned" on the Christian Church when it had made considerable headway. Could there be a better illustration of the truth that religion follows, and never leads, the progress of civilisation?

How was it that the Christian Church took eighteen hundred years to begin getting right on this subject? Well, in this way. "Christianity," says the *Methodist Times* man, "does not attempt to come into any unnecessary or premature collision with the existing customs and prejudices of society." Therefore it said nothing against male predominance, but just let the essential principles of Jesus Christ work themselves out, and that took nearly two thousand years. Dear, dear! What a frightfully slow thing this Christianity is!

Christianity is opposed to slavery, says the *Methodist Times* man, but "the New Testament does not say that in so many words." In fact, it seems to say the very opposite; and the writer admits that many persons still living can remember when "thousands of Methodist preachers in America argued that Christianity was in favor of slavery." Yes, and they did so with the Bible in their hands, and their arguments were unanswerable. The Methodist writer does not attempt to answer them. He talks like a Jesuit about "the reserve of Scripture on that subject." *Reserve*, indeed! Why the New Testament itself says, "*slaves obey your owners.*"

Similarly, with respect to women, Paul says, "I suffer not a woman to teach." He also declared that "the husband is the head of the wife." Any candid reader would take this to mean that the husband is the wife's "boss," and that is how the Christian Church and the Christian law have always taken it. But in these days of female emancipation the "boss" text must be twisted into meaning something very different; so, in defiance of the English language and common sense, the *Methodist Times* man asserts that the man's being the "head" of the woman just means that they are both equal. Merely this, and nothing more.

Erasmus complained that people in his time treated the Bible like a nose of wax. What would he say if he were living now? A Christian in a corner will make the Bible mean *anything*, even the exact opposite of what it says.

The following is from an article on "Scientific Treatment of Crime" in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of September 20: "Among the least argumentative but most interesting organic features that lie immediately beneath the organic criminal's tendency to crime is his love of, and tendency towards, religion. Ferri, an Italian expert, had not found, throughout a lifetime spent in prison work, a single murderer who was not religious. In converse with Deeming, the champion murderer of this decade, I found him possessed of the staunchest moral convictions, and prepared at a moment's notice to fight for his creed. The prison walls of England are scratched with a literature as pathetic as anything in our language. A criminal is a plebeian in society, and painfully conscious of his moral nakedness; and the first impulse of the naked is to hide himself, and the Rock of Ages offers the best shelter. Given a capacity for hearing—the rarest of gifts—there can be no cry that rises from a tired earth more sad than the 'We have erred and strayed from Thy ways' that lifts itself abashed each Sunday from prison chapels."

Owing to the Coombes' murder, there is an outcry against "Penny Dreadfuls," although the Judge, who looked through some of them, said they had not the remotest connection with the lad's crime. We see it stated in the newspapers that a pious member of Parliament, belonging to the legal profession, is going to introduce a Bill to check the circulation of such publications. "The line suggested," we see, "is an extension of the law as to blasphemous and indecent literature." This looks like a covert attack on the freedom of the press. In so far as it is aimed at Freethought literature, it will meet with our exposure and opposition. It appears to us that the "Penny Dreadful" parts of the Bible should be excised from the copies placed in the hands of the children in our public schools.

Messrs. Macmillan are publishing *The Modern Reader's Bible*. It appears that the Holy Ghost has not given proper attention to the printing of his, her, or its book, and Dr. Richard Moulton is going to see to the matter. We hope he will succeed in making the Holy Ghost intelligible.

Rev. Dr. Balgarnie, according to the *Sun*, is crusading against the nursery toy known as Noah's Ark. He thinks it is frequently the beginning of Atheism and infidelity. The "kids" compare the number and size of the animals with the dimensions of the ark; then they read Ingersoll, and go from bad to worse. The *Sun* says the reverend gentleman need not worry. But why not? Shall a toy send a child to hell? Perish the thought. Better burn it on the kitchen fire than let the "kids" burn for ever and ever in Old Nick's furnace.

The *Baillie*, of Glasgow (September 18), says: "Clergymen seem to be at their wits' end to know what to do to get their members to attend church. They have tried a revised version, have changed the hours of worship, introduced instrumental music, and some have added swimming clubs and football; but all to no purpose. Perhaps in their present mood they might sympathise with the Viennese movement to get rid of the Sabbath altogether, if only the Sustenation Fund were guaranteed." And this in godly Scotland! Ma conscience!

The *Sentinel*, of Washington, opposing the Sunday closing laws, says: "Our challenge to any minister, or any other person, to cite from the Bible a single word from the lips of Christ in favor of prohibition, and what the 'Christian citizens' blasphemously call 'the Christian Sunday,' remains still unanswered. If Christ should come among us now, how he would make those 'Christians' howl! How they would denounce him as a Sabbath breaker and wine bibber! How the name of Christ is being abused! And they all call themselves followers of Christ!"

The Spiritist *Two Worlds* declares: "We have never met with a spirit, who went away a rational, truth-loving individual, who, when he came back, declared that he had found Jesus, that his sins were forgiven, or that he had found in the spirit world that Christianity was true. We *have* held intercourse with many spirits who confess they were sadly misled, and have become disillusioned. They went away firmly believing that their sins were forgiven, that Jesus Christ would receive them, that he had 'atoned' for them, and they were going to dwell with God and the angels forever; they believed it; they waited 'on the other side' for the Judgment Day, they hoped, and prayed, and praised—and waited. Then came doubt, suspicion that they had been trained to believe a lie; gradually doubt and fear became a terrible certainty, and the process of 'breaking the fetters' had to be undergone." It would seem to be, on the Spiritists' own showing, best to be undeceived on this side the river Jordan.

A number of materialising "mejums" at Cassadaga camp have been exposed. One Donovan bolted after getting a lot of money from a wealthy lady for spirit pictures, the real painter of which owned up. Mrs. Aber, *alias* Jackman, and Hugh R. Moore also had to levant, leaving behind them masks, a dummy baby, luminous paint, and other evidence of their tricks.

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The Pueblo *Chieftain* says: "Within the cheerless walls of the city jail lies the materialised spirit of a being from the world beyond; at least, quite a number of people paid fifty cents each last night to see 'Dr.' H. H. Grabendike step forth from a cabinet at his materialising *séance* in Gold Dust block at D. and Union-avenue, clad in a flowing robe of cheese-cloth, in the *rôle* of a spirit, appearing for his own benefit, at the gain to him of one dollar for every two spectators. From the spirit embodiment he has fallen to a common prisoner, with a charge of obtaining money under false pretences."

F. W. Harrod, one of the Peculiar People, writes a long letter to the *Weekly Times and Echo* in defence of his sect. The "bone" belief, he says, is "a great mystery," but it is explained because the Peculiar People are members of Christ's body, "of his flesh and of his bones" (Eph. v. 30). Mr. Harrod defends not having doctors on scriptural grounds. 'The wrong of seeking after and trusting to the arm of flesh is shown us by Asa (2 Chronicles xvi. 12; Jeremiah xvii. 5). Asa sought not to the Lord, but to the physician, and he slept with his fathers; for the Lord said, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man. Those who trusted in Christ found a perfect cure." But he admits "there is a sickness unto death when prayers will be of no avail, for it is appointed unto men once to die."

After all, the Peculiar People are genuine believers. Moreover, Mr. Harrod assures us their forty-eight elders do not, from the highest to the lowest, receive one penny pay for preaching, all working six days for the support of the body, and devoting the Sabbath entirely to the worship of God. They are true Bible believers: while the people who condemn them pretend to beliefs which their lives show are pretences merely.

"Benjamin Bobbin," who writes the leading article in *Joyful News*, is probably a bit of a wag. Instance the following: "I am glad that Matthew has told us about the angel coming to tell Joseph that his sweetheart was as pure as he was, and that he had nought to lose by looking after her, and being to her as a husband. You see, he did as he was told, and took her with him when he started to Bethlehem. If only all good folk were as teachable as Joseph was, what a Church we should have." And this, which is almost as good, on the necessity for the eternal God having a portion cut off his person: "It would never have done for Jesus not to be circumcised. He would not have been allowed to enter the temple, and when he grew up no one would have listened to his teaching."

There is nothing the old women of the churches and chapels are prouder of than their efforts to promote decency by supplying the heathen inhabitants of torrid climes with coats and trousers by day, and blankets by night. The missionaries dilate on the benefits of civilisation, and traders follow them up. Yet Dr. Pritchard says these same coats, trousers, blankets, etc., are a sure but certain agency for the extinction of their wearers. They dress up in these proud garments for church or for procession, sit or walk perspiring in them, and when they get home throw them off in relief and lie in the cool breezes. Next they come to the missionary for medicine for a cough, unknown in their semi-nude state, and presently pulmonary disease has a hold on these victims of Christian civilisation. Thus does Providence, through the agency of missionary pennies, subtly work for the extirpation of the heathen.

The story of Christian aggression upon heathens, could it ever be written from the standpoint of the heathen, is nothing less than atrocious. The horrors enacted by Cortes in Mexico, and Pizarro in Peru, have been paralleled in the treatment of the natives of Africa and Australasia, and in every case the pretence of aggression has been the desire to spread the blessed gospel of peace.

Dr. W. E. Griffis says: "The Buddhist missionaries [to Japan] were not satisfied to bring in their train art, medicine, science, and improvements of all sorts, but they themselves became personal leaders in the work of civilising the country. They found out the necessity of better roads, and were largely instrumental in having them made. They dug wells, established ferries, and built bridges. They opened lines of communication; they stimulated traffic and the exchange of merchandise; they created the commerce between Japan and China, and they acted as peacemakers and mediators in the wars between the Japanese and Koreans." The Christian missionaries, on the other hand, brought strife; and, while the Buddhists were received with open arms, the Christians were expelled in the seventeenth century on account of their political intrigues.

The Rev. John McNeill, the Scotch Talmage, has fallen foul of Tennyson. He does not like his lines about honest doubt, or that other verse of his about "an infant crying in the night, and with no language but a cry"; which, said the man of God, a great many squeamish folk quoted oftener than they quoted any text in the Bible. "I used to think that was very fine poetry," he continued, "until I became a married man and had some experience of the baby's voice—(laughter)—and then I wanted some morning to meet Tennyson." These splendid witticisms were greeted with much laughter.

The Scotch Talmage does not like "honest doubt." He preached at Stockwell Free Chapel from the text: "But Thomas, one of the twelve called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." "Where in all the world could the fellow be? Ask yourself: Where is your Thomas? why is he not beside you? He is sitting at home in West Pollokshields reading his book. Think of the flimsy excuse for not coming to the place where Jesus is to reveal himself in resurrection brightness and gladness." We should fancy Thomas was much better occupied than in listening to the balderdash of the Rev. John McNeill, which, by the way, is well replied to in a letter to the *Glasgow Evening News*, signed "Doubter."

The Rev. Lindsay Young, of Portsmouth, is shocked to think that some clergymen actually go to the theatre. He has been still more shocked at the "awful sight" of little girls dancing in the street round a barrel-organ. Evidently the reverend gentleman is far too good for this world. Let us hope he will go to a better one before he is shocked into utter insanity. It would be to his advantage, and perhaps to other people's.

The British Association has been incidentally discussing missionaries. Professor Haddon actually referred to "those characteristic British exports, Beer and Bible." He thought it was quite right to extend our markets, but he thought we ought to do so "honestly, and not under the pretence of advancing religion and morality." Dr. H. O. Forbes did not want to depreciate the value of missionary enterprise, but he thought the "actual religious change" which took place in the missionaries' converts was "extremely small." This gentleman hit the nail clean upon the head.

"Thirsty Grindelwald" is the headline given to the following paragraph in the *Westminster Gazette*: "There seem to be at least two unregenerates attending the Grindelwald Conference. Professor Story, of Glasgow, writes from there to the *Scotsman*: 'I am content with the position, and grateful for the hospitality of Dr. Lunn, though the reason why I and others should travel from Scotland to this Swiss valley to discuss a reunion which we might have as well discussed at home has not yet revealed itself to my mind. Possibly it may be clear to Dr. Lindsay, of the Free, and Dr. Oliver, of the U. P. Kirk, who are here on the same errand. With one of these excellent gentlemen I have already reached a point of perfect sympathy in our common condemnation of the unkindness and impolicy of the managers of the Swiss hotels in keeping no beer on tap, and charging a franc and a half for a bottle which holds no more of a refresher than you can get—just as good—in a beer garden for twenty centimes.'"

How funny it is, to be sure, to read of a projected railway from Acre to Damascus, by way of the Plain of Jezreel, and across the Jordan through the Land of Bashan—where the famous Bible bulls used to roar. Had there been railways in that part of the world in ancient times, the Jews would not have given us a Bible stuffed with ridiculous miracles, nor would the Christian religion have stood a ghost of a chance of imposing upon the world.

Another singular choir strike is reported from Cossington, Leicestershire. The church choir had practised a processional hymn, and were about to begin it when the vicar vetoed the project. The choir thereupon struck, divested themselves of their surplices, and took their seats with the congregation, only a solitary chorister entering the choir stalls. The musical element is beginning to discover that it is the most attractive factor in church services, and it presumes accordingly.

The Rev. Walter Hind, who is charged with indecently assaulting little girls in the vicarage of All Saints, Highgate, is not the vicar thereof, who is the Rev. Edgar Smith, but merely the *locum tenens* put in charge of the parish while the vicar enjoys a holiday.

The Muslims of Bombay have petitioned the Government against enforced medical inspection before making the Hadj or pilgrimage to Mecca. They are entirely in favor of the other sanitary measures provided in the new Bill.

The Portsmouth *Evening News* devotes a paragraph to "Tom Paine," with special regard to the exhibition of Paine relics which is being organised by Mr. Moncure D. Conway. But why "Tom"? Surely it is high time to drop this

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vulgarity. The editor of the *Evening News* would hardly like us to call him Jack Brymer.

Our Portsmouth contemporary quotes some doggerel about Paine which has been resuscitated by that organ of "blood and culture," the *Globe*:—

> Tom Paine for the Devil is surely a match:
> In leaving Old England he cheated Jack Ketch;
> And then, to the wonder of all the beholders,
> He marched out of life with his head on his shoulders.

It is satisfactory to know that Paine was a match for the Devil, who is reputed to be marvellously clever. The Christians are *not* a match for the Devil. They are always begging God to deliver them from Old Nick. Paine was able to deliver himself.

With respect to the hanging which Paine escaped by fleeing to France, it is well to emphasise the fact that, if Jack Ketch *had* operated on Paine, it would have been for no crime. His sole offence was the authorship of the *Rights of Man*, which is now admitted to be one of the most important contributions to political philosophy.

By far the largest part of the cost of all the Voluntary schools in the kingdom is paid by the State. There were nearly two millions and a half of children in average attendance last year. The cost of each of these children was £1 18s. 2½d., and of this thirty-eight shillings 10s. 1d. came from the fee grant and 18s. 2d. from the annual examination grant. Here is £1 8s. 3d. direct from the State. The subscriptions come to 6s. 6d., and the children's pence, endowments, and other receipts make up the rest of the cost. These are averages taken over the whole of England.—*Daily News.*

The schools which thus derive five-sixths of their revenue from the State are not under public management. They are built and kept up for denominational purposes. The subscribers who contribute one-sixth of the cost have the whole control, and the public, who give five-sixths, have no part in the management. And now a further dip into the public purse is asked. Surely the time is approaching when a demand will be made for further public control of these falsely-entitled Voluntary schools.

Dr. Buckley, of the *Christian Advocate* (New York), has the honor to lead the way with a Christian lie about Huxley. He puts it tentatively, but no doubt it will soon reach the dignity of a full-grown assertion. His words are: "Huxley, it is said, wished, a few days before his death, to be buried with the service of the Church of England." Who said this, Dr. Buckley, before you, and how comes it to be said in New York when it is not said in England?

Mr. W. Allen, M.P., presiding over a meeting of the Primitive Methodists at Newcastle, urged them to stick to every word and letter of the old book, which he swallows *in toto* from Genesis to Revelation. He observed: "He did not think there was anything he believed in so firmly as in the Bible. He was one of those who believed that the spirit of God influenced the men who wrote the Holy Scriptures; that it influenced them to pen them word by word, passage by passage. He reminded them of the words in the last chapter of Revelation: 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life,' and said he believed that no pledge given by Jehovah to the human race would be more strictly carried out to the letter than that one, for there could be nothing so bad for Christianity—no day could be so dark for the Christian Church—as that day when her faith in the Scriptures became shaken.

During the past century the London Missionary Society has received no less than £5,618,123 in subscriptions and legacies. Yet the Bishop of Rochester has stated that South London is no longer Christian.

"Uncle Benjamin" writes on the "Sons of God," and M. Claremont Ganneau has suggested that Kadesh Ruach, the holy spirit that brooded over the water, was originally a feminine consort of deity, while St. Anna is addressed in a Catholic hymn as "grandmother of the eternal God." Yet another relation is turned up by a correspondent of the *Spectator*, who cites the following as an inscription in the parish church of St. Helier, Jersey: "To the glory of God, and in memory of George Frederick de Carteret *his cousin*, who perished by drowning, and lies interred in the Cathedral Church, Galway, Ireland, this window is given by Edward Charles Malet de Carteret, Seigneur de St. Ouen, A.D. MCCCLXVII."

According to the *Liberator*, more than three-fifths of the members of the new House of Commons are members of the Church of England—which is a bad prospect for Disestablishment. The Methodists, who crowed so much before the elections, have thirty-eight members all told. There are thirty-four Presbyterians, twenty-three Congregationalists, three Baptists, six Quakers, eleven Unitarians, and seven Jews. The number of Freethinkers is not stated, but there are known to be several, though they may object to be ticketed.

Napoleon's religion was the subject of a recent article in our columns by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, who pointed out that this extraordinary man had no particular religious belief of his own. A corroboration of this view appears in the *Daily Chronicle* review of *Napoleon's Last Voyages*. During his voyage to St. Helena the great victor-victim talked a good deal with the English chaplain, but "he did not at all impress Mr. Glover that he had any religious sympathies." "Every religion," Mr. Glover said, "is alike to him, and did I believe there existed such a being as an Atheist, I should say Buonaparte is that being."

After this it is amusing to read the vaporings of Mr. Alfred Thomas, M.P., in a chapel at Pontypridd. This gentleman—for we suppose he passes as such in Wales—said he believed with Mr. Gladstone that infidelity would be very little heard of by the end of the present century. Infidelity, however, would not die out altogether, for "as long as there were fools on earth infidelity would remain." Mr. Thomas, therefore, regards "infidels" as "fools." We know one or two of these "fools" who would give him an awful dressing on any public platform where he had the courage to maintain his "wisdom" in debate.

Joseph Hutchinson, a Belfast dyer, was dying for the last time, preparatory to his funeral; and in this extremity he bethought him that it would be nice to have in a priest, who might administer the last sacraments, and give him a good send off to the beautiful land above. But the landlord of the house wherein he lodged was a rabid Orangeman, who rushed in while the priest was performing, and tried to argue the matter with a poker. Finally, the priest had to be escorted home by the police, and Joseph Hutchinson died almost in the midst of the rumpus. This story will enable everyone to see the blessings of religion. There is nothing like it for bringing peace and comfort to the dying.

Religion is a source of harmony and goodwill at Vienna just now. A Christian killed a poor old inoffensive Jew in a public street, and the heroic action was loudly applauded by a large meeting of the hero's fellow religionists.

Christianity professes to be a *spiritual* agency, but when a Christian man of God takes up the subject of social reform the very first thing he does is to send for the policeman. At Grimsby, for instance, the Nonconformist Ministers' Association is "deeply impressed with the great extent to which gambling evidently prevails in the town." So far so good. But what remedy do these Nonconformist ministers apply to the evil? Their proper business is to preach against it and show its immorality. That is slow work, however, and troublesome work too; for a very good subscriber to the chapel funds may be guilty of making a bet now and then, and it would hardly do to rebuke him too pointedly. So the Nonconformist ministers "urge upon the Council to put into force its powers to suppress this vice." Which is all very well, in its way; but if the police are to look after morality, what are the ministers paid for?

Rabbi Schindler, of Boston, was recently asked if Jonah was really swallowed by a whale. "Ah," said the rabbi, with his agreeable accent, "I don't know anything about Chonah, and I don't know anything about the whale—it's all the same as *Drilby*—it's a noffel."

Helen Williams edits a spiritist journal, called *Freedom*, at Boston. On one side it has a quotation from R. W. Emerson; on the other, one from Helen Williams. No doubt the spirit of Emerson has called to thank her for the honor conferred.

Patrick Gleeson, a clergyman, aged forty-six, and therefore old enough to know better, was charged at the Lambeth Police Court with being found drunk and incapable in Atlantic-road, Brixton. The policeman found him lying helplessly in the road with his face cut. In consideration of the cut (probably) the magistrate ordered him to pay the doctor's fee. This case was reported on Monday. On Tuesday another London clergyman was charged with indecent conduct, and committed for trial.

The London rectors attended the meeting called to form a Curates' Union. The Rev. C. E. Curtis, of St. Paul's, Haggerston, and the Rev. T. W. Goodman, of St. Mary's, Haggerston, strongly denounced the proposal, and supported an amendment to that effect. The proposal was outvoted. This is a good deal like employers deciding that employees have no right to combine. But it is thought that the milk-sop curate will stand anything.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 29, Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C.: 7.30, "Clinging to Christ."

October 6, Wood Green.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—September 29, Camberwell. October 6 and 13, Foresters' Hall, London; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. November 17, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. Martin.—Professor Fiske's reply to Joseph Cook was republished in pamphlet form a dozen years ago. Perhaps you can obtain a copy from Mr. Forder.

Le Diable.—Will be acknowledged next week.

R. Wilson.—Thanks. See paragraph.

H. J. Barker.—You are early with "Shilling Week" subscription. Acknowledgment next week. Glad to have your warm approval. Tell your veteran friend that we have nothing to do with Sir William Harcourt as a Liberal leader. We complain that he lied about us most basely in the House of Commons. Surely your veteran friend does not think the reproof of a liar is worse than his lie.

London Branch Secretaries must send us their Lecture Notices for next week's number.

W. Gilmour.—Inserted.

J. Wood.—See "Sugar Plums."

H. Thompson.—Thanks for report of Cardinal Vaughan's sermon, which we have made the subject of our first leader. Thanks also for the sight of your friend's interesting letter. Glad to hear you both appreciate "the good the *Freethinker* is doing."

G. J. Warren.—We are obliged to you for your trouble in the matter, which is having our best attention.

R. Green.—Your letter is most encouraging. We were happy to see you and your daughter at Mr. Putnam's farewell lecture. Your donation is transferred to the Special Lecture Fund.

H. Snell.—Sorry to have missed you during your brief visit to London. Hope to see you before long.

J. M.—Thanks. Acknowledgment next week in full list of subscriptions.

H. W. Jones.—Much pleased to hear of the success of Mr. Cohen's lectures at Blackburn. We hope his next visit in December will be still more encouraging. Mr. Foote will be happy to lecture for you on a Sunday if you can secure a decent hall. He is in good health, and feels no impairment of what you call his "old fighting form."

W. Strassheim.—(1) The South Shields engagement was cancelled, and the announcement removed from the *Freethinker*. We are sorry that the alteration was not noticed by some Newcastle friends, but no engagement was broken, as you appear to imagine. (2) Glad to hear that Mr. Parris made such a good impression. (3) We cannot advise you to invite the other person you mention to lecture at Newcastle. (4) Thanks for cutting.

Pyrites.—The poem shall appear. Mr. Foote will be glad to hear from the Belfast Branch—or, if the Branch prefers inaction, from any individual members—what hall is available for Freethought lectures on a Sunday.

Hugh Lloyd.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder for execution. See "Acid Drops" re cutting.

A. Lemaire.—Pleased to hear you have been introduced to the *Freethinker*. Perhaps if you continue to read it you may see reason to change your opinions. Whether the Bible does or does not teach the doctrine of Atonement is properly a question for Christians to settle amongst themselves. We attack the doctrine because it holds the field, and you admit that we have "ably shown its fallacy and injustice."

T. E. Perkins reminds us that there was a case of bigoted intolerance on the part of Coroner Baxter in 1890, in connection with an inquest on the body of Mrs. Simson. Coroner Baxter was censured in the public press, a special leaderette appearing in the *Daily Chronicle*.

J. Hudson.—Thanks. See paragraph.

A. J. Marriott.—See our comment. It behoves us to be always vigilant.

C. Drane.—Always pleased to hear from you.

W. Wiggins.—Glad to hear you have derived so much profit from reading the *Freethinker*. Thanks for the cutting.

G. Hardie.—Surely you mistake us. We have no quarrel with Mr. Keir Hardie as a Socialist. Our complaint is, that he constantly mixes up his peculiar Christianity with labor questions. It would be reckoned ill taste if a Secularist labor leader were always introducing his Freethought on social and political platforms. Is it not equal ill taste on the part of Mr. Keir Hardie to be always introducing his religion? We are sorry to hurt anyone's "feelings," but public men are necessarily open to public criticism. With respect to George Macdonald's opinion of Keir Hardie, it was quoted in the *Freethinker* simply as an item of news. We neither approved nor condemned.

R. S. Pengelly.—Pleased at any time to receive your cuttings.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—We think you have argued the question ably. You must expect the devices and evasions you complain of if you discuss with Christians. Mr. Foote is seeing through the press a large pamphlet on *Bear and Bible*. It will be published in a week or so, and will probably be of considerable assistance to controversialists like yourself.

J. B.—Your subscription will be acknowledged next week. See "Acid Drops."

Papers Received.—Baillie—Glasgow Evening News—New York Public Opinion—Post—Staffordshire Sentinel—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Crescent—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Daily News—Two Worlds—Torch—Echo—Glasgow Evening Citizen—Isle of Man Times—Manx Sun—Introduction—Kirkintilloch Herald—Truthseeker—Liberator—Melbourne Herald—Dublin Saturday Herald—Secular Thought—Chicago Chronicle—Cumberauld Press.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SHILLING WEEK.

With the unanimous concurrence of the National Secular Society's Executive, I am taking personal charge of the organisation of our party's special propaganda. It is my intention to utilise the services of our best lecturers for the spread of our principles, not only in London, but in all parts of the country. Week-night lectures, under my scheme, are already being arranged for by Messrs. Watts and Cohen. The local Freethinkers will bear the local expenses of such lectures, with the assistance of a collection; and I will undertake to pay the lecturer. Sunday lectures, in special localities, where the cause is still weak, will be arranged for on the same conditions, or otherwise, if the resources placed at my disposal are adequate.

I believe it is possible through this scheme, if it is properly supported, to carry Freethought into every fair-sized town in Great Britain, and perhaps into some of the principal towns in Ireland.

Already I have taken the full financial responsibility of the lectures at Milton Hall, St. James's Hall, and the Foresters' Hall, in London; and I propose to organise similar propagandist efforts in other parts of our mighty metropolis, whose five millions of people offer a splendid field for Freethought missionary enterprise.

Wherever it is possible I intend to work this scheme in conjunction with the N.S.S. Branches. But in a few large towns I have my eye upon, if the Branches do not wake up, I shall have to engage halls and arrange for lectures independently.

This scheme is a bold one, and its only chance of success, in the present condition of affairs, lies in the personal supervision and control which I am prepared to give it.

To raise the means for carrying it into effect, I appeal to the thousands of readers of the *Freethinker*, whether they are members of the National Secular Society or not. Three-fourths of them can do *something*, and a percentage of them can do *a good deal*. I ask them all to do their very best.

The first week in October is set aside as "Shilling Week." During that period I ask all who desire to aid in sending the torch of Freethought into the cities and towns of this kingdom, to forward me one or more shillings. Every shilling I receive will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

We have seen nearly a hundred thousand shillings obtained for a popular cricketer. Surely a few thousand shillings can be raised for Freethought.

The Salvation Army has just had its "Self-Denial Week." Last year it raised nearly £50,000 in this way. Our party is not as large as the Salvation Army, but it is by no means insignificant, and I hope it will make this "Shilling Week" a satisfactory success.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

A CAPITAL audience assembled in the Foresters' Hall last Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Bible or No Bible in the Public Schools." His address was closely followed and applauded with marked enthusiasm. This evening (September 29) Mr. Foote lectures again from the same platform, his subject being "Clinging to Christ."

Admission tickets for the Foresters' Hall meetings are no longer necessary. The admission now is entirely free to all parts of the house, but a silver collection is expected in the body of the hall and a copper collection in the gallery. Freethinkers should do their utmost to induce their more orthodox friends to attend these meetings. We should like to see the hall, which is a large one, packed from floor to ceiling on the occasion of Mr. Foote's second lecture, and, if possible, afterwards.

Mr. Watts lectures at Camberwell this evening (Sept. 29) on "The Bible and Civilisation." This is the last occasion for some time that South London friends will have an opportunity of hearing our eloquent colleague.

The London *Echo* has made ample amends for inserting a letter by A. Le Lievre, in which Mr. Foote was stated to have been imprisoned for obscenity. Mr. J. M. Wheeler was so indignant at this detestable falsehood that he paid a visit to the *Echo* office with a copy of Mr. Foote's trial in his hand. Other correspondents protested against the slander, particularly Mr. F. Jackson, to whose letter the *Echo* appended the following note:—"It is only right to say that Mr. A. Le Lievre's statement that Mr. Foote 'had twelve months' imprisonment for publishing obscene caricatures' was false and calumnious, and that Mr. A. Le Lievre has forfeited his claim to again occupy our space."

The Wood Green Branch has engaged the Masonic Hall in High-street for a course of four Sunday evening lectures. Mr. Foote has consented to give the opening address on October 6, his subject being "Life, Death, and After." Money cannot be taken at the door, and therefore the tickets—which are a shilling, sixpence, and threepence—should be secured beforehand. They can be obtained of Mr. John Wood, 71 Gladstone-avenue, Wood Green, N. Mr. Foote is to be followed by Messrs. Parris and Forder.

Mr. F. Thompson, one of the best of our Wood Green workers, desires to have his child named by Mr. Foote on this occasion. This ceremony is always interesting to ladies, and there should be a good attendance of the fair sex that evening.

The Annual Convention of the Canadian Secular Union was held at Toronto on September 7 and 8. Captain R. C. Adams, the retiring president, was unable to be present, but sent a capital address. Mr. Allen Pringle was elected president, Mr. J. S. Ellis secretary, and Mr. A. Earsman treasurer. Among the resolutions passed by the Convention was the following: "Resolved, 'That this Union desires to place on record its high appreciation of the grand efforts being made in England by Mr. G. W. Foote and Mr. Charles Watts to further the cause of freedom of opinion and freedom of speech, and trusts the Freethinkers and Secularists of England will amply sustain them in their work.'"

It was also resolved to issue propagandist literature to influence the French Canadians. There is a French translation of the *Age of Reason*, and the works of Ingersoll are also to be translated into French.

We hope the best efforts of our Canadian brethren will be given to sustaining *Secular Thought*. Under the able editorship of Mr. J. S. Ellis it is maintaining a gallant fight. To us *Secular Thought* is a weekly sign that Secularism in Canada commands the support of intelligent and devoted men, of whose co-operation in Freethought work we are proud.

Members and friends should attend the Battersea Branch quarterly tea and soirée to-day (Sunday, September 29). Tickets are sixpence each, and can be obtained at the hall or at the outdoor meeting. Ex-members and strangers are particularly invited.

The Newcastle *Evening News* comments on the fact that England gets into a fever over Mohammedan outrages on Christians, but takes no notice of Christian outrages on Mohammedans. "Islam," the writer says, "has been from the beginning, and is still, incomparably less disposed to persecution than has been Christianity." He continues: "His greatest enemies allow that the Turk has never been a religious persecutor. When the Turks invaded Asia Minor and Europe they left with few exceptions the Christians in full possession of their worship, their priests, their monasteries, and their churches, and that, too, at a time when, in the name of Christ, Papal bulls ordered the massacre of heretics, and when the Reformers in certain parts of Europe were thirsting for the blood of the Mother Church, and calling on the populace to pull down the rookeries (Catholic churches) that the rooks might follow. Even now, when Protestant processions are forbidden in Catholic France, Catholic processions may circulate without let or hindrance through Constantinople. On such occasions the streets of Pera and Galata are hung with white, and Turkish soldiers present arms on the raising of the Host."

WHAT NOBODY KNOWS.

WHERE or when Christianity began.
Who was Jesus Christ, or when he lived.
Who wrote the Gospels, or any other part of the New Testament.
What the New Testament is—whether all that is in it ought to be there, or whether all that is out should be excluded.
Who made the New Testament.
When the New Testament was put together.
Where the New Testament was put together.
Who the Apostles were.
What became of Gabriel the angel.
What became of Joseph, Mary's easy-going spouse.
What became of Mary.
What became of Jesus.
What became of the shepherds that visited Christ's cradle.
What became of the "wise men" who came from the east.
What became of the star that misguided them.
What became of the dove that descended upon Jesus.
What became of the Holy Ghost who visited Mary.
What became of the Devil who tempted Jesus.
What became of the multitudes of devils who were expelled by Jesus and his agents.
What became of Simon the Cyrenian.
What became of Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, and the rest of the women who figure so prominently in the Gospels.
What became of Lazarus, and of others who rose at the time of Christ's resurrection.
How those devils fared which entered the pigs and frightened them into the sea, where they were drowned.
Who founded the Church of Rome, or who were the first bishops of it.
What the first Christians believed.
What the first Christians thought of Jesus.
Whether the first Christians had a Jesus or a Christ.
Whether a Christ gave rise to the sect, or the name of the sect suggested the supposed Christ as its founder.
What became of Pontius Pilate.
What became of Caiaphas or Annas.
What became of Joseph of Arimathæa.
What became of the seventy disciples Jesus sent out, etc.
What became of the five hundred persons who are said to have seen Jesus after his resurrection.
What became of any one of all the multitudes Jesus fed, cured, etc.
Why none of those benefited by Jesus ever took the trouble to preach his gospel and advertise his healing power.
Why none of them turned up to speak a word for him at his trial.
Who compiled the creeds.
Who compiled the old litanies, liturgies, chants, etc.
Who or what God was.
What the trinity in unity was.
What became of God or the trinity, etc.
Where to find such a mass of useless, lying, imbecile literary rubbish as in the Bible and religious books.

I have just flung the above together as they occurred to me with my pen in hand. Arrangement and elaboration are unnecessary. Let the reader turn each clause into a question; and there is no man in the world that can give any reasonable answer.

Had they ever been answered satisfactorily, I never should have required to put them, for they would have received such answers as would content all honest inquirers many centuries ago.

I renounced Christianity because it had no evidences and was manifestly untrue. I am now twenty-two or twenty-three years older, and I find the leading scholars in the Churches are now pretty much of my opinion, although the sentiments of many will revolt from what I say.

That doesn't matter. We Freethinkers have conquered their intellect; their emotions will follow.

JOSEPH SYMES.

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (August 17).

SATURDAY afternoon I visit some of the notable places of Birmingham—the library, art gallery, the Bull Ring, the market, the Arcades, the town hall, etc. In the evening I call upon Mr. Daniel Baker, who for years has been one of the main supporters of Freethought in Birmingham, and has given much of his wealth to aid the work, especially when Mr. Watts labored here, with much success, amidst many discouragements, keeping the cause vigorously at the front. Mr. Baker is over eighty years old now, but the "sweep of years" does not destroy his hope for humanity, nor his devotion to truth. I was pleased, too, to meet his daughter. His wife is now upon a sick bed. Also here, for the first time, I met George Jacob Holyoake, who for sixty years has been a Freethought agitator. He is over eighty years of age, but the intellectual fire is not diminished. He is keen, alert, ready to lend a hand. To lend a hand has, in fact, been one of the great purposes of his life. Perhaps no man understands better than does Mr. Holyoake the science of co-operation, not as a religionist, but as a man of the world. In youth he suffered martyrdom on account of his outspoken Atheism, and he stands firmly to-day by the principles he then enunciated. He does not indulge in any sentimentalities of religion. He does not believe in them. He makes no compromise with Christianity. He has done what he could to prevent the priest from assuming the mastership of the co-operative movement. And he has succeeded. So far as I can discover, the religious element has been kept out of this co-operative movement in England much more than in America. The curse of labor reform in our country is, that priests are allowed to run it. Mr. Holyoake saw this danger, and guarded against it over forty years ago. In all his associations with the reform party he has not denied his Atheism. I should judge that Mr. Holyoake was a good deal like our Horace Seaver. He has the gift of pertinacity and of resoluteness. If he makes up his mind to a thing, he stands by it, and all the opposition in the world would not induce him to change. If he makes up his mind to live to be a hundred years old, I guess he will do it. He came to Birmingham on purpose to be present and preside at my lectures, which afforded me great gratification, for, knowing Mr. Holyoake by reputation for so many years, I desired to see him face to face, and to stand together with him in the ranks of Freethought.

The friends at Birmingham did the best they could; but it rained on Sunday, and the audiences were not large. It cleared off somewhat in the evening, so that at the closing lecture there was nearly a hall full. I gave three lectures. Mr. Holyoake presided at the morning meeting. He said that, as Birmingham was his native place, he wanted to meet the representative of American Freethought and give him a welcome to Birmingham. The short address of Mr. Holyoake was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and it was certainly a stimulation to my own effort; and if it did storm outside, there was sunshine within. I lectured on "The Bible and Modern Thought." In the afternoon Mr. Ridgway presided. I gave my lecture on "Christ and the Nineteenth Century." The method of the lecture was to accept the validity of the orthodox record, the four gospels, and then to discover what value, if any, Jesus was to the nineteenth century. I demonstrated from the record that Jesus was ignorant, superstitious, fanatical, immoral, and utterly unworthy of the intellectual respect of the present times. Of course my Christian critics after the debate quoted Mill and Renan. I answered that neither Mill nor Renan was an authority in Freethought, and that on this point I considered them entirely unhistoric and unscientific. It is nonsense for any man to-day to talk of the commanding excellence of Jesus. It is false whoever utters it, be he Renan, or Mill, or any of the most illustrious of Freethinkers. The moral excellence of Jesus is one of the humbugs of the ages, and ought to be demolished with all the force of truth and intellectual sincerity. One man tried to come at me with the miracle of the resurrection, and wanted to know what became of the body of Jesus after it disappeared from the tomb. I answered that the body of Jesus, whatever became of it, had nothing to do with the question at issue, which was the moral character of Jesus as given in the gospels, which I had demonstrated, according to the gospels themselves, to be valueless and opposed to the progress of to-day. My opponent sat down. He could not stand up for the Jesus of the gospels; only for an imaginary Jesus. There is not a Christian to-day who obeys, or tries to obey, the teachings of Jesus. The discussion was somewhat animated. In the evening I lectured on "Christianity and Woman." There was some debate after this, wandering, as usual, all over the universe, and scarcely touching the points I made. One critic inquired if I did not think that Miss Willard and Lady Somerset were doing a great deal for the temperance cause. I answered, "No; that they rather had injured the rational temperance movement by their foolish and tyrannical methods; that the true method of temperance was science and education, and not coercion and sentimental gush. Of all methods of temperance that of prohibition is the most orthodox, despotic, and unsuccessful."

Mr. Holyoake closed the evening with a short address; and really, as my friends say, he was never in better form. He was animated by the occasion, and the audience responded to his keen thrusts with hearty appreciation. A vote of thanks was given him by the audience.

On the platform also with Mr. Holyoake was another veteran and well-known Freethinker, Mr. Charles C. Cattell, a broad-browed man, grey with years, who looks as if he could strike many a strong blow for mental emancipation. I was glad to meet one whose writings I had read with so much profit—writings clear, logical, and to the point. There is a young and vigorous element at Birmingham, but it is seldom that four such veterans gather on one occasion as George Jacob Holyoake, Charles C. Cattell, Daniel Baker, and Joseph H. Ridgway. All honor to those who have made it easier for our footsteps to press forward in the thorny pathway of reform. After the lecture a few of us met at the house of Mr. C. H. Cattell, and enjoyed a social union for an hour or so. Mrs. C. H. Cattell is the daughter of Charles Watts, as is also Mrs. Courtis, who was present. We all wished that Charles Watts was with us on this occasion, with President Taylor and other jovial spirits.

Thus the campaign at Birmingham closed with brightness and cheer. I have made friends whom I shall remember always. Among the workers here, besides those already mentioned, are Robert Meredith, David Thomas Bullows, S. Armfield (who made the pilgrim welcome to his home), W. T. Pitt, J. H. Bridges, Mr. Steptoe, Mr. J. Terry, etc. Mrs. Armfield and Miss Lilly Pitt are also active in the ranks, with other ladies who are not afraid to be counted as Freethinkers. There have been many ups and downs for the cause at Birmingham, but there is still a good chance of winning the day, despite apathy, boycott, and various other things too numerous to mention that are always in the path of reform. In a city like Birmingham, where so many elements are in play, and where there are so many quasi-reforms and half-movements, the straight-out and pioneer rank cannot always advance. There will be drawbacks, but while the veterans pass off the stage I am sure that youth will take their place with undiminished fire, and with wider advantages for action.

With Birmingham comes Shakespeare, for Stratford-on-Avon is only a few miles distant, and with choice friends I spend a whole day in that land of poesy, and a thousand thoughts throng into my mind.

Shakespeare's day! What a day it was—of joy, of roses, of bloom and splendor; a day when man and nature blend in perfect poesy. The home of Shakespeare, the river Avon, the green fields, the beautiful church, the embowering groves, the thousand flowers, make a world of delight; the past and the present mingling in glory and romance. What memories illuminate the brain at the magic word "Shakespeare"! What a long procession moves athwart the mind; what pomp, what variety, what passion, what power! And here is the land of his birth. Here he gathered the treasures of nature, here he caught the music of the birds and plucked the flowers, here he felt the flame of love and the grand ambition of youth, and here, after the triumphs of an eventful life, he found the repose of death. How the heart thrills and the imagination kindles at Stratford-on-Avon! Scott, Burns, Byron, and then Shakespeare, who comprehends them all in the amplitude of his genius, and enriches them and us so that poetry and art hereafter are a common heritage, like the earth and sun and sky.

I did not come a solitary pilgrim to this memorable shrine. Not simply the dead, but the living world itself, was round about my pathway, as variable as the pages of Shakespeare himself, and the comedy of life softened and glorified its tragedy. Like Chaucer's company, we found as much wisdom in play as in labor itself, and certainly no one can appreciate Shakespeare who does not see the joy of life as well as its shadows.

I must describe the companions of my delightful journey, who added the lustre of Freethought to the reminiscences of the poetic past.

Robert Taylor is the captain of the Birmingham host, and, after being twenty-three years in the military service of his country, is fully capable for the position. He has travelled over a good part of the Old World, and expects eventually to see the New. He is a jolly story-teller. He has gathered his materials from many a camp-fire and curious adventure, and there is not a subject he cannot illuminate with some telling anecdote. James Partridge, the secretary, is a quiet and persevering man, and does the hard and silent work without which there is no public success. W. T. Pitt, the treasurer, has the knack of paying all the bills, which makes the passage of life a free-and-easy one to the Secular Pilgrim. Joseph H. Ridgway, vice-president of the Society, I have already referred to as a stalwart veteran. Mr. Stephen Armfield was ordained to preach the gospel according to Methodism, but found in Freethought and

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hard work a better field for humanity and truth. David Thomas Bullows is the singer of our party, who puts the music in where it does the most good, and adds to the festivity and romance of the occasion; and Charles Henry Cattell joins us with Freddie Cattell, the grandson of Charles Watts, so that my famous American co-worker has the dignity of a grandsire, which, of course, he carries with vigorous ease. This was a typical English party, proud of their own land, yet cosmopolitan in spirit, literary, poetical, musical, historical, anecdotal, reminiscent, and prophetic; so there was plenty of Promethean fire all along the way.

We left Birmingham at 9.40 in the morning, and it was about 11 o'clock a.m. when we rolled into the station at Stratford-on-Avon. Stratford has a population of about 10,000. It is one of the cleanest and handsomest towns in England at the present time. It looks like a parlor. It has quite an aspect of modern magnificence. The old parts of the town are not apparent without a searching look. Ignatius Donnelly, the anti-Shakespearean critic, says that Stratford was a "dirty little town." I can see no evidence of this. All towns were dirty three centuries ago to what they are now. London was simply horrible. Stratford was no worse than its neighbors. It was evidently a town of some importance, the centre of business for an extensive agricultural country, where crowds would gather on market days, and a bright boy would have a chance to see a vast deal of human nature. It was not a country place that Shakespeare lived in, but a bustling trading-point, which would afford much stimulation and knowledge to a youthful genius. Donnelly is very much out of the way when he calls Stratford a "dirty little town" in order to belittle Shakespeare. At the time in which Shakespeare lived Stratford might be called a leading provincial town, and of this town Shakespeare's father was the chief magistrate, and must have been a man of energy and ability. Stratford was not a stagnant village. Shakespeare was born amidst active and superior elements of English life.

The first thing to attract our attention was the handsome American monument, which is gratifying as the expression of our national feeling for England's greatest bard. They say that more Americans visit Stratford every year than Englishmen. It appears that every American tourist makes it a point to see Shakespeare's birthplace without fail.

But I cannot linger at the monument. It is too modern. I want to get back to the old times—to the very hearthstone of Shakespeare; and here, in a little while, I stand beneath the very roof under which he was born. The big old-fashioned fireplace is before me. The iron dogs are gone, but the very stones are there where the fire glowed, and on the side are the stone seats under the chimney, where, I suppose, little Willie must have sat when the embers were low and it was cold. At any rate, I sat myself down on these snug stone seats where Shakespeare might have toasted his shins. This was in the kitchen with its stone floor. Overhead is the room where Shakespeare was born; not much of a room now, but more royal than the court of any prince. I should think about a million names were scribbled all over the walls and the window-panes; among them, by careful observation, might be discerned Scott's, Byron's, Carlyle's, Dickens's, Thackeray's, etc.; but it is almost impossible to distinguish. In another room opposite is a portrait of Shakespeare, probably the finest extant. To my mind, it is certainly a veritable portrait, and conveys a noble impression of the poet. This portrait was discovered a few years ago among some old relics. It had a thick, heavy beard upon it. It was found, however, that this beard did not belong to the original picture, and, being carefully cleaned off, a new face appears—the face of Shakespeare himself. It is constantly guarded, being framed in a fireproof iron safe, which is locked every night. It is a priceless treasure. I do not like the ordinary pictures of Shakespeare. They convey no impression of genius or character. One might think Shakespeare was only a comfortable burgher, looking at these pictures. It is a heavy, unintellectual face that confronts us, in which there seems to be no fine play of wit and cheer. But in this portrait now hung upon the walls of Shakespeare's home, and of which I believe there is no copy elsewhere, we see the real man, as described by Ben Jonson—"honest, brave, open, free, gentle, and witty." Here we see the lips that the muses might have kissed; the eyes where genius makes the world luminous, and the dome-like forehead. In connection with this portrait I am reminded of the Kesselstadt mask, which I think is the most wonderful and pathetic expression of Shakespeare's face ever given. Here we see the grandeur, the delicacy, the subtlety, the mobility of the poet-genius. Thus in the shadow of death, rather than in the fleshly lineaments of life, are revealed the depths and intensities of Shakespeare's inner being.

I cannot describe the many relics and curiosities, pictures, books, manuscripts, etc., now gathered within the poet's birthplace. Amidst the mingling rain and sunshine we journey to Shottery, about three miles from Shakespeare's early home. Here, on a bit of rising ground, is Ann Hathaway's cottage, surrounded by an old garden, in which are many of the Shakespearean flowers. The cottage has been divided into three portions. The central portion is a fairly large room, with quaint chimney corner. There is an old settle with high back, and the window, under which Shakespeare might have done his courting in the "good old days." Upstairs is a beautiful carved bedstead, which shows the care and workmanship lavished on furniture in the Middle Ages. This bedstead existed in the Hathaway house before the time of our poet. An old woman has charge of the house, a descendant of the Hathaways. She is eighty-three years old, and is a sprightly and chipper old lady. She can talk the day long. She is full of the old days, of her great-great-grandfather, and great-great-grandaunt, etc. It was a pleasure to listen to her traditions. I liked the cottage and its surroundings. The modern look has not yet appeared as in bustling Stratford. The glamor of the old days is almost undisturbed. The garden has an ancient flavor. The flowers are in wild profusion, and we are permitted the blessed privilege of plucking a few. At Shakespeare's birthplace there is a garden in which are blooming, it is said, all the flowers spoken of in Shakespeare's drama; but the guardians will not allow one even to stroll through it, and not a petal is to be had for love or money. They are not so strict at Ann Hathaway's cottage, and you can roam around to your heart's content, and dream of the lovers of the "golden time."

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN CHINA.

MR. A. A. HERBERTZ, who was formerly a member of the American mission at Shanghai, writes to the *Melbourne Herald* as under:—

"One feature of the Inland Mission, in contradistinction to the other missions, is the number of single women they employ. These they dress in Chinese costume, and send them out in the streets to 'preach' or visit from house to house wherever they can gain admittance. This is utterly opposed to all Chinese notions of etiquette, or even decency. Native ladies never perambulate the streets; they must go in sedan chairs, and attract as little attention as possible. There are other causes that give color to false impressions. In the first place, the ladies have no husbands—which the native cannot account for on moral grounds. They live in the house of a married man, and the native distrusts that. They are averse to foreign missionaries of any sort, but when, in addition, the missionaries trample on all their notions of propriety, this feeling becomes intensified. Again, if young women missionaries make babies and young children their special field of work (as it seems some of these young ladies did), then the gravest suspicions are aroused in the minds of all respectable Chinese.

"It is sad to think that these young ladies who have fallen before the fury of an excited mob might have escaped their terrible death had they used ordinary common prudence, for coming events had certainly cast their shadows before them, and it was evident that trouble was brewing for some time previous. It was plainly Mr. Stewart's duty to have sent the women and children into Foochow weeks before the riot commenced—even if his desire for a martyr's death prompted him to remain himself."

Voltaire.

It is fashionable to say that he was not profound. This is because he was not stupid. In the presence of absurdity he laughed, and was called irreverent. He thought God would not damn even a priest forever; this was regarded as blasphemy. He endeavored to prevent Christians from murdering each other, and did what he could to civilise the disciples of Christ. Had he founded a sect, obtained control of some country, and burned a few heretics at slow fires, he would have won the admiration, respect, and love of the Christian world. Had he only pretended to believe all the fables of antiquity, had he mumbled Latin prayers, counted beads, crossed himself, devoured now and then the flesh of God, and carried fagots to the feet of Philosophy in the name of Christ, he might have been in heaven this moment, enjoying the sight of the damned.—*Ingersoll.*

The Episcopal Church at Canterville, Ct., was an object of displeasure to Almighty God, so on the 30th ult. he hurled one of his thunderbolts at the belfry, and knocked it into smithereens. The world is governed by special providence, if we can trust the Bible and the preachers, but Providence is unselfishly regardless of its own.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

The Executive meeting was held on Thursday, September 5, at the Club and Institute Buildings, Holborn, W.C.; the President in the chair. Those present were Messrs. C. Watts, S. P. Putnam, T. Parris, H. J. Stace, J. N. Zwibel, F. Wood, S. Jones, E. W. Quay, G. Ward, S. Hartmann, J. Samson, E. Bater, J. M. Wheeler, S. R. Thompson, T. Gorniot, J. Potter, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Cash statement received.

The President gave an outline of his Lecture Scheme, and informed the meeting that he had, upon his own responsibility, arranged for courses of lectures at Milton Hall and St. James's Hall, and recently at the Foresters' Hall. Mr. Charles Watts moved, and Mr. John Samson seconded: "That this Executive cordially approves the action of the President in the matter of his Lecture Scheme, and promises him not only a free hand, but the utmost possible support in his enterprise." Carried unanimously.

The forthcoming Conference at Brussels was discussed, and the President was asked to make the necessary arrangements for the Society to be represented.

The meeting then closed.

At the previous meeting of the Executive the following ladies and gentlemen were elected to serve on Committees for the year:—

Organisation Committee: Messrs. R. Forder, T. Gorniot, C. Watts, E. Bater, G. J. Warren, S. Hartmann, and G. Ward.

Benevolent Fund: R. Forder, Mrs. Standring, Thornton Smith, Annie Brown, Miss Robins, G. J. Warren, Victor Roger, S. Hartmann, G. Burton.

Committee for Examining Lecturers: Messrs. J. Samson, J. M. Wheeler, V. Roger.

Finance Committee: E. W. Quay and J. N. Zwibel.

E. M. Vance, *Assistant Secretary.*

THE LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

The monthly meeting of the Federation was held at the Club and Institute Rooms on September 5; Miss E. M. Vance in the chair. Present: Messrs. G. Ward, F. Schaller, W. G. Renn, M. Loafer, C. Durrant, S. R. Thompson, J. M. Wheeler, and the Secretary.

The minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed, and the Annual Excursion was reported to have yielded a profit of £4 18s.

A grant was made to the Lambeth Branch, and the meeting adjourned.

The Secretary wishes to call the attention of branch secretaries to the fact that only two branches have yet forwarded their Annual Collection.

Annie Brown, *Hon. Sec*

GLASGOW SECULARISM.

One of the best and most effective replies to the cry that Secularism is decaying in Glasgow was the large turn-out at the Soirée and Concert held by the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. on Sunday evening last, in commemoration of Mr. Bradlaugh's birthday. The hall at 110 Brunswick-street was practically filled with the members and their friends; indeed, a pleasing feature in this respect was the large number of ladies present.

After a nice cup of tea, the chairman, Mr. Gentles, gave a short address on the benefits of such social gatherings. This was followed by a cornet solo by Mr. W. Turnbull, and a song by Miss Taylor. Mr. W. Gilmour then addressed the gathering, dealing with some of the more stirring episodes of Mr. Bradlaugh's career. Another cornet solo was rendered, and songs were tastefully sung by Messrs. Allison, Bolesworth, Gilmour, and Miss King, which led to the delivery of a short, pithy speech by our old friend, Mr. Brown, who congratulated the Branch on the success of the gathering.

After awarding a hearty vote of thanks to the chairman, a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close by the audience singing "Auld Lang Syne." A word of praise is due to Mr. Welsh for his admirable accompaniments on the piano.

Unscrupulous men who try to save Christianity from the responsibility of having encouraged the "peculiar institution" of slavery insist on retaining the word "servants," as it is now found in the King James canonic translation; but all competent Greek scholars know that its Greek equivalent is *Doulos*, which means *slaves.*—*Blue Grass Blade.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

UNSPEAKABLE TEXTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—At one of Mr. C. Cohen's Sunday afternoon lectures in Stevenson-square, Manchester, two or three weeks ago, he observed that there were certain passages in the *Holy* Bible of such an immoral character that no one would be allowed to read them before a mixed public assembly. A Christian opponent, however—J. Howarth, 17 Thomas-street, City, Manchester—who, evidently, is but slightly acquainted (as is the case with so many other Christians) with the contents of this book, undertook to read any passages which Mr. Cohen might select. As chairman of this meeting, I considered it my duty to inform the chief constable of the facts of the case, and accordingly I enclosed a considerable number of very delicate texts, including 2 Kings xviii. 27 and its duplicate Isaiah xxxvi. 12, for sending which, on a post-card, to the Rev. Mr. Venum, you will no doubt remember, Mr. J. H. Wise, of Kansas, was prosecuted; and I further intimated that, if Mr. Howarth should be allowed in presence of the police to read these passages in public (Stevenson-square), I should claim an equal right to be allowed to have them printed and circulated.

The chief constable, as usual, simply acknowledged the receipt of my letter. Mr. Howarth was informed by me of these proceedings, and when the time arrived (last Sunday, September 15, as agreed upon) for the ceremony of reading the said texts—the police were present—the said Mr. J. Howarth backed out of it by the flimsy excuse that he must read them from *our* platform. Of course, we would not allow him to retail his Biblical filth from a *Secular* platform—we have a little more self-respect than that—and thus render us, perhaps, indirectly responsible; but I informed him, in presence of the public and the police, that he must provide himself with a stand. This he apparently would not do, and so the matter ended in a fiasco.

The said Mr. J. Howarth had the hardihood to state that we actually had invited him to read the texts from *our* platform. This is an audacious falsehood, and is on a par with his courageous funking.

It surely is a pitiable spectacle when a Christian dare not read passages from his *Holy* Bible for fear of the police, and of a public prosecution for uttering obscene language!

E. G. Taylor.

A Branded Sheep.

A man, upon whom religion had left its mark ineffaceably, was observed at Ellis Island recently, says the New York *World.* He was one of a number of French immigrants brought before the commissioner for examination.

He was a tall, handsome young man; a skilled iron worker. Attraction was drawn to his personal appearance by the fact that he wore his thick hair brushed down over his forehead to his very eyebrows.

When he was asked by the commissioner the reason for this extraordinary coiffure, the French youth looked embarrassed for a moment, and then replied that he wore his hair in this manner to hide the mark on his brow.

"What is the mark?" was asked.

He tossed his hair back and exhibited a skilfully executed piece of tattooing, which, on examination, proved to be a text from the Bible, done in minute but perfect letters. It was in French, and read: "*Dieu est mon Berger, je n'aurais besoin de rein*"—"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

He stated that the tattooing was done at the request of a cranky aunt when he was a twelve-year-old boy.

A Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Literal.

Brethren and Sisters: I take for my text, on this beautiful Sunday morning, a few verses from the last chapter of Mark—"Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. . . . . And they that believe shall cast out devils . . . . . and do many wonderful works. And these signs shall follow them that believe. . . . . They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them."

Now, brethren and sisters, let us show our belief by doing these things. You, sister Jones, will please take a respectable dose of strychnine upon your arrival home; you, brother Smith, will at once go to the gardens and take therefrom a poisonous snake, wrap it twice around thy neck, and behold it shall not harm thee. Brother Brown will jump into the middle of the river on his way home, and refuse all aid except that which shall be sent him by the Holy Ghost.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Clinging to Christ."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 5.30, tea, entertainment, and dance. Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, annual general meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Bible and Civilisation."

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH (91 Mildmay-park): Tuesday, at 8, adjourned meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Good Old Providence."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "Come to Jesus."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, a lecture.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, T. Thurlow, "The Religion of Jesus."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, George Standring, "Progress of Freethought"; 3.15, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Humanity."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Lucretius Keen, "From Darkness to Light." Thursday, at 8.30, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, debate between Messrs. Terry (C.E.S.) and Lucretius Keen, "Has Man a Soul?" 3.30, L. Keen, "The Hen and the Egg." Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, H. Courtney, "What is Secularism?"

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, Stanley Jones will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, S. R. Thompson, "Slavery."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Glory of Freethought."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.15, R. Forder will lecture. (Collection on behalf of London Secular Federation.)

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Prayer"; 7, "Adam, the Fall, and the Atonement." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution—Part II., The Dawn"; 7, "Scepticism: Its Meaning and its Value."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Plain Truth about the Bible"; 2.30, "The Doom of the Gods"; 6.30, "Is Christianity Consistent with Socialism?"

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Religion and the Emotions."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Closed for decoration.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 3, members' monthly meeting and election of new secretary; 7, debate between Messrs. M. Lynn and R. Mitchell, "Is Divine Providence a Myth?"

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, a meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members' and friends' trip to Grimsby and Cleethorpes. Meet in front of Victoria Station at 8.30; train starts at 8.45.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, a reading.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Mr. Yates will read a paper on "Mohammed and Christ."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BIRMINGHAM: Monday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture at the Five Ways; Wednesday, at 8, at the Bull Ring; Saturday, at 8, at Smithfield Market.

DERBY (Market-place): 10.45, W. Dyson, "Christian Want of Evidence"; 6.30, "Antidotes to Superstition."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Carl Aarstad.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—September 29, Birmingham.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 29 m. Victoria Park, a. Finsbury Park, e. Kilburn. October 6, Battersea.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 29, Westminster. October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

TOTHEAT PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—October 6, Leicester; 13 and 20, Wood Green; 27, Foresters' Hall.

T. THURLOW, 250 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 29, e. Edmonton.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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COLLAR THE KIDS.

RELIGION is the greediest thing in the world. There is no satisfying its avarice for privilege, power, or wealth. In gratifying this passion it has committed every crime, and resorted to every infamy.

Religion is also the most hypocritical thing in the world. It always wears a mask. Its designs are always covered with a pretence of virtue. It robs man for his advantage, oppresses him for his benefit, and tortures him for his welfare. And whenever it is found out in some exceptional wickedness, it acts like Macbeth to the ghost of Banquo: "Never shake thy gory locks at me! Thou canst not say *I* did it."

Like every other abstraction, religion must be incarnatad to be effective. Principles and politics only exist in human beings. The incarnation of religion is in *priests*. This is their generic name. They may assume all sorts of special designations, according to the system or sect they belong to; but they are all one in essential character; their object being to rule their fellow men with the rod of mystery, and to exploit them materially by spiritual pretences.

These priests, these men of God, these mystery-mongers, these wonder-merchants, these traders in supernatural secrets, these holy tipsters, these fortune-tellers of kingdom-come, have the impudence to declare that their business is the most natural as well as the most important. They assert that man is a religious animal, though they are all occupied in making him so. They affirm that there is a necessary demand for what they supply, though they are always occupied in making or retaining customers. They cannot let us alone for five minutes. They dare not trust to free-trade and an open market. They obtain laws for their special protection; they have thousands of shops maintained by public capital, and thousands of other shops exempted from all taxation; they get into parliament and say prayers; they nobble the hospitals, the workhouses, and even the lunatic asylums; they station one of their long firm in every regiment and in every ship of the line; they almost command the universities, and they have also laid their hands upon the public schools.

This proves that religion is not entirely natural. It is very largely, if not altogether, artificial. Religion, indeed, is like the old medicine. The doctor's bottles were at once a fascinating mystery and the secret of health and longevity. But all that is changing. Hygiene is taking the place of medicine. We give fair-play to man's natural powers, instead of dosing him with questionable aids in the midst of bad conditions. And if we only give morality and common sense an honest chance, there will be no call for spiritual nostrums.

The Churches do not admit that such a state of things can ever exist, but they feel it is approaching, and this accounts for their desperate efforts to keep, and if possible confirm, their hold upon the education of children. Unless they can instil their doctrines into the minds of the young, they know perfectly well that their business is doomed. Early education decides the religion of the overwhelming majority of people on this planet. Whether they are Mohammedans, Jews, Buddhists, Brahmists, Christians, or what not, depends upon the geographical accident of their birth and training. We are all naturally men and women, but as religionists we are all (or nearly all) manufactured specialities.

We must expect the Churches to fight for their hold on our national education. They are impelled to do so by the instinct of self-preservation. Yet it is easy to show that their action is quite at variance with their doctrines. Who pretends, for instance, that the deity of Jesus Christ, or his miraculous birth of a Virgin Mother, is defensible on grounds of reason? What argument could ever prove an obvious man to be a disguised god? What discussion, what multiplicity of statement, could ever prove that a child, who had a mother, had no father? Such propositions can only be accepted on grounds of faith, by which we believe for reasons which are not reasonable. And how does faith act? Solely under the grace and influence of God. If he does not *move* us to believe, we *cannot* believe. But the Churches will not leave the children in God's hands. They preach *faith*, but in practice they rely upon *authority*. It is as clear as daylight that church pews are filled from school benches. The child is father of the man; if they capture the child they have the man for certain. Consequently their motto, in a possibly rude but certainly forcible alliteration, is "Collar the Kids."

Happily the Churches are divided, and herein lies the best hope of Freethought. Mr. Price Hughes admits that "the great majority of the English people are utterly sick of the ecclesiastical strife which accompanies every School Board election." He therefore proposes that Church and Dissent should arrange a compromise. Let all the voluntary schools—which are only voluntary in name—be handed over to a universal School Board system; let the Apostles' Creed be taught as well as the Bible; and let all Christian denominations unite in staving off—if possible for ever—that accursed Secular Education which would make children too sensible to be religious, and thus overwhelm all Churches in a common destruction.

Mr. Hughes launched this beautiful proposal at Grindelwald, at a serene distance from "the passing squabbles and partisan difficulties of the hour." How delightful! But alas! proposals have to be carried out in the midst of those squabbles and difficulties. A Frenchman may admit a German to be a good fellow at a distance; but not if he meets him with a rifle in his hands. Christian harmony, too, seems possible at a Grindelwald picnic; but it looks very different at home, where Church meets Church, and comes the tug of war. Mr. Hughes's proposal has elicited no sympathy. Everybody is against it. Nonconformists declare they will never, never, never admit the Apostles' Creed in the schools; while the Church of England party smile at the idea of giving up their schools, and inquire whether Mr. Hughes perceives any green in their optics. Cardinal Vaughan is so far from being ready to give up the Catholic schools that he actually proposes, in a letter to the *Times*, that they should be supported to the same extent as the Board schools, only out of imperial taxation; a proposal to which Mr. Hughes is warmly opposed, and which he promises to resist to the bitter end.

What a happy family they are, and how pleasant it is for Freethinkers to note that their unanimity is so wonderful! We hope this sort of Christian unity will continue and increase. The more certain people quarrel the more certain other people come by their own. In the end the children will escape from the clutches of the priests. The very "squabbles" of the Churches are hastening the triumph of Secular Education. "To this complexion they must come at last."

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A word in conclusion about the Bible, which stays in the schools until it is kicked out. Mr. Hughes wants it "reverently used as the Word of God"—Jonah and the whale, and Lot and his daughters, and all. He does not want it explained away by Rationalists, nor used as a text-book of ethics while its supernatural sanctions are ignored or denied, nor "regarded simply as a literary classic, and degraded to the level of Shakespeare." Fancy degrading the Bible to the level of Shakespeare! It would be as easy to degrade Mr. Hughes to the level of Shelley.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE DECLINE OF FAITH.

Mr. Frederic Harrison thinks that we are passing through a period of reaction—intellectual, social, and religious, as well as political. If so, I should say it is but as the momentary withdrawal of waves, which apparently are running out even during an incoming tide. It is not by any glance at the publications of a single year, or the results of any Parliamentary election, that such a question can be determined, but by an extended survey of what has been in the past as well as of what is now.

The historical student, however much of a progressive he may be, will regard with little apprehension the alleged signs of reaction. Those with privileges to protect and power to lose are always more vigorous and coherent as danger approaches. Those who expect that a long-established and wealthy corporation like the Church is going to succumb, or allow any of its branches to be cut off, without a struggle, are doubtless living as much in a fool's paradise as those who think that, because a Conservative Government is in office, therefore Church Disestablishment is adjourned to the Greek Kalends. No one, it has been said, witnesses the death of a religion. It is a long drawn-out process of transformation under the pressure of new ideas. Yet no one who looks around can fail to see that such a process is continually going on to-day. The old religious ideas, as formulated in creeds, no longer occupy the place they held in the past. They are much less alluded to, and always with modifications and new interpretations.

A certain Nonconformist minister, who puts himself very much in evidence, recently proposed to unite Christians—at any rate, enough to continue combined control over infantile minds—on the basis of the Apostles' Creed. But there is hardly a minister of any education, either among Nonconformists or Anglicans, who fails to see that such a compromise would be disastrous. The Apostles' Creed is too palpable a forgery, and its doctrines of the virgin birth and the descent into hell too evidently mythical, for it ever to be made the basis of a new Christian defence. The men of God know that their interests rather lie in indefiniteness than in any creed, however simple and however generally professed it may be.

If astrology were as heavily endowed as is the teaching of Christianity, if its root ideas were inculcated in infancy, if all that ran counter to it were discountenanced by law, and all opposition tabooed as unsettling the very foundations of society, it would doubtless command a large number of satisfied believers. But a slight acquaintance with history suffices to show that the influence of interested professors is not what it was. There is more free inquiry, and less readiness to accept on authority, than ever before. Moreover, the clergy are steadily declining in public esteem. There are now so many more honorable and lucrative professions that only the old-fashioned, or those with command of livings, ever think of putting their sons to the black business, which was once so highly reverenced, but which now endangers its occupants being suspected of being either dull or dishonest. The Church only gets the inferior brains, and its system of training them is not calculated to develop ability—at least, as compared with the other professions.

The Rev. H. R. Haweis, in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, bewails the social and intellectual decline of the Episcopal clergy. He says: "The inaudible mumbler, the sporting 'Dodo' curate, the lifeless drone, the weakling parasites who take orders, some for social position, others to fill family livings, and many because they could not get sixpence a day in any other profession—these, of course, must be put aside as malignant, if not incurable, sores; no doubt they all help greatly to reduce the tone of the Established Church, but they are no new social evils. The real *crux* is rather to be found in the sort of thing the clergy are trained or even expected to preach, and the sort of thing the people decline any longer to listen to." Mr. Haweis certainly is not dull, but seeking to lead the clergy to preach Broad Church doctrine, while they subscribe to creeds drawn up in a totally different spirit, is certainly of questionable honesty.

One need not go back to the historic evidences of the ages of faith, when demons, angels, spirits, witches, and ghosts were as common as blackberries; one has only to read the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, and compare the doctrines there taught with those actually preached in the churches, to see that "the world do move," that supernaturalism is slowly evaporating, and that religion is gradually being superseded by ethics. No doubt the progress is slow, and its main hindrances are the existence of a class interested in the maintenance and propagation of supernaturalism, and the inheritance of wealthy endowments upon which they are sustained. But a class which is intellectually dull or morally blunt cannot permanently retain ascendancy over an educated people. Their very struggles and quarrels to keep their ground by imposing on the susceptible minds of the children will in time be thwarted by the efforts of independent parents counteracting their baneful teachings. Logic works slowly, but it does work. Teach children to think for themselves, and to exercise their reason upon all they are taught, and the dogmas intended to stultify their intellects will lose their power. Until the power of the clericals is broken, it behoves all Freethinkers to nullify their influence as far as possible.

J. M. Wheeler.

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF MIND.

There is no question in reference to which greater differences of opinion exist between Freethinkers and Christians than upon the subject of the nature and origin of the human mind. Orthodox believers regard the mind as a special entity in man, which uses the brain as an instrument for obtaining and imparting knowledge. Freethinkers, on the other hand, accept the word "mind" simply as indicating the intellectual part of our physical organisation, and they consider that its nature and power of manifestation depend upon the condition of that organisation. In my examination of these two opposing views of mind I shall purposely avoid all metaphysical conundrums, and confine myself to my own observations and deductions therefrom.

The definitions of mind that have been given by prominent writers do not, as a rule, assist the student much in the study of this question. Bain, in his *Mental Science*, tells us that the only account of mind strictly admissible in a scientific sense, "which must stand for a definition," is that which specifies the properties of such functions as "feeling, will or volition, thought or intellect, through which all our experience, as well objective as subjective, is built up." In a similar way, Hume writes that mind is "nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions united together by certain relations." Hamilton says it is "that which thinks, feels, wills, desires," etc. Many writers allege that the intelligence manifested by man is different in kind, as well as in degree, from that of all other manifestations of intelligence. But very aptly Darwin remarks: "Spiritual powers cannot be compared or classed by the naturalist; but he may endeavor to show, as I have done, that the mental faculties of man and the lower animals do not differ in kind, although immensely in degree" (*Descent of Man*, p. 147). Further, as this eminent naturalist observes, "a difference in degree, however great, does not justify us in placing man in a distinct kingdom, as will perhaps be best illustrated by comparing the mental powers of two insects—namely, a coccus, or scale-insect, and an ant, which undoubtedly belong to the same class. The difference is here greater than, though of a somewhat different kind from, that between man and the highest mammal. . . . . On the

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whole, the difference in mental power between an ant and a coccus is immense; yet no one has ever dreamed of placing these insects in distinct classes, much less in distinct kingdoms" *(ibid)*.

Metaphysicians have claimed that man, besides being able to perceive sensible objects, can also perceive abstract qualities of them; and that sensation is not like a physical nervous movement: thought and sentiment cannot be studied by the senses. Now, such language as this appears to me to be misleading, and destitute of any practical meaning. How could a man have what he calls metaphysical notions except through his senses? Before he can accept the so-called Intuitive Philosophy he is compelled to use his senses in studying its character. The conception of a circle or a triangle is derived through the sense of sight or touch. All ideal conceptions are the result of an appeal to our senses. I cannot understand how man can have an endowment entirely different from that of those animals with which it is admitted, anatomically, he is in every particular identical. It is not even disputed that mind and brain are either directly or indirectly connected, and that the quantity and complexity of the brain are in some way concerned in the degree of mind manifested. But can anyone reasonably suppose these to be two separate substances, having the power to act and to react on each other, and yet to possess no properties in common? Wherever we discover mental phenomena, we find it associated with functional activity of bodily organs. To say that man has two substances, the one spiritual and the other material, is only an assertion; and before such a claim can gain my assent each must be defined, and equal evidence must be adduced for the existence of the one as for the other.

It would be interesting to learn what mental qualities man exhibits that are not to be found in some degree in the lowest savage, or in the highest type of animal below him. The question is not how much better man can think and reason than an orang, any more than it is how superior intellectually a philosopher is to a ploughman, or a sane to an insane person. The real point to be considered is: Have we more evidence to believe that the thinking principle is located in brain matter than that it is the result of some spiritual entity, which exists apart from the brain, but that employs it as a medium for its manifestation? It is a fact, demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt, that the brain varies in different races of mankind in quantity, complexity, and symmetry, to a greater extent than between the lowest man and the highest ape; and the lowest type of the ape varies as much in brain formation from the highest as these do from man. There is ample evidence in support of these statements. For instance, a drawing of the brain of an orang and of that of man reveals an identity as closely resembling each other as the one known to exist between the anatomical structures of their bodies. But while the human brain differs enormously in size and complexity, man has no rational thought if his brain be below a certain point. Many creatures with less brain than man possess manifest great intelligence. They exhibit indications of having the power of designing and of purposing, which are the very features that are claimed to prove the superior qualifications of the human species. Darwin, in his *Descent of Man*, already referred to, mentions that the ants do most of the things that are done by man. They "certainly communicate information to each other; several unite for the same work, or for games of play. They recognise their fellow-ants after months of absence, and feel sympathy for each other. They build great edifices, keep them clean, close the doors in the evening, and post sentries. They make roads as well as tunnels under rivers, and temporary bridges over them by clinging together. They collect food for the community, and when an object too large for entrance is brought to the nest they enlarge the door, and afterwards build it up again" (p. 147). Darwin also points out that their cerebral ganglia are of extraordinary size compared with the less intelligent beetles, and yet they are "not so large as the quarter of a pin's head. Under this point of view, the brain of an ant is one of the most marvellous atoms of matter in the world, perhaps more so than the brain of a man" (p. 54). Huxley also says that "no impartial judge can doubt that the roots, as it were, of those great faculties which confer on man his immeasurable superiority above all other animate things are traceable far down into the animal world."

Even those who hold the "spiritual" origin and nature of mind recognise that activity is one of its most important elements. How, then, can they conceive a time when it began to act, or when nothing existed upon which it could act? The eternal existence of both matter and "spirit" is therefore essential to make their idea at all intelligible. Universal matter must stand in a similar relation to an eternal mind that operates through it as brain does to the supposed soul. In fact, we can get no conception of "spirit" apart from matter, although the immaterialist would have us believe that the one preceded the other. Of course, every mind that is allied with a body manifests life and feeling; but these manifestations of themselves do not constitute what I regard as mind. Mind, to me, implies a succession of states of consciousness that have a beginning and an end. As we know it, the mind is the subject of growth, as is clearly perceptible in its development in a child. Associated with the senses is the power of thought, and all discrimination, comparison, judgment, however inefficiently performed, I consider to be absolutely impossible in the absence of the senses. Moreover, according to general experience, whatever tends to impair these senses always injures proportionately the power of thought.

The distinguishing feature of living matter, called protoplasm, is that it has capacity for organisation; but *why* this is so is at present unknown to us. Now I am not aware of any reason for denying to the organised form of protoplasm, called brain, the capacity to think, although we may not be in a position to prove how the process is carried on. Where is the necessity to go outside nature for an explanation of the one more than for the other? It is equally as self-evident, to my mind, that some organised matter thinks as that some formless, structureless matter becomes organised. To me there appears no doubt as to either; and to take the opposite view, that of an alleged "spiritual" nature of mind, is to encounter difficulties which seem to the unprejudiced investigator insurmountable. For instance, what is the so-called "spiritual"? What are its properties, and how is it to be differentiated from the material? Has it ever been known to act apart from matter? If so, when and where? If mind be an entity not depending for its operations upon matter, why does it not manifest itself apart from the organised body? If, on the other hand, it depends upon the human organisation for its working power, it cannot be an independent entity.

After much careful thought, the conclusion at which I arrive as to the nature of mind is, that it is not an existence *per se*, but a descriptive term relating to the intellectual part of animal organisation; that its potency is regulated according to the position in which it is found in living organisation, and the quantity and quality of the brain; and, finally, that, when such organisation ceases to exist, the mind (not its influence) ceases also. If we are desirous of accepting the theory upon this subject about which there appears to be the least difficulty, it will be, in my opinion, that of the Monist. This theory recognises both mental and material phenomena as realities, but not as independent of each other. Mind thus becomes a property of organised forms, the same as life is. We also obtain a conception of that which lives and that which thinks in one and the same being—Man.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

The Good Old Times.

In the *History of England during the Reign of George the Third*, by J. G. Phillimore, he cites the following (p. 261) in illustration of the low state of morals of the period: "The Rev. Mr. Patten was, during many years, curate of Whitstable, at a very small stipend, and used every Sunday to travel in a butcher's cart, to do duty at another church. Whitstable, lying close to the sea, is very aguish, so that, had he been dismissed, it would have been very difficult for the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom the living belonged, to have provided another curate at the same low rate. This he knew well, and, presuming upon it, was a great plague to every new primate. He kept a mistress publicly, and had that esteem for punch that, when his sermons were too long, someone, showing him a lemon, might at any time cause him to bring his discourse to an abrupt conclusion, that he might be at liberty to adjourn to the public-house."

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THUGS.

Worship of, or belief in, the supernatural often leads people to strange actions. Sometimes the religious spirit is manifested by complete abnegation of self, and a pious resignation to what is termed fate; at others faith in the unseen bursts forth in fierce fanaticism and perpetual frenzy; while frequently the measure of a person's piety is determined by the degree of his insanity. In the history of all religions there can be found recorded slaughters and assassinations authorised in the interests of deities or creeds. The shedding of blood, according to the Christian gospels, was necessary for the forgiveness of sins and the propitiation of God, and one of the greatest disadvantages that has accrued from this idea has evolved in the belief of many Christian propagandists—as evidenced by their deeds—that the continued shedding of human blood is necessary for the appeasement of the Almighty. A similar doctrine is present in religions other than the Christian, one of the most notable instances being in that of the Indian Thugs. About sixty years ago the *Edinburgh Review* contained an account of the peculiar religious observances of this society, taken from official documents, the publishing of which details caused considerable surprise and sensation, and led to the adoption of measures for the suppression of what these people considered their religious duties. Indian Thugs were nothing less than a band of robbers and murderers, whose ramifications existed throughout the whole country by means of a secret association. Murders were committed not solely for the desire of plunder—though this unquestionably influenced their actions to a degree—but from a sense of religious obligation. The Thugs believed in the existence of a god, practically an evil spirit—as is the Christian deity at bottom, if the contents of the Old Testament and the doctrine of salvation are to be credited—who, they conceived, could only be propitiated by blood, or, rather, the sacrifice of human life, as the Thugs were careful to avoid the actual shedding of blood, which was contrary to their creed. He who had committed the greatest number of murders was the most respected, being even reverenced and exalted to a position similar to that of a priest. In perpetrating these crimes they were diligent to avoid being betrayed into anything like remorse or pity, as this would lose them caste.

When they were young these Thugs served an apprenticeship to assassination. Almost as soon as they were able to wield their limbs with vigor they were inured to the sight of death, so that all sensation of fright or fear should be removed from their minds, and taught how to use the implements of murder. Having been given the best education possible in accordance with the means of their parents, the children were turned out into the world to plunder and assassinate for god and themselves. The way in which these superstitious criminals allured and dispatched their victims was very cunning and peculiar. They wandered over the country in parties numbering from ten to thirty in all sorts of disguises, and whenever they chanced to overtake or to meet a party of travellers, whom they considered they could overpower, they fell in with them as friends, sought their confidences, relieved their labors, and at the first suitable spot prevailed upon them to rest and partake of their hospitality. A meal was then prepared, and a time spent in conviviality. When the travellers were afterwards reposing from the fatigues of the day they were set upon and strangled one by one; graves were dug to receive their bodies with a "consecrated spade," and the marauders then proceeded to search for other game. By such means as these thirty or more people have been known to have been killed at one time; and the most remarkable feature of these occurrences was that the marauders were very seldom discovered by the authorities, so dexterous were they in the performance of their holy duties. The proceedings of the association were ultimately checked by the determined action of Lord William Bentinck, who had a few dozen of the assassinators hanged, by way of an example to the rest.

Those who prate of the utility of belief in deity can, in this instance of savage murderers being prompted by religious motives, perceive something which ill fits in with their theory. It only requires contemplation, together with those incidents in the history of the Christian Church relating to massacres of heretics for the glory of God, to convince the sturdiest adherent of "safe-side" morality that belief in the supernatural has more often than otherwise exercised a baneful influence over the lives and actions of men. "What won't a man do for his God?" Ay, and what crimes won't a man use his God to shelter?

F. W.

THE CONSPICUOUS ABSENCE OF GOD.

The S.S. "Iona," bound for London, moving steadily o'er the dark and sombre sea, an hour after midnight on September 16, was about to become the theatre of a catastrophe, a tragedy, and a deed of heroism. The navigators at their several posts saw naught of danger. The mighty engines, obedient to human genius, throbbed and oscillated with a certain soothing periodicity which had doubtless helped to lull to sleep the unsuspecting passengers. All seemed well; but a sudden peril leaped like a fiend upon the unwarned ship, and, fiend-like, chose the weakest for its victims—the sleeping women. One of the first to awake was Edith Ledenham, the stewardess, who was seen hurrying round the sleeping-berths, awakening the sleepers. Afterwards she went on deck and gave the alarm. Finally, she rushed through the flames "to rescue a little girl who had been placed in her charge"; and the ship's officer, who related the ghastly search for the lost, said: "The last we found was the stewardess. She was clasping the hand of the dead child."

Where was "Almighty God" during these events? Where was the "Creator of Heaven and Earth," who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son," etc.? Where was this Almighty God whose power is over all his works, and the dinning of whose name into our ears provides thousands of clergymen with sleek, cosy livings, while millions groan and perish from agencies of distress and destruction not yet under human control? Where was "Almighty God" when the screams of the frightened women rang across the heedless ocean, without so much as an echo in response?

Picture that little girl roused from her sleep by the deadly crackle of the blazing cabin; imagine the pallid cheeks, the trembling, noiseless lips, the little arms upraised with a child's instinctive gesture for help, and then think of the eye of "Almighty God" surveying the scene unmoved; the almighty arm inert; the almighty will imperturbed!

But what God Almighty could not or would not do was dared and done by the young stewardess. The helpless child was not to look for succor quite in vain. Edith Ledenham was safe outside the burning cabin when she thought of the little girl inside, and flew to the rescue. Alas! Edith Ledenham was *not* "almighty." Had she been so, she would of course have stopped that fire before a life had been lost. She was only a poor working girl, and by the time she reached her little charge the heat and smoke had overcome them both, and the charred remains of the heroine were found "clasping the hand of the dead child."

Edith Ledenham is dead, but the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury still live, and all the parsons will continue to preach doctrines and dogmas which, in the lurid light of the "Iona" fire, are as wicked and detestable as they are absurd and contemptible. These priests would say—they could not help themselves—that, unless Edith Ledenham had been "born again," "washed in the blood of Christ crucified," and other allegorical foolery, her soul is consigned to the bottomless pit, in the fire that is never quenched. If this be so, who would not choose to suffer beside her rather than spend eternity in the company of the almighty fiend, who will use his infinite power to punish a lack of deference to himself, but will not use it to protect an innocent child in danger?

And what have you gentlemen of theology to say? To Mr. Gladstone we are often referred as to a man of pure motive and intellectual perspicacity, who is also a true believer. Probably he would meet the question with circumlocutionary phrases about the "impenetrability of the holy mystery," etc. Price Hughes! what would he say? "It is all for some good purpose, and God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to——."

Faugh! There are times when we can laugh at this

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feebleness and fatuity; but beside the biers of the "Iona" victims we can only fling such folly back into the stupid mouths that utter it, and, drying our tears, invigorated by the example of Edith Ledenham's noble chivalry, renew our assault upon the senseless superstition that makes muddle-headed mountebanks of men, and throws a chilling and benumbing apathy over the grand human instinct of resistance to cruelty and wrong. C. DEANE.

SEE THE GREAT MEN WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST!

A YOUNG man, not much overdone with faith, said to me, about a fortnight ago: "What puzzles me is that so many great men believe in Christianity." He was not satisfied that they were right; but their faith seemed to throw some discredit upon his own unbelief; or, at least, he could get no support for his unbelief from their faith.

I think I represent his position correctly, but shall be pleased to rectify any mistake, should this fall into his hands.

To myself this argument—if I must so call it—has always appeared extremely weak and pointless; even in my religious days I never used it much, if at all, for I very soon perceived its weakness.

Still, the weakness of even an old and ridiculous argument is worthy of new exposure, *so long as it deceives any rational being.* I think that is the point which should decide whether we, as Freethinkers, ought or ought not to attack an error or an argument. An argument which really has ceased to deceive may well enough be treated with indifference; but the very weakest that could be used should be an object of attack, so long as it has power to impose upon sensible people. An argument is nothing of importance except in its effects. It is its practical part which should decide us to attack its theoretical, and to expose in it whatsoever is calculated to mislead.

Now, if it were true, as it is not, that Christianity was the only religion which learned, great, and able men favored, I confess there would be much in that fact to impress me, if it did not convince. I should feel bound, on becoming acquainted with that fact, to re-examine my position, and to sift what are called the evidences of Christianity again, with all the thoroughness I could employ.

If I found the Christians the best and most enlightened people, and that the more enlightened they were the firmer was their faith in Christianity; and if I found Jews, Mohammedans, Hindus, Buddhists, and all other Pagans or non-Christians ignorant, unreasonable, intellectually dull, and more full of faith in their creeds as they were the more ignorant, I confess this would create in me a suspicion that there must be in Christianity something better and more logical than other creeds could claim, and something worthy of my respectful re-examination.

If, further, I found the Romish Church destitute of all brilliancy and intellectual greatness, while the Protestant Churches completely eclipsed it in this respect, I confess I should feel it possible that Christianity, as embodied in Protestantism, must be the most logical religion to be found.

If further investigation showed me that in the Christian society no bribes were offered in favor of the popular creed, no intimidation employed to defend it; that every man and woman was perfectly free to think and say what to themselves seemed best about any and every religion, and that no sort of persecution or disability ever followed unbelief or the open declaration of unbelief, I should be compelled to admit that this religion, so just, so fair, so liberal in its spirit, must have some truth in it, and be worthy of full and complete re-investigation.

Such is a view of a case which might have been possible, had things in general been very different from what they ever were. Let us, therefore, turn to the actual state of the world, now and from time immemorial.

(1) In ancient Judea, as amongst modern Jews, the most intelligent persons, the most respectable people, were and are orthodox Jews. You do not find, and you do not pretend to find, that the Jews who become the most intelligent and great leave their old creed and embrace Christianity. I presume that even the most presumptuous parson or priest will not venture to say that the Jews cannot equal the Christians in intellectual power. If only the ignorant remained Jews and the intellectual gravitated to the Christian Churches, I think the Christians would not hide the fact from any false notions of modesty.

Probably no Christian would argue that, inasmuch as the greatest of Jews remained Jews and behaved as orthodox Jews are required to behave, therefore all of us should turn Jews.

(2) The ancient Greeks could boast of intellectual giants who probably have never been surpassed in genius and mental power. They were our teachers. Where is the man to-day who, with no more advantages than they had, could have taught better than they taught? How many of to-day will be heard of two thousand years after their death, as scores are in the history of ancient Greece?

And yet there was not so much as one Jew or one Christian amongst those ancient Greeks! And the Greeks never became Christian until conquest and worldly self-interest and a broken spirit (in the un-Christian sense) made them so.

Must I adopt the Grecian mythology because Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Peisistratus, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, Hipparchus, Euclid, and many other intellectual giants, belonged to that old Pagan Church, as I may call it? The Christian will say "No!" and so do I.

I am not a Socrates, not a Plato, not a Sophocles, not a Euclid; but, however inferior in intellect, I know many things which were impossible for them to know; and I know the absurdities of their mythology, although they do not seem to have perceived anything wrong about it.

Similar remarks will apply to Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, India, China, to ancient Rome, and to the nations where Mohammedanism has prevailed. Go where you may, in ancient or modern times, you find the greatest men, as a rule, of precisely the same religious opinions as their most ignorant contemporaries. No matter how often a nation may change its religion, the great are always pretty much the same as the rest, and about as orthodox.

The social sentiment dominates and enslaves all but rebels and reformers—sometimes both are one, by the way. And we find in every case the great are as much dominated by the general sentiment as any of their fellows. Manners, customs, and early prejudice sway the most free and liberal of us for life. No man ever flung off all those shackles; nor is it desirable; for his countrymen would hound him to death for doing so. I can speak for myself, and say that, although in theology, in religion, I am absolutely emancipated from the prejudices of early life, in social matters every honest sentiment sways, binds, dominates me as powerfully as ever. Much as I have been and am persecuted, deeply as I deplore the madness of the people, I have never lost an atom of my respect for mankind; nor has my desire to better them in the least diminished.

I know the power of prejudice, the almightiness of sentiment; and I also know that no Christian, however great, has any better or more logical reason for clinging to his creed than Jews and Pagans have for clinging to theirs, than the veriest savages have for holding fast the notions they regard as sacred. Habit, custom, prejudice, early training, the social and domestic sentiments, fully account for every case of the kind.

Note that the greatest of the Greeks never wrote a great book in defence or commendation of religion—nothing at all which could induce an intelligent man now to worship Zeus, Hera, Apollo, etc. All that pious poets and others wrote of those divinities fails to draw out our worship.

The greatest Jew has written nothing that draws the Christians over to his views; even the Old Testament is a complete failure in that respect, in spite of its constant use in Christian churches. The Christians are equally powerless to convert the Jews.

Of the Catholics and Protestants the same truth holds. Here and there a stray sheep passes from one fold to the other; but the vast majority on both sides live, act, believe, according to the early bias they receive, and there is an end of it.

Let me add one word more. No great man ever wrote a great and convincing book in favor of Christianity. Copernicus, Tycho Brahé, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Shakespeare, Newton, Halley, Descartes, Huyghens, Laplace, Herschel—none of them wrote anything in favor of Christianity which satisfied even the Christians who came after them, although some of them were ardent believers.

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David Brewster, Michael Faraday, and the present Professors Stokes and Dawson were or are ardent Christians. What figure did they or do they cut in regard to Christianity? There is nothing from the pen of any of them on religion that is worth perusal.

If great men who are Christians wrote better on that subject than much inferior men, I should be impressed with the fact. But I will venture to say that the greater the man the more worthless will be whatever he is induced to write in defence of his religion. If this is not so, it is in the power of the believer to overwhelm me with facts to the contrary.

JOS. SYMES.

—*Liberator.*

THEISM.

As lowland folk, with ceaseless care, engage
To curb and dike the hungry sea,
A war with all the universe we wage:
All sleepless it; all wakeful we.

If we personify this loveless force—
Eternal, merciless, and blind—
We make a god's malignity its source,
Or stultify the human mind.

The universe is hard enough to fight,
Without capricious will behind
To circumvent, with diabolic spite,
The wisest schemes of humankind.

The god-idea fills the world with strife,
And makes the worst as good as best;
Its morbid dreams of extra-mundane life
Rob life of joy, and death of rest.

Can God be trusted, in a future life,
To change his ways and make us blest?
He's changeless; then, as now, will woes be rife,
And all that's bad be "all for best."

The present life, in which 'tis all for best"—
Though pain commences with our breath—
Is quite enough, so, thanks! we'd rather rest
In nothingness or endless death.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

CHURCH METHODS.

"GEORGIA has a quiet, harmless Seventh-Day believer in the chain-gang for a year for working on Sunday."

The above news item betrays to-day the methods which have been employed throughout the entire history of the Church to extend its power. Professing to serve the Prince of Peace, it has stopped at no crime which could be made to advance its interests. Now its purpose is to suppress those who recognise the teachings of God through Moses as paramount to an edict of Constantine; hence all the machinery of governments, which they have forced into their service in defiance of constitutional law, is evoked and set in action to put them down.

Synods and ecclesiastical councils declare that opposition to Sunday observance must be suppressed. State laws are enacted under whip and spur of the Church, when the prisons are filled with devout worshippers, whose only crime is disrespect for what they esteem man-made holy days.

Not only in Tennessee and Georgia, but in our own Illinois, the devil of persecution is incarnated, and is carrying on his despicable work. Four Adventists of Decker township, Richland county, were lately arrested and tried for violating the Sunday laws, and were each fined $1 and costs, amounting to over $100.

All these outrages against humanity for opinion's sake find their parallel in mediæval times; yet Protestants want the world to hold Catholicism only responsible for them. The spirit of persecution is always rampant in those countries where the Church holds sway, without regard to the sect in power.—*Progressive Thinker.*

Customer (in book store)—"I would like to get some good books on Faith." Clerk—"Sorry, sir, but our rule is to sell nothing to strangers except for cash."

ACID DROPS.

MANY years ago we met a blind clergyman in the train going from London to Leicester. He was armed with a sheaf of papers, including the *Athenæum*. We got into conversation with him, and found he was an American on a visit to England. He had seen Carlyle in London, and was going to preach the next day (Sunday) at Leicester. We chatted with him about papers and books and authors, and he seemed delighted. Of course he had not the remotest idea of our identity. His name was Milburn.

We presume it was the same Rev. W. H. Milburn, the blind chaplain of the United States Congress, who is now on another visit to England, and has been interviewed by the *Westminster Gazette*. As there is a salary attached to the post, we are glad it has fallen to the lot of a blind man, for we have an unspeakable pity for all who are so afflicted.

The chaplain's duty is to open the sittings of Congress with prayer. He never exceeds five minutes, which is kind both to Congress and the Almighty. But his prayers do not seem to be answered. Colonel Ingersoll says that clergymen ask the Almighty to do impossible things. Only the other day, said "Bob," I heard the chaplain ask God to give Congress wisdom.

The mayor of Avignon wishes to make the old palace of the Popes there into a museum of antiquities, and has obtained permission from the Town Council to do so.

The French Catholics are afraid that, if they resist the tax on religious property, they will strengthen the hands of those who propose to suppress the Budget des Cultes, and, after some bluster, have decided to give up a sprat rather than risk catching no more mackerel.

The Roman Catholic *Tablet*, of course, considers the rejoicings at Rome, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entrance of the Italian troops, as "insulting to the august Head of the Church," and among the insulting manifestations mentions "the illumination of the British Embassy." It is satisfactory to read, however, that "the Pope has shown himself wonderfully calm."

The *Tablet* (September 28) places side by side two paragraphs—one stating that the Rev. P. F. Gleeson, D.D., priest of the Church of Rome, has been received by Canon Duckworth, acting on behalf of the Bishop of London, into the Church of England. The other states that Rev. Patrick Francis Gleeson was charged at Lambeth with being drunk. He was helplessly intoxicated, and was lying in the road with his face cut. Perhaps he had been celebrating his conversion.

Cardinal Vaughan's statement that there are many Anglicans prepared to recognise in the Pope not only a primacy of honor, but a spiritual supremacy, has excited a lot of controversy in the *Times* and other papers, and has led to the mention that there are several secret societies among clericals who are prepared to do anything and everything to restore England once more to Rome.

The Pope says it is impossible to speak of conciliation with Italy until all the rights of the Church are restored. The Vatican organs take seriously the project to buy Rome for the Papacy. The *Tribuna*, the leading Liberal organ, ironically asks what England would say if the Irish in America proposed to buy Ireland.

It is a sad spectacle to see a clergyman in a Revision Court objecting to poor men as voters because they had received parish relief. Such a spectacle was recently witnessed at Westerham. The Rev. F. H. Jones, rector of the parish, attended to do the dirty work of Tory election agents. Several voters were struck off the list on his evidence. At last the Liberal agent insisted upon the production of the Relieving Officer's certificate. This, however, was not forthcoming; and the Revising Barrister asked the parson whether he might not be mistaken with respect to the two persons in question. The man of God was "positive the persons had had parish relief," but it turned out at the adjournment that he was positively wrong. Naturally the Revising Barrister expressed strong disapproval of Parson Jones's conduct; his remarks, he said, would have been stronger if the reverend gentleman had been present to hear them.

How meek and mild and forgiving our adherents of the religion of peace and goodwill always are. Here is the *Daily News* saying the Turks are treating Armenians "as Christian Europe cannot allow fellow-Christians to be treated. Lord Salisbury, backed by a unanimous public opinion, has sent an ultimatum to China to avenge the

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deaths of fellow-Christians. Unless Abdul Hamid makes up his mind quickly, the next ultimatum must go to Constantinople." Not much turning the other cheek about the organ of the Nonconformist conscience.

A landslip in Arabia has resulted in the loss of one hundred lives. They were only Muslims, and perhaps the displeasure of the Lord was upon them. If they had not sinned themselves, they had, at least, inherited the sin of Adam. He doeth all things well.

At St. Katherine's Church, Neath, at morning and evening services, a large portion of the congregation and the whole of the choir took their departure when the preacher entered the pulpit, this action being intended as a protest against the suspension of the Rev. J. T. Hoskin, the curate. On the previous Sunday that gentleman had stated that he would not preach again, as the Archdeacon had insulted him.

There has been a scene at the Blackburn School Board, where Mr. Cooper, a Nonconformist member, accused the Church party of attempting to proselytise the children of Nonconformist parents by the aid of public funds. It was reported that the Nonconformists attacked the Church of England from motives of jealousy, and stormy scenes ensued. The more church and chapel quarrel over religious education, the sooner sensible people will see that the State and public funds should be used to promote secular education only.

Christianity finds it easier to exterminate and supplant Pagans than to convert them. Even in America, where the aborigines have had nearly four hundred years of Christian religion and Christian rum, with Bibles, brandy, and the Holy Ghost thrown in, it is stated that only twelve per cent. of the Indian population are church members, and their membership would be uncertain but for blankets and other subsidies.

In the town of South Framingham, Mass., during a heavy thunderstorm, two elderly ladies of the Roman Catholic faith became so frightened at the idiosyncrasies of the elements that they fell upon their knees forthwith, and besought in prayer the protection of the Lord. They had scarcely thus manifested their trust in God and his goodness, and had not arisen from their knees, when a lightning-bolt knocked both insensible.

The New York *Observer*, a Presbyterian organ, laments that "the influence of Professor Huxley has been, and, we fear, will continue to be, pernicious to the cause of religion." How lamentable, too, that people continue to read the words of Huxley, while Candlish, Rutherford, Knox, Haliburton, and even Calvin, are neglected.

The Maories, whether they imbibed the belief from missionaries or not, used to prophesy the speedy coming of a millennium. The Hon. H. Meade, in his *Ride through New Zealand*, mentions that, "curiously enough, the prophet or leader of the last fanaticism, who foretold a millennium and a season of miraculous abundance of food and good things of all sorts, so close at hand and so bountiful that it was both useless and impious to go on planting or rearing stock, himself died of starvation in the woods whilst on a short journey." This prophet was evidently a more genuine believer than Prophet Baxter, who has well feathered his nest, yet refuses to leave any of his money to the poor on the day after that which he has predicted for the end of all things.

There is an honest boy at Coniston. He was found out in this way. A limelight lecture took place in aid of the Church Missionary Society, and the collection for the heathen included sweets, buttons, and other articles not particularly valued by missionaries. The next day the vicar visited the school, displayed before the boys the various non-negotiable articles found in the missionary box, and bade the scholars step forward and claim their gifts. Only one small boy responded. He pleaded guilty to a button. Let us hope his mother sewed it on again.

The Rev. Edward Oerton, vicar of Tebay, and a Justice of the Peace for Westmoreland, has been suspended for six months from the duties of his office for alleged improprieties with members of his congregation. It transpires that a private inquiry was held at Grange by the Bishop of Carlisle into the allegations made against Mr. Oerton, with the result stated. It is also said that Mr. Oerton has been discharged from the living of Tebay.

The Rev. Jonathan Crosland, late vicar of Kilham, Yorkshire, has been deprived of his living, and the Archbishop of York has taken away his orders. At Driffield an order was made against him by the magistrates for the maintenance of his late servant's child.

The latest statistics of India show that among the inhabitants of the country there is one convicted criminal to every 274 European Christians, to every 509 European Asiatics (the children of European fathers and native mothers), to every 709 native Christians, to every 1,361 Hindu Brahmans, and to every 3,787 Buddhists. Accordingly, as a matter of fact, European Christians furnish comparatively the greatest amount of criminals, and Buddhists the fewest.

To the Convention of the London Missionary Society a paper was sent over from Bangalore by the Rev. T. E. Slater, missionary to educated Hindus, on "Openings of Christian Work among Students and Educated Men in India." The writer said that since the days of Macaulay and Duff the British Government had nurtured two generations of university youths in India on the literature, philosophy, and science of the West, and also on the strong meat of English political ideas. So a powerful and rapidly-increasing educated class had been created. But, sad to say, of the tens of thousands who obtained an English education only a few became professing Christians. "Young India was impressed alike by Western truth and Western scepticism, and many souls were being wrecked on the rocks of rationalism, agnosticism, and intemperance." What a nice collocation! It is not the missionaries who introduce beer drinking. Oh, dear no. This comes from the Rationalists and Agnostics.

According to *Science Siftings* (September 28), Dr. Forbes Winslow, who states that "Jack the Ripper" is now in a lunatic asylum, says this notorious criminal was a medical student of good family, who studied hard and his mind gave way. He then "became a religious enthusiast, and attended early service every morning at St. Paul's. His religious fervor resulted in homicidal mania towards the women of the street, and impelled him to murder them." Such is the testimony of Dr. Forbes Winslow, who says the facts are known to the authorities.

Christian politics are occupying a large amount of public attention and newspaper space at present. The pressing question in ecclesiastical circles is the "star" system of preaching. The star system of dramatic acting is pretty familiar; provincial audiences ought to know anyhow, for the travelling companies that they see are generally composed of one "star" and a collection of "sticks." It is the same with the Christian Church, showing how close is its connection with the stage. Certain long-tongued cushion-thumpers are selected for their gift of the gab as special preachers, and they go up and down the country, practically giving entertainments, to call a spade a spade, by playing lingual gymnastics for the delectation of their auditors. The most successful "stars" are those who can best hide a grain of doctrine in a bushel of wind, and it would not be difficult to place the finger on a number of popular preachers who fill the bill to perfection.—*Crescent*.

A correspondence has been going on in the *English Mechanic* on the disagreeable topic of "Buried Alive." It is generally allowed that, owing to the laxity of death certificates, the danger is a real one, and that cremation would provide a remedy. The late Dr. H. Prater, a Freethinker and author of *Letters to the American People*, left directions in his will that a surgical incision should be made in his arm before burial.

"Bibulous" writes to the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*: "I wish one of our city ministers would preach a stirring sermon on the iniquity of putting bad corks in beer-bottles. I buy my liquors from one of the most conscientious merchants in the town. His beer, wine, whisky, and brandy are all that the most fastidious could desire; but the corks——. Not one in ten comes out whole. I am a mild-mannered man, seldom indulging in vituperation; but, after vainly trying for more than half-an-hour to take the cork out of a bottle of Bass in microscopic instalments, my temper fails, and then, as you imagine, my language is strong. Judging from my own experience, I should say that there is no more prolific source of profanity, and I ask the clergy to use their influence to stop such wholesale demoralisation."

The *Blue Grass Blade* chaffs Sister Frances Willard, of the W.T.C.U., on being one of the committee to bring out the Woman's Bible. Brother Moore says: "Sister Fannie, with whom I have done some little flirtation in Prohibition circles, will knock out that story about Jesus making wine, and about Noah getting on a high lonesome as soon as he could find a saloon after getting off the ark, but it would not seem fitting for her to want to swipe out those passages where Brother Paul advises against matrimony."

The Rev. Norman Macleod sees that cycles are breaking up the Scotch Sawbath, and he hopes the wheelmen will draw the line. He doesn't see any harm in a person riding

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a bicycle to church, but at the same time he doesn't approve of Sunday being used as a holiday for cycling.

We see from the *Straits Times* that an English magistrate, in charge at Pekan, in the Malay Peninsula, excited much indignation by ordering that the body of a Malay, who died of cholera, should be burnt. The Malays hold that cremation prevents the possibility of resurrection, and the magistrate guilty of such an outrage will never be forgiven.

Such mistakes often occur in dealing with other races, and people are surprised that they show such enmity to foreigners, forgetting that the foreigners often outrage their most cherished convictions. Some years ago the Bible Society sent a large cargo of Hindustani Bibles to India bound in leather. Of course no Hindu would as much as touch the volume, which on its very outside reminded them of the slaughter of the sacred cow.

The Society of Christian Endeavor has had an undoubted success in America, chiefly, it is suspected, because it leads to a deal of sweethearting and match-making. The movement is seen to be a secularising one under Christian pretences, and it is breaking down the old idea of feminine subordination in the Church. Under these circumstances it is vigorously denounced by the Rev. E. Brantly, in the *Presbyterian Quarterly*, as one of the cunning wiles of the Devil, which leads "further on towards Rationalism, Jacobinism, disintegration."

The Baptists of Portobello have Sunday salt-water baptisms of all converts; but the proceeding of plunging the elect over head and ears amid the tumbling waves always draws a large and derisive crowd, whose laughter and shouts, according to the newspaper reports, are "scarcely in keeping with the sacred performance." We are ardent believers in the efficacy of this kind of baptism, but prefer to dispense with the services of any officiating minister.

Reynolds's Newspaper, reviewing *The Pilgrims and the Anglican Church*, by W. Deverell, says of the Pagans: "They persecuted, but with a leniency that sinks into insignificance when the bloody horrors which have marked the track of Christianity are remembered."

The Rev. A. J. Waldron has been delivering a course of lectures at New Brompton. One of his subjects was "My Debate with Mr. Foote—a Retrospect." Surely this is a curious proceeding. It would be better to let the debate stand than to have it over again—in Mr. Foote's absence.

We do not suppose that Mr. Macdonald, the editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, has been subtly bribing the editor of the *Christian Reformer;* but the latter gentleman is anxiously endeavoring to push the former into prominent notice. First he suggests that the *Truthseeker* comes within the provisions of the law against blasphemy. Then, not satisfied with this good advertisement, he writes: "We cannot understand why the post-office authorities of New York City, or the Society for the Suppression of Vice and Immorality, do not compel the publishers to change the character of the paper, or suppress it as an enemy of public morals and the nation's weal." The *Christian Reformer* is evidently actuated by the true Christian spirit, and we hope that Brother Macdonald duly appreciates its loving kindness. The prosecution of the late D. M. Bennett did a deal towards putting the *Truthseeker* on a firm basis, and the *Christian Reformer*, doubtless aware of this, is anxious to give it another lift by the means of that eminent protector of American morality, Anthony Comstock. Should the circulation of the *Truthseeker* shoot up wonderfully, we hope it will not forget how much it owes to the kind attentions of the *Christian Reformer*.

According to the *Church Reformer*, the Rev. George Brooks, Mr. Balfour's Bounty Brooks, the bankrupt, begging-letter writer, who keeps his horse and carriage, is the author of the attack on the Christian Social Union in the *Church Quarterly Review*. Was it for this he was rewarded by the author of *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt?*

The Rev. J. Carvell Williams, writing in the *Daily News*, says that the clergy often demand high fees for burying in vaults, on the plea that they grant a portion of their supposed freehold. But, legally, no such grant can be made, and Mr. Williams states that, "as a matter of fact, some of the clergy, knowing that this is the law, show their hatred of Nonconformist services in churchyards by refusing to allow the burials to take place in the family graves which are supposed to have been purchased by the deceased persons or their predecessors."

"Surely, Mr. Editor," continues Mr. Williams, "it is a pitiful thing that the ministry of the Established Church should be in any degree dependent for their maintenance on what are practically taxes levied on the burial of the dead, and which are sometimes illegally demanded also."

The Pope has been giving himself up to prayer and meditation. The only person to whom the Pontiff has thrown open the doors of his room of seclusion is Ugolini, the painter, who, in painting his portrait, has very discreetly avoided the reproduction of the Pope's distinct resemblance to Voltaire, one of his Holiness's *bêtes noires*. The German painter, Lenbach, having painted too faithful a portrait, "*Questa è una volpe!*" cried the Pope angrily, turning his back upon the picture and walking out of the room—"It is the portrait of a fox."

Dean Farrar, in the October *Fortnightly Review*, examines the "Asserted Growth of Roman Catholicism in England," and comes to exactly the conclusion anyone might have expected of him—that Romanism is becoming "more and more powerless, more and more verbal among the immense majority of the people, especially of the men," not only in England, but in the very countries in which it has "held for centuries an almost undisputed sway."

The rowdy fiasco at the curates' meeting will, it is hoped, hinder our spiritual pastors and masters from giving lessons on behavior to working men for some time to come. The *Church Reformer* says of the meeting: "Both sides ought to be thoroughly ashamed of themselves."

According to a paragraph in the London *Star*, the Gillingham School Board (near Chatham) has just voted on a proposal to rescind the teaching of the Apostles' Creed. The motion was lost by one vote, and that vote was cast by the Secularist member. We shall be glad to receive some account of this matter from Mr. Thompson.

Here is the Rev. Charles Harris writing to the *Church Reformer* (an organ which, under the conduct of the Rev. S. Headlam, has opposed the Blasphemy Laws) declaring that, "as Coke well puts it, Christianity is part and parcel of the law of England." The Rev. C. Harris is evidently unaware that Lord Chief-Justice Coleridge, in the trial of the editor of this paper, laid it down that that old dictum no longer held good, being invalidated by the admission of Jews to Parliament and to the highest offices in the land.

Mr. Gladstone has written and talked on many subjects, and it appears that he is now going to tackle the question of Immortality. It is said that he does not consider man to be intrinsically immortal, but immortalisable; that is, he may become immortal by availing himself of the redemption of Jesus Christ. What a pity it is that the question is still debateable after so much debate! Jehovah's revelation requires to be revealed, and Mr. Gladstone will try to explain it; but people are sure to wish that he would explain his explanation. Like the man in *Punch*, the world "gets no forrarder" in theology.

The British Army is becoming a very cosmopolitan body. It includes Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Mohammedans, Brahmists, Buddhists, and the Lord knows what besides. Lord Wolseley says that a friend of his, a colonel, has recently become a Jew, while another has become a Buddhist. We suppose they will all sit down with Abraham in the kingdom of heaven. But, of course, the non-religious soldiers—like Cæsar, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Peterborough, and Garibaldi—will be excluded. Well, it will be a rather poor muster without them, from the military point of view.

Obituary.

Mr. Samuel Standring died in the Manchester Royal Infirmary on Friday afternoon, September 28. The funeral took place on Wednesday, the remains being incinerated in the local Crematorium. Messrs. Willock, of Manchester, and Howarth, of Rochdale, superintended the obsequies. A long and favorable notice of the deceased appeared in Saturday's *Rochdale Observer*. He was forty-two years of age. Mr. Standring was a man of active and enterprising character. In his lifetime he attempted many things, too often going beyond his strength, which he finally exhausted, beyond all hope of recovery.

Modern Persecution.—A man may be entirely uninjured in his body by the actions of his fellow men, and he may be entirely unimpeded in his movements by them, and he may yet be prevented from carrying on the activities needful for the maintenance of life.....No interference of this kind is possible without a breach of the law of equal freedom.—*Herbert Spencer*.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 6, Masonic Hall, High-street, Wood Green:—7.30, "Life, Death, and After."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—October 6, Foresters' Hall, London; 13, Foresters' Hall; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 24 and 25, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. November 17, Liverpool; 24, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N., having been disappointed of a course of engagement in Scotland, desires to fill up his Sundays either in London or the country.

OLD DEVONIAN.—Pleased to have your good wishes.

G. HOLLOWAY sends his shilling, and hopes we shall get "ten thousand more." We should do so if our readers would all "rise to the occasion."

A. HAYNES.—Hope we have your initial right. Thanks for the Bromley paper. See paragraph.

G. ENNION.—A good joke, but it has already appeared in the *Freethinker*.

W. CLOSE.—We hope to give some more illustrations during the winter. Glad to hear you like Mr. Putnam's account of his experiences in this country. We note your hope that "the rank and file, more especially the 'passive' ones, will support you during Shilling Week, so that when the winter is passed they may look back with pride at having helped you and others to lift the dark cloud of superstition hanging all round."

E. G. TAYLOR.—Thanks for the copy of Mr. Storey's letter. It was only natural that orthodox bigots should oppose him, with every device of malignity, for introducing a Bill to give Freethinkers the same rights of citizenship as are enjoyed by Christians. We hope to get a report of the trial of his election petition. Anything you send us will be valued.

C. LEWIS.—The Cheshire Branch, one of the poorest, is the first in the field with its Shilling Week subscription. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Chester before Christmas.

MRS. BESANT, in sending four shillings, expresses "every good wish for the success of Mr. Foote's meritorious undertakings generally."

A BLACKPOOL FRIEND, in sending twenty shillings, writes: "Keep pushing on, but don't be discouraged if things do not go forward as quickly as you would like; Freethought is a plant of slow growth." We assure this friend that there is little fear of our being discouraged. It was said of one of the greatest of men, Oliver Cromwell, by an intimate acquaintance, that hope shone in him like a pillar of fire when it had almost gone out in others. In a humble way we aspire to emulate that mighty example.

HERALITE sends the result of "Self-denial to aid Freethought."

T. DUNBAR says: "I approve of your plan of propaganda, and hope all Freethinkers will consider it their duty to give according to their means." If they only do so, we will make Freethought propaganda "spin" during the coming winter.

C. K. DUMAS.—Mr. Edwards is quite right, in his *Witness of Assyria* (an excellent book), in saying that there is no evidence, except their own statements, that the Jews were ever in Egypt. Bishop Tomline's reference to the "shepherd people" is very misleading. There was a Shepherd Dynasty in Egypt at one time, but it was afterwards expelled. This has no connection whatever with the Bible story.

J. P. GILMOUR.—Glad to hear of Mr. Heaford's success at Glasgow. His abilities and accomplishments deserve a wider recognition, to say nothing of his zealous and modest character.

TOBY KING.—It was like you to send a shilling for every week in a year. We hope soon to have the pleasure of shaking hands with you again.

ALPHA.—Pleased to hear that, despite your physical infirmity and failing eyesight, you still enjoy your *Freethinker*.

W. A. NEWCOMBE.—As you say, the battle of Freethought is far from ended.

DANIEL BAKER, the Birmingham veteran, who sends his shillings for the new fund, says: "I hope there will be many of them. Glad to see you reported in such good health."

H. W. D., who sends fifteen shillings, says: "I hope you will receive at least a thousand more such sums, as I know there are many Freethinkers who could well afford it."

G. J. WILLIAMSON, subscribing, writes: "Though not a member of the N.S.S., I am a constant reader and admirer of your paper, and wish you every success."

E. W. W.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. A. CUMBER, subscribing to Shilling Week, writes: "I thought it would not be altogether absurd if I asked a few professedly Christian friends to subscribe, especially after Mr. Holyoake's contribution to the Salvation Army; but I am sorry to say I failed miserably." Of course!

R. VERNEY, who is "only a poor working girl," but takes "a keen interest in the Secular movement," sends her mite, and hopes Mr. Foote's scheme will be a great success.

C. D., sending ten shillings, hopes "a large number of readers of the *Freethinker* will respond liberally, as well as many outsiders."

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Tottenham Branch, 5s. 8d.; Bethnal Green Branch, 5s. 6d.; Barnsley Branch, 5s.; Parcel of clothing from Mrs. Mann.

H. S. W., in subscribing to Shilling Week, wishes that something could be done at Weymouth in the way of Freethought propaganda. There are several Freethinkers in the place, but on the whole it is the most bigoted in the south of England.

D. G. LINDSAY.—Thanks for Glasgow list of subscriptions.

E. RAE.—In June, 1877, the *Secular Review* and *Secularist* amalgamated. No. 1, vol. i., bears date June 9, 1877.

W. CARELL thinks that some of Mr. Symes's queries in our last issue were unhappy. For instance, "Why none of those benefited by Jesus took the trouble to preach his gospel or advertise his healing power." Our correspondent points to Mark vii. 36, which flatly contradicts this. Mr. Symes would probably reply that the statement is too general, and appears only in the Christian record, without any outside corroboration.

E. P.—Thanks for your subscription, which is acknowledged in list. No doubt boys might sell some copies of the *Freethinker* on Sunday mornings, but there are difficulties in the way. Their mothers interfere, or their employers object to "blasphemy" being associated with "proper" publications—such, for instance, as the pictorial ones that purvey nudity.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Surely there must be some mistake. We can hardly believe that Mr. Waldron could publicly speak of Colonel Ingersoll as a loud-mouthed orator and blasphemer, as an advocate of the doctrine that a man who tires of one wife should take another, and as one who cursed his mother's God and called her a fool for believing in the Bible. We hope Mr. Waldron will be able and willing to deny that he uttered such contemptible stuff. The other matters shall be looked into, and dealt with next week if possible.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Rochdale Observer—Straits Times—Isle of Man Times—Look Times—Church Reformer—Le Peuple—Le Matin—Reynolds's Newspaper—Weekly Dispatch—Melbourne Age—The Literary Guide—English Mechanic—Two Worlds—Melbourne Standard—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Open Court—Zoophilist—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

***The Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.**

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SHILLING WEEK.

As we go to press on Wednesday, the *Freethinker* is practically completed on Tuesday evening. I am therefore only able to acknowledge, this week, the subscriptions that have reached me up to the end of the first day in October. Six more days remain to complete the first week, and I hope every one of them will bring me a large batch of letters with remittances.

The object of this subscription, as already stated, is to send good Freethought lecturers into all parts of the kingdom. With the unanimous concurrence of the National Secular Society's Executive, I am taking personal charge of this enterprise; and what I can do will depend on the means placed at my disposal.

It seems to me that such means should be adequate. There are scores of Freethinkers who could spare a pound, hundreds who could spare a few shillings, thousands who could spare one. If all who can do something, whatever it is, will only do it, we shall see the beginning of a new era in the propagation of Freethought.

As it happens, this is "Self-Denial Week" with the Salvation Army. "General" Booth's soldiers are denying themselves meat, tea, sugar, and all sorts of comforts and even necessaries. I do not ask my readers to go to that extreme. I only ask them, especially if they feel "saved"

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themselves, to assist in carrying salvation to others. Let them not wait for "a more favorable opportunity," but give what they can afford, however small it may be. There should be a glorious feeling of comradeship in the knowledge that now—at this very hour—other Freethinkers in other parts of the country are doing the very same thing. Though they cannot see each other, they know of each other's existence, being connected by the impalpable and invisible ties of common sympathy for a splendid cause. G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

J. B., 2s.; Le Diable, 2s. 6d.; H. J. Barter, 2s. 6d.; J. M., 2s. 6d.; W. Clegg, 1s.; W. C. Stuart, £1 1s.; Plymouth Friend, per H. J. B., 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Bezant, 4s.; A Friend, £1; C. Shepherd, 2s.; W. C. (Dorking), 10s. 6d.; W. Lamb, 4s.; Hemalite, 2s.; E. Calvert, 1s.; T. Dunbar, 1s. 6d.; A. Haynes, 1s.; Cheshire Branch of the N.S.S., 10s.; Old Devonian, 2s.; G. Holloway, 1s.; M. Christopher, 1s.; J. Eccles, 1s. 6d.; H. S. Woolley, 3s.; E. P., £1; Alpha, 1s.; J. Brierley, 1s.; W. A. Newcomb, 1s.; Daniel Baker, 5s.; Worker, 1s.; J. Garven, 1s.; H. W. D., 15s.; H. A. Cumber, 5s.; R. Verney, 2s.; C. D., 10s.; J. H. Williamson, 2s. 6d.; A. Firth, 2s.; W. W. Roberts, 2s.; C. J. Gask, 2s. 6d.; H. J. Thorp, 3s.; Victmount, 1s.

From Glasgow:—D. McFarlane, 1s.; J. Threlkeld, 1s.; W. Allbin, 1s.; T. Train, 2s.; W. Owen, 1s.; A. Young, 1s.; T. McCormack, 1s.; W. F., 2s.

Per Miss Vance:—H. Good, 2s.; W. Nash, 1s.; Mrs. Marsh, 1s.; J. Embleton, 2s.

Per R. Forder:—J. H. Begg, 1s. 9d.; W. L., 1s.; W. Palmer, 1s.; M. L., 1s.; S. H. Munns, 1s.; J. Munns, 1s.; Mrs. Small, 10s.; J. Edwards, 4s.; Toby King (1s. a week yearly), 52s.; F. T. R., 10s.; Four Britons, 4s.; W. Baxter, 1s.; H. Wallace, 1s.; T. Dunbar Harris, 20s.; W. J. Scottow, 2s. 6d.

SUGAR PLUMS.

In spite of the phenomenal weather, there was an improved audience at Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Clinging to Christ." When the cold weather sets in the hall will no doubt be thoroughly crowded. Up to the present the collections have been really good. Mr. Foote's taking the personal responsibility of the venture seems to have appealed to the audience's generosity. One friend, on Sunday evening, dropped a sovereign in the collection plate. As for the lecture, it was received with most pronounced enthusiasm. Mr. James Rowney made, as usual, an excellent chairman.

Following his new plan, Mr. Foote lectures this evening (October 6) in the Masonic Hall, High-street, Wood-Green; a populous neighborhood on the northern heights of London. There has been a good deal of open-air Freethought propaganda in the district, and the enterprise of the Branch in starting indoor lectures ought to be crowned with success. Mr. Foote's lecture is on "Life, Death, and After." During the evening he will name a child of Mr. Thompson. Tickets of admission to this lecture (1s., 6d., and 3d.) can be obtained of Mr. John Wood, 71 Gladstone-avenue; or of Mr. S. R. Thompson, 35 Clyde-road, South Tottenham.

Mr. John Wood, secretary of the Wood Green Branch, will be outside the Masonic Hall at 7 o'clock, ready to inform non-holders of tickets where they can obtain them.

The Wood Green open-air meetings have been much disturbed lately. Christian rowdies have endeavored to break them up, and we hear that the police have looked on with indifference at obvious breaches of the peace. Mr. C. Cohen delivers a special lecture at Jolly Butchers' Hill next Thursday evening (October 10) at 8 o'clock, and we hope the local Freethinkers will rally around him on that occasion.

Notwithstanding the remarkable weather we have been having of late, Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience at Camberwell last Sunday evening. His lecture on "The Bible and Civilisation" was most enthusiastically received, Mr. Watts being in his best form. We are glad to hear that new members are joining this promising Branch of the N.S.S.

This evening (Sunday, October 6) Mr. Watts occupies the platform at Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C., when he will deliver his new lecture, "The Bible and Dramatic Literature." It is a good subject, and should draw a crowded audience.

We have received a welcome letter from Mr. S. P. Putnam, who arrived safe, sound, and jolly at New York, and is now busy in preparing for the Annual Convention of the American Secular Union. Mr. Putnam's passage was rather a stormy one, but he was not sea-sick; in fact, he came up—or rather went down—smiling every time the bell rang for meals. One big wave that washed the deck broke a clergyman's leg. No doubt it was intended for friend Putnam, but it missed its mark. Still, we are sorry for the clergyman, though he has got a good text for a new sermon on Providence.

The *Leek Times* reproduces Mr. Foote's leaderette on "Mr. Howard's Challenge" from the *Freethinker*, and we shall see what the reverend gentleman has to say in reply. It is charitable to pass over his long and wordy letter on Mr. Wheeler's brief note. We prefer to take Mr. Howard, if he will let us, on his manlier side. He concludes by expressing admiration for Mr. Foote's "great ability and earnestness." "Would," he says, "that all our preachers were as active in spreading the truth as he is in diffusing his unbelief. Surely he and men like him should put many of us to shame. We wish him nothing worse than that his distinguished abilities and untiring efforts should be spent in a worthy cause, and that he might achieve the success commensurate with the same." Mr. Howard will pardon Mr. Foote for thinking that the Freethought cause is "worthy" of his best service.

Professor Ernst Haeckel, contrasting Huxley and Carl Vogt, says that the former laid his foundations far deeper than Vogt had done. Vogt had a liking for laughing at philosophy generally, while Huxley gave it duly the highest place in the whole kingdom of science. As a Monistic philosopher and founder of the ape-theory, Huxley ranks higher than Vogt. Thomas Huxley belonged to that small number of far-seeing naturalists who, from the very beginning, saw the epoch-making import of Darwin's work of research carried on through fifty years, and who, with unselfish devotion, worked out the detailed application of his theories and aided their propagation. The pre-requisites for such work were not only an extensive and thorough knowledge in all fields of biology and a clear sagacity of judgment, but also that moral courage which, regardless of consequences, assails a "mountain of prejudices" many thousand years old, and seeks truth for its own sake.

The British Association having decided to visit Toronto in 1897, they will be invited to become the guests of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which will probably hold its meeting at San Francisco.

On Monday, October 14, the Finsbury Branch of the N.S.S. have a dinner and entertainment in the large hall of the Eldorado Club, 30 East-street, City-road, E.C. The tickets, which for two shillings include Dinner, Concert, and Dance, can be obtained from the secretary, 21 Coburg-street, Clerkenwell, or at 28 Stonecutter-street.

Mr. Parris lectures in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, this Sunday, both morning and evening. His subjects, as usual, are interesting and important.

A commemorative tablet has been placed on the house at Potsdam in which Helmholtz was born. It is expected that the house at Ealing where Huxley first saw the light will be marked in a similar manner.

The National Congress of the American Secular Union and the Freethought Federation of America will be held at New York on October 25 and 26. The Revival of Sunday Laws in New York should serve to consolidate the forces of Freethought.

In the *Islamic World* Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam contrasts the superstitious medicine of the seventeenth century with the long anterior science of the Arabs, much to the disadvantage of the former. Moulri Mohammad Aboul Ghani, B.A., M.D., also shows there is something to be said for Eastern polygamy—at any rate, when contrasted with Western prostitution.

Mr. Cohen has had fairly successful meetings during his three weeks' mission at Birmingham, especially at his open-air lectures. He winds up to-day (October 6), and we hope there will be a good attendance. Tea will be provided in the hall for visitors from a distance. We are glad to hear that Mr. Cohen's mission has brought the Branch several new members.

Mr. Frank Creswell is the new secretary of the Newcastle Branch, which augurs well for its future prosperity. Mr. J. G. Bartram, who has for some time conducted the Branch's business with zeal and ability, has had to resign in consequence of change of employment and removal from the

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city. It has been decided to resume the Sunday morning lectures on the quayside.

We hope the Newcastle friends will do their utmost to make a great success of the approaching debate between Mr. Charles Watts and the Rev. A. J. Waldron. A large hall is engaged, and we hope it will be crowded. Some local misunderstanding has existed, but this should not interfere with a serious interest. Mr. Foote appeals personally to all his friends in the district to make the debate widely known, and not only to attend themselves, but to bring as many as possible of their acquaintances.

The Bradford Branch will have a Tea and Dance on Tuesday evening (Oct. 8) in the Milton Rooms, Westgate. Tea on tables at 6.30. After the tea the dancing will proceed till eleven o'clock. Tickets are ninepence each, and can be obtained of Messrs. Gott, Sunderland, and J. T. Carpendale, secretary, 38 Acton-street. There ought to be a good muster.

A monument has been erected in Rome to the Liberal poet, Pietro Cossa. Cossa was expelled from a Jesuit college, being accused of heresy and Liberalism. He was afterwards exiled, and went to Peru. The scene at the ceremony was one of great enthusiasm.

The new issue of the *Agnostic Annual*, to be published on Monday, will contain a special article by Mr. Samuel Laing in reply to Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*. Mr. J. Allanson Picton contributes an article on "The Man, Christ Jesus: The Germ of the Christian Myth," which should be both important and interesting.

Mr. W. H. Pollock, who writes in *Longman's Magazine* on "Marseilles," says that many of the working classes are Athists, and do not wrap up their unbelief with such words as "Agnosticism." At the same time, he says, they never take any step of importance in civil life "without an elaborate and expensive church ceremony." Mr. Pollock appears to regard this as singular. He forgets that there are women as well as men in Marseilles, who have to be consulted about baptisms, marriages, and funerals.

The International Conference of Freethinkers, at Brussels, seems to have been well attended. Among speakers were MM. Fulpius, Robin, Schaere, Furnémont, and des Essarts. The ladies were well to the fore, including Frau Wilhelmi, Mlle. Verone, Mmes. Barberousse, Van Kol, etc. It was even proposed by one delegate that the government of the family should be matriarchale, children taking names from their mothers; but this was negatived in favor of the complete equality of the sexes. A proposition to make August 15 a festival of peace was also negatived. Messrs. Forder and Ward represented the National Secular Society.

Mr. W. Heaford is spending a part of his annual holiday on a lecturing tour in the north. He had three very successful meetings at Glasgow on Sunday. The evening lecture on "Is Christianity Consistent with Socialism?" gave rise to a protracted discussion, sustained principally by Anarchist opponents. Mr. Heaford is to hold a debate with Mr. M. Gass, who is retained by the Bridgeton Branch of the Independent Labor Party, on the question, "Do the Teachings of Jesus Christ Proclaim Socialism?"

The Failsworth Secular Sunday-school has arranged a String Band Concert, interspersed with songs, for this evening (Oct. 6). It begins at 6.30, and the admission is free, with a collection to defray expenses. Secular friends in the neighborhood, if they drop in, will spend an enjoyable evening.

Christian Science.

The following interesting reply was returned to a circular letter soliciting subscriptions to a certain medical journal (*Pacific Drug Review*):—"Fairbault, Minn., February 22nd, 1894.—Your copy of the ——— Journal come, and the letter to, askin me to send fifty cens and git it fur a yeer, I dont need no jurnals. When I git a tuff case, I go off inter sum secrit place and tell the lord all about it and wate for him to put inter my minde what ter do. That's bettern jurnals and skylopeds and such. If we hel more lord trustin doctors and less colleges weed fare better. The lord noes morn all the doctors, and if we go to him for noledge it ill be bettern jurnals naterally in the lord.—A CHRISTIAN DOCTER."—*Dublin Journal of Medical Science.*

MARRIAGE.—At the Registrar's Office, South Shields, Miss Adelaide Emily (Ada) Moir, of South Shields, to Frederick John Stockill, of Leeds. Miss Moir was one of the most useful members of the South Shields Branch.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (August 24).

THERE is no evidence that the poet's married life was an unhappy one; that he ever ceased his affection for his wife, or that he went to London from any other motive than an honorable desire to better his condition and that of his family. There is no evidence that he ever stole the deer, or was arrested for any youthful escapade and had to run away. There is no doubt that Shakespeare was a manly youth, honest, straightforward, energetic, and handsome. He went to London to make a fortune. He probably had many good friends to help him, among them the actors who visited his native town and were cordially welcomed and sustained by Shakespeare's father, who was fond of dramatic entertainments. There is no evidence that Shakespeare went to London penniless, or that he was obliged to hold horses at the theatre doors for a scanty living. Shakespeare was a first-class business man, practical and sagacious, if he was a poet. I have no doubt he went to London with a good capital to start with and ample support. He was the kind of man to make friends and to keep them. Shakespeare became, for his time, a very wealthy man; and not by luck, but by foresight, labor, pluck, and perseverance.

From Ann Hathaway's cottage we drive to the church, a noble structure, which shows by its size and stateliness that Stratford must have been a town of note before Shakespeare's era. What a beautiful churchyard is here, the sunlight falling through the green arches upon the green grass and the solemn gravestones, even as when the poet mused and dreamed along the banks of the Avon. We enter the church and wander among the memorials of the dead. We stand by the tomb of Shakespeare. I can only express myself in the noble words of Washington Irving: "There are other monuments around, but the mind refuses to dwell on anything that is not connected with Shakespeare; his idea pervades the place, the whole pile seems to be his mausoleum. The feelings, no longer checked and thwarted by doubt, here indulge in perfect confidence. Other traces of him may be false or dubious, but here is palpable evidence and absolute certainty. As I trod the sounding pavement there was something intense and thrilling in the idea that in very truth the remains of Shakespeare were mouldering beneath my feet. It was a long time before I could prevail upon myself to leave the place, and as I passed through the churchyard I plucked a branch from one of the yew-trees, the only relic I have brought from Stratford."

As I was passing through the same churchyard I found the workmen cutting down an ancient yew-tree, of which I secured a branch, also some leaves and grass, and yellow buttercups and white daisies and a beautiful red rose, in whose fading splendors I shall ever see the glory of Stratford church.

From the churchyard we walk past the great Lucy Mill, built about two centuries ago, from under whose wheel the waters of the Avon swirl and dash away; thence we pass over a foot-bridge to the other side of the river; and here, for a half-hour or so, we remain under the stone bridge of the railway, for the rain is coming down in torrents. It was a picturesque scene; the old bridge, the mill and wheel, the church tower just beyond, glimpses of the village, a couple of fishermen on the banks, the prosperous Londoner, besides the yokel who does not seem to have changed since Shakespeare's time, and our own company trying to be as philosophical as possible. When there is a burst of sunshine we make a start over the meadows. The rain, however, has only stopped in order to make a more furious onset, which we meet just as we are half across. But the rain adds such a misty loveliness to the whole scene that I cannot but remain and enjoy it, even if I do get wet to the skin. The river is flowing along, and beyond it on the wooded bank looms the church in a veil of shining mist; and the trees seem to be dripping with a million diamonds, and the grass presents the freshness and cleanliness of an emerald floor, and the roofs of the houses glitter where the columns of rain are already marching off from the advancing sun.

All this journeying and sight-seeing does at last make us hungry, hungry as bears. We therefore betake ourselves to Swan's Nest Hotel. This used to be called "The Leg of Mutton," and the picture of the leg of mutton is still there. I like the title "Leg of Mutton." It is not so euphonious as the present name, but it is more suggestive to the hungry traveller. However, it is a jolly tavern, and we gather around the table and proceed to demolish about the best beefsteak I have ever tackled. As they say in Western parlance, it goes to the spot. If Shakespeare lived on such beefsteak as this, no wonder that he produced such glorious poetry. Beefsteak is much better than Bacon, I think, for Shakespeare poetry.

After the pleasant festivities of the table, we visit the Memorial Theatre, Library, and Picture Gallery. This pile of buildings will always be connected with the name of

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Charles Fowler, who gave the grounds and worked energetically for its completion. Within is a large library devoted entirely to Shakespeare—his works printed in almost every language. In the last report is noted a donation of books in the Cingalese. In the picture gallery are portraits of actors and actresses in their great Shakespearean characters, and engravings and paintings of many of the famous scenes in the poet's plays. We climb the tower, whence there is a vast and beautiful view of the city and surrounding country. In April, the month of Shakespeare's birth, the theatre is open, and the best dramas of English literature are produced. There is generally a fortnight's festivities, and it is a wonderful occasion for the lovers of Shakespeare. From the building we pass forth into the gardens alongside the Avon, where one can sit for hours and watch the ever-changing prospect and the varying faces of people from all parts of the world, who come to see the memorials of England's greatest glory.

Thence I go to the grammar school where Shakespeare learned "a little Latin and less Greek." This school and the guild were in existence in the fourteenth century. The long room on the ground floor was the Guildhall. This hall is interesting from the fact that it was the scene of dramatic representation in the poet's youth. John Shakespeare, the poet's father, greatly encouraged the drama while mayor. This was when Willie was about five years old. Does it not seem probable that the child's imagination was fired by witnessing these performances? Here is the Latin school-room in which the poet received his classical education, and the very desk is shown at which he used to study. Shakespeare went to school until his fifteenth year, when reverses in his father's estate caused him to be taken out to work on the farm. Still he might have been fitted for the university while in school. The school dates from Edward VI., and the opportunities for instruction were quite favorable. At the time of Shakespeare's youth children were sent to the English schools at the age of five, and at seven they commenced the study of Latin, the regular course taking about ten years, so that boys usually left school for university studies at the age of fifteen. Among the books read were those of Æsop, Ovid, Virgil, Terence, Cicero, Horace, and Seneca. Shakespeare might have been familiar with all these authors when he left Avon. He had good opportunities for a classical education, much more than Ben Jonson gives him credit for. There is not a particle of classical scholarship displayed in Shakespeare's poems that he could not have acquired before he was fifteen years old.

From the grammar school we turn our steps to the New Place, where Shakespeare passed the last years of his life. Alas! the house where Shakespeare lived is gone; only the foundation is left. It was a clergyman who cut down Shakespeare's favorite mulberry-tree in the garden, and also demolished the house itself in 1759. He left Stratford immediately, amid the curses of the inhabitants. The New Place is, at present, a beautiful garden, with many lovely flowers and smooth greensward, and the old stump of the mulberry-tree, which still produces some leaves, and is now carefully guarded from the ravages of time and clergymen. I suppose the modern elegance of the place gives but little idea of what it was in Shakespeare's time, seeing that the building itself is obliterated; but here is the soil on which Shakespeare trod when he rested from his labors, and here was the serene ending of a most wonderful life. Shakespeare's mind was so full in all directions; it was in such exquisite harmony with nature and equipoise with all life, so calm and deep, that he needed no outward pomp for the expression of his genius, no palace, no "golden round," only the sweet felicity of flowers and grass and the summer's sky. The greatness of Shakespeare is shown in the placidity of his closing years.

Returning to "The Swan's Nest," we cross over the Avon by the old Clopton bridge. This is built of stone, and very old stone too. It was the work of Sir Hugh Clopton, Lord Mayor of London, in the reign of King Henry the Seventh. It is 376 yards in length, and has fourteen principal arches. It is even for to-day an admirable structure. The building of a bridge like this at so early a date shows the importance of Stratford. In 1643 the Queen of Charles the First, Henrietta Maria, having to stay in Stratford, chose New Place as her residence. She was entertained by Shakespeare's daughter for three weeks during these troublous times.

I did not have an opportunity to visit the cottage of Mary Arden at Wilmcote. Mary was the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, esquire of Warwickshire. Her marriage portion was fifty acres of arable land, six of meadow, and a right of commonage, which was considerable property for that age. Her father's family must have been cultivated and well-to-do. In 1557 she married John Shakespeare. In 1564 the poet was born.

Mary Arden must have been a beautiful woman, with good blood and good brain and a happy genius. From her motherhood came the crowning glory of the human race. In the temple of her body nature breathed its divinest melody, and the "miracle of birth" revealed its most wondrous joy.

The Shakespeare day is accelerating its close to the Secular Pilgrim. The golden sunlight is over all the beautiful city; over the broad meadows and winding stream; over the stately church and loveliness of the quiet graveyard; over the lowly birthplace, and the gardens and paths of immortal love; over the sweet cottages and the embowering roses; over the forests thrilling with romance like those of Arden itself; over the Memorial building, and the Fountain, and the bright dwellings where modern luxuriance seems to drop like a jewel into the misty past and melt in the mild radiance of antiquity. Beautiful scene! and in this enchanting hour of mingling day and night, the chambers of the brain all crowded with imageries of Shakespeare, and the heart filled with unutterable emotions as the voices of the ages seem to call in tenderest music—in this resplendent evening we glide over the bosom of the river Avon. We see the fishermen along the banks; the boys in bathing; the boats sweeping past; the dimpling waters whispering to the shores. There are the willows and the rushes; the leafy beds of osiers; the mossy stone steps; the little bird on its precarious perch swaying almost to the water as it poises to take flight again; the green meadows and blue hills in the dim distance; the cattle coming to drink, or standing in the shallow water; the hedgerows and the flowers reflected in the glassy depths; the buds of the water lily, and the tiny water-rat plunging in and leaving a bubble or two on the placid surface; tall poplars and elms that fringe the bank, and flowers—the flowers of Shakespeare. Think of them all—the daffodils, the violets, the primroses, the cowslips, the Mary-buds, the honey-suckle, the pansies, and columbine. Do we not hear the song?—

> When daisies pied, and violets blue,
> And lady-smocks all silver white,
> And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
> Do paint the meadows with delight.

And so, with the rhythm of the poet vibrating in the mind, and the river flowing musically along as it flowed centuries ago, when

> Sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,
> Warbled his native wood-notes wild,

dreamily we voyage the Avon, while the sunset light is flushed with the emerald hues of leaf and grass, dancing far as the eye can range to some Orphic harmony; and then our songs break forth, songs of native land, songs of freedom and of humanity; and from the opulent past, where man has blazoned his magnificent genius from nature's burning heat, we look into the future with hope born of a thousand years of toil, and in the splendor of Shakespeare's genius and the splendor of his native soil we see all life enriched, all work made glorious, and the thought and heart of man triumphant.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

A CHINESE MANDARIN ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

MR. C. P. HODGES, who, despite his English name and birth, is a Mandarin of the Crystal Button and a leader of the Chinese in Australia, writes to the *Melbourne Herald* on the subject of the late outrages, which, he says, the Chinese of the colony unanimously regret. He points out that four hundred millions of people must not be considered responsible for the doings of some thousands of fanatics. He notes that in China the religion and the State are so bound together that Christianity in antagonising the one inevitably touches the other. The missionaries are, he says, subverters of the nation. He asks: "Suppose a society of Chinese males and their wives and some single women, all worthy persons, should essay in Melbourne to convert such as they could to the doctrines of Confucius. They obtain access, or, to more correctly illustrate the case, gently force themselves into people's houses and induce women to leave their homes, thus outraging a strong prejudice rooted by custom and education. For, according to Chinese usages, a woman cannot receive anything from the hand of a man unless he be husband or son, and then not in the presence of strangers, even in her own house. Straightway, as the proclamation of the Vegetarians set forth, there is discord; 'a man is set at variance with his father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.' Carried to the extent thus, as in some places in China, what would be the result of such injudicious meddling here? Why, without an executive power able to protect them, all the violence of Kucheng would be enacted in Little Bourke-street."

Such a parallel he shows is insufficient, because Chinese politics and religion are built on filial piety. On the very threshold of the new faith the Chinese are asked to accept, they are told that a man must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. Their answer is: "They which commit such things are worthy of death." The sayings of

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Christ, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" "Let the dead bury the dead," and "Except a man hate father and mother he cannot be my disciple," seem to the Chinese subversive of the true foundations of society, and to take children away from their natural guardians to teach them such doctrines they regard as the height of impiety.

It is clear, from a published letter of one of the victims, that the question of the marriage of believers with unbelievers has been raised and settled adverse to family considerations. As the importance of succession rests on the side of the sons, so there are matters of only secondary importance affected by the disposal of the daughters, if indeed they can be deemed secondary. Any interference with the customs of this religious and domestic rite would arouse strong feelings of resentment. Mandarin Hodges says Europeans wish to force their way into China, oblivious that they thus force natives out. The unreasonable hostility to the Chinese in foreign lands is beginning to have effect. Millions of them have returned to China with one unvarying tale. The Christians treat them as enemies, while pretending that God has made of one blood all nations.

CHRIST.

THUS said the Christian's Christ: "To me
A better love shalt thou extend
Than that thou giv'st in full degree
To father, mother, friend."

Through the sweet love of wife and child,
The love that softens human need,
A man with God is reconciled
If God be God indeed.

But if through love so freely spent
He cannot reach God's love and grace,
Shall he not then be well content
With that which fills its place?

For greater love can none possess
Than that which goes by friendship's name;
The love of God must needs be less,
If it be not the same.

From the best passions of the heart,
From love most god-like and benign,
This Christ hath set himself apart,
And is no more divine.

He is as one who should remove
Man's faith by preaching faith abroad:
"Lo, I am love, who know not love;
God is not: I am God."

PYRITES.

PROFANE JOKES.

"What are you going to preach about to-morrow?" asked a minister's wife of her husband. "I am going to preach about female vanity." "You will have to select some other topic. I'm going to wear my new dress and hat."

Rev. Dr. Steenthly—"Yes, my beloved hearers, money is the root of all evil. And now a collection will be taken to make up the arrears in your pastor's salary. The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

The new minister had arrived at Deacon Clover's house, and was to remain a few days. When the evening was far spent, the dominie was escorted to his bedroom by the deacon, who said, as he opened the door to the rather small apartment: "This, Dr. Fourthly, is the prophet's chamber." "Ah," replied the clergyman, as he surveyed its circumscribed dimensions, "it must have been one of the minor prophets."

It was the custom of a certain clergyman to point his sermons with either "Dearly beloved brethren," or "Now, my dear brothers," until one day a lady member of the congregation took exception to this, and asked him why he always preached to the gentlemen and never to the ladies. "My dear lady," said his reverence, "the one embraces the other." Lady—"But not in the church."

A Polish Jew was admitted to heaven for his piety, but, on entering, he took his seat in a corner and wept bitterly; so Jehovah asked him the cause of his despondency, to which he replied that, although he himself had scrupulously observed the law of Moses, yet he considered himself unworthy to sit with the righteous in heaven "on account of his unnatural son," who had become a Christian. "Is that all?" answered Jehovah. "Why, the very same thing happened to me."

BOOK CHAT.

The Structure and Authorship of the New Testament, by I. Panin (Grafton, Mass.), is an attempt to make out that the various writings received as canonical by the Christian Church, are really inspired by one mind, on account of certain arithmetical calculations discovered in them. Thus the author says: "The whole vocabulary of Matthew has 1656 words, or twenty-three seventy-twos, of which the first seventy-two is thus assigned to this genealogy." Wonderful! Mr. Panin founds his conclusions on the text of Westcott and Hort; but, if he had taken other texts, he would have had to make different calculations, and would doubtless have come to equally wonderful conclusions. Mr. Panin convinced himself by his method that Westcott and Hort are wrong in rejecting the last twelve verses of Mark, and the story of the woman taken in adultery. It seems to us his method is hardly sane, and his conclusions are valueless. We find that in his appendix, on page 67, he has to admit that a statement on page 42 "proves to be incorrect." We think Mr. Panin might do well to consult some friends before he issues further publications impugning the conclusions of the critics.

* * *

F. M. Holland has, in *Open Court*, a good sketch of Frances Wright, one of the pioneers of women's rights and Freethought in America. Mr. Holland says: "Her ablest book, published in 1822, and entitled *A Few Days in Athens*, is a complete vindication of the life and teachings of Epicurus against slanders not yet extinct. She shows how plainly he distinguished between pleasure and vice; her style is that of a novelist, and she draws a charming portrait of herself as one of the disciples of a philosopher who has been sadly misunderstood." The work is published by Mr. Forder, with an Introduction on the Epicurean Philosophy, and a sketch of the life of the authoress by J. M. Wheeler.

* * *

Mr. Holland thus concludes his estimate of Frances Wright: "Her influence in destroying intolerance and slavery, as well as in reforming education, was very great, and we can feel sure of the fulfilment of her generous wish, published in the *Free Inquirer*, on August 12, 1829: 'Let Death conquer my memory, and let the world preserve those principles which it is the object of my life to establish.'"

* * *

In the same number of *Open Court* is an interesting account of "Christening in Cyprus," supplied, from a private letter, by Mr. M. D. Conway. The infant in Cyprus is plunged naked three times, in the name of the Father, Son, and Ghost, into hot oil and water in a round copper which served as font. Then three locks of the baby's hair are cut off, with a new pair of scissors, in the name of the Trinity, and cast into the font. We suppose this is dispensed with in the case of a bald baby; or do they wait till the hair grows? This done, a cross with blue ribbon is put round its neck, and, the devils thus exorcised and propitiated, the child becomes a Christian.

* * *

It must not be supposed, from the advocacy by Sir Douglas Galton of the "meteorite hypothesis," that therefore the Nebular Hypothesis, first put forward by La Place and endorsed by Herschel and Herbert Spencer, is defunct. On the contrary, an elaborate defence of *The Nebular Theory in Relation to Stellar, Solar, Planetary, Cometary, and Geological Phenomena*, by William Ford Stanley, F.R.A.S., is this year published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co.

* * *

Mr. R. Dobell, 77 Charing Cross-road, announces as in the press *Gluck and the Opera* by Ernest Newman, *Human Documents* by Arthur Lynch, and *Like Stars That Fell* by Geoffrey Mortimer.

* * *

Mind and Motion and Monism, the last work of the late George John Romanes, is announced by Longmans, Green, & Co.

* * *

The Open Court Publishing Co., of Chicago, announces for publication early in October a collection of popular sketches of the religious and secular history of Israel, by Professor C. H. Cornill, one of the foremost orthodox authorities on the Old Testament history in Europe; *Post-Darwinian Questions*, the second part of the late Professor George J. Romanes's *Darwin and After Darwin*; and *The Primary Factors of Organic Evolution*, by Professor E. D. Cope.

A lively discussion on the Biblical aspect of the Temperance question has been going on in the *Kirkintilloch Herald*. Such discussions do a great deal of good, and the contortions of the numerous advocates of Bible temperance are certainly amusing.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Bible and Dramatic Literature."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, conclusion of debate between Stanley Jones and Cyrus Symons on "The Soul and Science." Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, business meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Dr. A. A. Beale, "Health and its Morals."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Humanitarianism."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, G. C. H. Carter, "The Moral Value of the Apostles' Creed."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Life, Death, and After."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, debate between Stanley Jones and Cyrus Symons (Unitarian) on "The Soul and Science"; 3, a lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Evolution."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, R. Forder will lecture. (Collection for L.S.F.)

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Jews on the March." (Annual collection for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.)

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution—Part III., Daybreak"; 3, "An Hour with the Devil"; 7, "What Think Ye of Christ?" At 5, Tea and social gathering.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, business meeting—election of secretary.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market place): 6.45, A paper.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class.—J. Cowie, "Tolstoi on the Church and State"; 6.30, Neuroo, "Bible Fictions and Malay Archipelago Facts."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, Tousan Parris, "Some Bible Symbols: Their Origin and Meaning"; 6.30, "Man: Whence he Comes and How."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Quarterly meeting of Touline Society; 7, Ernest Newman, "The Re-union of Christendom."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, John Barlow, "The Great Revolution of 1903."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, R. Mitchell will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, A Competent Scientific Gentleman, "The Evidence for Evolution"; 7, "Animals and Plants: their Relationship" (with lantern illustrations).

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King street): 7, Captain W. B. Duncan, "The Globular Theory."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, "Secularism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

DERBY (Market-place): 10.45, W. Briggs, "Secularism and Monarchy."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell, "The Bible and Science."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 3, T. Thompson, "A Rationalistic View of Historic Christianity."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—October 6 Birmingham; 13, Leicester; 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 23 and 24, Chester-le-Street; 27, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 28 and 29, Stockton-on-Tees; 31, Blackburn. November 1, Blackburn; 3, Sheffield; 4, 5, and 6, Barnsley; 10, Foresters' Hall, London; 17 and 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—October 6 m. and e. Battersea; 7, Edmonton; 13, Pimlico Pier; 14, Edmonton; 20 and 27, King-land.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Cresdon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

TOUSAN PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—October 6, Leicester; 13 and 20, Wood Green; 27, Foresters' Hall. November 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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"Thus Saith the Lord"
Believe or be Damned
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Clotted Bosh
Lord Bacon on Atheism
Christianity & Slavery
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Martin Luther
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A Lost Soul
Happy in Hell
The Act of God
Keir Hardie on Christ
Blessed be ye Poor
Converted Infidels
Mrs. Booth's Ghost
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Mrs. Besant on Death and After
The Poets and Liberal Theology
Christianity and Labor
Dueling
An Easter Egg for Christians
Down Among the Dead Men
Smirching a Hero
Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ
Jehovah the Ripper
The Parson's Living Wage
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Frederic Harrison on Atheism
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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 41. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE PARSONS' PALAVER.

THE Church Congress at Norwich opened with scenes which would be regarded as utterly disgraceful at any Secular assembly. A red-hot "Protestant" contingent shouted and howled at the High Church or "Catholic" party. The leader of the row seems to have been a ridiculous person, who is also a malignant fanatic. He appears to hate Catholicism and Freethought with an equal hatred. What he publishes about Catholics is no particular concern of ours, but we have no hesitation in saying that the pamphlet he publishes about Colonel Ingersoll is one of the vilest and most disgusting libels that were ever penned.

From the official program of the opening ceremonies, we see that the clergy who joined the procession to the cathedral were to walk "three abreast;" perhaps out of compliment to the Trinity. "They will wear cassock, surplice, hood, etc," the program says, "or, being Doctors of Divinity, their scarlet robes." A pretty lot of guys they must have looked at this end of the nineteenth century; it is no wonder that the profane multitude treated them with derision.

There is an "N.B." at the end of the program, stating that, "should the weather be unpropitious," the procession "will not move through the Close." What a "should" for the Church of England! Surely the clergy might beg fine weather of God Almighty for such a special occasion. It seems, however, that our rain-doctors are as much at the mercy of the weather as their customers. We therefore suggest that their prospectus should be amended. Let them clear out the farcical petitions "for rain" and for "fine weather" in their antiquated Prayer Book.

The Congress was welcomed by the Mayor and Corporation of Norwich. It was also welcomed by the local Nonconformists, one of whom—a man of God rejoicing in the great name of Shakespeare—was allowed to harangue the assembly. This gentleman talked about "reunion," which was also the principal theme of the subsequent address by the Bishop of Norwich. But "reunion" is only a word to bandy at religious entertainments. There is no chance of its ever being realised. Dr. Sheepshanks appreciated the "kindness" of the Pope's recent message to the people of England, but declared "the notion that the Christian world will ever pass under the domination of the Roman Pontiff" to be "nothing but the baseless dream of the religious partisan"—which is a hard slap in the face for the poor old Pope. Dr. Sheepshanks was more complimentary to the Nonconformists, who are drawing nearer to the Church, and many of whom "are not unwilling that their children should join in her communion." At the same time, there was "no prospect of organic union with any of the Nonconformist bodies." Not the slightest!

The multiplicity of sects means good business for the sky-pilots. If they all united in one Church, half of them would have to go into the ordinary labor market to obtain a living.

Naturally the Congress had its annual flirtation with Socialism. The Dean of Ely advocated Trade Unionism, which has fought all its worst battles, and does not require his patronage. It was not clergymen who rallied to the support of Trade Unionism in the evil old days, when it was outlawed and downtrodden; no, it was Atheists like Bradlaugh, and Positivists like Harrison and Beesly. If the Dean of Ely is very anxious to promote Trade Unionism, he might help to establish the Curates' Union, and destroy sweating and financial injustice generally within his own Church. Reformation, even more than charity, should begin at home.

The problem of the age, it appears, is to "bring democracy into close touch with Christianity." We have heard this before. As a text it produced a fine commentary at the last elections, when the parsons all over the country acted as Tory agents. Still, we dare say the Dean of Ely's problem" will become more and more important—to the Church. Haughty as they are, when they can afford to be so, there is a certain parasitism and sycophancy about all Churches. They never dare cross the great currents of the world. They must bow to "the powers that be," on pain of losing their wealth and privileges. They are perfectly impartial, because they are always serving their own interest. In Russia the Church fawns upon the Czar. He commands the legions and controls the money wrung from the people. In England the Church is ready to fawn upon the Democracy, because it sees that His Majesty the People is going to sit upon the throne, which has so long been occupied by kings and flanked by aristocrats. The clergy used to flatter the monarch as though he belonged to a different species from his subjects, and they are now getting ready to flatter the multitude. "Good night!" they say to the setting sun; and to the rising sun "Good day!" They crook the pregnant hinges of the knee where thrift may follow fawning.

Saint Athelstan Riley, of the London School Board, was unable to be present, and his paper on Education was read for him. We always like to see this gentleman on the war path. He is an object-lesson in the bigotry, subterfuge, and equivocation, which naturally attend the policy o spending other people's money in propagating your own religion. We wish Mr. Riley life and health; and, as the Irish say, more power to his elbow! He is one of the best friends of Secular Education. Every time he opens his mouth, or puts pen to paper, he hastens the good day when the schoolmaster will no longer be required to play the jackal to the priest.

Up to our time of going to press the Church Congress has been deadly dull; and unless later meetings are more lively we shall not trouble our readers with further comments on its proceedings.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SOME CHRISTIAN TRUTHS.

In his *Notes on Christian Evidences*, page 44, Mr. Bradlaugh says: "When William Lloyd Garrison, the Abolitionist, delivered his first anti-slavery address in Boston, Massachusetts, the only building he could obtain in which to speak, was the infidel hall owned by Abner Kneeland, the 'infidel' editor of the *Boston Investigator*, who had been sent to gaol for blasphemy. Every Christian sect had in turn refused Mr. Lloyd Garrison the use of the buildings they severally controlled."

When this passage was brought before a certain reverend lecturer, who has recently been pushing himself forward as a Christian Evidence-monger, he is reported to have declared that it was "a deliberate lie." It was a serious thing to give the lie to Charles Bradlaugh when he was alive, and I trust the reverend gentleman will be made to feel it is a serious thing still. At any rate, I am in the position to cast the lie back into his teeth. Asked for his authority, the lecturer referred to Oliver Johnson's book on Garrison and the Anti-Slavery movement. Johnson's book is entitled *William Lloyd Garrison and His Times*. He was editor of the *Christian Soldier*, and devotes a number of pages to showing that the charges of infidelity urged against Garrison by the anti-abolitionist party were false. But there is no denial, in the whole of the book, of the statement made by Mr. Bradlaugh, and that statement, I am sure, was well founded. At first I thought there was nothing whatever in Johnson which could even have suggested giving the lie to Mr. Bradlaugh. But I remembered he had been quoted before in an anti-infidel paper edited by another unscrupulous reverend divine. I accordingly looked up the first edition, and discovered that at page 79 he made the statement that "during the whole history of the movement, with the single exception of that noble woman, Ernestine L. Rose, I do not remember a single prominent speaker on our platform who could truthfully have been called an infidel." This has been made much of, though the writer saw fit to withdraw the statement. If the scrupulous individual in question will turn to the latest edition of Mr. Johnson's work, revised and enlarged, he will find that he totally omits any such statements. Up to page 74 the paging is alike in the two editions; but page 75 of the edition of 1882 omits all this passage, and goes on at page 81 of the edition of 1880. It will thus be seen that Mr. Johnson not only does not contradict Mr. Bradlaugh, but that he actually withdraws a misleading statement he had given currency to. As to Garrison's own views, Mr. Johnson says, page 363: "I am not aware that Mr. Garrison ever made any systematic statement of his religious opinions. His mind was too much absorbed in the application of moral principles to the conduct of life to permit him to pay much attention to the theological speculations which are so fascinating to many."

At page 66 Mr. Johnson says: "That in later years he held the views of the Bible common among Quakers and Unitarians is not denied; but this was long after the American clergy and churches had repudiated the anti-slavery movement. Indeed, it was this repudiation on their part that led him to the investigations which resulted in the modifications of his inherited views on this and some other points." But he contends Garrison was a Christian at the last no less than at the first; and in his lax sense this may be correct. It is merely a question of terminology. Mr. Matthew Arnold called himself a Christian and a member of the Church of England, while repudiating belief in miracles, or even in a personal God. The point I am interested in is only this: Did Charles Bradlaugh write down a deliberate lie?

I had the honor of knowing intimately "that noble woman, Ernestine L. Rose," as Oliver Johnson called her, and she has more than once assured me of that very fact which Charles Bradlaugh stated—viz., that Garrison (who, Mr. Johnson notices, lectured continually on Sunday) had to go to the infidel hall in order to ventilate his opinions. On the authority of my revered friend, I challenge disproof from the reverend lecturer.

Mr. Bradlaugh made another statement, also dealing with slavery, in the same Notes—viz., that William Wilberforce, in the House of Commons on February 18, 1796, contrasted the conduct, in the matter of slavery, of what was then called "Infidel France," with "Christian England." The same reverend lecturer is reported as saying that Wilberforce afterwards changed his opinion, and as giving the same book by Oliver Johnson as his authority. It happens that the only mention of Wilberforce in Johnson's book is in the following passage (p. 131): "It was while he was in England that Wilberforce died, and it was his sad privilege to participate in the obsequies of that great and good man, and to follow his remains to Westminster Abbey." It is most unlikely that Wilberforce ever repudiated anything he deliberately said before the House of Commons, and again I challenge the reverend lecturer for his authority.

Once more, the same particular man of God is reported as saying that Baur and Strauss altered their views. If they did, it was certainly not in the direction of orthodox Christianity. Here is what the Rev. P. Schaff's standard *Religious Encyclopædia* says of Baur: "He ruthlessly attacked the optimistic opinion of the Apostolic Church, and attempted to show that, so far from being peaceful, quiet, loving, and united, it was torn by opposing factions—the friends of Peter and those of Paul." So far from modifying these opinions, they are the most pronounced in his latest writings. This was also the case with Strauss. The heresy put forward in the first edition of *Das Leben Jesu* (1835) was much milder than that of the fourth edition (1840), and this in turn was supplanted by the popular edition of 1864; while in his last work, *The Old Faith and the New*, he emphatically proclaims that intellectual man is no longer Christian—calls Christ's resurrection "a world-historical humbug," and gives up Christian belief in immortality. In accordance with his will, he was buried without religious rites.

As the same reverend lecturer is reported to have said that Colonel Ingersoll is an advocate of free love, and that he fought for slavery (each statement the very antithesis of the truth), it may be wondered why I leave the even tenor of my way to take any notice of such a person. False coin may be sure of detection in the long run; but, as there is apparently a good deal circulated about the country by this individual, which obtains currency owing to his cloth, the surest plan is, when met with, to nail it down.

J. M. Wheeler.

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF MIND.

(Concluded from page 627.)

From what was stated in my article last week, it will be seen that in my opinion the mind represents the intellectual part of the living organism; that intelligence varies only in degree throughout the animal kingdom, and that its manifestations depend upon the character of the mental faculties wherever found. As Dr. Wigan remarks, in his *Duality of the Mind*: "The mind every anatomist knows to be a set of functions of the brain, differing only in number and degree from the intellect of animals. . . . . Can the mind, then, be a thing *per se* distinct and separate from the body? No more than the motion can exist independent of the watch; and all the arguments of theologians and metaphysicians on this subject are founded on the confusion of terms." Spencer, in his *Elements of Psychology*, says: "Though we commonly regard mental and bodily life as distinct, it needs only to ascend somewhat above the ordinary point of view to see that they are but subdivisions of life in general, and that no line of demarcation can be drawn between them otherwise than arbitrarily." More recently, Professor Graham, in his *Creed of Science*, referring to Bain's *Mind and Body*, points out "that thought is fully and adequately described as the function of the brain; that it is nothing more, and nothing other (for to regard it as a case of causation amounts to the same thing), is proved, according to physiologists, by abundant and increasing evidence" (p. 156).

These are my views, plainly stated, as to the nature of the human mind; and I am pleased to find that they are corroborated by the evidence of leading scientists, both of the past and of the present time. The opinions which I have here expressed, supported as they are, in the words of Professor Graham, "by abundant and increasing evidence," are thoroughly opposed to the notions entertained by orthodox Christians in reference to the nature of soul or mind. Too long has the absurd fallacy obtained that the human body possesses an ego which controls and

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regulates the thoughts and actions of the bodily organisation. More and more are unprejudiced thinkers recognising, with Professor Ribot, that "the ego is not an entity acting where it chooses or as it pleases; controlling the organs in its own way, and limiting its domain according to its own wish. On the contrary, it is a resultant even to such a degree that its domain is strictly determined by the anatomical connections with the brain, and that at one time it represents an entire body less an undivided part, and at another time the half of a body, and in parasitic monsters such a limited domain that it does not suffice to support life, and accordingly is expelled prematurely" (*The Diseases of Personality*, p. 45). It appears to me that man's ego consists in his entire self, the result of his organisation and the operation of his mental faculties.

There are two general and conflicting views entertained in reference to the origin of human intelligence. The one attributes it to natural causes; and the other regards it as having emanated from a God who is infinite in wisdom and power—the one great Cause of all existences. It is supposed that this Being has endowed the human race with mental faculties that differ in some respects both in kind and degree from those found in the lower animals. I share the former view, for the reason that there appears to me to be no evidence to justify the latter. Of course, how body or mind originated can only be inferred, inasmuch as, from the very nature of the case, neither could have been the subject of human observation. I object to the dogmatism of theologians, who positively assert that there can be no reasonable doubt that their view is the correct one. I allege that their contention has not been, and cannot be, verified by facts. Moreover, while refraining from putting forth any dogmatic statement as to the origin of life and mind, it seems to me evident that the cause assigned to either by theologians is bare assumption. Basing an opinion upon the known facts of nature, I prefer accepting the theory of natural origin and evolutionary process to that of special creation and endowment. My theory, at least, has probabilities in its favor, while that of the theologian is merely a speculation, opposed to the manifestation of all natural law of which we have any knowledge. Thus I say to my readers, in the words of the late Professor Huxley: "Choose your hypothesis; I have chosen mine"; and "I refuse to run the risk of insulting any sane man by supposing that he seriously holds such a notion" as that of special creation.

Accepting the theory of Evolution as affording the best explanation of the development of man and the whole of the animal kingdom, I believe that man has reached his present condition, physically and mentally, by a natural process, and that by the struggle for existence, and by natural selection, he has acquired the mental qualities he now possesses. This view of Evolution is to-day largely accepted by many professed Christians who formerly rejected it. Such persons, however, still maintain that, whatever may have taken place with regard to physical powers and bodily organs, it is clear that the higher intellectual faculties of man could not so have originated; that these, at least, must be the result of special creation, and must have been called into existence when human beings first appeared upon the stage of life by some supernatural power. They further urge that, even if it could be shown beyond doubt that the marvellously-constructed body of man, with its beautifully adjusted parts of bone and muscle, nerve and brain, skin and mucous membrane, had its origin in evolution, yet no light whatever would be thrown upon the source of the wondrous powers of judgment and memory, understanding and will, perception and conception. I fail to see that the assumption here involved has any basis in fact; for those very powers are found existing in the lower animals. Psychological investigation has clearly shown that perception is not peculiar to man, but that it exists wherever there are organs of sense, and these extend in some form or other to the lowest phase of animal life. Volition is also met with in all the higher animals; and memory may be observed in the dog, horse, elephant, cat, camel, and numerous other mammals. Even judgment, in the form of comparison, is often displayed by the domestic animals—the dog in particular. Dr. H. Bischoff, in his *Essay on the Difference between Man and Brutes*, writes: "It is impossible to deny the animals, qualitatively and quantitatively, as many mental faculties as we find in man. They possess consciousness; they feel, think, and judge; they possess a will which determines their actions and motions. Animals possess attachment; they are grateful, obedient, good-natured; and, again, false treacherous, disobedient, revengeful, jealous, etc. Their actions frequently evince deliberation and memory. It is in vain to derive such actions from so-called instinct, which unconsciously compels them so to act." Now, with a knowledge of these facts, is it not reasonable to conclude that psychical powers are as likely to have been evolved as bodily organs? If the mental powers of the lower animals have come by evolution, there is not a shadow of reason for supposing that those of man came in any other way; for, while Darwin says, "the difference between the mind of man and that of the highest ape is immense," he also remarks, "great as it is, it is certainly one of degree, and not of kind."

To those who persist in asserting that the lower animals differ fundamentally from man in the intelligence they exhibit, and that therefore they must possess mental faculties different from those of man in order to account for such difference, I reply that, upon the same principle, it would be equally as logical to allege that, inasmuch as the manifestations of intelligence by some animals resemble those of man, therefore the cause of each must be similar, which at once destroys the notion that there is any radical difference in the intellectual powers of man and of the animals below him. To argue that an immaterial and intelligent Being was necessary to give birth to material and thinking animals is only putting the question of origin a step backwards. It gives no explanation of the genesis of the assumed immaterial Being, or states how *he* became possessed of *his* intelligence. The same objection applies to the statement that "in the beginning" all parts of existence were "endowed" with properties and powers necessary for their becoming what they are. This assumption rests upon the error of supposing that each separate mode of existence had a special starting point from which they all proceeded.

Then we are told that reasoning from effects to causes enables us to formulate a starting point. But it does nothing of the kind, and such an attempt at argument is on a par with the method adopted by theologians, who argue from the scheme of redemption to the fall of man. They trace the first sinner to the family of Adam, and there they stop; but beyond that, according to the story, there are the garden, the trees, and the serpent, which were the very agencies that caused the deplorable event. Whence came these?

CHARLES WATTS.

MARY MAGDALENE AND THE VIRGIN MARY.

IN the *Expositor* for September, Professor J. Rendel Harris writes on "The Blessed Virgin in the Talmud," reiterating his nonsense about the Roman soldier Pandira being an anagram of Parthenos, a virgin, and trying to show that, because Mary is spoken of as Megaddela, a hair-dresser, therefore the mother of Jesus was identified with Mary Magdalene. Dr. Harris, of course, cannot allow the supposition that the Christians misinterpreted the Jewish story. Yet his facts strongly confirm this. He says: "The Syrian commentators are much exercised to explain why Mary Magdalene was so called; they did not apparently know of any town of Magdala to which to refer her." Magdala, like Nazareth, turned up afterwards in answer to the demand of pilgrims. But these commentators "speculated as to what tower (migdol) she could have been named after," for there are many legends of virgins, including Mary, being, like Danæ, enclosed in a tower. Bar Salibi says: "She was called Magdalene because she inhabited the tower of Astrat, or the tower of Shiloah; or from plaited, because her hair was plaited." From this Dr. Harris concludes: "Jesus, therefore, according to the Talmud, was the son of Mary Magdalene." Dr. Harris shows further "that so careful a student of the Scripture as Ephrem Syrus made the same confusion in his *Commentary upon the Diatessaron*."

Now, how came the Christian commentator to make such a slip as this? I surmise it was for the very same reason that made St. Epiphanius say that Jesus was the son of Jacob, surnamed Panthera, and John of Damascus maintain that Panthera was great-grandfather to Mary, and Barpanther her grandfather (see *The Jewish Life of*

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Christ, edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, p. vii.). They were, like Dr. Harris, trying to reconcile the Jewish traditions with the Christian myths (see *The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ*, by Gerald Massey). The obvious explanation of the Miriam who bore Jeshu to Pandira being called Magdela was that the profession of hair-plaiting was a cover for harlotry. Hence, although there is nothing about it in the Gospels, it has always been the tradition of the Church that Mary Magdalene was a harlot, and she is identified with the woman who was a sinner. But this very Christian tradition proves the priority of the Jewish tradition that Mary Magdela was the mother of Jesus ben Pandira. UNCLE BENJAMIN.

HUXLEY.

MR. GEORGE W. SMALLEY, the American correspondent of the *Times*, who had a long and intimate acquaintance with the late Professor Huxley, has a monograph, or perhaps we should call it a tribute, in the October number of *Scribner*, which is one of the best we have yet seen. Mr. Smalley declares Huxley to have been "one of the truest men who ever lived, one of the manliest, and, in all points, one of the noblest." "I believe," he adds, "I should say the same thing if I had never known him, or known him but slightly, for I have known also many of his friends and some of his enemies, and from no one of them did I ever hear a word questioning his loyalty or truthfulness of nature." Mr. Smalley thinks Huxley's advocacy of Darwinism hindered the appreciation of his own original work. He says:—

> "When Darwin published the *Origin of Species*, he was denounced from every orthodox pulpit in England as an infidel. That was in 1859, not two generations ago. Huxley, who had already made a name in science, took his stand at once by Darwin. He did not affirm—he was never much given to affirming anything except that two and two made four—that Darwin's hypothesis had been made out. It was enough for him that the theory of evolution, or of natural selection, as it was first announced, had the probabilities on its side. It explained the hitherto unexplained origin of species more satisfactorily than any preceding theory. It gave, to say the least, a rational and not a merely mythological account of things, and for Huxley the use of the reason was the first condition of an approach to the truth. Until a more rational theory, better supported by facts, should be advanced he stood by this, and was content to work, and that others should work, on the lines Darwin had laid down. Darwin and Darwinism held the field. They hold it still. Twenty-one years later Huxley delivered, at the Royal Institution in London, a lecture on the coming of age of the Darwinian theory. He had very little to alter or modify."

We shall give some further extracts from this article in our next number.

W. L. Garrison and Orthodoxy.

When the great lights of the American Church—Stuart, Hodge, Fisk, and others—boldly asserted that the Bible sanctioned slaveholding, he was naturally led to consider the question of the inspiration of that book, and its authority over the consciences of men. His investigations resulted in the conviction that on this subject also the Friends were substantially right; that the revelation of God in man was older and more authoritative than that inscribed upon any parchment, however ancient, or by whatever miracles authenticated; and that if, as Stuart and other professors of theology affirmed, the Bible sanctioned slavery, then the passages containing such sanction could not be from God, but must be from the Devil.—"*William Lloyd Garrison and his Times*," by *O. Johnson*, p. 304.

For a whole generation Mr. Garrison was denounced by the pro-slavery ministry and Church as an Infidel. It was so much easier to hurl that epithet at his head than to answer his arguments against slavery.—*Ibid*, p. 306.

Obituary.

MARTHA COLE died at West Cowes on Friday, October 4th, after a lingering and cruel illness, the intense pain of which was borne with the greatest heroism. She was an ardent admirer of the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh.

GOD'S HOBBY.

THROUGHOUT his changeful mad career,
From zero to the present year,
  In raging wrath and meekness,
God showed, and shows, that all the time
He had, and has, for blood and crime
  A rather strongish weakness.

He filled the world with eager life
Foredoomed to live by deadly strife,
  And die in pain and sorrow;
And then—except a foolish few—
Through Hell's red night to roast and stew—
  A night without a morrow.

His motto is, as all must see:
"Do evil just that ill might be,
  Or else that good might follow";
A motto which we all detest,
And which, e'en Protestants protest,
  Beats Jesuits quite hollow.

The major factors of his plans
Were crimes, as seen by him that scans,
  With open mind, the Bible;
As "all's for best," God justifies
His means and methods: murder, lies—
  Or else the Book's a libel.

He couldn't e'en devise a plan
To save his wretched creature, man,
  Without a victim squealing:
And those whom Christ was killed to save
He "chastens" all, this side the grave,
  To show "there's no ill-feeling."

If God thought fit his Son to slay,
He might have planned a better way
  Than forcing man to do it;
He might have killed by bane, or beast,
And thus have saved the Jews, at least,
  From persecution through it.

But no, He dearly loved a crime,
And liked to see it ev'ry time;
  To him, 'twas sweet as honey:
Still, forcing man to do a sin,
In order sinlessness to win,
  Is rather—well, it's funny!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Samson's Locks.

A story, which in some points resembles that of Samson, is told in the island of Nias, off the west coast of Sumatra. A certain chief, Lanbo Maros by name, was taken prisoner by his enemies and condemned to death. It was resolved to drown him; so they flung him into the sea, and kept him there for a while. But when they hauled him up by the rope he was quite alive. Next they tried him with cold steel, stabbing him in every part of the body; but he took no harm by it. Surely, they thought, fire will do the business. So they tied him to a stake, and set fire to it. But, though the wood was consumed, he was not even singed. Then they took counsel with his wife, and she revealed her husband's secret. On the middle of his head he had a hair as hard as copper wire, and with this hair his life was bound up. So they pulled out the hair, and immediately he gave up the ghost.—*Frazer*, "*Passages from the Bible*," p. 430.

IS THE WORLD INDEBTED TO THE BIBLE FOR MORALITY?—"The wisdom of the Egyptians" was summarised in various compends of proverbial philosophy. One of these—written centuries before the time of Moses—is termed by M. Chabas "the most ancient book of the world." In common with other papyri of a similar character, it inculcates the study of wisdom, the duty of honoring parents and superiors, of respecting property, of being charitable, peaceable, contented, humble, chaste, sober, truthful, and just.—*The Rev. James Doble, D.D.*, "*The Faiths of the World*," pp. 175, 176; *1882*.

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (August 31).

After my visit to Stratford-on-Avon a few Birmingham Freethought friends gathered at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Armfield for a farewell gathering, hoping that, as the age rolls on, we shall meet again and bivouac on the fields of time, and join forces for further struggle. Mr. Ridgway leads off with an address both of welcome and good-bye, and Mr. Armfield, Robert Taylor, Mr. Cattell, and others, add their hearty good wishes, while the American visitor responds to the best of his ability. It was a joyous occasion, after the inspiration of Shakespeare, to thus realise the universal genius and comradeship of Freethought.

The movement formerly carried on so strenuously by Mr. Watts in Birmingham is sure to make itself felt in future years. My faith is ever in the progress of humanity. After a swift journey, for they can go in England if they only try, I am again in London, and am refreshed with a chat on all the things that interest a Freethinker, from politics and religion to art and literature, with my friends, Foote and Watts. The next day, Thursday, July 25, I again meet my American friends, Dr. Darrow and Dr. Morton, and we put in the time at the Crystal Palace. I find that while I was on my tour my friends, in usual Yankee fashion, in a little over a week had visited Scotland, the North of England, and also Paris. I was rather astonished at the rapidity of their course, but, being busy, professional men, and obliged to return soon, they determined to enjoy as large a glimpse of Europe as possible, and they certainly made the most of every minute. The Crystal Palace is one of those places that the traveller must behold, for it contains a vast variety of interesting objects. In art, in science, in history, are displays that one could study for months. The varied riches of many countries are here. In the evening, especially, with the myriad lights, the animated crowds, the sparkling waters, the solemn and sprightly music of organ and stringed instrument, and, to wind up, the vast and brilliant rush of fireworks, where every sort of color and fiery particle blazes and sprinkles through the heavens, the Palace is like an enchantment, and, for the time being, we seem to be walking the mazes of romance. It is impossible to describe the thousand-and-one exhibitions that throng upon the view. After this visit to the Crystal Palace I have to say good-bye to Dr. Darrow. He leaves the following day for America.

On Friday Mr. J. M. Wheeler takes me to the Tower of London. What a sad history is unfolded here! The heart aches to think of it. How many a bright life has been quenched in these gloomy buildings. Here are the mighty armors of the olden time that once made men invincible. These cumbrous suits appear foolish now. It makes one thankful that he can wear a modern suit of clothes and snap his fingers at these doughty knights, who must have had a hard time of it travelling about in these stupendous habiliments. By the way, all these suits of armor here and elsewhere are very small, showing that the average height and size of man have increased since the Middle Ages. Once in a while you come across a suit that might do for a six-footer, but very seldom. The modern man, in strength, grace, skill, and virility, surpasses King Arthur and his famous knights. There is no question but that man to-day is nobler physically than he ever was before. Judging from the armor, the warriors of old were a rather poor lot; and as for the horses, they were "slow coaches" indeed. They could not go much above a jog trot, and the jousts of chivalry would be very tame affairs at the present time. The heaviest man was sure to win, merely because of his weight. In this old-time royal residence and prison-house I wander in the chapel built by William the Conqueror, where he himself worshipped. I stand in the dungeons where many a prisoner has pined in agony, and on the spot where the scaffold was erected for the execution of Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey, and other illustrious victims. How cruel and barbarous those times appear whose shadow oppresses us to-day! I can never enter these ghostly buildings, with their record of crime, without a thrill of horror. I can but think of the awful injustice that has existed in the universe. And there seems no help for it. The strong arm has triumphed. History is a perpetual puzzle. God is always a vanishing point, while man is both good and evil, and makes and mars his own destiny. Somehow, out of the everlasting turmoil we have won the vantage ground. The terrific deeds of the past are no more. In them, however, we see the evolution of man and the annihilation of the deity.

Passing from these dark towers—a huge, strange relic in the bustle and glamor of to-day's civilisation, seeming like a great ship stranded on a foreign shore, a wreck of the ages, freighted with the wealth of kings, jewels and crowns, swords and regalia, and the glistening instruments of war—I walk to the Tower Bridge, which arches the Thames near by, in glorious contrast with the ancient palace of kings, a modern structure, built for the people, and not for a despot. It is the noblest bridge over the Thames, with massive towers. Between these swings the enormous drawbridge through which the great ships pass. The traffic over this bridge, as over London Bridge, is a marvel to those who first see London. One wonders where all the people and the teams and the crowded carriages come from, and would think that the great metropolis was pouring itself into this one highway. Still, if he went to London or Blackfriars Bridge, he would find the same vast mass of tidal business.

I must confess there is an occasional stupidity in the English mind that is quite exasperating. Here are the great towers of the bridge, which we are invited to climb to the extent of two hundred steps or more, with the expectation that, as we pass aloft from tower to tower, we shall have an extended view of the Thames and the city. Alas! you are doomed to a disgustful disappointment. Disgust is the only word that can express your feeling when you reach the top to find that you pass from one tower to the other through a closed archway. I was over the bridge before I knew it, and could scarcely believe that I was on the other side until I went back and looked through a few little crevices upon the broad stream beneath. It made me swear a prayer or two to think I had been so thoroughly deceived by the massive stupidity of Anglo-Saxon conservatism. If French or Greek genius had built this loftly highway, it would have been a light and airy structure, through which might be seen vast and glittering prospects of the river and the busy traffic. A noble panorama would have greeted one, instead of this dungeon-like path, through whose crevices you catch the sunlight while you stand on tip-toe, and wonder that the mind which built such a stupendous bridge should crown it with such a solid piece of folly. I say to every traveller, Do not climb the stairs of the Tower Bridge. You will be humbugged if you do. Walk over it, take a good look from the outside, see the great drawbridge rise and the stately ship pass through and the tide of traffic roll on again, and that is all that you can do. The splendid view from the top is shut out by an almost inconceivable blunder.

It is curious what you will see in London at times, a grotesque and yet romantic mingling of art and dilapidation. Just on the verge of Billingsgate—the dirtiest portion of London I guess—is St Mary's Church-on-the-Hill, a humble-looking edifice, with an air of desolation in the outward view that would make one think that the inside must be as gloomy as a grave. A change, however, passes over the vision as we enter, for within are perhaps the most exquisite and beautiful carvings in all England—a very gem of art in the slums of London. This church must have been on a favored and fashionable spot to be so nobly decorated, yet in process of time the *débris* of Billingsgate flowed around its site, and imprisoned its precious ornaments with the environments of poverty. This is an evidence of the vastness of London life and its perpetual changes, like those of the sea itself.

After these wanderings, Mr. Wheeler and myself sit down for dinner in the famous Crosby Hall. This is where Richard III. received the crown, and within it, in the dining-room and smoking-room, are memorials of the dim and dusty past, paintings, armors, carvings, etc. However, the ghost of the bloody Richard does not disturb our appetite. We eat heartily, and think that kings are no better than common clay, and a crown is a poor bauble compared with a healthy stomach.

Saturday is my busy day for mail, "News and Notes," etc., for America. But after these labors I wander over to King's Cross and meet my friend, Mr. G. W. Foote, and spend the evening with him and his family, with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Watts, and Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler, and others. It was delightful to sit out in the garden, on the green sward, with the flowers in perfume and bloom about you the trees making soft music, the rich sunlight glancing on roof and wall, and making a mellow radiance over the scene; while the children play, and the elders talk philosophy. It was a charming place for thought, for reverie, for imagination. It was one of those resting places for the mind, where we forget the strife of the world, the injustice and falsehoods, and the stern duties that must be met. We rejoice for the moment in the ideal life, and poetry touches our heart with its imperial sceptre; as Alexander Smith says, "It clothes us with kingdoms." Our host is not simply the sceptic, the reformer, the warrior, the iconoclast; he is a lover of poetry, in all its moods of glory and of song. Especially is he a student of the supreme and universal Shakespeare, through whose domains he has wandered many a joyous day, and gathered from wide experience the noblest fruitage of the immortal bard. So the evening passes, and music adds its marvel to the occasion, and the soul of Freethought touches the heights of human excellence. It flashes the promethean fire, the forethought of humanity, the glory of the future, the budding of beauty and delight, after the destruction of misery and the wrong.

I am indebted to Mr. Victor Charles Jackson, one of our

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young Freethought workers in London, for a delightful visit to Canterbury on Sunday, July 28, when I am for the first time free from the harness. Canterbury is an old and orthodox town. The spirit of the past broods over it. Its cathedral is one of the most ancient in England, and one of the most beautiful and impressive. It, indeed, charms the eye with its massive yet graceful glory. Its arched roof, its painted windows, its columned aisles, present a scene of sweet attraction, mingled though it may be with the superstitions of a dead age. Glorious music was pealing through the vast space as we entered. It was a solemn religious service preparatory to the installation of Dean Farrar, a somewhat advanced theologian, who has just been appointed to the place. I enjoyed the music; the singing was delightful. Some of the voices are the finest in England, for they take especial pains at this cathedral to secure first-rate musical ability; and certainly the music was in harmony with the magnificence of the cathedral. But the formalities of worship, the stiff, artificial ceremonies, the dry prayers, and still drier preaching, did not conduce at all to elevation of mind. They were like a bitter pill which we had to swallow in order to get the real good of the occasion, which was simply in the masterful effects produced by the genius of man in the decorations of the building, in the superb and unmatched beauties of the windows, that flushed with soft yet splendid effulgence that must charm the imagination which delights in color, however critical the mind, and in the waves of music that flowed on and on as if the cathedral itself were a fountain of melody, and all its beautiful forms and hues were melting into ethereal joy and splendor.

In the afternoon, in fortunate conjunction with a party of American visitors, and by the courtesy of Mr. Jackson, I had the pleasure of viewing the cathedral under the guidance of Canon Holland, who is a most cultivated gentleman, and who has made a faithful study of the cathedral and its wonderful history. This was the place where Thomas à Becket was murdered. The canon described the scene with dramatic felicity, so that a vivid picture was presented of the theatre of the crime. We could see the crowding monks, the heroic prelate, and the relentless knights. We saw the very spot where the stubborn priest received his death wound; where he fell and poured out his life blood upon the pavement. Beneath, in the crypt of the cathedral, we saw the tomb of Becket, and the place where the king, in penance for the murder, received three hundred and twenty stripes upon his bare back. The canon remarked, with a somewhat subtle smile, that here was a case in which the value of penance was displayed, for before the king received the stripes he was defeated on every hand; but when he went forth from the cathedral after the penance he was greeted with news of victory after victory. He was a lucky king without doubt. As usual, God was on the side of the heaviest battalions, penance or no penance, and the twinkle in the canon's eye meant as much; but I am afraid he didn't apply his logic to the whole case of Christianity.

We saw the tomb of Edward, the Black Prince, and the armor he wore in battle, and the tomb of the king and queen, Henry and Eleanor. I must express my thanks to Canon Holland for his genial politeness, and for the wealth of scholarly information which he furnished of the great cathedral and its centuries of existence.

After visiting the cathedral, we wandered to St. Martin's, which is said to be the oldest church building in the land. It is, indeed, an antique structure, and looks as if it might have floated down from the flood. It is situated in the midst of an old cemetery, where wild grasses and flowers flourish over the graves. Services are going on as we approach, and soft and solemn music fills the air. It is said that this was originally a temple of the Druids, built 100 A.D. It afterwards became a place of Roman worship, and then a Christian church in 370 A.D. This is the legend. Whatever may be the facts, the "corridors of time" stretch far away to the foundation-stones of this quaint little church, and we need not dispute the story as it is given.

Canterbury is also famous as the place where David Copperfield lived, and I think that David will be remembered as long as St. Thomas à Becket, and with much more delightful associations. *David Copperfield* is, to a certain extent, an autobiography of Dickens, and on that account is intensely interesting, as also are Canterbury and its surroundings, connected with the genius of the great story-teller, who has so much of the wonderful exuberance of Shakespeare. Mr. Jackson, who is an enthusiastic student of Dickens, pointed out the house where Agnes used to sit sewing by the window, and where Uriah Heep used to look forth with his cunning eyes; and also the tavern where Micawber gave his farewell gorgeous banquet, for which he never paid the bill; and there was the butcher's shop, etc. All these things, associated with the immortal story, gave to ancient Canterbury the brilliant light of modern humanity and glorious romance. I shall not forget my excursion to this venerable place, and must thank Mr. Jackson for his kindness and generosity.

On Monday I have to write "News and Notes" again, but find a pleasant relief after these literary labors in a social reunion at the home of Miss Edith M. Vance and Miss Annie Brown. Our women friends do not fear to put on the harness and work for reform, notwithstanding danger and ostracism. Since I have arrived in England, in many places in the field work there has been bitter opposition, and, but for the protection of policemen, there would have been bloodshed and riot. The cruel nature of the Christian religion is thus exposed. In these emergencies we find that woman does not lack in courage and devotion.

On Tuesday, July 30, I sail with Dr. Morton down the Thames to Greenwich, and visit its museum and hospital and observatory. The voyage along the river is one of constant animation, so varied are the scenes, the vessels, the bridges, the shores, etc. The great hospital at Greenwich extends magnificently on the sight as we approach. In the museum and gallery are the portraits and relics of Nelson, and the melancholy remains of the Arctic expedition under the gallant Franklin. Time forbids a further description.

In the evening, with Mr. Jackson, I visit the India Exhibition, where the great wheel, three hundred feet high, rolls around, and where there is a most brilliant exhibition of oriental life, its trade, its skill, its art, its wild and luxuriant animal world; its temples of worship, its thousand gods. It was a resplendent scene, ten thousand blazing torches, ten thousand people, bands playing by the dozen almost, beautiful gardens, cascades and flowing waters. One need not travel to India to see its vivid and superb variety of human genius.

On Wednesday evening I went with Dr. Morton to the magnificent Royal Aquarium, where music and the drama add their charms to a display of curiosities from every age and clime. I also visit, with Dr. Morton, the "Old Curiosity Shop" of Dickens. It is still standing in the heart of London, a little, crooked building, with old books and papers for sale, pictures of Dickens, relics, etc.

On Thursday, with my genial and learned friend Wheeler, who is interested in all that pertains to literature, we visited Chelsea, the home of Carlyle, and the house where he used to live and work, and the garden where he used to smoke and muse. Carlyle has been a great influence in this century, a kind of thunderbolt of reform and sincerity. He was tremendously in earnest, and, although he believed in God, he found fault with him also, and muttered: "He does nothing, he is asleep." Though Carlyle could not waken the deity, he did waken man, and set him to thinking and doing. Carlyle was a rugged old fellow, but he wielded the hammer of Thor and made the sparks fly. I plucked some jasmine planted by the wife in the garden. In this case I honor the woman more than the man. She was equally heroic, equally genuine; a woman of fine devotion and splendid nobility of character. I honor Carlyle, but Jane was the better man of the two, and deserves a more shining crown.

On Thursday evening I end my week's London experience at the home of Charles Albert Watts, the son of Charles Watts, who is engaged in scientific and Freethought publishing business, is editor of the *Literary Guide*, etc. Around his hospitable table are Mrs. Watts, his wife, the twin children, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Watts, who can rejoice in seeing grandchildren gather about them. How old we are getting to be; yet no one would know it by our looks, only by our children, who grow up so fast about our pathway. We spend a delightful evening, and are loth to part when train time arrives; but we cannot afford to be "left"—we must keep up with time and tide.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

ACID DROPS.

MRS. CHANT is in America, trading on the notoriety she gained by her crusade against the Empire Music Hall, the license of which has just been restored without restriction, at least so far as the recommendation of the Licensing Committee is concerned. Mr. Price Hughes, however, is still here to save London from outrage. Last Sunday afternoon he had a meeting of Good Templars in St. James's Hall, and asked them if, in their name, he might send a message to the Chairman of the London County Council, requesting it to overrule its Licensing Committee's decision. Of course the meeting said Yes. No doubt this highly *impartial* opinion will have great weight with the County Council.

MAX NORDAU'S *Paradoxes* has long been known to Freethinkers in England through the American translation. A new translation is now issued in London by Heinemann, and the *Methodist Times* says it "will find many readers." In another part of the same paper we notice that "infidelity in this country has had its day." Our pious contemporary is evidently ignorant of Max Nordau's irreligious opinions.

Considering that "infidelity" has had its day in England, it is curious that Mr. Price Hughes is imploring the Dissen-

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ters to join the Church of England in opposition to Secular Education. He begs them not to "make themselves the cats'-paws of agnostic journalists," and warns them against letting the School Board system be "worked in the interests of infidels and agnostics." We have had our own day, but somehow it is not night with us, and Mr. Hughes knows it.

Mr. Hughes is one of the loosest writers and speakers in this country. He refers to the "millions of workmen" who have received the Salvation Army preachers with open arms. How many millions of workmen does he think there are in England?

The *Church Times* protests against the heretical proposals of the Women's Total Abstinence Union for the use of "unfermented wine in the eucharist." It says: "A liquor that is not fermented is not wine, and without wine the original command to do this cannot be obeyed." The question is fully dealt with in Mr. Foote's new pamphlet on *The Bible and Beer*.

A writer who has travelled in China comments in the *Melbourne Argus* on the folly of letting young Christian women go about preaching in that country. To go unattended in the way they do is only practised by the lowest class of Chinese women, with whom they are thus naturally confounded. What, he asks, is the sense of "sending ladies out at all? If only for pity's sake, and in the cause of humanity, this system of luring inexperienced girls to die in agony and horror amid the yellow savages of China ought to be at once put an end to."

Dr. Griffith John, of Hankow, a well-known missionary, also strongly objects to female missionaries going about in strange districts, sometimes accompanied by male evangelists. This presents a picture to the eyes of the Chinese which is not calculated to heighten their respect. "I think," he says, "the women are of very great service as nurses and teachers, and they should only, I think, work from thoroughly organised centres, and under every possible safeguard."

It appears that in China, wherever there is a Christian mission established, Chinese parents are afraid of letting their children go out, lest they should be kidnapped by the foreign devils. At Cheng-tu, where the massacre took place, a placard was issued warning parents to keep their children within doors. However false and erroneous such a notion may be, no one can wonder that where it exists there must be a feeling of enmity and hatred against the foreign devils, "the followers of the *cha* Jesus."

The Church Missionary Society is sending more ladies out to China to take the place of the martyred ones, who are supposed to have a safe seat in glory. We very much question if these ladies know the real state of native feeling; and, should further massacres result, the pious parties who induce these ladies to thus devote their lives to martyrdom are really accessories before the fact.

Cardinal Gibbons, a Yankee red-hatted priest, has been to Rome. Unfortunately he did not stop there. He has returned to the United States, where he informs the people that the Pope "believes fully" in the custom of opening Congress with prayer. Of course he does. We know that without asking. Who ever heard of a butcher running down beef?

There is a good deal of sham liberty in "free and independent" America. A wretched fellow called Comstock, secretary of the Vice Society (as old Cobbett used to call the original body in England), pretty well decides on his own hand what literature shall pass through the United States mails. It now appears that the Postmaster-General of Canada has prohibited the transmission of our gallant contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*. By a stroke of his pen he stops the circulation of this paper in the whole Dominion, and there is absolutely no appeal against his decision. It is really astonishing that "free" people should hire a man to carry their letters, and let the fellow dictate what they shall read. Yet so it is, and they submit to it like a lot of sheep—all but the Freethinkers.

The *Christian Reformer* calls for the suppression of the *Truthseeker*. This is to "induce" its readers to "seek something more wholesome." The *Truthseeker* remarks that "The prescription is a very simple one, but it is not new." Of course not. It is as old as the first rogue who joined the first fool to hunt down the first honest man.

The revival of the curfew in many parts of the country is an indication of the stern way we are now making towards mediævalism. A curfew is a bell rung at candle-lighting. If, after the prescribed hour, a child under the age of consent is detected in the act of being upon the public street, by or in default of its parents' permission, a fine of one hundred dollars, more or less, is incurred. The custom, of course, has its origin in the hen-roost, though its present adherents are insensible of that fact. They take a hint from Mohammed, who prayed that the mountain might come to him, but, learning that that natural object was sedentary in its habits, he went to the mountain. The clergy, who are the volunteer herders of the populace, seeing that a penitentiary cannot at present be erected in every town without exceeding the legal indebtedness, have started in with the material at hand, and propose to make every child's home its own jail. Parents are honored by appointment as assistant jailers over the fruit of their loins. It is superfluous to inquire, Whither are we drifting? We are hell-bent for Puritanism.—*George Macdonald*, in "*Truthseeker*" (*N.Y.*).

High Church and Low Church are likely to have some nice squabbles during the Church Congress at Norwich. Father Ignatius intends to be present, and the Protestant Alliance will muster in force to disseminate anti-Catholic literature.

The *Church Times* declares that the Board school system, as at present practised, "is nothing more or less than the endowment of Dissent." There is a simple remedy—secular education only to be paid for out of public funds. Until this remedy is adopted there will always be squabbling as to the character of religious teaching, and teachers who should be employed in teaching what they know, instead of what they believe, will be jealously watched lest they lead the children in the direction of their own beliefs.

Some of the School Board Reports are somewhat misleading. Thus from Lenham, Kent, they report: "Nothing doctrinal is taught." Yet in another column we read that all divisions learn the Apostles' Creed. If that venerable forgery is not "doctrinal," what is?

According to the *Tablet*, the Archbishop of Santiago, in Chili, has pronounced an interdict upon two Atheistic journals "which had distinguished themselves by their blasphemies and scandalous attacks upon the Church, and excommunicated all connected therewith, including sellers and readers." The *Tablet* seems to recognise that all this may be laughed at, for it adds, most impressively, as the climax, that "The two leading banks have stopped their advertisements."

Sir Richard Church, who was Commander-in-Chief of the Greek forces during the War of Independence, afterwards accepted a commission from King Ferdinand to put down the brigands who infested and terrorised the kingdom of Naples. "Worst of all," the *Westminster Gazette* says, "were the Decisi, under Ciro Annichiarico, a bloodthirsty priest who generally prefaced a crime by a mass, and at his execution confessed to sixty or seventy murders." Quite a King David! The man after God's own heart always twanged his harp when he was bent on an extra-special crime.

Under the heading, "Shocking Case of Depravity," the *South Australian Register* (August 27) reports the arrest, at Oakleigh, Melbourne, of the Rev. James Frank Gannaway, who has filled various Congregational pulpits in England and Victoria, for getting children by his own daughter. He is an elderly man, and is said to have six children, who are his grandchildren also.

At the sensational trial of a Sunday-school teacher for murdering a girl in a chapel at San Francisco, an incident was the infliction upon the secretary of the Y.M.C.A. of a fine of 250 dollars for having told a juryman that the people would hang him if they did not hang Durrant, the accused.

An order of half-a-crown a week has been made on the Rev. Jonathan Crossland, late vicar of Kilham, near Driffield, for the purpose of maintaining the illegitimate child of a girl of sixteen, who was in his service.

The monks of Athos rigidly exclude all female creatures, including animals, from their domains. Yet travellers complain of fleas. Why do they not excommunicate feminine fleas, as the bishops of old solemnly excommunicated locusts and other vermin?

Bowen, in his work on Mount Athos, mentions a superstition that any women who presumed to land on the holy peninsula have always been struck dead for their impiety. One of the monks asked him, "What sort of human creatures are women?" He answered, "Have you never seen a woman?" "when he assured me he had only seen his mother, and that he had forgotten even her appearance." These monks do not make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but perhaps it would be just as well if they did.

A straw showing the way the wind is blowing in America on the New Woman question is the announcement that the

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Catholic University of Washington, this month opens its doors to women. They will not receive degrees, but will be brought under priestly training, and receive such higher education as the Church has to offer. It is satisfactory to see the Church, which is built on the necks of women, obliged to give them a little more opportunity, for fear lest they drift where education of a non-priestly character may be obtained.

An American Catholic magazine, *Self-Culture*, has the impudence to write: "Had Thomas Paine's mind been clear in his last moments, he would undoubtedly have died in the communion of the Catholic Church." Now, it happens that Paine's mind was clear in his last moments, and he deliberately rejected the offices of all men of God. If there was one faith more than another which he disliked, it was the set of priestly institutions and superstitions called Catholic.

Benton Ridge, Ohio, has recently suffered from a furious revival of religion, and one of the converts is building a large tank, which he will fill with water, so that another convert can show the depth of his faith by attempting to walk upon its surface. He is likely, incidentally, to show the depth of water.

Christian civilisation wants a little toning up (or perhaps toning down) in some parts of America. Monday's papers reported a horrible lynching incident at Cole City, Tennessee. A negro, alleged to have assaulted a white girl, was dragged from the jail by a furious mob. The father of the girl then mutilated him in an unspeakable manner, after which another man pounded the joints of his fingers until his hands were reduced to a jelly. The poor wretch was then shot in different parts of the body, and his corpse was burnt to ashes.

Sunday before the Church Congress at Norwich was taken advantage of by the local Bishop, who addressed a meeting in the Agricultural Hall on Christian Socialism. "It would seem," says the *Daily News* correspondent, "that he expected the audience would largely consist of working men; but there did not seem to be many of that class present." We should think not, indeed! Working men are not fond of listening to harangues on "Labor" by rich dignitaries of a purse-proud Church.

The Wesleyan Missionary Committee having decided to stop the supplies for South African Missions, the churches over there have appointed a week of self-denial throughout the entire body, in order to make up the deficiency.

In 1852 it is believed there were about 150 native Christians, but it is doubtful if there were one hundred Muslims, in the whole of Lagos. To-day there are at least *twelve thousand* followers of Islam, with fifty Mosques. Christianity, in the same period, although State-aided and recognised, and protected by treaty rights, can only boast of twenty-eight churches and chapels of all denominations, and about five thousand nominal followers. With these striking figures before them, Christians continually declare that Islam is *only* promoted by the sword, and cannot succeed when opposed by Christianity.—*Crescent.*

Actual investigation shows that more outrages are committed by Americans upon Chinese than by the latter upon the former. It is also clearly shown that, while the Americans have no decent excuse for their barbarities, the Chinese generally act under great provocation. Yet these facts will not deter the newspapers from claiming all the virtues for the Americans, and condemning the Chinese as inhuman fiends unfit to live.

The Rev. H. T. Chapman, of Leeds, addressing the congregation of the Orchard Chapel at Preston, reproved them hotly for using their handkerchiefs as fans, and said that cooling themselves made it all the hotter for him. He perspired in the pulpit, but that was nothing to what some will have to undergo hereafter.

Matthew Arnold said that God was usually conceived as a magnified non-natural man, and Herbert Spencer holds that all gods are the ghosts of ancestral chiefs. This may be too summary an account of the deities, but it is borne out by what missionary Taylor reports of the Kaffirs. When told about God, they asked how many wives he kept. A chief's status was determined by the amount of luxuries he could afford; and when they heard that God had but one son and no wife, they thought he was not much of a sovereign.

Polygamy has always proved a trouble to the missionaries. Jesus said nothing about it, while the heathen read in their Bibles how Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, and other favorites of God, practised it. If the missionary insists on all the wives being put away except the first, this usually means that the polygamist is left with the oldest, while the others are cast adrift. One Central African is said to have qualified himself for baptism by eating up all his wives save the one permitted by the messenger of Christ.

Herbert Burrows, who is currently credited with converting Mrs. Besant to Theosophy, has left the Theosophical Society, and, in doing so, writes a letter to the papers, in which he says: "The recent disclosures of fraud which have split the Society led me to further investigations, impossible before, which have thoroughly convinced me that for years deception in the Society has been rampant, deception to which Madame Blavatsky was sometimes a party." Mr. Burrows adds that he leaves the Society because "as it exists I believe it to be a standing danger to honesty and truth, and a perpetual open door to superstition, delusion, and fraud." The curious thing is that Mr. Burrows, who, according to a famous inscription by H. P. B., was "my friend in a former incarnation," has been so long in finding this out.

Our Ritualistic churches now go in much for Harvest Thanksgivings, and turn their altars into the resemblance of a greengrocer's shop. All this is an attempted modification of the old Pagan rites of harvest time. One of the most significant of these was the custom kept up by Catholics on Lammas (*i.e.*, Loaf-mass) day, of celebrating the sacrament with bread made from the last cut sheaf of the newly-taken harvest, in which the corn-spirit, or old John Barleycorn of the song, was supposed to have entered, and which found its way into the safe receptacle of the stomachs of those who partook of the Holy Sacrament.

Of course, the real inner meaning of the old spring and harvest festivals was that God (*i.e.*, his priests) should have the first fruits of the sheep, cattle, and harvest. But with every advance of civilisation God's (*i.e.*, his priests')-share gets less and less, and now, instead of taking tithes of all, he has to hand over the big pumpkins to the sexton.

A recent attempt has been made to back up the legends of Noah's flood, by referring to the evidences of some catastrophe which swept away palæolithic man and the great beasts of the palæolithic period. Assuming this to be correct, it is yet certain that the neolithic period lasted for an immense time after the palæolithic period; while the races which dwelt in Egypt, long prior to Noah, were not in a stone age, although doubtless they preserved remnants of it, but were acquainted with, and made utensils of bronze and copper.

It was found from the Parliamentary Returns on Religious Teaching in Board Schools that eight schools, despite the express terms of the Act under which they sit, taught the Church Catechism *en bloc*. Only fifty-seven dispense with religious teaching altogether, and of these only seven are in England, though sixty Welsh and nearly twenty English Board schools fight shy of Bible-teaching. Some of them open with a hymn.

Colonel Ingersoll's pocket was picked the other day in Missouri, whereat the *Richmond State* rejoices. "Go for him again, slick-finger!" exclaims this elegant representative of Christian piety. Once it was right to burn a Freethinker—now it is right to rob him. Even this is an improvement. If they only let the Atheist live, he will teach them to be honest.

There are still over ten thousand parishes in which there is no Board school, and where the inhabitants are forced to send their children to the Church schools. Of course, the Church people say there is the Conscience clause, which they well know is a fraud and a snare, leading to the persecution of the children withdrawn.

The men of God at Johannesburg, S.A., have a Ministers Association to protect their own monopolies. The said Association has brought an action against the lessees of the Theatre of Varieties and Empire, charging them with contravening the Sunday Act by having their houses open for Sunday Concerts. No doubt the L.D.R.A. would like to do something similar here.

Most church attendants now are women. They go to see and be seen, to get out once a week, and keep up with the latest styles of dress-fitting. The married men go occasionally to please their wives, and the young men to see the girls, while possibly a few old fogies go because they think God will damn them if they don't.—*Independent Pulpit.*

The corner-stone of a church was being laid at Lorain, Ohio. A thousand persons assembled on a platform to witness this function. Somehow the structure collapsed. Five persons were killed on the spot, eleven fatally injured, and many others hurt. Some were trampled to death in the panic. Such is the sustaining and elevating influence of the religion which conquers the fear of death.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

October 20, Foresters' Hall.

November 17, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—October 13, Foresters' Hall; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 21, Paisley; 22, Cupar; 24 and 25, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. November 17, Liverpool; 24, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. Dowding.—It is, as you say, a great victory at Walthamstow. Many thanks for your action in the matter.

W. Strassheim.—Mr. Foote will probably visit Newcastle again shortly. The matter you complain of shall be looked into. Thanks for your good wishes.

W. Walker hopes we shall have a New Year's Gift week after Christmas.

J. Hindle, a veteran Freethinker, writes: "Could you not extend the *time* to a Shilling *Month* Fund? I approve your method of propaganda, and wish ten thousand shillings may be sent you. The Freethought party could do this and more."

J. W. F.—We also wish your shilling were "a hundred times as much," but the deficiency might easily be made up by ninety-nine others sending a shilling each.

A. Stanley, subscribing to Shilling Week, says: "I wish you could extend your leading articles in the *Freethinker*; they are sweet, sweet, but far too short." The difficulty is that Mr. Foote has work enough for two or three people already. Besides, he has always aimed at putting "the cream of the matter" into his articles; and if the reader gets that, he need not trouble very much about the skim-milk left over.

W. B. Thompson.—Your communication is too long for insertion this week, as we are overcrowded with matter at present. We note your explanation of why you voted for once with the Church party on the Gillingham School Board. The Dissenters would not help you in any way to carry out their own boasted principle of "religious equality," so, having the odd vote that turned the scale, you left them at the tender mercy of the Church party, with its Apostles' Creed; telling them that, as the Conscience clause was good enough for the Secularists, it would have to be good enough for the Dissenters. We quite understand your action, and hope it will show Dissenters their folly and hypocrisy.

A. Staigen.—Thanks for your letter and the newspaper. See paragraph.

James Hart.—Glad to receive your appreciative and encouraging letter. Mr. Foote has for some time had his eye on Cardiff, Swansea, and South Wales generally, as a likely place for Freethought propaganda. Perhaps something could be done there this winter.

Humanitarian.—Would the lady inflict injury upon another mother's child because it was not baptised? If not, why should she think God (if such a being exist) is more cruel than herself? A child is passive at its baptism; knows nothing about it in fact. Would it not be monstrous, therefore, to punish it for not being baptised, when the omission is no fault of its own?

A. J. Newton.—Your money is transferred, as requested. It was the Queen's secretary who officially denied the truth of that story about her declaring the Bible to be the source of England's greatness. It is an imposition to hang that picture up in a Board school.

W. Cole.—Accept our sympathy.

T. Fisher.—The far east of London requires waking up, and we hope to do something there this winter. Freethinkers exist in West Ham, Walthamstow, etc., but they want uniting for a common effort. The passage you refer to is not to be found in the words given; but see Judges ii. 20-23.

A. F. Walter.—It is pleasant to receive a family subscription for Shilling Week. We like to see Freethought permeating the whole household.

W. Martin.—We think you may depend upon Mr. Gott as an honest tradesman, anxious to do justice to his customers as well as himself. The goods ordered for our own household have always given satisfaction.

E. Jennings.—Mr. Foote will be glad to pay Ipswich another visit. Lectures in such a place should for some time be of a decidedly militant character. It is no use tickling the surface of hard soil; it must be ploughed up.

J. Scott.—Pleased to hear from you. Did not know you had removed to Manchester.

Hugh Thomson.—Thanks for your kind letter and good wishes.

H. A. G.—Shall appear, with slight alterations.

W. Box.—Hope your wish that we may receive "many thousand shillings" will be realised.

W. A. Ansell.—Glad to know you appreciate our lecture scheme. It is pleasant to hear of the ex-local preacher newsagent, away down in Cornwall, exhibiting our contents-sheet and selling a dozen copies weekly. Our compliments to him.

R. Carroll.—Your letter to hand. It confirms our suspicions. We will write you on the subject in a few days.

D. G. Lindsay (Glasgow).—Both remittances received, and names acknowledged.

Joseph Taylor.—Convey our thanks to the Staleybridge subscribers.

F. P. Cooper.—Particulars of membership of N.S.S. forwarded. We hope you will see your way to join.

A. B. Moss.—It was good of you to subscribe, especially after your recent heavy domestic expenses. Hard workers like yourself ought not to be taxed financially in addition.

W. A. Jones.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with our "racy articles in the *Freethinker*."

J. Draper.—We thank you for obtaining us a new subscriber. Change of address notified to our publisher.

J. Hockin.—The second volume of the work you mention has been delayed by Mr. Foote's multifarious duties. We hope to publish it next year.

B. Waterhouse, who sends ten shillings from a little Kentish town, says of our scheme: "I think it is about the best way you can lay out money at present."

J. Kimberley.—Thanks. Will see, and if possible acknowledge next week.

W. F. Dobson.—Letters for insertion must be written on one side only of the paper. Your communication is, besides, too long and too impertinent.

W. H. Spivey.—Glad to hear the Huddersfield Branch is prepared for fresh active work, and hope you will be able to obtain a suitable hall for lectures.

A. Waymark.—(1) The statement in *Was Jesus Insane?* that his friends thought him mad, is supported by Mark iii. 21. (2) We cannot undertake to substantiate the statements of writers in the *Clarion*, who, we dare say, are well able to defend themselves.

W. Davies, who sends ten shillings, says: "Your Shilling Week is a move in the right direction."

G. A. K.—You point to a real drawback. Mr. Foote is bent on reducing this chaos to order. Easy-going muddlers will not like his action, but he is resolved to proceed.

T. Thelwall.—Pleased to have your "hearty sympathy" in our "efforts to spread Freethought." Mr. Wheeler's new volume will not deal with the God question in the way you desire; the essays in it will be mostly anthropological; but we believe you will find it both interesting and useful. Ecclesiastical history, especially up to the fourth century, is gangrened with fraud.

J. Proctor, who sends ten shillings, writes: "I hope you will get more this time than you did last Shilling Week, which was a disappointment to me, as I hoped you would get a thousand pounds at least."

E. D. H. Daly.—Amount divided as you suggest. Miss Vance will send you receipt for the N.S.S. subscription. Exceptionally glad to have your "best wishes and sincere admiration" for our "conduct as leader of the party."

C. H. Sheldon.—Mr. Foote will certainly visit York if a decent hall can be obtained.

H. Jones (Blackburn).—List received with thanks. Glad to hear you are sending Miss Vance the names of six new members.

T. Womersell.—(1) The Barnsley Branch, with its poor members, has done well. You have a right to "hope the rich will do better." (2) It is absurd to say that Hebrew was as easy without the vowel points as with them. Why then were the vowel points adopted? Professor Bruce says, in his *Christian Apologetics*, that the man who wrote the old Hebrew would have difficulty in understanding himself after a time long enough to allow of a lapse of memory.

J. Fulton, subscribing to Shilling Week, writes: "I am sorry to see the apathy that exists among well-to-do Freethinkers with regard to your heavy and useful work. I am doubly astonished that the very wealthy do not occasionally present you with a thousand or two out of their profusion."

F. Nelson (Sheffield) writes: "It is with great pleasure I support Self-Denial Week. I trust the funds raised thereby will enable you to carry on a vigorous propaganda. I think this is just what the Freethought movement requires. We want more 'push.'"

R. Johnson (Manchester) thinks Shilling Week should be quarterly or half-yearly, and says every Freethinker should give one shilling at least.

Papers Received.—Walthamstow Reporter—Freidenker—Post—Orcadian—Walthamstow Guardian—Blue Grass Blade—Referee—Crescent—Norwood Weekly Herald—Kaffrarian Watchman—Port Elizabeth Advertiser—Chatham and Rochester News—Scribner—Rochester and Chatham Standard—Two Worlds—Dublin Saturday Herald—New York Public Opinion—Secular Thought—Newcastle Chronicle—Progressive Thinker—Dundee Courier.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 6d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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SHILLING WEEK.

ACTING on the suggestion of a correspondent, I have resolved to do what I did on a previous occasion—namely, to keep this Fund open a little longer. This will give the laggards—and they are many—an opportunity of subscribing; and really it is better late than never.

The great majority of subscriptions, up to the present, are for small amounts. Of course more of these are wanted, as it is well to see "the rank and file" interested in the success of the movement. But those who can send larger amounts are requested to bestir themselves. Cheques are welcome, as well as Postal Orders.

My own share of this enterprise is simply work and loss. I have not taken a single penny for any lecture at Milton Hall, St. James's Hall, or Foresters' Hall; and I am personally responsible for the deficit.

A few facts will show, better than columns of abstraction, at what I am aiming.

Mr. Watts has formed extra engagements under my scheme during his approaching northern tour. He will visit York, Coupar, Perth, and Paisley. Mr. Cohen is also making a number of similar engagements. In each case I undertake to recompense the lecturer, leaving the Branches or committees to see to the purely local expenses, which can be met, or met partly, by collections.

Mr. Gott wrote to me a few days ago from Bradford, stating that the local friends at Bingley, Shipley, Stanningley, Farsley, Heckmondwike, Keighley, and Halifax, were too timid or indolent to move; but himself, Mr. Grange, and other Bradford friends, were willing to organise lectures by Mr. Cohen, and perhaps by Mr. Snell, in these places in November, if I would take the financial responsibility, which they would make as light as possible. I replied that I *would*, and said "Go on."

Mr. Heaford is just back from a lecturing tour in Scotland, and in this case I thought it right to promise assistance. I do not believe our party wants a good man to work hard and lose at the finish.

It is high time this matter were taken in hand, and I have stepped into the breach, as the President should. Our party wants a forward movement in every part of the country. It is no use mincing matters. I mean to advance, with those who will trust me and work with me. I will not be held back by critics and cavillers. Something must be done, and I will try to do it.

For the present, at least, I do not mean to be trammelled by committees. I want help, in money and in work; but I do not want people looking over my shoulders, and trying every minute to control my activities. Committees are never good at initiative; their time comes afterwards, when the enterprise has had a successful youth and has passed into a steady middle-age. Perhaps this enterprise will help to build up a strong party, with a strong organisation, capable of conducting its affairs successfully on purely democratic lines. Meanwhile the work must be done as it can be done. There is no alternative.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Per R. Forder:—M. Warren, 1s.; S. A. B., 1s.; J. Cruickshanks, 1s. 8d.; R. Stirton, 1s.; L. W. W., 1s.; A Middlesboro' Sailor, 2s.; J. Kelsey, 1s.; W. Cross, 1s.; C. J. Pottage, £1; Mr. Waymark, 1s.; W. Mullen, 2s.; A. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Deane, 2s.; D. Jones, 1s.; W. Tipper, 2s.; J. W. Griffiths, 2s.; W. Hunt, 5s.; T. Thurlow, 2s.; J. Edwards (making 5s.), 1s.; T. Lorney, 1s.; E. Lawson, 2s. 6d.; T. S., 1s.; A. R., 1s.; T. L., 1s.; J. R., 1s.; R. P., 1s.; J. H. S., 1s.; H. Byshe, 2s.; Ulster Branch, 5s.; A. E., 1s.; J. E., 1s.; W. G., 1s.; J. Abbott, 1s.; A Grateful Admirer, 1s.; S. Soper, 2s. 6d.; J. and Miss J. Clarke, 2s. 6d.

Per Miss Vance:—A. W. Marks, 13s.; Mrs. Marks, 5s.; S. M. A., 2s.; W. H. Kemp, 1s.; Marie du Bois, 5s.; C. Heaton, 2s.; R. Gotthed, 2s. 6d.; J. Hargreaves, 1s.; T. Shore, 1s.; F. Wood, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Wilson, 5s.; G. Bowman, 5s.; C. Hippack, 2s.; D. Young, 1s.; R. Green, 2s.; E. Cruttenden, 1s.; W. Johnson, 4s. 2d.

Corrections:—W. F., 2s., in last issue, should have been 2s. 6d.; M. Christopher, 1s., should have been 2s.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE course of indoor lectures organised by the Wood Green Branch opened most encouragingly on Sunday evening. The Masonic Hall was crowded, and Mr. Foote's lecture on "Life, Death, and After" was to all appearance very highly appreciated. There was a considerable sprinkling of ladies, who appeared to be much interested in the "naming" of a baby boy. Mr. Thompson's child, who was to have been named, was unfortunately indisposed; but Mr. and Mrs. Wood took advantage of the opportunity to have their child named instead. The little one acted in an exemplary manner. He was evidently occupied in making out who it was that held him, and before he settled the problem the ceremony was over.

Some courteous opposition was offered by "Captain" Potts, of the Salvation Army, who was answered in the same spirit. The chairman then invited the audience to come again on the three following Sundays to hear Mr. Tourney Parris and Mr. Robert Forder. We hope the invitation will be responded to, and that the present course of lectures will be the precursor of many more in that populous suburb of London.

Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience last Sunday evening at Foresters' Hall. His lecture on "The Bible and Dramatic Literature" was enthusiastically received. Miss Brown made an excellent "chairman." Mr. Watts again occupies the same platform this Sunday evening, October 13, when he will speak upon "Atheism and Christian Theism: Which is the More Reasonable?" Mr. Foote will preside, and he hopes to see a good audience on this occasion. Now that the admission is free, Freethinkers should try to fill the seats by bringing as many as possible of their friends and acquaintances.

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To-morrow, Monday, October 14, Mr. Watts starts for a sixteen days' tour in the North of England and Scotland. The first four nights he debates with the Rev. A. J. Waldron in Ginnett's Amphitheatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne. We hope our friends in the North will muster in full force, and give our colleague a hearty support.

Mr. Cohen follows Mr. Parris at Leicester, and lectures this Sunday on the Theistic question. Mr. Gimson reports that the opening of the winter season by Mr. Parris was very successful. He say: "We expect an intellectual treat when Mr. Parris comes, and we always get it."

J. Partridge reports that Mr. Cohen's last lecture at Birmingham was the best attended of all, that he has won unstinted praise for his work in the town, that several new members have joined, and that several other accessions are expected.

The members of the Finsbury Park and Islington Branches are requested to attend an adjourned meeting at 91 Mildmay-park on Tuesday next, October 15, at 8 o'clock. Every member is invited to be present.

Mr. A. B. Moss is submitting the following motion to the Bermondsey Vestry: "That this Vestry do petition Parliament to amend the law which now exempts the places of worship of the Church of England as by law established from rates and other parochial charges."

Miss Vance is organising a dramatic performance at the Camberwell Secular Hall for Wednesday, November 13, in aid of the Lecture Scheme Fund. Mr. Charles Watts will be one of the performers, and Mr. Foote will attend and give a reading. Full particulars will appear next week.

The Camberwell Branch will have a Tea and social reunion on Sunday, October 20. These gatherings are always enjoyable, and are attended by friends from all parts of London. The Camberwell Science Classes, at the Secular Hall, reopen under the able conduct of Mr. Coppock on Friday next (Oct. 11). Chemistry at 8—teacher, Mr. W. J. Clark; Hygiene at 9—teacher, Mr. E. Watkins. The classes are all free, and are in connection with South Kensington.

Mr. Dowding, of Walthamstow, offered a weekly copy of the *Freethinker* to the local Public Library, and whoever drew up the report stated that it would not be accepted. The matter was, however, brought before the Library Committee by Councillor McSheedy, and an amendment declaring that Mr. Dowding's offer should be accepted was carried by 8 votes to 2, Councillors Cropley and Geary alone opposing.

Freethought has penetrated as far North as Orkney; indeed, a Shetlander, Mr. L. J. Nicholson, has published, in the South, a volume of Freethought poems. But in Orkney itself the *Orcadian* inserts a letter, signed "Brimstone Billy," making fun of that great prop of the churches, Satan himself, and, moreover, satirising the Bible references to his devilship.

The *Aberdeen Journal* can safely advocate free inquiry when pitching into Cardinal Vaughan. It says of his warnings against the works of Huxley and Spencer: "Any such cramping doctrine is wholly out of place to-day. We live in an age of inquiry and speculation. All our beliefs—scientific, philosophical, theological, and historical—are undergoing strict and careful scrutiny; and this spirit of investigation is not by any means the worst sign of the times. It is only the timid or the half-convinced that can fear an honest examination even of cherished beliefs."

In an article on "The Religion of the Undergraduate," in the October *Nineteenth Century*, the Rev. A. C. Deane says: "The writer has himself known more than one instance in which this ill-advised use of Paley's evidences by the University has done a great deal to overthrow the very faith which it was designed to strengthen."

Mr. Deane says that the prevalent attitude towards religion on the part of the university undergraduates is Agnosticism. "With sorrow and reluctance it must be confessed that the majority of Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates are without, or, at least, profess to be without, any religion at all"! Most horrible!

Clarence Waterer writes in the October *Westminster Review* on "The Dawn of the Trinity," pointing to the evidence of divine triads in Egypt long anterior to the rise of Christianity. He holds that the idea arose from the type of the ideal human family as father, mother, and offspring.

The New York *Truthseeker* of September 28 reproduces Mr. Foote's article on the farewell dinner to Mr. Putnam, and a portion of his article on the "Missionary Martyrs" in China. Mr. Putnam continues his "News and Notes," parts of which will reappear in our columns.

The *Independent Pulpit*, of Waco, Texas, reproduces Mr. Wheeler's article, "Is Christianity Useful?" Where Mr. Wheeler, however, uses the word "Freethinkers," the *I. P.* prints "Liberalists." We do not consider the American nomenclature an improvement.

Bible and Beer is the title of a large new pamphlet by Mr. Foote, which is now in the press and will be on sale next week. It is a thorough-going examination of Bible Temperance, dealing with Old and New Testament drinks, and showing the absurdity of the contention that Jesus Christ was a teetotaler, or that the wines recommended in Scripture were unfermented. The pamphlet also gives a brief, but sufficient, history of the drinking habits fostered by the Church, and shows how the religious bodies opposed the Temperance movement in its infancy. The pamphlet will, we believe, be not only interesting to the general reader, but of great service to Freethought propagandists in exposing the pretensions of Christianity.

Mr. Forder reports that the International Congress of Freethinkers at Brussels was a very successful gathering. The question of education was brought prominently to the fore, and it was hoped that by a union of Liberals the clerical party in Belgium will yet be defeated. The children's entertainment in one of the largest halls in the city was a great success, and a good collection was taken up for carrying on the work.

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR.

In speaking of the chief evils which afflict the human race we might adopt the phraseology used by the author of the Pauline epistles, and say: "Now remain these three—poverty, disease, and war; and the greatest of these is war." Not only is war the chief of these ills, but it is also a principal cause of the other two. The wealth wasted in senseless struggles of nation against nation and man against man would feed all the hungry and clothe all the naked on the globe. The wounds, exposure, and privation incident to military service, the brutal passions kept alive by indulgence in the spirit of combativeness—which is the survival in man of one trait of his former ancestor, the ferocious beast—and the neglect of home duties while the energies of a people and of their rulers have been consumed in planning the destruction of their neighbor, have been the fruitful parents of diseases. Vultures fatten on the rotten carcasses of the dead; vermin swarm where pestilential vapors poison the blood and filth engenders pestilence. Human vultures and human vermin thrive in times of war; but universal prosperity is only possible when first shall have been firmly established a condition of universal peace.

It is no wild Utopian dream that such a condition will at some future time be established. It should be already a recognised essential of civilisation. War is only possible where primitive barbarism is not yet wholly extinct. The evolution of humanity would have raised all but savage tribes above it, and perhaps might have had sufficient influence to instil even into those tribes a milder spirit and gentler practices, but for one opposing element, the worst foe mankind has ever known—Christianity.

"I came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword," is the one fulfilled prophecy of the New Testament Scriptures. All religions ever preached on earth have promulgated errors, and, more or less, have misled their votaries; but let us be just. All religions have not been equally cruel, bloody, and barbarous. All have not been equally tyrannical, equally given to the infliction of injustice and agony. The foulest monster of the number bears the symbol of a man dying the death of a tortured slave; and she flaunts it upon her banners as the mark of the beast by which she may be known.

Christianity did not originate in a stable at Bethlehem, in the companionship of a peaceful ox and an ass. It was not first promulgated by honest, however ignorant and deluded, fishermen. It was not first accepted by sincere investigators after truth, seeking knowledge by night or by day. Everyone who has examined the subject with any approach to unprejudiced criticism knows that these statements are entirely false. It was originated by men who desired through its means to retain or to increase their power over their fellow men. It was promulgated by a

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savage warrior and murderer who did not scruple to imbue his hands in the blood of his own kindred. It was accepted by those down whose throats it was thrust at the sword's point.

From the days of Constantine to this year E.M. 295, Christianity has been the more or less direct cause of all the wars which have devastated the world. Always has she been found on the side of the oppressors, though sometimes, for a brief season, wearing an ill-fitting mask of liberty. The missionary of Christ has always been to the heathen the pioneer of the soldier, the rum-seller, and the commercial robber. The silly and wicked war of some thirty years ago between England and Abyssinia would never have been but for the missionary. The present Chinese trouble, and whatever may result from it, spring from the same poisonous root before our eyes. If men and women will go to people whom they call heathen to induce them if they can to change a possibly bad enough religion for one certainly worse, by all means let them go, provided always that those heathens do not object to the impertinent intrusion, and that they go at their own expense. But if they attempt to raise money at home under pretence of converting those who never were converted and never will be, let them be considered as no better than other swindlers who endeavor to live at the cost of others. And if they get into trouble abroad, let no nation raise a finger in their defence, or send so much as a postal-card pleading their cause, under penalty of being adjudged a partner in their crime.

Let it be understood that the Christian missionary in heathen lands is there to make a better and easier living than he can make in his own country; and that, whether he knows it or not, he is usually the tool of the civilised Christian government, who, when he has succeeded in driving a long-suffering people to take measures to protect themselves against the annoyance of his presence, will step in, ostensibly to rescue him, but really to plunder the defenceless heathen, who are assumed to have no rights which Christians are bound to respect.

—*Boston Investigator.* E. J. BOWTELL.

EARLY FAITH.

PRIMITIVE man saw everywhere manifest a world of phenomena of which he was wholly ignorant, and concerning whose cause and purpose he could only imagine, guess, and speculate. And who has not been amazed at the facility with which ignorance accounts for and explains every mystery it encounters, as well as the dogmatic persistence of its belief and its ever-ready reason—*because!*

To primitive man, the earth appeared to be the most ponderous of all things, and he naturally guessed it was so. For a similar reason, he guessed it was flat and the great primal and central body around which the universe revolved. He guessed that the sky was only a little distance above; was a solid arch spanning the earth and separating it from heaven, where he fancied was the abode of the great Unknown. He guessed that the sun, moon, and stars were, as they appeared beneath the solid arch, trivial in size, and mere furnishings of the inconceivably great earth. He guessed the clouds to be the hiding place of the Deity; thunder his voice, and the lightning his messenger. He guessed that earthquakes, plagues, and famines were manifestations of his anger, while sunshine and plenty betokened his pleasure. He guessed that rain was capriciously poured from reservoirs above the sky. And thus ignorance guessed respecting the *cause* and *purpose* of every phenomenon it beheld or experienced.

With the great unknown power which man saw everywhere so mysteriously manifested, he very naturally came to associate not only his own origin, purpose, and destiny, but all the good he enjoyed and the evil he encountered. And how natural, led by his own conceit, that he should ultimately fashion it in his own image and enthrone it in the mysterious realms above as *his* God and the creator and ruler of the universe. Thus man it was who fashioned a creator in his own image, rather than a God so creating man.

If good came, the gods were propitious, and were rewarded with praise and sacrifice; if evil came, they were angry and resentful, and were besought with prayer and sacrifice. Thus, man came to alternate between belief and doubt, hope and fear, ever presenting the strange anomaly of being compelled by an inexorable necessity to supply his physical wants through the operation of natural law under the guidance of his own reason and experience, while at the same time he was led to importune heaven for every desired good.

As to which of these sources he was most indebted, although he had bewildering doubts, yet, fearing lest, through some mistake, offence should be given to and vengeance taken by the great unknown and higher power, he usually adopted what appeared the safer alternative of giving to it the benefit of all doubts, and according to it all praise and reward. Under such belief in, and dependence upon, an arbitrary and capricious God as the almighty controller and giver of all things, how natural that some plausible, crafty, aspiring leader should come forward and, under the pretence of being the specially appointed agent of this almighty God, usurp his accredited power, and in his name levy tribute, dispense favors, inflict judgments, and, through threats of his almighty vengeance upon the transgressor, compel unquestioning and slavish submission to his alleged heaven-directed decrees. D. T. AMES.

CHRIST.

II.

Is to have suffered, loved, and died
For sins of others, not our own,
Were to be crowned and deified,
Would Christ be God alone?

Red human blood has fed the rack,
The block, the cross, the writhing flame;
The tramp of martyrdom gives back
No thunder at his name.

Waited the world for light so long,
Through centuries of rayless light?
Came he to make wrong aught but wrong
Right different from right?

Came God to suffer life and death,
Through thirty bitter years to groan,
And all to tell with human breath
Half-truths already known?

Truth waxes clearer day by day;
But yesternight a truth was born,
Which died and rotted to make way
For newer truth this morn.

And Truth is old; since first the dawn
Of conscience made men pause and brood,
The human mind was strongly drawn
Upon some goal of good.

Spake Epicurus all in vain?
Epictetus or Sokrates?
Aurelius? Did this God maintain
A truth unknown to these?

Nay, where in all his mystic lore
Dwells there an inference so true
As that, two thousand years before,
The great Lucretius drew?

A dream inscrutable, sublime,
And welcomed as the truth to-day,
For aye invincible to time,
Corruption, or decay.

Yet one of all is called divine,
The meanliest-minded, smallest one;
While reason only will resign
That name to all or none.

From the best words this God could say
What niggard crops of good have grown:
Pure love and tenderness to-day
Are scarcely better known.

But for the evil that he spake,
The devils may account it well;
And envy him his power to make
The human heart a hell.

PYRITES.

A lady writes to a religious paper suggesting that a Sunday should be set apart to the advocacy of pure literature. Just fancy pure literature advocated with a text taken from the unexpurgated Bible. Some civet, good apothecary.

Christians sometimes take us to task for speaking lightly of their superstitions, yet they are given to such things themselves. Not long ago we read in a Methodist paper some reference to a Baptist preacher, whom it dubbed "The great apostle of the water god."—*Independent Pulpit.*

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BOOK CHAT.

The second volume of Mr. Edwin Sidney Hartland's *Legend of Perseus* has just been issued by David Nutt. Mr. Wheeler, who noticed the first volume recently under the title of "Virgin Births," will shortly review this volume, which, in his opinion, is of high importance for the light it casts on the customs and beliefs of early man.

* * *

Planets and People is a quarterly journal of astrology, issued from Chicago, and illustrating how hard these old beliefs are in dying. As it, however, contemplates coming out as an annual in future, it hardly appears to thrive as well as its friends might desire.

* * *

Orthodoxy v. Evolution is the title of a printed lecture delivered by Daniel T. Ames before the Brooklyn Philosophical Society and the Manhattan Liberal Club. Mr. Ames is vigorous and convincing. He hits at orthodoxy straight from the shoulder, and we hope his pamphlet will have a good circulation.

* * *

A big book on *The Life and Writings of Turgot*, by W. Walker Stephens, has been published by Messrs. Longmans. Coming after Mr. Morley's monograph, it nevertheless gives much further information on that great statesman, who turned from the Church to politics.

* * *

Mr. George Meredith's new novel, *The Amazing Marriage*, will be published by Messrs. Archibald Constable & Co. in the course of the season.

* * *

A pamphlet on *Old Age Pensions*, issued at the *Sunday Chronicle* office, Manchester, gives a description of several schemes before the public. It should not be forgotten that the original purpose of tithes eminently suit them for appropriation to this object.

* * *

Those who delight in a spirited exposure of sophistry can be recommended to *Reaction*, a little fourpenny pamphlet by Karl Pearson, published by William Reeves, 185 Fleet-street, in his neat "Bijou Library." It is chiefly directed against the theological obscurantism of Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, and the polemic is carried on in a pointed and vigorous style. Our statesman finds his cue in decrying reason; but Mr. Pearson points out that "the race of life is now to those who educate and foster thought—to the reasoners among the nations." "Was it," he asks, "Mr. Balfour's hydra-headed authority, habit-tradition-custom, which proved a better national fulcrum than reason when Japan met China? And when our modern statesmen term the reason anti-social, will they venture to recommend the policy of China to the inhabitants of Great Britain? Consciously or unconsciously, Mr. Balfour teaches this policy philosophically, and preaches it emotionally."

* * *

The Night of the Gods, by J. O'Neill, is a work of vast erudition, by an Oriental scholar, giving a new view of the symbols and mythologies of the past. Mr. O'Neill did not claim to have found the sole key thereof. On the contrary, he said there was a whole bunch. But he did find a new key in the worship of the heavens and the polestar as the most high, and the first volume of his work, all that is published, shows a scholar of wide reading and insight.

* * *

Mr. O'Neill died early in the present year, and his death has left his widow without funds for publishing the completion of his work, the first volume of which is got up in very handsome fashion. A committee, of whom it is only necessary to mention the names of Drs. Budge and Garnett and Professor R. K. Douglas, of the British Museum, have issued an appeal for donations or subscriptions for this purpose, in which they say: "We believe that the loss of half Mr. O'Neill's book would be a calamity, as it would deprive students of the use of a large portion of the unrivalled collection of Greek, Latin, Celtic, Hindu, Semite, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, and American-Indian mythology, astronomy, and symbolism, collected and focussed by a traveller and scholar so keen-eyed, discriminating, careful, and devoted as Mr. O'Neill. We are convinced that the preservation and transmission to posterity of these researches will, whether they agree with the author's conclusions or not, be permanently useful to all who wish to set before themselves and others a life-like picture of the hitherto obscure past."

* * *

In France or Germany such a work as *The Night of the Gods*, recommended by scholars of the eminence of the committee issuing this circular, would be printed out of national funds. But there is no endowment of research in England, and a scholar may starve, or his manuscripts be sold for butter-paper, unless he can pay for printing them himself, and trust to be found out by a public not too apt to quickly discern merit which runs out of the ordinary rut. We have a wealthy Association for the Advancement of Science, and flourishing Antiquarian, Anthropological, and Folk-Lore Societies; but none of them would think it within their province to publish a work of research into the religious beliefs of the past. So an appeal is made merely to individuals interested. The price of volume ii. to subscribers will be 18s., or £1 16s. for the complete work, which will, when completed, be raised to £2 12s. 6d. Subscriptions will be received by the publisher, Mr. D. Nutt, 270 Strand.

* * *

The Free Review for October, the first that has been sent to our office, appears under the editorship of Mr. G. A. Singer. The opening article is an outspoken and sensible one by "Cato" on "King Alcohol and Liberalism." The writer is in favour of Free Trade in drink, as more conducive to temperance than is our licensing system. "Democritus" contributes a bright article on "Ideal Husbands," showing that the group of ladies who have just been writing on the subject are rather poor empirics. Mr. J. M. Robertson's article on "Huxley and Agnosticism" is very unflattering, but it presents a view of Huxley and his work which is entitled to consideration in the midst of the general eulogy. Mr. Robertson always writes with knowledge and great ability, and for our part we quite share his dislike of the "Agnostic" ticket, especially when we hear of "reverent" Agnostics and even "Christian" Agnostics. Mr. Ernest Newman's article on "Amiel" is delightful reading. Other articles and items make up a very interesting number.

* * *

The Agnostic Annual for 1896 (Watts & Co.) opens with a capital criticism of Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* by the veteran Samuel Laing. Another important article is "The Man, Christ Jesus," by Mr. J. Allanson Picton. We call it important because it presents, in clear and eloquent language, what may be called the advanced Unitarian view of the Prophet of Nazareth. Mr. Picton is not scientific. He discards the miraculous, and then constructs a Jesus of his own out of arbitrary selections from the Gospel narrative. He imagines that "the time has gone by" for any doubt as to the historical existence of the man Jesus; but his references to Tacitus, Josephus, and the Mischna show that he has not mastered the subject. It is idle to speak of the famous Josephus passage as merely corrupted: as Warburton and Gibbon (two very different critics) said without hesitation, it is a rank forgery. On the whole, the "rationalists of the workshop and market," who have had "no opportunities of high mental training," may smile at Mr. Picton's loose argumentation. Constance Plumptre's article on "Mind as Controlled by Matter" is lucid and sensible. Our readers know what they may expect in Mr. Charles Watts's "Faiths of our Forefathers." Dr. Bithell writes as an Agnostic in the service of God on "Theism and Monism." Mr. F. J. Gould has an interesting and well-informed paper on "The Old Testament Library." The only fault we find with him is that he speaks too tenderly of the priestly imposition of the Books of Moses upon the Jews, and, through them, upon sixty generations of Christians.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Pa, can God do everything?" "Yes, my boy." "Can God ride a bicycle?"

First Boy—"My mother's got a new baby." Second Boy—"That must be our kid that died last week."

"Little boy, does your father fear the Lord?" asked the new pastor. "Yessir, I guess he does, 'cause he takes his gun whenever he goes out on Sunday."

Little Mamie read on her Sunday-school card: "God makes, preserves, and keeps us." Looking up suddenly, she said: "Mamma, what do you s'pose he does with 'em all?" "With what, my dear?" "Why, all those preserves."

Clergyman (to little boy)—"I suppose you say your prayers, my boy?" Boy—"Yes, sir." Clergyman—"Does your father say his?" Boy—"He doesn't have to; his father's dead."

Clergyman (dining with family)—"I noticed during the sermon you were very quiet, Tommy; a very good boy, indeed." Tommy—"Rather! 'Cos I was afraid of waking pa. Last Sunday, when I woke him up, he said he'd half kill me if I did it again."

Mankind has never groaned under the yoke of a more atrocious combination of moral, mental, and physical despotism than at the period when the Christian hierarchy had reached the zenith of its power.—*Dr. F. L. Oswald, "The Bible Controversy."*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Foresters' Hall (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Atheism and Christian Theism: Which is the More Reasonable?"

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Meaning of Secularism." Tuesday, at 8, social gathering.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Herbert Burrows, "Why Secularists Should be Socialists." Friday, at 8, reading class.

East London (Sealy's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, J. T. Blanchard, "Secularism from a Matter-of-Fact Point of View."

Finsbury Branch: Monday, at 8.30, Dinner and entertainment in the large hall of the Eldorado Club, 28 East-road, E.C. Tickets from Mr. Forder.

Finsbury Park and Islington Branches: Tuesday, at 8, meeting of members at 91 Mildmay Park.

West Ham Secular Ethical Society (61 West Ham-lane): 7, G. Spiller, "The Need of a Science of Ethics."

West London Ethical Society (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Genius and Sanity."

Wood Green (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.30, St. John, "Christianity and Progress."

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, a lecture.

Deptford Broadway: 6.30, C. James, "Christianity as a Guide to Conduct." Thursday, at 8, C. James, "Morality in the Ages of Faith."

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 7, W. Heaford, "The Christian's Faith, Hope, and Charity."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Creed of an Unbeliever"; 3.30, "A Rational View of Religion."

Kingsland (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-told."

Old Pinlico Pier: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity Critically Examined."

Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, W. J. Russell, "Never Spake Man Like This"; 7, John Watts, "The Causes of the Wreck of the Liberal Party."

Chatham Secular Hall (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. B. Thompson, "The Apostles' Creed—Why I Voted for its Retention."

Glasgow (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class—J. Cassells, "The Unemployed Problem"; 6.30, W. King, "Thomas Paine, the Reformer."

Hull (St. George's Hall, Story-street): 7, Mr. Fryer, "Lessons from the Late General Election."

Leicester Secular Hall (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"

Manchester Secular Hall (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Mr. Cooke will start a discussion on "Old Age Pensions."

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, J. Selkirk, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' quarterly meeting; 7, Mr. Axe, "Coral and Coral Islands." Tea at 5.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, a reading.

Stockton-on-Tees (82 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Mr. Scott will read a paper on "Vaccination."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—October 13, Leicester; 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 23 and 24, Chester-le-Street; 27, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 28 and 29, Stockton-on-Tees; 31, Blackburn. November 1, Blackburn; 3, Sheffield; 4, 5, and 6, Barnsley; 10, Foresters' Hall, London; 17 and 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

Stanley Jones, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London.—October 13, Pimlico Pier; 14, Edmonton; 20 and 27, Kingsland.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—October 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

Touzeau Parris, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—October 13 and 20, Wood Green; 27, Foresters' Hall. November 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

APARTMENTS to Let Unfurnished. Three Rooms, with kitchener. Very Cheap. Overlooking the Alexandra Palace. Write or call. B, 69 Western-road, Mayes-road, Wood Green, N.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

TO FREETHINKERS.—Ladies and Gentlemen requiring SUPERIOR CUT GARMENTS at moderate prices. First-class Style and Fit Guaranteed.—H. HAMPTON, Artiste Tailor, 14 Great Castle-street, W. (three doors from Regent-street). Patronised by leading Freethinkers.

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(Adjoining Nightingale Hotel.)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY, WOOD GREEN BRANCH.

A COURSE OF LECTURES

Under the auspices of the above, to be delivered on the following dates at 7.30 p.m.:—

Sunday, October 13—Mr. TOUZEAU PARRIS, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless."

Sunday, October 20—Mr. TOUZEAU PARRIS, "Some Bible Symbols, their Origin and Meaning."

Sunday, October 27—Mr. R. FORDER, "Who is the Devil? What is the Devil? and Where is the Devil?"

Admission by Ticket Only. To be obtained of John Wood, Secretary, 71 Gladstone-avenue, Wood Green.

Tickets, 6d. *Reserved Seats, 1s.*

Course Tickets for Last Three Lectures, 1s. 6d. and 1s.

Works by G. W. Foote.

Flowers of Freethought. *First Series.* 221 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Flowers of Freethought. *Second Series.* 302 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series.* 128 pp., 1s.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Grand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Is Socialism Sound? Four Nights' Public Debate with Annie Besant. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 2s.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 3d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

A Defence of Free Speech. Three Hours' Address to the Jury before Lord Coleridge. With a Special Preface and many Footnotes. 4d.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 3d.

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Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

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Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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SILLY SUNDAY.

THE Church Congress has continued its palaver at Norwich, and amongst other subjects it discussed Faith and Science. No sceptics were present to lend the debate liveliness; still, there were differences of opinion. The Rev. Professor Bonney was very outspoken with regard to the Bible. According to the *Daily News* report, he "could not deny that the increase of scientific knowledge had deprived parts of the earliest books of the Bible of the historical value which was generally attributed to them by our forefathers. The story of the creation in the Book of Genesis, unless we played fast and loose either with words or with science, could not be brought into harmony with what we had learned from geology. Its ethnological statements were imperfect, if not sometimes inaccurate. The stories of the Fall, of the Flood, and of the Tower of Babel, were incredible in their present form. Some historical elements might underlie many of the traditions in the first eleven chapters of that Book, but this we could not hope to recover." It was not to be expected that the reverend and right reverend gentlemen taking part in the discussion would endorse these statements, but they only "hinted" their dissent, and touched the subject very gingerly. No doubt they felt a certain relief when Professor Bonney resorted to the good old theory that, if the Genesis narratives were not historical, they were at least allegorical, and contained "spiritual truths of the highest importance." One of these truths is that God is the creator and ruler of all. Professor Bonney may well call it a "spiritual" truth, for it is certainly unknown to science, which refuses to entertain the idea of creation. It seems pretty clear, too, that if God rules all, his government is highly imperfect; for Church Congresses, and other annual conventions, are always suggesting improvements. As for the "innate depravity in the nature of man"—another "spiritual truth" enshrined in the allegories of Genesis—it is far more comforting to the clergy than it can ever be to the laity; for it leads straight to hell and damnation, on which the men of God trade, and which yield them such a splendid harvest of wealth, privilege, and comfort in this miserable vale of tears. Selden long ago observed that the clergy cry up original sin as quacks make their patients think themselves dreadfully ill. The worse they make us believe ourselves, the more we run after them to cure us.

Another subject discussed at the Church Congress was the poverty of the clergy. This does not refer to the curates, who have been talking about a Trade Union to raise their salaries. It only refers to the poorer incumbents, some of whom (sad to say!) only get twice the wages of a skilled artisan. To redress this terrible wrong the Dean of Norwich came forward with a gigantic proposal. Seven million people (laymen, of course) were to contribute one penny weekly; this would amount to £1,516,666 per annum; and by means of this stupendous Sustentation Fund the incomes of the poorer incumbents might be levelled up to £300 a year. Many clerical mouths must have watered at this delicious prospect. But will it ever be realised? Will not most of those seven million intended victims beg the rich clergy to begin the levelling operation themselves? A bishop's salary would cut up handsomely among a dozen or two of his poverty-stricken brethren; an archbishop's salary would provide the requisite addition for a hundred servants of the altar. There are also fat canons, deans, and archdeacons, who could stand a good deal of sweating. Let the seven, eight, or ten millions a year, absorbed by the Church, be equitably divided; and if any starving clergymen are still left, with less than £300 a year, the charitable public, and particularly those who subsist on less than £50 a year themselves, may be asked to contribute to the relief of clerical distress.

The professional spirit of the clergy at the Church Congress shone conspicuously in the talk (we cannot call it a discussion) about Sunday. Nearly every speaker called upon the government to uphold this pious institution. Relaxations in favor of entertainments, recreations, and even lectures, were sternly denounced. Let us have the day all to ourselves! was the cry of these clerical Protectionists, who are perfectly aware that they cannot stand against the competition of a free market. One of them quoted Chateaubriand, who said "No religion without worship, and no worship without Sunday." But it was hardly wise to shout this saying from the housetops. It is a public confession that religion would die without systematic inculcation and legal compulsion.

One of the speakers, a Mr. Chambers, vehemently attacked the Sunday Societies. Education on the Lord's Day was, in his opinion, just as bad as amusement. The time should be devoted to spiritual, not to intellectual objects; in other words, it is the day of faith, not the day of reason; and the clergy mean to keep reason out of it, by the aid of God and Lord Salisbury—especially Lord Salisbury, who has more power in England than all the gods of the pantheon.

Mr. Chambers was accurate in one instance. He warned the Church that, behind all the Sunday Societies and similar bodies, there was the army of sceptics and infidels, who were the real danger to all forms of faith. These people were restless and malignant. They knew that Christianity depended on the Sunday, and they meant to destroy the Sunday. Such is Mr. Chambers's view of the case, and he is both right and wrong. It is true that the Churches have a tremendous advantage in the law which allows them to monopolise the Sunday, and it is true that the sceptics and infidels mean to deprive them of that advantage. But it is not true that the sceptics and infidels mean to destroy the Sunday. Their object is not to destroy, but to fulfil. They want to destroy the sacredness of Sunday in order to restore its utility.

Sunday (that is, the sun's day) is far older than Christianity. It was borrowed by that religion from the pagans of the Roman empire. What was a day of release from toil, and of general festivity, the Church turned into a day of worship. When the Puritans came they intensified the worship and abolished the relics of festivity. They made it a day of gloom to men and women, and of terror to children. And we are still under the Puritan domination in England. For the great majority of the people who do not, and will not, go to church, Sunday is simply wasted. For this reason we call it Silly Sunday.

"What are all these people doing?" asked a French friend, who saw crowds of Englishmen loafing about the dull streets of London on a Sunday. We told him they were "Waiting for Monday." And the clergy want to keep them waiting till the day of judgment.

G. W. FOOTE.

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DR. STARK MUNRO'S LETTERS.*

DR. CONAN DOYLE, who, by his *Memoirs*, and *Adventures of*, the now happily defunct *Sherlock Holmes*, his *Micah Clarke*, and *The Refugees*, has placed himself in the front rank of popular living novelists (not beside George Meredith or Thomas Hardy, but in a distinct niche of his own), has in this, his latest work, essayed a more ambitious task than that of mere story-telling He has sought to depict, roundly and squarely, if I may be permitted the Hibernicism, the life of a young medical man, when he is entering on a career. His hero is at that age when he becomes interesting to the fair sex; but he is forced by ties of family to put aside, for the time, those ideas of love and sex-union which form the leading theme of romances in all ages; and, alike from choice and necessity, works his way upward from the lowest rung of the ladder, till in the last letter we get a faint glimpse of him happily married, and on the road to social distinction. Mr. Herbert Spencer holds that all fiction is founded on biography. That seems the case with the present work. Dr. Doyle offers us no subtly-constructed plot, but, instead, those sudden changes of experience which often happen in real life, and which give force to the saying that it is always the unexpected which happens. This is not only illustrated throughout the book, but in the postscript, which those who must have poetical justice are warned *not* to read. Dr. Doyle's book differs also from contemporary novels in that, to develop his hero's confidences and confessions, he resorts to the epistolary form. In the old days, when postage was costly, long confidences were given in letters, and we are troubled, in reading Richardson's epistolary novels, with no such sense of incongruity as in the minute details with which Dr. Munro, even while in extreme poverty, favors his friend and old fellow student across the herring pond. Putting aside this criticism, or, rather, heartily accepting the form as necessary to the work of art as conceived by the artist, it will be seen to have its own merits. At any rate, I have read these discursive letters with as much interest as I should letters from a personal friend.

Dr. Doyle is of too fertile an imagination for anyone justly to ascribe to himself all the sentiments of his hero. He is, at least I suppose so, a person of mature age, and some of these sentiments are of immature cast, such, however, as we may suppose him to have possibly held in the years 1881–84, the date of the letters. We are so carried on by the vividness of the story that we feel as if the author was relating his personal thoughts and experiences. So evidently is his heart in his work that we shall not be surprised if Dr. Doyle is generally set down as an Agnostic, or, rather, a Deistic Secularist of the type of Dr. Stark Munro. This may be a mistake, for there is surely nothing out of the way in making a young man who has received a medical education a sceptic as to revealed religion, when the Rev. A. C. Deane tells us, in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*, that the undergraduates at our universities are nearly all Agnostics. Nevertheless, it is a compliment to the author's *vraisemblance* and power of throwing himself into his characters that so many assume that the opinions of Dr. Stark Munro are those of Dr. Conan Doyle. Naturally, it is Dr. Stark Munro's Freethought with which I am here chiefly concerned. I do not care for didactic novels. Yet, apart from the right of any author to impress his own views and personality into his work, or to develop his characters in whatever way seems most natural to him, it appears to me that the reviewers who have wished this portion of the work omitted are in the wrong. For the evident purpose of the book is not simply to tell a story of struggle at the outset of a medical career, but to depict the life and character of a cultured young man at the period when he begins to meet the world, to think for himself, and feel his own feet. To leave out of sight his thoughts on problems of life and religion, his relations to his fellows and to nature around him, would be to present a mutilated picture, to make a young barbarian, not a well-educated youth of the nineteenth century.

Dr. Stark Munro is almost an aggressive Deist. A scientific training has shattered the cramping influences of orthodoxy, but he remains throughout a believer in the argument from design. His God is, like all gods, a magnified man; but he is a civilised one. He confesses he cannot understand Atheists; and he also admits he cannot reconcile cruelty with his own scheme. In his first letter he breaks out: "Can't I hear your grave voice saying 'Have faith!' Your conscience allows you to. Well, mine won't allow me. I see so clearly that faith is not a virtue, but a vice. It is a goat which has been herded with the sheep. If a man deliberately shut his physical eyes and refuse to use them, you would be as quick as anyone in seeing that it was immoral and a treason to nature. And yet you would counsel a man to shut that far more precious gift, the reason, and to refuse to use it in the most intimate question of life." "It is," he declares of reason in another letter, "more moral to use it and go wrong than to forego it and be right. It's only a little foot-rule, and I have to measure Mount Everest with it; but it's all I have, and I'll never give it up while there's breath between my lips." There is nothing novel in all this, but it is uttered with a vigor and earnestness calculated to impress the average type of novel reader. The volume throughout is sprinkled with outbursts of heresy and indignation against religious bigotry. Thus he says:—

> "When one considers what effect the perversion of the religious instinct has had during the history of the world; the bitter wars, Christian and Mohammedan, Catholic and Protestant; the persecutions, the torturings, the domestic hatreds, the petty spites, with all creeds equally blood-guilty, one cannot but be amazed that the concurrent voice of mankind has not placed bigotry at the very head of the deadly sins. It is surely a truism to say that neither small-pox nor the plague has brought the same misery upon mankind."

Again, and with equal vigor, he asserts:—

> "It isn't true that the laws of nature have been capriciously disturbed, that snakes have talked, that women have turned to salt, that rods have brought water out of rocks. You must in honesty confess that, if these things were presented to us when we were adults for the first time, we should smile at them. It isn't true that the Fountain of all common sense should punish a race for a venial offence committed by a person long since dead, and then should add to the crass injustice by heaping the whole retribution upon a single innocent scapegoat. Can you not see all the want of justice and logic, to say nothing of the want of mercy, involved in such a conception?"

When Dr. Munro first sets up in a very poor way as a practitioner on his own account, he is visited by a local curate; but, instead of seeking his self-interest by accepting his invitation to attend church, he falls into a lively disputation. The curate says: "You are a Unitarian, then; or rather, perhaps, a Deist?"

> "'You may label me as you like,' I answered (and by this time I fear that I had got my preaching stop fairly out); 'I don't pretend to know what truth is, for it is infinite, and I finite; but I know particularly well what it is *not*. It is not true that religion reached its acme nineteen hundred years ago, and that we are for ever to refer back to what was written and said in those days. No, sir; religion is a vital, living thing, still growing and working, capable of endless extension and development, like all other fields of thought..... Look at this!' I cried, rising and reading my Carlyle text. 'That comes from no Hebrew prophet, but from a ratepayer in Chelsea. He and Emerson are also among the prophets. The Almighty has not said His last say to the human race, and He can speak through a Scotchman or a New Englander as easily as through a Jew. The Bible, sir, is a book which comes out in instalments, and "To be continued," not "Finis," is written at the end of it.'"

To pick out the Freethought views of Dr. Stark Munro apart from their setting may be as unfair to the book as its desired mutilation by their excision. Yet it is worth while in the *Freethinker* to call attention to the kind of sentiments that can now-a-days be put into a popular work issued by one of the world's leading publishing firms, and which must be acknowledged to be entirely in keeping with the character sought to be expressed.

It would be unfair to quit the work without mention of its most distinctive character, Dr. Cullingworth, a study worthy of Dickens at his best. Only a close student of human nature (some will think only a medical man) would have ventured on that wonderful sketch of genius and insanity, soaring merit and sunken meanness. If taken

* *The Stark Munro Letters*, edited and arranged by A. Conan Doyle. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co.)

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from some strange original, the picture of Dr. Cullingworth is still a marvellous piece of painting. If a purely imaginative creation, it is a triumph of art.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE BIBLE AND HUMAN PROGRESS.

UNTIL a comparatively recent date the Bible was regarded by its devotees as the precursor of all moral and intellectual progress; and its teachings were held to be indispensable to the advancement of the best interests of society. Fortunately, however, a healthy change has taken place in intelligent minds within the last few decades; and, although the emancipation from theological errors has not been so general as many of us desire, still, thanks to Secular and Freethought advocacy, the work of deliverance has gone heavily on, and it is at the present time making more rapid strides than it ever did.

Twenty years ago the belief in Biblical accuracy was far more extensive than it is now. About that time the late Professor Huxley, in his *Lay Sermons*, penned the following: "The myths of Paganism are as dead as Osiris or Zeus, and the man who should attempt to revive them in opposition to the knowledge of our time would be justly laughed to scorn; but the coeval imaginations current among the rude inhabitants of Palestine, recorded by writers whose very name and age are admitted by every scholar to be unknown, have unfortunately not yet shared their fate, but even at this day are regarded by nine-tenths of the civilised world as the authoritative standard of fact, and the criterion of the justice of scientific conclusions in all that relates to the origin of things, and, among them, of species. In this nineteenth century, as at the dawn of modern physical science, the cosmogony of the barbarous Hebrew is the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox. Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of bibliolaters? Who shall tell the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonise impossibilities—whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled by the outcry of the same strong party? But it is true that, if philosophers have suffered, their cause has been amply avenged. Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science, as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules; and history records that, whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed if not annihilated, scotched if not slain."

Now, in order that the reader may be enabled to recognise the vast progress that has been made since the above words were written, it is only necessary to study those works upon science and advanced theology which have recently been published, and also to note the tone of feeling that has prevailed at the meetings of the British Association. At these assemblages views upon the Bible were readily accepted that twenty years ago would have been condemned as being too sceptical even for consideration. Now, Darwin is admitted to be a better authority in reference to the origin of man than Moses, and the law of evolution has entirely discredited the theory of special creation. And, be it remembered, this progress is the result of disbelieving Bible teachings.

Experience has taught us that in effecting human progress three things have been found to be absolutely essential—namely, knowledge, industry, and freedom. We have no doubt that civilisation is the result of the free and enlightened exercise of man's physical and mental powers. Everything that has contributed to the improvement of art, the increase of literature, the spread of science, and the expansion of liberty has been principally the outcome of the persistent labors of men and women who were free from the trammels of theology. Nothing is easier than to demonstrate that many of the teachings of the Bible are opposed to the essentials of all progress. In Genesis it is indicated emphatically that the acquirement of knowledge was a sin, that labor was inflicted as a punishment, that woman was made a slave to man, and that freedom was destroyed by the establishment of general slavery, initiated in those degrading words: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Genesis ix. 25). There is no possibility of justice and refinement, of the development of human sympathy, friendship, and social happiness, where woman is entirely subjected to the will of man, and where one portion of the human family is forced to be in abject slavery to the other. These Bible-ordained conditions are in themselves quite sufficient to prevent the operation of all progressive ideas.

The position of woman in any country is an indication of the state of civilisation existing therein; and the fact that in those nations where the Bible has held sway the condition of woman has been menial and humiliatingly dependent shows that its teachings have not been conducive to her elevation and personal freedom and dignity. Sir Henry Maine, in chapter x. of his *Ancient Law*, gives a clear statement of the influence of canon law on the liberty of person and property that Roman women then enjoyed. Speaking of their freedom, he says: "Christianity tended from the very first to narrow this remarkable liberty. . . . . No society which preserves any tincture of Christian institution is likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by middle Roman law." Lydia Maria Child, in her *Progress of Religious Ideas*, says: "How far the Romans had advanced beyond the Asiatic [Bible] ideas is indicated by the remark of Cato, who lived two hundred and thirty-two years B.C. He was accustomed to say: 'They who beat wives or children lay sacrilegious hands on the most sacred things in the world. For myself, I prefer the character of a good husband to that of a great senator.'" Renan, in his *Apostles*, observes: "Under the Roman law woman was becoming more and more her own mistress" (p. 245). Even Bosworth Smith, in his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 243, writes: "It must be remembered also, what we are apt to forget, that it required not the sublime moral precepts of Christianity alone, but the influence of codes of Roman law, and the innate respect felt by Teutonic nations for the female sex, and centuries of civilisation also, to raise woman to her proper position in European countries." There can be no doubt that the incentive to woman's progress is not to be found in the Bible. Both in the Old and New Testaments her position is degrading. Many instances could be adduced in confirmation of this allegation, but two will suffice, which the reader will find recorded in Numbers v. 11-31 and Ephesians v. 22-24.

Equally cruel and unprogressive is the Bible doctrine of slavery. The enormity of this crime is made the more intense by the fact that, according to the Bible, it was imposed and regulated by God himself (see Leviticus xxv. 44-46; Exodus xxi. 2-4; 1 Timothy vi. 12; and Titus ii. 9). Bell, in his *Life of Canning*, on page 218, referring to the efforts of the Abolitionists, says: "The greatest stress of all was laid on the antiquity of slavery. This was a difficulty which paralysed many persons of tender conscience. They felt . . . . that slavery was cruel, that it blighted human beings, crushed the god-like part of them, and reduced them to the condition of the lower animals. But it was a sacred institution; it had flourished in the earliest ages; it had a Divine origin." It must not be overlooked that the most determined opposition to the abolition in America of this God-inflicted curse upon humanity came from Bible believers, who contended that, as it was a "divine" institution, any attempt to remove it was wrong, and ought not to be tolerated. Of course, this dislike to depart from religious customs, that were supposed to be based upon, or to accord with, God's will, has always been the great impediment to human progress. It was the tenacious adherence to Bible superstitions that for ages delayed the advancement of science and education, and hindered the recognition of the political and social rights of man. The Bible doctrine is that of "master and servant," not employer and employed; no delicacy of sentiment, no dignity of character, and no independence of action are allowed the servant, for he is to be subject to his master "with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1 Peter ii. 18).

The progress that has been made from the old barbarous custom of inflicting the death penalty as a punishment has been achieved in direct opposition to Bible teachings. This brutal practice was based upon such Old Testament injunctions as: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot," "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to

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live" (Exodus xxi. 24; Exodus xxii. 18), and death for blasphemy (Leviticus xxiv. 16). This was the spirit of revenge taught by God to his chosen people. No marvel that Christian exponents decline to defend the Old Testament, although it is said to be "God's Word." There never would have been much progress if men had continued to be guided by such cruel and savage methods as those enjoined by the Bible. One of the grandest triumphs of modern times has been the successful revolt of secularised humanity against Biblical barbarity.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

(JOHN VIII. 1–11.)

IF there is one gospel story which more than another is redolent of the divine aroma of love and forgiveness, and which on this account may be, erroneously, claimed as peculiarly Christian, it is the story of the woman taken in adultery, with its dramatic rebuke of Phariseeism and the sublime declaration of the teacher, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." Yet nothing is more certain than that this story formed no part of the original gospel of John, but was foisted in by a later hand, when Christianity, which set out by declaring that Christ had but come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that he came not to destroy but to fulfil the law, no jot or tittle of which should pass away, had got far beyond the narrow confines of Judaism, and promised to become a world religion like Buddhism.

Even such orthodox scholars as Bishop Westcott and Dr. Hort, in their great edition of the New Testament, are constrained to reject this story. In this they only follow Lachmann, Tischendorf, Alford, and Tregelles. It is entirely wanting in the two oldest manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican. It is also absent from Codex Regius, Codex Sangallensis, Codex Monacensis, and other ancient codices, etc. Of the MSS. which contain it more than sixty stigmatise it with marks of suspicion. It is wanting in the Old Latin, the Sahidic, the Gothic, the Ethiopic, the Syriac, and the best authorities of the Coptic and Armenian versions. The commentaries of Origen, Chrysostom, Tertullian, Cyril, Basil, and other early fathers know it not. Jerome, or the monks writing in his name, is the first to defend its genuineness; while to St. Augustine is attributed the supposition that it had been omitted for moral reasons, lest it should seem to allow sinning with impunity! The passage, together with the last verse of chapter vii., is manifestly an interpolation, and at verse 12 the broken report of the really unbroken discourse is resumed. Critics have also found that it is not in the style of the writer of the rest of John. But this is a matter for the Greek textual critic.

Of course a number of suggestions have been made to get over the difficulty of this narrative being a later concoction than the bulk of the gospel, that of St. Augustine being rather too dangerous for an age that has ceased to believe in a double doctrine. The favorite and most plausible suggestion is, that the story was handed down by tradition, and gradually worked its way into the text. If so, where did the tradition come from? What of the declaration of John's alleged revelation, that "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book"? Why is this tradition preserved, but that found, for instance, in Luke vi. of Codex Bezae rejected? May not the other stories and sayings of Jesus, found in the early fathers and in the Apocryphal Gospels, be equally authentic? There is no end to the questions that arise from a consideration of the spurious character of this story, and the most important of all is this: The person or persons who were capable of adding an elaborate moral story of this character to the gospel were also capable of doing a great deal more.

LUCIANUS.

An anthropomorphic God is the only God whom men can worship, and also the God whom modern thought finds it difficult to believe in.—*J. Cotter Morison, "The Service of Man," p. 36; third edition.*

ARCHÆOLOGY versus CRITICISM.

THE Rev. Professor Sayce is again upon the war-path. The well-known English advocate of the Higher Criticism Canon Cheyne, recently wrote an article in the *Contemporary Review*, in which he stated that the two persons who, under God, stimulated him to his studies of the Old Testament, and consequent adoption of his present views, were Professor Kuenen and Professor Sayce. Hence these tears. Mr. Sayce first says, in the present number of the *Contemporary Review*, that he has never changed his attitude towards criticism. To those conversant with the learned gentleman's writings this statement comes with something like a shock. A few years ago Professor Sayce wrote a little work entitled *An Introduction to the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, in which he pooh-poohed and condemned, without rhyme or reason, the whole of the critical objections to those three books. Last year he wrote another work, on *The Higher Criticism*, in which he embraced and endorsed the whole of these critical objections, without giving the slightest reason for adopting them. There may be consistent people in the world, but our author is not one of them.

Professor Sayce comes forward again as the champion of Moses. Writing was known and practised in the time of Moses; therefore Moses must have written the Pentateuch. We have all heard that statement before, from the lips of less eminent men; yet, somehow, it fails to carry conviction. Mr. Sayce seems to fancy that the "critics" are ignorant of the fact that writing was known and practised before the time ascribed to Samuel. It is difficult to see whence he got this notion, except from Christian Evidence literature; if he had read the writings of the "Higher Critics," he would have known differently. The Babylonian scribes were always very careful and conscientious in making the copies of their works; therefore, Mr. Sayce says it is impossible that the Jews can have made fraudulent use of an earlier literature. We are unable to see the force of this wonderful argument. It is certainly very creditable to the Babylonian scribes to find them so careful; but when we compare the book of Kings with the book of Chronicles, we sometimes wish that these accurate Babylonians had compiled the latter book, instead of leaving it to the tender mercies of Hebrew writers.

Professor Sayce tells us that "the story of the campaign of Chedorlaomer and his Babylonian allies against the Canaanitish princes has been fully confirmed, and now Mr. Pinches has found the name of Kudur-Lagamar or Chedorlaomer, as well as that of his ally Tadghal or Tidal." Of course Mr. Pinches has found the names of Chedorlaomer and Tidal. Every Assyriologist of note has done that, except Professor Sayce. Sir Henry Rawlinson, Professor Lenormant, Dr. Hommel, Dr. Delitzsch, Mr. St. Chad Boscawen, and others, have all "discovered" the kings of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. The only trouble is that they have all "discovered" them differently, and we are still waiting for reliable "confirmation" of the campaign of Chedorlaomer.

Mr. Sayce also tells us that Mr. Pinches has discovered names of the Hebrew type on ancient cuneiform tablets. But there is nothing novel in this information. Mr. St. Chad Boscawen read a paper on this very subject before the Victoria Institute ten years ago; and the "Higher Critics" know all about it.

We are presented with the somewhat startling statement that Moses must have written the tenth chapter of Genesis, because "there we are told that Canaan was the brother of Mizraim, or Egypt. The assertion was strictly true as long as Canaan was a province of Egypt; when it ceased to be so the statement was not only true no longer, but was contrary to the daily experience and political beliefs of every inhabitant of Palestine." Palestine was never again united to Egypt, "except during the short space of years that followed the death of Josiah." The rev. professor's logic is like the grace of God—it passeth all human understanding. But he has told us repeatedly in his works that two of the names in Genesis x.—namely, Gomer and Madai—represent the Gimmerians, or Cimmerians, and the Medes, neither of whom was known to the Babylonians or the Jews before the year 820 B.C.; it is, therefore, for him to explain how Moses came to write of them six centuries before.

Professor Sayce totally fails to show that Archæology is

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any way jeopardises the position of the Higher Criticism, and he carefully refrains from touching the fact that the provisions of the Pentateuch are unknown to the historical books. That is the central point of criticism. When we find monarchs commended for their piety, even though they act in direct opposition to the "Law of Moses," it is pretty evident that neither king nor historian knew anything of that "Law." There is only one sentence in the article we can commend, and that for its sentiment, not its grammar.

"The same method and arguments which have made of the Pentateuch a later and untrustworthy compilation, whose divine origin and character are discernible only to the critics themselves, would, if applied to the Gospels, end in the same results." We gladly welcome the scholar of the Church who honestly admits that the Gospels will not stand criticism.

CHILPERIC.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

THE Rev. R. Spence Hardy, the famous Buddhist scholar, to whose industry we owe several valuable contributions to our knowledge of Buddhism, has written a book, *The Legends and Theories of the Buddhists Compared with History and Science*, in which he treats Buddhism with extraordinary injustice.

It is nothing but the spirit of injustice that alienates the sympathies of non-Christian people towards Christianity.

It is strange that Mr. Hardy's unfair statements are made with no apparent malice, but from a sheer habit which has been acquired through the notion of the exclusiveness of Christianity.

In making these critical remarks I do not wish to offend, but to call attention to a fault which can and should be avoided in the future.

Spence Hardy says in his book, *The Legends and Theories of the Buddhists Compared with History and Science* (pp. 138, 140): "The tales that are told about the acts performed by Buddha, and the wonders attendant on these acts, need only be stated in order to be rejected at once from the realm of reality and truth. . . . . These things *are* too absurd to require serious refutation."

Mr. Hardy forgets that many "tales told about the acts performed by Jesus, and the wonders attendant on the acts," too, need only be stated in order to be rejected at once from the realm of reality and truth. Mr. Hardy recognises the paganism of others, but he does not see that he himself is still entangled in pagan notions. What would Mr. Hardy say if a Buddhist was to write exactly the same book, only changing the word Christ into Buddha, and making other little changes of the same nature? Buddhists requested by a Christian missionary to believe literally in Christ's walking upon the water, or being bodily lifted up to heaven, are, as much as Spence Hardy, entitled to say: "These things are too absurd to require serious refutation." Mr. Hardy protests (p. 137): "I deny all that is said about the passing through the air of Buddha and his disciples, or of their being able to visit the Dêwa and Brahma worlds."

If history and science refute the miracles attributed in the later Buddhistic literature to Buddha, why not those attributed to Christ? And we must assume that Mr. Hardy does not deny that Christ descended to hell, and that he passed through the air when carried up to heaven in his ascension.

Mr. Hardy speaks of "the errors of Buddhism that are contrary to fact as taught by established and uncontroverted science" (p. 135); but he appears to reject science whenever it comes into collision with a literal interpretation of Christian doctrines. Buddhism is to him a fraud; Christianity a divine revelation.

In other passages Mr. Hardy refers to Buddha's tales in which Buddha speaks of his experiences in previous existences. He says (p. 153): "These facts are sufficient to convince every observant mind that what Buddha says about his past births, and those of others, is an imposition upon the credulity of mankind, without anything whatever to support it from fact."

Here Mr. Hardy's *naiveté* can only evoke our smiles. Buddhists are no more obliged to accept the Jataka tales as genuine history than our children are requested to believe the legends of saints, or Grimm's fairy tales. Christ said, "Before Abraham was I am," apparently meaning that he had existed aeons before his birth. There is a great similarity between the pre-existence of Christ and that of Buddha, especially when we consider the later doctrine of Amitâbha, the infinite light of Buddhahood which is omnipresent and eternal. While Christ claims to have existed before Abraham, he gives us no information about the fossil animals that have of late been found by geologists. Ingersoll speaks of Christ in the same way as Spence Hardy does of Buddha. He says: "If he truly was the son of God, he ought to have known the future; he ought to have told us something about the New World; he ought to have broken the bonds of slavery. Why did he not do it?" And Ingersoll concludes: "Because he was not the son of God. He was a man who knew nothing and understood nothing." When Ingersoll speaks in these terms, he is accused of flippancy; but Mr. Hardy's seriousness is not to be doubted.

What would Christians say of a Buddhist who, with the same logic, commenting on analogous Christian traditions, said of Christ what Mr. Hardy says of Buddha? Mr. Hardy says: "I have proved that Buddhism is not a revelation of truth; that its founder was an erring and imperfect teacher, and ignorant of many things that are now universally known; and that the claim to the exercise of omniscience made for him by his followers is an imposition and pretence. . . . . We can only regard Buddha as an impostor."

This is strong language, and I am sorry for Mr. Hardy that he has forgotten himself and all rules of justice and fairness in his missionary zeal.

Even Buddha's broadness in recognising the good wherever he found it is stigmatised by Mr. Hardy. He says (p. 215): "Buddha acknowledges that there are things excellent in other religions, and hence he did not persecute. He declares that even his opponents had a degree of wisdom and exercised a miraculous power. But this very indifference about error, as about everything else—this apparent candor and catholicity—is attended by an influence too often fatal to the best interests of those by whom it is professed."

Mr. Hardy condemns "this apparent candor and catholicity" as "indifference about error," and he adds (p. 216): "To be a Christian a man must regard Buddha as a false teacher."

Mr. Hardy, apparently intending to palliate his harsh remark, says: "I am here a controversialist, and not an expositor" (p. 206).

But even as a controversialist he should not lower himself by making unjust accusations. It is neither right nor wise; for the liberties which he takes must be granted to opponents; and if they refuse to use them, it is to their credit.

P. CARUS.

—*Open Court.*

MR. LE GALLIENNE'S CONFIDENCES.

THE author of *The Religion of a Literary Man* contributes to the New York *Cosmopolitan* for October an article on "The Greatness of Man." Mr. Le Gallienne writes so daintily, and takes his readers into his confidence with so frank and charming an air, that really it seems outrageously rude to say what we feel after reading him—that it is rather skimble-skamble stuff. He tells us:—

> "I was brought up, I rejoice to say, in the bosom of an orthodox Puritan family. I hope that that family rejoices too. I was led and driven to believe that man was everybody, and that God was somebody—and that, not merely the Sabbath, but the whole universe, was made for man; that the stars were his bedtime candles, and that the sun arose to ensure his catching the 8.37 of a morning."

On this belief he acted "for many years," which may account for an air of self-importance, which, however, got a check from "those terrible Muses, geology, astronomy, and, particularly, biology." These suggested: "Nature cares nothing about us, and her giant forces laugh at our fancies." After this rebuff to inflated vanity, our young thinker very properly reflects that man has done some noteworthy things after all.

> "No, we mustn't allow ourselves to be frightened by the mere size and weight of the universe, or be depressed

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because our immediate genealogy is not considered aristocratic. Perhaps, after all, we are sons of God, and, as Mr. Meredith finely puts it, our life here may still be

> '. . . a little holding
> To do a mighty service.'

And the more man sees himself forsaken by the universe, the more opportunity to vindicate his own greatness. Is there no kind heart beating through the scheme of things?—man's heart shall still be kind. Will the eternal silence make mock of his dreams and his idealisms, laugh coldly at 'the splendid purpose in his eyes'? Well, so be it. His dreams and idealisms are none the less noble things, and if the gods do thus make mock of mortal joy and pain, let us be grateful that we were born mere men. Moreover, he has one great answer to the universe—the answer of courage. He is still Prometheus, and there is no limit to what he can bear. Let the vultures of pain rend his heart as they will, he can still hiss 'coward' in the face of the Eternal."

After this explosive outburst we have the reflection: "Perhaps, after all, who knows—God is love, and his great purpose kind"; and we are told that man is "an animal by accident, a spirit by birthright": a characteristic utterance which shows we are dealing with a poet, and not a logician. But there is one good thing about Mr. Le Gallienne. Here, as elsewhere, he directs his readers to George Meredith, who is a poet, and a thinker too.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

HUXLEY.

MR. SMALLEY says of Huxley's work: "What he did was to break down the ecclesiastical barrier between human reason and the exercise of it on some of those great questions which most nearly concern the human race. I do not mean that he alone did it, but that he was, on the whole, the foremost figure in that momentous struggle. The struggle is not yet over, but there is no longer much doubt on which side victory is to rest." Mr. Smalley gives his opinion that Mr. Gladstone, Ward, Dr. Wace, the Duke of Argyll, and all who attacked Huxley were worsted. Speaking of the debates at the Metaphysical Club, he says:—

> "Mr. Gladstone is a hardened disputant with a tough skin, but even he must have winced under Mr. Huxley's exposure of his controversial methods. On the point of orthodoxy, moreover, Mr. Gladstone is inflexible, or almost inflexible. If you are not a Churchman, you are in outer darkness. He does not follow scientific movements very carefully, but he knew very well what tremendous inroads Mr. Huxley was making upon ecclesiasticism, and he could not forgive him. One of Mr. Gladstone's most faithful henchmen once remarked that he thought it an act of presumption in a man who did not know Hebrew to discuss the Old Testament. What he really meant was that it was an act of presumption to crumple up Mr. Gladstone in a public debate."

Mr. Smalley mentions the friends who used to assemble at Huxley's London house—Tyndall, Spencer, Sir Henry S. Maine, Norman Lockyer, Alma Tadema, and others. He mentions that neither Tyndall nor Spencer smoked. "Mr. Huxley liked his pipe, and would never admit that tobacco in moderation would hurt anybody." But this was perhaps his one indulgence, for Mr. Smalley says:—

> "His life was almost ascetic. He never spared himself. Often and often have I known him leave the circle of family and friends, of which he was the life, very early in the evening and betake himself to his library; a room of which the only luxury was books. If remonstrated with, or appealed to for another half-hour, he would shake his head. There was something to be done. And it would be midnight or one or two o'clock before it was done, and then he was up at seven in the morning. I sometimes thought he had no higher happiness than work; perhaps nobody has. He would dine on a little soup and a bit of fish; more than that was a clog on his mind. 'The great secret,' he said, 'is to preserve the power of working continuously sixteen hours a day if need be. If you cannot do that, you may be caught out any time.'"

Kid—"Do you think we'll have a thunderstorm to-night?" Mother—"No." Kid—"Then I needn't say my prayers. I'm only afraid of thunder."

DO THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS PROCLAIM SOCIALISM?

THIS was the subject of a public debate on the 3rd inst., in the hall of the Bridgeton Branch of the Independent Labor Party, Howard-street, Glasgow, between Mr. William Heaford and M. M. Gass, the latter representing the Labor Party.

Mr. Gass argued that the commands of Jesus to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourself, which their promulgator declared to be the sum and substance of the law and the prophets, afford a subjective basis, which, with the Golden Rule, in the positive form in which Jesus alone expressed it, as an objective standard of conduct, constitute a code of principles the practical application of which must eventuate in Socialism. A reference to the doctrines of the prophets of Israel showed that, in Renan's words, the prophets were what we "would now call Socialists," inasmuch as they were Republicans and opposed to slavery and land monopoly. This was especially true of Isaiah, who forecast a state of society, which was exactly that aimed at by Socialism, when every citizen should enjoy in peace and security all the advantages due to him as the fruit of his own labor. The two petitions in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread" and "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," were essentially Socialistic aspirations. A divine of the last century had proved how monstrously selfish it would be to ask for more than daily bread, by this *reductio ad absurdum* version of the clause, "Give us our daily bread, and give us superfluities to pamper our flesh and feed our vanity"; and the desire that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven means that love, which implies liberty, equality, and fraternity, may prevail below among men, as it does in the presence of God.

Mr. Heaford pointed out that the injunction to love God committed those who obeyed it to the worship of the sanguinary Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the hardly less sinister and vindictive God of the New, who consigned the mass of mankind to an everlasting hell. The prescription to love our neighbor as ourself was a counsel of perfection, and any serious attempt to carry it out would subvert the whole system of civilisation. Self-love is the beginning of wisdom in moral development; the source of the highest and truest altruism. The Golden Rule, even in its affirmative form, existed long before the time of Jesus; and as for the quotation from Isaiah, it was evident that the millennial felicity there portrayed was as much a poetical version as the well-known passage in Virgil concerning the return of the Golden Age. Besides, Isaiah represented this beatific state as a direct or special creation of God. Now, Socialism, as generally understood by its advocates, was a purely secular method of improving society by human or natural agency. They had been waiting in vain for nineteen hundred years for God to commence, and the certainty was that, if we left it to him, we might wait till the Greek Kalends. The prayer for daily bread was unnecessary if men worked for it. People only prayed for what was beyond their reach. One of the most serious defects in the doctrine of Jesus was the emphasis it laid on the value of prayer, whereas the practical Socialist echoed the old Latin aphorism, *Laborare est orare*. It was impossible to understand how God's will was to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Did it mean that, when the prayer was finally answered, earth would become a second heaven, where there would be neither marrying nor giving in marriage? In that event, what would become of the home and all its lovely associations? They had had a reference to the prophets, but none to the law. What were they to make of such facts as the sanction of slavery by the Mosaic code, and the brutal command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"? Were these Socialistic institutions or practices?

In subsequent speeches Mr. Gass sought to make out that the law of Moses concerning slavery was really an anti-slavery statute, and to justify his ascription of Socialistic doctrine to Jesus.

In his closing speech Mr. Heaford searchingly reviewed the debate as a whole, and traced in graphic terms the pernicious influence of Christ's teaching and example on the history of the social well-being of mankind.

J. P. GILMOUR.

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ACID DROPS.

The Baptist Union annual at Portsmouth would not have been complete without a "missionary day." One of the speakers on this occasion was the Rev. G. H. Pople, a missionary from the Congo, where some white men have lately been cooked and eaten, and pronounced too highly flavored with rum and tobacco. Mr. Pople said that "much of the cruelty which there prevailed was due to the belief in witchcraft; but gradually the superstitions were giving way before the blessed influences of Christianity." Mr. Pople forgot to add, however, that a witch was recently roasted to death in Ireland; a good deal nearer than the Congo. He also forgot to add that the Bible orders the murder of witches, and that Jesus Christ went about ejecting devils from human beings. But of course the acknowledgment of these facts would damp the ardor of subscribers, and what would then become of the missionaries? They would starve, which is nearly as bad as being eaten, and much worse than the mere off-chance of being cooked to make a Congo holiday.

Christian bigotry is always active and enterprising, and always trying to injure someone for the glory and honor of God. The *Joyful News* puffs the Silver Cord League, whose members pledge themselves not to deal with any grocer who sells beer, wine, or spirits. The cream of the joke is that most of these grocers must be *Christians*. We advise them to copy the holy wine texts from Mr. Foote's new *Bible and Beer* pamphlet, and hang them up in their shop windows. Wouldn't the Silver Cord League scream then!

The G. O. M. is still true to his ancient love of theology, and correspondents often draw him on this fascinating subject. The Rev. A. G. Prichard, of Denton, Norfolk, has heckled Mr. Gladstone on the "New Birth," and elicited a characteristic reply. The G. O. M. believes in "a renewing spiritual operation in an infant," and speaks of the grace of God, which is supposed to perform this operation, as "a germ developed or dormant, or arrested and frozen to death." Fancy the spirit of God frozen to death! Evidently the G. O. M. is a victim of metaphor, like all the theologians that have gone before him. He mistakes ideas for realities.

"Many children, in my opinion," says the G. O. M., "and some within my happy knowledge, grow up holy from the womb." This is no doubt inspired by dear little Dorothy Drew. Were it not for sweet child voices, and tender child hands, and the patter of child feet, Christianity with its "original sin" would have ended in madness and suicide. When an old man's brain swarms with pious maggots, the best medicine is the laughing light in two little rogueish eyes.

When Mr. Athelstan Riley got his obnoxious Circular issued to Board school teachers, it was promised that "the religious opinions of candidates will not in any way influence their appointments or promotion." Now Mr. Riley openly declares that he will do his utmost to prevent the promotion of any and every one of the teachers who protested against the Circular. This is a sample of the sort of faith always kept by bigots, who consider their duty towards their deity or their Church overrides all considerations of justice towards their fellow men.

The Conservative *Times*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *St. James's Gazette* concur in censuring this breach of trust, which, as an object lesson in the tactics of the clerical party, ought not to be forgotten.

Mr. Macnamara, the "Progressive," who is making such a dead set at Mr. Athelstan Riley on the London School Board, does not understand religious equality any more than the bigot he opposes. He advocates increased grants to the Voluntary schools, without public control, although he does so ostensibly in the interest of underpaid teachers. He is also in favor of keeping the Bible in the schools; and, in that case, the Secularists can only regard the squabble over how it shall be read and explained as the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. "A plague o' both your houses!"

Count Leo Tolstoi tells, in the *New York World Monthly* for October, how a peasant drafted for the military was confined, flogged, and otherwise tortured to death as a convict because, in obedience to Christ, he refused to take the customary oath. This under the most Christian Government of the Czar.

Tolstoi says: "The mortality in the convict battalions is very great—is abnormal. Since Burow, for instance, reigns supreme in Wordnessch, 340 bodies have been added to the battalion's private graveyard; men starved or beaten to death or driven insane or to suicide by the eternal fear of punishment by continuous hard work at small rations." The number of a convict battalion seldom exceeds 600. So it appears that three-fifths of the men have been most Christianly murdered.

The poor old Pope has issued a protest against the National celebrations of September 20. He would fain persuade the Italians that their rejoicings over having their capital were an insult to his old age, "led by a sect who are enemies of God"—*i.e.*, the Freemasons. He will not, however, convince them that Rome was better off under Papal Rule, despite his prophecy of fresh perils and greater disasters. As long as Popes covet temporal power, the perils and disasters are likely to fall on the Church.

The Stepney Board of Guardians have, on the motion of Father Higley, adopted a curious method of dealing with the religious difficulty. They have decided that in future one foundling child out of every four chargeable to the Union shall be brought up as a Roman Catholic. So, after three parentless and religionless children have been put on the Protestant path to the everlasting bonfire, the next comer will have a chance of being included within the pale of salvation. Father Higley, who proposed this, had also to claim that the Catholics produced a full quarter of the foundling children. When will men learn that they have no more right to decide the religious views of children than to put them in iron cages!

If Londoners don't get saved, it is not for want of opportunity for learning the road from all sorts and conditions of men. A Hindu Yogi, Swami Vwekananda, who advertises himself as "connected with no society," is delivering lectures on "Vedanta Philosophy" at the Princes' Hall, Piccadilly, the price for admission to the stalls being five shillings.

The United Liberal Societies of New York made a big parade through the city as a demonstration against the Sunday Laws. It was computed that over 30,000 persons took part. But the Liberal Societies made a mistake by holding the parade on a Wednesday. If held on a Sunday, the demonstration would have been more effective, and, perhaps, more numerously attended.

M. T. Witt Talmage has issued a book on his travels, which he calls *The Earth Girdled*. A chief item appears to have been his visit to the Czar, who, he tells us, "worships God." The Czar seems to have known how to utilise the mountebank. The latter reports: "I said to the Emperor, 'I saw Moscow burn!' Somewhat startled, he said, 'What do you mean?' 'I saw it at sunset.' 'Oh,' he replied, smiling, 'I have often seen it in that blaze.'" This sort of talk let the Czar take Talmage's measure nicely, and he flattered the preacher, knowing that he in turn would celebrate his praises wherever he travelled.

Sir Hartley Williams, one of the Justices of Victoria, has been stirring up Melbourne orthodoxy by giving a discourse on "Religion, Dogma, and Theology," in which he advocated teaching morality apart from dogmas. A whole swarm of clericals have swept down on him, but only to show what pitiable obscurantists they are.

"The Sermon of the Week" in Monday's *Daily Chronicle* was by Mr. Price Hughes, who declared that "No man can argue himself into Christianity." This is a smack in the face for all the advocates of Christian Evidences. According to Mr. Hughes, you cannot know that Christ was God except "by the revelation of the Eternal Father." Why, then, is Mr. Hughes so anxious to have the deity of Christ taught to the children in Board schools? Why doesn't he leave it to "the Eternal Father"?

The "revelation of the Eternal Father" has made Mr. Hughes a most niggardly economist of truth. If ever we get that "revelation," we hope we shall take it in a milder form.

The *Quarterly Review* has the cheek to say: "Outside of Christendom what we behold is stagnation and decay." It, of course, implies that Christianity is the cause of movement and progress being found in Christendom. How, then, did it happen that stagnation and decay prevailed in Christendom for a thousand years, and still prevails in Abyssinia, where Christianity has existed for 1,400 years, without outside influences? If anything is certain, it is that the progressive movement in Europe came through Jews, Moslems, and Sceptics. To-day Japan is to the full more progressive than Spain, or than any other nation that can fairly be classed as distinctively Christian.

Professor Richard T. Ely, the author of a popular American book on Socialism, writes on "State Universities" in the October *Cosmopolitan*. He says: "One of the sad facts I am

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more and more compelled to face is that the great social, educational, and political reforms of our day receive little sympathy and increasing opposition from the churches as institutions. Institutionalism is getting squarely in God's way now, as it always has, although the number of individuals who see the needs and signs of the times is increasing. The hardest and wickedest obstacle in the path of progress is blind and dogged conservatism of the religious classes."

The Marquis of Lothian has a curious notion of what is meant by a denominational school. He is reported as saying, before the Church Council of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, that any school in which religious teaching was not given "might be held to be a denominational school, on the ground that it was just as emphatically placing the school in an exceptional position as if it were conducted as a denominational school." This brilliant logical *tour de force* of the noble Marquis was received with great applause by the assembled ministers, and, thus encouraged, he may now attempt to convince the Education Department.

According to F. Pommerol, they place in Auvergne a rude stone, instead of a cross, on the apex of house roofs and chimneys. This is an old custom descended from pre-Christian times, and is supposed to be an offering to the god of thunder and a talisman against lightning. At Rome, Jupiter Tonans was represented by a boulder. Thor had, as the symbol of thunder, his hammer, which made a pre-Christian cross.

The riots at Barcelona were, it appears, occasioned by the removal from the Chair of Natural History, at the University of Barcelona, of Professor Odon de Buen. The only reason for his removal is his pronounced Freethought. He was the delegate from Spain to the recent International Freethought Congress at Brussels. This seems to have been the immediate occasion of the persecution. The students resented so much the action of the authorities that they smashed the windows of the bishop who instigated it. If the clericals of Spain think they can keep out the doctrine of evolution by removing all the professors who teach it, they are probably mistaken. These miserable obscurantists are doing their worst to sink Spain into old barbarism.

Mr. Cluer (to the prisoner): "Have you any questions to ask?" Prisoner (incoherently): "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made God. I come to avenge God." Mr. Cluer: "Oh! I see. You are remanded for medical examination."

Striking illustrations of Ritualistic teaching are given in the form of a leaflet issued by the Wesleyan book-store. The illustrations are pictures of instruments for self-torture now being sold in England for the use of Anglo-Catholics. For self-flagellation you may buy a "discipline" for 4s. 6d. or more, according to the number of knotted thongs; or you can get the same in knotted steel, with which you may drench your back with blood. "You can have a wristlet for 1s. 6d. or 2s. 6d., or an anklet for 10s. 6d., large enough to wrap round any part of your leg; or a cincture, which will enwrap your waist, for 16s. These are made of steel wire, and at the intersection of the links there are sharp-hooked steel-points for the tearing of your skin at every movement of wrist, or leg, or body." Hair shirts can also be had at various prices. The use of these articles is regularly enjoined in the confessional by Ritualist priests as a condition of absolution. Mr. Athelstan Riley is reported as recommending the hair shirts to Board-school teachers. The High Church Fakirs are on the right road. They advocate celibacy, and we hope soon to report that they earn the commendation of Christ on those who make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

Professor Sayce, whose article in the *Contemporary Review* is ably dealt with by the author of *The Witness of Assyria* in this issue, gave utterance to a lot of nonsense before the Church Congress. He crows over Professor Flinders Petrie finding a scarab with the name Jacob-el—which proves that Jacob was an old divinity if it proves anything—and over the same names being found in Babylonia; that is, he makes much of points which no one thinks of disputing, without furnishing an iota of evidence for the miraculous transactions which are disputed. When he finds monumental evidence that all the rivers of Egypt were turned into blood, he can crow as he pleases. Meanwhile he only makes himself ridiculous.

Mr. E. Sidney Hartland, author of the *Legend of Perseus*, has a column-long letter in the *Times* of October 14 on "The Sin-Eater in Wales." In his book Mr. Hartland indicates that the custom of sin-eating, the partaking of food off a corpse, comes down from times of cannibalism. Of course, there have been vehement denials of the custom, which was certified to by Aubrey, Moggridge, and others. Canon Silvan Evans and the Rev. T. Eynor Davies have been adduced as saying they did not know of any such custom—which is a good deal like the Irishman who offered to produce witnesses who would swear they did not see him do what he was accused of doing.

Mr. Hartland mentions that Miss Gertrude Hope saw the same ceremony performed at Market Drayton as recently as July 1, 1893. She says: "The minister who had lately come from Pembrokeshire remarked that he was sorry that Pagan custom was still observed. He had been able to put an end to it in the Pembrokeshire village where he had formerly been." Mr. Hartland also tells an anecdote of an inspector of schools who asked a clergyman concerning the superstitions of the place, when he was met by the dignified response: "Our people are not superstitious, I am glad to say." His inspection over, he asked the first-class: "Now, children, can you tell me of any place where there is a bogie, and of anyone who has seen one?" and instantly every hand was stretched out.

If any of our readers know of instances of clergymen having suppressed old customs or children's games, we shall be glad of authentic information, as we have reason to think that wherever the Pagan character of such observances is revealed by the folk-lorists it is suppressed as speedily as possible by the men of God.

A Queensland Democrat mentions in the *Daily News* that in that part of the world the Sunday Act of Charles II. is enforced against Chinamen who do gardening on Sundays. Christianity always was the most tolerant of faiths.

A press telegram from Cincinnati, a few days ago, says: "The customary Lord's Prayer in the Linwood, Ohio, school has been ordered to be stopped." A father took his child from school on account of this prayer, and notified the teacher, who consulted the attorney of the public schools. The latter replied that prayers had been eliminated from the schools, and that a State law forbade anything of a sectarian nature being taught in the public schools. Have we not a similar law in Illinois? Will not some lawyer be so kind as to advise us for publication, as we have inquiries on the subject?—*Progressive Thinker.*

The Dean of Norwich is very modest. He only wants a million a year raised for a National Sustentation Fund for poor incumbents. As for the curates, they can form a Union of their own and go on strike. The Church already takes from seven to ten millions, and if those at the bottom of the ladder want help they should look to the fat deans and bishops higher up.

Under the heading of "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil," *Reynolds' Newspaper* gives a list of men of God gone wrong. It is sad reading, especially for Christians.

Mr. Headlam has spent too much money on his *Church Reformer* and thinks of dropping it. Reforming the Church is a big undertaking; too big for anyone but Jesus Christ, if he would only come again, as he promised; and perhaps he would fail. On the whole we think he would.

Mr. F. Goodchild has compiled for the *Outlook* (N.Y.) a lot of statistics on "What Working-men Pay for Religion." It appears to be precious little in the United States, considerably less than what is spent for tobacco. In Great Britain it is far less than in America; in France still less; in Germany less still; and in Belgium least of all. America probably leads the way, because of the almost enforced contributions of the Irish, as it was found among glass-workers in the States that 68 per cent. of American families were said to contribute to the Church, while 84 per cent. of the Irish contributed. But the contribution throughout from working men is so small, in the highest instance not 1½ per cent. of the income, as to make it certain that religion is practically maintained by the wealthy classes, who doubtless believe that it subserves their interests.

Either J. C. or the Devil.

The Kurnai, aboriginal natives of Australia, had three mysterious gods—Brewin, Bullumdut, and Bankan. In Fison and Howitt's *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* (p. 255) the latter writes: "Being desirous of learning what Brewin, Bullumdut, and Bankan were supposed by the Kurnai to be, I questioned two of the most intelligent men. Both were Tatungolung—one a member of the Church of England, the other an intelligent savage and a scamp. I said: 'What is Brewin?' They consulted, and after a few minutes one of them said: 'We think that he is Jesus Christ.' I said: 'Well, I think you had better consult again; I do not think your Catechism teaches you that.' They then consulted somewhat longer, when he said: 'We have talked about it, and we think it must be the devil.'"

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 20, Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C.: 7.30, "The Holy Ghost."

October 27, Plymouth.

November 17, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—October 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 21, Paisley; 22, Cupar; 24 and 25, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. Nov. 3, m. Newington Reform Club, e. Foresters' Hall; 17, Liverpool; 24, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. S. W.—It would be difficult to provide for a Secular funeral in such a remote place, unless someone attended from Plymouth or Bristol.

A. Adams (Hull).—Notices should be sent to the editor.

T. Dobson.—We have not forgotten the promised articles. The *Beer and Bible* pamphlet is a good preliminary.

C. Johnson.—Thanks for papers. The joke has appeared in a slightly different form.

S. Feuerein.—Will give particulars of bishops' incomes and legacies at death next week.

R. Axelley.—We received no letter about the opposition to our placard. Kindly forward particulars.

H. Gadd.—Your subscription shall be transferred.

F. W. Swain.—Pleased to hear the Derby friends who subscribe "hope the day is not far distant when Mr. Foote's worth will be fully recognised." If people everywhere who think him worth anything would just send on the amount for Freethought propaganda, it would be doubly interesting. The other matters shall be attended to.

A. F. Walter.—Mr. Forder attends to your order. Thanks for your kind words.

T. W. Bundy, 86 Etta-street, Deptford, S.E., is the new secretary of the Lewisham and New Cross Branch. We should like to see some lecturing done in this district.

T. Millar.—Why not try to get a few of the Belfast friends together, and make inquiries about a hall for occasional special lectures?

A. B. Moss.—Sorry to hear of the fiasco. Put the notice down again, and keep your seconder in sight. Pleased to have your good wishes for our lecture scheme.

R. Dowding.—We have no covers for holding weekly copies of the *Freethinker*, or we would send one to the Walthamstow Library. We may see what can be done when we get a little time.

Peter.—The verse is in type.

John and James M'Glashan (Glasgow) transfer their £2 donation to the Hall fund to Shilling Week, and send another £1, with wishes for a good response to all our appeals. This is a practical way of wishing.

A Servant Girl sends a shilling, and wishes she could send more. The poor girl's mite should be a challenge to some of the wealthier friends.

H. Dines (Colchester).—Hope we have your name right. Will inquire about the other matter.

Delta, sending twenty shillings, writes: "You are so energetic and audacious (in a complimentary sense) that you are likely to awaken enthusiasm in others." He wishes the Agnostics amongst the aristocracy would come to our aid.

J. M. Jones.—Shall be transferred.

Donald Black.—Thanks. Glasgow has beaten other places hollow in the Shilling Week subscription. We shall bear it in mind if Glasgow ever wants a service from us.

J. Morton.—Transferred as desired.

H. Smith (Stanningley).—Glad to have your cheerful letter.

Joseph Close.—Thanks for your interesting letter. We like to hear of our readers sowing the seed of Freethought. Much can be done in courteous and kindly private conversation.

H. Brown.—Our compliments to the subscribing members of the Isle of Dogs Progressive Club.

Beelzebub.—Shall be attended to. Portsmouth will not be left out of our scheme. We have not Mr. Harding's address. Kindly ask him to communicate.

Painter sends a second £1 to Shilling Week, and hopes we have "now received at least 2,000 shillings." Not yet, but no doubt we shall before the end of the month.

T. Hibbott, subscribing, writes: "You deserve all the support and encouragement our party can give for your devotion and energy in the cause. Our party should rally together and close their ranks."

H. R.—We sympathise with you, but in the long run you may think yourself well rid of a young lady who would restrict your reading to her own narrow limits. It is always best to look upon the cheerful side, if you can; indeed, those who would live wholesome, useful lives should cultivate the habit of doing so.

A. S. Coleman.—The fund is not closed. You are quite in time. Hundreds of others are still behind, and we are giving them a chance.

W. Darton.—Hope to see you next Sunday at Plymouth.

H. Jones.—Correction made. You are quite right. It is always well to be accurate.

G. Brady, subscribing to Shilling Month—as it now is—hopes "the result will be a substantial sum which will enable us to attain the important object in view."

W. H. Morrish, our veteran Bristol friend, transfers £2 from the Hall fund to our lecturing scheme.

E. Shedley.—How can we answer the man's nonsense? If a Christian minister knows that most Secularists are bad men, he is like the rest of his species; their knowledge is always guesswork.

M. Christopher is "so pleased with our lecture scheme" that he sends us another subscription.

R. Joslin.—Pleased to hear that yourself and a few Edmonton friends would contribute £10 towards a guarantee fund if Colonel Ingersoll would only "come over and help us." We fancy, however, that the Colonel would need no other guarantee than his own popularity.

J. W. Gott writes: "The new scheme is one in which I can heartily work, because I feel sure we are going to get our money's worth."

F. Marsh.—Mr. Foote and all his household are quite well. Thanks for your wish that he "will have the best of health and live many years to uphold the noble cause of Freethought."

W. J. Gaines.—Glad to hear you induced your Christian friend to attend Mr. Foote's first lecture at St. James's Hall, and that he was "delighted." Keep pegging away, always courteously, at your orthodox acquaintances. Much good is done in this way. Freethinkers should all take a part in our propaganda, and not leave it entirely to our lecturers and journalists.

J. B.—Thanks for cuttings. Your subscription is not as large as your wish to help, but that is no fault of yours. If all subscribed what they could, we should be able to carry Freethought into every part of the kingdom.

Papers Received.—Oldham Standard—Oldham Chronicle—New York Public Opinion—New York World Monthly—Two Worlds—Monist—Liberator—Truthseeker—Oxford Times—Blue Grass Blade—Free Sunday Advocate—Melbourne Age—Cape Times——Melbourne Herald—Middlesex Chronicle—Orange Free State Express—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SHILLING MONTH.

This fund will be kept open till the end of October. I am requested to do this by several correspondents, and it is only fair that all who *might* give *should* give, or at least have a full opportunity afforded them.

My lecture scheme has "caught on." Many of the oldest and best workers in the country see in it a real prospect of a "Forward Movement." I have had a number of applications for help in propagandist efforts from various parts of the country. They are really more numerous than I can deal with, but I shall do what I can. Everything depends on the means put at my disposal. I therefore appeal again to my readers. Hundreds of them, surely, are able to send something; scores of them, I know, are able to assist handsomely; and I want them to understand that *I am waiting*.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

J. D. Leggett, 2s. 6d.; J. Crabtree and two boys, 3s.; J. S.; A. F. Walter; Mrs. Walter; R. Ellis, 2s.; T. Millar; R. Shaw 2s.; R. Axelley; J. and J. Beale, 2s.; J. Close, 2s. 6d.; W. Bineham; A. E. Moore; W. Stevens, 6d.; L. Oaks; E. Middleton, 6d.; H. Brown; Painter, £1; T. Warwick, 2s.; T. Hibbott, 2s.; W. Akenhead; T. M. C.; C. R. W.; Pyrites; John and James M'Glashan, £3; J. Pruett, 5s.; A Servant Girl; E. Lyons; H. Dines, 2s. 6d.; T. Ollerenshaw, 2s.; G. W., 2s.; G. Wilkins; Delta, £1; Howforth, 5s.; W. H. Morrish, £2; M. Christopher, 2s.; W. Hopper, 5s.; M. Bell, £1; W. Davey, 2s.; Mrs. Harwood; Mr. and Mrs.

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Yates, 2s.; Mr. Scott; A. Marks; R. Joslin, 10s.; J. W. Gott, 2s. 6d.; J. R., 2s.; J. M.; R.G.; A. R.; J. L.; G. W.; C.M.; W.H.; J. F.; D. B., 2s. 6d.; Southport, 2s.; Few Port Glasgow Friends, 5s. 6d.; F. Boorman; F. J. Boorman; G. Lucas, 2s. 6d.; P. Shapter; W. Deacon, 6d.; A Gospel Stater, 2s. 6d.; A. Weddle, 5s.; J. Morton, 5s.; H. Smith, 2s.; C. E. Hall, 2s. 6d.; T. Stead; R. and Mary Lowther, 2s.; W. S. M., 4s.; J. Ainsworth (Blackburn), 2s.; Mrs. and R. Bransby, 2s.; A. J. Lovell, 10s.; A. S. Webb; J. Tonkins, 2s.; Mrs. James; J. Hooper, 2s.; R. S. Smith, 2s.; Alchem, 5s.; R. Bulman, 2s. 6d.; C. J., 3s.; S. Bulman, 4s.; J. K., 2s.; F. Marsh, 4s.; A. A. Watts; H. Higgins; W. J. Gaines; C. R. Morgan; Friend; J. W. Phillips; G. Phillips; A. Phillips; H. Smith; John Grange, 5s.; J. B.; J. P. W.; H. Bounds, 2s.; A. S. Coleman, 5s.; J. S. and C. W.; O. M. L., 2s.; Mount Batten Friends, 5s.; W. Pearce, 2s.; G. Brady, 5s.; T. Dobson, 2s.; J. Umpleby, 5s.; W. O. and J. M., 5s.

Derby: Barker, Briggs, Fletcher, Ford, King, Martin, Whitney, Wright, Heritage, Swain, 10s.

Per Miss Vance.—A. Cross, 10s.; J. Worster; B. Dundas; W. B., 2s.; T. Lewis; J. Cole; J. Payne; R. Fountain, 4s.

Per R. Forder.—C. R.; H. L. Towers, 2s.; H. J., 2s. 6d.; Wm. M. (North Shields), 5s.; J. Hayes, 2s. 6d.; T. B., 2s.; A. J. Lorkin, 2s. 6d.; H. Gadd, 2s. 6d.; S. Newson, 2s.; J. A. R., 3s.; R. C. G.; Rhosddaite; A. G. Scopes (Ipswich), 2s.; H. Poulson, 5s.; F. W. D., 2s. 6d.; J. Radford; A. Radford; R. Radford; G. H.; Amygo, 2s.

Correction.—In the Blackburn list, J. Titherington, 1s., should have been 2s.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE *Sentinel*, a North London paper published at Bowes Park, gives a fair report of Mr. Foote's recent lecture at Wood Green. Reference is made to the "naming" of the baby boy, Alec Wood, and it is admitted that Mr. Foote "spoke eloquently and movingly on the solemn responsibilities of parenthood." The lecture is described as "powerful and eloquent," but "spoiled here and there by cheap laughter-raising"—which, of course, only means that the lecture was less solemn than a sermon.

Another good report of this Wood Green meeting appears in the *Pioneer*, which says: "The hall was crowded by an attentive audience, who vigorously applauded many of the points made during the lecture." The writer of this report makes an excellent summary of the lecture in the space at his command.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured to an improved audience at Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening. His able and eloquent address on "Atheism and Christian Theism" was frequently and loudly applauded. Mr. Foote, who took the chair, appealed to the audience to fill the twelve hundred seats by bringing their friends and acquaintances to these meetings. A good collection was contributed towards the expenses.

Mr. Foote lectures at Foresters' Hall this evening (Oct. 20) on "The Holy Ghost." He will be followed by Mr. Touzeau Parris and Mr. C. Cohen.

Mr. Putnam concludes his "News and Notes" on his British tour in the *Truthseeker* of October 5, the latest to hand. Most of the article will be reprinted in due course in our columns. Meanwhile we may note that now Mr. Putnam is on the other side of the Atlantic he takes the first opportunity of thanking the President of the National Secular Society for his reception of the President of the American Secular Union. "I must thank Mr. Foote," he says, "for the thorough-going manner in which he has supported my labors in the field, and for his whole-souled greeting to me as a guest. He has been a comrade indeed, with chivalrous devotion to the cause." Mr. Putnam also thanks Mr. Watts for his "unstinted aid," and hopes to repay them both when they visit America.

Mr. Foote has written a special message on behalf of the Freethinkers of this country to the American Secular Convention, which will be held at New York the last week in October. This was done at Mr. Putnam's request.

Professor Goldwin Smith has spoken out on the action of the Postmaster-General of Canada in suppressing the circulation of the *Truthseeker* in the Dominion. In a letter to Mr. E. M. Macdonald he says: "Dear Sir,—You may be sure that you will always find me on the side of perfect freedom of opinion. Beliefs which cannot maintain themselves by argument in fair lists against all comers ought not to be maintained at all. In the number of the *Truthseeker* which you have sent me there is much to which believers in Christianity would object, as they would to many of the utterances of my late friends, Professors Huxley and Tyndall. But there is nothing, so far as I can see, to justify or excuse the exclusion of your journal from circulation.—Yours faithfully, GOLDWIN SMITH."

Mr. Joseph Symes, our gallant old colleague out at Melbourne, writes as follows in the last number of the *Liberator* to hand:—"The *Freethinker* has a note or two on my late imprisonment and other 'legal' experiences, and adds: 'Mr. Symes has apparently more than one man can do in Melbourne. Bigotry seems as rampant there as it is here, and even more so.' True. It is impossible for my English friends to even imagine the difficulties of my position here in Melbourne; and no words of mine could ever describe them. I am not insinuating that they have not worry and trouble enough, and much too much. But I am alone, and have been for eleven and a half years. Still, I am not dead. I have been robbed wholesale, insulted, outraged, and have still more lies told and whispered against me than any other man, and more utterly cowardly enemies, whose cowardice makes cowardice itself almost blush for them. True, I have much more than I can do; but I never was more able or willing to work, nor less disposed to show quarter to that horrid superstition under which all my foes more or less find shelter, encouragement, and incitement to crime, and assistance in it. Still, I drop my work when I can work no more; I yield to my enemies when they have really beaten me; but not till then. My fight has been long and fierce. It is a wonder I have any respect for the mass of mankind left in me; and a greater wonder still that that respect and hope for them does not seem to diminish. Perhaps this arises from the fact that all along my course, while rascality has seemed overwhelming, I have found the utmost goodness in a few persons. In every crisis I have experienced noble men and women have come forward with help and encouragement. To them I owe more than I can express, more than I can ever repay."

Mr. J. Morrison Davidson, whose last volume, *Let There Be Light!*, has been noticed in the *British Weekly*, sends a letter to that journal, in which he reaffirms his statement that nine-tenths of the clergy would be helpless in the grasp of a Foote or a Watts. "If I were a betting man," he says, "I should be prepared to take heavy odds that they would pass a far better examination in the writings of said scholars [Lightfoot, Harnack, Sanday, Ramsay, etc.] than five-sixths of the 'clergy of all denominations.' In a word, they 'master their briefs,' while the salaried advocates of Christianity but too often shamefully neglect theirs."

In the *New Age* (Oct. 10), edited by A. E. Fletcher, there is an article on "The Religion of Thomas Paine," in reply to the *Christian Commonwealth*. The writer rather patronisingly pats Paine on the back for being no Atheist. He says: "He was not an orthodox Christian certainly, but he was one who would have entirely agreed with Dean Milman when he said: 'Christianity has been tried for more than eighteen hundred years; perhaps it is time to try the religion of Jesus.'" This is a shade overdone, for one wonders, if this was exactly Paine's position, how it was that he still remains a stigmatised heretic, while Milman was a honored dignitary of the Church. The truth is, Paine led the van of heresy in his own day, and, were he living now, we should rather expect to find him with the Atheists than with the colorless Broad Churchmen of the type of Mr. Fletcher. The article gives several notable extracts from Paine, and concludes as follows: "Paine died under the ban of society and the Churches, when a little hypocrisy or even discreet silence might have secured him unbounded applause; but he was to the last inflexibly true to the highest he knew, and the best of us can do no more."

It appears from Renan's book on his sister, Henriette, that to her he owed the exquisite refinement of his style. She read all his proofs, and was a most fastidious critic. She, moreover, led the way in Freethought, and regretted the priestly leanings of her brother. He says: "I left St. Sulpice Seminary in 1845. Thanks to the liberal and earnest spirit which ruled over that institution, I had carried my philologic studies very far; my religious opinions were greatly shaken thereby. Here again Henriette was my support. She had outstripped me in this path; her Catholic beliefs had wholly disappeared, but she had always refrained from exerting any influence over me upon this subject. When I told her of the doubts which tormented me, and which made it my duty to abandon a career for which absolute faith was requisite, she was enchanted, and offered to smooth the difficult passage."

We are indebted to the *Leek Times* for the perfect courtesy and fairness it has shown in respect to the correspondence on the suggested "Foote and Howard Debate." Mr. Howard's letter in reply to our very plain statement in the *Freethinker* is to be charitably accounted for on the theory that he is laboring under a violent prejudice, which clouds his understanding. "Mr. Foote, one of the ablest platform debaters that ever lived," he says, "declines to discuss the

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question of man having a soul unless he can secure an unfair advantage to himself in the framing of the proposition to be debated." Really this is very astonishing. Mr. Foote asked Mr. Howard to frame the proposition he wished to maintain with respect to mental phenomena, and promised to frame his own proposition afterwards. Mr. Howard calls this securing an unfair advantage. In other words, Mr. Howard declines to debate unless he frames his own proposition and Mr. Foote's too; which is the very course we charged him with pursuing in former negotiations.

Mr. Howard wants Mr. Foote to champion the "brain theory," which is surely a rough way of expressing the scientific psychology of Lewes or Maudsley. Mr. Foote would be silly to let himself be saddled with such crudities. Nor will he call himself a Materialist or an Agnostic to please Mr. Howard, who would at once put his own construction on these terms, and cry "Behold the philosophy of Mr. Foote."

We invite Mr. Howard to drop his heroics and come to the point. Let him frame his proposition, as he is the "challenger," and Mr. Foote will then frame his. If the reverend gentleman then complains of any unfairness, the matter may be left to the adjudication of the editor of the *Leek Times*, whom we do not know from Adam; or to the adjudication of a committee of three persons at Leek, two of whom shall be nominated (if he pleases) by Mr. Howard himself.

Mr. Watts lectures three times at Glasgow to-day. Tea will be provided, between meetings, for friends from a distance, and before the evening lecture Mr. Watts will name the infant daughter of Mr. D. G. Lindsay, the secretary of the Branch. There will also be a collection for the Benevolent Fund at the close of each meeting.

The National Congress of French Freethinkers will be held on Friday, November 1, at the Salle de l'Harmonie, 96 Rue d'Angoulême, Paris. This, being the feast of All Souls, is a general holiday, and a suitable time for the Congress. Among the subjects to be discussed will be the relation of Freethought to Internationalism.

Lord Salisbury, like his nephew, Mr. Balfour, is an upholder of Christianity. His address to the British Association last year was a clever, but superficial, attack on Darwinism. Happily it is to be answered at length by Mr. Herbert Spencer, who is preparing his answer for the press. No doubt it will be as effective as the best of Mr. Spencer's previous efforts in controversy.

The *Oldham Chronicle*, referring to a Freethinker who claimed to affirm in the local Coroner's Court, remarks that "An individual having the courage to publicly confess that he has no religious belief is still somewhat of a rarity." It is satisfactory to learn that the Coroner administered the law, and at once allowed the Freethinker to make an affirmation.

It is notable that, while the Rev. A. C. Deane tells us in the *Nineteenth Century* that the young men of our universities are Agnostics, a discussion on the subject of Agnosticism is going on in the *Oxford Times*, to which H. Pash and W. Valliss contribute well-written letters on the Agnostic side.

The Finsbury Park and the Islington Branches, together with the old members of the Balls Pond Branch, have taken the Balls Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green-road, to the end of the year 1896. There will be a meeting of members and friends on Sunday next at 8.30. On Wednesday, October 23, a Christian Evidence class will be inaugurated, the subject for consideration being the disputed passage in Josephus. Mr. Forder will open at 8.30. The first public lecture will be on Sunday, November 3, by Mr. Foote.

Secretaries of Branches of the National Secular Society are requested to send at once to Miss Vance all particulars which they desire to see inserted in the N.S.S. Almanack for 1896. Lecturers who desire their addresses inserted should forward them without delay.

WHAT humanity needs is not people who lead unsocial and wicked lives, and are very sorry when about to die; when, by the nature of the case, they can do no more harm nor good; but people who, at an early period, begin to render valuable service to the good cause, and continue rendering more valuable services as they advance in years.—*J. Cotter Morison, "The Service of Man," p. 196; third edition.*

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (September 21).

I HAVE the pleasure of another visit to Professor Edwin Johnson, and this time we take a stroll over Hampstead Heath. This park is nearly as large as Central Park, and consists of hill, forest, and lakes, which present a charming variety. In fact, on Hampstead Heath it seems more like being in the country than in any other place I have visited in London. The views are wilder and more secluded. The air of cultivation is not so apparent. The neighborhood is both ancient and rural. There is the old hotel, and the chair in which Queen Victoria sat when she was a young lady and was in danger of an accident from restive horses on the steep Hampstead hill; and in this chair she recovered her nerves and equanimity. Since then the chair has been held sacred, and the tavern preserves its aristocratic dilapidation. Of course the thirsty traveller takes a glass of beer at this historic spot. Farther on are "The Spaniards" connected with the Lord Gordon riots, as depicted in *Barnaby Rudge*. We pass by the grove of pines amidst whose melodious songs Keats used to wander in his poetic youth, and it is certainly a beautiful spot. One can see far off into the glowing country with its diversified sceneries, while opposite the busy city looms, and between are the pastures where blackberries used to grow and lovers still wander. Many a dream the poet might have had amidst these delicious and contrasting scenes. From one point on Hampstead Heath the city can be seen in almost its entire extent. This is one of the finest views that England can present. I shall still more remember the beauties of this place because, almost immediately after the visit, I came across the poem of James Thomson (B.V.), entitled "A Sunday at Hampstead Heath," also "A Sunday up the River." I did not know that Thomson was so great a poet until I read those fresh and vigorous idyls. He has the ring of Burns, and the airy spaces of Shakespeare. He brings nature right before you, and pours forth the genuine human heart. I had read his "City of the Dreadful Night," and, while it is a marvellous poem, I did not like it. It is a kind of abnormal production, a gloomy curiosity of literature. But the "Sunday on Hampstead Heath" is gloriously healthful and jubilant, and, to my mind, ranks Thomson in essential genius with the greatest singers of the day. My visit to Hampstead Heath made me realise better the fidelity of this bard to nature's opulent display.

Professor Johnson is a scholar and a philosopher, both of fine literary insight and extensive reading. We talked on all manner of subjects along Hampstead Heath, and among his books. He is rich in experiences of the remarkable men of this era. Like myself, he was compelled to give up his orthodox position and accept the perils of out-and-out heresy. He has been brave and true to his convictions. He has written a Radical novel, *The Quest of Mr. East*. I have not read it, but I have no doubt it is a suggestive work. It is not yet published. I hope, however, it will find its circle of readers. Professor Johnson has the pen of a felicitous writer.

On Friday I take my way to Leicester, and Leicester is indeed a handsome place. It has a population of 180,000. It is a large manufacturing point, but its atmosphere is clear of smoke. The chimneys must consume their own smoke. The city fathers enforce this rule. If a chimney pours forth too much smoke, there is a call at once for a halt of the columns, so that the city always presents a bright and clean appearance. Leicester is famous in the history of England. One of the ancient Earls of Leicester was the originator of the British Parliament. Here are remnants of the old Roman wall, and the Roman Fosse, or public highway, is now one of the elegant streets of the city. There is King Richard's Road, along which Richard the Third galloped to Bosworth Field, eight miles distant. At the bridge where he passed over is the inscription: "Near this spot are the remains of Richard the Third, the last of the Plantagenets." It is not known where his body was buried, if at all. Some say that it was thrown into the river and never recovered. I journey to Leicester on Friday in order to attend an "outing" of the employees of Mr. Sydney Gimson and Company, who have large manufacturing works at Leicester. Mr. Gimson is president of the Secular Society at Leicester, and is active in our cause. About four hundred men are employed at the company's works, and these, with their wives and sweethearts, made a rally of about six hundred excursionists. The British workers do not do anything by halves. They go in for a whole day of fun when they set about it, and enjoy themselves from morning till night. We start off at seven o'clock a.m. A special train of fifteen cars is chartered for the occasion. These are filled full; even the babies join in the festivities, and don't seem to get tired. Our destination is Skegness, a watering-place in Lincolnshire, about seventy miles off. On our way we pass through old Boston, the original of Massachusetts Boston. The Puritans came from here, and the Pilgrims

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from Plymouth. A grim sect were the Puritans, and armed with authority. Old Boston has something of the appearance of its namesake. You might imagine yourself in a part of the "Hub" as you roam its ancient streets. It used to be the third seaport in England, ranking after London and Bristol. London has maintained its supremacy, but the glory of Bristol and Boston has departed. Other cities have rushed to the front. The parish church at Boston is one of the largest in the kingdom—larger than any in New England, I think. It has a noble tower, which is called the "Stump," for, as you approach the city, especially in the evening, it has the appearance of a huge stump, rising above the surrounding dwellings. It is massive, and, as you view it nearer, beautiful in its structure. It is a notable landmark. Boston has a population now of about 15,000. It has some shipping and manufacturing business. The country around is level, and rich in agriculture.

We also pass by Belvoir Castle, pronounced "Beaver," the seat of the Duke of Rutland. It is, I understand, a French word, meaning "beautiful sight," and certainly there must be an extensive view from its lofty battlements. It is on a high hill clothed with forests, the highest elevation in the county, from which a vast and level expanse stretches, mostly of prosperous farms. The railroad extends through what are called the "fenlands," which were once swamps, incapable of cultivation, but have been drained, canals and huge pumps being used for this purpose, and now the landscape shines with harvest. Thousands of acres have thus been utilised. We reach Skegness about half-past nine, and to the music of the band we march to the pavilion, and the broad and shining beach, miles in length, over which the children rush with joyous excitement, and the older folks follow, equally interested in the ever-varying panorama of sea and shore. The children take off their shoes and stockings and paddle barefoot along the sands and incoming waters, and it is interesting to watch their manœuvres. They enjoy it with the recklessness of childhood. Some of the elders take to the bathing-machines, some to the boats, and some sail over the tide on the yacht or steamship. It is a chequered scene on every hand. A long pier stretches out into the ocean, upon which the band plays, and various entertainments attract for ten continuous hours. There is a "switchback," and although this was invented in America, and ran its course at the World's Fair, I had to come to Skegness in order to take my first ride, which was an exhilarating affair, something like coasting down hill. Various games are advertised, shooting the cocoa-nut, etc. The negro minstrels put in their fun, and altogether there is a wide and resounding effervescence of jollity. The tide is somewhat insidious along these sands, and creeps inward before one is aware, and the loiterer is shut off from the mainland by an ever-broadening stream; and the way people clamber over that watery barrier is somewhat amusing to those who are safe on the other side. At one o'clock sharp is the dinner hour, and we all gather promptly in the vast pavilion, and in true democratic fashion proceed to the consumption of a "good, square meal," with a pint of beer attached. The British workman has a good appetite, and eats vigorously, and when he gets through he proceeds at once to the open firmament of heaven, and takes a smoke. He does not wait to listen to speeches, as we do in America. Everybody, so far as I can see, is satisfied, sober, contented, and happy. The afternoon pursues its glorious march. The mists of morning disappear, the sky is almost cloudless, and the brilliant sea and the vast, level shores, glimmering into distant silver, make a resplendent picture. Out on the smooth water one can hear the music of the band, mellowed into wondrous harmony by the beaming distance, while a million waves break along the strand and join their voices to the sweeping melody. Even the donkeys seem to have an ear for music, and trot jubilantly along, with the little children shouting and laughing on their backs. The silvery afternoon slowly changes into golden twilight. More beautiful appears the ocean, now almost like a mirror. The sails are drooping, and the boats are lazily floating. The children are tired, but trudge sturdily onward. The crowd gathers at the station, and at 8.5 p.m. we start for home through the broad and glistening night. The earth hath its electric stars, answering to the stars above, as we thunder through the cities, villages, and fields. At eleven o'clock we arrive at Leicester, and of all the joyous crowd only one man is left behind to pay the penalty of too much "income-tax" on the brain. It was a regular British holiday, and I enjoyed every moment of the breezy entertainment. It was a delightful "water-sketch" of Merrie England.

The Gimson Company paid the expenses of this big picnic, the railroad fare of all the men, and provided the excellent dinner; and they did this with no patronising airs, but in the true spirit of liberty, fraternity, and equality. They are genuine men, and appreciate the manhood of the worker.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

The road to hell is paved with parsons.

CHRIST.

III

THE godhead robs the man of all
The greatness which he might possess,
For he was worthy, if at all,
In simple humanness.

And as his quiet life I scan
Through mists of falsehood, folly, fraud,
I think that may be great in man
Which were but low in God.

And woven through and through this life
What tales of swine are made for geese?
Dimmed legends once with beauty rife
In the clear mind of Greece.

What stories children to affright,
Of one of three, the third of one!
Such spectres haunt the skirts of night,
But vanish from the sun.

This person of the Trinity
Came forth his godhead to disown—
"Why callest thou me good?" said he,
"For God is good alone."

SUMMING UP.

I would do right from day to day,
Love good and hate the evil thing;
But I will strongly put away
This sensuous passioning.

And when for sorry faults I grieve,
And one, with smooth, insidious tones
Says, "Set thy heart to sleep—believe—
Rest softly—faith atones,"

Then doth my mind's unclouded eye
See from his lips the poison fall—
I will not stoop to listen, I;
But rather suffer all.

I follow Truth, before whose face
Nor God nor blackest hell hath might;
I would not win his love and grace
And lose her in the night.

PYRITES.

A Candid Archbishop.

On board the train going west I found Archbishop Langevin, of Manitoba, who very politely responded to my inquiries as to his opinions on the school question. He said that the complete secularisation of the schools would in no wise satisfy them, for what they objected to mainly was "godless schools." I asked him why, if Catholics were allowed separate schools, the same might not be demanded by Jews and Freethinkers, to whom Protestant religious exercises were objectionable. His reply was: "This is a Christian country, and Jews and Freethinkers should be allowed no rights for the propagation of their opinions. An Agnostic is worse than a murderer." I said: "Then, to be consistent, you would revive the Inquisition and exterminate unbelievers?" "Oh, no," he replied, "I would not go so far as that; a limit must be made somewhere." I thought to myself, the only limit is your weakness. This intolerant spirit would only be satisfied by the death of your enemies had you the same power as of yore. The only change that centuries have made in your Church is to lessen your ability for mischief, not your purpose.

After considerable discussion, I told the Archbishop that I was glad to hear his opinion of Agnostics, because I was an official representative of that school of thought, being President of the Canadian Secular Union. His purple robes rustled, the heavy gold chain around his neck gleamed, and, holding up his hand with its great amethyst ring, he exclaimed, "Oh, you dreadful man!" Then, recovering from his surprise and horror, he laughed heartily as he realised how aptly he had spoken. He agreed with me that we stood at the two logical extremes of religious thought; it must be Rome or Reason, authority or private judgment. Protestantism is an inconsistent compromise. Its 400 sects show that it has no rational basis for unity. The battle of the future is between the Romish Church and Freethought, and he and I represented the opposing principles. Still, we had a cordial parting, and he expressed himself as gratified with the conversation.—*Captain R. C. Adams, in "Secular Thought" (Toronto)*

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BOOK CHAT.

In connection with Mr. Foote's new pamphlet on *The Bible and Beer*, it is interesting to note that Count Leo Tolstoi, who has strong claims to be considered the most Christian Christian, if not the only living Christian extant, in his *Four Gospels Harmonised* utterly rejects the story of turning water into wine at Cana. He considers it "most instructive as an example of the harm done by accepting the mere letter of the Bible story as inspired revelation. The main incident in itself presents nothing extraordinary or instructive, from whatever point of view we choose to consider it. If we look on it as a miracle, the miracle is meaningless; to consider it a mere trick were to insult Christ; as a picture of daily life the narrative possesses no value." Now we differ from Count Tolstoi in considering the narrative very instructive as to the solar and Bacchic elements underlying the Christian myth. If we adopted his principles of interpretation, we should have to strike out much from the teachings of Jesus, as well as "the false teaching of Paul" and "the ravings of the writer of the Apocalypse." We conceive the Count's method of reconstructing the Gospels by picking out what suits himself, as fundamentally wrong, unless they are taken as poetic romances and fiction. They claim to be historical documents, and must be judged as such. If they are not historical, but mythical, the attempt to construct a rationalised history from them is vain.

* * *

The works of Edward Carpenter on the marriage and sex questions, already noticed in these columns, have been translated into German, and are published by Max Spohr in Leipsic. They are *Die Geschlechtsliebe, Die Homogene Liebe, Das Weib*, and *Die Ehe in der freier Gesellschaft.*

* * *

The *Monist* for October opens with a paper on "The Darwinism of Darwin and the Post-Darwinian Schools." A more satisfactory article follows, on "Science and Faith," by Dr. Paul Topinard, the French anthropologist, who goes in thoroughly for evolution. Professor C. Lloyd-Morgan writes on "Naturalism," a reply to Mr. Balfour; Dr. Woods Hutchinson writes of Darwinism as "The Fifth Gospel"; Professor Lombroso treats of "Criminal Anthropology Applied to Pedagogy"; and G. Ferrero writes on "Arrested Mentation." Altogether this number of the *Monist* is a capital one.

* * *

Dr. F. H. Chase, of Cambridge, has put out a small book on the *Syro-Latin Texts of the Gospels*, in which he shows there is a remarkable coincidence of expressions and passages between the old Syrian and the Latin versions of the Gospels. The orthodox assume that the route was from Antioch to Rome; but it is just possible that it was the other way, and that, as the seat of empire went from Rome eastwards to Constantinople, so the Gospels may have travelled the same route.

* * *

D. Appleton & Co., New York, give in their list an account of a new book by Dr. Hoffman, of the Bureau of American Ethnology, on *The Beginnings of Writing*. Dr. Hoffman traces the steps in the development of writing from reminders, tied strings, notched sticks, and wampum belts, through picture writing to phonetic writing with an alphabet. He shows that the American Indians developed complicated systems of pictography; and some peoples of Mexico and Central America were passing from the use of ideograms to phonograms. The book is likely to prove an interesting supplement to Colonel Mallery's work on gesture language, and one equally important for the understanding of the evolution of mankind in the past.

* * *

La Légende du Messie, by Victor du Breuil, is a work announced by the French Freethought Federation, 7 Rue des Ecouffes, Paris. If a copy is sent for review, we shall be happy to notice it in these columns.

* * *

Mr. Augustus Henry Beesly has published a volume of *Ballads and Other Verse* (Longmans). One is entitled "An Agnostic's Apology." It ends thus:—

> Be that lot mine
> To know, save in the human, no divine;
> To hope, but not to pilot life by hope,
> And all man's future country past man's scope,
> As this world's liege to do to-day's work well,
> Unlured by heaven, undriven by dread of hell.

* * *

No. 18 of the Humanitarian League publications is *The Dog: His Rights and Wrongs*, by Edith Carington. The authoress writes in a plain, simple style, with good sense and good feeling. As we think quite unnecessarily, she starts with the assumption that dog and man have been made "by the same hand." The natural affinities which she brings out are equally facts, whatever view we take of their origin. Nor does it follow that dogs would be better treated, as we join with her in wishing they may be, if credited with souls. Belief that their fellow men were endowed with souls has not prevented men from torturing others, but rather led to additional torture of bodies for the sake of saving souls. It is equally true that kindness educes the best qualities in a dog or a man, whether we credit them with souls or not. Apart from these little differences, the publication is in every way a commendable one. It is remarkably cheap, for it gives sixty pages with eighteen illustrations for twopence. It should have a large circulation.

* * *

Diderot still excites interest in the world of thought, and we notice that the eminent firm of Felix Alcan advertise a new work on the life, works, and correspondence of this philosopher, written by A. Collignon.

* * *

In *Kaffir Stories*, an interesting little book, by Charles Scully, a good, and it is said true, tale is told of how a little chemistry averted war with Sololo, the chief of the Kwesa clan of Pondos, who refused to give up a murderer to the Government. By the aid of lycopodium powder, a piece of potassium, and a few "serpents' eggs," Teddy Morton gave the chief such an exhibition of parlor magic as to frighten him out of his wits and convince him that the gods were on the side of the white man.

China's Conversion.

There are 1,511 Protestant missionaries laboring in the Empire, and, estimating their results from the statistics of previous years as published in the *Chinese Recorder*, we find that they gathered last year (1893) into the fold 3,127 Chinese—not all of whom, it is feared, are genuine Christians—at a cost of £350,000, a sum equal to the combined incomes of the ten chief London hospitals.—*Dr. G. E. Morrison, "An Australia in China," p. 5.*

Hankow itself swarms with missionaries, "who are unhappily divided into so many sects that even a foreigner is bewildered by their number, let alone the heathen to whom they are accredited" (Medhurst). The Chinese "Rice Christians," those spurious Christians who become converted in return for being provided with rice, are just those who profit by these differences of opinion, and who, with timely lapses from grace, are said to succeed in being converted in turn by all the missions, from the Augustins to the Quakers.—*Ibid, p. 6.*

God and the Devil.

In the Christian system the Devil is a personage of the greatest importance. God is described as absolutely good, wise, and powerful; and unless he were counterbalanced by the Devil, it would be impossible to see where the innumerable and measureless evils, which predominate in the world, come from, if there were no Devil to account for them. And since the Rationalists have done away with the Devil, the damage on the other side has gone on growing, and is becoming more and more palpable, as might have been foreseen, and was foreseen, by the orthodox. The fact is, you cannot take away one pillar from a building without endangering it.—*Schopenhauer.*

PROFANE JOKES.

"I suppose you say your prayers, my little man?" "Yes, sir." "Does your father say his?" "He doesn't have to; his father's dead."

Sunday-school Teacher—"You knew your lesson perfectly this time, Tommy." Tommy—"Yes'm. Pa said he'd let me go fishing this afternoon if I didn't miss any of it."

"The Lord hath need of him" is the inscription on a gravestone in a Surrey churchyard. The passage in St. Mark unfortunately refers to the ass used to ride into Jerusalem.

Young Chip—"It will be eternal morning in heaven, won't it, pop?" Old Block—"The Bible says it will, my son." Young Chip—"Then what will you do about your afternoon snooze?"

A preacher asked a university don what he thought of his sermon. "I was disgusted. I heard in it what I hope never again to hear in a sermon." "Indeed! why, what was that?" "I heard—the clock strike twice."

University of Chicago Professor (lecturing): "Now, Arsinius was sent as a legate to Rome. He was an exceedingly wicked man, and was later excommunicated. On dying, soon after, he went (according to all belief) to hell. We shall see more of him hereafter."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Foresters' Hall (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Holy Ghost."

Balls Pond Secular Hall (36 Newington Green-road): 8.30, opening night; chairman, R. Forder.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, E. Penny, "The Struggle for Existence." Tuesday, at 8, dancing.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road,): 5.30, tea and social. Friday, at 8, free science classes.

Penton Hall (61 Pentonville-road): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Theology."

West London Ethical Society (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Genius and Morality."

West Ham Secular Ethical Society (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. Scott, "Matthew Arnold as Teacher."

Wood Green (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Some Bible Symbols, their Origin and Meaning."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Bible Beauties."

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, a lecture.

Deptford Broadway: 6.30, C. James, "What Christianity has Done for Man." Thursday, at 8, C. James, "The Service of Man."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Has Man a Soul?"

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 7, Arthur B. Moss will lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, A. B. Moss will lecture.

Kingsland (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Man, Ancient and Modern."

Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, W. H. Whitney, "An Hour with Ingersoll"; 7, "An Impeachment of Christianity."

Bolton (Borough Chambers, Rashton-street): 6.30 J. Shufflebottom, "A Few Suggestions how to Improve the Position of the Bolton Secular Society."

Bradford (Temperance Hall, Leeds-road): 8, John M. Robertson, "The Rational Treatment of Criminals"; Oddfellows' Hall, at 7, "The Population Question."

Bristol (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, "The Re-union of Christendom, from a Secularistic Standpoint," by "Cognito."

Glasgow (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11, Charles Watts, "The Revolution of Modern Thought"; 2.30, "The Bible and Dramatic Literature"; 6.30, "Christian Evidence: A Theological Fallacy."

Halifax (Mechanics' Hall): Monday, at 7.30, John M. Robertson, "The Future of Liberalism."

Leicester Secular Hall (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, musical and literary evening.

Liverpool (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Hammond, "Our Earth's Place in the Universe."

Manchester Secular Hall (Rochdale-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Simpson, "Which Way?—Voluntary Co-operation v. Compulsory Collectivism."

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, C. Cohen, "Charles Darwin"; 3, "The Holy Bible"; 7, "Scepticism: its Meaning and its Value."

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Ernest Evans, "Four Scientific Men who have Modified the Thought of Europe—Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and Pasteur"; 7, "Water, its Properties and Uses."

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, W. Cook, "A Chapter from Spencer."

Stockton-on-Tees (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, important business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—October 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 23 and 24, Chester-le-Street; 27, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 28 and 29, Stockton-on-Tees; 31, Blackburn. November 1, Blackburn; 3, Sheffield; 4, 5, and 6, Barnsley; 10, Foresters' Hall, London; 17 and 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

Stanley Jones, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London—October 20 and 27, Kingsland.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—October 20 m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

Touzeau Parris, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—October 20, Wood Green; 27, Foresters' Hall. November 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 43. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE BLACK ARMY.

AFTER my lecture at Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening a young gentleman rose to offer some opposition. While not wearing clerical attire, he had a very decided clerical accent, and I concluded that he had caught the twang in addressing Sunday-school children or in debating at Young Men's Christian Associations. Perhaps he has aspirations to the ministry, for one of his objections to my lecture was urged with much feeling. I had said that the ministers of all denominations were, for the most part, actuated by commonplace motives; that they went into pulpits as others go into law, or physic, or the army—for a living; and that their being called by the Holy Ghost was only the cant of their profession. My critic declared that I was wrong. He asserted that hundreds of them, perhaps thousands, entered their Churches, and engaged in the service of Christ, for purely disinterested reasons; that their great object was to save souls and fill heaven; that many of them were very poor, the average income of curates, for instance, being only £120 a year; and that some of them went abroad as missionaries to convert the heathen, facing all sorts of hardships, and carrying their lives in their hands. I cannot say that my critic put his case so tersely, but this is the substance of his objection; and I think it well to give an answer, once for all, to what I dare say is a very common argument.

Now at the outset I wish to make my own position clear, and to guard against misunderstanding. In the first place, I have nothing to do at present with the truth or falsity of Christianity; yet, at the same time, I am entitled to expect of its ministers a decent conformity to its teachings. In the next place, I do not assert that there are no ministers or missionaries who are earnest and sincere. Some of them, I have no doubt, would preach Christianity if it were poor, despised, and oppressed. These are men of principle and conviction; men with a passion for their calling; men who really believe that they are under God's orders to exhort and reprove a fallen, sinful world, and to point out the only way of eternal salvation. There are also some lawyers with a passion for law, some doctors with a passion for medicine, and some soldiers with a passion for military affairs; as I dare say there are men with a passion for almost every one of what are called the "humblest" employments. But these are the exceptions, and may be eliminated from a general survey. When we talk of any profession, as such, we have to go by the average; and I say that the average minister, like the average lawyer, doctor, soldier, tinker, tailor, or ploughman, is simply earning a subsistence for himself and his family; in short, that he preaches for a living. Simply this and nothing more.

Let us look at the *number* of these clerical gentlemen. There are some fifty thousand of them in England alone. Will any man in his senses affirm that the law of averages does not apply to this huge Black Army? Are they all heroes and enthusiasts? The very idea is an absurdity. Try them by any other test, and what is the result? They are average in stature, average in shape, average in looks, average in strength, average in intelligence. Why then, even on the most favorable estimate, should they not be average in character? Has not the Catholic Church always recognised this fact, and made its priests sink their little individualities in the greatness and splendor of the Church? Has it not found a compensation for the pettiness of its myriad agents in the magnificence of its organisation? Are not all its orders, wheel within wheel, from the Pope down to the poor bog-trotting Irish priest, a practical recognition of the hard truth that the men of God, like the masses of other men, are actuated by the fundamental motives of human nature?

Look next at the *unfailing supply* of these clerical gentlemen. Exceptional motives are liable to fluctuation, and are therefore unaccountable. Any one of twenty men who saw a sovereign lying at his feet would pick it up, but it would be hard to tell which of them would risk his life to save a fellow being's. The British army is filled by enlistment, and *well* filled, because poverty and misadventure drive thousands into taking "the Queen's shilling." But how full would it be if it depended upon the accession of men who yearn to fight and die for their country, turning from all other attractions to follow that stern ideal? And how full would the Black Army be if it were not recruited like the Red Army, under the forceful pressure of the necessities of existence? Year by year every vacancy is filled, and a waiting crowd is clamoring for admission. The supply always equals the demand, and goes beyond it, as it does in every other trade and profession. This phenomenon can only be explained by the ordinary laws of human action. Were the Churches manned by persons of exceptional—that is, incalculable—motive and character, there would be variations in the supply. Sometimes there would be a lull, and sometimes a feverish activity. But nothing of this sort ever occurs; the supply of ministers is as regular as the supply of carpenters or tailors, and must be subject to laws of the same generality.

This is quite consistent with the fact that *aptitude*, as well as accident, plays a part in determining a minister's career; but it also operates in the case of other professions, without implying any ethical consideration. A young man at one of the universities may have a taste for theology, as another has a taste for science or art or history or poetry. He may have a bent for public speaking, without the active, enterprising character which is requisite for successful oratory in politics; he may be fond of the social attentions which are paid to clergymen, especially by the female members of their congregations; or his temperament may be suited to the comparatively easy, unharassed life which is led by the general run of Christian ministers, who go to bed when they like, rise when they like, and adapt their duties to their convenience.

We will now consider the financial aspect of the question. It may be true that the average income of Church of England curates is only £120 a year. But before I recognise any hardship in this, I must be assured that they would earn more (I mean on the average) in the general labor market. I am not at all satisfied that the ordinary curate is gifted with more brains than the ordinary skilled artisan. He may talk better English, but that is an accident, and we all know that great nonsense may be couched in very elegant language. Being able to speak grammatically is no criterion of a man's ability to do anything serviceable to his fellow men, for which he may reasonably expect a fair remuneration. One's own experience, of course, is not everything; but I have met both curates and artisans, and I cannot say that the former showed any distinct superiority over the latter. Perhaps I shall be told that their superiority is ethical and spiritual; to which I reply that I am not discussing their character, but their capacity.

It must also be remembered that income is not the sole factor in determining employments; or we should not see

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so many clerks keeping up a respectable appearance on meagre salaries, while they might earn more in a rougher or more active occupation. A minister's life has certain advantages of personal comfort and social respectability. Nor is this all. His position is not precarious; he is not affected by commercial disasters and aberrations; his income is generally as certain, and as regular, as the succession of the seasons.

There is also the *prospect* to be considered. A curate's position is humble, and his income is "sadly limited," but a long vista of possibilities is before him—temporal as well as spiritual. He may become a vicar, a rector, a dean, an archdeacon, a canon, a bishop, even an archbishop. Who knows? Every one of Napoleon's soldiers fought with "a marshal's baton in his knapsack." Few of them *could* become marshals, but there was at least the chance, and the hope lured them to a hundred battlefields. And is not the "poor curate" under a similar inspiration? He also may climb the ladder of preferment, at the top of which shines resplendent, in the sunlight of glory, the golden prize of the great Archbishopric. G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

HALLOWEEN.

THE importance of rites and customs in elucidating the beliefs of the past, thanks to the labors of anthropologists like E. B. Tylor, W. R. Smith, and J. G. Frazer, is beginning to receive recognition. The great nature festivals of Easter and Christmas remain, and their customs, though modified, sufficiently betray their origin. But those connected with All Hallowtide are rapidly dying out in Protestant countries, and will soon be known mainly by the West of Scotland customs celebrated in the poem of Burns. Yet the festival of All Souls has a distinct place in the history of the evolution of religious faith. Early man is much troubled with his ghost belief. Ghosts and gods—they are one and the same—are a confounded nuisance by their interference in human affairs, and very much of early religion consists of attempts, by sacrifices and spells, to cajole, propitiate, and cheat the ghosts or gods, and prevent them troubling their worshippers. Artful medicine men and priests contrived to get many of these spirits, saints, and gods adored with regular offerings, and with special days devoted to their service.

The month was known before the year, and it was an advance on the nightly worry of ghostly dreams, when the spirits of the dead were supposed to reside in the moon, and the new moon was celebrated with a festival. It was a still further advance when this festival in honor of the common ruck of ghosts, the poor wandering spirits who had no special day assigned them, became annual. The Eastern nations still set apart a day for the worship of ancestors. With the Coreans it is the 15th of the first month. But a general time was that of offering the first fruits of the harvest, which ceremony is called in many places "Feeding the Dead." The offering, instead of being daily, became annual at the harvest season. In Northern nations it was towards the end of October when the corn was gathered, beer was brewed, and the long, dark nights were coming. That was the time for the spirits to have their outing, and for the living to hope to pass over the winter well by propitiating the spirits. In Tooke's *Russia* (vol. i., p. 48) is an account of All Hallows among the Finns, which feast almost drives them out of their wits.

Dorman, in his *Origin of Primitive Superstitions* (p. 35), mentions that "Many of the savages of South America have a subterranean spirit-world, where the pursuits are the same as in life. The Zuñis had removed their spirit-world to a comfortable distance, where they would not be troubled with them daily; but they annually assembled on the top of a lofty mesa, and spent the entire day in communication with the spirits of the departed, who were supposed on that day to revisit that locality and hold converse with their friends and relatives, who carried them presents." This superstition, he says, is very similar to the custom of Roman Catholics on All-Souls Day. The Catholic custom of grave decorating on All Saints is one of the most deep-seated, and in Eastern Europe it is customary to light lamps and lanterns at the graves, to let the spirits see their way about. In Japan, also, on the day of the dead they light the tombs with colored lanterns and place on them food for the spirits. Next morning little vessels are sent out to sea, also provided with food, that the spirits may migrate to another clime. This giving of one day to the dead has something poetical, pathetic, and attractive about it; and the feast of All Saints is retained by Auguste Comte in the Positivist Calendar. With our Pagan ancestors the day of spirits was connected with the break-up of the season of fruitage and the coming of winter and desolation.

Flammarion says, in his *Astronomical Myths*, that the night of November 1 was to the Druids one full of mystery, in which they annually celebrated the reconstruction of the world. On this day the Druidess nuns had to pull down and rebuild the roof of their temple, as a symbol of the destruction and renovation of the earth. If any of these nuns happened to drop any of the materials for this new roof, they were pounced upon and torn to pieces by their companions, who were seized with a fanatic transport. It was also on this night that the Druids extinguished the sacred fire, and then all other fires were put out, and a primitive night reigned throughout the land. Then the phantoms of those who had died in the preceding year passed along to the West, and were carried away by boats to the judgment seat of the god of the dead.

Offerings of the fruits of the earth used to be laid out for the spirits, but these in time came to be used chiefly in divination, for it was thought that the eve of All Souls was the special time to call spirits from the vasty deep, to divine one's fortune, and to evoke the apparition of one's future husband or wife.

Burns has so happily described the Ayrshire superstitions and customs of Halloween that to his poem the reader must be directed. We will look at a few others, mostly taken from Hazlitt's edition of Brand's *Antiquities*. T. Bisset, D.D., minister of Logierait, Perthshire, says: "On the evening of October 31, O.S., a remarkable ceremony is observed. Heath, broom, and dressings of flax are tied upon a pole. This faggot is then kindled. One takes it upon his shoulders, and, running, bears it round the village. A crowd attends. When the first faggot is burnt out, a second is bound to the pole and kindled in the same manner. Numbers of these blazing faggots are often carried together, and, when the night is dark, they form a splendid illumination." The minister of Callander says: "On All Saints' Even they set up bonfires in every village. When the bonfire is consumed, the ashes are carefully collected into the form of a circle. There is a stone put in near the circumference for every person of the several families interested in the bonfire, and whatever stone is moved out of its place or injured next morning the person represented by that stone is devoted, or *fey*, and is supposed not to live twelve months from that day." The minister of Kirkmichael, in Perthshire, says: "The practice of lighting bonfires on the first night of winter, accompanied with various ceremonies, still prevails in this and the neighboring highland parishes. Formerly the Hallow Even fire, a relic of Druidism, was kindled in Buchan. Various magic ceremonies were then celebrated to counteract the influence of witches and demons, and to prognosticate to the young their success or disappointment in the matrimonial lottery. These being devoutly finished, the Hallow fire was kindled, and guarded by the male part of the family." This became rival families or clans would attempt to scatter the fire, and thus bring disaster on their enemies. "But now the Hallow fire, when kindled, is attended by children only; and the country girl, renouncing the rites of magic, endeavors to enchant her swain by the charms of dress and of industry."

In North Wales, upon All Saints' Eve, they made a great fire called Coel Coeth, and, when the fire is almost extinguished, every one throws a white stone into the ashes, having first marked it; then, having said their prayers, turning round the fire, they go to bed. In the morning they search out the stones, and, if any is found wanting, the owner is supposed to die before another All Saints' Eve. They also distributed *Soul Cakes*, on receiving which poor people pray God to bless the next crop of wheat. The poor used to say: "God have your Saul, teens and all." Seed cakes at All Hallows used to be common in Warwickshire. At Ripon, on the Eve of All Saints, the good women make a cake for every one in the family. Martin tells us that at St. Kilda they baked at this time "a large cake, in the form of a triangle, furrowed round, which was to be all eaten that night."

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In Owen's account of the bards we read: "The autumnal fire is still kindled in North Wales on the eve of November 1, attended by many ceremonies, such as running through the fire and smoke, each casting a stone into the fire," etc. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1784 it is stated that at Findern, in Derbyshire, the boys and girls go every year, on the evening of November 2, to the common, and light up small fires, which they call Tindles. The burning of guys on November 5 only represents a modified survival of an ancient practice.

Martin, speaking of the Isle of Lewis, says it was long before the minister could persuade the people to relinquish a practice they had of going by night on Hallowtide to the Church of St. Mulvay, whence one of their number went into the sea up to his waist, with a cup of ale brewed for the occasion with malt contributed by the inhabitants, and, pouring the liquid into the water, invoked the sea-god Shony, who was supposed to have an influence over the crops. They then returned to church, observed a moment's dead silence; then extinguished, at a given signal, the candle on the altar, and proceeded to the fields, where the rest of the night was spent in revelry. The Rev. M. Mac Phail, in his account of the Superstitions of the Lewis (*Folk Lore*, p. 165; June, 1895), says the invocation there was, "Shoni, Shoni! send us plenty of sea-ware this year, and we will give thee more ale next year." H. Arnot reports, in his *Criminal Trials*, that in the seventeenth century a poor woman was burnt, in the south of Scotland, on a charge of "blasphemy." She was alleged to have offered a cup of ale to the Devil.

It was an old custom in England at this time for poor persons and beggars to go *a souling*—that is, they begged money, and offered to pray for the souls of the donors and the departed. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* Shakespeare makes Speed speak of one puling "like a beggar at Hallowmass." Special soul cakes were made for the dead, and children used to sing a carol beginning:—

> Soul! soul! for a soul-cake;
> Pray, good mistress, for a soul cake—
> One for Peter, two for Paul,
> Three for Them that made us all.

In some parts—*e.g.*, North Staffordshire—"souling," or begging for apples on the Eve of All Souls, is still a common custom. This custom, Miss Charlotte S. Burne, authoress of *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, says, was suddenly checked in her parish "by a new vicar forbidding it to the National School children" (*Folk-Lore*, September, 1890, p. 321). The men of God are usually violently opposed to any superstition save their own. Yet the getting of apples by children under pretence of souling is venial, compared with living on the labors of others by pretending to give salvation through the blood of a dead Jew.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE BIBLE AND HUMAN PROGRESS.

THERE are certain facts deserving of attention when the relation of the Bible to human progress is being considered. These are: (1) The place where it is supposed to have originated was not remarkable for a high state of philosophy, science, or general education. Literature, culture, and knowledge of nature, which are the characteristics of the present progressive age, were comparatively unknown where it is said most of the contents of the Bible were written. Albert Barnes, in his *Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity* (pp. 257–8), writes: "The Bible came from a land undistinguished for literature; a land not rich in classical associations; a land not distinguished for pushing its discoveries into the regions of science. Chaldea had its observatories, and the dwellers there looked out on the stars and gave them names; Egypt had its temples where the truths of science, as well as the precepts of religion, were committed to the sacred priesthood; Greece had academic groves, but Judea had neither. To such things the attention of the nation was never turned. We have all their literature, all their science, all their knowledge of art; and all this is in the Bible. Among the ancients they were regarded as a narrow-minded, a bigoted, a superstitious people." Now, here was an entire absence of the principal elements that have aided modern progress.

(2) The alleged period when the Bible was written was one of moral and mental darkness. The grandeur of Rome had subsided, the glories of Greece had departed, philosophy was at a discount, and the facts of science were unknown. Further, ethics were in their infancy, the government of the universe was misunderstood, and the true nature of man had not then been comprehended. The result is, that the teachings of the Bible are thoroughly unscientific, its philosophy is misleading, and, as John Stuart Mill has shown in his work, *On Liberty*, its morality is incomplete and defective. Moreover, Bible statements as to the origin of all things, the development of the human race, the manifestation of phenomena, the self power of man, and the value of intellectual acquirements, are all the very opposite to the lessons derived from a progressive and an enlightened age.

(3) The factors necessary to human progress existed before the Bible was known, and are now to be found in sections of the community where Biblical teachings are not accepted as an authority in mundane affairs. Greece, without the aid of the Bible, had reached a high state of culture, of intellectual sublimity, and of moral excellence. It is to the Greeks that historians trace the beginnings of our intellectual civilisation. As Max Müller observes: "Like their own goddess, Athenæ, the people of Athens seem to spring full-armed into the arena of history, and we look in vain to Egypt, Syria, and India for more than a few seeds that burst into such marvellous growth on the soil of Attica" (*Science of Language*). "To the Greeks," says the present Bishop of London, "we owe the corrective which conscience needs to borrow from nature." The same Christian writer admits that "it is in the history of Rome rather than in the Bible that we find our models of precepts of political duty, and especially of the duty of patriotism." With such facts as these given by Bible believers, how futile it is to contend that to its teachings we are indebted for the progress of the world.

(4) Professor Huxley, after showing that modern progress is the result of a knowledge and application of physical science, says: "She is teaching the world that the ultimate court of appeal is observation and experience, and not authority." The Bible, however, teaches the very opposite, for it rests upon authority, not upon observation and experience. Many of its teachings are certainly contrary to what we learn from the observed facts of nature and the lessons of experience. From these sources we find that the progress of the world has been an evolutionary process, and that things change for the better with increased experience and facilities. But the Bible alleges that at the "beginning" all things were perfect, and that God pronounced them to be "very good," although they proved to be far from good if the Bible theory be true. Now, we have no lack of evidence to show that the history of man has been one of progression, not retrogression.

The Bible teaches that the operations of nature depend upon the capricious will of God. If his children obeyed him and walked in his statutes, they were to have rain in "due season," and grass in their fields for their cattle; but if they did not hearken unto him he would "shut up the heaven that there be no rain," he would appoint terror over them and subject them to "consumption and the burning ague," and they were to eat the flesh of their sons and daughters (Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xi.; Psalm lxxviii.). There are no elements in these barbarous narratives that would tend to the progress of humanity. Besides, if it were once sincerely believed that the operations of nature were interfered with in consequence of belief or disbelief in theological figments, there would be no reliance upon the stability of natural law, and cause and effect would have no meaning. The belief in this very law has formed the basis of all progress; it is the fulcrum on which the lever rests that has caused the advancement from the ignorance of the past to the enlightenment of the present. This natural law is not recognised in the Bible, and therefore so far its teachings are not favorable to the progress of society. Men of science no longer inculcate the delusion that this world is governed by a supernatural will in opposition to the doctrine of fixed natural laws.

Progress cannot be secured, to any great extent, if the acquirement of knowledge is retarded; but the tendency of Bible teachings is to do this, and its believers have done their best to limit knowledge to the Bible and to writings which favored its inculcations. They have manifested a dread of secular instruction, and even God is reported as

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becoming alarmed at his first children knowing too much (Genesis iii. 22). Paul writes: "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (Cor. xiv. 38). He also says: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise" (1 Cor. i. 27), which was a very foolish thing to do; and in the same chapter (verse 19) we read: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent"—a poor encouragement, surely, for obtaining wisdom. The following command, said to be from God, is certainly not conducive to the spread of knowledge: "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered: Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate" (Isaiah vi. 9, 10, 11).

Progressive ideas arise from mental activity, unfettered by fear and undismayed by the dread of penalties that might be inflicted for arriving at any other conclusion than a certain specified one. The tendency of Bible teaching is to inspire the mind with terror, which often prevents intellectual freedom. For instance, many portions of the book inculcate the notion that those persons shall be "put to death" who "hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God;" while, if even a mother, wife, or daughter seek to induce a man to serve other than the Jewish God, the Bible exclaims: "Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him" (Deut. xiii. and xvii.). The same spirit of dread and restriction is taught in 2 Thessalonians (i. 7–9). It is also stated that all things are done at the command of this God. As the prophet says, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 7); "I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isaiah xlv. 7). Such teaching, if sincerely believed, must make the intellect stagnant, man a helpless creature, and therefore progress impossible. To teach that human affairs are regulated by this supernatural being, and that they are dependent upon his vacillating will, is to promulgate the delusion that in the operations of nature there is no certainty.

The fact is, the candid and impartial mind arrives inductively and deductively at the conclusion that the advancement of useful knowledge, and its application for the removal of physical and mental evils, have been in proportionate ratio to the cessation of belief in Bible teachings. Less and less are men heeding the commands of revenge given in the Old Testament, or those of non-resistance found in the New. No practical attention is paid to Christ's supposed Sermon on the Mount; to his doctrine of prayer; to his utter disregard of this world, or to his assigned cause of physical diseases. Belief in the power of secular knowledge, and reliance upon the facts of science, have taken the place of the confidence which was once felt in the inculcations of the Bible; and the result is that we are at the present time progressing to a higher state of civilisation than has ever existed at any period during the Christian era. CHARLES WATTS.

HENRY GEORGE ON RELIGION AND THE STATE.

LIKE other political economists of the new school, Mr. Henry George has been guilty in his time of promulgating serious doctrinal errors, which, being fundamental in their nature, have largely prevented a fuller recognition of the truths he has assisted in disseminating. It seems inevitable that all original and great thinkers, though masters of the special subjects with which they deal, are unable to appreciate the essential features of other matters of no less vital importance for the public welfare. Henry George, however, has made amends for some of his superficialities by his outspoken advocacy of certain principles which many of the petted leaders of democracy to-day fight shy of, and will not have discussed except on narrow premises of their own. He has fearlessly combatted the popular notion that it is the duty of the State to concern itself with questions of faith; that one of the functions of government is the provision of theological instruction; and that the association of religion with authority is necessary for the well-being and morality of a community. In his volume on *Social Problems* Mr. George devotes a chapter to "The Functions of Government," under which heading he writes plainly and forcibly of the proper relations of the State, religion, and morality. This is one of his passages: "It is not the business of government to make men virtuous or religious, or to preserve the fool from the consequences of his folly. Government should be repressive no further than is necessary to secure liberty by protecting the equal rights of each from aggression on the part of others, and the moment governmental prohibitions extend beyond these lines they are in danger of defeating the very ends they were intended to serve." These are words of wisdom, which, though uttered by Secularists in many forms times out of number, are of special significance coming from the pen of an acknowledged Christian, whose desire is to reform the world, not only in the interests of man, but for the glory of God, who has, seemingly, so signally failed in his creative works and social arrangements. There are many people to-day who are being seduced by the sophistries of social saviors, and it is to these the words of warning must be taken. They must be urged to withdraw their trust from sycophantic leaders; they must be made to realise—which they are far from doing at present—that the alliance of the State and the Church is indefensible on grounds of justice and liberty, and that the interference on the part of a governing power with the private belief or unbeliefs of its subjects is a gross perversion of the rights of man.

Never was it needed so much as it is at present that the cardinal principle of religious liberty should be made known to the half-intelligent masses of electors who now wield the sceptre of legislative power. Education, so powerful in other respects, has done but little in developing healthy opinion on the proper place in society for religion, so blasting has been the effect of sectarian prejudice on minds otherwise free. The local and national business of the country being vested in representative bodies, which are now, more than ever, kept constantly in touch with the ideas of the governed, it follows that all legislative work must depend upon the bent of the popular mind. The system is one of many defects, and is open to many objections; but, so long as it exists, it is clear that no serious alteration can be made in the law until it is distinctly and definitely called for by a majority of the people. Beforetime the middle and poorer classes were not consulted as to the methods and manner of their government, the propertied and titled classes monopolising the instrument of management, during which period comparatively little concern was manifested with the enactments of controlling bodies only so far as the administration of existing laws, and the making of new, affected public safety and comfort. Protest by small communities in the State was practically useless; there were no means of voicing their grievances or giving effect to their desires. But now the Government is not an oligarchy. The giant growth of democracy has equalised men of all grades of society in respect of electoral power; the ploughman and the squire, the sweep and the lord, and the artisan and the capitalist sit on the same bench to order the destinies of the nation. Such authority, such power, such opportunity in the hands of the working classes have never been fully and freely utilised. It is said that when the American slaves were set at liberty many of them failed to realise their position; they were ignorant what to do, and sought to be taken back into bondage again. The attitude of the British working man since the gift of the franchise has been somewhat similar. Lethargic, ignorant, indifferent, prejudiced, and full of the spirit of servility, he has practically rejected the offer of his salvation, and spurned the means of exodus from the land of his oppression. Politicians may argue to the contrary, but it is almost indisputable that a large proportion of the electorate care little, and know less, of the many questions on which they vote. Hence it is that many monopolies, abuses, and privileges have not been removed, though the changed foundations on which the constitution rests would have led one to suppose that many peaceful revolutions would have long ere now been accomplished.

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In respect of the question of the establishment of State Churches, and, bound up with that, the relations of the individual to religion and government, it is sad to confess the non-existence of much sound opinion in the public mind. True, there has been for some years past a vague kind of agitation for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, carried on by the Nonconformist section of one of the political parties; and certain bold ones among their number have gone so far as to suggest a similar process for the State Church in England; but it is pretty plain that mere sectarian interests only have dictated such action. We do not know if it be disputed, but it is tolerably safe to assume that, were the opportunity presented any one of the dissenting bodies of instating itself in the position of the Established Church with its endowments and emoluments, it would not refuse the privilege, and continue to stand by the principle of non-governmental recognition of religion. The Nonconformist attitude on this question is solely prompted by motives of self-interest and jealousy. The Free Churches, enjoying the pecuniary and social advantages enjoyed by the Establishment, and perceiving no chance of grasping the perquisites of ascendency, adopt the only course open for them—that of championing the principle of self-supporting Churches free from State alliance, the advocacy of which admits the assertion of the blessings of their own unfettered position with the boastful exhibition of their liberty. Their policy is choicely indicated in the lines:—

> Well, while I am a beggar I will rail,
> And say, There is no sin but to be rich;
> And, being rich, my virtue then shall be
> To say, There is no vice but beggary.

Only they full well know that the latter possibility will never be realised.

Among the teachers and preachers of democracy, also, there are few who handle the question of the relation of government with private beliefs on its broadest merits. One or two could be mentioned, we believe, who recognise the injustice of State recognition of a creed in a country whose inhabitants are attached to numberless beliefs and some to none at all, and they have sometimes given articulate expression to their ideas in a more or less explicit kind of way. Public men, however, fear to jeopardise their reputations, for which they care far more than any cause they advocate; and, knowing that no section of the public is so intolerant and prejudiced as the religious class, they are exceedingly careful to refrain from wounding their susceptibilities. On the question of religious equality they are especially diligent in refraining from dealing with its fundamentals, contenting themselves with siding with half-hearted believers in the principle, whose only desire is to remove their own shackles, no matter how heavily similar impediments may press on other people. In the passage quoted above Henry George has spoken out fearlessly, and, though the words may have often been noticed before, it is not without benefit to emphasise his ideas on the subject, in view of the ominous silence of other writers. He indicates his knowledge of the essentials of liberty when he points out that governments become coercive and tyrannical when they infringe on the personal concerns of their subjects. It is not the business of government to make people religious, or to provide them with the means of ministering to their "spiritual needs." The propagation of creeds should be assisted only by their devotees, and not by grants from the national exchequer. Besides the immorality of robbing one man to pay for another man's priest, there is the danger that in the establishment of a religious system with vast powers and influences there may be created a movement in society subversive to the interests and safety of the constitution. A large priesthood, an extensive monopoly, a great organisation with civil powers and privileges, are liable to undermine the healthy life of a country, and sap a nation of her vigor. The records of history show what a disintegrating force is organised religion; it is, therefore, the duty of the State to guard against the recurrence of similar dangers. Henry George recognised the evil consequences of governmental patronage of sectarian creeds, and urged that "it is not the business of government to interfere with the views which anyone may hold of the Creator, or with the worship he may choose to pay him, so long as the exercise of these individual rights does not conflict with the equal liberty of others; and the result of governmental interference in this domain has been hypocrisy, corruption, persecutions, and religious war."

F. Wilson.

INFIDEL ABOLITIONISTS.

Whether William Lloyd Garrison was an "infidel" or not, it is certain that the orthodox Christian press of America stigmatised him as one, and that some of his most prominent colleagues were unbelievers in the divine authority of the Bible, which, in any full sense, he was also. Prominent among his friends and colleagues was Henry Clarke Wright. He wrote many abolitionist works, and was also author of *The Errors of the Bible Demonstrated by the Truth of Nature*. He also wrote *The Living Present and the Dead Past*.

Another prominent friend and colleague was Parker Pillsbury, who, though he became a Congregational minister, left the Church, which he found to be the bulwark of slavery. Wendell Phillips relates that the Faculty of Andover Theological Institution threatened Pillsbury that they would never recommend him to a parish unless he gave up speaking at anti-slavery meetings. In his *Acts of the Anti-Slavery Apostles* Pillsbury shows that "the apostles" were everywhere met by the opposition of the Churches. Pillsbury acted as editor of the *Herald of Freedom*, of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, and the *Revolution*. He became an out-and-out Freethinker, wrote *Pious Frauds*, and contributed to the *Boston Investigator* and the *Freethinkers' Magazine*.

Then there was Ernestine Louise Rose, who proudly called herself an Atheist, and wrote a *Defence of Atheism*. This eloquent and brave woman lectured, without fee, against slavery, not only in the North, but in the Southern States. She died as she had lived, a confirmed infidel. Her friend and colleague in Abolitionism, as in the Woman's Rights movement, and in Freethought, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, still lives. Before them Frances Wright had taught the same doctrines, and *The Life of W. L. Garrison*, by her sons, says: "Her attempted community, Shelby, co. Tennessee, in 1825, was a notable early anti-slavery enterprise." Harriet Martineau, who also became an Atheist, was one of the best upholders of the anti-slavery cause, both in England and America. Lucy Colman is another woman who has spent most of her life in promoting Freethought, the abolition of slavery, and woman's emancipation.

The first corresponding secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society was Elizur Wright. He edited the *Abolitionist* and the *Commonwealth*. He was a firm and uncompromising Atheist, and a contributor to the *Boston Investigator*, *Freethinkers' Magazine*, etc. He promoted the Convention which organised the American Liberal (Freethought) League. He died in 1885, and his funeral oration was delivered by Colonel Ingersoll.

C. C. Burleigh, who was twice put in jail for selling anti-slavery books on Sunday, was, with Francis Jackson, C. K. Whipple, A. K. Foster, and Garrison, among the callers of the Anti-Sabbath Convention.

Emerson, Thoreau, Theodore Parker, Gerrit Smith, and La Roy Sunderland were all men of literary standing in the ranks of the Abolitionists, and all tainted with very pronounced heresy.

GARRISON AND THE BIBLE.

In the life of *William Lloyd Garrison*, by his sons, Wendell Phillips and Francis Jackson Garrison (vol. iii., p. 386), is given the following as the text of a resolution moved by Garrison at the Hartford Bible Convention, June 5, 1853:—

> "Resolved: That the doctrine of the American Church and priesthood, that the Bible is the Word of God; that whatever it contains was given by Divine inspiration; and that it is the only rule of faith and practice; is self-evidently absurd, exceedingly injurious both to the intellect and soul, highly pernicious in its application, and a stumbling-block in the way of human redemption."

In the eighteenth volume of his *Liberator* (p. 186, 1845)

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Mr. Garrison reviewed the works of Thomas Paine, which he had then read for the first time. In the course of the review he said:—

> "To say that everything contained within the lids of the Bible is divinely inspired, and to insist upon the dogma as fundamentally important, is to give utterance to a bold fiction, and to require the suspension of the reasoning faculties. To say that everything in the Bible is to be believed simply because it is found in that volume is equally absurd and pernicious.....When the various books of the Bible were written, or by whom they were written, no man living can tell. This is purely a matter of conjecture; and as conjecture is not certainty, it ceases to be authoritative.....Truth is older than any parchment, and would still exist though a universal conflagration should consume all the books in the world."

GARRISON AND "INFIDELS."

SINCE writing my article on "Some Christian Truths" (*Freethinker*, Oct. 13, p. 642), I have found, full confirmation of what was told me by my friend, Ernestine L. Rose, and what is affirmed in Mr. Bradlaugh's *Notes on Christian Evidences*—viz., that William Lloyd Garrison had to resort to an "infidel" hall to deliver his anti-slavery lectures. The facts are given in the largest and best life of the great Abolitionist, entitled *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879; The Story of his Life. Told by his Children.* (New York: The Century Co.; 1885.) On page 211 of the first volume appears the following:—

> "During the first fortnight after his arrival in Boston, Mr. Garrison vainly endeavored to procure, without cost, a place in which to deliver his lectures, and he finally sent this advertisement to the *Courier*: 'Wanted, for three evenings, a Hall or Meeting-house (the latter would be preferred) in which to vindicate the rights of TWO MILLIONS of American citizens who are now groaning in servile chains in this boasted land of liberty; and also to propose just, benevolent, and constitutional measures for their relief. As the addresses will be gratuitous, and as the cause is of public benefit, I cannot consent to remunerate any society for the use of its building. If this application fails, I propose to address the citizens of Boston in the open air on the Common.—William Lloyd Garrison, No. 30 Federal-street, October 11 1830.' This appeal was quickly answered, but not by any of the Christian ministers or churches of Boston. It was left for a society of avowed 'infidels' [*Note.*—Under the leadership of Abner Kneeland] to save the city from the shame of sealing its doors against the slaves' advocate, and to offer him their hall for his three lectures, although, as a body and individually, they had no personal acquaintance or sympathy with him, and no especial interest in his cause."

This is final and decisive. It may be well for Freethought advocates to keep this extract beside them in view of controversy. J. M. W.

"D.V." OR "GOD WILLING."

ON pious posters, years ago,
We always used to see,
For instance: "Mr. So-and-so
Will preach to-night (D.V.)."

And even yet, a few remain,
In 'ninety-five A.D.
Apparently possessed of brain,
Who use the sign "D.V."

These praying folk think God decides
Each hour, what things shall be,
And yet they count upon the tides
Without the sign "D.V."

They know the moon enough to know
It ne'er skylarking tries,
And that the tides will ebb and flow,
"D.V." or otherwise.

All thinkers know—if Christians don't—
"D.V." means this, or *nil*—
That things that won't be, merely won't;
And things that will be, will.

Of course, the implication is—
If God must first agree—
That all our acts are really his;
That he does all—not we.

All honest parsons must admit—
If honest ones there be—
That none can e'en a "weasand slit,"
Unless their "D." is "V."

If God is God, he's all in all,
And less he cannot be;
So thieves will steal, and cats will squall,
Next Tuesday week (D.V.).

But these are days of common sense,
So now we seldom see
Announcements in a future tense
Conditioned by "D.V."

The spirit of our Freethought day
Has forced the world to see
That now 'tis time to put away
The silly sign "D.V."

A few who cannot quite forsake
The pious sign "D.V."
Prefix an "O"; and thus they make
The symbol "O.D.V."

Thus godly signs and symbols fade,
With all they symbolise:
The priests' and parsons' stock-in-trade,
Which honest men despise.

And now, as Science proves her rules,
The Christian's forced to see
That faith in prayer's the faith of fools—
Amen! So let it be.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

CHRISTIANITY is the religion of mercy—that is, to all who escape hell. It is also the religion of peace—that is, when the Christians leave off fighting. But they don't leave off frequently, or for long at a time; and the best of the joke is, that they generally bring in their religion to sanctify rapine and bloodshed. Let us take a couple of illustrations.

On Saturday last a big new English warship was launched at Chatham. It has all the latest improvements, and is thought to be the most destructive ship afloat. Its business is to send other ships to the bottom if required. But the advent of this terrible monster on the sea had to be attended with a religious ceremony. The dockyard chaplain read a portion of a psalm, and implored God's blessing on this magnificent specimen of man's malignant ingenuity.

On Sunday *Te Deums* were sung at Notre Dame in Paris, and at other churches in various parts of France. God Almighty was thanked for letting the French lick the Madagascese. It is difficult to see what right the French have in Madagascar at all. The island is a very long way from France, and ought to belong to its own inhabitants. However, the French think otherwise, and their priests think so too, and apparently the Lord is of the same opinion. Anyhow, he shows no indignation at being thanked for his share in the bloody business. N.B.—The last phrase is not swearing. It is a quotation from *Macbeth*.

The magistrates of Dundee have been severely denounced by certain ministers for licensing certain spirit vaults in Lindsay-street, said to be directly underneath a church. The proximity of the spirits above to the spirits below seems the occasion of the disturbance, but probably the church people are responsible for letting the basement for the purpose named.

Samuel Oldham Allan, of Lees-road, Oldham, was a Protestant who married a Catholic. On his death-bed she

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called in a priest, and he received extreme unction. This anointing from the holy one resulted in ructions. The friends quarrelled how he should be buried. There was a scuffle at the house, and the brothers forcibly removed the corpse to have it interred by a Church of England clergyman. But this person declined, having heard that the deceased died a Catholic and his widow wished him buried by a Catholic priest. A noisy crowd assembled and waited a long while, till at last a Catholic father was induced to perform the ceremony, and the women bore the bier in triumph to the grave, the widow having police protection from the cemetery to her home.

Another Church of England parson—the Rev. E. M. Phillips Treby, rector of Forrabury, Cornwall—has gone over to Rome. However, the clerical market is well stocked, and the vacancy will soon be filled.

Big salaries are not confined to the Established Church. Some of the Nonconformists make the best of this life while they are waiting for the next. "Why should men," asks the *New Age*, "be paid twelve hundred a year for holding out prospects of perdition to workers on twelve shillings a week?" We have asked that question ourselves, and we are glad to hear it echoed by Mr. Fletcher.

Mr. W. H. D. Rouse, in *Folk-Lore*, of June this year, gives "Notes from Syria," and mentions that "Women who wish for children tie a thread round a broken pillar (that which is popularly called the 'hanging pillar') in the Church of the Annunciation at Nazareth; and afterwards they wear it about their waists." It thus seems that a very primitive superstition remains in the native place of the Christian's deity.

An interesting review of *Malay Sketches*, by F. Swettenham, is given in the *Saturday Review* (October 19). It notices that witchcraft and possession by evil spirits is widely believed in by Malays, and says: "Of the origin of these spirits there is a legend, dating from a time before the teachings of Islam reached Malaya. When God purposed to make man, He took clay and fashioned it into a figure which He endowed with the spirit of life. But the spirit was too strong, and, the body being only clay, was rent into a thousand fragments, and scattered all over the world. These were the *jin*, *hantu*, and *bdjang* of the Malays."

"Then God made another figure, but this time he wrought iron into the clay, which made the body able to withstand the strain of the vital spark, and it became man. This legend is, no doubt, a survival of the ancient spirit worship of the Malays, as are many customs of the people which the Mohammedan priests dislike, but are often obliged to wink at for fear of unpopularity."

Christianity has never taken root in the Malay Peninsula. Mr. Swettenham tells a story of a Christian missionary who got hold of an earnest and truthful Malay, apparently a promising subject to begin upon. The missionary told him the story of the Immaculate Conception. The Malay listened to the end, showed great interest in the miraculous narrative of the Blessed Virgin; then he said: "If that had happened to my wife, I should have killed her."

The *Presbyterian* says that "Matthew Arnold, though not an orthodox believer in Christianity, was a great admirer of the Bible, and was the means of converting Charles Reade, the novelist, to Christianity. On one occasion he urged Mr. Reade to read the Bible through in an unprejudiced and candid spirit. The novelist did so, and was thereby led to accept the Gospel." This is a real orthodox Presbyterian whacker. Matthew Arnold rejected the supernatural element in the Bible, and Charles Reade was a believer all his days. Winwood Reade, his nephew, was a sceptic, and was never converted.

The Burgess Golf Club, Edinburgh, is agitated on the question of Sunday playing. Bailie Macpherson wants a bye-law to stop this horrid practice, but Councillor Cranston opposes the bye-law as a piece of despotism. A special meeting will be held to consider the matter. It is to be hoped that too much respect will not be paid to what is called "the feelings of the people of Scotland." For our part, we have no respect whatever for the "feelings" of people who want their own predilections to be a law to their neighbors. Both sides have "feelings," but apparently it is only those of the bigots that are to be consulted.

The German Emperor does not like to be stared at when he is communing with the King of Kings. He has issued the following extraordinary notice: "As soon as I enter church, every one is on the *qui vive* to look at me—a thing which annoys me extremely. I therefore desire that all shall abstain from this curiosity when I go on Sunday to hear Divine service. Those who desire to have a good view of me can do so every day when I take my walk in the Thiergarden, or drive in my carriage."

Cremations are spreading in New York, especially among the Germans, since Dr. Hartmann's scare about being buried alive. The cost of cremation is thirty-five dollars for an adult, which is less than that paid for a funeral. Indeed, it is claimed that cremation, with a handsome urn for the ashes and a niche for the urn, is altogether less costly than the price of a poor man's burial.

Mr. Diggle, ex-chairman of the London School Board, repeats that old fable about the Queen declaring that the Bible is the cause of England's greatness. Christian imagination is so active, and Christian veracity so feeble, that useful falsehoods pass current in spite of any amount of contradiction.

Henry Sherwood, an American Doctor of Divinity, is in trouble at Blackburn. He is charged with maliciously wounding a laborer, and has to give substantial bail on remand, himself in £100 and two sureties of £50 each.

God is no respecter of persons, and his storms are no respecters of places. Churches get knocked down like theatres, or rather more so. During the recent cyclone in Italy a church collapsed at Avellino, east of Naples, and several persons were killed and more injured.

"Dodo" of *Reynolds'* says he has received a letter from Mr. H. Sims, stating that if the Bible is to be believed the world is flat. "Everyone now knows," "Dodo" remarks, "that the Old Testament does teach that the world is flat. Perhaps, if Mr. Sims addresses, say, the Archbishop of Canterbury—in that dignitary's official, but not learned, capacity—he will discover why no State-Church parson believes the Bible in this respect."

The Rev. G. W. Elliott went to preach at a church at Aston, and during the anthem left the building and proceeded to a neighboring public-house. The congregation waited in vain for his return. He was charged with drunkenness at the Aston Police Court, and remanded to see if anything could be done for him.

A clerical correspondent, who is not ashamed to give his name and address, has sent to the Rev. Dr. Guinness Rogers the following letter. It refers to Dr. Rogers's recent address at the Congregational Union Assembly at Brighton, as reported in the *Daily News*: "Reverend Sir,—If, as is reported, you said that 'the English people did not love the Anglican priesthood,' you are a malignant liar. Royal David said, 'Liars shall be turned into hell.' I wish you joy of your journey and its end.—Yours in the faith,——."—*Daily News*.

Dr. Dawson Burns writes to the *Daily News* on the continued refusal of the British and Foreign Bible Society to print the Revised Version. He says: "Without entering upon a discussion of the comparative merits of the two versions, it is beyond denial that the Authorised Version contains many errors of great magnitude from which the Revised Version is free; and the persistent publication of myriads and millions of copies of the Authorised Version, with all its inaccuracies, to the exclusion of the Revised Version, is a procedure which has no parallel in the history of translated literature of any other kind."

Sworn statements by native princes witness to human sacrifices still being offered in Ashanti. When Kwassie Aframi, the King of Gyeso, died King Prempeh ordered six men to be sacrificed "to go along with him to the other world." The Dahomeyans had so strong a belief in immortality that they dispatched messengers to heaven, and if anything was forgotten another man was killed to take the postscript.

The Catholic Bishop of Nottingham was asked the plain question in the local *Daily Express*: "What will become at death of a man who, from birth to death, never heard of our Bible, never heard of either Papist or Protestant, or of Jesus Christ, and who lived a pure, honest, and industrious life?" The Bishop answered: "I say that the man who was 'only' pure, honest, and industrious would go to hell because he neglected to worship God by faith, hope, and charity, which are necessary for everlasting salvation, for 'without faith it is impossible to be pleasing to God' (Hebrew v. 3); and again (Hebrew iii.), 'We see that they could not enter in, because of unbelief'; and 'This is the first and greatest commandment: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul.'"

This is good sound Catholic doctrine. All outside the Church will be damned. There is no salvation in any other name under heaven. This is the good old cry to frighten the sheep into the shearing fold. Hume well said the more tremendous the divinity, and the more mysterious his

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methods of salvation, the better for the priests, to whom the frightened and the foolish always look for guidance.

The *Crescent* reports from the *Ceylon Independent* that Mr. C. J. R. Le Masurier, a well-known member of the Ceylon Civil Service, has abjured Christianity, and on September 15 embraced the faith of Islam. He has taken the Moslem name of Abdul Hamid.

Ameer Ali, a Rationalist Moslem, who writes in the *Nineteenth Century*, makes the following point against orthodox Christianity: "The baptismal dogma is the best index to the charity of the Church of Christ. The orthodox Moslem believes that all children are born in Islam, and that they are perverted by education, so that if they die before they formally adopt any religion they go to heaven. The orthodox Christian believes that all children are born in original sin, and that if a child dies before it is baptised it is doomed to eternal perdition—the fate charitably assigned to heathens, Moslems, and Jews."

The *Lutheran Witness* shows its true Christian spirit in the following remarks on German Rationalism: "Just think of men like the famous—or rather infamous—Church historian, Harnack, in Berlin, who uses all his influence, not only to discredit parts of the Apostolic Creed, but to do away with it altogether. Think of Ritschlianism, which is subverting the system of Christian religion by denying all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, as the doctrine of redemption and reconciliation as taught in the Scriptures, the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, etc. Think of the almost universal rejection of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, regarding which even the most prominent so-called orthodox-believing professors, who are looked upon as pillars in the Lutheran Church, declare that this doctrine as taught by the dogmaticians of our Church could not be accepted and adhered to any longer in the light of modern science." Think of the *Lutheran Witness* unable to do anything better than howl at heresy.

The tombstone of the person at Allendale, who inscribed it as a rebuke to infidelity that his wife had ten children all of whom died in birth, reminds a correspondent that the Rev. J. Eagles, in his essays, mentions that "A medical man told me that he was called upon to visit a woman who had been confined, and all of whose children had died. As he reached the door, a neighbor came out, saying: 'O, she's a blessed 'oman, a blessed 'oman.' 'What do you mean?' said he. 'She's a blessed 'oman, for she breeds angels for the Lord.'"

The writer of "Feminine Fancies" in the *Wheeler*, a cycling journal, speaks of marvellous trees alleged to have grown out of the grave of an Atheist at Aldenham, who said: "If there be an Almighty Power, then let trees grow out of my grave." Of course the legend grew up after the trees had grown. Such legends are numerous, and are easily accounted for. In ancient times it was customary to place seeds on graves as food offerings to the spirits of the dead. When the seeds grew, the plants coming from the grave were deemed to absorb the spirit beneath. Mr. Grant Allen holds that this was the origin of cultivation, that originally a corpse was supposed necessary for a crop, and this led to human sacrifices, for which animal sacrifices and consecrating fields were substituted.

Mrs. Hart, writing on Japanese women in the *Saturday Review* (Oct. 19), remarks: "Good manners and courtesy are the constant rule of life in Japan, so that brutal conduct and wife-beating, common upon Christian people, are unknown there." There are, however, serious drawbacks in Western eyes; for instance, the husband can return his wife to her family if unapproved. Since 1872, there has been a system of national education where boys and girls, rich and poor, are taught on the same benches.

A traveller in the Sahara was once informed by one of his savage escort that he had just killed a devil. It appeared that the devil was the traveller's watch, which the savage had found, and, hearing it tick, had concluded there was a devil inside. Accordingly he smashed it by hurling it against a tree (El Tounsy, *Voyage au Ouaday*, p. 538; Paris, 1851). How would Paley's famous argument from the watch have operated on this savage?

Mr. Didier says the negro in America is an habitual liar and thief. On this Judge Tourgee remarks: "Considering the fact that Southern white Christian civilisation had absolute control of the American negro for two hundred and fifty years, that there is nearly as much white as colored blood in his veins, and that it gave as an excuse for its acts the need of Christianising and civilising the blacks, this indictment of the result should be taken as conclusive evidence of the worthlessness of Southern methods, and a serious imputation on Southern Christianity."

The Rev. Francis Whaley Harper, M.A., canon of York, who died there recently, was eighty years old. In 1877 he preached a sermon in York Cathedral, in which the following passage occurred and became widely circulated, and caused much comment: "The spirit and the body were the Lord's, and the Bible and beer, taken rightly, were the Lord's too. The beer would not do without the Bible, and the Bible would not do fully and perfectly without the beer." It is therefore claimed that he is the author of the alliteration used in Mr. Foote's latest pamphlet. But it is probably older even than Canon Harper.

One of the most popular churches in New York announces every Saturday in the papers that "the entire service, including the sermon, is limited to one hour." The old-time "thirdly" business has become unpopular.

A humorous controversy is going on in Chicago between the Rev. Dr. Caufield (Universalist) and the Rev. Dr. Hensen (Baptist). Man of God No. 1 says "all human beings are children of God." Man of God No. 2 says the immense majority are children of the Devil, and follow the injunction, "Children, obey your parents."

Fifteen thousand pilgrims annually visit St. Baume, in Provence, not far from Marseilles, where Mary Magdalene is said to have spent the last thirty years of her life. The legend runs that Mary Magdalene came from Judæa in a small boat with Lazarus, Martha, the two Marys, and Salome. It is curious how many of the saints got to the West. Irenæus, the first bishop of Lyons, is said to have come from Asia Minor, and this is probably as true as that Mary Magdalene went to St. Baume.

The lessee of the Theatre of Varieties, Johannesburg, who was prosecuted by the Ministers' Union for contravening the Sunday law by giving a concert of other than sacred music, has been discharged with a caution.

The poor fellow Miers, who committed suicide in London, under the stress of neglect and starvation, left behind him a letter which can hardly be pleasant reading to a good many pious people. He disclosed his misery to rich men "pulling long faces at church and pocketing a good deal of money for religious work," but they told him to "Believe in Him" Sometimes they advised him to work for the Salvation Army. "How kind!" he exclaimed; "again, cheap Christianity. To join a Salvation Army refuge at my age, without knowing a trade, and in such a weak state of health." The poor fellow's landlady was good to him, but rather than be a burden to her any longer he ended it all, saying, "In my case suicide is no crime, but a necessity."

The *Sunday Chronicle* comments on the fact that the *Sporting Chronicle* has been excluded from the Priestman Institute at Ashton, though the meeting decided to order the *Freethinker*. The publisher of our Sunday contemporary is "glad" of this, because he "wouldn't like the *Chronicle* contaminated." But why on earth does he lose his temper in this fashion? We don't rail at luckier papers when the *Freethinker* is excluded from public institutions, as it is too frequently. We simply wait—as we must wait—till our countrymen grow more tolerant.

The Rev. W. W. Howard does not show a coming-on disposition. We are waiting to hear what he has to say in response to Mr. Foote's offer. Meanwhile we note that he is getting into hot water at home, and that a Leek layman, writing in the local *Times*, remarks that "It has been left to a sceptic—Mr. G. W. Foote—to remind us that prize-fighting does not come within the requirements of even the most versatile Christian minister."

The Hon. Waldegrave Leslie, at a meeting of the Council of the Scottish Episcopal Church, said he was afraid that a number of the young Presbyterian ministers did not believe in the Word of God. We fancy his fears are far from groundless.

The Sabbath Observance Association has remonstrated with Messrs. W. S. Brown & Sons, upholsterers, George-street, Edinburgh, for printing a testimonial dated June 23, 1895. That date was the Lord's Day. Gods and little fishes! what a keen eye for desecration is in the head of a Scotch Sabbatarian!

"Brother, the present's an era of questionings;
Nothing is taken for granted to-day;
Science and reason are probing the best o' things;
Truth is the guerdon they seek, and they say
Nothing is right because
Time out of mind it was.
Error is not the less gross that it's gray."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 27, Co-operative Hall, Plymouth: 11, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible"; 3, "Religion in the Light of Science"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

November 3, Balls Pond; 17, Leicester.

December 1, Bradford; 22, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—October 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. Nov. 3, m. Newington Reform Club, e. Foresters' Hall; 10, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 17, Liverpool; 24, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Admirer.—Mr. Foote hopes he may fulfil your wish to "wake them up at Plymouth."

A. Banks trusts the "laggards" will "prove many, and liberal in their subscriptions."

L. Kerr.—Announcements are inserted only when they come officially from Branches. Some rule is necessary, and this is ours.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—The correspondence will do good. You have certainly had the best of it. In any future controversy you will find a lot of fresh useful matter in Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* pamphlet, which is cram-full of information.

A. S. (Glasgow).—Shall appear, but not with your name, which would make it too personal.

W. Bradburn wishes to know where the *Freethinker* can be obtained at Harrow, Middlesex. Can any reader oblige him with the information?

J. C. Grant thinks the Shilling Month appeal should be made periodically—say half-yearly—in order to afford an opportunity to many who, like himself, cannot give much at a time.

J. Richards.—Our best thanks to the Ryhope pitmen who subscribe to Shilling Month. We hope to see them all again before the winter is over.

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. Charlton.—We have not the least hope that Mr. Howard will debate with Mr. Foote. If he does, we shall be very agreeably disappointed. Cannot you get a good hall for Sunday lectures at Hanley? Mr. Foote has offered to come over since the Conference held in your town.

S. H. Hallifax.—Your deposit is transferred to Shilling Month. Thanks.

N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Dr. Nichols, £1 1s.; C. M. M. Jacob, 10s.

W. S. Clough.—Thanks. Shall have attention shortly.

E. Smedley.—Thanks for cuttings.

S. Fisburn.—The Bishop of London gets £10,000 a year; Durham, £8,000; Winchester, £6,500; Bath and Wells, £5,000. Jackson, Bishop of London, left £72,000 by will; Barry, of Durham, £120,000; Sumner, of Winchester, £80,000; Auckland, of Bath and Wells, £120,000. So they contrived to save a little. Full particulars of the Bishops and their wealth will be found in the *Secular Almanack for 1896*.

T. Bintley.—Glad to hear you are going ahead at Chester-le-Street. We will write to Mr. Nicholson.

J. Dodds.—So you are "only a navvy," are you? Well, you may be perfectly certain you are a useful man. Don't say "only" again. A good many of your "betters" are "only" useless. Glad to know you would sooner miss your dinner than the *Freethinker*, but hope you will always have both.

Eppio.—We do not care to keep the fund open beyond October, though we shall acknowledge any subscriptions that dribble in, as they always do after date. The fund can be reopened in the new year.

A. Forrester.—A further list of subscriptions from Glasgow! You have done well. No doubt you regard Mr. Watts's week-night lectures under the new scheme as a proof that the President means business. The subscription of £1 4s. to the Benevolent Fund is handed to Miss Vance.

T. Hinton.—Richard Brothers was a well-known pious lunatic, though with a spice of the craftiness we find in Prophet Baxter. Thanks for the pamphlet, which shall be returned as you request.

R. Ward.—Best thanks to the Hanley friends for subscriptions and hope that we shall "raise a good round sum."

H. W.—We never heard of any Dr. Newell in connection with our movement.

G. Crookson.—Subscription received with your genial letter. Thanks for both.

J. Carpenter.—The Church must be very hard pressed when it puts up a man like Dr. Kinns, with an Archbishop in the chair, to defend Genesis in the name of Science. Kinns and Science! The two are never heard of together except in pious circles.

E. Pinder.—We shall see the Leicester friends face to face in a few weeks. Meanwhile, thanks.

D. Fyfe.—It is pleasant to find sympathy, and practical sympathy too, in such a remote part of Scotland. Our wish for your country is, that the spirit of Robert Burns may extinguish the spirit of John Knox

A. E. Aspinall.—Volney was, we believe, an Atheist. He is in the list of our *Infidel Death-Beds*.

A. Baxter.—Shall be attended to. You are misinformed as to Mr. Watts's position at the Finsbury School Board election. He did not promise to vote for free meals for children at the expense of the ratepayers. He distinctly refused to consider the question, as it was unpractical, the Board having no legal power to provide such meals, even if it wished to do so.

W. H. Stevens.—Thanks for your good wishes, which we know are sincere.

H. Lees Sumner.—Your letter is a real encouragement. There will always be cavillers. The great thing, as you say, is to go on with the work, and let it speak for itself.

J. Willey.—Yours is an interesting letter. With regard to the question, why so many sympathisers with Freethought do not avow their opinions, we can only say (1) that courage is not a common virtue, and (2) that Christian bigotry is very malignant.

W. H. Twyman.—Mr. Putnam would have been delighted to shake hands with you at Canterbury. Lecturing in your old city is, after all, worth thinking about; considering that you have a Marlowe memorial just in front of the cathedral.

Papers Received.—Johannesburg Star—Digger's News—Two Worlds—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Ipswich Star—Echo—Torch—Progressive Thinker—Londoner—Freethinkers' Magazine—Pioneer—Der Arbeiter Freund—Yiddish Worker's Friend—Liberty—Lloyd's Newspaper—Oldham Chronicle—Cape Times—Twentieth Century—Dundee Courier—Sunday Chronicle—Leek Times—Truthseeker—Chatham News.

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SHILLING MONTH.

October has a week to run after the publication of this number of the *Freethinker*. During that brief period I earnestly invite all my readers who are able to subscribe, but have not yet done so, to forward me their donations. They may rest assured that the money they send will be spent usefully. My lecture scheme, so far as I can see, meets with universal approbation. Some of the lecturers have written to say that it bears the only present hope for a real forward movement. I am anxious to have Freethought propagated with vigor in all parts of the kingdom, and it shall be done if (mark the *if*) adequate means are placed at my disposal. Next week I will state how many persons have subscribed, and how much I have received.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

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Per Miss Vance.—C. Smith, 2s.; R. E. Douglas, 6s.; J. Clark; T. Birtley; J. Phillips.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures three times to-day (October 27) in the handsome new Co-operative Hall, Plymouth, where he hopes to meet all the local "saints," with others from the surrounding districts.

The audience at Foresters' Hall goes on improving. Mr. Foote had a capital meeting on Sunday last, and the collection was considerably ahead of all previous record. For the second time a sovereign was dropped in the box. The lecture on "The Holy Ghost" was frequently punctuated with laughter and applause. Mr. Heaford, who had been preaching the Gospel of Freethought out of doors, made an excellent chairman. In response to his appeal for discussion, a young gentleman, with a clerical accent, mounted the platform and spoke for ten minutes. He admitted that Christianity was all a matter of faith, and the more you reasoned about it the deeper you got in the mire of unbelief.

Mr. Touzeau Parris lectures at Foresters' Hall this evening (October 27) on "Some Bible Symbols, and their Meaning." We hope he will have a good meeting, for he is sure to be interesting and instructive. Mr. Watts lectures on the following Sunday, and after that Mr. Cohen.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Glasgow last Sunday. In the evening the hall was crowded in every part. Mr. Watts named a sweet little girl, "Mary Lindsay"; the ceremony was much appreciated by the large audience.

To-day, Sunday, October 27, Mr. Watts lectures twice in Edinburgh, and to-morrow, Monday, in York.

The *Pioneer*, of Wood Green, gives a good report of Mr. Parris's first lecture there, and speaks of him as "a gentleman whose sincerity and ability are bound to command respect."

Mr. Forder concludes the course of lectures at Wood Green this evening (October 27), dealing with the subject of "The Devil." Tickets can be obtained of J. Wood, 71 Gladstone-avenue.

Mr. C. Cohen had good meetings at Newcastle on Sunday, the best he has ever had in that city. He lectures again to-day (Oct. 27) to what we hope will be still larger audiences. Next week Mr. Cohen lectures at Stockton and Blackburn under Mr. Foote's new scheme. He will visit several other places, under the same scheme, this side of Christmas.

Mr. Thomas Birtley informs us that he is endeavoring to reorganise the Chester-le-Street Branch for active work during the winter. Meetings will be held at 7 Twert-street, adjoining the Co-operative Hall. Mr. Birtley's address is 7 Co-operative-street. We hope all the Freethinkers in the district will rally in support of this forward movement. Mr. Cohen is delivering two lectures at Chester-le-Street this week, under Mr. Foote's scheme, and his visit is expected to give the cause a fillip.

On Saturday the members of the Failsworth Sunday-schools have a dramatic entertainment, and on Sunday evening the quarterly meeting of teachers and scholars.

One of the most energetic members of the Battersea Branch met with an accident while at work, and will be unable to follow his employment for some months. The Branch gives him a benefit this Sunday evening, October 27, when there will be a musical and dramatic entertainment, followed by a dance. Tickets are sixpence each, and can be had at the outdoor meeting or at the Battersea Secular Hall.

The hall at Balls Pond, having been cleaned and decorated by Messrs. Ward, Guest, Jackson, and lady friends, was opened last Sunday. Mr. Forder presided, and addresses by Messrs. Calvert, Thurlow, and Rowney were interspersed with songs and music. Over sixty members joined the club, and the entertainment was followed by dancing.

Miss Vance is still waiting for some notices and particulars from secretaries and lecturers for insertion in the *Almanack*, part of which is in the printer's hands. Particulars should be sent without delay.

The world goes round, and the Churches have to go with it. Even the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has to keep moving, however reluctantly. One of its latest books is *The Dawn of Civilisation*, by Professor Maspero, who writes as follows on the antiquity of Egyptian civilisation: "The oldest monuments hitherto known scarcely transport us further than six thousand years, yet they are of an art so fine, so well determined in its main outlines, and reveal so ingeniously combined a system of administration, government, and religion, that we infer a long past of accumulated centuries behind them. It must always be difficult to estimate exactly the length of time needful for a race as gifted as were the ancient Egyptians to rise from barbarism to a high degree of culture. Nevertheless, I do not think that we shall be misled in granting them forty or fifty centuries wherein to bring so complicated an achievement to a successful issue, and in placing their first appearance at eight or ten thousand years before our era." Egyptian civilisation is thus allowed to be six thousand years older than Adam, who, according to the Bible, was the first man!

The *Athenæum* (October 19), in a review of M. Maspero's *Dawn of Civilisation*, remarks: "The people are not content to be led passively by the facts as they are found by experts. There is no knowing in what this might issue, perhaps in the slaughter of their convictions; so, in order that their 'convictions' may be soothed and strengthened, they require, like children at bedtime, to be told the same story over and over again. The result is that, in England at present, the teachers are far from being as strong, numerically and otherwise, as they should be in proportion to the monstrous regiment of the preachers." Our leading review also refers to "the temptation to blindfold Science, and then make her prophesy to ignorance and superstition." Surely the reviewer has been reading the works of Sayce, Drummond, or some other of the reconcilers of the new truths with the old myths.

Mr. John Skelton ("Shirley") has just published his recollections of, and correspondence with, a number of dead celebrities in literature and politics. One letter from Froude is very interesting. Referring to the doctrines of John Knox, he writes: "The horrible creed is not new. Thomas Aquinas says much the same. And, after all, if it is once allowed that God Almighty will torture poor devils for ever and ever for making mistakes on the nature of the Trinity, I don't see why any quantity of capricious horrors may not be equally true. Given the truth of what all English orthodox parsons profess to believe, and Hephzibah Jones may believe as much more in the same line as she pleases. Only I think our opinion ought to have been asked as to whether we would accept existence on such terms before we were sent into the world."

The first of a series of addresses on "The Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals" was given in the Memorial Hall, E.C., on October 15, by Mr. J. C. Kenworthy, the friend and disciple of Tolstoi. The title was: "The Humanitarian View—Social Conditions and the Treatment of Animals." Mrs. C. Mallet was in the chair. The lecturer showed that we must first consider the treatment of man by man, as the proper treatment of animals depends on human social conditions; and that under the present commercial morality, which permits of sweated labor, aggressive militarism, and an inhuman prison system, no real improvement in the condition of animals is possible. The next lecture will be by Mr. J. Oldfield, M.A., B.C.L., on "The Scientific View," on November 19, when Mrs. Massingberd, President of the Pioneer Club, will take the chair. The Rev. Canon Wilberforce, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. G. W. Foote, and Rev. A. Lilley will take part in subsequent meetings.

Can any of our readers design a barrow, to be hand-driven, for selling Freethought literature in the streets of London? It would require to be light but capacious, and with means to protect the stock against rain. Communications to Mr. Forder, who desires such a vehicle.

Obituary.

We regret to notice the death, at an early age, of Katie Kehm Smith, one of the most promising of American lady Freethought lecturers, and secretary of the flourishing Oregon Secular Union.

Of all deceivers who have plagued the world, none are so deeply ruinous to human happiness as those impostors who pretend to lead men by a light above nature.—*Logan Mitchell.*

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INSPIRATION.

THE primary definition of inspiration is, "The act of inspiring, breathing in, infusing, and the like; inhalation; as the inspiration of the air into the lungs; opposed to expiration."

We read that at the creation God, after he had made Adam, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. From this the Bible writers concluded that the soul, or spirit, of man was the air that filled his lungs, and as the breath left the body at death they spoke of it as the spirit leaving, or becoming separated from the body and returning to the God who gave it. So God, who was spoken of as a spirit, was supposed to be air or the wind. And when Christianity came to modify the monotheistic ideas of the Jews, the third person in the triune God became the Ghost, more particularly the wind in motion, or a gust of wind; and as these winds were caused by the heat of the sun—*helios* in the Greek, and *hele* in the Phœnician—the language of Palestine, it became the *Hele Gust*, corrupted into the Holy Ghost. All inspiration, therefore, came from that part of God that was called the Holy Ghost.

In the evolution of religious ideas inspiration came to mean something more than the inhaling of air into the lungs, and it was supposed that with the air some persons drew in some undefinable influence that enabled them to perform acts or things that were beyond the ability of the mass of common people to do. They spoke of the inspiration of the poet, the artist, the statesman, and the successful leader of armies. And in modern times—not earlier than the fifteenth century—Christians had formulated the doctrine of the plenary and verbal inspiration of the writers of the Bible, upon which to base the claim of the inerrant word of God for those writings.

This theory of the plenary inspiration of the Bible writers was an invention of the Protestants; Roman Catholics never took any stock in it. It is one of the necessities of any system of religion that it should have a standard of absolute truth, to which should be referred for settlement all questions of doctrine or church discipline. The Catholic made the Church itself its standard, and held that the decisions of its general councils and the decrees of the Pope constituted the infallible authority for the belief and doctrine of all Christians. As the Protestants repudiated the authority of the Church and the Pope, it became necessary to adopt some other standard that should be their authority for absolute truth; and so they invented this dogma of an inspiration that rendered all they wrote and said the infallible word of God, not subject to any change or contradiction, or even interpretation by the private judgment of individuals.

Of course, in the nature of things there can be no such thing as an infallible standard of absolute truth. Human reason is the only guide to truth; but even this, with the limitations of the human machine, in its not yet perfected stage of development, cannot be said to be infallible.

But, leaving now the Catholic claim to an infallible Church, let us inquire into the modern Protestant doctrine of an infallible Bible, made so by the inspiration of its writers.

In the first place, it should be noted that none of those writers claimed to be inspired. They wrote as modern novel writers do, for pay, for reputation, for fame, for influence in the community in which they lived; they wrote to suit the taste of the people for whom they wrote, and, as that was a taste for wonders and marvels, each writer strove to tell the biggest story, and he who succeeded in doing so became the most popular.

As time were away till the authors of these stories were dead and forgotten, under the influence of a priestly caste who monopolised all learning, these old mythical stories became history, and it was made a crime to doubt the actual truth of them; and thus they have come down to our time, developed by law, force, and religious terrors into the veritable words of God, through the modern doctrine of plenary inspiration.

But how can we know that the writers of these old stories were inspired? The stories themselves are incredible without convincing evidence of inspiration, and inspiration is incredible without proof of the truth of the stories. Even supposing the stories to be true, it does not prove that the authors of them were inspired; and if you prove that they were inspired, it does not follow that they told the truth. It is now proved that much of what is set forth in the Bible as the writing of inspired men is not true, and the latest dodge of Christian Bible worshippers is that the Bible was not intended to teach science, and that, as a matter of fact, the Bible writers were mistaken when they undertook to teach us anything which science has already disproved. That is good doctrine; but the trouble is that these Bible-mongers still keep up the war against science, upon matters that are particularly within the province of science, and hold to the scientific truth of the Bible as against science, until they are ignominiously driven out of it by the ever-rising tide of human intelligence.

How, then, are we to know whether a writer is inspired or not? If he is liable to make mistakes in matters of fact—as we see he is—how does his being inspired make him any more reliable? Are there any rules or marks by which we can recognise his inspiration? The question of the existence of God is a question of fact, and he may be mistaken about that. If it takes an inspired man to teach good, sound morals, still the question appeals to uninspired men to recognise the good morals, and the inspiration is useless and proves nothing. If an uninspired man knows the difference between good and bad morals, then there is no need of inspiration to teach it. And, in fact, morals were developed out of the needs of human society, and religion with its doctrine of inspiration knew nothing about it.

Suppose a man sits down to write a story, a psalm, or a creed, how is he to know whether he is inspired or not? There is no message to him direct conveying the information. He says to himself, I feel something that may be inspiration, or it may be the effect of indigestion. Nothing is so deceptive as feeling. If I am inspired, of course I must tell the truth. It is like testifying in court under oath. But then suppose I don't tell the truth, there is no perjury about it, and there is no court in the case to send me before the grand jury, or sentence me to the penitentiary. Besides, if I make what I write favorable to the clergy, they will pretend it is true whether or no, and the crowd of their devout and ignorant dupes will swallow it all as "gospel truth" anyhow. And that is just the kind of truth it will be.

But suppose the feeling I have does indicate inspiration, there is another question that bids me pause. What or who is it that inspires me? It may be God, or it may be the Devil; neither of them is in sight or hearing: how am I to tell which of them it is? If I look to the productions of most of the Bible writers, it would seem that they could have been inspired only by the Devil. But, again, what is the difference? Who knows which of the two is the better friend of man? It was the Devil who told the truth to the woman in the Garden of Eden, while God was trying to deceive her and her husband to prevent them from getting a taste of the best fruit in the garden.

With all these questions pending, without any possible solution, the thoughtful man must remain in doubt about the fact, the source, and the utility of inspiration. He will be safer to conclude that the whole doctrine is an invention of the priests for their own profit and advantage, and that it has no foundation but in fraud and duplicity.

Any man may say he is inspired, or priests may say it for him; but to prove it is entirely another thing. In ancient times, if a person was eccentric or crazy, he was supposed to be inspired; but whether he was inspired by a good spirit or a bad one was a question upon which men were divided. If his insanity took a religious form and his ravings suited the priests, then he was an inspired saint; otherwise he was sold to the Devil, and they burned him at the stake. In these more enlightened times Christians do not claim inspiration for any living case that may be investigated by scientific physicians, but only for the insane or fraudulent ones who lived and died so long ago that science cannot diagnose their cases.

—*Independent Pulpit.* J. P. RICHARDSON.

They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

—*J. R. Lowell.*

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (September 21).

I SUPPOSE right here I might give some of my impressions of the British working-man and his conditions. Of course, I have not had time to study the matter thoroughly, but I have learned many things. I used to think that the position of the working-man in this country was not much better than slavery, and the sooner he could emigrate to America and "go West," the better. As far as I can see, the position of the working-man here is fully as good as in America. He may not receive as much for his labor, but then it does not cost so much to live. Rents and clothing of all kinds are much less than in America. I can buy as good a suit of clothes here for $7 as I can for $15 in New York or Chicago. Shoes that cost $10 in America are only $5 here, and so on. You can get a shave for 3 cents in London that costs 10 cents in New York, and 25 cents in the Far West. Luxuries, however, are not much cheaper. Restaurant living in London is fully as expensive as in New York, Chicago, or San Francisco. They have a fashion here of charging for everything. You have the impression at first glance of the menu that you get your steak or chop at a less price than at home; but you have to pay extra for potatoes and other vegetables, for bread, butter, napkin, and also two or three pennies for attendance, so that by the time you finish you have paid even more than in New York. You cannot get a good meal in London short of fifty cents, and it is more often a dollar if you are extra hungry. I think, however, that the materials for home living throughout England are much cheaper than in America; and if you get into out-of-the-way places, off the line of travel and fashion, you are surprised at the abundance, goodness, and cheapness of the living.

I am therefore satisfied, from observation and the reports of those who should be well informed, that the working-man is pecuniarily as well off in England as in America.

The British working-man is intelligent and independent. To a certain extent he has won his rights. He is not by any means the "under dog." His power is respected. There is getting to be a good understanding between employer and employed. They are finding out that both are made of the same stuff; both are human beings, with the same interests and the same world to live in. The old feeling of antagonism and distrust is disappearing. Of course there are strikes, with more or less bigotry on one side, and selfishness on the other; but arbitration is generally resorted to, and justice prevails. Wrongs exist, but enlightenment and improvement are on the gain, and the rights of labor are more and more acknowledged. This mainly by voluntary co-operation, and not by any interference of the State.

The British workman takes things easier than the American. The American works faster; he will get more out of a machine, and, of course, gets greater wages. But, if he works faster, he also spends faster; and even if he takes a holiday he still "rustles" and hurries through his pleasure as if time were short. But the British workman will take his time. He doesn't hurry. He enjoys life as he goes along. He is tranquil. He makes the most of his holidays. He gets all out of them he can. He doesn't seem to make it a business to be happy, as the American does. He simply is happy with a jolly complacency. He makes no fuss about it. The workmen don't labor hard in England, so far as the factories are concerned. They have for holidays Sundays, half Saturdays, and generally half Wednesdays or Thursdays. They begin work at six in the morning, breakfast from eight to half-past, work from that time to one, dinner from one to two, and then quit work at five. It strikes me that this arrangement breaks up the monotony of labor better than the custom in America.

While much is yet to be accomplished, I feel that labor in England has made magnificent progress, and its vast results are not going into the hands of a few. Wealth is on the road to equitable distribution. The principle of co-operation, as I have before noted, has been developed with wonderful success in Great Britain. An International Co-operative Congress is now being held in London, whose sessions I have attended. At the meeting yesterday, when George Jacob Holyoake, the father of the co-operative movement in England, was introduced by the chairman as of "Great Britain and the world generally," it was stated that in Great Britain there were no less that 1,700 co-operative stores. Enrolled in the ranks are a million and a quarter of members, carrying on a trade of $250,000,000 a year, with a profit of $25,000,000 a year. About $200,000 were spent in education, and $40,000 in charities. I am glad to hear from Mr. Holyoake that from the beginning there has been no question of the full equality of woman. She has been a shareholder, and received profits, in the same way as man. There is a Woman's Guild connected with the movement for the education of woman, not only in domestic, but in social and universal life. While woman endears the home and also wields the "basket power"—that is, the marketing power—yet she is not simply for the home, but for all the world, side by side with man.

It must be noted that these vast results have been achieved by voluntary co-operation, not by State Socialism. The interference of the State in such matters would not only be useless, but injurious.

Sunday morning, with my host, Mr. Gimson, and his little son Humphrey, five years old, I wander over the stately Abbey Park of Leicester. The old ruined abbey is near by, though not in the park itself. In this abbey Cardinal Wolsey died, and, I believe, was buried. Only the walls are standing of the once grand structure. The sunshine flouts it, as fortune flouted the poor cardinal himself. The people of Leicester who do not attend church come to the park to enjoy the Sunday, and the young folks make love, and it presents quite a pastoral scene.

In the afternoon I make acquaintance with the Secular Society of Leicester. First of all we have a splendid sociable time. We gather around the tables, over one hundred of us in all. There is a delegation of eight good comrades from Derby, and another friend travels thirty miles on his bicycle to attend the first Freethought lecture of his life. Music adds its charms to the festal hour. Nobody says grace; but before we partake of the tea and bread and cake the orchestra pours forth its animating strains.

It is certainly a great pleasure to satisfy the hunger to "the Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders." It adds to the conversational ability of the occasion, and we don't eat so fast. After the tables were pretty well cleared of the delicacies, and the tea, which "cheers, but not inebriates," had permeated the chambers of the brain, the chairman, in the name of the Secular Society, gave a warm and generous welcome to the American visitor, to which he responded with cordial goodwill. The party then adjourned to the club-rooms, reading-room, and library until half-past six o'clock, the hour for the evening service, at which I gave my lecture on "Christianity and Woman." The hall was filled. It was one of the best audiences that I have greeted in England. There was music by the choir, which was excellent every way. I was cheered by the animating surroundings of this Leicester campaign.

I have much to say of this Leicester Secular Society. It has a noble record, of small beginnings, of struggles, and of brilliant victory. The building in which the society now meets is about as large as the Paine Memorial Hall, Boston. It is a handsome structure on one of the best streets of Leicester, with ample accommodation for improvement and pleasure.

The origin of this society dates back to 1840. A Discussion Class was held in the Mechanics' Institution, originated and animated by George Bown, one of the advanced thinkers of that time. Among the young men who gathered about him was Josiah Gimson, the father of Sidney A. Gimson. The subjects brought forward in the class soon became the talk of the town. Afterwards a school was carried on during the week, with lectures on the Sunday. A library was also formed. The social and Secular views of progressive thinkers were discussed, and Leicester thus had the opportunity of listening to new thoughts. Out of this evolving institution, which, having no creed, readily adapted itself to circumstances, in May, 1873, was organised the Secular Hall Company, and the site of the present hall was purchased. In 1881 the hall was completed from designs of W. Larner Sugden, and opened on the first Sunday in March. A large number of notable Freethinkers were present from all parts of England. The property now pays an income of six per cent. on the investment. Secular, social, political, and religious advocates are welcome to its platform, provided they submit their views to criticism and debate. A long list of illustrious names adorns its record. Among them I must mention James Thomson (B.V.), who contributed a poetic address at the opening of the hall. I must quote a few lines, for they show the vigorous Atheism of the poet, whom I have already referred to as a genius of high order:—

> Lo, all the lands wherein our wandering race
> Have led their flocks, or fixed their dwelling-place,
> To till with patient toil the fruitful sod,
> Abound with altars to the Unknown God
> Or Gods, whom man created from of old,
> In his own image, one yet manifold,
> And ignorantly worshipped. We now dare,
> Taught by millenniums of barren prayer,
> Of mutual scorn and hate and bloody strife,
> With which these dreams have poisoned our poor life,
> To build *our* Temples on another plan,
> Devoting them to God's creator, Man;
> Not to Man's creature, God. And thus, indeed,
> All men and women, of whatever creed,
> We welcome gladly if they love their kind;
> No other valid test of worth we find,
> *Who loveth not his brother at his side,*
> *How can he love a dim dream deified?*

Another name must be added to this extraordinary list, that of Professor Huxley, who placed himself among the

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supporters of the society. An appeal being made for funds, he wrote, February 12, 1891: "Mr. Huxley encloses a small contribution to the special fund of the Leicester Secular Society in evidence of his full sympathy with the objects of the society."

To a request for permission to publish the above he replied: "You are quite at liberty to use my note, and I shall be glad if it is of any service.—I am, yours very faithfully, T. H. HUXLEY."

This record, it seems to me, places Huxley in square accord with the principles of Secularism.

The importance and far-reaching nature of the Leicester movement will thus be understood. In Leicester, as in Failsworth, we see that, give Secularism a fair field, it will show its true adaptation to humanity. It will satisfy, not perhaps a "believer," but anyone who is willing to accept the truth and do his duty.

In the hall are the portraits of Charles Bradlaugh, George Jacob Holyoake, and Josiah Gimson. The name and fame of the latter cannot be forgotten in the history of this society. He was one of its founders, and a most ardent and generous supporter. At his death, in 1883, he bequeathed, in maintenance of the institution, an income of one hundred pounds for ten years.

I am cordially entertained during my stay at Leicester by Mr. and Mrs. Sydney A. Gimson, and I must thank them for the delightful and instructive hours I spent in this beautiful city, where I had an opportunity to see so much of progressive English life. I cannot name all the Secular friends I met here. They are many. I shall not forget the generosity of their reception. SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

WATTS-WALDRON DEBATE AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

DURING the last week Newcastle has had an intellectual treat. The long-talked-of debate between Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. H. J. Waldron took place on the evenings of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, October 14 to 17, in Sinnett's Amphitheatre, Northumberland-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Unfortunately, the weather was far from what could be desired; the first two nights, especially, it seemed as if "all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." Although there were great counter attractions during the week, such as races, a special preacher from Glasgow, and last, but not least, the world-renowned nightingale, Madame Patti, was giving a concert in the next building on the Monday evening—nevertheless, large numbers flocked each night to hear the discussion, many coming from Shields and other surrounding towns; and an admirer of Mr. Watts, who came all the way from York, was present every night. The audience, who were on the whole orderly, listened with great attention, and enthusiastically applauded the debaters whenever they thought a point had been scored. Judging from the applause, there seemed an equal number of Christians and Secularists, which is very gratifying.

Both disputants throughout were gentlemanly and earnest, frequently eloquent, and were absolutely free from personalities. Mr. Waldron, a lecturer for the Christian Evidence Society, London, is a fluent speaker, and probably a good preacher; but he is certainly not a good debater. He did not seem to grasp the points at issue, and to note the force and bearing of his opponent's arguments. He too often appealed to the feelings of his "followers of faith." Mr. Watts once remarked to the audience: "If warmth of feeling and appealing to the emotions constitute debate, then you have had it."

The subject for the first two nights was, "That Christian Theism is More Reasonable than Atheism," and the Christian gentleman's arguments were the one from design and "that philosophers like Herbert Spencer did not believe in Atheism." Mr. Watts said the latter proved nothing, as the philosophers he had mentioned did not believe in Christianity either. Mr. Watts had nothing to do with disproving the existence of "a god," but only of the "Christian God"; and from the Old and New Testaments he read about a dozen texts showing the imperfect character of that God—such as Ezekiel xx. 25 and xiv. 9; Proverbs xvi. 4; 1 Samuel xv. 3—and commented on the fact that from pulpits they would preach that God, though he had never yet found one who could defend him. Except saying that "the evil" mentioned in "Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord not know it?" meant punishment for sin, without defining the last word "sin," although requested—except this mere statement, and that there was not one Jew who would accept the anthropomorphic ideas of God, Mr. Waldron never attempted to deal with the texts, which, according to the Bible, were characteristic of the Christian God. Being asked what there was "unique" in Christianity, Mr. Waldron said "it was intellectual," upon which Mr. Watts, with a smile, complimented him upon his great modesty, and asked if men like Voltaire and Thomas Paine were void of intellect. Mr. Watts regretted that the subject had not been discussed. Mr. Waldron was the first person he had known to stand up to defend "Christian" Theism, and would probably be the last.

On the second and third nights the proposition was, "That Secularism is Superior to Christianity." Mr. Watts opened the debate by expounding the N.S.S. principles, and showing, in his masterly way, the necessity for Secularism: (1) Because Christianity had failed; (2) there were persons who absolutely could not believe Christianity; and (3) a rule was needed for all. "Christ," said Mr. Waldron, "was not a social reformer, but a social regenerator"—an expression which his followers frantically applauded; but, notwithstanding being afterwards twice asked if there could be regeneration without reform, no answer was forthcoming. Mr. Waldron commenced then to build up a man of straw, and urged that, according to Secularism, there could be no meaning in such words as "duty," "responsibility," and "morality," as Secularists did not believe in free will; but, while frank enough to admit (when pressed for an answer) that he himself did not believe in absolute free will, he carefully abstained from explaining where free will commenced, although asked to do so in every subsequent speech by Mr. Watts. Secularism, Mr. Waldron urged, was not a system at all, for it is based on ignorance, as Atheism teaches "I don't know." In his final speech Mr. Waldron showed himself much better than the creed he was defending, by saying: "If Secularism raises humanity, I will admit Secularism as equal to, nay, superior to, Christianity. I will judge by results." Mr. Watts, in replying to Atheism being ignorance, said: "Quite true, if you mean with regard to the supernatural; and in this we have an advantage over you: we know that we don't know, but you have that yet to learn."

Mr. Watts has shown how Secularism, if given fair play, would benefit humanity. One earnest Christian gentleman, after the debate, came up to Mr. Watts, expressing his admiration, and said: "Although not of your way of thinking, I admit you have given me something to think about."

CARL A. AALSTAD.

WAR!

I SEE marching armies, over vast continents;
Practising the use of weapons deadly;
Men full-prepared to take the life of brother-man:
Great, giant forces, lying dormant, waiting,
Want but a spark to spread destruction's flame.

Comrade-man! what seest thou?
Observe thou but the gorgeous uniforms;
The pomp and pride of seeming-glorious war?
Nay! look thou well beneath the surface;
Heed not nation-hatreds: Humanity is thy nation!
Thou the Altruist shouldst be.

See the consequence of war, the corse upon the field.
This man knew thee not! Wherefore was he slain?
Look again! at widows, orphans, sorrowful fathers and mothers:
They ask thee of the loved one: What *wilt* thou say?

Men, ye are comrades! Why allow your rulers
Thus to send you forth to take your brothers' lives?
Speak! true men! Speak trumpet-tongued!
Clasp hands and say, "We will not quarrel."
Pass ye the verdict—you are the masters—
War *must* cease! Enough of strife and carnage in the past:
No king shall now our friendship break. Henceforth we brothers are.

F. W. THORRINGTON.

The Early English Clergy.

In theory, of course, the clergy set up a standard of morals which was opposed to most of the worst faults of the age. But the theory was by no means in accordance with the practice. In reality, the priest took to money-getting and wenching, and was frequently rebuked by his superiors for his own ignorance. Priest became the rival of priest for tithes, bishop of king for worldly dignity.—*L. O. Pike, "A History of Crime in England," i. 93.*

The orthodox clergy, of course, maintained that the most suspicious form of study which lay people could undertake was that of divinity. The consequence was that the clerical party enlisted as far as they could every knightly prejudice on their side, and represented a thirst for knowledge as essentially unchivalrous. It was easy, too, to foster a belief that no one would know, or even wish to know, more than his neighbors, except through the influence of the Devil.—*Ibid, p. 353.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Some Bible Symbols and their Meaning."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 8, social gathering and short addresses. Wednesday, at 8.30, open discussion on "Religious and Secular Education," to be opened by R. Forder.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, special entertainment and dance. Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Friday, at 8, special meeting of members.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, a lecture. Friday, at 8, free science classes.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Psychology."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Philistine Conscience."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. H. Smith, "The Persistency of Barbarism."

WOOD GREEN (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, Robert Forder, "Who is the Devil? What is the Devil? and Where is the Devil?" Business meeting at 71 Gladstone-avenue on Sunday morning at 11.30.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Bible God."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, a lecture.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, St. John will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, St. John will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Primitive Culture."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "How Christianity became Strong."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, select concert.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, G. Harper, a paper.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): Saturday, October 26, at 6.30, drama, *Belphegor*; music by string band. Sunday, at 6.30, quarterly meeting of teachers and scholars.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Paul, "The Single Tax"; 6.30, J. Cowie, "G. B. Shaw's 'A Degenerate's View of Nordau.'"

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Gustav Smith, "Different Forms of Slavery and Murder."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, John M. Robertson, "Christianity and Slavery"; 6.30, "The Future of Liberalism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rosholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Four Scientific Men who have Modified the Thought of Intellectual Europe."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 3, "Gods and God-Makers"; 7, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall): 11, G. W. Foote, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible"; 3, "Religion in the Light of Science"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, special musical evening.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, readings and music.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, the Secretary will read a paper on "Christian Evidences a Delusion." Tuesday, at the Borough Hall Dining Room, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "What Think Ye of Christ?" Wednesday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Scepticism, its Meaning and its Value."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 3, R. Chapman, "Secularism: A Defence."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—October 27, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 28 and 29, Stockton-on-Tees; 31, Blackburn. Nov. 1, Blackburn; 3, Sheffield; 4, 5, and 6, Barnsley; 10, Foresters' Hall, London; 17 and 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London—October 27, Kingsland.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Nov. 24, New Brompton. Dec. 22, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—October 27, Foresters' Hall. November 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 44. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE BLACK ARMY.

(Continued from page 674.)

THE clerical profession, like every other, has its prizes, and they are so graduated as to inspire hope in the least capable and sanguine. No doubt it is true that in the Church of England, particularly, a minister may wait long, or all his life, for preferment, unless he has influential friends or relatives. But this is a disadvantage which is common in every branch of industry. While, however, there are doctors with no patients, and barristers with no briefs, there are comparatively few ministers without occupation and salary. However small their income may be, they begin with *something*, which is solid and secure; whereas a doctor has often to spend years in seeking patients enough to keep him in bread and cheese, and a barrister to wait years for his first solicitor's cheque.

A complaint was made at the recent Church Congress that many incumbents were deplorably poor, and it was proposed that a gigantic national fund should be raised in order to level up the poorest to £300 a year. Now, I ask any man of candor and intelligence, who has seen anything of the average "poor" incumbent, to say whether he is really the equal, in energy and general ability, of the average man who occupies a post worth £300 in the commercial or professional world.

Probably the clergy would resent their ability being canvassed in this profane manner, but when they complain of their poverty they invite such treatment; in fact, it becomes inevitable.

Much as it may hurt their feelings, I will even go farther. I have already said that we have a right to expect from Christian ministers, as from all other men, a decent conformity to their own teachings. Now, if there is any teaching in the New Testament which is clear, explicit, and unmistakable, it is that wealth is a danger and poverty a blessing. According to the Sermon on the Mount, the "poor" are the first to inherit the kingdom of heaven; and according to the epistles of Saint Paul, every Christian should content himself with little, and only minister to the bare necessities of his "carnal" part during his earthly pilgrimage. I do not accept this teaching myself. I believe that man is a risen animal, not a fallen angel; and that our sensuous nature should have its rational gratification. But I am *not* a Christian, while the clergy *are*—at least by profession. They are bound to follow Jesus and Paul, or to confess themselves hypocrites. And if the teaching of Jesus and Paul should be followed by every ordinary Christian, how much more should it be followed by those who assume to exhort and reprove their brethren.

Apart altogether from the express teaching of the New Testament, there is something incongruous in the action of spiritual teachers, who would wean us from the *material* world, and who at the same time demand a fair share at least of all the good things of this life. It reminds one of the Cornish minister, whose sermon was interrupted by the news that a ship had run ashore. The wrecking instinct was strong in that congregation, and every man started for the door. They were arrested, however, by the stentorian voice of their pastor, who bade them take their seats before God; and then, casting off his ministerial robe, he exclaimed: "Let us start fair."

Considering the *spiritual* pretensions of the clergy, I smile when they complain that they are poor. That is precisely what they ought to be. It is their only honest condition. Every penny they expend on themselves, or their families, beyond what is necessary to support life, is a confession that their *doctrines* are absurd and impracticable, and that *they* are subsisting on false pretences. I am not at all sure that they are entitled to take *any* care of their bodies. If they had a proper supply of the *faith*, which they recommend to *us*, they might trust to God for a supply of their bodily wants, as Elijah did in the desert and the Jews in the wilderness.

Let us turn our attention now to the missionaries. It is popularly believed that these gentlemen are all animated by a burning zeal to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ; that they court hardship and danger in the spirit of martyrdom. But what is the real truth? It is beyond doubt, to anyone who has investigated the matter, that the great majority of missionaries have positions of ease and emolument. They are generally within reach of protection, and their salaries, though sometimes moderate if expended in England, are always sufficient to provide them with every comfort in the land of their labor, and generally to provide them with a retinue of servants which they could never hope to have in their native country. I have no hesitation in saying that the lot of the average missionary is an enviable one. If the statement be disputed, I will furnish conclusive evidence from the writings of travellers, and even from the reports of Missionary Societies.

It is of course undeniable that there have been missionaries who held their lives cheap, and faced hardship, peril, and death itself with unfaltering devotion. I honor such men, though I do not share their faith. Courage and conviction are always admirable, and a martyr's grave is holy ground. But every cause has had its heroes. A doctor in a hospital has been known to suck the poison of diphtheria from the throat of a strange child, and sacrifice his own life in the attempt to save another's. Large bodies of men will always yield a percentage of such noble spirits; and we may reverence the martyr missionary without throwing a false halo round the heads of all his profession.

Missionary Societies, in practice, are chiefly agents for relieving the congestion of the clerical labor market. It is better to send the superfluous men of God abroad than to let them stay at home, competing with their brethren and reducing the general rate of wages. Emigration is an advantage to those who go and to those who remain. And when this is understood by the British public, the missionary business will be seen in its true

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light. A few go converting the heathen for Christ, some from Christ and themselves, and more for themselves and Christ.

Of a piece with the chief motive of this missionary enterprise are the arts employed in raising its expenses. School children are cheated of buns and toffy to fill the mission-box with halfpence. Shameless begging goes on from door to door. False pictures are drawn of missionary heroism, and falser pictures of the moral darkness of the "heathen." It is perfectly certain that in many cases, whatever may be said of the "civilisation" of the heathen, and their scanty costume in hot climates, they are essentially more moral than the majority of the missionary's countrymen; more truthful, more honest, more sober, more tender to their children, and more respectful to their elders and parents.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

THE ODIN RELIGION.

I HAVE, I think, made a discovery. I have found an article by Thomas Carlyle, unmentioned by any of his biographers. Mr. Richard Hearne Shepherd, who compiles a careful bibliography of Carlyle, does not mention the article. This fact, I confess, gave me pause. Had I found a mare's nest? I read the article again, and leave the question to the discerning reader acquainted with Carlyle. The article in question has first place in the October number of the *Westminster Review*, 1854. It takes the shape of a review of Simrock's *Edda*, Uhland's *Myth of Thor*, Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*, etc., and is entitled "The Odin Religion." It sets out by saying:—

> "The English may be considered fortunate in their kindred. Across the Atlantic they have a remarkable family of cousins, of singular energy, and, perhaps, the most expanding, mobile, multiplying, 'go-ahead' human creatures that ever 'exploited' this terrestrial globe. Altogether modern, and with a History respectable, indeed, but of only two short chapters—Puritanism and Revolution—with no deep Past to allure the imagination or divide the attention, and with a Present as yet vague, undefined, and hardly more settled than the halt of the exploring traveller, whose night's rest is hurried and feverish with onward thoughts for to-morrow. Their keen faculties and energies are all set on 'progress'—working for times that are not, but will be—for a Future that is to 'beat all creation'—a Future, ambitious, vast as the imagination and appetites of man. Even Goethe, in a moment of despondency, almost envies America for its freedom from 'ruined castles,' useless remembrances, and vain disputes, which entangle old nations and trouble their hearts, when they ought to be strong for present action."

Then he turns to our other cousins, the Teutonic people, who "cultivate a loving piety for that rich and still fertile Past, from which the Americans have cut themselves loose altogether, and about which the English, with a distinct and proud history of their own, and busy withal with other things, without renouncing their share or interest in it, take less concern." A sketch is given of German history, afterwards much amplified in *Frederick the Great*, and then we are taken back to "their common belief, the Odin religion as we will call it." In a note he says: "It might be called *English* or *Saxon* with as much right as *Scandinavian*. It was the religion of the whole Teutonic race, and came—we know not whence."

Carlyle, as for the nonce I shall call the writer, recites the story from Bede of the old Saxon chief who compared the life of man to the bird flying in at one door and out at another—a passage afterwards used by Emerson in his essay on Immortality. "The sense of the Infinite was awake in that heart," he says—and this he thinks characteristic of Teutonic man; "but the supreme virtue of the free, vigorous, cheery Teutonic man was valor, action, positive, not negative, virtues; none but heroes entered Valhal; the nobodies went to the dull limbo of oblivion." This healthy strength, he declares, "is ever accompanied by a proportionate measure of tenderness and pity." And there is a third quality—"the feeling of *wonder*, the sense of the infinite, which lies at the base of all religion as well as of poetry."

> "The ancient Teutonic man, with his healthful, joyous strength and elasticity, roaming over sea and land in pursuit of manly adventure, knew no fear of death; neither was life mournful to him, or a mere burden to be endured for the sake of 'hereafter.' Life was for action, and the gods were propitious to the brave. Yet was his soul strangely affected by the ever-shifting, changing nature of things. The bright day is beautiful, and such a majestic luminary must certainly rule for ever; but a little while, and the gray twilight creeps on, enveloping the day as with a veil, and anon black mysterious night covers the earth. What has become of the day and its fiery ruler? And there is the glorious summer-season, clothing the hills with verdure, and inspiring all creatures with joy. Its heat has melted the icebergs, it is so strong; surely it must prevail? But the days grow shorter, and the leaves wither and fall, the hills turn gray and sad; black clouds come riding upon the back of the whirlwind, and lo! wild winter is uppermost again, and the kren Yötuns are busy destroying the fair handiwork of gods and men: where is Thor the Thunderer?—Life itself wastes and wanes; this arm, once so vigorous and all-powerful, has grown unsteady and helpless; Iduna, the beautiful maiden, bright as the blooming apple-tree, is old now, and shrunken, and her eyes are dim. Are we the same we were, or what are we?—These apprehensive feelings, inexpressible 'pre-sentiments' working as 'inner experiences' in the Teutonic soul from of old, had their important share in the building up of the Odin religion."

Then come descriptions of the tree Ygdrasil, the gods, and Yötuns, or giants, in which, incidentally, he compares the office of the original *Pontifex*, who, standing on the bridge which separated hostile armies, made peace between them, with "the present Pontiff with French bayonets keeping the peace for him upon his own bridge."

The account of the recovery of Thor's hammer is too long for quotation here. But every line shouts the name of its author, Thomas Carlyle, and makes me wonder if any Carlylean can have read the article without recognising the powerful voice. Fiery passion, prejudice, grim humor, and soft-melting humanity are mixed, as also in the oft-told story of the death of Balder the beautiful, encompassed by Loki, whom the reviewer declares is "not unlike Goethe's Mephistopheles, done in the rough." A characteristic touch is this. "The life of the gods, we said, is serene upon a ground of sadness." "The Greek gods have their combat behind them; it lasted but ten years, and got itself transacted once for all. Olympos has triumphed over Orthys, and the Jovites have ever after an easy, jolly life of it. Not so the Asen; no easy, idle life of mere graceful or graceless gallantries is theirs; chaos is ever threatening, and has to be kept out by unsleeping vigilance." Again he says:—

> "As a counterpart to the 'sons of God who saw the daughters of men that they were fair' we meet, in the later 'Heroic Sagas,' with cases of love adventures, and of union between the sons of men and those Valkyrie—daughters of the gods; unions not productive of serene happiness, but of happiness tinged with sorrow. The low chant of a sad, sweet melody makes itself heard amidst the clangour of steel and wild war-whoop of these heroic poems; death-valor and gentleness, devotion and revenge; the stout heart overcome by the force of irresistible attraction; immortal woman yearning for the love of mortal man, whose prowess is so divine; inexorable destiny over-ruling all."

The period of conflict between Odinism and Christianity extended over eight centuries, from the fourth to the eleventh. The writer of this article tells with gusto how "one Radbot, Frisian king, while already standing in the font to receive the sacrament of baptism, asked: 'Where are my ancestors?' 'In hell, of course,' answered the priest, impatiently. 'And yours?' 'In heaven,' was the reply. 'Then will I rather be with my brave forefathers than with you paltry Christians!' exclaimed the king, and leaped out of the font unbaptised." Motley, in his *Rise of the Dutch Republic* (Introd. v.), tells the same story; but instead of "paltry" has "little starveling band of Christians." The *Westminster Reviewer* also tells of the Frankish king, Chlodwig, who, when solicited by his Christian wife to confess Christ, answered with a sneer: "Your God is not even of divine descent; is a mere plebeian!" The

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reviewer evidently looks on the Odin religion as the more manly, and Christianity as the more womanly, faith.

> "And so the Odin religion went out, and the Bible came in. The ideals of the fathers became the horrors of the children. Venerable Bede, as we saw, called the old gods 'Devils'; and Scholasticus Adam etymologises Wuotan into *Wütherich*: 'Wodan, id est furor!' And thus, by unknown stages, the mighty Odin degenerated at last into a Wild-Huntsman of the *Odenwald*, an Opera-Guy of the *Freischütz*; while the once so graceful Freia bestrides a broomstick, and leads the chorus of witches on the Blocksberg! '*Das ist das Loos des Schönen hier auf Erden!*' it cannot remain beautiful for ever, it becomes litter and an encumbrance when the virtue is gone out of it. Happy if the 'virtue' gets clothed in new beauty!
>
> "Yet is there one prophecy of the Volu-seeress which is being singularly fulfilled: Thor's offspring shall survive, 'Modi and Magni shall swing *Mjollnir*, and fight it out to the end.' The Hammer shall prevail. Thor, the subduer of chaotic forces, the pioneer of industry, he alone of all the Asen is still honored amongst us in a practical way. And the new generations, having lost the faculty (to the inexpressible regret of friend Simrock and others) for treating nature 'mythically,' have entered upon the task of treating her scientifically; which to its own extent is also—as the gods said of Balder's invulnerableness—'a great advantage;' and will be more so some day, when men, driven painfully and inch by inch out of their temporal nestling-places in the Partial, will learn to find rest in the Whole."

If this is not by Thomas Carlyle, I should much like to know who thus imitated, not only his style, but his inmost thoughts, and found the first place in the *Westminster Review*. It will be noticed that this helps to fill up the long period of silence between the publication of the *Life of John Sterling* (1851) and that of *Frederick the Great* (1858). It may be observed that all the volumes reviewed are German, and, when in Germany procuring material for the *Frederick*, Carlyle would doubtless be attracted by all bearing on the Odin religion, which he had lectured on in 1839, and which he reverted to in his *Early Kings of Norway* (1875).

J. M. Wheeler.

THE SECULAR AND CHRISTIAN STANDARDS OF MORALITY.

It is frequently asked by our Christian opponents: What is the standard of Secular morality—that is, to what do we appeal in order to decide the ethical character of human actions? We purpose answering this question, and to state wherein we think the Secular standard is superior to the one furnished by Christianity. It may avoid misunderstanding if we state that, in our opinion, no standard is, or can be, perfect, for in a progressive state of society perfection is not allied with humanity. Our duty is to carefully study whatever ethical tests are presented to us, and then to select the one which we consider accords with reason and the best interests of the community. If, therefore, flaws are discovered in the Secular standard, it would not be wise to reject it simply on that account. The only justification for its rejection would be the production of a superior one. Christians allege that their standard is higher and of greater excellence than ours. Let us see if this allegation is supported by fact; and, in order that a fair comparison may be made, we will first state what the Secular standard is.

The science of morality refers to human conduct, and to its influence upon mankind in general. An act which ennobles the individual, and has a tendency to benefit others, we term moral; actions of an opposite character and influence we regard as being immoral. Secularists, rejecting all appeals to theology, find in reason, experience, and utility the means whereby they discover truth and its value to humanity. Reason is the faculty by which we distinguish truth from error; experience includes the widest and best verified inductions of mankind, and utility is the test by which we estimate the worth of conduct in its power for good in general. As to what is good or moral, that must be determined by the demands and requirements of the community, who have to decide as to what is necessary to secure and preserve harmony, comfort, justice, and progress. Such demands and requirements may, of course, vary with the growth of enlightenment and the increase of the refinement of human feelings; but the nature of the test remains through all changes. By verified inductions we mean what is learnt from the discoveries of natural law, and obedience to that law is compliance with the legitimate condition of existence. Experience teaches that obedience to the highest natural law leads to virtue and happiness, while non-compliance therewith involves more or less pain, misery, and often crime. To urge that this view is "godless" in no way affects Nature, for in her operations she heeds neither blame nor remonstrance, any more than she rewards the pious or punishes the impious, except in accordance with the law of cause and effect.

Thus it will be seen that, from a Secular standpoint, we recognise universal law, not chance or supernatural providence. Morality with us really means living up to those natural laws which reason and experience have proved to be good and useful. From this method we have learnt that it is only by united exertion, self-reliance, and mutual confidence that improvement is obtained. Ethical conduct originates in, and grows out of, the relations of the members of the human family to each other. It should never be forgotten that Secular morality teaches what Confucius taught—namely, that we should do unto others what we desire that they should do unto us. There is undoubtedly in the cultured mind an instinctive desire to promote human happiness, or, as Bacon writes (*On Goodness*), "the inclination is imprinted deeply in the nature of man."

As to utility, that is a term much misrepresented by some Christian exponents, who limit its signification in a most unjustifiable manner. We do not employ the word as meaning that

> The value of a thing
> Is the money it will bring.

It is the quality of a person's actions to which utility is applied, and, despite all that is said against it, we believe that the ultimate test of conduct will be generally acknowledged to be its usefulness or otherwise in conducing to the well-being of society. Practically, it is so now in various phases of life. In science, politics, in the world of literature, and in the social sphere, the value of actions is estimated by their power to render service to man. By intelligent and unbiased minds a man is revered, not for his belief in theological dogmas, but rather for the assistance he has rendered in improving the world, and raising humanity from the low and degrading condition into which it has fallen under the influence of priestly rule and theological supremacy.

We object altogether to the erroneous notion that utility excludes poetry and art, which are, beyond doubt, prolific sources of joy and gladness, and are necessary to make the happiness of life complete. Whatever tends to add to the sunshine of existence is useful, and those persons who contribute to the happiness of life experience a gratification that must have a beneficial effect upon their lives. Utility destroys no element or principle in our nature that has a tendency to increase our physical and mental pleasure; on the contrary, the service of utility is like the quality of mercy—"it is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes." In other words, the performance of good actions confers an advantage both upon the performer and also upon those who experience the benefit of those actions, for the intelligence and comfort of others are the best security for our own social peace. It will thus be seen that the improvement of others is not only good for them, but is the best self-defence against the possible injuries they might inflict upon us; and those who see their reward in the good effected are at the ideal standpoint, where the glory of humanity shines in its grandest splendor.

Probably no better definition of utility has been given than the one furnished by Bentham, who says: "By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question; or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or oppose that happiness. I say of every action whatever, and, therefore, not only every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government." If it be asked, Who is to be the judge of the good or evil tendencies of an act? we answer: Who under Christian rule is supposed to judge in the framing of Acts of Parliament, which at

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least are intended to be on the side of virtue? As all society is involved, why, of course, society is the proper judge. The opponents of Secularism, however, exclaim: "Unless a man could foresee all the circumstances of an act, how could he tell whether it would be a moral one or not?" That is to say, that unless a man is infallible, how can he have any guide at all in his conduct? Men judge as to whether an act will be beneficial or prejudicial in character from experience of what has been the result of similar acts on previous occasions, also from reflection upon the circumstances in which it occurs. True, this rule is not infallible; but it is as perfect as man can attain to. It is also said: "Certain acts may be moral in one age, and immoral in another." Certainly! This, however, is not an objection exclusively to Utilitarianism, since it would apply with equal force to every class of ethics that has ever been propounded, that of Christianity not excepted. According to the Bible, many acts were performed in ancient times which were supposed then to be moral or beneficial; but to perform such acts to-day would be deemed very immoral.

To sum up the Secular position: With us the word "morality" indicates that state of society where happiness, justice, and virtue obtain. As it is improbable that all mankind will experience such a condition of society as this, we deem it both wise and useful to adopt that course of conduct which is calculated to confer such advantages upon the "greatest number." Reason, aided by experience and strengthened by wisdom and intellectual discipline, is our standard, and the usefulness of our actions in promoting the general welfare is our authority. Thus Reason tells us what to do, Experience shows why it should be done, and Utility is the test that either justifies or condemns the wisdom of our actions. CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THREE BOGUS HEAVENLY WITNESSES.

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one."—1 JOHN v. 7.

WHEN Erasmus put out his first edition of the Greek New Testament, in 1516, he omitted the above verse, as wanting in all the Greek copies with which he was acquainted. He was called over the coals by the theologians, especially when his second edition (1519) also took no notice of the passage, and he rashly offered to insert the verse if any Greek manuscripts containing it were forthcoming. Of course he was obliged. Before his third edition was published a Greek MS. providentially turned up. Erasmus, a timid man, kept his word and inserted the text, though, if he looked at all into the matter, he must have suspected, and perhaps discovered, that the MS. was made to order; for, when critically examined, the manuscripts containing the text proved to be as bogus as the passage they were designed to support. The text has, however, been questioned ever since the time of Erasmus. Sir Isaac Newton riddled it pretty thoroughly, and Porson gave it the *coup de grâce*. Bishop Burgess, the Rev. F. Nolan, and some lesser fry have kept up the combat; but, since Porson's time, no competent scholar has come forward to defend it. One of the last of the orthodox fry is the Rev. H. T. Armfield, who puts on his title-page that he is "one of the contributors to *Smith's Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*." Mr. Armfield is a good old Christian antiquity himself. He pleads *in forma pauperis* and *ad misericordiam*. The compilers of the Revised Version had the sense to omit the interpolation, without any comment, or even information that "here the Authorised Version has a passage on the Blessed Trinity." They slurred it over by putting the figures 7 and 8 to verse 8, so that a casual reader would be none the wiser for their omission. Dean Farrar, too, rejects the passage cavalierly. These things annoy Mr. Armfield, who points out that there are some little difficulties on the other side.

He notices, for example, that the passage appears in the famous Polyglott Complutensian version of Cardinal Ximines. Dr. Davidson says (*Biblical Criticism*, ii. 421) that its editors "took the passage, not from Greek MSS., but from the modern copies of the Vulgate, pseudo-Jerome, and Thomas Aquinas." But Rev. Mr. Armfield says: "That is, in plain English, they made it up. The Vulgate, Jerome, and Aquinas are all Latin works, and to say that the Complutensian editors took the Greek from them is to say that they made it up." This is a very serious charge, says he. It is, indeed. But there are serious grounds for making it. What manuscript authorities Cardinal Ximines and his editors had has never been ascertained; but there is a probably bogus story of their having got into the hands of a firework maker, who sent them up to heaven. These editors are said to have used MSS. in the Alcala Library, but the MSS. have never been produced. Be it noted they gave the Latin text the place of honor, and compared it to Jesus crucified between two thieves—the Greek and the Hebrew. How could they have ventured this if they had known and credited the legend of a Greek original? No; they followed their predecessors in "making it up."

Porson, in his *Letters to Travis* (Letter xii.), says: "In short, if this verse be really genuine, notwithstanding its absence from all the visible Greek MSS. except two, one of which awkwardly translates the verse from the Latin, and the other transcribes it from a printed book; notwithstanding its absence from all the versions except the Vulgate, and even from many of the best and oldest MSS. of the Vulgate; notwithstanding the deep and dead silence of all the Greek writers down to the thirteenth century; if, in spite of all these objections, it be still genuine, no part of Scripture whatsoever can be proved either spurious or genuine."

How, where, and when did it get into Greek? Who put it into Greek? Clearly it was manufactured—*i.e.*, translated from the Latin. If this was done once, may it not have been done many times? Tischendorf held that the Latin version of Codex Beza, one of the earliest MSS. of the New Testament, was older than the Greek of the same codex; and Father Hardouin and the Rev. J. Black, the author of *Paleoromaica*, have even contended that throughout the Latin is the original—not, of course, that the Latin ascribed to Jerome is meant, but rather some Italic version, though it may be doubted if there is any codex that has not been doctored up and interpolated in accordance with the dominant views of the Church at the time of its production.

Among the authorities who give up as spurious the only verse in the Bible plainly teaching a Trinity may be mentioned Aldus, Bentley, Adam Clarke, Davidson, Farrar, Gibbon, Green, Griesbach, Grotius, Hort, Lardner, Leclerc, Luther, Marsh, Michaelis, Milton, Sir Isaac Newton, Porson, Priestley, Scrivener, Father Simon, Tischendorf, Westcott, Wetstein. To write the history of the controversy would fill a volume. If anyone supposes there was, therefore, much to say on both sides, he would be extremely mistaken. Against the verse have been all lay scholarship and whatever clerical honesty happened to exist. For it has been a cloud of interested witnesses fighting tooth and nail for a palpable forgery, because the exposure of this forgery also exposes the baseless character of all their pretences to be in the secrets of God and ministers of the Most High.

Of course the doctrine taught in the forgery is utter rot. If the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost bear record in heaven, they bear record in the very place where it is not wanted; and, if they are a trinity in the same sense as spirit, water, and blood on earth, then they are no more three in one than pepper, pork, and peas. But the bigger the nonsense, the better for the creed of those who say *credo quia absurdum*. Hume well remarks that the more mysterious and tremendous the divinity, and the more unaccountable the measures of acceptance required by him, the more necessary for men to abandon natural reason and submit to the guidance of the priests. This is the true explanation of the bogus three-in-one deity, salvation through lamb's blood, etc.

A more palpable forgery than this declaration of the Trinity was never foisted into any book. Such an interpolation could take place only when the masses were ignorant and all learning in the hands of an interested corporation. And does any innocent believe that this verse and the other passages omitted in the Revised Version, because the evidence is too strong against them, stand alone in being spurious? Let such an one, if such there be, remember that the men of God of all sects fought tooth and claw for the retention of the forgeries, and continue to ignore the Revised Version and to read to their congregations the Authorised Version, as though it were the

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inspired Word of God. Be sure that the duplicity which conceals and ignores the results of criticism as far as possible was prepared for the work of absolute deception in days when such deception could easily escape detection.

There have been some deliciously ingenious suggestions to account for the omission of the passage from all the Greek versions. Some lax scribe, it is supposed, noticed similar words further down, so skipped this important testimony to the blessed Trinity; and all the other copyists, being as little concerned for their three-headed deity, followed suit. Others have suggested that the wicked Arians got the manipulation of the manuscripts, and deliberately left out this confutation of their monotheism; and so it happened that in all their controversies the Greek fathers never mentioned this verse, though they mentioned those before and after it. When, to uphold the integrity of their fetish book, the sky-pilots resort to such shifts as these, they might as well inscribe Ichabod over the gates of the New Jerusalem.

LUCIANUS.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE Rev. Samuel Jones frequently illustrates his remarks with anecdotes more or less decent. Here is one that he gives on the authority of a commercial traveller On a visit home the drummer aforesaid found his little girl sitting on the floor playing with her kitten. While doing so she said: "Kittie, you are a sweet little thing; I love you, and I know who your mommer is. Old pussy is your mommer. But, kitty, I don't know who your popper is, for I never saw him. I expect your popper is a travelling man." Jones applies this story to Ingersoll, whose mother, he explains, is the earth, but whose father, he intimates, is that migratory individual who goes about seeking whom he may devour or seduce. But the application is not very close. I should suppose that even before he repeated the drummer's story for the first time the evangelist might have considered how appropriately the evolutionary ancestor of that anecdote could have been related of the Judean carpenter and joiner who held upon his knee the future lord and savior of the Reverend Samuel Jones.

The voice of the liar, who told the tale of paralysis superinduced by blasphemy at High Shoals, Ga., still echoes through the religious press. One James T. Lowe, doubtless a Methodist dominie, writes from Rehoboth to the Wesleyan organ at Atlanta that the tongue of Haguewood was paralysed while he was asleep, after denouncing the sermon of the day on his way home from church. Except that Haguewood's tongue was not paralysed while he was asleep, and that he had not denounced any sermon, Lowe's account may be true. The only really indisputable assertion of the religious and so-called secular press is that the paralysis, though Haguewood had been subject to it for years, was a "warning providence." I am candid enough to admit that nobody can disprove that any event is a "warning providence." Nevertheless, if there is an impartial God who attends to the Ananiases, why has not the perpetrator of this indecent assault on veracity been everlastingly belted with the club of his honest wrath?

They are holding an exposition at Atlanta just now for the display of the remarkable products of the adjacent back country, of which there should be no scarcity. Visitors from a distance would be interested in exhibits illustrating the latest methods of lynching; explaining improved systems of getting the drop on a political antagonist; exemplifying the proper way of conducting a camp-meeting or concealing a clandestine distillery; and showing at a glance how morality may be maintained and promoted by means of the rawhide and the revolver. The theology of the South, which, according to the New York *Independent*, is unsinged by the fire of the Higher Criticism, would also excite the curiosity, not only of all Northerners, but of the whole civilised world, including Japan, which is heathen. But the managers might secure all these attractions, and yet find their exposition incomplete as a local exhibit, unless somewhere—conspicuous among wonders, miracles, prodigies, marvels, monstrosities, spectacles, and astounding phenomena—the liar who started the Haguewood paralysis yarn was found in a group with the ministers, religious editors, and minor falsifiers of fact who have vouched for the fake in pulpit and press.

GEO. E. MACDONALD.

—*Truthseeker.*

"WE BESEECH THEE TO HEAR US, GOOD LORD."

[More missionaries are on their way to China, where they are not wanted.]

"Go forth to all the world and preach
Jahveh's great and holy word!
And all its errors proudly teach—
Even at the point of sword."

Oh Lord, preserve our holy Church,
Which is now crumbling fast.
Lord, leave us not now in the lurch—
Preserve, as in the past.

Lord, be thy servant's trusty friend;
Preserve us, Lord, from want;
So we may prosper in the end,
We care not how we cant.

For of the earth we are the "salts"—
The medicine of life.
Keep us, O Lord, with all our faults,
From ills that are now rife.

Preserve, O Lord, our sacred cause,
Confound all who rebel;
And in thine anger do not pause
To send them all to—sheol.

Lord help us in our holy work
To do just what we please—
Whether 'tis to save the warlike Turk,
Or slay the weak Chinese.

We're doing all things for thy good
(The work as sweet as honey),
But we must have it understood
What we want most is Money!

Let's strike the iron while it's hot,
And boldly wield the sword,
And sacrifice the hostile lot
On altars of the Lord.

FRITZ P.

Cui Bono?

Of what use are all the clergy in the world? For over a thousand years they have pretended to teach truth and morality, and all that time have been killing or otherwise punishing honest men who dared to expose their shams. And now look at Christendom! There the gospel of peace has been preached by the quacks and impostors who have fomented more wars and murders than all other men, until Europe is smothered under the hugest military despotism ever known in ancient or modern times! Every *Christian* nation is incessantly on guard against its Christian neighbors, watching for an opportunity to steal lands and murder the people, or else ceaselessly on the alert to repel invasion from some pious neighbour. The clergy are the principal supporters of all this; they consecrate and sanctify the military preparations, although they well know that the people are crushed and starved, and rendered perpetually miserable, by the awful incubus.

And why all the militarism? Just to support such things as the Emperor of Germany, the clergy, the bishops, the aristocracy, and other useless shams. The poor people in France or Germany have no reason in the world for quarreling, except so far as they are egged on to it, like game-cocks, by the clergy and every titled humbug in the two countries. And that truth applies all round. There are laws in several countries against cock-fighting, &c.; but in no country is there a law or a gospel to prevent poor men from fighting for the amusement and enrichment of their owners. Oh! no! It is by human cock-fighting that rulers and the clergy flourish, confound them!—*J. Symes, in "Liberator."*

Force is no impelling god, no entity separate from the material substratum; it is inseparable from matter, is one of its eternal indwelling properties. A force unconnected with matter hovering loose over matter is an empty conception.—*Moleschott.*

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ACID DROPS.

Dr. Bilsborrow, the Catholic Bishop of Salford, has been holding forth at Preston against the "lawlessness" of private judgment. Every man, he says, puts his own construction on the Bible, and the Church is thus "broken up into an incredible number of conflicting and clamoring sects." In his opinion, the non-Catholic people of this country are progressing "from the labyrinths of rationalism and agnosticism into the dread abyss of infidelity." How dreadful! We are all going to the devil unless we take tips from the priests. And the charge is—well, see the tariff. Dr. Bilsborrow reminds us of the ancient gentleman who went about crying that there was nothing like leather.

The Barnsley friends got Mr. Cohen to promise to give them a lecture under what they call our "excellent propagandist scheme." They applied for the use of the Miners' Institute for a lecture on "The Origin of Man." This application was considered by the Council of the Yorkshire Miners' Association. A Socialist supported it manfully, but it was bitterly opposed by Mr. Pickard, who had to withdraw some of his insulting observations, and by Mr. Cowey, who delivered a diatribe against Atheism, from the Methodist point of view, with special denunciation of "Bradlaugh, Foote, and Co." Mr. Cowey said he would rather see the Institute burnt to the ground than let an Atheist lecture in it. When the vote was taken there were 22 for the application and 138 against it. So much for the liberality and justice even of Trade Unionists and their leaders when they are inoculated with the virus of Christianity.

The American papers often show great enterprise, but they quite as often insert rubbish which would fail to find admission into any reputable English paper. An instance is offered by the Sunday *New York World*, which devotes eight columns to "The Gospel in Christ's Own Words." A worked-up description of the manuscript found by Mrs. Lewis at St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, three or four years ago, is given as if it were a fresh discovery, heralded with such exclamations as "Found at last," and such baseless assertions as that "Christ, *as we know*, was master of several languages; but it is certain that Syriac was the one he learned as an infant;" and that "*It is known*, for instance, *that autograph letters of Christ were at one time in existence*." We wonder the *New York World* allows itself to be gulled in this way.

Mr. W. T. Stead says that he has derived great advantage from the writings of James Russell Lowell. "In some of the critical moments of my life," he writes, "I found help such as I found in none other outside Carlyle's *Cromwell* and Holy Writ." Mr. Stead puts Carlyle before God Almighty.

The Rev. Seymour Ashwell, of Finmore Rectory, near Buckingham, forgot to lay not up for himself treasures on earth, where moth doth corrupt and thieves break through and steal. The result is that a burglar has eased him of watches, chains, rings, bracelets, brooches, etc., to the value of £100.

A little while ago a complaint was made to the Glasgow police that a man frequented a particular place at a certain hour, and indecently exposed himself to females passing. An inspector visited the place at the hour noted, and found a man there praying. The man was arrested, and identified by two witnesses as the culprit. He got thirty days' imprisonment. The fact that he was found praying was actually looked upon as evidence that he was a person likely to commit the indecent offence. Before the completion of the thirty days it was discovered that the wrong man had been arrested, the real culprit having again appeared. In the interests of justice, however, the discovery was suppressed, and the man who prayed completed his sentence. Moral.—When ye pray, don't stand at a corner like a lunatic or a street-preacher, but enter ye into your closet and pray in secret, and the Lord will give you the usual reward.

The practical worth of "Citizen Sunday" is very little, judging by the discourses reported in the newspapers. A nice specimen was that of the Rev. E. T. Hand, at St. John's, Walworth. He declared that "the horrid City of London, with all its wealth, poverty, and shame, was a dream, but the heavenly city was a reality." It is such nonsense as this that contrives to perpetuate the poverty, suffering, and shame of our big cities.

A movement, the original idea of which was, we believe, started by the late Laurence Oliphant, has been taken up by the Adventists to go to Palestine in a colony and there await the Lord's second coming. This, like the attempt to get the Jews back to Judea, is a religious work which has our warmest commendation. If we can do anything to hasten the day when the Adventists will emigrate from England, we shall be pleased.

Talmage is quite right. Those Atheists are always committing suicide. Colonel Nash, for instance, shot himself at Sandymount, near Dublin. In a letter left behind him he calls several times on God, and says, "I shall soon be in heaven." Evidently an Atheist, this!

Catholics and Protestants are still fighting at Sligo. Policemen keep them from sending each other to heaven. It is almost a pity the bobbies don't let them go. They would be better off, and so would other people.

Eusapia Palladino, the most renowned spirit medium in Europe, who deceived Lombroso, and converted Professor O. Lodge to occultism by pulling his hair in a dark room, has been bowled out at last. Her Continental celebrity and the reports of the Spookical Research Society got her invited to Cambridge. She imprudently accepted, though she declined an invitation from Mr. Maskelyne, the conjurer, who has a standing challenge to duplicate the work of the spirits.

Eusapia does her business in the dark, and makes one hand and one foot do duty for two. Dr. R. Hodgson, who was a chief agent in the exposure of Blavatsky's frauds in India, perceived the process in detail. She placed her feet, so that with the toe and heel of one foot she could make them believe each felt a distinct foot. The exposure appears in the November number of the Proceedings of the P.R.S. Professor Lodge and Mr. Myers agree that the Cambridge *séances* were fraudulent; but, of course, they cannot allow they were deceived when they trumpeted her supernormal powers on a former occasion.

Eusapia Palladino offers one more example of the ease with which an artful woman may dupe the most learned persons unused to their wicked ways. Florence Cook, in similar fashion, duped poor old Dr. Crookes. The editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science* was as putty in the hands of the fair mejum. Dr. Hodgson was able to cope with Eusapia, because he had a previous experience with that arch-impostor, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

Mr. Maskelyne, on this subject, makes the observation that he "has found from experience that no class of men can be so readily deceived by simple trickery as scientists. Try as they may, they cannot bring their minds down to the level of the subject, and are as much at fault as though it were immeasurably above them." Being on the look out for trickery, he speedily discovered it, and the wily Eusapia declined all tests proposed by Mr. Maskelyne.

Mexico, as a nation, is still in debt, and with undeveloped resources. Yet, at a recent religious festival in Mexico City, a gold crown was provided for the Virgin at a cost of $40,000. The dress of the statue, it is said, contains diamonds and precious stones estimated to exceed in value $3,000,000. They may be wanted some day to redeem the nation's credit.

The Pope declined to see Methodist Pastor Lunn in his official capacity as President of the Grindelwald Conference, but expressed his willingness to see him in his private capacity as picnic-organiser. On receiving this gentle snub, Methodist Pastor Lunn retired from the Holy City, whither he had been delegated by the Grindelwald picnicers.

Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who is by birth a Roman Catholic, has, despite the protests of his wife, and in violence of his marriage contract, allowed his infant son to be "converted" and rebaptised into the Greek Church, in order that he may be eligible as his successor on the throne. The religion of princes, and usually of priests too, is pretty much a matter of convenience and worldly advantage.

The *Church Times* is horrified that Westminster Abbey should be desecrated by a service in honor of Purcell, who was no saint or martyr, but only a musical composer. It is shocked that a concert, for which there will be half-guinea and five-shilling tickets, should be given in a sacred building, and says: "If this is not a traffic wholly unworthy of the Church, we do not know what is." But the Dean of Westminster can do as he pleases as to the purposes to which he employs the Abbey, as he inherits the rights of the old Benedictines. After admitting such heretics as Grote and Darwin within its sacred walls, a concert in honor of Purcell becomes trivial.

The *Daily News* Paris correspondent condemns the French Government because it insists that priests shall take their share of military duty like other men, and calls this "a piece of Freethought intolerance." He says nothing of the fact that the same rule is followed in pious Protestant Germany. Nor does he mention that in France the priests

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are State subsidised, and that, until the law in question was passed, thousands entered the priesthood simply to avoid the conscriptions.

A clerical writer in the *Church Times* has hit on a means for persons to establish popularity, and get a little cash in. It is to establish a goose club, offering better terms than the grocers. In the good old days the parsons only thought of fleecing the geese, but now they are thinking of providing geese for their parishioners.

The *Crescent* reports another outrage at the Liverpool Mosque. On Friday, the Moslem holy day, while the faithful were at prayers, some scoundrels stretched about ten yards of wire some eight inches above the topmost step, so as to trip over and precipitate down the steps the worshippers as they came out after dark. Fortunately the wire was discovered before anyone was injured, and the police are searching for evidence as to the perpetrators of the villainy.

Etchmiadzin, in Armenia, is the seat of the Catholicos or Patriarch of the Armenian Church, who is, however, understood to be really under the Czar as head of the Greek Church. When Captain Wilbraham was there the archbishop informed him that the cathedral "was built on the very spot where our Savior alighted upon earth when he descended from Heaven, in order to destroy the fire-worshippers." It contains a portion of Noah's ark, doubtless of equal authenticity.

We had not hitherto heard of this visit of Christ to Armenia. But we have received from E. Hampden Cook, M.A., the second edition of his work, *The Christ has Come*, the first edition of which we noticed some time ago. Mr. Cook gives a host of evidence from Jesus and his Apostles that he ought to have come in the first century, during the lifetime of his disciples. Mr. Cook thinks that he did so come, that we are now in the Millennium, and that there will be a third advent. Well, if Christ doesn't bring a better millennium than at his first or second advent, we cannot see much use in his coming again.

The Rev. Dr. Fulton rails in the *Evangelist* against the Chinese officials as "wretches, half civilised and wholly barbarian." It happens that, just before reading this, we had been perusing the published report of the negotiations for peace between Li-Hung-Chang and the Japanese Minister, Count Ito. Unlike negotiations between Christian nations, every word of their interviews has been published, and, moreover, translated into English. It reflects great credit on both sides. We doubt extremely if any living Christian statesman could have equalled the tact and urbanity, or have surpassed the patriotism, of Li-Hung-Chang, who, under most trying circumstances, and himself suffering from a severe wound, extracted the best terms possible from the Japanese conquerors. Suppose Buddhist missionaries were to sneer at our officials as half-civilised wretches; it would hardly help the spread of their faith.

To judge from the farewell sermon of the Rev. H. H. Henson, Barking must be in a very bad way, notwithstanding his seven years' ministrations there as vicar. In taking leave of the "degraded parish" and its "multitude of revolted souls," the reverend gentleman declared that the men of Barking had yielded to "the appeal of sensuality" until "the streets of that ancient Christian town had become as the highways of the City of the Plains." "The appeal of hatred," he continued, "the hatred of class against class, of rich against poor, of party against party, was loud and constant, and it prevailed.....No man trusted another; everywhere there was the reign of suspicion; and the backbiter and the falsehood-monger were supreme." Such is the Rev. Henson's opinion of his late parishioners. It would now be interesting to learn the parishioners' opinion of their late vicar.—*Truth*.

Ex-Rev. James Frank Gannaway, a retired Melbourne Congregational pastor, has received a sentence of seven years' imprisonment. Each year represents a child which he begot from his own daughter. The scoundrel attempted to shield himself by blaming his wife and daughter. He said in court that he was in God's hands. God had judged him, and he accepted His judgment. "May God help the jury to come to a righteous judgment." The God fake did not work, for, although the man of God denied the paternity of the children, the jury found him guilty after a few minutes' consideration.

When a handsome man visits the north-eastern portion of Tartary the inhabitants kill him because he is good-looking. They don't want his clothes or his money; they simply want his soul to remain among them. Christians need not laugh at this state of mind, for it was remarked at the last meeting of the British Association, in a discussion on Cannibalism, that the motives which induce a cannibal to eat the flesh and drink the blood of his enemy, in order that his spirit may be imbibed, underlie the ceremony of eating the god in the holy eucharist.

The *Standard* (Oct. 25) has the following choice anecdote of the aristocracy: "Lady Oxford was a pious woman, who, after a lifetime spent in a very worldly way, assured the Duchess of Buckingham, who was chattering about what 'her Lord' was doing in politics, 'that she knew no Lord but the Lord Jehovah.' 'Oh, dear!' was the innocent reply of the Duchess, a foreigner, 'who is that? I suppose it must be one of the new titles, for I never heard of him before.'"

It is asserted that fifty lives have been lost and several hundreds of persons injured by the recent storm in Italy. Such events both explain the origin of superstition and expose the folly of belief.

The Rev. J. Cromarty Smith has been railing against the "Kid-glove Christians" of the West-end of Glasgow. He says their churches are nothing but comfortable lounges. Look at the 200,000 non-churchgoers of once godly Glasgow. In the face of such a fact, could it be said that the members of the Church were doing their duty among the heathen? What would the Rev. J. Cromarty Smith say if he came South?

At Belfast the Rev. John James Brown, until recently rector of Portglenone, Antrim, has been remanded on a charge of threatening to murder Mr. Thomas Maguire, a Belfast solicitor, with whom he had had a dispute. A loaded revolver was found on the rev. gentleman.

The *Daily News* says: "Count Lippe, a canon of the Vienna Cathedral, has been entrusted with a delicate mission to Italy. He takes for the Virgin of Loretto a beautiful brocaded robe, which was offered by the Archduchess Maria Theresa, and to the Pope an embroidered purse containing one hundred thousand golden ducats, the gift of the Austrian nobility. It may be noted, says our Vienna correspondent, that whenever money is wanted for charitable purposes, for hospitals, or for the distressed poor in the winter, or after some shocking catastrophe, the names of Austrian noblemen and their wives are always missing from lists of subscriptions." Humanity is often in the inverse proportion to religion.

The Rev. W. Charles Lorsmore, of the New-road Congregational Church, has been eulogising the Bible, which, he says, is the text-book of democracy. He says: "The American Republic was built upon the Bible." What nonsense! The real founders of the Republic—Paine and Jefferson—had no belief in the supernatural claims of that volume. If they had followed the injunction, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; the powers that be are ordained of God," there would have been no American Republic. It would be more correct to say the Bible is the charter of despotism. The men of God preach the claims of their fetish book because it helps to maintain reverence for them.

It is a fact deserving special notice that Hindus, though more numerous than others, commit less crime than other people, who vaunt that their religion is the only true religion, and that Hindus are heathens and robbers! The English Government should love those who thus show obedience in deeds. No doubt the jail officers may be displeased with Hindus, because they do not swell their departments.—*The Harbinger, Lahore, India*.

M. Raggonneau, a French scientist, it is said, has exposed the celebrated mango trick of Indian fakirs, who, he noticed, always embedded the seed in a particular soil. M. Raggonneau found out at last that this soil was obtained from ant-hills. As ants contain much formic acid, with which, of course, the soil of their habitations becomes charged, the soil itself, like the acid, has the power of quickly dissolving the integument about a seed, and of stimulating marvellously the growth of the germ within. Though the clever Frenchman was finally able to duplicate the mango trick, the most interesting thing about it all is that this discovery may be profitably applied to agriculture. M. Raggonneau has obtained an acid as strong as vinegar by infusing ants in boiling water, and with this acid has achieved a remarkable vegetable growth.

By an old German law women, who, in the time of Tacitus, took part in tribal councils, are prohibited from joining in any political society, and several members of women's rights associations have been arrested and fined for belonging to an unlawful society. The despotism and militarism of Germany are driving its most advanced spirits to other lands.

The Rev. John Batchelor, in *The Ainu of Japan*, says the Ainu are very religious, and tells how one, whom he took as

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gardener, when he asked him to improve the ground by digging in some manure, seriously replied: "What! will you, a clergyman and preacher of religion, so dishonor and insult the gods? Will not the gods give due increase without your attempting to force their hand or endeavoring to drive Nature?" The Ainu are logical believers in the supernatural; but the half-secularised Christians are so unreasonable as to tell people they must do everything for themselves, and then give all the thanks, praise, and glory to God, "that indolent Grand Turk" who, as Carlyle says, "does nothing."

At Montreal, Alderman McBride is proposing to abolish all tax exemptions except on hospitals. A great many French-Canadians are said to be favorable to the proposal, which would add about half a million dollars to the revenue of the city; but it is hardly likely that it will be carried. The clerical anaconda is not likely to loosen his hold upon poor Quebec.—*Secular Thought.*

The *Guardian*, in an article on "Mr. Riley and the School Board," advises the Church party "to wait until one of these protesting teachers was discovered to be giving religious instruction contrary to the spirit and terms of the Circular, and then put him on his trial." A London School Board teacher put on his trial for heresy would be a fine object lesson in the methods of the clerical party.

The Royal Seamen's and Marines' Orphan School very properly appeals for support to all sections of the community. The orphans, however, are trained in "the principles of the Church of England." Commander Wilcox has justly called attention to this, and, at the annual meeting of the subscribers, remarked that the statement made twelve months ago, that the money to found the institution had been left by two Nonconformists and one of no religion at all, remained uncontradicted, and until this vexed question of sectarianism was cleared up the institution would never, he contended, be properly supported.

The Canadians boast of being a free people, but they give their Postmaster-General the right to exclude any matter from the mails which he pleases. He need not specify any reason, and there is no appeal from his decision. Such power would spoil any average man, and we do not wonder that Postmaster Caron refuses even to specify what he considers objectionable in the pages of the *Truthseeker*, which he excludes from entry to the dominion. Canada is known as the Mecca of defaulting pious U.S. cashiers; but U.S. Freethought is, it appears, to be rigidly excluded.

The various churches in Cumberland, Md., recently devoted an afternoon and evening in praying the Lord for rain. In the light of present knowledge it does seem ridiculous to see men of brains asking for a reversal of the laws of nature to gratify their needs. The whole machinery of the universe is governed by fixed and changeless law. The rains are obedient to that law, and cannot be increased or diminished by any art of puny man. It was easy to write that the sun was arrested in its course by Joshua's prayer; but he is a very ignorant man who will believe the statement.—*Progressive Thinker.*

A peculiar incident of the drought is reported from Emmaville, New South Wales, where there are large numbers of Chinese fossickers, who were much retarded in their work by want of rain. They prayed to their joss for some time, and then, losing patience, chopped him up, burnt him, and installed a new joss. Almost immediately afterwards rain fell. The latest joss, accordingly, has been accorded a grand feast.

Salvationists also earned notoriety at Balmain by expressing their belief that Providence had answered their prayers for rain. Both men and women divested themselves of their boots and stockings, while the men, in addition, put off their hats and coats. They waded and splashed through the waterways and channels in the streets, exclaiming vociferously, "God has answered our prayers."

The *Tablet* (October 26) mentions a report that Princess Maud of Wales is to be betrothed to the Prince of Naples, but denies that Cardinal Vaughan has acted as intermediary, securing the consent of the Holy See on condition that any sons born of the marriage shall be brought up as Catholics. It says that Leo XIII. would be no party to an arrangement by which the faith of one sex would be secured by the sacrifice of those of the other. Really now! The *Tablet* well knows that such marriages are continually winked at by the Church. Moreover, it knows that Leo XIII. gave a special dispensation to the Duke d'Aosta to marry his own niece.

The clerical members of the London School Board can hardly claim to be civilised gentlemen. They carried, by a majority of 16 over 14 an amendment to the recommendation of the Home Secretary, that girls at industrial schools should not receive corporal punishment. It was proposed instead, by Mr. Athelstan Riley, that a deputation in favor of flogging the girls should wait on the Home Secretary, and this was carried despite the protests of Mrs. Maitland and Miss Davenport Hill. Mr. Cecil, who supported the amendment, quoted the rhyme:—

> Solomon said, in accents mild,
> "Spare the rod and spoil the child.
> Whether a boy, or whether a maid,
> Whack and wallop her," Solomon said.

He forgot to mention that Solomon's own children turned out badly.

The Bible belief in possession by devils still remains among lunatics. Dr. Forbes Winslow thus reports from his notes the case of a woman afflicted with this delusion: "Acute mania, says she is a witch and that the Devil is inside her, and that she has been sent by the Devil to earth, and that she is doomed to go to hell, and that the gates of heaven are closed to her. Raving constantly, and very wild in manner."

First Insane Asylum.

The preachers are boastful in their claim that the finest hospitals were Christian devices for relief of the unfortunate; but it is not true, save as regards insane asylums. We concede they were the originators of that kind of hospitals and that as early as the sixth century at Jerusalem. Gibbon, in his 37th chapter, says one was founded in that city for the reception of penitent monks, who lost their senses by their devotion to God. The principal use of this class of hospitals from that time to this has been to furnish retreats for those maddened by an excess of what is popularly called religion.

On page 587, 18th volume of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, second column, it is stated that Asoka, an Indian prince, became a Buddhist about B.C. 263. "He then founded hospitals for men and beasts throughout his realm, planted places where nothing had grown before, and provided wells and grew trees along the roads for the refreshment of man and beast. Further, he caused his example in these things to be followed by his neighbors, whether southern or western."

Is there one Christian preacher in the wide world who will have the manliness to credit the following of Buddha with the invention of hospitals? And dare any of them tell the truth, that the followers of Jesus were the first who constructed insane asylums for the care of their own lunatics?—*Progressive Thinker.*

Christianity and Witchcraft.

The imported scepticism of such writers as Horace, the growth of the town, and, with it, the promise of a higher civilisation, were influences operating during the Roman occupation of Britain, which had, perhaps, some tendency to eradicate these superstitions. But we know from many passages in the Theodosian Code that in civilised Rome herself, after Rome had become Christian, it was thought right to torture and burn wizards and magicians.—*L. O. Pike, "A History of Crime in England," i. 34.*

Obituary.

We regret to record the decease of Mr. William Robinson, of Darlington Lodge, Warrington, in his seventy-sixth year. He died, as he had lived, a staunch Freethinker. Every week he gave away six copies of this journal, and cuttings from Freethought journals were often displayed in his window. He was humane and generous; not only the Freethought cause, but various charitable enterprises, being indebted to his munificence. The local *Examiner*, in recording his death, mentions that he was "well known as a militant Atheist." He was buried in Hartley Churchyard. The minister refused to have the coffin brought into the church, but said a few words at the graveside.

The painful duty has devolved upon me of recording the death of Franz Roos, who died on October 18, at Sunniside, Tow Law, Durham, at the age of seventy-five years. He was a member of the N.S.S. and a fearless friend of the Freethought cause, always attending the lectures of its advocates in the North. His remains were interred at Stanley Churchyard on Sunday, and, in accordance with his wish, without religious ceremony of any kind. He died with confidence in the principles which had guided him during the greater part of his life, and the large number of friends who followed the remains testified to the esteem in which he was held.—J. Robinson.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 3, Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.: 7, "Why I am an Atheist."

November 10, Birmingham; 17, Leicester.

December 1, Bradford; 22, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—November 3 (morning), Newington Reform Club; (evening), Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell; 10, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 17, Liverpool; 24, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

C. S.—Glad to have your high appreciation of our Freethought work. On the other matter you are misinformed. Mr. Foote has not supported, but opposed, State Socialism. He has a great mistrust of wholesale theories, and holds that every social proposal should be considered on its merits, with a view to general utility. At the same time, he has every respect for the generous ardor of many Socialists, however he may, in some respects, think them mistaken. It is agitation that keeps the world from stagnating. Anything is better than hoggish indolence and blind acquiescence.

J. P. Gilmour.—Many thanks for your interesting letter. Glad to hear that Mr. Watts's visit to Paisley, under the new scheme, was such a success. We pass over the rumpus, as Mr. Watts is going to write a full account of his tour for our next issue. We have handed him your letter, which will no doubt be of assistance to him.

G. Clancy, 50 Back Wood-terrace, Primrose-hill, Huddersfield, is the new secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch, in place of W. H. Spivey resigned.

W. H. Spivey.—We hope Mr. Cohen's visit will stir you all up, and that other lectures will soon follow.

J. Hayes.—*Which* case is it, our reference to which is *misleading*? There are several on the cutting you enclose.

Mr. Forder has received a letter containing 2s. for pamphlets and 1s. for Shilling Week from Hamilton, but no name or address is given.

W. Dyson.—Mr. Foote will certainly pay Barnsley a visit if you can get a decent meeting-place. See "Acid Drops." The leaflet might be printed for two or three pounds, according to the number and quality of paper; say, twenty thousand. We are so indignant at the conduct of Messrs. Pickard and Cowey, that we will write the leaflet for you, if you will only send us the fullest particulars you can gather.

T. Clark.—It is all fudge. The *Freethinker* has always been supplied to the trade on sale or return. Newsagents should insist on the wholesale agent's supplying them in the same way. But bigotry is always interfering with our circulation. Thanks to you all the same.

G. Harding.—Thanks. Mr. Foote will write.

L. Levine.—Many thanks.

F. J. Boorman.—Your lecture notice was too late last week. You did not post it till Tuesday night, as the Chatham post-mark was "Oct. 23."

W. G. Unkles.—See "Acid Drops."

J. Robinson.—Compelled to shorten.

A. J. H.—Thanks.

T. Sykes.—See obituary. Coins must not be enclosed in letters. The Post Office charges double registration on delivery. We had to pay eightpence for your shilling, so can only credit you with fourpence.

E. Smedley.—(1) Both the disputants are trusting to fabulous records. This alone is certain—Christianity was introduced in England, and by the Catholic Church, for at that time there were no Protestants. (2) Pleased to hear you were "delighted" with our article on the Black Army. We agree with you that lectures lose half their value unless they lead to the perusal of Freethought literature.

W. D. Rolley.—£230 a year.

W. Simons asks us to request the local Freethinkers to meet to-day (Nov. 3) at 36, Newington Green-road, at 12, to initiate preparations for next season's open-air work.

J. Ratson.—Such letters in the local press are most useful.

H. Sharples.—Apply to Mr. Forder, 28, Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., for the papers you mention.

D. F. Gloak.—Pleased to have your opinion that Mr. Watts's lectures at Dundee and Cupar prove our lecture scheme to be "a splendid idea." See our answer to Mr. Gilmour.

B. Lee.—The *Freethinker* would have double its present circulation if it were not for the active opposition of bigots.

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks for cuttings.

A. Cox.—Pleased to receive your encouraging letter.

W. Palmer.—The other sum is probably waiting to go in with the general list. But we will inquire.

A. W. Stavers.—Cuttings that may serve as material for a paragraph are always welcome.

C. Cohen.—We only received your letter on Tuesday, after returning from Devonshire. Send us your fresh address.

J. White.—We also wish your 5s. were £500. What is wanted is money. If a millionaire would find a few thousands a year, we would undertake to double, treble, quadruple the forces of Freethought.

W. W. Box.—Thanks for cutting.

Papers Received.—New York Sun—New York World—Morning—Dublin Evening Herald—Christian Herald—Echo—Isle of Man Times—Melbourne Standard—New York Public Opinion—Introduction—Calcutta Sunday Times—Liberator—Melbourne Age—Secular Thought—Torch—Leek Times—Lucifer—Sunday Companion—New York Times—Truthseeker—Kent Herald—Progressive Thinker—Friedenker—Der Arme Teufel—Twentieth Century—Two Worlds.

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

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SHILLING MONTH.

As subscriptions still dribble in, and the month is not quite ended as we go to press, I will reserve till next week what I intend to say with respect to the number of persons who have subscribed, the amount of their donations, and what I may be enabled to do therewith between this and the new year.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

Macclesfield, 2s. 6d.: Steve Edmunds, 2s.; Whitby; Peal; Smith, 6d.; A. J. W.; Bristol Freethinker; F. J. Boorman; C. S., 2s. 6d.; A. J. W., 2s.; Two Plucked Brands, 2s.; M. A., 2s.; T. Sykes, 4d.; W. Crosland, £2; Servant Girl (second subscription); B. Lee, 1s. 6d.; R. Shaw, 2s. 6d.; W. Muir, 2s. 6d.; J. Walker, 2s. 6d.; E. Thorley; A. Cox, 5s.; R. Brookes, 5s.; C. Dryden; W. V., 2s.; E. Truelove, 2s. 6d.; W. Palmer; R. B. Harrison, 1s. 6d.; A. W. Stavers, 2s.; R. W. Stavers; A. Clacher, 5s.; J. Ritson, 2s. 6d.; H. Sharples; Two Jersey Agnostics, 2s. 6d.; J. S., 2s. 6d.; J. Goodanew; G. F. P.; N. P.; F. Pascoe, 3s.; H. Nicholson, 2s. 6d.; T. Elwen, 2s. 6d.; G. Biggs, 3s.; T. Waters, 2s.; J. White, 5s.; R. Crowther; T. Crossley; J. Clegg; Two Friends, 2s.; F. Thornett, 5s.; A. Anderson, 2s. 6d.; W. Scott, 5s.

Per C. Watts.—Paisley Friends, 9s. 6d.; Mr. Maclean, 5s.

Per Miss Vance.—F. Mason; Mrs. Hodgson, 2s.; W. Early; T. Campbell, 2s.; J. Orr; Mr. and Mrs. John Samson, 2s.; Mrs. Penny, 3s.

Per R. Forder.—Mr. Syrett, 5s.; B. L. Coleman, 10s.; Alpha; Tom Beach, 2s. 6d.; W. Snelling, 5s.; W. B. (Darlington), 2s. 6d.; G. P.; J. and Mrs. S., 2s.; T. Coram; F. Softley; A. C. Brown.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote delivered three lectures on Sunday in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth. There were good audiences, though not up to Mr. Foote's general level. This was probably owing to the shortness of the public announcement and the sudden cold weather. Some discussion followed the morning and afternoon lectures, but none in the evening. In a chat with the Committee at the end of the day's work, Mr. Foote promised to arrange, if possible, for a week's Freethought mission in the district by Mr. Watts or Mr. Cohen, or perhaps by each of them. It is also on the cards that a debate may take place at Plymouth during the winter.

This evening (November 3) Mr. Foote delivers the inaugural lecture at the Balls Pond Secular Hall, his subject being "Why I am an Atheist." The Finsbury Park,

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Balls Pond, and Islington Branches are co-operating for the purpose of keeping this hall open for Freethought propaganda, and it is at their request that the President gives the first public lecture there.

The Bradlaugh Club and Institute, as the Balls Pond Hall is now called, is 36 Newington Green-road, three minutes' walk from Mildmay Park Station (N. L. R.); omnibuses from Victoria to Stoke Newington pass the door; trams from Aldersgate-street within a minute's walk; trams from Moorgate to Manor House, *viâ* Green Lanes, within five minutes' walk.

Mr. Touzeau Parris lectured at the Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening to a very good audience, considering the unfavorable weather. He delivered a fine discourse, and was most warmly applauded. Mr. Watts (who is at the Newington Reform Club, S.E., in the morning) occupies the platform this evening, and will of course meet with a hearty welcome. The lecturer for the following Sunday evening is Mr. Cohen. We hope the London friends will give him the encouragement of a good meeting.

Mr. Watts is back in London after a fortnight in the North, where, in addition to other meetings, he has addressed some very successful ones under Mr. Foote's lecturing scheme. His final meeting was at York; nearly four hundred people attended, and contributed an excellent collection, which covered the considerable local expenses. Some of Mr. Watts's experiences, especially at Glasgow and Paisley, were rather exciting; but we will not go into details, as he intends to write at some length on his tour in our next issue.

Mr. Charles Watts had capital audiences at Edinburgh last Sunday. In the evening the hall was crowded, all standing-room being occupied. The audiences were most enthusiastic, and it was pleasing to see so many ladies present. An interesting debate took place after the evening lecture.

The Wood Green Branch has decided to continue its lectures in the Masonic Hall during the winter. They have been excellently reported in the local *Pioneer*. This Sunday evening Mr. Mawer, F.G.S., deals with the subject of "Evolution *v.* Creation," and it is hoped the attendance will be as good as heretofore.

The *Sunday Times*, of Calcutta, is decidedly Freethought in its character, and its issue for September 29 has a good article satirising the Bible account of creation, which it compares very unfavorably with that related by the Brahmins.

A life of Professor Huxley is being compiled by his son, Leonard Huxley. He requests any person with letters from Huxley to communicate with him at Charleston, Godalming.

A centenary in celebration of the birthday of Thomas Carlyle is to be held at his old residence, Cheyne-walk, Chelsea, which is being converted into a Carlyle Museum.

In *John Stuart Blackie: A Biography*, by Anna M. Stoddart, appears the following bit on Bradlaugh, done in Blackie's Carlylese:—"He made a notable exhibition. A terrible tearing assault against the book of Exodus and its anthropomorphic representations of the unseen God; eloquence powerful and fervid of the first order. Really a remarkable man, and, from his point of view, triumphant over those who hold by the infallibility of the record instead of the divinity of the dispensation. He made, incidentally, a profession of Atheism, which induced me to write him a long letter."

Mr. Foote's new pamphlet, *Bible and Beer*, is the subject of a leading article in the *Weekly Times and Echo*. "People of all opinions," our contemporary says, "may read it with profit," its author being "one of the few men amongst us who has proved the sincerity of his opinions by suffering for them." With regard to the main contention of the pamphlet, our contemporary expresses its agreement in the plainest language: "Mr. Foote is quite right in his contention that, at the first, the parsons of all denominations were among the bitterest opponents of the Temperance movement. When the Temperance men became stronger, the parsons began to patronise them, just as now-a-days they kindly patronise Socialists. There is not a word in the sermons or writings of any of the great Church or Nonconformist divines in favor of teetotalism—in fact, many of them recognised, as plainly as Mr. Foote does, that, with the exception of the special prohibitions in Leviticus x. 8, 9 and Numbers vi. 2-4, relating to the Aaronic priesthood and the Nazarites, and the caution in Proverbs xx. 1, the Biblical writers all praise and desire the moderate use of wines and strong drinks. Mr. Foote, of course, instances this as damaging to the Bible and to the Churches; but we are not sure that he does not give himself away now and again. It is, in our opinion, just possible that the Biblical writers and the earlier clergy knew a little more about human nature than the more rabid teetotalers; and that some of the more scrupulous successors of the former would have been better employed in combating the evils that lead to drunkenness than in capturing the Temperance organisations for their own purposes. Anyhow, we are in complete agreement with Mr. Foote when he says that it is to wise education began in childhood that we must mainly trust for the general amelioration of society in this and other matters. We quite believe that the picture of a drunkard's liver on the walls of a Board-school will produce a more permanent impression on children's minds than all the texts in the Bible, which have to be so 'explained' before they can be safely used."

The November number of the *Literary Guide* contains a very interesting "Literary Chat" with Miss Mathilde Blind, written by Mr. F. J. Gould. We are glad to note that Mr. Gould's leaflet on the need and value of ethical teaching in Board Schools, instead of Biblical instruction, is being extensively circulated.

From E. Salva, 7 Rue Saint-Nicaise, Rouen, who is a leading *conférencier* of that part of France, we receive a little packet of *brochures*. No. 1, a discourse on the soul, *De l'Ame*, has reached a third edition. The lecture concludes: "*Nous n'avons nul besoin de nous croire immortels pour nous bien conduire; guidés par notre conscience, nous agissons en hommes libres, sans désir de récompense, sans crainte de châtiment.*" *State and Church* (*L'Etat et l'Eglise*) contends that the 300,000 clergy who are subsidised by the State are really the worst foes of the Republic. He compares the Church to the octopus or devil-fish, described by Victor Hugo in his *Travailleur de la mer*. It is vain to cut off a single tentacle; to escape its deadly clutches decapitation is necessary.

La Libre-Pensée et les Réligions, also by M. Salva, is a severe indictment of the Christian Church for its opposition to liberty, science, and progress. *La Femme: ce qu'elle fut, ce qu'elle est, ce qu'elle devrait être*, is a strong appeal for woman's emancipation from superstition, that she may take her place as the companion of man, the manageress of the home, and the instructress of children. All M. Salva's lectures are animated, elevated, and full of a warm sentiment of the solidarity of humanity.

The *Echo* is a paper that really does carry out its motto to "hear all sides," and very frequently Freethought views get ventilated in its columns. Its issue for October 26 has a capital letter on Christian temporising with truth, from the pen of Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, who, our readers know, can put his ideas pointedly, whether in prose or verse.

The *English Mechanic*, now in its sixty-second volume, is always well edited, and competent readers largely contribute to the interest and variety of its pages. "A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society," by his acute criticisms, keeps the other contributors "up to date."

In Dr. Briggs's new volume on *The Messiah of the Apostles* he makes the following admission: "The author has done his best to turn away from the Christ of the theologians and of the creeds and of the Church, and see the Messiah as he is set forth in the writings of the Apostles. He has made every effort to see the Messiah as he appeared to each writer in each separate writing. *The diversity is great. It is not always possible to combine the diverse representations in a higher unity.* It would have been easy to construct what some call a logical system. But *it would not have been possible* to constrain all the material into such a system of deductive logic."

The *Leek Times* reproduces our last paragraphs on the Rev. W. W. Howard's "challenge" letters, and adds, with respect to Mr. Foote's offer: "If the above proposition, which we deem both fair and reasonable, does not lead to business, we shall decline sacrificing any more space on the subject." So shall we.

South London readers will remember the dramatic performance at the Camberwell Secular Hall on November 13, in aid of the new lecture scheme. Mr. Watts and Mr. Moss will take part, and Mr. Foote will give a reading.

THE WORLD'S NEED.

So many gods, so many creeds—
So many paths that wind and wind,
While just the art of being kind
Is all the sad world needs.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (September 28).

AGAIN upon the lovely ocean, and homeward bound. Again the shores sink from view, and again the mighty ship, plunging through the glistening billows, is for the time being the bounded world of humanity.

The past summer appears a dream floating before the mind's eye like a wondrous panorama. In the sunshine, beneath the boundless heavens, we muse and meditate, while with soft, continuous thunder through blue depths the huge vessel speeds with flying banners. It is beautiful, serene, rejoicing, all the shining expanse, while fresh winds give vigor and elasticity to the frame; while, as the sea itself, the mind sparkles with a thousand thoughts. Like a mirror, it reflects the gorgeous scene. This is pure happiness, a diamond-like existence, without burden, without care. An ocean voyage is poetry, music, romance. We are borne along whether we will or no, and abandon ourselves with inexpressible delight to the changing glory of wave and sky.

Farewell to England, to its ancient grandeur, its accumulated wealth of centuries, its blossom in to-day's life of a thousand years of toil. The "golden eloquence" of Shakespeare was never so deeply felt. The more we appreciate England, the better we understand all the world.

> This sceptred isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
> This fortress built by nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea.

The last two weeks seemed to go like a flash. I can give only a glimpse of these crowded days. It was as if the hand of time was turning a kaleidoscope, and each moment presented a new picture.

I spent an evening with Edward Truelove, the oldest Freethinker in the world, I guess. He is in his eighty-fifth year. He is like a mountain, over whose face have passed the storms of conflict, but is now shining in rugged serenity. He has always shown great courage in the publication of radical books, and has suffered imprisonment therefor. He gave me many reminiscences of his extraordinary experiences, and I realised more than ever the savage nature of that Christian theology which still sways in the laws of England. The tortures of imprisonment are but little understood. It is a living death. Man is treated like a machine. Every right is violated. It is bad enough when criminals are thus treated; but what shall we say when those who are devoted to the improvement of mankind are compelled to endure this terrific ordeal? We cannot too highly honor those who, like Holyoake, Truelove, Bennett, and Foote, have conquered through these depths of solitary suffering. They have given to our time a noble realm, but at an awful cost, which we are sometimes apt to forget in the enjoyments of these happy days.

Mr. and Mrs. Truelove celebrated their golden wedding about five years ago. At their home at Hornsey they still give welcome to Freethought friends. In Mr. Truelove's library, gathered through many years from his book store, are rare Freethought publications, not to be found even in the British Museum. He has portraits of Godwin, Hetherington, Watson, etc. He has the table upon which Thomas Paine wrote the *Rights of Man*, which bears an inscription recording the fact, placed there by Clio Rickman, who owned the table when Mr. Truelove first saw it in his early manhood at Rickman's house. In after years, by strange coincidences, it came into Mr. Truelove's possession. Mr. Truelove also showed me a picture of Paine's iron bridge, the first iron bridge built on this planet, and which still arches the river at Sunderland. Many phases of the world's history flashed before me in my brief visit with this remarkable veteran, whose life has spanned so much of the nineteenth century.

Liverpool is my next lecturing field, August 25, and here I again receive a hearty Lancashire welcome. The hall is full in the evening, and, though the challenge for debate is given, no Christian opponents appear. They seem to be discouraged, or perhaps they will resort to guerilla warfare and attack the lecturer when he is far across the Atlantic. Liverpool has a varied and interesting Freethought element, which branches out in manifold directions—literature, science, politics, and philosophy. Mr. Ernest Newman has fine promise in the field of art and criticism, for he has the faculty of appreciation and the talent of expression. Mr. Laurence Small, Mr. Wollett, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Towers, Secretary Doeg, the Balfour brothers, etc., are generously equipped for the service. Liverpool is not an easy field. It demands work and expenditure. There are so many forces in play here that Freethought must watch and win its chance. All sorts of "isms" are on the move. Liverpool is more like Chicago than any other city I know of. It is comparatively modern, and there is no ancient flavor about it. It is a city of to-day. It has something of the rush and roar of Western life, and lacks the oriental ease of time-honored institutions. It has not even an old cathedral, but must build a new one. Liverpool, therefore, like Chicago, is open to all kinds of influences, tendencies, commotions, and reforms. It is not tied down. It has no deep roots into the mighty past, like London and Edinburgh. No knights, no castles, haunt the memories of Liverpool. She is pre-eminently the "child of the sea." From "watery Neptune" she derives her pomp and pride and circumstance.

Liverpool takes its name from the Welsh; the words, *Lher pool*, signifying "place of the pool." The Domesday Book does not contain the name of Liverpool. In King John's time it was only a fishing village. During the reign of King Edward the First it had only 800 inhabitants. In 1347, when levies were made by Edward III. upon London for 25 ships and 662 men, Bristol 22 ships and 608 men, Hull 16 ships and 466 men, for the war against France, Liverpool was required to furnish only one bark and six men. In Queen Elizabeth's time the place is described as "Her Majesty's poor decayed town of Liverpool." In 1634, when Charles I. made his levy of ship money, Liverpool was let off with £15, while Chester paid £100, and Bristol £1,000. The Liverpool of modern times began about 1738. In 1800 the population was 77,000; in 1868, 500,000; to-day, with the incorporation of surrounding municipalities, the "Greater Liverpool" will enroll a population of over one million. It will thus be seen that Liverpool is mainly a city of the nineteenth century, and, with its marvellous and widespread trade, possesses the characteristics of this teeming age, having much of the dash and energy and comprehensive spirit of the great cities of America. I find a good deal of the Yankee in this ocean-nurtured metropolis. Farewell to Liverpool. I hope to see again its spacious docks, its thousand flags, its villas and mansions, its handsome parks and gardens, its noble Mersey, and its brilliant Freethinkers, who will certainly keep these busy shores illuminated with reason and liberty.

Margate flows on the vision next—Margate by the sea, one of the "peculiar institutions" of England. We might say of it, "Age cannot wither, nor custom stale, its infinite variety." One would miss quite a picture of English out-door life if he did not go to Margate and its brilliant surroundings—Ramsgate, Broadstairs, etc. Broadstairs was one of the favorite abodes of Dickens, where he wrote *Bleak House*. It is certainly a lovely place for meditation and romance. I went down with Foote and Watts, and we surrendered ourselves to the beauty of sea and land, and roamed through realms of lively enchantment. The moment you strike Margate you are in the midst of a big crowd. It seems as if everybody was coming there. You wander to the beach, and it is covered with thousands of people. All sorts of shows are rampant—the minstrels, the shooting-galleries, the phrenological lecturer, the donkeys, etc. Hundreds of children with bare legs splash through the waters, digging holes in the sand, or building castles. The "machines" go in and out; the boats fly; the steamships roll, packed to the brim, and far away spreads the immensity of the ocean with its million flashing waves. It is a vast and animated scene. Everybody is happy, and abandons himself to the impulse of the moment. It is the fashion to do as you please. Nature smiles with exhilarating changefulness. The sunshine is gorgeous, and the houses and streets are bathed in splendor, and wherever you look there is the joy of untrammelled life. It does people good to come to these great, bright, beautiful shores and be "real folks," to be as outspoken and rollicking as the sea itself. It is health to the whole man, body and brain, this wild and wondrous motion of the waters; this glory of the heavens; this free, democratic, cheerful, luminous interminglings of all sorts and conditions of humanity on the broad level spaces of the spangled shores upon which the sea-god pours his brightest jewels.

Great coaches, with "four-in-hand," speed from Margate to Ramsgate, and it is a charming drive. For a while we leave the blue ocean behind. Green fields and groves, beautiful gardens and delightful homes, clothed with ivy and roses, expand upon the view. Then again the ocean appears as we dash down the declivity into the bustling town. Ramsgate, if anything, is more jubilant than Margate. At some portions of our way we can scarcely push along, so intricate is the multitude. We reach the immense pier, from which there is an extensive view of sea and shore. For miles the chalk cliffs stretch their battlements in white radiance. We see the cloudy lands of Dover, where King Lear once walked, and beyond, in the keen sunset, can sometimes be discerned the faint outlines of the hills of France. From the pier we journey to the lofty walls, where Hotel Granville fronts the main, one of the most beautiful hotels I have ever seen. It is more picturesque than most buildings of the kind. There is an element of poetry in its architecture. It has towers and turrets and spacious roofs. It is not all straight up and down, but there are curved lines and sunlit spaces, where, in ordinary hotels, are confinement and gloom. It is in

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harmony, I think, with its environments, the tall cliffs the vast sea, the glowing heights, shadowed by stately groves.

In the moonlight and starlight, through dim majestic pictures, we return to Margate, to Terrace Hotel, and Hearts of Oak Restaurant, which are along the Marine Drive. We receive a jolly welcome, for the landlord is S. H. Munns, an old-time Freethinker, side by side with Bradlaugh, and always ready to do his level best. Our appetite is good, and the dinner is delightful. After the dinner we sit upon the broad portico, with the sea before and the stars above, while below the crowds pace along the brilliant streets, and occasional music bursts athwart the electric lights, and the tide comes glistening in, until all the sandy spaces shine with lustrous waves. Amidst these bewitching surroundings, with nature and the human heart in magnetic attraction, we indulge in reminiscences of the past, of Bradlaugh's mighty battle, with whom my *confrères* had fought and won, and whose spirit still walks abroad, unchained by death, and burning in the thoughts of to-day and to-morrow. How wonderfully life expands when we thus look on the limitless sea and the limitless stars. It was a glorious night. I shall not forget its manifold scenes, its stars and waves, its circling lamps, its murmuring people, its joyous companionship, its music of hope, "ring out the old, ring in the new."

On the morrow we drive to Broadstairs, and thence walk along the margin of the sea to Ramsgate. It is beautiful, the tall cliffs for our pathway, the sea a hundred feet beneath, murmuring and glistening on miles of shore with faint melody, while like little fairies almost seem the people that wander up and down; and the great blue spreads beyond in immeasurable glory, while on the other side masses of green fields and golden harvests mingle with the dark splendor of groves. We pass around the magnificent estate of the noble Montefiore, the philanthropist who made all the world his country. It was a place where one's mind might be filled with great and beautiful ideas, so broad and universal is the aspect nature presents. It is enough to make us boys again, and when we come across a venerable man who might be Merlin or any other bearded vision of antiquity, whose only means of living was a cocoanut gallery, it behoved us, of course to try a hand. You pay a penny a shot. If you hit the cocoanut, the cocoanut is yours. If not, the old man is a penny ahead. Only one of us made out to hit the cocoanut, but it was good exercise, and made us breathe the atmosphere of youth. This is one of the favorite games along the seashore. From Ramsgate we pursue a roundabout course to Margate, where we again refresh the inner man at the Hearts of Oak Restaurant, bid farewell to our comrade and host, Mr. S. H. Munns, and his wife, and return to London, beneath the illuminations of the harvest moon.

On Saturday my good friend of Wales memory, Mr. Horatio Montefiore, takes me to another sea resort, Bognor. This is down towards Portsmouth. We ride through a beautiful country, great hills on either side crowned with bountiful forest, with here and there a castellated mansion; anon the noble structure of Arundel appears, and the vast cathedral built for the Catholic Church by the Duke of Norfolk; all amidst scenery of magnificent loveliness. It is wonderful how green the landscapes are in England at this season. It is like the freshness of springtime. The fields fairly glitter. There is nothing like it in America except in June. After June the sober brown, with harvest gold, begins to prevail. But in England it is still a brilliant green flashing against the dazzling harvest and "cloth of gold" of innumerable buttercups. They say that there is a still more brilliant green in Ireland. If so, it must be a fascinating land indeed, a jewel "set in the silver sea." These vivid colors seem almost like music as they strike the vision. If there is such a thing as a "symphony of colors," then England and Ireland are attuned to glorious melody, with these emerald hues at the gateways of summer and autumn. Bognor is not like Margate. It is a different picture of English life, quiet and attractive. There are no crowds here, no rush and turmoil. The broad sea is before you—the lovely beach, with two or three hundred people roaming leisurely along, and children at play. It is a pleasing scene if one wants perfect rest. It animates and soothes. At Margate you must be on the go; you must keep up with the procession. At Bognor you can float away in dreams; you can take things easy. There is just enough excitement to tingle the blood, while allowing you to sink away in delicious slumber. There is good companionship here. If one wants a bower of paradise, he will find it at Victoria Hotel, Mr. E. Lawford-Webb proprietor. You have the best of everything, with all the loveliness of country life about you, and, when you desire, the far-off glistening sea mingles with the radiance of tree and flower and grass. Mr. and Mrs. W. Taylor extend their hospitality to the American visitor, and the merry children also animate the circle. Lawn tennis adds its variable fortunes and dancing colors to the charm and music of the sea. I had a thoroughly enjoyable day. I have not found any of that "British reserve" yet. So far as my experience goes, the Britons are as open, generous, and hospitable as the typical Westerner himself. They will give you a good hearty handshake, and make you feel at home with frankness and joviality. The elegance of civilisation does not diminish the real humanity of the Briton. He has too much business with all the world to be a provincial. Those who do the work in England, who keep its commerce, trade, literature, science, on the move, are those who give the stranger a generous welcome. I must thank my friend Montefiore for a happy introduction to English good-fellowship, and for the enjoyment of noble sceneries. I hope America can sometime repay these delightful experiences.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

ADVANCE, HUMANITY!

OPPRESSION'S hateful powers! Why lighten now
The hand that, many centuries, has crushed
The manhood of our race? Kings, priests, and all
The tyrannous who have made might a law,
Treading fair right into the mire; have ye
Then recognised that to attempt to stem
The irresistible and boundless tide
Of human progress can but mean that, though
A transient halt is made in man's advance,
Yet, gath'ring strength e'en from the brief repulse,
The tital wave shall sweep thee from its path
Like feathers whirled before the cyclone's might?
Yea, priest, thou know'st the mind's emancipate
From superstitions thou hast striven hard
To shackle Freedom with. Thou seeketh now
That it shall be believed thy place is in
The van of Progress' army.
Hold no hope
That man will ever come again within
Thy baneful grasp. Thou and the monarchs whom
Thou hast maintained to have a right divine
T' enslave Humanity are doomed to pass
Away, and Man shall rise in brotherhood;
Shall achieve solidarity, and make
The planet radiant with glancing beams
Of love that shall pervade the universe.

F. W. THORRINGTON.

"There Goes an Atheist."

Such was the covert attack made by a Christian acquaintance of mine regarding one of whom I could repeat: "Yes there goes an Atheist, who, for fourteen years, has had a happy home, the father of a healthy, sturdy little girl, who promptly pays his rates and taxes, his butcher and baker, and, like the village blacksmith, can look 'the whole world in the face, for he owes not any man'; has had his name standing on the books of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary for many years as a subscriber, and to various charitable lists appends his signature most willingly." Now, let me show your readers the record of this Christian *gentleman* (my brother-in-law), who, since uttering the innuendo which heads this paper, has suddenly decamped, leaving his wife and three helpless children without a penny; leaving her the victim of a loathsome disease (one of the bairns showing the result of this); leaving his rates and taxes unpaid; his grocer, upholsterer, and milliner unpaid; his gas bill, his coal bill, his poor servants' wages bill, also unpaid. It now transpires he abused his wife and his weens; he starved them so that he could drink; but, to make amends for all these sins, *he was a humble but earnest communicant* in the late Reverend Robert Barclay's (Established) Church, Greenock.

A. S.

Jonah—A New Version.

The Rev. John Jasper has joined the army of Higher Critics, and deals thusly with the Jonah-whale story: "Dat country war a sea shoah, an' de hotels dey wuz named aftah de tings ob de sea. Dar wuz de 'Sailors' Pannikin,' de 'Main Brace Splicer,' de 'Seaman's Paradise,' an' so forth, et cetera, jes' as yo see 'em in Ratcliffe Highway; an' one ob 'em was called 'Daniel's Den,' an' anudder the 'Whale's Belly.' Den Jonah he kum along an' stayed right hyar in de 'Whale's belly' free days and free nights, when de landly she foun' out he didn't have no scrip in his purse, so she spewed him right out. An' she gib him such a awful boist, it sent him spinnin' right ober to Nineveh, hunnerds an' hunnerds o' miles away frum de sea. Dis beautiful history, dear bredren, am gib us to show us how, when we don't treat a man right kase he's pore, we may be kickin' an angel unawares. De deakins will now take up de collection.

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BOOK CHAT.

A book which should be of interest is announced by the Chautauquan Century Press. It is entitled *Some First Steps in Human Progress*, and is by Frederick Starr, of the University of Chicago. The book deals with fire-making, food-getting, basketry, pottery, hunting, arts relating to plants, domestication, stone working, metal working, dress, habitation, travel, speech, folk-lore, sociology, and religion. If the Professor can afford to tell the truth about the first steps in religion, the work should be a valuable one.

* * *

A History of Slavery and Serfdom, by J. K. Ingalls, though only an enlargement and revision of the article on "Slavery" which Dr. Ingram contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, deserves mention as filling up a gap remaining in English literature. The French have Wallon's *Esclavage dans l'Antiquite* and Larroque's *Esclavage Chez les Nations Chretiennes*. In Germany there is an elaborate section on Roman Slavery in Marquardt's *Privatleben der Römer*. Esther Copley's *History of Slavery and its Abolition* (1833) is a poor book, beginning: "I thank the goodness and the grace which on my birth have smiled and, made me in these Christian days a happy English child."

* * *

Volume vi. of the Christian Classics Series, published by the Religious Tract Society, is entitled *The Writings of Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland*. It ought to be entitled *Selections Translated from Writings Attributed to Patrick*, for Dr. C. H. H. Wright, the translator, admits that writings are included "which are of doubtful genuineness." We should say all are in this category. He also says he has omitted, as far as possible, "all matter which has been made the subject of religious controversy." In such a case it is likely that the deleted matter is most important. We wonder what Irish Catholics will think of the Protestant garb given to the banisher of snakes from Ireland.

* * *

Shakespeare's England, by William Winter, is the first of Macmillan's Miniature Series, got up in very neat fashion for the American market. It is an account, not of England in the time of Shakespeare, but of visits to England's historic haunts by an American, keenly touched with all the beauty of the past of the mother country. We heard an old English Freethinker remark that Mr. Putnam had told him more about England than he knew before, and certainly a perusal of this delightful little volume may lend fresh interest to our native land.

* * *

Mr. Alfred Kitson, the author of *Outlines of Spiritualism* (Hanging Heaton, Dewsbury, Yorks: 1s. 3d.), is the person who riled that good man Stead at the last Conference of Spiritists, by declaring that the education of children should discard the old teachings of Christianity. In the book before us, which is designed for the use of children's lyceums in particular, and Spiritualists in general, Mr. Kitson has pursued that plan with signal advantage. He is thus able to teach the doctrine of evolution instead of creation, of all-round development instead of restraint, the teachings of science concerning the past of this world and of man instead of the ancient myths, and to base ethics chiefly on secular relations. In its main features the book is decidedly rationalistic. Mr. Kitson insists on the necessity of depending on action, and the foolishness of dependence on belief. He gives useful information on the ill effects of past creeds, and on how the Bible, which he shows countenances Spiritism, was compiled. Yet must we state our opinion that Spiritism retains the germ of the mischiefs seen to arise in the old faiths.

* * *

Mr. Kitson's longest chapter is on "The Various Conception of Heaven and Hell of all Nations," in which there is much information concisely given. He does not, however, notice how many savage nations believe, like the Theosophists, in man having a multiplicity of spirits within him, nor does he mention that many of them hold that heaven is only for the chiefs and upper classes. If he consulted Mr. Tylor's work on *Primitive Culture* and Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, he would perhaps better understand the genesis of these beliefs, and come to see that the revelations of Andrew Jackson Davis concerning the summerland must be put in the same category as the beliefs of the inhabitants of Tahiti.

* * *

Public Speaking and Debate: A Manual for Advocates and Agitators, by George Jacob Holyoake (Fisher Unwin), is a much-enlarged version of a work which was of considerable utility in its day, and the merits of which were testified to by Wendell Phillips, and appreciated by many English Freethinkers, as well as by Dr. Joseph Parker, to whom this new edition is dedicated. We have not compared the editions. The present should have the fruits of a riper experience, but it may be doubted if amplification was necessary. The more concise and direct hints and instructions for public advocacy are the better. Whether in speech-making or writing, phrase-mongering and rhetoric are, if used for their own sake, to be reprobated. All that can be taught may be put in brief compass. The Scotch doctor who said there were only two rules—(1) to say what you have to say in as few words as you can; and (2) when you've said it to hold your tongue—fairly superseded Blair and all the other rhetoricians. If he could only have taught his pupils to first think clearly before speaking at all, he would have been a perfect master. None the less, the youth who desires to become a public advocate and agitator cannot be recommended to a better book than this by Mr. Holyoake who gives abundant good advice and apt illustration.

Why Christianity is Accepted by Indian Aborigines.

If we analyse the views of most of the Oraon converts to Christianity, we shall, I think, be able to discern the influence of their Pagan doctrines and superstitions in the motives that first led them to become catechumens. The Supreme Being who does not protect them from the spite of malevolent spirits has, they are assured, the Christian under his special care. They consider that, in consequence of this guardianship, the witches and bhuts [devils] have no power over Christians, and it is, therefore, good for them to join that body. They are taught that for the salvation of Christians one great sacrifice has been made, and they see that those who are baptised do not, in fact, reduce their live-stock to propitiate the evil spirits. They grasp at the notion, and long afterwards, when they understand it better, the Atonement, the mystical washing away of sin by the blood of Christ, is the doctrine on which their simple minds most dwell.—*Colonel Dalton, "Ethnology of Bengal," p. 257.*

Scepticism.

If a man holding a belief which he was taught in childhood, or persuaded of afterwards, keeps down and pushes away any doubts which arise about it in his mind, purposely avoids the reading of books and the company of men that call in question or discuss it, and regards as impious those questions which cannot easily be asked without disturbing it; the life of that man is one long sin against mankind.

Inquiry into the evidence of a doctrine is not to be made once for all, and then taken as finally settled. It is never lawful to stifle a doubt; for either it can be honestly answered by means of the inquiry already made, or else it proves that the inquiry was not complete.

"But," says one, "I am a busy man; I have no time for the long course of study which would be necessary to make me in any degree a competent judge of certain questions, or even able to understand the nature of the arguments." Then he should have no time to believe.

No man's belief is in any case a private matter which concerns himself alone. Our words, our phrases, our forms and processes and modes of thought are common property fashioned and perfected from age to age; an heirloom, which every succeeding generation inherits as a precious deposit and a sacred trust, to be handed on to the next one, not unchanged, but enlarged and purified, with some clear marks of its proper handiwork. Into this, for good or ill, is woven every belief of every man who has speech of his fellows. An awful privilege, and awful responsibility, that we should help to create the world in which posterity will live.—*Professor Clifford.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Voltaire said of Mdlle. de Livry: "She was so beautiful that I raised my long, thin body, and stood before her like a point of admiration."

Teacher—"Can you tell me, Johnnie, why Satan goes about the earth like a roaring lion?" Johnnie—"'Cause he can't cut any ice in the place where he lives when he's at home."

Complaining Wife—"You are glad to see me ill. I think you would be delighted if I were dying." Husband—"Oh, no, my dear! I should only be pleased to think that you were going to heaven."

Mrs. Watts—"How is your girl?" Mrs. Patts—"Oh, she's a perfect heathen. I left her to straighten things up before the minister called, and she never even dusted the Bible."

Rev. Jones (to tramp who has asked for food)—"Here, my good man, is a piece of bread; but, remember, I don't give it for your sake, and I don't give it for my sake, but I give it for God's sake." Tramp—"Then for Christ's sake put a bit of butter on it."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Forresters' Hall (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Theological Puzzles."

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Ponds, N.): 7, G. W. Foote, "Why I am an Atheist." Wednesday, at 8, adjourned debate on "Education in Board Schools."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Robert Shaw, "The Soul Theory." Tuesday, at 8, social gathering.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. T. Blanchard, "The Population Question and its Relation to Socialism." Friday, at 8, free science classes.

Finsbury Branch: 12, important members' meeting at St. John's Restaurant, 120 St. John-street, Clerkenwell.

Islington: 3.30, annual meeting, for election of officers, at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road.

West London Ethical Society (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Debasing the Moral Currency."

West Ham Secular Ethical Society (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Miss Vallance, "The Old Faiths Grown More Wide."

Wood Green (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, W. Mawer, F.G.S., "Evolution *v.* Creation."

Open-Air Propaganda.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.30, H. Courtney, "What is Secularism?"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, S. Armfield, "The Influence of Christianity on Civilisation."

Blackburn (Venetian Hall, Darwen-street): Thursday, October 31, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery." Friday, Nov. 1, "Evolution *v.* Special Creation."

Bristol (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, select entertainment.

Chatham Secular Hall (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, C. James, "The Decay of Belief."

Failsworth Secular Sunday-school (Pole-lane): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Life, from a Biological Point of View."

Glasgow (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—T. Robertson, an Essay; 6.30, J. P. Gilmour, "God and his Christ for Camlachie."

Leicester Secular Hall (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality."

Liverpool (Old Fellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, Ernest Newman, "The Origin and Development of Legends."

Manchester Secular Hall (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Robert Law, F.G.S., "The History of Life on the Globe."

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, Touzeau Parris, "Some More Bible Symbols"; 3, "How we Obtain Knowledge"; 7, "Sin Against God an Impossibility."

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, C. Cohen, "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer"; 3, "The Holy Bible"; 7, "What Think Ye of Christ?" Tea at 5.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, music and an address by W. Cook.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Barnsley (May Day Green): 11, Willie Dyson, "God's Inhumanity."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—November 1, Blackburn; 3, Sheffield; 4, 5, and 6, Barnsley; 10, Foresters' Hall, London; 17 and 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Nov. 24, New Brompton. Dec. 22, Leicester.

Touzeau Parris, 83 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—November 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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THE BLACK ARMY.

(*Concluded from page 689.*)

It is a common reply, on the part of its apologists, that the Black Army is too much judged by exceptional cases. In the Church of England, for instance, there are only two Archbishops, and less than three dozen Bishops; and what are these among the many thousand ministers of the Establishment? But what is the real value of this objection? Are not the plums few in every profession? How many physicians, how many Queen's Counsel, how many writers make their thousands a year? The number is just sufficient to keep the fire of hope alive in the breasts of the less fortunate; so that, after all, we find the same commercial law operating in the clerical profession, which operates in other departments of human activity.

The critic to whom I referred in my opening paragraph asserted, as though it were a fact of his own knowledge, that the Archbishop of Canterbury does not spend a penny of his £15,000 a year upon himself; that it is all expended upon his diocese, his own wants being supplied by his private income. I do not believe this; but if it be true, it proves nothing. One swallow does not make a summer, and an argument cannot be based on a glaring exception. It cannot be *usual* for Church dignitaries to subsist on private fortunes. Nor is my critic's suggestion in any way reconcilable with the fact that such immense sums of money have been left by so many Bishops during the present century. I take it that their estates, as disclosed by probate, were partially, if not wholly, built up by savings out of their episcopal revenues; and I say that their conduct in this respect is scandalous, when we consider that Bishops are constantly pleading to laymen on behalf of "the poor clergy," and that Jesus Christ told them to feed, and not to fleece, the flock committed to their charge.

Another objection of the Black Army's apologists is that the Church of England does not comprise the whole Christianity of the country, and that the Nonconformist ministers must be taken into account. None of these, it is said—not even the highest—is paid five thousand a year. I dare say not, but I think it probable that they take all they can get. Some of the luckiest Dissenting ministers in America have salaries running into four figures. Dr. Hall, of New York, is reported to be in enjoyment of £8,000 a year. Dr. Talmage took a very large salary at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, with freedom to make as much more as he could by writing and lecturing. When he visited England, and discoursed for Christian bodies, he never opened his mouth for less than £50 a night. Surely it is difficult to see anything but commercialism in such conditions of advocacy. The late Mr. Spurgeon was paid £1,200 a year, in addition to the revenue accruing from the extensive sale of his publications. Dr. Joseph Parker lives in a fine house and keeps his carriage. Even the salary of a provincial minister, like the Rev. A. J. Berry, of Wolverhampton, is far from despicable. This gentleman has publicly called me "a professional infidel." I reply that his salary exceeds the earnings of all the "infidel" lecturers in this country put together. Of course there are plenty of Nonconformist ministers with very small stipends, but are there not plenty of ill-paid doctors and barristers, and still more of journalists? The law of supply and demand operates in *all* professions. The clericals may not get as much as they *desire*, and indeed they were never heard to say they had *enough*; but they obtain all that is possible in the existing state of the market.

I may be told—in fact, I *have* been told—that the salary is not *everything* to the members of the Black Army. I never said it was. They have tastes and inclinations, like other men, and prefer to earn their living in that way. What tickles my risibility is the pretence that they are "moved by the Holy Ghost." They are really "called" by the motives which lead men into other professions. When a man already in holy orders receives a "call," in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is to a more lucrative or eligible situation. The farce which is gone through on such occasions is sickening. When a clergyman leaves a poor living for a richer one, he solemnly declares that he is directed thither by the third person of the Trinity. Every man of sense knows this to be a hypocritical falsehood. Nor is the case any better among Nonconformists. A minister is invited by a neighbouring or distant congregation; the stipend is higher, and the church more famous. He cannot give an immediate answer, for it would look too much like a mere business transaction. He says he will consider it, and consult the Lord, and pray to be told what he should do. Meanwhile he makes inquiries, the negotiations continue, and perhaps his old congregation makes him a tempting offer to remain. When he has thought the matter out and come to a decision, he finds that he has a clear call from the Holy Ghost; and when he preaches his farewell sermon, he does not say that he has accepted a better situation, but that he is going to a wider sphere of usefulness.

Many years ago a friend of mine was a member of a Congregational Church at Manchester. The minister was an attractive rhetorician, and was known to be contemplating a career in London. His congregation wished to retain him, and money was raised to purchase him a house. Subsequently a fresh bribe had to be put in his way. Another house was purchased for him, and a handsome cheque was presented to him in the vestry. The man of God pocketed the cheque with great complacency; but he could not tell the deputation whether he would stay with "his old church" or go to London. He would have to lay the matter before the Lord. A week later he said he had been told to go. But he did not return the cheque, and within another week the house was advertised "to be sold." My friend thought the church was sold too. It was a lesson to him for life. He has understood the Black Army ever since.

English history furnishes a colossal illustration of the worldly, mercenary motives of the Black Army. During the sixteenth century England was converted, reconverted, and converted back again; and it was all done with the high hand of temporal power. Henry the Eighth quarrelled with the Pope, repudiated his spiritual supremacy, and set up an independent Church. Under his successor this Church was made definitely Protestant. The reign of Edward the Sixth was a short one, but during that brief period the Prayer Book was drawn up and ordered to be used in all churches, under penalty of fine, imprisonment, banishment, and finally death. The Church officials declared that they were moved in this matter by the Holy Ghost. But soon after, when Mary came to the throne, they kicked out the Prayer Book, and declared that the Holy Ghost had nothing to do with it. Once more the English Church became Catholic, and the Protestant clergy turned right about face to keep their livings. Only a

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hundred and twenty, out of about thirteen thousand, had the honesty to stand by their convictions. Elizabeth succeeded Mary, the English Church went back to Protestantism, and the glorious Reformation was a standing proof of the ease with which the pulpit can be turned by those who have power over the bread-and-cheese of the clergy.

Let me conclude with a few words on the function of this Black Army. Our red-coats have to fight a visible, tangible enemy; they shoot, and they are shot at; they kill, and they are killed. Many who are not killed are wounded, and bear about them the scars of combat. But the Black Army fight an enemy who is intangible and invisible. They fight the Devil. This personage was once a grim reality, at least in the imagination of believers; but he has sunk into a comic figure, and is now laughed at as a bogey. Nevertheless, the Black Army survives. It is engaged in fighting "Sin." But what a ridiculous notion it is that sin can be put down by preaching. The Black Army should be disbanded, and the money it costs be expended on the secular improvement of the people. G. W. FOOTE.

FOLK-LORE RESEARCHES.*

UNDER the title of "Virgin Births," I wrote in the *Freethinker* of September 1st a brief and superficial notice of the first volume of Mr. E. Sidney Hartland's *Legend of Perseus*, dealing with "The Supernatural Birth." The opinion there given of its merits has been more than confirmed by the second volume, dealing with "The Life Token." When I say that I think the work worthy to be placed beside those of Dr. Tylor and Mr. Frazer, no higher expression of commendation is possible. Consciously or unconsciously, the anthropologists who deal with comparative folk-lore and mythology are exploding, by explaining, the Christian legends and superstitions, and the increasing attention given to these subjects is a gratifying sign to the Freethinker.

Mr. Hartland is a prince among folk-lorists. He has all the popular sagas, fairy tales, customs, and superstitions at his fingers' ends. He deals with them as a scientist, analysing, comparing, and drawing deductions from them. He not only notes folk-lore; he explains it. His knowledge is so extensive, his method so sound, and his judgment so good that, even where I fancy his interpretation may be defective, I should be chary of offering another as being any more certain. We are all perhaps a little too ready to fancy we can, like the palæontologist, reconstruct the past organism from a single bone. But sometimes what is taken for a wing further investigation shows to be a flipper. The highly cultured anthropologist usually errs because he cannot descend to the level of the people whose minds he interprets. Hence we have such an able man as Mr. Andrew Lang bamboozled by a trickster like Eusapia Paladino; and doubting whether such a custom as the *droit du Seigneur* ever did exist anywhere. If Mr. Lang would inquire in India, he would find that Kulin Brahmins have exercised this right within recent times. Mr. Hartland's remarks on the sin-eater have excited controversy in the *Times*. To find among civilised peoples instances of eating off the body of the dead, and to connect it with cannibalism, is sure to elicit repudiation from those whose local patriotism is affected. "Such things never occurred—at least, not in our country." I do not scruple to say that not only has Mr. Hartland maintained his point, but that to the student of human evolution the custom has as natural a place as has the hipparion between the anchitherium and the horse. So in former times has been challenged what I call "the nobly ridiculous custom of the couvade," the laying in of the man when the wife has a child, though there is abundant evidence of the custom in many parts of the world. It is just such peculiar fossils and transitional links that our author sees the value of to the student of human evolution, and his investigations of them are characterised by patient and thorough research.

Every page of *The Legend of Perseus* is full of apt illustrations. To the Freethinking evolutionist it may appear that Mr. Hartland gives a superabundance of evidence where a few select, concise instances might suffice to carry conviction. But it must be remembered that so rapidly are savage races being extirpated, so swiftly peasant lore and custom being obliterated, that it is most desirable that all bearing on human evolution shall be recorded ere it is too late. Moreover, the case presented does undoubtedly gain by the selection of a great variety of instances gathered over a wide area. Mr. Hartland well says: "Distance in space counts for naught where we are dealing with similar conditions of culture."

Mr. Hartland has, indeed, wandered far from the classical story of Perseus; but he has remained throughout close to those root ideas and institutions which have been of supreme importance in human evolution, and which to me alone give interest to the old legends. The titles of his chapters may indicate this. They are: The Life-token in Tale and Custom; Witchcraft, Sympathetic Magic; Witchcraft, Philtres, Preventive and Remedial Leechcraft; Sacred Wells and Trees; Totemism, The Blood Covenant, Customs Connected with Saliva; Funeral Rites; Marriage Rites; The Couvade, and other illustrations of the Strength of the Blood-tie.

In two of the subjects Mr. Hartland has taken up in this volume he has anticipated two chapters in my *Footsteps of the Past*—viz., on "Totemism" and "Sympathetic Magic." Both of us are indebted to Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, and I frankly recognise my superior in Mr. Hartland as well as in Mr. Frazer. Mr. Hartland does not go quite as fully into the question of totemism as I do; but with the allied subject of animal worship he will have another opportunity of dealing, if he chooses, when treating of Perseus and the Dragon. The importance of animal worship, and allied belief in transformation into animals, is not even yet sufficiently allowed; while, if my contention, that totemism led to the domestication of animals, is correct, it was a chief factor in the transition from savagery to barbaric civilisation. The importance of "sympathetic magic," too, can scarcely be exaggerated. It lies, as I think, and as I have endeavored to show, at the very root of the Christian legends, as well as of the Christian sacraments, the real explanation of which may be gathered by careful readers of Mr. Hartland's work.

On several points Mr. Hartland is more orthodox than myself. When, for instance, he finds a close parallel to the story of Perseus told by an illiterate peasant woman in Tuscany, he is content to say "it may only date as a popular tale from the revived Paganism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." I hold that such Paganism was never dead—nay, Mr. C. G. Leland, in his *Etruscan Roman Remains in Popular Tradition*, proves it is living still, though in underground fashion, at the very seat and centre of Christendom. *Le Livre du Valiant Perseus*, 1572, shows that the Christian Church was then still accommodating its fables to the more ancient ones of Paganism. When the untrustworthy—nay, fraudulent—character of early Christian literature and ecclesiastical history is known, it will be seen that the true history of the suppression of Paganism and its amalgamation with Christianity has yet to be written, and it is writers like Mr. Hartland, Mr. Frazer, and Mr. Leland who are supplying the material.

Speaking of the custom of dropping pins into wells at Easter, Mr. Hartland says (p. 231): "The pins must have been intended, as elsewhere, to unite the thrower with the god. And the custom may accordingly be supposed to be a periodical union with the divinity, removed under Christian influences from the day of the Pagan festival (perhaps May day) to the nearest great feast day of the Church." I feel sure, if Mr. Hartland will look into it, he will find that Easter was quite as much a Pagan festival as May-day, the one celebrating the spring of vegetation, the other the bursting of blossoms. The determination of Easter by the moon is itself indicative of its pre-Christian antiquity. Mr. Hartland has been at great pains to determine the meaning of dropping pins in wells, fixing nails in trees, temples, and statues of the gods. I do not quarrel with his explanation. Yet is there much to be said for such customs, being rather reminders than processes effecting union. A nail knocked in fixes a thing. It may thus be allied to the later sealing of a bond, itself a survival of blood covenanting. I would suggest, too, the possibility that the employment of Brahmins as sin-eaters may be merely that a safe receptacle may be found in the holy bodies of these twice-born men, since there is a still deep-seated superstition

* The Grimm Library. *The Legend of Perseus: A Study of Tradition in Story, Custom, and Belief.* (London: David Nutt, Strand.) 1895.

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in India that, if a person's body is eaten by a wild beast, he becomes transformed into the beast that eats him.

With the main conclusions of Mr. Hartland I am in entire agreement. Some of them are sufficiently disturbing to those brought up to believe that man was created perfect some six thousand years ago. If expressed by myself, they would probably be startling in their heresy; but Mr. Hartland has a happy knack of mildly suggesting heterodox conclusions. However, it is time that he was allowed to speak for himself, and next week I shall offer the reader several extracts from his remarkable work.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

THE SECULAR AND CHRISTIAN STANDARDS OF MORALITY.

(Concluded from page 692.)

It will be obvious to those who understand our statement of the Secular standard of morality, as given in our article last week, that it is essentially different from the standard furnished by popular Christianity. Orthodox believers do not hesitate to disqualify man's reason and judgment in consequence of the alleged fall, which is said to have corrupted human nature, and rendered man powerless of himself even to "think anything," for it is "God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (2 Corinthians iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13). Even faith, which is the very basis of St. Paul's Christianity, cannot be secured by man's own effort, for "it is the gift of God" (Ephesians ii. 8). Here human effort, which is pre-eminently a Secular agency, is rendered null and void, as we are told that salvation depends upon the will of a supernatural power. Christ evidently thought this, hence he says: "No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my father" (John vi. 65). If, as we contend, the formation of human character results from the laws of mind and the circumstances that bring them into play, faith in any supernatural power is not the force that moulds and regulates the conduct of man.

Much is said about the Golden Rule, "Do unto others," etc., as a factor in Christian morals; but the injunction is not peculiar to Christianity, and, moreover, it would be rendered of no effect if other portions of the New Testament were accepted and acted upon as a standard of conduct. Not only does Sir William Jones, in his tenth discourse before the Asiatic Society, say that he has seen the Golden Rule "word for word in the original of Confucius," but other Christian writers of more recent date have acknowledged that it did not originate with Jesus. The Rev. Dr. Matheson, in his lecture on *The Religion of China* (p. 83), states: "That Confucius is the author of this precept is undisputed, and, therefore, it is undisputable that Christianity has incorporated an article of Chinese morality." Dr. Grant also, in his *Religions of the World*, published last year, writes (p. 64): "Perhaps the most remarkable feature of his (Confucius's) moral code is the distinct enunciation of the Golden Rule. Professor Legge tells us that Confucius understood it in its positive and most comprehensive sense, as well as in its negative form, in which it is usually quoted in the classics." Thus, whatever value may be attached to this precept, it is clear that we are not indebted to Christianity for it, and it is no more a part of Christian morality than it is of Secular ethics.

But, unfortunately, in the Christian code of morals this injunction is opposed to many of the sayings ascribed to Jesus, and also to his conduct on several occasions. For instance, when Jesus says that he came to save only the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew xv. 24); "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi); his command to his disciples to "go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not" (Matthew x. 5); "But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God" (Luke xii. 9). Equally out of harmony with this precept was Christ's conduct in riding into Jerusalem on a colt and an ass that did not belong to him (Matthew xxi.), and his driving out of the temple the merchants with small cords (John ii. 15). It is impossible to reconcile these sayings and doings, upon the part of Christ, with the principle of the Golden Rule, which implies an equality of sympathy for all men.

The standard to which Christians appeal is the New Testament. This, however, would be only valuable as such if the book were free from contradictory teachings, and if its injunctions were practicable. But the very opposite is the fact, for both the Gospels and the Epistles are full of contradictions, which, as the Rev. Dr. Giles says, "cannot be reconciled; imperfections that would greatly detract from even admitted human compositions, and erroneous principles of morality that would have hardly found a place in the most incomplete systems of the philosophers of Greece and Rome" (*Christian Records*, preface, p. 7). In Matthew (xxv.) Christ taught the efficacy of secular work, and implied that this would secure "life eternal"; but in other parts of the New Testament he makes belief in him indispensable to salvation (Mark xvi. 16; John xiv. 6). St. Paul says God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans ii. 6); but he also says man is saved. "By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.....man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans iii. 27, 28). In the same chapter he recognises Christ and him crucified, and he adds that, "if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye hath received, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 9). The "gospel" here referred to was St. Paul's Gospel (Romans ii. 16; 2 Timothy ii. 8), which he received from no man, "but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 12). Thus the only Gospel in which St. Paul enjoined belief was his own, and those who did not accept it were to be "accursed." No marvel that Professor Jowett remarks: "When we demand logical equivalents and similarity of circumstances, when we balance adverse statements, St. James and St. Paul, the New Testament with the Old, it will be hard to demonstrate from Scripture any complex system, either of doctrine or practice" (*Essays and Reviews*, cheap edition, p. 444).

Of what value are statements which are conflicting and uncertain? It is even doubtful, in the opinion of the late Professor Huxley, whether the Sermon on the Mount and the so-called Lord's Prayer were ever preached and prayed by Jesus. That the Christian standard is defective is further shown by the fact that few, if any, professed Christians make the slightest attempt to regulate their conduct by it. Its teachings as to the possession of devils, the mutilation of human bodies, and the punishment in hell fire are discarded, and its injunctions as to poverty, disregard of this world, prayer, and special providence are not believed. There is a rapidly increasing number of intelligent people who share the opinion of the late Bishop of Peterborough, who said: "It is not possible for the State to carry out all the precepts of Christ. A State that attempted to do so could not exist for a week. If there be any person who maintains the contrary, his proper place is in a lunatic asylum" (*Fortnightly*, January, 1890).

The Christian standard is not suited to a scientific and progressive age, inasmuch as it recognises none of the principal facts upon which the true theory of life and conduct is based. The law of cause and effect, uniform natural law, the facts of physiology and of psychology, are all ignored, and in many instances the very opposite of those teachings is inculcated by Jesus and his Apostles. According to this standard, everything is done under the direction of an Almighty God, who is supposed to rule the destiny of the human race. And even upon this subject the New Testament is not harmonious in its statements, for it would be extremely difficult to determine from this book what the ultimate destiny of the race is to be. It may be that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter iii. 9), or that some were ordained to condemnation before of old (Jude 4; Thess. ii. 11, 12). It may be that all will be saved, or that only a few will be chosen (Matt. xxii. 14). It may be that man's destiny will be decided, as St. James says, by works, or, as St. Paul alleges, by faith, and not by works (Ephesians ii. 9).

Paley argues that virtue consists in obeying the will of God for the sake of everlasting happiness. But, as seen above, the Christian standard puts the question of future happiness as a very doubtful one. Besides, how are we to know what that will is? It is not to be learnt from the Bible, for therein are found many wills ascribed to God which are contradictory in their nature. Hardly any crime can be mentioned that is not attributed to the

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Christians' deity; how, then, can this book be consistently claimed to be a standard for human conduct? As Shakespeare says, "The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose." If we ask Christians, who accept the Bible standard, for an incentive to good conduct, we are referred to the promise of an eternal future; if we desire to learn about fixed natural laws which regulate the universe, the Bible gives us no trustworthy information; and if we seek for principles that have been verified by experience, how few, indeed, shall we find in the teachings of Jesus.

In conclusion, we allege that the standard of Secularism is superior to that of Christianity, because (1) it belongs to man, of whom we know something—not to God, of whom we know nothing; (2) it pertains to the certainties of this life, not to the conjectures of some imaginary existence beyond the grave; (3) it involves practical work, not merely theoretical faith; (4) reason is the highest faculty we have, and without its exercise no sound conclusion can be arrived at; even Christians are bound to borrow our standard when they seek to decide upon the merits of their own; (5) experience, when allied with reason, is the greatest monitor we have to enable us to judge wisely as to the nature and influence of actions; and, finally, whatever is useful in the promotion of virtue must be moral. Our standard justifies the fact that truth, love, justice, and self-reliance are the emblems of a noble and cultivated humanity.

CHARLES WATTS.

A SERMON.

My text will be found in Matthew xi. 25, 26: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

It must not be supposed that the babes referred to in my text meant infants at the breast only; they were the babes in intellect, the men and women who had grown in bodily stature, but had developed nothing in the way of brains; they were the full-grown babes and sucklings, the mental imbeciles, who were ready to suck in any taffy that the Lord might give them, without ever asking a reason for it. If they had developed mentally as well as in stature, then they would be classed among the wise and prudent, and not fit subjects for the Lord's revelations, which were fitted so admirably to the capacity of babes.

Neither Jesus nor his father saw fit to give any reasons why these babes should be preferred over the wise and prudent as recipients of such an important matter as the revelation of God's will, except the "even so, Father, that it seemed good in thy sight"; but every person of common sense will have no difficulty in guessing at a better reason than that. The wise and prudent would be very apt to ask some questions that might be difficult for Jesus and his Father to answer. They would require some evidence that the revelation was true. They would want to put Jesus on the stand, and cross-examine him upon his authority to represent God in such an important matter; for God himself being absent—a witness in hiding—his testimony could not be had. Jesus knew that there were a great many weak spots in the evidence that the wise and prudent would be sure to detect, and, therefore, he thanked God that he had not submitted it to them. The babes—he had observed—always put everything that was offered to them into their mouths, without asking any questions.

The wise and prudent recognise the fact that God himself has never made any revelation to man. He has never spoken one word, either oral or written. He has never been seen, heard, or felt. At various times in the history of the world thousands of different men have come forward claiming that God has spoken to them and given them a revelation which they were to make known to men, at second hand; but God himself has never signed their credentials, and no one of them has ever produced a scrap of authority or a tittle of proof of the truth of his revelation. There is a remarkable unanimity in all of them in claiming that they must be believed by faith without evidence; and this is the reason why the weak and credulous "babes of grace" of all ages are preferred, as recipients of such revelations, over the wise and prudent.

Suppose some one or all of these revelations to be true, they are not revelations to us, but are only revelations to the persons to whom God spoke. To us they are only hearsay, and the confidence that we may have in their truth must depend upon a variety of circumstances. We must know something of the character of the person who claims to have received it, and it must be such as to convince us of his honesty and capacity for testing the phenomena that he calls a revelation. We must know that he is a reliable, truthful man, who would not tell a lie even though it would give him wealth, ease, power, and fame. He must be an intellectual man, in full possession of his normal faculties, so that he could not be mistaken in what he tells us. Do we know enough of any one of the pretenders to revelation to enable us to answer in the affirmative all these questions about him?

The revelation itself must be, in substance, something that is not incredible, something that does not contradict facts that are firmly established by universal experience and observation of the laws of Nature. It must be something worth knowing, and not merely a recital of the early and fabulous doings of a tribe of wandering barbarians who had not yet developed the capacity to distinguish truth from fiction. It must be something new, something that man could not find out for himself in any other way, and not merely a corroboration of old theories already fixed in the fancies of ignorant savages. Who can say that any revelation that has been offered to the world answers all these requirements?

To the wise and prudent it raises a strong presumption of fraud for any one person to come forward with a claim that he has been favoured above all other men with a revelation from God, which they are bound to accept without any evidence whatever except his saying so. It would be as easy for God to reveal himself and his will to every man, woman, and child in this earth of ours as it is to do it to one, and it would go far to establish his pretended character for goodness if he should do so. It is these pretended middle-men who claim to stand between God and man who make all the trouble and strife in the world. If they could be eliminated from our midst, and men and God allowed to settle their differences face to face, without any meddling by priests and religion-makers, there would be peace and goodwill to men, and to God too, and the babes would be allowed to develop into wise and prudent men and women, without any superstitious shackles to keep them down.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

(To be concluded.)

MY TOUR IN THE NORTH.

On Monday, October 14, I started on a fortnight's tour in the north of England and Scotland. During that time I visited Newcastle-on-Tyne, North Shields, Glasgow, Paisley, Cupar, Dundee, Edinburgh, and York; held a four nights' debate, and delivered fourteen lectures.

My debate was with Mr. A. J. Waldron, who is the regular lecturer for the Christian Evidence Society. He is a young man of some promise, having a fair command of language, and throughout the discussion he was most gentlemanly. It is not for me to give any opinion as to the merits of the debate. We both did our best, and the audiences showed their appreciation by very heartily applauding our efforts. Public controversies, when properly conducted, are certainly useful in their results, inasmuch as they stimulate mental activity. A Christian gentleman remarked to me at the conclusion of my debate with Mr. Waldron: "I am not of your way of thinking, but you have certainly given me much to think about. I never saw the subjects you have dealt with in the light in which you have presented them. I must think over seriously what I have heard these four nights." As the principal object of all discussion should be to induce serious thought, Secular disputants ought to be exceedingly careful with whom they debate. Reputable Christian exponents, capable of public debating, are now few and far between. There are several what the Americans call "theological tramps" going throughout the provinces, seeking notoriety by endeavoring to discuss with Freethought representatives. To meet these, however, on the platform would be humili-

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ating and an utter degradation of controversy. In vain do we look for the successors of such disputants as Dr. Harrison, Dr. McCann, and Dr. Sexton—gentlemen with whom I frequently discussed years ago. They understood the art of debate and the courtesy of conducting it. Upon whom has their mantle fallen? I know not.

My lectures were all well attended, most of the evening meetings being crowded. Under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, I introduced Secularism into Cupar Fife, and held week-night meetings at North Shields, Paisley, and York. All these gatherings were very successful. This scheme I regard as the most important advance that has been made in Secular propagandism for many years. It has long been known that Christians object to pay to hear their system criticised; but, when admission is free to our week-night lectures, the experience of the past few weeks proves that they will attend and listen to what we have to say. This is what we require, and it is to be hoped that the impetus given to our advocacy by Mr. Foote's scheme will be supported by all who are in a position to render practical aid in the dissemination of Secular views. Now that the scheme is in full force, those who can afford to do so should at once subscribe to the fund, which, of course, is necessary to our success. Writing on October 31 in reference to my lecture at Paisley, Mr. Gilmour, of Glasgow, says: "You may take credit for bringing about the resurrection of the Paisley Branch, which is once more in action. It is evident that the lecture scheme is going to bear some good fruit." I have good reasons for believing that encouraging results similar to those which followed the lecture at Paisley will be seen in other places where the free lectures have been given. A whole winter of such work will be the most effectual means of spreading a knowledge of our principles in districts where hitherto they have been comparatively unknown. The President of the N.S.S. having devised and put into practice this excellent method, it devolves upon the members to do their duty by heartily co-operating to make it productive of lasting good.

On Sunday, November 17, I shall lecture in Liverpool, and on the following Sunday in Manchester. If friends in Bolton, Rochdale, Bury, Todmorden, or other places in the district, can arrange for a lecture on any evening between those two Sundays, I shall be pleased to visit them under Mr. Foote's scheme. The only expense which the local friends will have to bear is the hire of hall and advertising, and to meet this they can have a collection at the lecture. The admission must be free. I shall be glad to hear from the above towns *immediately*.

I must mention one unpleasant incident during my tour that occurred in connection with that contemptible "defender of the faith," Walton Powell, who sought to break up my meetings in Glasgow. I mention this, not that any importance is attached to the utterer of the filthy libel on the London Hall of Science, but to warn Freethinkers to take no notice of him, and, above all, not to attend his lectures. He is discarded by the Christian party, and those who wish to know his character and career should send to Mr. H. A. Long, Ingram-street, Glasgow, for a pamphlet written by a Christian, price one penny. Some of Powell's associates attended my afternoon lecture at Glasgow and publicly asked me to meet him in debate. Of course, I refused to have anything to do with such a person. A lively scene followed, which was renewed at night. What took place in the evening may be gathered from the following statement written by Mr. J. P. Gilmour, who was chairman of the evening meeting:—"Just as Mr. Watts had got well under weigh with his lecture Powell himself, with a gang of his ruffians, burst into the meeting; and the emissary of the afternoon commenced, 'In the afternoon a statement——' when the chairman ordered him to be silent or to withdraw from the meeting. This order was repeated three times without effect. Then, seeing that nothing short of summary action would meet the case, the chairman gave the order for the forcible expulsion of the disturbers. This was speedily effected without any serious trouble, although some of Powell's 'lambs' offered stubborn resistance, and Mr. Watts resumed his lecture amid echoes of Homeric combat from the stairs."

CHARLES WATTS.

If God made us in his own image, we have amply returned the compliment.—*Fontenelle.*

INSANITY AND INSPIRATION.

THE work of Dr. Nordau on *Degeneration*, and, still more, its criticism by Dr. Cesare Lombroso, raise the old question of insanity and genius. Nordau thinks it sufficient to find evidence of morbidity or neurotic temperament to set down such persons as Tolstoi, Wagner, Zola, and Ruskin as degenerate and, therefore, inferior. Lombroso goes even further in regarding genius as a form of degenerative neurosis, yet holds that when this neurosis takes original forms the diseased—that is, the abnormal—persons may really be superior to the rest of their fellows. Dr. Lombroso says:—

> "If Nordau picks to pieces in this fashion the works of the greatest men, it is natural that he should discover oddities and astounding slips. And thus we see how easy it is for him to demolish Wagner, Ibsen, and Zola in contrast with the bourgeois, because of that excess of originality, of morbidness, which neurosis creates in them. But this very craziness is a consequence and proof of their genius. Instead of suspecting that just because they were neurotic they were geniuses, Nordau concludes: '*They are insane; therefore they are not geniuses.*' Thus on one side he wanders from the natural path of genius, and on the other he ends by sacrificing a large number of geniuses like Ibsen, Zola, etc., and pretends that they are inferior to normal men—the mediocre men whom he does not criticise. What Nordau ought to have done was to study the insanity of the geniuses singly, and to set it in relation to their works, so as to help us to interpret its most original characteristics and those which deviate most widely from the average, and to get the explanation of it.....
>
> "In Tolstoi's book there are certain strange, and even maddish, ideas; but among these what splendor of observation and profundity of thought! And even though the theory of love developed in *The Kreutzer Sonata* is, as Nordau says, a delirious theory, still, when you have deducted from the book all that extravagant philosophy, there remains a stupendous psychology of marriage, though it be a little too pessimistic. And while only the degenerate, and not normal man, regards love and conjugal life in this fashion, there is left, nevertheless, a marvellous picture, albeit of a morbid state."

Lombroso's view of men like Tolstoi seems to me applicable to the religious geniuses of the past. Most of them exhibited traits which now we must class with insanity. And yet they have been in many particulars elevated above their fellows, and even of service to them. The Hebrew prophets appear to have been the chief instruments in raising Judaism from a tribal fetishism to a national religion. Yet they were certainly a cranky lot. When Saul prophesied, he stripped off his clothes and lay down naked, whereupon they said: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel xix. 24). Ezekiel laid siege to a tile, and Isaiah, the greatest genius of the lot, walked naked for three years (Isaiah xx. 3).

Jules Soury and Mr. Foote have made out a pretty good case from the Gospels for considering that Jesus was insane. His friends certainly considered so, and endeavored to restrain him (Mark iii. 21), while the Jews said of him: "He hath a devil, and is mad" (John x. 20). Paul tells the early Christians at Corinth that, if they use their dangerous gift of tongues, "Will they not say ye are mad?" (1 Cor. xiv. 23)—exactly what was said of the Irvingites.

Sprenger and Ireland both hold that Mohammed was subject to hallucinations. His love of solitude and fasting would contribute. He heard voices, had interviews with Gabriel, and went to the seventh heaven. When questioned as to his inspiration, he would say: "It affecteth me like the ringing of a bell, penetrating my very heart, and rending me, as it were, in pieces." Deutsch says: "Mohammed was epileptic." Epilepsy the Greeks called a sacred disease, and those affected are often regarded as inspired in the East.

Many of the saints of the Catholic Church, and those the best of them, were clearly insane. St. Dominic had a mania for flagellation. St. Francis, in accordance with his more amiable disease, preached to the birds, and even addressed the fishes as "little brothers and sisters." St. Simeon Stylites lived continually on the top of a pillar, and St. Eusebius carried a hundred and fifty pounds' weight of iron always on his person, and lived for three years in a dried-up well.

Glorious Joan of Arc. "What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl," who "rose suddenly out of the gust,

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out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitude, to a station in train of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings"! She was an ecstatic, heard voices, saw lights. The voices of St. Catherine and St. Margaret were often in her ears. She went weeping to the stake, but maintained the reality of her revelations to the end, and was heard to invoke Michael and St. Catherine.

Swedenborg, too, tells in his diary that one night in London, after he had dined heavily, a mist spread before his eyes, and the floor of his room was covered with hideous reptiles, such as serpents, toads, and the like. He says: "I was astonished, having all my wits about me, and being perfectly conscious. The darkness attained its height, and then passed away. I now saw a man sitting in the corner of the chamber. As I had thought myself entirely alone, I was greatly frightened when he said to me: 'Eat not so much.' My sight again became dim; but when I recovered it I found myself in the room." The following night the same thing occurred. He says: "I was this time not at all alarmed. The man said: 'I am God; the Lord, the Creator, and Redeemer of the world. I have chosen thee to unfold to men the spiritual sense of the Holy Scripture.'" Enough! The ecstatics of genius were all insane. But this, it seems to me, is no reason why their utterances should not be taken on their own merits. For the insane of one generation are sometimes the teachers of another, while the mediocrities, who pride themselves on their sanity, might often more justly be noted for their imbecility. UNCLE BENJAMIN.

BIBLE BIRD-NESTING.

(Deuteronomy xxii. 6, 7.)

THE world is full of awful ills,
And quacks that claim to cure them;
It reels beneath the weight of pills,
And patients that endure them.
Shun quacks, and quickly quite quit questing
A cure from them, and go "a nesting"!

'Tis sad to think of those that die
Who well might still be living,
If only they had known what I,
In God's name, now am giving:
A cure that cannot fail in testing;
The cure is this: Just go "a nesting"!

Dishonest quacks profess to cure,
With cheap and simple simples,
A host of ills that men endure,
From broken legs to pimples;
But God, who never stoops to jesting,
Declares that all are cured by nesting!

In Deuteronomy "I Am"—
See chapter two-and-twenty—
Says: Rob a nest, but leave the dam,
And you shall live in plenty;
Your constitution shall be strengthened,
And all your life improved and lengthened.

So, steel your heart, and rob a nest,
And all your feelings smother;
Take eggs or young—'tis God's behest—
But mind you leave the mother;
And, if the changeless God's not lying,
You'll live beyond your time for dying!

This cure is only found, no doubt,
In spring, the nesting season;
At other times you go without—
Of course, that stands to reason—
But, while you wait till time of nesting,
Jehovah has a chance of resting.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Everyone is born with a nose and five fingers, and no one born with a knowledge of God. This may be deplorable not, but it is certainly the human condition.—*Voltaire.*

ACID DROPS.

THE Bishop of Worcester, speaking at Birmingham on behalf of the Church Extension Society, noticed what magnificent collections were made on Hospital Sunday, and remarked that spiritual needs were greater than bodily needs. The Bishop of Coventry said ditto, and the moral was "More money for soul-saving." It is really astonishing what a lot of money is spent on this business. No one ever knew the clergy to have *enough*. And what have they to show for the vast expenditure? A doctor can produce the man whose life he saved in a hospital; can a clergyman produce a man whose soul he saved in a church? It is impossible to tell, before the day of judgment, whether any soul is saved or not; and the clergy ought to wait till then before they present their bill.

At Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon, the solid part of the communion is served in wafers instead of bread, after the Catholic fashion. A much-respected lady member has protested, but the vicar is obstinate, and the lady has to go without "the body of Christ" or obtain it elsewhere. We offer her our condolence in this sad affliction.

The Free Church Association at Birmingham will not include the Unitarians. This is a monotheistic country, but it seems to be wrong to worship one god, after all. It is not respectable to have less gods than three, though it is damnation to have more than one. We give it up, and try the fifteen puzzle.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in his "Protest of a Spooko Folk-lorist," at the Folk-Lore Society (referred to in our issue for June 30), made much of Eusapia Paladino, and remarked: "Whatever causes these Eusapian phenomena probably caused some of the innumerable similar phenomena of which all folk-lore is full." Apparently, he thought these phenomena were ghostly, spiritual, or, as they prefer to say, psychical. But Mr. Maskelyne and Dr. Hodgson, who have seen Eusapia, say it is pure humbug and trickery. We believe they are far more competent judges than Mr. Lang or Mr. Lodge, and venture to think that humbug is at the bottom of "innumerable similar phenomena."

A good instance of how the old, old story gets doctored up in transition to another race is given in the *Popular Science Monthly*, by Abby L. Alger, from an old Penobscot Indian, who made the Lord God take a back seat compared to his own. God, he said, made Adam out of earth, but he did not make Gluskabe (the Indian God); Gluskabe made himself out of the dust kicked up at the creation of Adam. Then God consulted Gluskabe about making the rivers. He proposed that they should run up one side of the earth and down the other; but Gluskabe said, No, they must all run down one way. Then the Lord asked him if the ocean should lie still. No, he answered, it must rise and fall, or else it will grow stagnant. How about fire? asked God; shall it burn always? No, again said Gluskabe; and it seems fortunate that the Lord had him at his elbow during the work of creation, or things might have been even worse than they are.

One of our Manchester friends, Mr. William Westwell, was waited on by a deputation of the Armenian Committee, who wanted him to give a subscription. He forwarded them a cheque for one guinea, with a letter stating that he would have been happy to give more, but his own party were downtrodden in Christian England, and they had the first claim upon him. Mr. Westwell's cheque was returned, and he was told that his letter was "an insult." The only meaning we can attach to this is that it is a crime for Mohammedans to oppress Christians, but quite right for Christians to oppress Freethinkers. Somehow, if you scratch a Christian, you are pretty sure to find a bigot.

Mr. Athelstan Riley has undoubted leanings towards the clerical profession. *Apropos* of a recent debate at the School Board, he must have regretted his neglect to take holy orders if he read, among the ecclesiastical preferments last week, the appointment to the rectory of "Great Birch with Little Birch Essex."—*Echo.*

Alderman Wallond, of Maidstone, was a charitable man. According to a local paper, he gave financial aid every week to twenty aged persons, without inquiring into their creed or politics. But good men, like bad men, have to die; and when Alderman Wallond came to be buried the Vicar refused to allow the coffin to be taken into the church. It appears, however, that this act of bigotry was illegal, for the deceased had been baptised, though he was not a communicant. The Archbishop of Canterbury is stated to have admitted that Canon Dyke, the vicar, made a regrettable mistake. But a "mistake" of this kind is *worse* than a mistake. Charity should be strained, rather than formality,

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when people are standing with lacerated hearts over their dead. But when did such considerations enter the mind of a priest?

The Rev. Sydney Fleming, of St. James's, Croydon, is candid enough to state that he does not want people in his church who only put a paltry sum in the collection-plate. He says people can have no fear of the Lord unless they support his ministers.

Judge Tourgee says that, in the first eight months of the present year, there have been 140 cases of negro lynchings in the United States. Some of them were quite as atrocious as the recent roasting alive at a slow fire in Texas. We should think that the amount of zeal displayed by American missions to heathens might be better directed towards a mitigation of barbarism at home.

The prosecution of Seventh-Day Adventists in America has its counterpart in England. The International Tract Society is a body of Bible believers who hold that the commands given to Moses in respect to the Sabbath were never abrogated by Jesus, and that Sunday is as much a Church institution as the Mass. It publishes literature enforcing its views, and acts up to them by closing its place of business on Saturday and opening it on Sunday. Mr. Plowden, the Clerkenwell police magistrate, has fined the society £44 on fourteen summonses. These good Bible believers are thus in a fair way to be ruined and imprisoned by their adherence to the words of their fetish book. Verily we live in a Christian land.

The Birmingham *Daily Argus* is printing a correspondence on "Why Working Men do not Go to Church." Some say the men of God live too well, others that they think too much of themselves, others that they are too fond of calling everybody "infidel" who differs from them, others that they don't go in strongly enough for "Bible truth." The real truth is, that people have always had to be brimstoned and treacled into religion; and now that the brimstone is disappearing, the treacle alone is not efficacious.

W. Babbington gives his experience in the *Birmingham Daily Argus*. Till recently he was a Sunday-school teacher. He was struck by the contradictory accounts of the death of Judas in Matthew xxviii. and Acts i., and asked the minister what was the explanation. He was told it was a question such as an infidel only would ask. This led to further research, and the result that he cannot conscientiously take part in either church or chapel.

The *Argus* devotes a leading article to the case of a dreadful swindler called Hart, who has been sentenced to five years' penal servitude at the Birmingham Quarter Sessions. "Habitual swindler in his Birmingham business," it observes, "he was the pattern of religious virtue at Olton. He was a familiar figure in Olton parish church, where he worshipped with apparent fervor." Our contemporary adds, with keen sarcasm, that "he is not the only pious man who has fallen a victim to an uninvited scrutiny of his conduct where he did not think the application of his religious principles necessary."

Mr. Gladstone has curious notions of Providence. In his passionate letter to Madame de Novikoff, he speaks of "the wretched Sultan, whom God has given as a curse to mankind." If this be true, it should put an end to the Armenian agitation, or at least turn it into a fresh channel. God Almighty is the responsible party, and Lord Salisbury should send him a strongly-worded remonstrance. Meanwhile the "wretched Sultan"—on Mr. Gladstone's own principles—can justify himself by saying, "I am the curse of God."

St. Winifride's miraculous well has been doing such good business that the landlord—the Holywell Urban Council—has raised the rent. Even miracles, when they are regular, fall under the laws of political economy.

The Chief Constable of Walsall has made himself obnoxious throughout the town by a series of petty persecutions of tradespeople for keeping open their shops on Sunday. The local *Free Press* has a good article upon the subject, and, if other tradespeople follow the example of Mr. Card in refusing to give any undertaking that they will not continue to open, the police authorities will probably soon get tired of the publicity awarded to their pious zeal.

The Rev. H. Chapman is well known as a philanthropic clergyman in South London. Mr. Denman, the magistrate of Lambeth Police Court, however, does not approve of his Christian ways. He said Mr. Chapman took upon himself to write to the witnesses asking them to stop away in order that the case might lapse. It was an attempt to interfere with the course of justice, and anyone who reflected for a moment must see that it was a most improper thing to do. If any other case was brought to his notice of a clergyman or anyone else endeavoring to interfere with anyone coming to the court in the performance of their duties, he should feel it his duty to report all the facts to the Home Office.

A correspondent of the *Daily News* says that "General Gordon entertained a strange belief concerning the 'coco de mer' and the islands where it grows. The hero of Khartoum believed the islands to be the long-sought-for Garden of Eden, and the coco de mer the 'forbidden fruit' which caused the fall of Eve. The conviction had such hold on the gallant soldier that he attempted to prove by the chart of the island that the rivers of the Seychelles corresponded with those mentioned in the Bible."

The Local Government Board has notified to the Stepney Board of Guardians that they will not be justified in adopting the suggestion of Father Highley, that one foundling out of every four should be brought up as a Roman Catholic. The inference is that all children the religion of whose parents cannot be ascertained must be brought up in the tenets of the Church of England.

It is found that several children's games represent once solemn ceremonies and religious rites, and it is suspected that a usual course for effete institutions is to descend to children. Perhaps this may explain the crop of boy preachers that have recently sprung up in America. These are now said to be outdone and outshone by a girl preacher named Clarette Avery. Clarette is only ten years old, and has already brought many (chiefly darkies) to the feet of sweet Jesus.

Professor G. D. Herron, of Grinnel College, Iowa, says: "Our boasted liberties were not born in the faith of our Puritan fathers, but of the Atheism of France." However he may intend it, he is stating simple fact.

It was festival day in a certain small country church in Warwickshire, and the choir were indulging in the luxury of an anthem which they had been assiduously rehearsing for months past. A bold start was made, but, after riding rough-shod over piano and forte passages alike, the vocalists came to a sudden stoppage, and, the bewildered organ-blower forgetting his duties in the general discomfiture, there was an awkward pause for the space of half a minute. The clergyman, a man of resource, thereupon sought to engage the congregation in prayer, a move which the elderly and somewhat privileged clerk approved by remarking, sotto voce, "Aye, parson, let up pray, for I'm dommed if we can sing!"—*Birmingham Daily Mail* (*October 26*).

Captain Ayres says in the *Cosmopolitan*: "Russia still refuses to accept the Gregorian calendar, and has the satisfaction of being a dozen days ahead of the whole world, and is constantly increasing the lead. If the empire and its conservatism endure long enough, Russia's Christmas and our Fourth of July will occur on the same day. This is the most transcendent case of old fogyism I know."

The reason for the objection is, of course, that the people would be disturbed in the celebration of their religious festivals. Western Europe had got ten days out in its reckoning before the Pope sanctioned a reformation, and even after the Papal Bull was issued in 1582 the Protestant countries resisted what they called a papistical invention for more than a century, and when the change was adopted in England in 1752 some people thought they were being deprived of so many years of their lives. In the *Secular Almanack for 1896* Mr. Wheeler has given an account of the various methods of time calculation, and of how they illustrate religion.

Messiahs are plentiful in America. The latest craze is about Francis Schlatter, an ex-shoemaker, whose portrait is given in *The Illustrated American*. He wears his hair long, parts it in the middle, and arranges it *à la* portraits of Jesus Christ. The resemblance at once turns him into a Faith Healer, and he goes about followed by crowds, some of whom look on him as a new incarnation.

The veracious Acts of the Apostles (xix. 11, 12) tell us "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." Schlatter outdoes this. His mail reaches from three to five hundred letters per day. Handkerchiefs from all over the continent come to be blessed. These, Schlatter claims, will do what his touch will for those who have faith in the Master. Of course, many claim that they are cured. What drug or nostrum is there that cannot claim to have healed by faith?

The Rev. Myron Reed, of the Broadway Temple, Denver, acclaims Christ Schlatter as a confutation of Hume. But so many have confuted Hume without even taking the trouble to read him. The "miracles" said to have been

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performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, to the evidence for which Hume appealed to show the unscientific character of such testimony, were far more wonderful than the healings reported of the new Messiah.

The Rev. J. B. Hawthorne, of Atlanta, U.S.A., is scandalised by the wheelwomen. "Recently," said Mr. Hawthorne, "a great religious convention in an Eastern city concluded its exercises by a bicycle race on the streets between seven hundred men, women, and preachers. Could anything less than a personal devil have instigated such a performance?" It is so customary to give Satan the credit for all progress that we do not wonder at Luciferans declaring that he rather deserves to be worshipped than his divine antagonist.

The Dublin *Evening Herald*, in a leader commenting on the Bishop of Down's claim for a University, "exclusively Catholic," in Dublin, Belfast, Cork, and Galway, points out that four such provincial institutions would be more under the complete control of the bishops than a common university, and they would be likely to swamp the institutions which, without any State act, have maintained higher education.

On the coffin of Horace Thatcher, the gentleman's servant who jumped into a pond at Furze Hill, near Woking, were inscribed the words: "I heard the voice of Jesus saying, Come unto me and rest." The inference is that, when the poor boy heard the voice, he concluded to make for the pond.

Dr. J. A. Spurgeon, brother of the late C. H. Spurgeon, preaching lately in a Victoria-park chapel, said that there should be greater belief in pastors as messengers of God. Of course! That's what the pastors like. It flatters their importance. It also promotes their comfort. A man who comes on his own account (say) gets a penny; the man who comes on God's account gets twopence—a penny for himself and a penny for the Almighty.

The G. O. M. compliments a Scottish clergyman, named Baxter, on having demolished Wellhausen. This will gratify the Caledonian man of God, and it will amuse the great German critic. Mr. Gladstone wants to know how long Dr. Baxter's criticism of Wellhausen has been published, in order to see "whether he has had the opportunity of reply." Really this is too simple for anything. Wellhausen is not called upon to reply to everybody who likes to criticise him, and he has plenty of room for controversy at home without going for it all the way to Scotland.

While the G. O. M. is seeing his book on Bishop Butler through the press, it is well to note what a correspondent of the *Daily News* says about the effect of Butler on the late Charles Stewart Parnell. The great Irish leader remarked that he was inclined to be sceptical when they made him read Butler for his examination at Cambridge. It is worth mentioning, in this connection, that it was reading *The Analogy* which made James Mill an Atheist.

"United Prayer," says the *English Churchman*, "is the secret of successful resistance to the encroachments of Romanism and Infidelity." At the same time, it mentions that the Catholics are putting up prayers for the conversion of England. With Catholics at his right ear, and Protestants at his left, we should think Jehovah would have recourse to cotton-wool.

The Catholics want a lot from Lord Salisbury in return for very little help at the elections. A number of their papers are asking for a Catholic University in Ireland, Endowment of the Christian Brothers' Schools, and Mrs. Meynell as Poet Laureate. Beaconsfield used to say that, when a Catholic asked for tolerance, he meant supremacy.

At the Church of England Assembly at Melbourne the Rev. Dr. Torrance gave the following significant notice of motion: "That in order to minimise the existing evil of sweating amongst the clergy of this diocese—(laughter)—especially in the poorer country districts, it is imperative that a united effort be made to provide a living wage for the stipendiary servants of the Church, and to secure, as far as possible, regular and punctual payment of the same." Pity the poor sweated clergy.

All Saints' Church, Norfolk-square, was burnt down in the spring of 1893. A new church on the same spot has just been consecrated and opened for public worship. This time, perhaps, the "consecration" will be more efficacious.

Delightful old Dr. Kinns has been giving a series of lectures at York on "The Historical Accuracy of the Bible." He wound up with Daniel, which sufficiently illustrates his method. Daniel speaks of Babylonian history and of the capture of Babylon. Well, from Babylon itself we get accounts of its history and of its capture; therefore, all Daniel says must be true, including the story of himself in the den of lions and the three Jews unharmed in the furnace of fire.

From the *Methodist Times* we see that, since 1870, the Anglicans have doubled their schools, and the Catholics have quadrupled theirs, while the Methodists have been stationary. The annual grant to Church schools is £2,700,000, to Board schools £2,600,000, to Catholic schools £300,000, to Methodist schools £198,000. These figures enable every sensible man to understand why the Methodists want to regulate religious education in the Board schools.

"We can never forget," the *Methodist Times* says, "that the real leaders of the Socialist movement on the Continent are bitter and aggressive Atheists, equally opposed to Christian truth and to Christian morals." "Christian *truth*" is good, only it begs the question. Atheists call it "Christian *falsehood*." As for "Christian morals," the Atheist prefers the substantive without the adjective. Was it not Dr. Johnson who said that the adjective is always the enemy of the noun? It certainly is so in this case.

Mr. Grant Allen has done good work for Freethought and general progress, but we regret to see that he is becoming too self-conscious. "This is a Hill-top Novel," he says of a new book of his. "I propose in future," he continues, "to add the words 'A Hill-top Novel' to each one of my stories which I write on my own account, simply and solely for the sake of embodying force of my own opinion. Whenever, therefore, the words 'A Hill-top Novel' appear on the title-page of a book by me, the reader who cares for truth and righteousness may take it for granted that the book represents my own original thinking, good or bad." This reminds us of persons who have two standards of truth—one on oath, and one without it. In any case, the public have nothing to do with Mr. Grant Allen's motives in writing, whether it be to make money, or to satisfy himself, or to promote certain principles; and if Mr. Allen goes on talking so much about his motives, his novels will become sermons, which people will not read for the mere sake of truth and righteousness.

We put this question to Mr. Grant Allen: Can he imagine Shakespeare, or even Shelley or George Meredith, hanging out a notice: "Dear friends, listen to me now; I'm really in earnest this time; and you may always take me seriously when you see this announcement"?

Dr. Berdoe, the well-known Browningite, is stated to have been converted from Agnosticism to Christianity by a study of the poet. How amusing, when Browning declared that he was not a Christian himself! We have not read Dr. Berdoe's new book on Browning as a Christian teacher; but, judging from the review of it by "W. A." (William Archer?) in the *Daily Chronicle*, it is a very washy production.

How religion asserts itself when people are frightened! During the recent earthquake at Rome a rush was made for the churches, which were soon filled with excited crowds praying for mercy. It was an old Roman poet who said that fear was the first creator of gods. And he was right.

Considering that the Pope is God's vicegerent on earth, it is very curious that the earthquake—which, of course, was sent by Providence—gave the Vatican a good shaking, but did not disturb the palace of his enemy, the King of Italy.

The Pope, however, will find consolation in the large contributions that are flowing in to him from all parts of the Catholic world. Last year's receipts for the Propagation of the Faith amounted to more than six million lire, half of which came from France. To quote Shylock, it is a good round sum; enough to make the old man of the Vatican smile all over his face.

The parsons of Simon's Town, Cape Colony, wash their hands of paupers, and resolutely refuse to bury them without fee. The duty of burial falls on the resident magistrate. Of such are the kingdom of heaven!

Mr. Tom Hough, the leader of the Denaby Main surfacemen, who are out on strike, seems to have read the Bible at some time or other, but to retain a vague recollection of its contents. According to the *Sheffield Independent*, he referred to the strike of the Jews against Pharaoh, and said it was the biggest on record, as forty-two million bricklayers were engaged in it. Someone in the meeting exclaimed, "Oh"; but Mr. Hough replied, "Yes." We always thought that Bible arithmetic was comical; but Mr. Hough makes it still funnier. He would be an amusing Sunday-school teacher.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 10, Alexandra Hall, Hope-street, Sherlock-street, Birmingham: 11, "Religion in the Light of Science"; 3, "Life, Death, and After"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

November 17, Leicester.

December 1, Bradford; 22, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—November 10, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 11, Stockton-on-Tees; 17, Liverpool; 24, Manchester. December 1, Wood Green; 15 and 22, Foresters' Hall.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

D. Denton.—Freethinkers will get no more consideration from politicians than they can extort.

Consistency.—Mr. Foote will be happy to pay Hull another visit. Why are the local "saints" so quiet? If a hall cannot be obtained on the system of charging for admission, let us admit the people free. Anything is better than stagnation, and Mr. Foote is prepared to take all risks.

J. Fulton, in sending another subscription to Shilling Month, says: "I am sorry to see only small sums sent. No £10, £50, or £100. You have to depend on the comparatively poor."

W. R. Newton.—Transferred as desired. Thanks.

W. Hardiman.—We are obliged to you for your good wishes.

A. J. H.—See paragraph.

W. Wilson.—Colonel Ingersoll cannot punish his libellers in England. The pamphlet you refer to was written by a low-caste American, who is disowned by his co-religionists.

A. Willeby.—Thanks. See paragraph.

Unknown.—Dr. Kinns is simply farcical as a scientist championing the Bible. We have no space to waste upon him.

G. Crookson desires to correct our last week's paragraph on the Miners' Hall incident. The objection was to letting the place for Sunday lectures. It has been engaged for a week-night lecture by Mr. Cohen. The bigotry of the officials is bad enough, but not so bad as we represented.

W. Richards (Edmonton).—Mr. Foote is in receipt of your invitation—which may or may not be authorised—to attend a lecture by the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale in your locality, with a view to offering opposition; or, failing that, to send a representative. Mr. Foote replies (1) that he has more important business than running after Mr. Woffendale, and (2) that he has no authority to send a representative to that gentleman's meetings.

H. Cooke.—Thanks for cuttings. Glad to hear you are so pleased at the opportunity of hearing Mr. Foote again at Birmingham.

J. G. Dobson, Stockton-on-Tees, writes: "Mr. Cohen has lectured here under your new lecture scheme. Both his lectures were very highly appreciated. We have arranged with Mr. Watts to give us a lecture on November 11, also under your scheme."

C. Heaton.—The second part of the last chapter of Mark, beginning with the ninth verse, is marked in the Revised Version as not to be found in some of the oldest manuscripts. It does not appear in either the Vatican or the Sinaitic. It is omitted by Tischendorf.

L. Organ suggests that G. L. Mackenzie should be made Poet Laureate with an enlarged salary.

R. S. Johnson.—Pleased to know that the Northampton friends "admire" our "courage and determination to keep Freethought to the front." Mr. Foote will lecture in your town at an early date if you can secure him a good, or even passable, hall.

Minnie Many.—Thanks. See paragraph.

A. G. Levett.—It shall be reprinted in full next week. Too late for this week's issue.

C. Lacoq.—Something will be done at Cardiff shortly.

Papers Received.—Pioneer—Look Times—Post—Birmingham Daily Mail—Referee—Sheffield and Rotherham Independent—Cambria Daily Leader—Glasgow Herald—Freethought Ideal—Yorkshire Herald—Melbourne Argus—Truthseeker—Liberator—Birmingham Argus—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Belfast Evening Telegraph—Yorkshire Post—Fur Unsere Jugend—De Dageraad—Arbeiter's Freund—Der Arme Teufel—Open Court—Woking News—Dublin Evening Herald—Daily Telegraph.

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

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SHILLING MONTH.

Shilling Month is now over, though a few subscriptions are still dribbling in, and will be duly acknowledged. I have received (roughly) about £90. This will enable me to push on with my lecture scheme, though it will not last long if operations are to be conducted with any vigor. I shall probably trouble my readers again in the new year. I will then state what has been done, and I hope the account will be satisfactory. Meanwhile, I may add that I have engaged St. James's Hall for another course of Sunday lectures in January, and that I am arranging for courses of week-night lectures in various parts of London.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

T. Smith; R. Ogilvie; J. Barbour; C. B. Hyde, 2s. 6d.; W. Hardiman, 2s.; John Cuff, 5s.; W. H. Putz; C. Lecoq and Friends, 5s.; J. Unsworth; R. Richards, 4s.; J. Hawkey, 5s.; Three Friends, 2s.; M. Messer; R. S. Johnson; Garley; Minerva, 2s. 6d.; M. L. B.; J. S. Doig, 5s.; J. Walker, 5s.; J. M., 1s. 6d.; D. D., 10s.; L. Sisman, 5s.; Alpha's Friend; Consistency; J. Fulton, 5s.; S. Hartmann, 10s.; C. L. Daniel, 5s.; G. J. Holyoake, 3s.

Per Miss Vance:—G. Dickenson; S. Alward, 2s. 6d.

Per R. Forder:—J. Chamberlain, 2s.; "Edaw," 3s.; W. Tipper, 2s.; J. Denham; J. F. Finn, 10s.; G. F. Wenborn, 5s.; J. H. White; W. Macfarlane, 5s.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote delivered the inaugural lecture on Sunday evening for the Bradlaugh Club and Institute at Balls Pond, Mr. R. Forder occupying the chair. The hall, which is of moderate size, though large enough for the locality, has been tastefully decorated and comfortably seated. Prior to the lecture Mr. Foote "named" the baby girl of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, of the Wood Green Branch. He also expressed a hope that Freethought propaganda would continue to be the first object with the new Club, and that the social element, which is always liable to overwhelm the rest, would be kept in its proper place as an accessory. Mr. Forder stated, on behalf of the promoters, that this was exactly the policy they intended to pursue. After the lecture there was some rather ridiculous opposition, which had to be taken as one of the penalties of free discussion. We understand that Mr. Parris follows Mr. Foote this evening (November 10).

Mr. Foote has not visited Birmingham since his last lecture in the Town Hall. To-day (November 10) he delivers three lectures in the Alexandra Hall, Hope-street, for the N.S.S. Branch, which is now domiciled there. Tea will be provided before the evening lecture for friends from a distance. Mr. Foote hopes to meet readers of the *Freethinker* from the surrounding districts.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured to a large audience last Sunday morning at the Newington Reform Club. In the evening he spoke to an enthusiastic gathering at Foresters' Hall. This Sunday, November 10, Mr. Watts lectures three times at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and to-morrow, Monday evening, at Stockton-on-Tees.

Mr. C. Cohen occupies the Foresters' Hall platform this evening (November 10). We hope he will have the encouragement of a good house, and that Mr. Foote, who is responsible for the expenses, will have the encouragement of a good collection.

It has been decided to publish the *Secular Almanack*, issued by the National Secular Society, at threepence. The issue for 1896 will be on sale soon after the date of this number of the *Freethinker*. The reduced price places it

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within the reach of all, and, as any profit goes to the society, we bespeak for it the patronage of our readers.

A few days ago, in conversation with Mr. George Anderson, we learnt that he had just been in communication with a friend he had lost sight of for more than forty years, and all through one of Mr. Putnam's letters in the *Truthseeker*. The friend in question saw a reference to George Anderson there, and said to himself, "Why, that must be *my* George Anderson." He wrote and discovered that it was, and now they are "Dear Georging" and "Dear Williaming" each other as though they had only parted yesterday. So strong is the friendship formed in the god-like time of youth.

Fifty years ago Mr. Anderson belonged to a Young Men's Society at Arbroath, and he converted nearly all the members to Freethought; though the Society degenerated when he left it, for when he returned some time afterwards he found them discussing whether an old maid or a young widow made the best wife.

It was at this period of his life that Mr. Anderson became acquainted with William Cant Sturoc, who visited America, settled down there, and so disappeared. The place of his settlement was Sunapee, in Sullivan county. He was admitted to the bar in 1855, and is now a respected citizen, widely known for intelligence and integrity, for liberal thought and a certain poetic gift which even law has not succeeded in suppressing. A portrait of him appeared in the *Granite Monthly* for December, 1893. The face is keen and intellectual, with geniality and humor about the eyes and mouth.

Mr. Anderson asked Mr. Sturoc whether the law over there was as badly against Freethought as it is here. Mr. Sturoc replies that there is no State law against selling tickets or charging a door-fee on Sunday, but municipal regulations have lately been enforced to put down Sunday theatricals and concerts. There are occasionally fanatical outbursts, encouraged by the clergy, against individual rights. Societies may take and hold property, but the intention of testators is sometimes frustrated by bigoted judges.

The Humanitarian League has just issued *The Shadow of the Sword*, by Mr. Foote, as No. 19 of its publications. The pamphlet has been revised and slightly enlarged. It remains to be seen whether the Press boycott against the President of the National Secular Society will be maintained in connection with this essay in favor of peace. In any case, it is to be presumed that the pamphlet will find fresh readers now that it is issued by the Humanitarian League.

The *Weekly Times and Echo* calls Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword* "one of the most eloquent pleas for Peace" it has ever seen.

The Rev. W. W. Howard, we see, is occupying some of his leisure in lecturing on noses. It is an organ on which clericals should be excellent authorities, for the priests of all religions have been leading people by the nose from time immemorial. In the course of his lecture Mr. Howard figured as a champion of phrenology, which strikes us as rather curious on the part of one who is so anxious to establish the soul theory of mental phenomena. However that may be, we are glad to notice that Mr. Howard takes another step towards the proposed debate with Mr. Foote. He sends another letter to the *Leek Times*, in which he formulates the proposition he is prepared to maintain. It is as follows: "That the soul theory—and the soul theory only—can render a full and true account of the human mind and all its operations." Mr. Howard desires Mr. Foote to formulate a proposition implying some other theory. Mr. Foote is prepared to do this, but he is not prepared to include the word "full" as well as the word "true." An account may be *true* without being *full*—that is, if *full* means *complete*, as most people will understand it. Science has not said the last word on "the operations of the human mind," any more than it has said the last word on many other things that are purely natural. Mr. Howard seems to be very much on his guard, and Mr. Foote may as well follow the reverend gentleman's example. He will therefore go no farther than he is justified in doing by present-day science, for, not being a prophet, he is unable to anticipate the science of the future. Accordingly, he advances the following proposition to be maintained in debate: "That the phenomena of what is called the human mind are but an aspect of man's organic activities, and do not imply the presence of a second or spiritual entity." This is all that any philosophical "Materialist"—if that word *must* be used—is called upon to maintain. It is the only theory, in fact, which remains when the soul theory is demolished; and it is expressed in language, not of popular freedom, but of scientific exactitude

A recent answer in our "Correspondents'" column has caused disappointment amongst the members of the Lewisham and New Cross Branch. We remarked that "we should like to see some lecturing done here"; but it appears that the Branch has had a great many lectures delivered during the past year at Deptford, which we did not know was within the sphere of its operations. Of course, we are very sorry for the mistake. It is another proof that we are not infallible. The secretary informs us that the Branch is much indebted to Mr. James for his services as a lecturer. All concerned in the local work have had an uphill fight, but they are now enjoying a considerable measure of success.

The *Pioneer*, of North London, continues its excellent reports of "Secularism at Wood Green," devoting a column to Mr. Forder's lecture on the Devil.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway lectures at South Place Chapel this morning (November 10) on "The Centenary of Paine's *Age of Reason*." A hundred years have elapsed since the publication of the first part of that brilliant work. The author paid the penalty of being in advance of his time, but his revenge has come, for the Higher Criticism is only the *Age of Reason* writ large—and dull.

The Paine Exhibition at South Place Chapel will take place on December 2. It is likely that another one will follow at the Bradlaugh Institute, Balls Pond, on January 29, Paine's Birthday.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake, in sending his Shilling Month subscription, says that "a cold has delayed transmission." We are sorry to hear of the veteran's indisposition, and hope by this time he is thoroughly recovered.

Vamadeo Shastri, writing in the November *Fortnightly* on "Brahmanism and the Foundations of Belief," mentions that Christian missionaries in India always employ against the Brahman teaching and tradition those very arguments which Mr. Balfour terms rationalistic, "touching the absurdity of our worships and beliefs, the incredibility of our miraculous narrative, the want of authenticity of our scriptures, and so on." Sauce for the Hindu goose is sauce for the Christian gander. Vamadeo Shastri also shows that in India they have long had that supremacy of authority over reason for which Mr. Balfour argues, and, at the same time, are untrammelled by definite dogmatic creeds.

Walter F. Reid writes in the November *Westminster Review* on "Huxley as Evolutionist," and contends that Huxley was no instantaneous convert struck by the novelty of the theory, but accepted it as the only possible explanation of the facts, after full deliberation.

Placing the Passion Play, by Signor Giovani Bovio, on the *Index* has made it popular all over Italy. Miss Helen Zimmern, who reviews the play in the *Zukunft*, Berlin, thinks this opposition to modern passion plays is easy to explain. During the Middle Ages the stage was entirely under the supervision of the Church. To-day dramatists are free from the influence of the priests, whom the masses no longer follow as sheep follow their shepherd. The public notice and applaud scepticism, and the higher the ethical and artistic value of a play, the stronger becomes clerical opposition.

South London friends, and perhaps some North London ones too, will remember the entertainment next Wednesday evening (Nov. 13) in the Camberwell Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell-road. It is in aid of the President's new lecture scheme. Mr. Charles Watts will give a selection from *The Lady of Lyons*, and Mr. Foote a reading from Shakespeare. Mr. A. B. Moss and Miss Annie Brown will take part, with others, in a domestic comedy; and Mr. Watts in a comedietta entitled *The Morning Call*. A Society Dance by Miss Harding and songs by Madame Kate Burgwitz will complete the program. The tickets, sixpence and one shilling each, can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or at the Secular Hall.

Miss Vance inquires if any member or friend has a lad of about 14 or 16 willing to assist with the bookstall on Sunday at Foresters' Hall.

The Plymouth Branch holds a special business meeting this evening (November 10th), at 7, in the Democratic Hall, Whimple Street. All members are requested to attend.

He who goes through a land and scatters blown roses may be tracked next day by their withered petals that strew the ground; but he who goes through it and scatters rose seed a hundred years after leaves behind a land full of fragrance and beauty for a monument, and as a heritage for all his children.—*Theodore Parker.*

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MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (October 5).

FROM Bognor, through the varying palaces of the moonlit night, I again return to London.

Sunday morning, September 1, dawns with cloudless sky. I drift in the morning sunshine over to the home of Foote, and take my last smoke in the garden where happy hours have passed. I have dinner with Mr. and Mrs. George Ward, and meet our veteran comrade, Tripp, of Brighton. In the afternoon I go to Finsbury Park, where Stanley Jones is wrestling with the Christians. He has a two hours' battle of it, but maintains the cause at every point. I take tea with Mr. and Mrs. Fleming, and then we make our way to Foresters' Hall, where I deliver my last lecture in England, "Ingersoll and Freethought," to a splendid audience—splendid in numbers, splendid in enthusiasm, splendid in its welcome to Mr. Foote as the representative of British Freethought, and to his co-worker from America. I must thank Mr. Foote for the thorough-going manner in which he has supported my labors in the field, and for his whole-souled greeting to me as a guest. He has been a comrade, indeed, with chivalrous devotion to the cause. Success has been the result, as witnessed by this great and applauding gathering. Mr. Foote is a man full of resources. If one opportunity fails, he seizes another. He has recently made a vigorous movement upon the West-End, at St. James's Hall. Bradlaugh, in his palmy days, made no effort upon this side of London. The importance of Mr. Foote's new departure is now conceded, and he has won fresh laurels in this campaign. He has met new faces and enlarged the sphere of Secular work, while abandoning no post. I believe the Freethought forces in London were never in better condition for advance, under this brave and cautious leader. I am sure that the series of lectures at Foresters' Hall will be a pronounced success. The enthusiastic conclusion of my own labors marks the beginning of a victorious winter's campaign. Mr. Watts lectures the next two Sundays, and he is a favorite with London audiences, as elsewhere, and always draws the full quota of our columns. I must thank him also for his unstinted aid. He arranged the whole course of my lectures in such a way that I could do the most work and see the best of the country. I could not have accomplished nearly as much without his cheerful assistance. I can only hope to repay the generosity of my British comrades when they come to see the grandeur and magnificence of America. Of course, while I admire the old country, with its vast accumulations of knowledge and art, I must still affirm that America beats the world, for in it is the immeasurable promise of the future. We may not have done much yet, but think of the mighty theatre, with mountains, rivers, lakes, and plains, in which millions of the human race will develop. Well, Foote and Watts must come to our shores, and I will show them a thing or two when they arrive. They shall have a warm welcome, and they shall be assured that the Freethinkers of America appreciate the work they have done as the representatives of our British brethren; and through them we will join heart and hand with all transatlantic comrades.

Monday, August 26, was also a day of pleasure, for I visited the far-famed Windsor Castle with Mr. Victor Jackson and the secretaries of the National Secular Society and the London Federation, Miss Edith M. Vance and Miss Annie Brown. The secretaries were formerly residents of Windsor; Miss Brown's father for nearly half a century has been employed in Windsor Castle itself; and so with these friends I had plenty of chance to see the glory of this magnificent structure, the largest royal residence in the world. I do not know whether we could have a Windsor Castle without royalty or not, but it is certainly a precious gift to the present generation, and may it endure when democracy shall triumph. Kings and queens have flourished here, and their day is gone; but not with them shall vanish the splendor of this imposing edifice. I cannot describe all I saw; I can give only glimpses. Of course I climbed the Round Tower, and was repaid for the somewhat difficult journey up the winding staircase. It was a memorable view that greeted the eye—the river Thames winding along, Eton College, the great forests, the deer and cattle, the vast fields, the city itself at my feet; the castle with its walls and turrets, its moat, its gateways, its pavilions and chapels, its assemblage of massive halls and chambers. Before me lay the accumulated result of the toils of many kings. It was a bright and beautiful picture, for little of tragedy is connected with Windsor Castle, "The muses' and the monarch's seat." It reminds one of gorgeous revelry, of the brightness and not the darkness of the past. After the tower we were guided into the State apartments, the Vandyck room, the Zuccarelli room, the Ante-room, the Grand Vestibule, the Waterloo Chamber, St. George's Hall, the Guard Chamber, and so forth. The paintings, statues, porcelains, curiosities that I looked upon, I cannot enumerate. It was a vast display, and I don't see that the queen can own it any more than the rest of us, for we certainly could enjoy all its beauty and draw lessons from its historic associations, its wonders of human ingenuity and power.

After we had visited the castle, and enjoyed an excellent repast purveyed by our good friend Victor Jackson, the same generous comrade secured a "trap," and we had a drive through the great park and to Runnymede. The "long walk," I believe, surpasses the world for grace and ornamentation. It is straight as an arrow for three miles—direct from the royal entrance of Windsor to the statue of George the Fourth. On either side are wide ranks of trees, and beyond these are open spaces of green fields, which, again, are hedged in by ampler forests. As we ascend towards the statue, the scenery broadens. Forest on forest appears; fields are added to fields; farther on are smooth pastures flecked with wandering herds; while the majestic castle, illumined by the setting sun, crowns the landscape with superb form. With soft, grassy banks, and bosom rippled by passing boats, the river flashes on our sight. The fair meadows of Runnymede stretch away where the shafts of sunset seem to glimmer on the armor of old barons. Quaint houses edge the road, with ivied walls and rose-embowered windows. Green hedges slip by us as we near the lighted streets, and the horse, spurred by thoughts of supper and guided by a skilful hand, gets on an extra move. It was a time when I could see Herne the hunter, and Falstaff, and the merry wives of Windsor, the oak in the moonlight with the fairies dancing about it, and the many-colored lanterns. Windsor is not simply the home of royalty. It is a palace of poetry, and its surroundings are replete with legend and romance. I must thank my friends for this day. Windsor Castle will not be forgotten, nor the companions associated with its entrancing scenes.

Tuesday is another day of notable experience. I visit Epping Forest and its vicinity, the greatest playground in the world, where for miles one may wander in sylvan solitudes. This forest is now preserved for the pleasure of the people. For centuries it was encroached upon by avaricious landlords; but, by Act of Parliament, hereafter its "contiguity of shade" will be untouched, and millions can roam in its bowers and drink the pure air of heaven—especially on Sundays. Such is the march of the people.

Forder takes me out, and we land at Aybridge, Essex. Mr. Moody meets us at the station, and takes us to White Hart Hotel, of which he is proprietor. We have a delightful welcome from both Mr. and Mrs. Moody, who are Freethinkers, and together we take a drive to King's Head, at Chigwell. This is an antique place, celebrated by Charles Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge* as the Maypole. Of it the novelist says: "Such a delicious old inn, opposite the churchyard; such an out-of-the-way rural place." It is to-day just as Dickens described it in *Barnaby Rudge*. He lived here himself when he wrote that great book. It is said that Queen Elizabeth lodged here. No one knows when it was built, but scarcely any change has overtaken the place in its structure. The walls, the rooms, the window-panes, are the same. It is a place for dim, sweet memories. The garden is especially lovely. It has all sorts of little nooks, bowers, flower beds, and grassy plots. No wonder Dickens loved this place, and fostered his genius with its exquisite surroundings. It is now kept by Tucker Bros., who warmly welcomed the Secular Pilgrim, having themselves been denizens of America. If within twelve miles of London one wishes to see real old English buildings and rural life, and enjoy the luxury of unruffled quietude, he must find his way to King's Head, Chigwell. It was to me a poetic revelation of "things that were."

White Hart Hotel is also an attractive caravansary. Mine host, Moody, is a provider of all good things, and believes in one world at a time. This is a favorite haunt of those who hunt and fish, and the little village is at times as crowded as the thoroughfares of London. My day at Aybridge was one of especial entertainment.

And now time rolls on to the farewell banquet. The Holborn is one of the most famous restaurants in London. It is a bright, handsome, cheery place. It has an air both of elegance and comfort. At the hour of dinner music fills its spacious halls. Flowers are seen on every side with tropical luxuriance. In the Holborn you have the "golden mean," art and beauty without depressing pomp or the restraint of rigid upholstery. No wonder that reformers love to congregate here, for they can have the good things of life, with brilliant surroundings, in a free-and-easy fashion. I hate some hotels. It seems a sacrifice of radical principle to enter their stiff and stately corridors. But the Holborn has a broad and wholesome look, inviting to the iconoclast, while he admires the beautiful.

So we gather here, and it was one of the happiest occasions of my life. The friends are numerous and widely representative of Freethought in England. George W. Foote presides over the festivities, with the Pilgrim on his right and the redoubtable Watts on his left. George Anderson, George Jacob Holyoake, Parris, Forder, Ward, Wheeler, Moss, Rowney, Mr. Gimson, of Leicester, Mr. Gilbespie, of Newcastle, Mr. Tripp, of Brighton, C. A. Watts

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Edward Truelove, Mr. Heaford, and Victor Jackson are among those who brighten the circle. The ladies who grace the banquet are Mrs. Foote, Mrs. Watts, Miss Jessie Nowlan, Mrs. Charles A. Watts, Miss Vance, Miss Annie Brown, Mrs. Ward, Miss Robins, Mrs. Heaford, and Mrs. Wheeler. Mr. and Mrs. Sumner are present, and Mr. and Mrs. Moody, of Aybridge. I cannot enumerate the whole, because the names shine along somewhere towards a hundred, good and true friends, who link England and America in glorious comradery. From time immemorial eating together has been the symbol of companionship—a very sensible, solid, materialistic, and humanitarian custom, which will no doubt endure as long as man has a good appetite and a generous heart. We did full justice to the ancient and honorable *régime*, and the Holborn certainly did its part in the hospitable program with triumphant felicity, while we did the rest. However, we did not consume in silence. The play of fancy mingled with the satisfaction of the material frame. Then came the after-dinner speeches, upon whose sacred altar Mr. Foote offered himself as the first victim. No one could do it more gracefully, or with more genial effect. He brought us at once into the glow of fellowship by his eloquence and humor. He did not clothe the occasion with melancholy. He looked upon the bright side of the farewell hour. "We are simply going to different fields of labor," he said, "and the same flag floats over us all." Then was drank the health of the representative of American Freethought. This was responded to first of all by George Jacob Holyoake, who spoke good words for American Freethought, of Ingersoll and his coadjutors, whose work is followed with interest throughout Great Britain. Mr. Holyoake referred to the letters of the Pilgrim, which he declared displayed a luminous knowledge of the fields of labor through which he had passed. I was glad to find that I had hit the mark, and was, on the whole, a correct observer, for I considered it of the first importance to give a veritable picture of the British Isles. Mr. Holyoake was followed by Mr. Gimson and Mr. Parris, whose words were indeed pleasant for me to listen to; and then came Watts, who is always good, and on this occasion especially so, for he spoke out of the experiences of many years and many places. We had been together both in England and America, side by side with Ingersoll, with Bennett, with Macdonald, in the New World, and now with Foote and all our brave allies in the Old. Mr. Watts touched the deepest chords of the occasion and voiced its noblest meaning, and made a fitting and inspiring close to the splendid words which had been spoken in sympathy with the kindred people of America. I made response with heartfelt utterance to these fraternal greetings, and in behalf of America spoke the message of progress and universal brotherhood. "We need these occasions," I said, "in order to rejoice in hope and courage. We cannot work alone. We must work together. Liberty, science, and humanity are the words that blaze on our banners, and above is the noble motto of Paine, 'The world is my country.'"

The speeches were followed by a recitation from Mrs. Charles Watts, whose humorous descriptions of mankind and elevation of woman were received with many plaudits. We were delighted that the "weaker sex" had such a brilliant representative, who was able to hold her own with such sparkling wit, and thus added to the *éclat* of the banquet. Then music filled the air, and merry songs made glad the heart. Mr. George Anderson afterwards gave one of the best speeches of the evening. Mr. Anderson seldom speaks; he does the work; but when he does speak it is to the point. He referred to the arduous labors of Mr. Foote; the many difficulties that beset him; the magnanimous spirit in which he had met them; the bold methods to which he had resorted, and the success he had attained. He spoke of the necessity of standing loyally by Mr. Foote, in order that there might be unity and concentration in the Freethought ranks and victory for the cause. He proposed the health of President Foote, which was drank with ringing applause. Mr. Foote eloquently answered, affirming that he did not claim to be infallible, but that he did the best he could, and would continue to do so. He did not ask support for his individual opinions, but for the measures devised as chief of the party, whose sole purpose was the advancement of the cause. In these we must combine. The response given to Mr. Foote shows that he has the entire confidence of the party; that the heart of Freethought Britain is with him; and with Mr. Watts, Mr. Anderson, and hundreds of unflinching supporters, he will push forward the lines to assured victory.

We close with singing "Auld Lang Syne." I can sing that song myself, and therefore it was a unanimous melody. Everybody takes a hand in it, as well as a note. I join hands with Anderson on the final stanza, and this stanza is given with a vim that the bards of Scotland cannot surpass. What visions of the past, what glories of the future, are in this beautiful song, whose music is heard the world over, beside a thousand camp-fires and hearth-stones; on mountain, plain, and sea; in cottage and palace. After the song we still linger. This is the last time I shall see many friends. We shake hands and say good-bye. We know not what is before us, but we have a heart for any fate. It's no use to repine or trust in Providence. We trust in ourselves and hope for good fortune. There may be sundering oceans, but humanity bridges them all. The heart of man is mightier than time or space.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

HUXLEY ON MORALS.

ABOUT a year before his death, Professor Huxley wrote the following letter to a correspondent, who inquired his view of the relation of religions and moral:—

"Hodeslea, Staveley-road, Eastbourne, July 11, 1894.

"MY DEAR MR. CREELMAN,—'Ethics' I take to be the science of conduct, a statement of the rules the observance of which tends to the attainment of the objects which are termed ethical. I conceive ethics to be as much a science as navigation, and not unlike it in so far as it tells us how to steer through life.

"'Theology' professes to be a science which furnishes men with truths which have to be taken into account for the guidance of conduct, in addition to those which are attainable by observation and experiment in the realm of nature.

"I, for my part, repudiate the claims of theology to interfere, because I consider it to be a science based on unproved and often highly improbable assumptions. Most people mix up religion with theology, and conceive that the essence of religion is the worship of some theological hypothesis or other. They may be right or wrong, but what I mean by 'religion' is the devotion to an ideal based on intense sympathy with the course of conduct exemplified by that ideal.

"That to the attainment of which a man gives all his energies is the real object of his worship (whatever he may prefer to venerate), from him 'whose god is his belly' up to the purest lover of truth or of his kind.

"On this view no one is without a 'religion' of some sort, and there is no need of any special religious faculty.

"Thus every man's ethical ideal is a matter of feeling. His 'ethics,' as a science, simply tell him the best way of attaining his ideal, just as the ship-captain settles in his mind the port which he wishes to reach, and applies the rules of the science of navigation to get there.—I am, yours very sincerely, T. H. HUXLEY."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE Monthly Executive Meeting was held at the Club and Institute Buildings on Thursday, October 31; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler, E. Truelove, T. Parris, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, S. Hartmann, R. Forder, E. Bater, T. Gorniot, S. Jones, A. F. Taylor, J. N. Zwiebel, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received.

A matter of grave importance, adjourned from last meeting for the attendance of a member who was alleged to have circulated scandalous reports in connection with the President, was then dealt with. After further inquiry, it was moved by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, and seconded by Mr. Charles Watts: "That Mr. James Anderson be declared no longer a member of the National Secular Society." Carried.

The Editors reported that the Society's *Almanack* was now in the press.

The President made a further statement with respect to the Hall of Science, and ultimately Mr. Watts moved, and Mr. Moss seconded: "That this Executive, after his action in regard to the Hall of Science, declines to sit any longer with Mr. R. O. Smith as a vice-president, and calls upon him to resign his membership of the Society." Carried unanimously.

The President again referred to his lecture scheme and the proposed operations for the winter. It was satisfactory to know that West-end halls could be engaged for Freethought lectures.

After other minor matters, the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, *Assistant Secretary.*

The Rev. T. A. Goodwin, D.D., contends, in *Open Court*, that "the Song of Song was probably founded upon some fact in the life of that lecherous king, Solomon; and that the headings of the chapters and the running titles in our common family Bibles are positively ludicrous." If so, why finds it place in an alleged revelation from the Most High?

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BOOK CHAT.

The Free Review (Sonnenschein & Co.), edited by G. A. Singer, maintains its character as an able and interesting organ of advanced ideas. The articles that specially appeal to Freethinkers are a witty one by W. Roberts on "The Reunion of Christendom," another on "Belief and Truth," by D. H. Balfour, and the conclusion of Ernest Newman's brilliant paper on "Amiel." J. McGavin Sloan's article "On Meliorism" is as bright as it is sensible. "Marriage and Free Love" is discussed by F. Rockell and W. F. Dunton, who both seem to us to require a large dose of sobriety. Cato continues his thoughtful paper on "King Alcohol and Liberalism," and G. E. Macdonald, in "The Emperor's Bugbear," shows how social democracy is artificially stimulated by the repressive measures of Bismarck and the young Bombastes Furioso who took the reins of power from his hands.

* * *

What cranks contrive to get their volumes published! The funniest we have come across for a while is Mr. James Robert Smith, who, in a volume entitled *Expository Thoughts on the Creation*, undertakes the little task of reconciling Scripture and Science. It appears that, prior to the commencement of the first "day," two persons of the Trinity, by a "corporeal act," originated the five compound elements of nature—viz., aëriform vesicular matter, wind, watery vesicular matter, oleaginous vesicular matter, and salt. Then these "began moving and rotating." . . . . The air thickened into "unctuous vapour," and this into seas, whence were evolved zoophytes, molluscs, radiata, and eventually marine creatures (now extinct), which attained an immense size. Penguins, cranes, sparrows, and redpoles followed, and, as a wind-up, Adam was generated "solely by a female gorilla." Perhaps Mr. J. R. Smith is a subtle humorist. Anyway, we commend his volume to the attention of all anxious to reconcile the Bible with scientific belief.

* * *

The new volume (44) of *The Dictionary of National Biography* gives an extensive notice of Charles Henry Pearson, the pessimistic author of *National Life and Character*. It mentions his services to education in Australia, and says: "He was a firm supporter of secular education as established in the colony, thinking it the only means of securing perfect fairness towards all religious denominations." John Macleay Peacock, the verse-writer, is mentioned, but Mr. Walter Lewin, who writes the notice, does not say that his chief contributions were made to the *National Reformer*, nor does he indicate his Freethought opinions beyond the line, "In both politics and religion he was always radical." Miss Cooke gives an account of Reginald Peacock, the first sceptical bishop (1395–1460?), to which we shall probably return.

* * *

Dr. Rendel Harris, in the *Expositor* for November, returns to the question of "The Blessed Virgin in the Talmud." He is able to cite Dr. Neubauer as confirming his view and that of Laible, that Mary Magdela, the woman's hairdresser of the Talmud, is identified with Mary Magdalene, and also with Mary, the mother of Jesus. Dr. Harris says: "The confusion between the two Marys is very early in the Syrian Church." But he does not contemplate the possibility that it was the Christians who misinterpreted the Jewish story, for this might lead to the conclusion that the Jewish tradition about the birth of Jeshu, embodied in the *Jewish Life of Christ*, is older and better authenticated than the Christian tradition.

* *

Philo's Treatise about the Contemplative Life is critically edited by F. C. Conybeare, M.A. (Oxford Clarendon Press), who, in a lengthy and learned "Excursus on the Authorship," defends its genuineness against Lucius, Harnack, Graetz, etc. This is the work which led "Eusebius" to say that the Alexandrian Therapeutæ were Christians. Mr. Conybeare's excursus is of considerable importance to all students of the origins of Christianity.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE CHURCHES AND VIVISECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As evidence of the total disregard which the Roman Catholic Church has always shown for animals, I quote the following passage from an article on "The Lower Animals," in *The Catholic Dictionary*, by W. H. Addis and T. Arnold, 1884: "The brutes are made for man, who has the same right over them which he has over plants and stones. He may, according to the express permission of God given to Noe, kill them for his food; and if it is lawful to destroy them for food, and this without strict necessity, it must also be lawful to put them to death, or to inflict pain on them for any good and reasonable end; such as the promotion of man's knowledge, health, etc., or even for the purpose of recreation" (quoted in *Animals' Rights*, Appendix, p. 161; London: George Bell & Sons, 1893).

But that the Anglican Church and some of the Methodists are only a little less bad in this matter is shown by the subjoined extracts.

Jeremy Taylor, one of the "weightiest moralists of the Church of England," speaking of the prohibition of the Jews to eat the blood, says: "But even this very precept is, by all the world, taught to yield to necessity and to charity, and cruelty to beasts is innocent when it is charity to men; and, therefore, though we do not eat them, yet we cut living pigeons in halves, and apply them to the feet of men in fevers, and we rip the bellies of sheep, of horses, of oxen, to put into them the side of a paralytic" (*Ductur Dubitantium, Rule of Conscience*, book ii., chap. ii., rule 2).

Though it is a far cry from Jeremy Taylor to the Rev. Frank Ballard, he serves to show that the mediæval spirit of utter indifference to animal suffering survives even among the party of which he is a representative. This is what this modern B.Sc. has to say in an article on "The Anti-Vivisection Craze," as he is pleased to call the movement against scientific torture in the current number of the *Young Man*: "The question of the Son of Man as to how much a man is 'of more value than a sheep' seems to some of us to point definitely and tenderly in the direction in which the most humane modern science [vivisection] leads."

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

THE WATTS-WALDRON DEBATE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—In your issue of October 27 a report of the above debate, from the pen of Mr. Aarstad, appears on page 685. He justly claims that "Newcastle has had an intellectual treat," and that "both disputants throughout were gentlemanly and earnest, frequently eloquent, and were absolutely free from personalities." But when he describes Mr. Waldron as "certainly not a good debater," he bids farewell to fair and honest criticism. Surely Mr. Foote, the President of the N.S.S., would not condescend to debate with Mr. Waldron if Mr. Aarstad's criticism be fair. Surely Mr. Watts, with his thirty-five years' experience as a public debater, would not waste his fervid and eloquent sentences on Mr. Waldron if your correspondent's statement be correct. I claim to be on very intimate terms with many members of the Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S., and am certain that, had Mr. Aarstad submitted his report to Mr. Mitchell, president, Mr. Bartram, ex-secretary, or Mr. Cresswell, secretary, these gentlemen would have condemned that part of the criticism altogether. In fact, although differing from Mr. Waldron in many points, they speak very highly of him as a debater. Further, many of the leading Secularists have stated to me that the two disputants were well matched in many respects, and that Mr. Waldron was an opponent worthy of his steel. Forgive my attempt to defend the honor of Mr. Waldron as a debater, but I think it fair that the public should know that Mr. Aarstad's criticism of the debate was written on his own authority, and not as representing any corporate authority. I also think it would have been more graceful if Mr. Aarstad, as *chairman* of the debate committee, had taken counsel before giving his *personal* views to the world.

Since writing the above Mr. Waldron has had an interview with Mr. Aarstad to protest against the statement made that his speech was founded on "the argument from design." Mr. Aarstad admitted in the presence of two witnesses that he took no notes on the first night at all, so that he utterly disqualifies himself for giving a fair criticism upon the Theism *v.* Atheism debate. Again, Mr. Waldron offered to place his MSS. in the hands of any committee, and allow them to decide whether it be true or false, and to show that "the argument from design" occupied an infinitesimal part of Mr. Waldron's speech. In reference to the phrase, "not a good debater," Mr. Aarstad admits that he meant that Mr. Waldron is not *as good* a debater as some others he had heard, but that certainly he is *a good* debater. Then, why does he not say what he means, so that we may be able to believe on his authority that there are still *better* debaters, and, it may be, to accept his verdict as to who is the *best*?

JOHN WOOD, *Sec. pro. tem. C.E.S.*

"Yes, sah," said a darkey evangelist, "Ise preached on creation, justification, sanctification, salvation, and damnation, and I finds it only produces consternation and botheration." "Suppose, Uncle, you were to try a simple text, such as 'Thou shalt not steal'?" "Laud, sah, that would produce frigideration."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Chapman Cohen, Scepticism, its Meaning and its Value."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Ponds, N.): 7, Touzeau Parris, "The Dogma of Original Sin." Wednesday, at 8, public discussion.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Stanley Jones, "Secularism and Social Problems."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James will lecture. Friday, at 8, free science classes.

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, J. P. Haines, "The Present State of the Vaccination Question."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Huxley's Soul."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Historic Lies."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, G. C. H. Carter, "The Anti-Malthusian Delusion."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Sunday, at 7.30, business meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, R. Forder, "Science and Theology."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, St. John will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, G. W. Foote, "Religion in the Light of Science"; 3, "Life, Death, and After"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" Tea at 5.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, W. H. Whitney, "Half an Hour with Ingersoll."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—T. Robertson, an Essay; 6.30, W. Reid, "The Labor Problem."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, Moncure D. Conway, "Babeuf, and the Centenary of Socialism"; 6.30, "How Jesus Sank into the Tomb of Lazarus."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. Roberts, "Judicial Evidence."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, 11, J. Bruce Glasier, "The Revolt of the Workers"; 3, "England as it Might be Under Socialism"; 6.30, "The Tragedy of Christianity."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, Charles Watts, "The God of the Bible: Who will Defend Him?" 3, "A Theological Puzzle: Free-will and Responsibility"; 7, "Secularism and Modern Thought."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, a meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Mr. Axe, "The Glacial Period."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, an address by D. Bon.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Mr. Worth, "The Faults of Secularism." Monday, at the Borough Hall Dining-room, at 7.45, Charles Watts, "Secularism and Modern Thought."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—November 10, Foresters' Hall, London; 17 and 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Nov. 24 New Brompton. Dec. 22, Leicester.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—NO. 46. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

SUNDAY CLOSING.

CHRISTIAN Reunion is the dream of a few enthusiasts. It can never be realised except under the arbitrary dominion of the Catholic Church. But there is one form of union which the Churches will always join in—namely, a union of conspiracy against the liberties of the people.

We have lately been trying to show that the Black Army is a huge body of professional soul-savers, animated in the mass by ordinary trade-motives; their chief object being to secure wealth, privilege, and power for themselves. Now, if our diagnosis be a true one, it is only natural that these earth-seeking mystery-mongers should be always encroaching on the rights of the community. This has been their policy in all ages, and it is their policy still. They will never forsake it until it forsakes them; that is, they will play the old game for all it is worth, down to the very last card in their dirty hands.

There is one book which is favored by all divisions of the Black Army. It is the Bible. A Christian without the Bible is a fish without water. Accordingly, the Churches all agree to force the Bible into the hands of the children in our public schools. They are at loggerheads as to how the blessed book should be interpreted, for even revelation requires to be revealed; but they form a common ring against all outsiders. They unite at the circumference, however they are divided within the circle. Churchmen, Nonconformists, and Catholics are at one in opposing liberty and justice where their privileges are involved. There are many signs that, in face of a common danger, they are coming to a general agreement, in order to secure at least an equality of robbery to all sorts and conditions of clerical exploiters.

Another matter on which the Churches are coming to an agreement is the preservation of Sunday as a day for religious worship, and, if possible, for nothing else. They want the day all to themselves. When they take down their shutters they want to do business under a strict law of protection. No one must compete with them. If they cannot *compel* the people to come to the house of God, as they did in the good old times, they can at least give them the choice of church or nothing.

This is the governing idea of the Temperance Bill which has been formulated by the Church of England, and which is naturally supported by the Nonconformists, in spite of their fear and hatred of the Establishment. Dr. John Clifford, like a little pope, sends a circular letter to the newspapers, pointing out the merits of this Bill, and calling upon Dissenters to support it, if only on the ground that the Church party is in power, and that the Drink Traffic cannot be tackled without its assistance. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes takes the same line in the *Methodist Times*. This gentleman rejoices over the prospect of closing every refreshment house in England on Sunday. The people will then have to get their refreshment at Methodist gospel-shops, or at similar establishments belonging to other firms. Methodism will not bag *all* the customers, but it will have its share in the scramble. Glorious opportunity! Yet a bitter taste comes into the mouth of the apostle of religious privilege. Perhaps the people will not stand the most drastic legislation! They may develop a will of their own and kick their tyrants into limbo. It is necessary, therefore, to treat them with some consideration; not on principle, but merely on grounds of prudence. Sunday closing is to be the law in England, as it is already the law in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; but, alas, the Englishman is either drier, or has a cursed inclination to decide for himself whether he is thirsty, and a slight allowance must be made for his unfortunate temper. "In view of the fact," says the Methodist oracle, "that England is on this subject more degraded and servile [poor England!] than any other part of the United Kingdom, it might be necessary to tolerate the opening of public-houses, especially in large cities, for one hour at noon, and for one hour later in the day, where the inhabitants desired it."

One hour at noon! Just in time to give the people a drink going home from church. How thoughtful! It reminds us of the old row in Glasgow over the first proposal to run tram-cars on the Sabbath. The religious party found it necessary to come to a compromise, and it was decided that the cars should run in time to take people to kirk and take them home again.

The one hour later in the day should, of course, be immediately after evening service. Upon this point we hardly expect a serious difference of opinion. It is so eminently just and reasonable. And what is the use of legislating if you cannot put in a clause for your own convenience?

Perhaps the Church and Chapel men of God will kindly tell us why public-houses should be closed on *Sunday*. If drinking a glass of beer is *wrong*, it is wrong *every* day. It cannot be wrong on one day and right on another. Let the men of God try to be logical. We know it will be a severe strain on their intellects, but they should really make the attempt. Let them explain why they pitch upon Sunday as the day for interdicting what they permit on every other day in the week.

That publicans and their servants require a day of rest may be perfectly true; but why do the clergy espouse their grievance, and leave the rest of the overworked population to find their own remedy? It may be alleged that, Sunday being a day of leisure, the people have more opportunities for drinking, and that the occasion is favorable for giving them a lesson in sobriety. But this is sheer nonsense. Sunday drinking is not exceptionally heavy in England. The leisure which gives a chance of exercise and fresh air does not minister to intemperance; on the contrary, it produces a natural flow of good spirits, which does away with the craving for stimulants.

The men of God do not really care for sobriety. That is only their pretence. They have no wish to lift the people out of the slough of a dull and deadly Sunday, such as is now the opprobrium of our towns and cities. They

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clamor for the closing of public-houses, but they also oppose the opening of public museums, libraries, and art galleries. In this respect the Wesleyan Conference is at one with the Convocation of Canterbury. And this fact is absolutely decisive. It demonstrates the purely professional motives of these clerical reformers. Whether the indulgence be moral or immoral, elevating or degrading, they are equally opposed to it as trenching on their privileges. We tell them plainly, and without the slightest hesitation, that they are wretched and miserable hypocrites. They are fighting for religion under the mask of morality. They are animated by motives which they dare not confess. Their sole desire in this matter is to enforce the old order to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." God never said that. The priests said it for him. And they say it still, and for the very same reason.

G. W. FOOTE.

FOLK-LORE RESEARCHES.—II.*

THE importance of the serious study of folk-lore—*i.e.*, the traditional tales, games, sayings, customs, and superstitions of the peasantry—as an item of historical, pre-historical, and anthropological research, has only been discerned since the labors of the brothers Grimm in the early part of this century. The Folk-Lore Society, which has spread its name and its methods through Europe and America, itself only dates from 1878, when, thanks to the labors of Darwin, Tylor, Spencer, Huxley and others, the evolutionary methods of study had made their way to the front. Dr. Tylor, in particular, had shown the importance of collecting and comparing the survivals of archaic beliefs, customs, and traditions found among savages and the less advanced of civilised peoples. The work of collection is going on, though, perhaps, not as rapidly as might be desired, in view of the extension of civilisation, fast obliterating its own earlier stages. The task of interpretation needs a more thorough outfit. There have long been recorders of customs, tales, and traditions; but the person who shows their place in the evolution of human culture is more than a collector of relics of the unrecorded past. He is a scientist, dealing with one of the most intricate branches of anthropology, and needs a sound training in psychology and in archæology; familiarity with the workings of the human mind as well as with the records of the past.

What, then, are the results of folk-lore scientific research? They are nowhere more fully or more modestly set forth than in Mr. Hartland's volumes. Briefly, the study of folk-tales, customs, and traditional beliefs entirely confirms the evidence from other departments of anthropology, that man, instead of being the degenerate descendant of ancestors created perfect, has developed from a condition of utter savagery, in which imagination has a strong and reason a minor place, and all objects animate and even inanimate are endowed with life and personality. Early man is infantile in faith, and finds nothing incredible in children born without fathers, or men ascending into the sky, or being transformed into other modes of life. The very beginnings of human science and philosophy are magical omens and spells. As Mr. Hartland observes, no substantial distinction is drawn between the physical and the spiritual:—

> "The abstract entity we call a soul has no existence for them: it is a philosophical speculation, whereof they have no conception. The soul, to them, is but another body which quits at times in life this visible frame, as a man quits his dwelling, on errands of business or pleasure, and forsakes it finally at death, as a corpse is carried out of doors. It is but a fragment of the man. It may take a fresh form, become a new whole, new but the same; for it will differ only in form, if indeed it will differ so much as in form. And the conception of divinity current in the lower culture corresponds with that of the soul. The god is precisely 'a magnified, non-natural man,' though not always in human shape, corporeal and subject to all corporeal wants and infirmities, but endowed with potencies and privileges far beyond those of ordinary men: potencies and privileges, however, the like of which are attained sometimes with much fasting and striving and patience by the greatest shamans. This corporeal nature of the god enables man to enter into communion with him, to put and keep himself in touch with him, to become united with him."

Such methods of communion are those used to cement the tie of kindred, such as eating together, and especially blood covenanting, a portion being offered to the common gods or ancestors. Sacrifices are thus essentially sacramental.

The whole circle of human ideas is influenced by social conditions. What, then, does folk-lore tell us as to the social conditions of yore? It reveals an age when the family is the unit. Early man can no more be understood apart from his brotherhood than can a foxhound apart from his pack. The Bible takes us back to a time of joint tribal responsibility, and of the institution of a *goel*, or blood avenger, as a means of maintaining the family; and folk-lore takes us still further. Mr. Hartland holds that the South Australian savage, who looks on the universe as the Great Tribe to one of which divisions he himself belongs, is only in a stage through which there is reason to believe every other people in the world has passed or is passing; so many and so widely scattered are its traces, and so deeply impressed are they upon human institutions and beliefs. Funeral and marriage rites alike display the importance of union with the clan, the latter showing forms of sacramental admission, similar to those of blood covenanting, often with an acknowledgment of the rights of the whole kin over the bride, and sometimes with indications of her capture.

From an examination of bridal customs, Mr. Hartland concludes that the ancestors of the European nations must have passed through a stage of society wherein group marriage was the rule. This was the conclusion drawn by Mr. Lewis H. Morgan from his investigations of systems of kinship among savage tribes.* When purchase replaced capture, the help of clansmen was equally called in. But the community thus established was quite distinct from absolute promiscuity,† and would be modified by individual appropriation. The proofs of the early solidarity of the family group, as afterwards of the village community, cannot fail to modify the conclusions of modern sociologists, and deserve study alike by Socialists and Individualists.

Mr. Hartland writes as the mere recorder of facts illustrative of human evolution, and holds no brief for any side. But facts are bound to have their weight, and I confess that to me the importance of folk-lore researches is their bearings upon religion and sociology. Apart, however, from any such conclusions, the work of Mr. Hartland is crowded with interesting illustrations of early thought, custom, and superstition. If its circulation is commensurate with its merits, the author should be well recompensed for the pains he has taken.

J. M. WHEELER.

* The Grimm Library, vols. ii. and iii., *The Legend of Perseus*. I.—The Supernatural Birth. II.—The Life Token. By E. Sydney Hartland, F.S.A. (London: David Nutt, Strand.) 1895.

* *Ancient Society*. This conclusion I supported in the first edition of my *Footsteps of the Past*, published ten years ago.

† In the instructive story of Tamar (Genesis xxxviii.) we see that she only became as a *Kadesha* to make Judah perform his tribal duty.

THE FALLACY OF ALLEGED CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

THAT a radical change has taken place within the last few years in the method of defending Christianity is, no doubt, obvious to most observers of Christian propaganda. It may, therefore, be interesting to ascertain if the new plan that has been adopted is of greater evidential value than was the old. We think it is not, inasmuch as it is based upon assumption; and, further, it is in itself an endeavor to achieve what is extremely improbable. The new method, like the old, assumes that Christianity contains nothing but undoubted truths, and that it is unique in its origin, nature, and influence, which certainly is not the case.

What are Christian evidences intended to prove?

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Principally that Christianity is a Divine system, and that its teachings are unique and superior to all others as a regenerating force. Now, if by the term "divine" is meant a supernatural power, we allege that no one has any knowledge of what such a power really is; hence we fail to see that there can be any evidence to prove its connection with mundane affairs. Moreover, as we are not aware of any nation or community where the "unique" teachings of Christianity are in operation, no opportunity is afforded whereby we can fairly test their regenerating value. Certain it is that what are called Christian truths are not self-evident, for if they were there would be no necessity to attempt to prove their veracity. Besides, the very fact that so many divergent opinions exist as to the nature of these assumed Christian truths shows that their true meaning is not manifest and uniform. Throughout the Christian era there have always existed different views as to what Christianity really means; and the same disagreement is prevalent at the present time. Of course, this obscure and contradictory phase of New Testament teachings may not affect their utility so far as they can be made useful; but it renders the consistent defence of any one particular view exceedingly difficult.

In former times either miracles, prophecies, Bible inspiration, or the divinity of Christ was deemed sufficient to prove the orthodox claims for Christianity. But Freethought criticism has demonstrated the fallacy of this notion, for either or all of the above "evidences" may be conceded, and then the contention that the teachings of Christ are compatible with a progressive state of society would not be established. It is not now contended that the belief in miracles and prophecies is confined to Christianity. As to miracles, the Bible frequently asserts that they were the result of human agencies. As thought became more advanced the old theory of Bible inspiration was given up, while even many Christians no longer argued for the original theological conception of the divinity of Christ. Thus new ground had to be selected, and among the latest statements of the new departure is one furnished by Dr. Alexander Stewart, "Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Aberdeen." In his "Handbook of Christian Evidences," after dealing with many other lines of defence, he comes to what he terms "the cumulative effect of the Christian evidences," which, he says, "may be taken as one of the chief grounds of its [Christianity's] acceptance by men of ordinary capacities, opportunities, and education." He gives the following "points," which he considers "contribute to the formation of such a cumulative argument: (1) The preparation for Christ in Israel. (2) The appearance of Christ at the time when Messianic expectation was at its height. (3) That the religion of Christ is co-extensive with the civilisation of the world. (4) The unity of plan and spirit in the books of the Bible. (5) The confirmation of Scripture by memorial ordinances and institutions, as the Lord's Supper and the Church itself. (6) The evidence of Christianity, with which all others will stand or fall, is the impression produced by the personality of Jesus Christ. All others must be regarded as subsidiary and supplementary to this."

Before further noticing these five "points," let us consider some of the reasons that the Professor offers in support of the "cumulative argument." He says: "Much obviously depends on the date of the Gospel narratives and their relation to each other, as well as to the other writings of the New Testament; and all this is proper matter of evidence. Then there is the great subject of prophecy, the correspondence of prediction with event." We grant that much of the value of what is put forth as Christian evidences depends upon "the date of the Gospel narratives and their relation to each other." And it is just here where the defect of the evidences is manifest. Who can tell the exact date when the Gospel narratives were written? The higher criticism of recent years has shown the uncertainty surrounding this event. Even the pious Hartwell Horne, who wrote some years ago in favour of Christianity, noticing the diversity of opinion among eminent critics as to the period when the Gospels first appeared, says: "In this conflict of opinions it is difficult to decide. The accounts left us by the ecclesiastical writers of antiquity concerning the times when the Gospels were written or published are so vague, confused, and discordant that they lead us to no solid or certain determination." The same uncertainty exists as to the date of fixing the canon of the New Testament, for, according to Dr. Samuel Davidson, one of the most eminent Biblical scholars the Christians have at the present day, it is clear that no fixed canon of the Gospels existed before the latter half of the second century ("The Canon of the Bible," pp. 114 and 144). He also admits that "it cannot be said that the canon was fixed in the second century, but merely the incipient efforts to bring it about" (*ibid*, p. 144).

Now, we submit that this Christian testimony shows that we have no trustworthy evidence as to the period when the Gospels were written and received as canonical. Supposing, therefore, that Christ really said and did what is ascribed to him, it is, to say the least, most improbable that we have a faithful account thereof. And evidently Dr. Davidson's statements support this view, for he writes that "legend and myth speedily surrounded" the person of Jesus. And he adds: "That the life of the great Founder should be overlaid with extraneous materials is special matter for regret. However conscientious and truth-loving they may have been, the reporters were unequal to their work. It is also remarkable that so many of them should be unknown; productions being attached to names of repute to give them greater currency" (*ibid*, pp. 109-10). Thus, as Dean Alford affirms: "These Gospels, so important to the Church, have not come to us in one undisputed form. We have no authorised copy of them in their original language, so that we may know in what precise words they were originally written" ("How to Study the New Testament," p. 18).

In reference to the alleged relation of the Gospel narratives to each other, surely Professor Stewart has overlooked, not only the many contradictions existing in the Synoptics, but—what is far more damaging to his theory—the pronounced difference in tone and character between the Gospel ascribed to John and those bearing the names of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We say "ascribed" advisedly, because Dr. Davidson distinctly observes: "The Johannine authorship [of the fourth Gospel] has receded before the tide of modern criticism; and, though this tide is arbitrary at times, it is here irresistible" ("Canon of Bible," p. 127). Mackay, in his "Rise and Progress of Christianity" (p. 184), says: "Many critics, Baur especially, have shown at length the impossibility of considering the fourth Gospel historical, or as anything but the Christianised logos theory in narrative form." The omissions in this Gospel are also remarkable. For instance, some of the principal incidents regarding the life of Jesus as recorded in the first three Gospels are absent in the fourth. Here we have no genealogy, no record of infancy, no sojourn in Galilee, no temptation, no transfiguration, no Jewish Passover, no agony in the garden, no cry of anguish from the Cross, no development of Messianic doctrine, no second advent, and no earthly kingdom. As Greg remarks, "the whole tone of the delineations, the tenor of the discourses, and the general course of the narrative are utterly different from those contained in the synoptical Gospels." From these facts it will be seen that the "relation" between the Gospels is not of a very near character.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

IN the third gospel John the Baptist and Jesus are represented as cousins, their mothers being kinswomen (Luke i. 36). The character of their respective sons, and the work devolving upon each, appear in the same gospel to have been well known and the subject of conversation among them. Matthew iii. 14, in like manner, makes the divinity of Jesus known to John before the baptism; it is precisely this knowledge which makes him hesitate to perform the rite, saying: "I have need to be baptised of thee."

It is a very difficult matter, however, to reconcile this synoptic view of the relationship of the two men with the language attributed to the Baptist in John i. 29–34, where he expressly declares (1) that before the baptism he knew him not; (2) that his purpose in baptising was that the Messiah should be revealed; and (3) that the pre-arranged sign by which he should know him was, that he should see the spirit descending and abiding upon him.

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To avoid the contradiction between the two accounts, it has been suggested that John means, not that he did not know Jesus, but that he did not know him to be the Messiah; which is still in contradiction to Matthew iii. 14. Moreover, if this be the meaning, it follows (1) that, although both Mary and Elizabeth knew the facts, they had never revealed them to their sons, but had kept the miraculous incidents preceding and attending their birth a profound secret for thirty years; or (2) that, if John had heard the stories, he did not believe them. The upholders of the traditional belief may be left to choose that horn of the dilemma which they may prefer. The former supposition is seemingly inconceivable, and the latter is fatal to the credit of the miracles involved.

It follows that we have no historical grounds for believing that John was only six months older than Jesus, or that there was any kindred between the two families, or an intimacy between the two mothers. It is even a matter of doubt whether the Baptist ever at any time acknowledged the Messiahship of Jesus. Our narratives of the baptism are unhistorical (see baptism). John, confined in the prison from which he never came forth alive, sent messengers to inquire whether Jesus was the Messiah (Matthew xi. 2–6; Luke vii. 19–23); but there is no evidence that he was convinced by the reply, which, if the events at Cæsarea Philippi are to be credited (see Cæsarea Philippi), can hardly be authentic in its present form. May it not be assumed that John, had he been convinced, would have instructed his disciples henceforth to follow Jesus? But in Acts xix. 2–4 we have clear indications that he did not do so, and that he never told them that he who was to baptise with the Holy Ghost had actually come:—

"And he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given. And he said, Into what were ye baptised? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him—that is, on Jesus."

It is to be noted that the words, "that is, on Jesus," are Paul's, not John's. If John had told his disciples to believe on Jesus, would not Paul have quoted his words to that effect, instead of resting the whole case on a questionable interpretation of his own?

The supposition is favored by Scripture (Matthew xix. 14; Mark ii. 18; Luke xi. 1; John iii. 25-30), and, indeed, is generally allowed, that John did not turn his followers over to Jesus, but that they continued to exist as a separate body till long after the spread of Christianity. John's failure to instruct his disciples concerning Jesus may, indeed, be accounted for on the supposition that he was dead when the messengers returned; but he cannot then be cited as a witness to the Messiahship of Jesus.

A sect still exists in Persia, in the country around Bassorah, sometimes known as the "Christians of St. John," professing to be the Baptist's disciples. Doctrinally they may have little in common with John, yet we cannot but note the fact that they respect Jesus as an impostor.

It may be regarded as certain that the tyranny of the Roman oppression led to fresh hopes, as the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes had done before (see Daniel), that the time must be near when God would deliver his people. This, and not divine inspiration, was the source of the Baptist's idea.

John was executed by Herod, according to Matthew xiv. 1-12 and Mark vi. 17-29, for rebuking sin in high places; but there is little doubt that he was moved to the deed in part by his fear of a political uprising in which John's Messianic doctrine seemed likely to culminate. Many years after, the knowledge on the part of Christian believers that their master was among the number of those whom John had baptised made it necessary to represent John as admitting his own inferiority to Jesus; and, this ground-work being obtained, the existing narratives were readily developed with the gradual formation of Christian theology.

C. L. ABBOTT.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

God proposes, but man disposes.—*Benjamin Constant.*

ATHEISM NOT AGNOSTICISM.

MR. OTTO WETTSTEIN is a German American Atheist, who scorns the name of Agnostic, and desires to put Atheism on a demonstrable basis. This is how he sets about it in the pages of the *Twentieth Century*:—

"In law and equity the affirmative is obliged to prove its case. If, then, a proposition is self-evidently absurd, unnatural, and absolutely impossible, why concede to those affirming, without a shadow of proof, that their belief is equally rational with our unbelief, that 'it may be so,' 'I don't know,' etc.

"There is a universe that excludes anything else of like character—two infinites being an absurdity.

"The universe (nature) is here and there and everywhere. This proves that God cannot be here and there and everywhere.

"Two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Matter (implying energy and force) monopolising every point of space, nothing else can occupy it in addition.

"The universe exists now. Something cannot come from nothing, therefore the universe has always existed.

"Being eternal and infinite, this excludes anything anterior, exterior, or superior to it.

"Is God in the universe, or the universe in God? If there is a God, either of these propositions must be true, yet both are glaringly absurd.

"Can an engineer drive a locomotive and be a locomotive at the same time? If not, how can a God manipulate an infinite universe and be infinite 'Himself'?

"Yet the universe, *outside of a God*, is an absolute reality, as much so as a locomotive is a reality outside of the engineer. The world is a reality, our planets, the sun, all the countless millions of stars within reach of our telescopes, and the infinitude of stars and systems beyond the reach of our strongest lenses, which science infers to exist—all these are a reality, and all these, yea, every object of knowledge is a reality, and all these are *not God!* How, then, in the name of reason, I ask, can a God, of whom we know absolutely nothing, be infinite, when an infinite number of material objects—not God—fill all space?

"But does the universe exist *in God?* If we but imagine for a moment the aspect of the universe to resemble a huge machine of infinite proportions, eternally active in all its vast proportions, the idea of the universe existing within a God will appear equally childish and simple.

"All phenomena are the results of energy co-existent and inseparable from matter. All cosmic motion, change, and life may be traced to this physical and chemical energy pervading all nature—*never to a God.*

"Mind—the so-called infinite as well as finite—implies limit, localisation, conditions, etc. This fact tends to prove that while God, perchance, might concentrate his mind on the world or some particular sect or individual, considering their exhortations, the rest of the world and the universe for the time being would be Godless!

"From a late scientific authority I quote in proof: 'It is impossible for a person's mind to be in two places at the same time.' Noted chess-players may play twenty games simultaneously, but it is done by speedy transfer of thoughts from one game to another, and not by considering two moves at once.

"Thus 'Omniscience' is impossible.

"Again! Mind implies limit and necessitates organism, brain, nervous force, etc. This, again, makes impossible a God. Let the Church demonstrate *how a God without a brain can be a God and all it implies, or how a God with a brain can be infinite*, and I will kneel down and worship with them."

FROM the sixth to the tenth century there were not in all Europe more than three or four men who dared to think for themselves; and even then they were obliged to veil their meaning in obscure and mystical language. The remaining part of society was during these four centuries sunk in the most degrading ignorance. Under these circumstances, the few who were able to read confined their studies to works which encouraged and strengthened their superstition, such as the legends of the saints and the homilies of the fathers. From these sources they drew those lying and impudent fables of which the theology of the time is principally composed.—*H. T. Buckle.*

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A SERMON.

(Concluded from page 708.)

I HAVE been told—but I don't vouch for its truth—that, if you feed a young puppy with whiskey till you get him drunk, it will stop its growth, and he will always remain a puppy. That is exactly the way revelation acts upon these gospel babes. Once get them fuddled upon one of these pretended revelations, and they never make any more progress, but remain intellectual dwarfs, as long as they live, unless by some fortunate chance they happen to meet with the scientific antidote to the religious microbe; but even then they will carry the effects of the disease to the end of their lives. Millions of these besotted babes, these undeveloped men and women, are sorrowfully wearing out their lives trying to save their imaginary souls by bowing down to an entirely imaginary God, while they totally neglect the real good and true things that pertain to their genuine and temporal salvation. So besotted are they that they consider themselves superior to the wise and prudent, and look down with scorn upon those who refuse to swallow the poisonous dose that they call revelation, and who offer to them relief from the disease that degrades them. They are like the drugged puppies with their eyes still shut and afraid to open them to the light of day, for fear that something awful and entirely imaginary should happen to disturb the dreams that they try to persuade themselves are essential to their happiness.

As has been said, the pretenders to revelation and concoctors of religions have been numbered by thousands, and the religious history of the world is but the long record of the struggles of these conflicting religions for supremacy. The wise and prudent have always been in the minority in all communities, and, therefore, all these systems have been adapted to the capacity of the babes, such being the great majority and the easiest to be fooled. A few of these religions have survived; and the wrecks of those that have gone down in the struggle and disappeared strew the bottom of the ocean of time.

If mankind had been all of one race, but one would have survived, and the degradation of all would have been complete and hopeless. Superstition enforced by priestly rule would dominate all classes, and the wise and prudent minority would be crushed out by fire and sword. Fortunately, the different characters of the different races and peoples of the world inclined each one to adopt a different religion from the others—one more in harmony with the feeling and character of the people. Thus, among the peaceful and moral people of Eastern Asia, Buddhism most strongly appealed to their sense of right and justice; and 500 years of Christian mission work have made no impression upon this peaceful, moral, and tolerant form of faith.

On the other hand, the Aryan race, the most arrogant, aggressive, and intolerant of all races of mankind, found in the Christian religion and in the character of the Christian God the reflex of their own cruel and bloodthirsty dispositions; and so this worst of all religions became the dominant one of Europe and America.

But there is one trait in the character of the Aryan that goes far to redeem him from his faults. That is his love of liberty and ambition to investigate whatever he sees going on about him, to find out its causes and results, and thus put himself in the ranks of the wise and prudent; and then, when he reaches that desirable position, he shakes off the shackles of superstition, and the priest has no further use for him, or he for the priests.

With the Aryan race rests the hope of the world for redemption from babyism. Babes are all right, and everybody who has a heart loves them; we cherish them for their potency of development into reasonable men and women; but the world has no use for those who always remain babes in intellect, and go through life taking their religion upon trust, without as much thought as an ordinary domestic animal. The time is coming for the rule of the wise and prudent, and believers in revelation will be on a par with believers in Santa Claus.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

The Church is at rest only when she has everything her own way, or is able, without let or hindrance, to trouble the tranquility of others.—*Voltaire.*

A GODLY MYSTERY.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."—1 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

"GREAT God, on what a slender thread You've hung eternal things," sung the pious and ever-lamented Dr. Isaac Watts. In this verse the Deity of Jesus Christ is hung on so slender a thread that we must handle the subject delicately, lest it snap, and the Godhead of our blessed Lord and Savior dissolve into thin air. The momentous question is, *Who* was manifest in the flesh? Our Authorised Version says God. But our Revised Version says: "The word *God*, in place of *He who*, rests on no sufficient ancient evidence. Some ancient authorities read *which*." Is the Greek ο, ος, or θεος? Learned critics have demonstrated how easily ο, delicately handled, might develop into ος, or ος degenerate into ο. The Codex Sinaiticus reads clearly ος—*who*. So does the Ephrem MS. The Alexandrian probably has the same, though some say they see, or fancy they see, a stroke over the ος, which delicate handling would convert it into Theos, and give us "God," instead of "godliness manifest in the flesh." The Vatican manuscript is mutilated at this passage. Some swear it should read ος, others Theos. Whether these things occurred by accident or design is a delicate question we need not enter upon; but students of theology are usually trained to look for design in godly matters. The Rev. T. S. Green allows that Chrysostom's citation of this passage, 1 Timothy iii. 16, has been tampered with. When it only needed a delicate stroke to introduce a Deity, a scribe's self-restraint must have been sorely tempted. Great without controversy is the mystery of godliness, and nothing godly is without controversy except its great mystery. The reader who spends his days and nights in seeing all that can be said for ο, ος, or θεος, will probably conclude, as I have begun, by using the words of the inspired Watts, "Great God, on what a slender thread You've hung eternal things."

LUCIANUS.

TWO EPITAPHS.

PRICE HUGHES *(prospective).*

HERE lies Hugh Price Hughes, who did earnestly try
To write what he thought wouldn't *pass* for a *lie;*
His candor was such that, when *truth* wouldn't do,
He wrote what he really thought *ought* to be true.

HUXLEY.

In spite of spooks from Palestine,
Who books inspired as well as swine,
And left them "all at sea,"
He worked till death, from days of youth,
At searching for, and finding, *truth,*
His motive, aim, and fee;
He worked as only good men do,
He worked for Truth *because 'twas true!*
O well for you and me.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

God Visiting Bradford-on-Avon.

Mr. Goulter Wood writes as follows of an incident which occurred at Bradford-on-Avon, near Bath, in 1805. The bishop visited the town, and the parish clerk said: "Let us zing to the praaze an' glawry o' God dree vusses o' the hundurd an' vourteenth Zaam, a varsion specully 'dapted to the 'casion by myself:—

Why hop ye zo, ye little, little hills?
An' what var do 'e skip?
Is it a 'cos yu'm proud to see
His grace, the Lard Bishop?

Why skip ye zo, ye little, little hills?
An' whar var do 'e hop?
Is it a 'cos to preach to we
Is com'd the Lard Bishop?

Yese; he is com'd to preach to we,
Then let us aal strik' up,
An' sing a glawrious zong o' praayze,
An' bless the Lard Bishop."

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A Pious Villain.

When pious villains are gibbeted in our pages, Christians are apt to exclaim, "Oh, that is only in the *Freethinker*." We, therefore, reprint the following article from the *Daily Telegraph* of October 30:—

"A really remarkable story of religious professions used as a cloak for crime has been revealed in the trial of a man named Hart, who has just been sentenced to five years' penal servitude for defrauding customers to his Birmingham pawnshop. Mr. Hart for some years has led what is generally called a 'double life'; he 'boasted two soul-sides,' a feat described by Browning to be more common than is generally supposed. One of his characters was that of churchwarden of St. Mark's Church, a pious Churchman of extremely charitable proclivities, with a penchant for reading the lessons when allowed to do so. On the other side of his nature he was a thief and a swindler, if nothing worse. Being agent for a burglary insurance company, Hart naturally insured his own shop, and it was a somewhat curious coincidence that on three separate occasions robbers should have broken into his place of business, thereby enabling him to put in as many claims for compensation. His business flourished, and he moved from Birmingham to Olton, where he soon established a reputation for uprightness and philanthropy. Had the vicar only permitted him to read the lessons there, he was prepared to make a present to the whole congregation of new prayer and hymn-books; but, as the vicar declined the pious transaction, the gift was never made. Last year his wife was discovered shot through the head; it was supposed that she had been cleaning a gun, as a duster was in her hand, and that she did not know that the weapon was loaded; a verdict of 'accidental death' was therefore recorded. Only Hart and one young child were in the house at the time of the death. It is said that for many years the Birmingham police knew Hart to be a dangerous thief, but had no definite legal proof against him. Various complaints, however, were made of swindles perpetrated by this upright Christian in the course of his pawnbroking business, one of his tricks being the substitution of paste for real diamonds in articles of jewelry pledged with him. A gold eighteen-carat chain, worth a large sum, was mysteriously transformed, whilst in his keeping, into a hollow nine-carat worth only a pound or two. He preferred, if he could, to swindle women who were unaccustomed to pawnbrokers' shops. One widow forgot to take her pawnticket away after depositing a gold watch; Hart accordingly stole the ticket, and appropriated the watch, pretending that it had been handed to a stranger who had presented the ticket. He frightened another poor widow, who pawned a sewing machine, by enlarging on the awful legal consequences of some technical slip she had made, so that she fled from his shop, leaving the machine behind. He promptly took it to a sale-room and disposed of it. He is said to have been engaged to a young woman of considerable possessions, to whom he gave a valuable engagement ring which he had stolen. This plausible scamp was on his way to church when arrested, and he had the impudence to threaten the police with an action for unlawful arrest. The learned Recorder seemed staggered at the prisoner's cool effrontery, and remarked that in his judicial experience he had never met with a similar case. Fortunately for society, there are not many persons capable of the hypocrisy and cunning which this man exhibited; and upon the whole it is as well that his term of office as churchwarden should have ended, and that his tenancy of a convict's cell should have begun."

Bible Morals.

BUT, although the wilful homicide of a Hebrew was punished with death, the beating to death of a slave is to be punished only if the slave die under the master's hand (Exodus xxi.); a circumstance in which the Hebrew law compares very favorably with the Egyptian regulation. The barbarous *lex talionis* is fully enforced, and the regulations as to compensation for injuries sustained by the "pushing" of oxen remind us more of the ingenuity of a Kaffir chief than of a divine law-giver. The killing of the thief caught in the act is an ordinary regulation of primitive societies, and the making of restitution shows that the immorality of the act was not considered, but only the loss which it occasioned. Death was, as we should expect, inflicted for adultery; but the lying with a woman who was not the property of another, either as wife or betrothed, has the same want of immorality as among the peoples of antiquity in general.—*C. S. Wake, "Evolution of Morality," vol. ii., p. 69.*

An event cannot be at once historical and supernatural, for history is only possible on the presupposition of the absolute continuity and homogeneity of experience; and that presupposition is uprooted and annihilated by the presupposition of revelation.—*F. Macan, "Hibbert Essay on the Resurrection," p. 116*

ACID DROPS.

BULGARIA is a Christian country, and we are not surprised that murder and piety go very well there together. After the brutal assassination of the country's foremost, if not its only statesman, the nation is in a state of intense agitation over the religion of a baby lying in his cradle. He doesn't know anything about it, but that doesn't matter; for, if his religion is to be decided for him, the same is done for most of the babies on this planet. Prince Boris would be baptised as a Catholic in the ordinary course of things; but the Russian party, which is now the dominant one in Bulgaria, clamors for his baptism in the Greek Church. Could there be a more striking illustration of the truth that religion always follows the line of temporal power? Instead of moulding empires, it is moulded by them, though it takes credit for the whole performance afterwards.

What a change has taken place since the poor first Salvation Army began its operations in Jerusalem, under the command of General Peter, the rocky gentleman on whom Jesus Christ promised to build his Church. The Church of Christ is now in a close confederacy with wealth and power. Its only care for the multitude is to bamboozle them. New countries, like America, are just as bad as old countries, like England, in this respect. Just look at the reports of the marriage of the Duke of Marlborough (rank) and Miss Vanderbilt (money). St. Thomas's Church, in Upper Fifth Avenue, New York, was lavishly decorated throughout with the costliest flowers, and the sacred edifice was filled by nearly two thousand of the snobocracy of the city. Gold and jewels gleamed and flashed everywhere. We read that the bride had a two-hundred-pound handkerchief to wipe her nose with, or to sop up her perfunctory tears; and that her wedding presents are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. It actually took two bishops and a rector to marry this portentous couple. And while the ceremony was being performed myriads of poor wretches in New York, male and female, were slaving to earn a paltry pittance, which can hardly be said to keep them alive, but just to keep them out of the grave. Hurrah for English and American civilisation! Three cheers for the blessed influence of Christianity!

Special funds are being raised this year for missions to the heathen. At the same time we note the statement in the *Methodist Times* that there are 343,000 people in Glasgow without any church connection.

The Rev. Stewart Headlam says he has no power as a citizen to say what sort of sermons the Rev. Price Hughes should preach, and he wants to know what power Mr. Hughes should have to determine what kind of play or dance he should go to see. Mr. Hughes replies that he only interferes in the interest of morality. But there is only one part of morality that Mr. Hughes seems to care about, and it is the very part whith decent people treat with judicious reticence. Swift's definition of "nice people" was "people with nasty ideas."

The West-end gentleman who cures fat people continues his expensive advertisements in Christian journals. A big one appeared last week in a Christian journal which is very strong on "temperance" and "purity." No doubt the enterprising advertiser knows his public. For our part, we agree with Kant that gluttony is a worse vice than drinking, being more intensely selfish and bestial. The drinker stimulates his brain, the glutton loads his stomach; the one may be a madman, but the other is an idiot.

E. J. Smith and Co., the publishers of *A Business Diary*, which gives a page with church lessons on Sunday, must be a very pious firm. When an order was given them from the Leek Publishing Co., a reply was received: "We do not recognise you as in the trade. Want nothing to do with Freethinkers or Socialists." The business firms who are desirous of thus restricting their custom must be few in number, and deserve to have their wishes advertised.

The American papers report an outbreak of religion in its old undiluted strength at Texacapa, in Mexico. The local judge ordered ten heretics to be burnt alive. He declared this was carrying out the will of God as revealed to him in a vision. When the news reached Mollango, the chief town in the district, the mayor, with an armed escort, proceeded to the scene of the outrage, and found the people in the public square dancing like maniacs round the ruins of the jails in honor of the Virgin Mary.

It appears that the *auto da fé* took place on the occasion of the quinquennial celebration of the Coronation of Our Lady of Guadaloupe, a festival which always evokes religious fervor in Mexico. The judge quite coolly justified his conduct on the ground that he had simply obeyed the

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Divine command. In a vision a saint had told him what to do, and God had wrought miracles to confirm the instructions. He had ordered the constables what to do with the "sinners," who were dragged from their beds and conveyed to jail, which was then set on fire. The "heretics," he said, "were filled with fear, and shouted for mercy; but heaven's will had to be done, and they were consumed to bones, and the vengeance of heaven was averted from our community."

This Lady of Guadaloupe is a perfect vampire to Mexico. An immense proportion of its wealth flows to her shrine, which is furnished with a solid silver railing weighing sixty tons.

A few years ago an individual in an ecclesiastical costume used to cross the frontier from Switzerland into France every morning with a large breviary in his hand. He was a man of dignified aspect, and received every mark of deference from the Customs officials, who sometimes accompanied him part of the way in his daily stroll. At last a letter put the authorities on the alert, and the presumed priest was found to be a professional smuggler, who had contrived to introduce into France at least a thousand watches in his breviary, which, on examination, proved to be a tin box.—*Daily Telegraph*, Nov. 9.

Quakers are popularly supposed to speak only when the spirit moves them. The spirit in the old days used to talk gibberish (see 1 Cor. xiv.), and even the Quaker deems it necessary to regulate the spirit's proceedings. It is noticed that, in the program of arrangements for the Conference of the Society of Friends at Manchester, "a time limit will probably have to be imposed." We wonder they are not reminded of the text, "Quench not the spirit."

The Rev. Silas Hocking, lecturing on "John Bull in his Best Clothes," the title apparently a plagiarism of Max O'Rell's famous lectures, wound up by saying: "Lastly, John Bull believed in the Sabbath. Infidelity had tried to root itself in English soil, but had not succeeded, and would not succeed. He earnestly looked forward to the day when not only the bread shops, but the liquor shops, would be closed on Sunday." If Mr. S. Hocking fancies that John Bull is going to let the parsons have the permanent monopoly of Sunday, we think he must be very credulous himself, as well as an inculcator of credulity in others.

Sir Claude Macdonald, in his report on the Niger Coast Protectorate, says that he has seen more drunkenness on one Fast-day in godly Glasgow than he has during his thirteen years' experience of Africa.

It is pointed out that, while the Archbishop of Canterbury's Church Patronage Bill would put an end to the sale of the cure of souls by public auction, it would only increase the private traffic carried on through the medium of the *Church Patronage Gazette*. The sin and shame of the iniquitous traffic does not affect the Archbishop, but only its publicity.

The Rev. G. S. Reaney, who deserted Congregationalism for a better billet in the Church, asks for more public money for church schools. His own school at Christchurch, Greenwich, already takes from Government £355 13s. 8d. The school pence and an endowment bring the sum up to £684 3s. 3d., while the whole amount donated by the church and voluntary subscriptions is £88 15s. 7d. Thus nine-tenths of the income is derived apart from the people who have sole control of the schools.

A number of public men in the United States were appealed to by the American Humane Association for their opinions on vivisection. The majority of them have expressed their disgust at the practice, but Father Tyrell, of the Society of Jesus, boldly says animals "have no rights," and they have no rights because they have "no radical capacity for pure reason." But—your Jesuit always has a but—"animals are the property of their Maker, who lends them to us for our use." "We should take reasonable, but not anxious, care for their well-being and freedom from suffering. Anxious care is unreasonable if the anxiety arises from the false imagination that we are dealing with a person, and, so far, an equal." Compare this balanced inhumanity with the simple words of the Freethinker Bentham: "The question is not Can they reason? but Can they suffer?"

The *Echo* says: "We are on the eve of a very important struggle on the re-marriage of divorcés question. The facts are said to be these. An English lady was recently married a third time in a West-end church by episcopal licence. She had been divorced by her first husband, had married the co-respondent, and had in turn divorced him in America on grounds which would not have entitled her to a divorce here. Archbishop Benson will be immediately petitioned to cite certain dignitaries before him, in order that the whole question of jurisdiction may be threshed out."

The *Church Patronage Gazette* gives particulars of about 400 advowsons and next presentations to more or less desirable livings in the Established Church, which are offered for sale by private bargain through the medium of an eminent firm of ecclesiastical agents. For good livings when the incumbent is old about ten years' purchase is required. Thus, a Hampshire rectory with a net income of about £900, which, we are assured, is one of the choicest livings in the South of England—price £6,000, and another in Somersetshire—net income £700, for which six thousand guineas are asked. The additional words "or offer" probably mean that less would be accepted. The word "Sold" conspicuously stamped across the announcement warns us that we are too late for a snug little Durham Rectory, price £3,000. The net income is here £340, from glebe, endowment, etc. It is observable that the population is always stated where it happens to be very small. Careful examination of the list has failed to reveal any such remark as "Population poor and large; great opportunities of useful work." On the other hand, "Society, both lay and clerical, extremely good," is an oft-recurring notification, together with "Healthy and pleasant neighborhood," "Kitchen garden," "Charming scenery," "Golf links in neighborhood," "Good river fishing," and so forth.

The Nonconformist Conscience is up in arms again. Under the chairmanship of the Rev. F. Herbert Stead—brother of the *great* Stead—a meeting of Nonconformists took place at the Robert Browning Hall, West Newington, and resolutions were passed against Earl Russell and Mr. W. M. Thompson for voting as County Councillors in favor of the Empire license. Earl Russell replies sarcastically that the worst thing about the professed defenders of morality is "the violence of their language and the questionable nature of their methods." Mr. Thompson replies that the purity zealots are doing their best to wreck the Progressive cause in London, and reminds his critics that "the gloomy tyranny of the Puritans was followed by the unspeakable excesses of the Restoration."

It is very funny to see Mr. Stead and the rest of those Nonconformist zealots fulminating from the Robert Browning Hall. Robert Browning would laugh at them if he could only behold their antics. He loved good cheer, good wine, and good recreations. There was nothing sour about him, and he would have been the last man in the world to legislate against his neighbor's amusements.

Mrs. Chant's crusade against the Empire really made matters worse. The drinking and talking promenaders, instead of having a circle to themselves, were simply crowded into a smaller space, to the annoyance of quieter persons who occupied seats in front of them. Zeal is all very well, but it is a dreadful thing without sense.

Mona's Herald, an Isle of Man paper, is down on the local Bishop, who has been evincing a disinclination to acknowledge that Church debts ought to be paid. "We have heard of consciences," it says, "being seared as with a hot iron. Would his Lordship dare to try this process with his? It would be worth sixpence to see him make the attempt."

The pious Chief Constable of Walsall is on the war path. His business is to keep the peace and catch criminals. But that is too prosaic a view for *him* to take of his duties. He regards the godliness of the town as under his special protection. Accordingly he is prosecuting tradesmen who do a little bit of legitimate business on Sunday. One of these is Mr. Card, who used to be well known in connection with our movement in Birmingham. Mr. Card says he will not give in, and the Chief Constable is bent on ruining him if he doesn't. The papers are full of the matter, and Walsall is in an uproar. What a ridiculous fuss over a few packets of sweetstuff! It would be all right if Mr. Card sold pills.

Miraculous visions still occur in rural parts of Italy. At Petriguano, in the district of Assisi, one Giovannino, little Johnny, probably "the natural" of the district, saw the Holy Family on September 20, and conversed with the Virgin. A little cabin chapel was erected on the sacred spot, like the germs of the great shrines and pilgrimages began. But the new cult has been nipped in the bud. The authorities, knowing these tales are always got up by the priests for their own benefit, had the chapel demolished on the night of October 31, which was dark and stormy. The Blessed Virgin has not as yet made any remonstrance against this sacrilege.

Emperor William has had himself painted as the Archangel Michael, calling on the nations of Europe, symbolised by females, to rouse themselves in defence of religion and morality. Of course the Cross figures in this wonderful picture. Those who have more money than sense can buy an engraving of the picture for six shillings.

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Professor Marcus Dods, who was *not* turned out of the Free Church of Scotland for heresy, writes in the *Sunday School Chronicle* on the way in which the Bible should be taught in the light of the "Higher Criticism." Dr. Dods thinks the children will not esteem the Bible any the less for being told that it contains mistakes. But he advises that they should be told so in a very judicious manner. Yarns like that of the talking serpent in Eden should be explained to children as "stories with a meaning." Very pretty, no doubt; but the trouble only thickens with this advice. For what is the "meaning" of that story? How on earth could its priapic significance be explained to Sunday-school children? We pity the teacher who follows Dr. Dods and finds himself in a very nasty trap.

What a Mississippi of falsehood is history. Here is Father Gerard, of the Society of Jesus, "a descendant," says the *Western Mail*, "of the famous Father Gerard, of Gunpowder Plot fame" (it does not say if he descends in a direct line), in a lecture on November 5, telling us that our history of the attempt to blow up Parliament in 1605 is altogether wrong. The harmless, innocent Roman Catholics had nothing to do with it. It was Cecil, the King's Minister (an ancestor of Lord Salisbury), who, "if he did not actually originate the plot, at least knew of it long before the pretended discovery, and worked it for its own ends." If national events alleged to have happened less than three hundred years ago can thus be questioned, how questionable must be supernatural ones related of a country much further off, and at a far more distant time?

Noticing Canon Tristram's *Rambles in Japan*, the *Athenæum* says: "Of the effect generally of Christianity upon the different classes of the people, of its results, political and social, achieved and likely to be achieved, we know nothing. Against Buddhism it seems to make little way, while it may be doubted whether Christianity has ever, either in Japan or China, produced any impression upon intelligent Confucianists." The truth is that wherever Christianity goes it only succeeds with uneducated populations, who are in what may be called the devil-worshipping stage of culture.

T. C. Hayllar, writing in the *Nineteenth Century*, says: "I think we ourselves would find it much more difficult to justify our treatment of China by anything to be found within the four covers of the New Testament than the Chinese would to find a sanction for their dealings with us from the teachings of their sacred books. The simple fact is that there do not exist any reasons for the Christianisation of China except from the standpoint of the missionaries themselves."

Public Opinion (November 8) reports that in one of the central departments of France a young woman recently gave birth to a child whose eyes were placed on the top of its head. Evidently this is another case of design, and the infant, who is said to be doing well, should be educated for an astronomer.

Mr. Justice Hawkins, at the Cambridge Assizes, remarking on the question addressed to a child of seven whether she understood the oath, said he did "not believe that one witness sworn that day could explain it."

We are disappointed in the Rev. A. J. Waldron, and if he does not mend his ways we shall have to advise Freethinkers to disregard him and his meetings. He sent us a lame letter about the slanders he was reported to have uttered at New Brompton against Colonel Ingersoll. His explanation is that he did not stand sponsor for the slanders himself; he merely mentioned them, and said that he had nothing to do with them. But why *mention* them? How would Mr. Waldron like us to say, "We have heard it said that he is a very questionable character, but we have nothing to do with that, as we have to discuss principles, not personalities"? Would he not think our conduct very mean and contemptible?

Mr. Wheeler has shown the utter falsity of Mr. Waldron's statements—probably picked up at second-hand—about Lloyd Garrison and slavery; while his reference to Charles Bradlaugh, in this connection, was not only false, but in the worst possible taste, seeing that "Iconoclast" is no longer alive to defend himself.

Mr. Andrew Shiel, writing to us from Hartford Colliery, Cramlington, Northumberland, informs us that Mr. Waldron, in a lecture at Shankhouse, on November 2, stated, in proof of the evil teachings of Secularism, that the *Freethinker* had inserted an advertisement of a League for registering prostitution. Mr. Shiel asked him, at the close of the lecture, what the advertisement really was. Mr. Waldron replied that he would send it to Mr. Shiel. He did so, and it was the advertisement of the Legitimation League. We inserted that advertisement, in common with several other London journals, in the ordinary way of business. We have nothing whatever to do with the League, and are in no way responsible for its principles or its policy. However, we have read its program, and we have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Waldron's statement about it is an outrage on common decency.

Mr. Shiel wrote to Mr. Waldron, saying that he had looked through the advertisement and found nothing in it to justify the statement that it was a League for "registering prostitution," and expressing a hope that the reverend gentleman would see his way to withdraw the statement. It is a matter of indifference to us whether he does so or not, for some of the utterances of Mr. Waldron that have been reported to us are such as we do not care to print, and it is really his affair, not ours, if he sinks down to the common dirty level of Christian Evidence advocates.

Roman Catholicism is, after all, the most flourishing branch of the Christian Church. The present Pope has established the new Patriarchate, that of the East Indies, 29 new archbishoprics, 85 bishoprics, 2 abbeys, 59 vicariates, 2 apostolic delegations, and 22 prefectures apostolic. Altogether 194 new titles attest the old inclination of the Catholic hierarchy to subdue the world.

According to the latest returns, there were 107 School Boards which teach the children that nonsensical forgery, the Apostles' Creed. These have just been added to by the Wolstanton School Board, who have decided to teach it by a majority of 6 to 5. As the teachings of the Creed, which is a distinct infraction of the spirit of the Education Act, is sure to lead to controversy, its adoption may not be an unmixed evil.

An eminent theologian has recently announced that the real "function of religion is to preserve and to enrich life, and not to insure the soul." If that is the case, it is evident that there is a good ground for action against the hordes of clerical actuaries who have been realising large commissions out of their post-mortem insurance policies. Securing money under false pretences will be the charge, and before an impartial jury it will undoubtedly go hard with the defendants. A just decision will result in a large decline in business for the New Jerusalem Soul Assurance Co., Limited, and an assignment will surely follow in a short time.—*Boston Investigator.*

Tidings of Life and Peace is the title of an evangelical journal emanating from Derby. The editor has only bad tidings. He says: "We are living in truly serious times. The popular leaders of religious thought are unblushingly renouncing the very foundation truths of Christianity. The total ruin of man, the absolute necessity of the new birth, salvation by the grace of God, and cleansing by the blood of Christ, have all become (in their estimation) only old-fashioned theories." So Mr. G. Cutting comes to the rescue with the rare old tidings of life and peace for himself and friends, and hell-fire for the majority of the world's inhabitants.

Reviewing P. Hume Brown's *John Knox*, the *Athenæum* says of the attitude of Knox to Queen Mary: "The real explanation is Knox's intense belief in God and intense belief in himself—beliefs practically identical, for his God was simply himself, John Knox, writ large, omnipotent as he would fain have been, and omniscient as he was or claimed to be. He seemed to himself God's oracle, a very prophet, and to stand towards Mary as Elijah had stood towards Jezebel." This explanation will suffice for the attitude of many men of God besides John Knox.

The Jews in the Army are wanting some attention paid to their religious requirements. It is considered an excuse for not granting this that some who did not enter the army as Jews might proclaim themselves as of that race to have an extra holiday on Saturday. Needless to say, all Freethinkers in the army require is exemption from the duty of attending the ministrations of other people's religion.

A minister who has recently returned from Johannesburg says: "A week before I arrived a hundred black 'boys' were 'run in' and whipped for the *crime* (!) of walking on the pavement." Why did not this Christian minister protest against the barbarity on the part of his fellow-Christians at the time, and on the spot where it occurred?

One of the speakers at the recent half-yearly meeting of the London Congregational Union quoted the statement of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes that London is the wealthiest and most sinful city in the world. Perhaps it is. We are not as great an authority on "sin" as the reverend gentleman. But we venture to remark that London is the most church-and-chapely capital in the world. Perhaps this has something to do with the large quantity of "sin" to the square yard.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 17, Leicester Secular Hall, Humberstonegate:—11, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible"; 6.30, "Huxley and Agnosticism."

November 24, Foresters' Hall.

December 1, Bradford; 8, Foresters' Hall; 15, Newcastle; 22, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—November 17, Liverpool; 21, Blackburn; 22, Bolton; 24, Manchester; 25, Derby; 27, Ipswich. December 1, Wood Green; 8, South Shields; 15 and 22, Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 31 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

F. Morgan.—There are several books of Humorous Recitations in the market. We have not examined any of them, but Bell's has a good reputation.

Thomas May.—Your letter is no reply to Mr. Collinson.

E. G. Taylor.—Thanks. See paragraph.

F. P.—Obviously not insertable.

E. Pinder and A. J. Hooper.—Clearly a mistake, but too late now for useful correction.

A. H. Coleman.—We will see if the suggestion can be carried out.

Admirer (South Shields).—Thanks for your encouraging letter. Only an active propaganda (as you say) will enable Freethought to reach the millions.

E. Cawley.—Obliged. See paragraph.

H. Jones.—Glad to hear of the success of Mr. Cohen's week-night lectures at Blackburn under the President's new lecture scheme.

E. B.—It was probably refused by the shop boy.

G. E. Macdonald (New York).—Many thanks. Mr. Wheeler will write. Hearty greetings.

President's Honorarium Fund (£100 for the year to provide expenses):—Already acknowledged £71 18s. 3d. Miss Vance now acknowledges the following: H. Barrett, 1s.; A. Cayford, 1s.; E. Self, 2s. 6d.; F. W. Smith, 10s.; W. Mortimer, 5s.; Dr. Nichols, 10s. 6d.

S. M. Peacock.—Mr. Watts informs us that you wrote to us respecting his North Shields lecture, and expressing approval of our lecture scheme. Your letter did not reach us, or we should have noticed it as a valuable testimony.

W. Clogg.—Thanks for your letter and the trouble you have taken.

C. Osborn, who has read our *Bible and Beer* with "the greatest pleasure," writes: "Although a Freethinker of some years' standing, I have been familiar only with the Agnostic advocates, and only recently seen your organ and efforts. If my opinion is worth anything, I will say that your journal does you great credit, and must do the cause great good. With such a Trinity as Foote, Watts, and Wheeler, you ought to redeem the world."

S. A. Bendit.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. C.—Cuttings always welcome.

W. Barrington.—Your letters in the local press must do good. It is a distinct advance, as you say, when such opinions can be ventilated in ordinary newspapers. We are glad to know that you have derived so much profit from our articles.

W. Dyson.—Our compliments to the Barnsley friends. Keep pegging away, as Lincoln said.

S. Elliott.—The London School Board elections took place last November. We never heard before of the Northampton "infidel" called "Noodles" who has been "converted" at Northampton. Perhaps "Noodles" converted him.

H. W. Jones.—The new edition of Mr. Holyoake's book on Public Speaking and Debate is published at 3s. 6d.

G. Glancy.—We share your hope that the new lecture scheme will revive the Huddersfield as well as other Branches. Let us know the result of Mr. Cohen's visit. It is our intention to press forward. After all, it is what is done that tells; and we believe the Freethought party, in the main, prefers action to paper resolutions and pious opinions.

B. W. Parsons, P. Woodward, and J. R. Barnes.—Transferred, according to your letters to Miss Vance. Thanks.

Papers Received.—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Echo—Fur Unsere Jugend—Die Freire Gesellschaft—Mona's Herald—Freedom—Pioneer—Liberator—Isle of Man Times—Leek Times—Liberty—Birmingham Daily Post—Two Worlds—Weekly Bulletin—Progressive Thinker—Boston Investigator—Scottish American—Philosophical Journal—Open Court—New York World.

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

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SHILLING MONTH.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

W. Fowler, 2s. 6d.; H. A. Huxley, 2s. 6d.; S. Elliott; E. Broughton; A. J. Hooper; H. W. Swisham; E. B., 2s. 6d.; Admirer (South Shields), 2s. 6d.; Pendlebury Friends, per J. Yates, 6s.

Per Miss Vance:—C. Harwood; Edinburgh Branch: McLeash, 2s.; McGregor; Cohen; Brown; Robertson; J. F. Dewar, 4s.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote delivered three lectures for the Birmingham Branch on Sunday, in the Alexandra Hall, which they have taken permanently. It is rather too far from the centre of the town for special lectures, especially when the weather is what it was on Sunday. How it did rain, to be sure! It was quite spiteful in its incessant vehemence. As a consequence, the morning and afternoon meetings were somewhat thinned, though the hall was crowded in the evening with a deeply-interested and most enthusiastic audience. The Branch means business at Alexandra Hall, and has arranged for an active propaganda throughout the winter. The committee are all poor men, but they are earnest workers, and they have an invaluable secretary in Mr. J. Partridge, a quiet, modest man, who does his work with great thoroughness.

Mr. Daniel Baker, the oldest but one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, attended two of the three meetings. His friends in all parts of the country will be happy to know that he has recovered from his bad attack of influenza, and is now enjoying a fair measure of health. His aged wife, as true and brave a Freethinker as himself, is feeble in body, but her mind is still clear and bright.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Nov. 17), morning and evening, in the Secular Hall, Leicester. His subjects are both new, and will doubtless attract large audiences.

Mr. Charles Watts had three enthusiastic meetings last Sunday at Newcastle-on-Tyne. In the evening a heavy storm came on, the rain coming down in torrents, and the wind blowing a hurricane. This, of course, interfered with the meeting at night. An interesting discussion took place after the evening lecture. Mr. Watts speaks highly of the members of the local branch, and also of the new hall they have engaged for Sunday lectures.

On Monday evening Mr. Watts lectured at Stockton-on-Tees under the President's new lecture scheme. Of course the admission was free, and the hall was crowded, even the standing room being occupied. The lecture was well received and heartily applauded, several persons confessing that they had entertained false ideas of Secularism. An old member rose and said that the President's lecture scheme seemed to him the best thing that had yet been done for the party. It is worth mentioning that the collection just covered the local expenses.

Mr. Watts lectures to-day (Sunday), November 17, three times at Liverpool, and during the following week he lectures under Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme at Blackburn on November 21, and at Bolton on November 22.

The Prince's Theatre, Bradford, has been refused for Mr. Foote's lectures on December 1, the lessee stating that the trustees will not allow it. An effort is being made to obtain the use of another theatre. We hope it will be successful.

Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword*, a new edition of which is just issued by the Humanitarian League, was the subject of the first leading article in last week's *Reynolds's Newspaper*. Our contemporary says that Mr. Foote has "summarised

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the arguments against war with great skill, ability, and picturesque force."

"Slaughter and Christianity," says *Reynolds'*, "seem two very familiar chums in this land. For centuries they have been the closest bedfellows, and our self-righteous people have felt no scruple whatever at the illicit intercourse."

Mr. C. Cohen lectured to a good audience at Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening, and met with a most gratifying reception. He was very loudly cheered at the close of his address. This evening (Nov. 17) the Foresters' Hall platform will be occupied by Mr. James Rowney, who will discuss the question, "Was Jesus a Reformer?" Mr. Rowney has done excellent and ungrudging work in the open-air lecture field, and we hope our friends will rally round him on this occasion.

Mr. Cohen has recently delivered nine lectures under the President's new lecture scheme, with good results in every case. He tells us that fresh interest is thus excited in our movement; people come to hear, members are enrolled, and literature is circulated. Mr. Cohen lectures at Bradford to-day (Nov. 17), and during the week he speaks (under the lecture scheme) at Huddersfield (Monday), Halifax (Tuesday), Heckmondwike (Wednesday), Stanningley (Thursday), and Todmorden (Saturday). Other fixtures are being made for the following week.

The New York *Truthseeker* of November 2 contains a report of the Annual Congress of the American Secular Union. President Putnam delivered an eloquent address on "Rome or Reason?" Of course he was re-elected. Mrs. Freeman, who resigned the secretaryship, is succeeded by Mr. E. C. Reichwald. Mr. Otto Wettstein is treasurer. The vice-presidents are C. B. Waite, T. B. Wakeman, J. E. Remsburg, and Franklin Steiner. Many subjects of practical interest were discussed, and letters were read from G. W. Foote and Charles Watts "amidst great enthusiasm." It was resolved—"That this Congress recognises the cordial sympathy of our comrades of Great Britain and other countries, and recognises the generous manner in which they have welcomed our official representative, and in the spirit of like fraternity we invite George W. Foote, President of the British Secular Society, and Charles Watts, vice-president, to visit our shores, and we assure them a hearty and universal reception by the Freethinkers of America. It is hoped they will be present with us at the national Congress of 1896."

Mr. George E. Macdonald writes informing our sub that the meetings of the Congress of Freethinkers at New York were "a distinct and unmistakable success." He says: "Tell Mr. Foote that his letter to our Congress was accepted with a shout which he might have mistaken for an English cheer if he had heard it, and the remark should be repeated of the letter from Mr. Watts."

Mr. Macdonald, speaking of Mr. Wheeler's article on "Garrison," says: "Nearly all the veteran infidels of this country were anti-slavery agitators, in so far as they were able to do any agitating at all. Your Christian evidence-monger has been deceived by our Christian history-monger, Johnson; but, being a Christian, he should have known better than to trust any other Christian in matters of this kind. Johnson made a Christian out of Abraham Lincoln, and was obliged to unmake him."

The *Scotsman* (November 4) hails the Rev. Alexander Robinson's book, *The Saviour in the Newer Light*, as "a remarkable sign of the times." The author, who is the parish minister at Kilmun, Argyleshire, gives up all the miracles of the gospels, including the supernatural birth and the resurrection. He holds Jesus up simply as a great moral teacher sent by God. The fourth gospel he declares to be most untrustworthy, and says it is "hurled down irrevocably from the high pedestal on which piety used to place it." All this is very gratifying. It shows that Freethought is penetrating the very churches. In the course of time it will be seen by all that Jesus is not even a great moral teacher, but the figurehead of a mythical system.

The following letter, which reaches us from the far north of Scotland, will interest many of our readers: "It may be of some interest for you to hear of how things move beyond the Grampians. I am not in ordinary eligible as a juror, but last week, through some inadvertence, summoned, I attended without demur. I claimed to affirm, and the claim was duly admitted, without objection or remark. On the same day two witnesses made similar claims. One entered into some lengthy disquisition around some conscientious scruples, amidst which the judge checked him, and asked him to affirm if he wished, which he duly did. The second simply asked to affirm, and thereupon was duly affirmed. I was elected by my fellow-jurors as foreman, to deliver their verdict. I am in the midst of a priest-ridden population, and the incident is only noteworthy in so far as it shows that we do move.—W. Duncan."

The Rationalist Press Committee has just issued a very useful pamphlet (6d.) by Mr. Charles Watts on "The Claims of Christianity." Our colleague takes the recent "Handbook of Christian Evidences," by Dr. Alexander Stewart, as his starting-point. He goes over the whole ground with great care and thoroughness, giving telling extracts from all sorts of authorities as he goes along. His writing is firm but temperate, and is calculated to set open-minded people thinking. We sincerely hope the pamphlet will have (as it deserves) a wide circulation.

The Congress of the French Federation de la Libre-Pensée was attended by delegates from a majority of the 200 groups of which the Federation is composed. The question of education largely occupied the attention of the Congress, provincial delegates representing that owing to clerical domination there were parts where the law for compulsory education of 1882 was virtually a dead letter. Municipalities were called on to provide secular education for girls as well as boys, and resolutions in favor of the suppression of the *budget des cultes* and of the judicial oath were passed.

Mr. E. G. Taylor lectured for the Independent Labor Party at Manchester on the Blasphemy Laws, and the following resolution was adopted unanimously: "That this meeting of the South Manchester Branch of the I.L.P. pledges itself to adopt measures to influence Parliament to remove all laws from the Statute Book imposing disabilities on account of opinion by recommending the Executive of the I.L.P. to advocate and support the Liberty of Bequest and Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bills, and that these two Bills should be included in the program of the I.L.P." A sub-committee was appointed to see to the carrying out of this resolution.

The Secular Almanack, issued by the National Secular Society, and edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, is on sale. By resolution of the Executive it is now published at threepence. Of course it is slightly diminished in size, but it contains a great deal of information which is useful and interesting to Secularists, who should all obtain a copy, especially as any profit accruing from the sale goes into the Society's exchequer, to be spent on the propaganda of Freethought.

Mr. Sydney Gimson writes to us from Leicester, under date November 11: "I notice that in 'Sugar Plums,' in yesterday's *Freethinker*, you announce that Mr. Moncure D. Conway was to lecture at South Place Chapel yesterday, on the 'Centenary of Paine's *Age of Reason*.' I believe this mistake was owing to an error in the South Place lecture list. As a matter of fact, Mr. Conway lectured twice in the Leicester Secular Hall yesterday (as announced in our list and in your Guide to Provincial Lectures)—in the morning on 'Babeuf, and the Centenary of Socialism,' and in the evening on 'How Jesus Sank into the Tomb of Lazarus.' He had two very good audiences, who listened with the closest attention to the lectures. This was Mr. Conway's first visit to the Leicester Secular Society, but we hope it will not be his last. His lectures have given great pleasure, and the information given out by such an original thinker must bear fruit in thoughtful minds. Our Society is honored when we receive such men on to our platform, and from them we get the encouragement to persevere in the none too smooth paths of Freethought work."

An American committee has been formed for the purpose of erecting a memorial to Professor Huxley.

The *Bulletin Mensuel*, of the French Freethought Federation, reports the proceedings at the unveiling of a monument at Pontoise to Maria Deraismes, the first woman who was made a Freemason. Many of the leading French Freethinkers were present. The monument, which consists of a granite pyramid and a bust, is erected at a circus in the Rue Maria-Deraismes.

Public Opinion, of New York, gives every week careful extracts on religious, as well as other, topics. Occasionally it makes an extract from the *Freethinker*, and in the latest number before us gives the following striking extract from Alexander von Humboldt: "All positive religions contain three distinct parts. First, a code of morals very fine and nearly the same in all. Second, a geological dream. And third, a myth or historical novelette."

Ella E. Gibson, a well-known American Freethinker, now in her seventy-fifth year, writing to us from Barre, Massachusetts, says: "In my opinion yours is the best Freethought publication I read. I think you in England are ahead of us in America. The way you beat parson Hughes delighted me." During the Atheist Shoemaker controversy some

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Christian wretch in London sent an infamous letter to this aged lady, his pious malignity being perhaps excited by the fact that her name was Gibson. What a beautiful religion it is that prompts a devotee to commit such a gratuitous outrage! We should like to have five minutes with the scoundrel. The interview should take place near a hospital.

Mr. Foote has engaged St. James's Hall again for three Sunday evening lectures in January (12, 19, and 26). He will probably work the West-End, in conjunction with Mr. Watts and perhaps other colleagues, during the rest of the winter. He is also arranging for courses of week-night free lectures in various parts of London during January and February. One lecture of each course will be taken by himself; the others will be taken by Messrs. Watts, Parris, Cohen, Moss, Heaford, etc.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH.

Colonel Ingersoll's New Lecture.

Robert G. Ingersoll talked for nearly an hour and three-quarters in the Boston Theatre, on "The Foundations of Faith." He had an immense audience, an enthusiastic reception, and a more than sympathetic hearing. The orator began his new lecture with an account of the way in which scepticism regarding Holy Writ arose in the minds of men. For many centuries, said he, the books of Christianity were accepted as facts. For many centuries the Church had absolute power. Very few questioned its authority; if they did, they ceased to be a part of the population.

A very few denied the dogmas, and most of them were satisfied with a consummation of eternal pain. When now and then somebody had a new idea about some particular passage, he was denounced as a heretic. Still, the heretics multiplied, until there came to be many kinds of Christians, and until all of the various kinds of Christians accepted what they called the fundamental truths—that is to say, the falsehoods at the foundation. Now and then some one went so far as to doubt even the existence of the Infinite Master which humanity had put above the clouds. Such a man was answered with the scaffold, though he generally admitted before he died that he was mistaken. But now and then a man stood by his reason, and was martyred; and all such should be remembered with gratitude by every free man and free woman in the world.

In spite of it all, there was intellectual advance. Doubt continued to spread; somebody looked at the stars, and found that this earth was not the centre of the universe, but was a mere grain of sand on the infinite shore of existence. Then men began to examine the earth, and found it to be more than six thousand years old. Then the Church came, and called these men infidels and rascals. But the objections became so great that the Church had to answer them, and it said that the Bible meant by the six days of creation six epochs, or long whiles. Yet the epoch or long-while theory could not be applied to the age of man on the earth.

According to the Scriptures, man has been upon the earth for 5,899 years. Now, it is known that certain forms of life existed in Europe hundreds of thousands of years ago. In caves once inhabited by human beings there have been found implements, flints, and knives, hatchets and arrow heads, made by men; and in these same caves have been found the bones of hundreds and thousands of these extinct animals, and those that have been extinct for hundreds of thousands of years. Now, every bone witnesses that the Bible is false; every flint instrument testifies that the writers of the Bible were ignorant as to the origin of the human race.

It is certain that hundreds of thousands of years before Adam lived men, women, and children inhabited this earth of ours. I would like the clergy to answer that, and it is no answer to say that I am a bad man; I admit that. Therefore, I say that the Bible is not true, and if it is not true on that subject, why do they call it inspired? If God made this world and wrote this book, he ought to have some idea of when he did it.

Mr. Ingersoll gave what he termed further proofs of the antiquity of the earth, as drawn from historical and other records. He pointed to the lack of scientific knowledge shown by the writers of the Bible. These things, said he, show that the Bible is not to be relied upon. And to me, he went on to say, the fact that it cannot is enough to fill the world with joy. I hate it with every drop of my blood. It has driven millions to insanity. It has been the enemy of human liberty.

If the Bible is incorrect on astronomy and geology, cannot we rely upon it for historical facts? is asked. The lecturer here instanced as grossly improbable or false such a statement as that about Jeroboam's army of 800,000 men, and Abijah's of 400,000; and the one telling of the raising by David of $2,000,000,000 in silver, and $45,000,000,000 in gold, to build a temple ninety feet long, forty-five feet high, and thirty feet wide. The Old Testament, said Mr. Ingersoll, must be given up. The Old Testament, as one of the foundation-stones of our faith, is crumbling; and it is no longer a guide for men of intelligence or courage who have not been possessed by superstition.

The New Testament is just as deceptive as the other. No one knows, for example, when Christ was born; yet Christians seized on the 25th of December, the date of the festival of the sun god, and said he was born on that day. The story of his birth is told in all sorts of ways by the disciples. Matthew knew nothing of the heavenly host; Luke knew nothing of the wise men; Matthew heard nothing of the shepherds, and Luke knew nothing of the murder of the babes by Herod, or of the flight into Egypt. Which of these accounts is true? Why, the genealogies of Christ given by the disciples differ to the extent of fourteen to fifteen generations.

Is there ingenuity in all the pulpits of the world enough to harmonise these palpable contradictions? Why, they do not even agree about Judas. Matthew says that he repented and took the money back. Peter says that he bought a field with it; Matthew says that he hung himself, and Peter says that he fell down and burst asunder. Now, I don't believe that anybody betrayed Christ. If it is true that he made a public entry into Jerusalem, that he went into the temple and discussed with teachers there, is it possible that they had to hire a man to point him out so that he could be arrested? Now, I say with absolute confidence that he was unknown in Jerusalem, had performed no miracles, and never made a triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Why did not Christ defend himself before Pilate? Pilate wanted to acquit him, but he would not let him. He wanted to find him innocent, but Christ would not help him. Did Christ wish to be convicted? No. But Christians think that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins; and that doctrine comes from the heart of savagery.

The New Testament is not historically true. You tell me that there is a living God; but why does he permit slavery to exist? Why does he permit Siberia? Why does your God allow injustice to triumph? Why does he give success to brute force and fraud, while innocence and kindness are trampled under foot? What is your God doing—counting hairs? Ministers ask if it is possible for God to forgive man; but I ask if it is possible for man to forgive God.

Mr. Ingersoll here assailed the Christian idea of God, severely criticising the conception of the Trinity. No God, he said, has ever asked me to worship him, or to raise a temple to him; and I am going to wait until he asks me. If I were a God, I would succor the oppressed. If I had the power, no lash should ever have been applied to the back of a slave.

The God of the Christians must perish from the universe. He is of no use. He has never answered a prayer; he has never heard the chains of the prison clank. A God that will not protect his friends ought to get away, and some other potentate ought to take his place.

The lecturer here entered into a discussion of the Christian idea of Christ. He described the doctrine of the incarnation as beyond the reach of reason, as defying observation and being independent of experience. My purpose, he went on to say, is to rescue the reputation of Christ. The God must die that the man may live.

If we are to rightly conceive of the character of Christ, many of the sayings which he is alleged to have uttered were not by him. The New Testament is not inspired, because many of its statements are untrue. Orthodox religion itself has no foundation in truth; beneath its structure can be found no fact.

But someone will say: "Oh, you are trying to take our religion away." No, I am not. Superstition is not religion. Faith without facts is not religion. Well, what is religion?

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To love justice, to long for the right, to love mercy, to pity the suffering, to succor the weak, to forget wrongs, to remember benefits, to love truth, to be sincere, to love liberty—these belong to true religion.

Mr. Ingersoll here uttered a scathing indictment against the Christian conception of hell, and brought his address to a close by describing the function of hope in the world. Hope, said he, is the consolation of mankind; and let us hope, if there is a God, that he is wise and good; let us hope, if there be another life, that it will bring peace and joy to all the children of men. And let us hope that this poor earth on which we live may be at last a perfect world, without a crime and without a tear.

—*Boston Herald.*

DEATH OF V. E. LENNSTRAND.

We have to record the death of Viktor Emmanuel Lennstrand, one of the founders and martyrs of organised Freethought in Sweden. His imprisonment for blasphemy, and subsequent establishment of *Fritankaren*, appealed strongly to the sympathies of English Freethinkers. Viktor Lennstrand was born at Gefle on January 30, 1861, so was only in his thirty-fifth year. He was educated at Upsala University, where he became acquainted with the works of Darwin, Spencer, Mill, and other Freethinkers. With the courage of his convictions, he got into a conflict with the authorities by lecturing in Upsala against Christianity, in 1887. In March of the following year the Swedish Utilitarian Society was started. By May he was sentenced to a fine of 250 crowns for denying the truth of the Christian religion, and, as he continued his propaganda, on November 29 he was imprisoned for three months for the same offence. Mr. Lennstrand defended himself manfully, and challenged the prosecution to prove that what he said about the Bible God was false. These were the first prosecutions for blasphemy in Sweden since 1821, when Professor Erik Gustaf Geijer was indicted for his work on *The Protestant Creed*, and was acquitted. Having full information of the case from our veteran friend, Captain Otto Thomson, a subscription was started in England, and we had the mournful satisfaction of contributing towards the expenses of his imprisonment. Continuing his advocacy, Victor Lennstrand founded *Fritankaren* as a journal of Freethought, and lectured throughout Sweden. During 1889 he was subject to no fewer than eight prosecutions for blasphemy, each time being acquitted when brought before a jury, and sentenced when brought before the official tribunals. His last prosecution was for a pamphlet on *The Idea of God*, which has been translated and published in English. Eventually he served two sentences of three months at Malmo, and one of six months at Stockholm. Of a delicate constitution, it is only too likely these imprisonments ruined and shortened his life, as, in the opinion of his friends, he was not the same man afterwards. Though he continued his active propaganda, he has been for some time past suffering from ill-health, and went back to his native place to die. Of an impetuous nature, it seems likely that the sword has worn out the sheath. In the *Social Demokrater* (November 2) Hjalmar Branting, the Socialist leader, and one of his former opponents, pays a tribute to him as an enthusiastic fighter and a distinguished propagandist. Lennstrand will be remembered for his sufferings and his efforts to arouse Sweden from her pietistic lethargy. We hope Sweden Freethinkers will unite over his grave to continue the work which he so valiantly began.

Immortality.

It seems to me that the belief in immortality, and the belief in supernatural moral authority, are *secondary*, *incidental*, and *theoretical* beliefs, deriving their existence and their strength solely from the *primary*, *essential*, and *practical* certainties: firstly, that life is the first concern of living beings; secondly, that life is capable of being continually made safer, easier, and happier; thirdly, that the human *will* is an ulterior agency in improving human resources; and, fourthly, that a more satisfactory total of result is obtainable by the agency of wills set upon virtue than upon wills set only upon immediate self-service. Everything in the history of religious codes goes to show them at the mercy of any and every advance in social feeling. Religious sanctions have ever bent to moralities rather than moralities to them. This is increasingly the case, as social justifications for virtue emerge into recognition.—*Miss L. S. Bevington.*

BOOK CHAT.

Epicurean Science and Poetry, selected from Lucretius, by Islay B. Muirhead, M.D. (J. Bale and Sons, 85 Great Titchfield-street, W.), is a little volume of translations from choice and important passages of the *De Rerum Natura* of the great Roman atheistic poet, prefaced by an essay on "The Genius and Influence of Lucretius." Within the compass of twenty pages Dr. Muirhead gives a very good account of the system of the great philosophic poet, and of its influence upon later and even the most modern thought.

* * *

Lucretius has, indeed, an unique place among poets. He is the only one who has a cosmic philosophy. If of Sophocles it may be said he "saw life steadily and saw it whole," of Lucretius it may be said he saw it in relation to the surrounding universe. It is, indeed, a strong tribute to the atheistic view that it has produced the most philosophical of poems, and that, after nearly two thousand years, science, emerging from the slough of Christian superstition, has come round to the views of evolution propounded by Lucretius.

* * *

It is curious what an attraction the Roman Atheist has for moderns, whether scientists or poets. His merits in popularising the atomic theory of Demokritos have been acknowledged by Lange, Tyndall, and Jenkin; while poets have united in praise of his poetry. Dryden, no less deserving regard as a critic than as a poet, speaks of his "sublime and daring genius." Tennyson has consecrated a poem to his thought and tragic end; and Mrs. Browning, holding the very antithesis of his philosophy, in her *Vision of Poets*, calls up

> Lucretius, nobler than his mood,
> Who dropped his plummet down the broad,
> Deep universe, and said "No God"—
>
> Finding no bottom, he denied
> Divinely the divine, and died
> Chief poet on the Tiber-side.

* * *

Lucretius has not wanted for translators. In verse, Creech Good, Busby, and Baring; in prose, Watson and Munro, have all had their share of popularity. The version of Mr. H. A. J. Munro has the dignity of a classic, yet its merits are best appreciated by scholars familiar with the Latin text. For the popular reader there is still room for a good poetic version which shall combine easy flow of English rhythm with accurate translation of the author's text. As a specimen of Dr. Muirhead's version, we have only room for a few lines of the opening panegyric on Epicurus:—

> When human life lay crushed full heavily
> Before all eyes, under the monstrous weight
> Of dark religion, which displayed her head
> From forth the heavenly regions, menacing
> Men with abhorred front, a Greek first dared
> To lift created eyes, and to withstand
> Her, face to face, unfrighted. Him nor tale
> Of gods, nor thunderbolt, nor the vexed heaven's
> Loud murmur quelled; but nerved with more resolve
> And courage to be first to break the bars
> Of nature's confines.

Dr. Muirhead has made, on the whole, a telling selection of passages. But he has not picked out all the plums, and what he offers us is good enough to make us wish for more.

* * *

The catalogues of Mr. B. Dobell, 77 Charing Cross-road, always contain items of interest. No. 48, just issued, has, for instance, a work by Voltaire, with the bookplate of Hume; also the scarce work written by Marat when in England, and entitled *Philosophical Essay on Man*, being an attempt to investigate the principles and laws of the reciprocal influence of the soul on the body (two vols., 1773).

* * *

Another and a new book in the same catalogue is the recently-published *Poems and Sonnets* of Herbert E. Clarke, who is saddened by the realisation of "what man has made of man," and his feelings find expression in vigorous rebel-songs, alike against kings and creeds.

* * *

According to the *Daily News*, Mr. Johnston, the Orange M.P., has written a novel entitled *Nightshade*. Deadly nightshade it is, and the Rev. Mr. Werd, one of the characters, says: "It was only last week that a little Sunday scholar who had left Popery was placed on the heated bars of a grate, and lighted turf placed round him till he was almost burned to death." The "almost" happily marks Mr. Johnston's constitutional anxiety to be precise in matters of fact.

* * *

The genius who tried to elevate himself by pulling at his bootstraps has found a follower in the Rev. Mr. Milsee

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who writes on *Jesus as a Higher Critic*. Jesus certifies to Daniel and Moses, and therefore they must have written all ascribed to them. The Bible is all true because part of it affirms the authenticity of another part. Such is clerical logic.

* * *

Mr. A. H. J. Greenidge, M.A., of Hertford College, Oxford, has put out a monograph on *Infamia: Its Place in Roman Public and Private Law*. It is curious, to say the least, that the work of Dr. Emil Reich, *Greco-Roman Institutions* (1890), in which he called attention to the importance of the doctrine of civil honor among the Romans, is not as much as mentioned by Mr. Greenidge.

* * *

Mr. C. L. Abbott, of Austin, Texas, whose article on "John the Baptist" we reproduce in another column, is bringing out *An Agnostic Dictionary of the Bible*, which is to embody the results of the Higher Criticism.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE WATTS-WALDRON DEBATE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the last number of the *Freethinker*, Mr. John Wood, secretary *pro tem.* of the Christian Evidence Society (Newcastle Branch, I presume), has a letter of criticism re my report of above debate, and in fairness I trust you will make room for my reply.

When Mr. Waldron and his agent (the two witnesses referred to) called at my office, I showed them that my report, before being inserted, had been considerably "boiled down," and that in consequence of this process the word "practically" had been omitted after the words "arguments were." With this correction or addition I must adhere to my assertion, in spite of that I took no "written" notes the first night, only being requested the next day to send report; but, for Mr. Wood's information, permit me to say I took plenty of "mental" notes.

The deductions from ontology and psychology, which Mr. Waldron considered arguments, were but resorts to vocal pyrotechnics to blind his followers, or, as Mr. Watts said, "metaphysical problems" about atoms, etc., which had nothing to do with the subject of debate. To the rest of my report Mr. Waldron took no exception. Mr. Wood says I admitted Mr. Waldron "was certainly a good debater," and blames me for saying one thing and meaning something else. Mr. Wood has been misinformed. I never said so—it is absolutely untrue—and I meant it when I said that Mr. Waldron was certainly not a good debater. A prominent member of the C.E.S. opined that Mr. Waldron showed a great lack of perceptive power. Mr. Wood's experience differs entirely from mine. I, too, have seen a great number of Secularists, and not one differed from me on this point. Can the Secularists Mr. Wood refers to have spoken ironically, and Mr. Wood not noticed it? Mr. Wood draws the inference that Mr. Charles Watts must think otherwise. Oh, for the irony of fate! In the very same number of the *Freethinker* (p. 709) Mr. Watts thus refers to the debate: "In vain do we look for the successors of such disputants as Dr. Harrison, Dr. McCann, and Dr. Sexton.....*they understood the art* of debate.....Upon whom has their mantle fallen? I know not." Again, in the *Freethinker* (April 28, p. 261), Mr. Watts says: "The rev. gentleman was no match, intellectually for Mr. Foote. Debate is an art, and, in addition to a person having *the gift* to master it, practice is required. Now, it appeared to me that Mr. Waldron was deficient in each of these requisites.....as a philosophical debater he is not great. He seemed not only to fail to grasp the nature of his opponent's arguments, but also to possess a very limited supply of his own."

Entertaining great regard for Mr. Waldron as a gentleman, I regret having been forced into this correspondence.

CARL A. AARSTAD.

[We cannot insert any more letters on such a trivial and barren theme.—EDITOR.]

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

Christianity.

The fundamental theory of Christianity is false, and it is surrounded with a mesh of creeds and doctrines and theories varying from the monstrous to the ridiculous, and from the truthful to the unreasonable. Christianity, as such, never rose above persecution; toleration is not a Christian virtue. It is a low and debasing falsehood that man was perfect once, but is now bad by nature and lost without Christian salvation—a falsehood altogether mean and contemptible. The morally good and the bad are not equally lost forever. When this standard prevails, moral death is certain, and history proves it to the letter. Theological sophistry cannot permanently prevail over truth. Real, true men always have loved and always will love goodness, apart from theology and in spite of theology. And Christianity, founded upon the moral teachings of Christ, has lived, not because of its many theories and doctrines of salvation, but in spite of them. There is no more vital moral truth for mankind than this; not that we were once perfect, but that we are growing better.

The teaching of Christ is overlaid with creeds. Theology, insisting upon its rule and catechism, places a yoke upon our necks which we cannot and will not bear. When we are told that we cannot reason on God's wisdom, and that we must accept what we find or be outcast, we are mocked, though with never so honest intent. Our reason is all we have to guide us, and he who rejects it deserves nothing; he has thrown away his only talent.—*William P. Hale.*

The Only True Fishing Story.

In connection with the fact that the Apostles were fishermen, I have said that there never was a fisherman who would not lie.

A Lexington man, leading his little son, stopped me not long ago, and the father said that the son had said that he had "a true fishing story that he wanted to tell Mr. Charley Moore." I asked what it was, and the boy said he had "been fishing a few days ago and never got a bite."

That's right; if I make a statement that is not absolutely true, I want to be corrected; but that is the first true fish story that I ever heard or read. The bigger the fish, the bigger the lie. The Jonah whale lie is the biggest one that was ever told, and I have no doubt that the fish lies in the Bible have much to do with the distinguished mendacity of the religion of this country.—*Blue Grass Blade.*

Not Such an Easy Matter.

A Scotch chaplain was recently appointed to a prison in a certain town. He was a man who made the most of his office, and, entering one of the cells on his first round of inspection, he very pompously addressed the occupant, and the following passage occurred:—

Chaplain—"Well, sir, do you know who I am?"

Prisoner—"No, nor I dinna care."

Chaplain—"Well, I'm your prison chaplain."

Prisoner—"Oh, ye are; weel, I hae heard o' ye before."

Chaplain (letting his curiosity get the better of his dignity)—"And what did ye hear?"

Prisoner—"I heard the last two kirks ye were in ye preached them both empty; but ye'll no find it sic an easy matter tae dae the same wi' this ane."

Pat Got Out of It.

Pat was on his way to church, and on the road met the priest.

"Good morning, Pat."

"Good morning, your riverince."

"Where are you going?"

"To mass, sor."

"Well, Pat, what is the meaning of mass?"

Now Pat did not know, but he was bound not to let the priest find it out.

"The loikes of you asking the loikes of me the meaning of mass!"

"Now, Pat, tell me, anyway."

"I don't like to tell you."

"But suppose a Protestant should ask you?"

"Oh, I could easily tell him."

"Well, I will be a Protestant, and meet you at the next corner."

So the priest walked away, and met Pat at the next corner.

"Good morning, Pat."

"Good morning, yer honor."

"Where are you going?"

"To mass, sor."

"What does mass mean?"

"Well, if you're a Protestant, it's none of your business."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Foresters' Hall (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, James Rowney, "Was Jesus a Reformer?"

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (84 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, Arthur B. Moss, "A New Age of Reason." Wednesday, at 8, public discussion, opened by R. Forder, "The Passage in Tacitus: Is it Genuine?"

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, J. T. Blanchard, "The New Secularism." Monday, at 8, entertainment. Tuesday, at 8, dancing class.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Robert Forder, "Pagan Symbols and Christian Imitations." Friday, at 8, free science classes.

Penton Hall (81 Pentonville-road): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Philosophy or Wisdom."

West London Ethical Society (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Spiritual Dram-taking."

West Ham Secular Ethical Society (61 West Ham-lane): 7, C. E. Ford, "Science and the Bible."

Wood Green (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Man: Whence he Comes and How?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Is Man a Free Agent?"

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, Tom Groom, "What Socialism Is"; 7, "The Need of an Ideal in Life."

Blackburn (Venetian Hall, Darwen-street): Thursday, at 7.30, Charles Watts, "Secularism and Modern Thought."

Bristol (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Darné, "Rise and Decline of Christian Dogma."

Chatham Secular Hall (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Hosford, "The Creed of an Unbeliever."

Dundee (Tally-street Hall): 2.30, discussion class; 6.30, D. F. Gloak, "The Decalogue."

Glasgow (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Gilbert, "The Division of Labor"; 6.30, Anon, a lecture.

Huddersfield (Friendly and Trade Societies' Hall, Northumberland-street, No. 5 Room): Monday, at 7.45, "Is it Reasonable to Believe in God?"

Hull (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Fryer, "Fiction and Freethought."

Leicester Secular Hall (Humberstone Gate): 11, G. W. Foote, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible"; 6.30, "Huxley and Agnosticism."

Liverpool (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Theological Puzzles"; 3, "Christian Evidences a Fallacy"; 7, "Secularism in Modern Thought."

Manchester Secular Hall (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Newman, "The Common-sense of Atheism."

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, R. Mitchell, "The Christian and Secular View of Death."

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, F. H. Hart, "Some of the Country-folk of Thomas Hardy, the Novelist"; 7, "Yorkshire to Pennsylvania." Tea at 5.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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MISS LANCHESTER'S CASE.

WE have delayed writing on Miss Lanchester's case, in order that the general dust of controversy might settle and leave room for calm reflection. In all probability the public meetings that have been held will eventuate in nothing. We imagine it to be unlikely that Miss Lanchester will take legal proceedings against her own father, and we fancy that Dr. Blandford's certificate would be regarded in court as an error of judgment rather than an act of criminality. Anyhow the lady does not seem very anxious to pursue the matter; which causes a profane wag to say that the new woman takes as long as the old woman in making up her mind.

Some of those who have buzzed about this affair are animated by ulterior motives. We do not mean that their motives are dishonest or improper, but merely that they look upon the case as a convenient fire in which to warm their own irons. Nor do we censure their action. They are entitled to do what they can to advertise their objects; but, at the same time, we may be pardoned for considering the case from a more general point of view.

Let us first consider it in connection with the lunacy laws. We will begin by laying down the proposition that no man or woman is absolutely sane. Every person is a little cracked, intellectually or morally; some, of course, are more cracked than others; and when they become dangerous to themselves or others, or an intolerable nuisance to all around them, it is right that they should be placed under restraint. Obviously, however, the onus of proof lies upon those who seek to deprive any person of liberty. Incarceration in a lunatic asylum is really imprisonment, though it is not attended by the "punishment" which is meted out in criminal establishments. To shut up everybody who is somewhat cracked would be to imprison the whole population. No one would be left to officiate as keepers. We must discriminate. The line must be drawn somewhere, and it should be drawn, in our opinion, at the point already indicated. Eccentricity must not be treated as madness; otherwise half the geniuses in the world will be sent to bedlam by butchers and greengrocers. Before a person is shut up in a madhouse, it should be proved—not *alleged*, but *proved*—that his seclusion is necessary to his own or the public safety; or else, as in the case of an offensive imbecile, that it is necessary to public decorum.

Miss Lanchester did not fall under either of these categories. We have every sympathy with a father who, in the existing state of society, seeks to guard his daughter against an unrecallable act, when he thinks she has not sufficiently considered the consequences; and a certain allowance should be made for human nature in such circumstances. But it was an outrage to lock Miss Lanchester up as a madwoman, and Dr. Blandford's reasons for signing the certificate were simply puerile. All he discovered was that the young lady held uncommon views on the marriage question. He therefore concluded that she was temporarily insane, and that she should be subjected to the regimen of an asylum until she returned to normal opinions. Dr. Blandford made himself the normal standard for the occasion, and some people think he is ridiculously inadequate.

The great sex question cannot be suppressed in this way. It has come to the front, and is going to stay there. All other questions are of inferior interest and importance. The world turns upon two great hinges—self-preservation and reproduction; and as the first chiefly affects the individual, and the second chiefly affects society, we can understand the supreme part played by love in all imaginative literature. The will to live, as Schopenhauer calls it, necessarily moves along the line of sexual affection; and human instinct, which is deeper than reason, looks for the love interest in stories, novels, poems, and dramas.

Hitherto the passion of love has acted rather blindly. But in the course of time every passion is compelled to form an alliance with reason. This is now happening with the passion of love. And one result is the emergence of the marriage question in our best literature. Not to mention foreign writers like Ibsen, we find it in our two greatest novelists—George Meredith and Thomas Hardy. Nothing could be franker or more probing than Mr. Hardy's latest novel *Jude the Obscure*. Some of its realism is quite Zolaesque. His previous novel *Tess*—a really great book—presented the marriage question in a different light, but it was still a search-light. Mr. Meredith has treated the same theme, in his own superb, unique fashion, in novel after novel—in *Diana of the Crossways*, in *One of our Conquerors*, in *Lord Ormont and his Aminta*, and now lastly in the *Amazing Marriage*. The fact is, the old ideas have to be reviewed. Throwing the handkerchief has had its day, and sexual relations will have to be readjusted on lines of reason and self-respect.

This does not imply the abolition of marriage, as some light-headed enthusiasts imagine, but simply its reformation. Miss Lanchester, like the heroine of Mr. Grant Allen's novel, is no doubt a high-minded girl. She is mistaken, however, in supposing that because there are valid objections to an institution as it exists, the institution itself has no justification. All she appears to desire could be obtained by a rational law of divorce, which is bound to come in time. Meanwhile, she should ask herself why marriage originated. It is shallow to answer, Because the man captured or inveigled the woman. Why did he keep her when she had served his purpose? Because she was the mother of his children. Marriage is not based upon sexual instinct. The instinct itself would rather lead to promiscuity. Marriage is based upon offspring. And the reason which determined its existence is the reason that will determine its continuance. Marriage is primarily for the rearing of offspring, and consequently for the future of the race. So long as the procreation of children is not a merely personal, but a decidedly social act, so long will the marriage institution exist, however modified by the progress of a higher civilisation.

Laws cannot prevent illicit sexual intercourse, but society has a right to say what it will respect and guarantee. Those who reject that guarantee, however high their motives, are bound to consider all the consequences. They have to think, not only of themselves, but of other persons. And when the principal third persons are children, whose introduction to the world is a matter in which they are not consulted, it seems to us both wise and just for "advanced" lovers to respect marriage while agitating for its reformation.

When girls are up in arms against our present marriage laws, we may hope that attention will be concentrated upon them; and though the revolt of Miss Lanchester has its painful and pathetic side, and some people will say its comic side, it will doubtless be a factor in bringing about a more wholesome condition of affairs.

G. W. FOOTE.

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WAS SIR WALTER RALEIGH A FREETHINKER?

AUBREY, in his *Lives*, set down both Sir Walter Raleigh and Thomas Harriot, his friend, the mathematician, who accompanied him to Virginia, as Deists. Anthony Wood gives the same testimony of Harriot, and it has been noted that, although Raleigh's writings abound with fine expressions of religious sentiment, in the sense of expressing trust in God, they contain no allusion to the positive doctrines of Christianity. It is not surprising that it was concluded that, in the words of Aubrey, "he was an A-Christ, not an Atheist."

The writer of the oldest *Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, affixed to his *History of the World*, says: "He behaved himself at his death with so high and so religious a resolution as if a Christian had acted a Roman, or rather a Roman a Christian. And by the magnanimity which was then conspicuous in him, he abundantly baffled their calumnies who had accused him of Atheism." Magnanimity was, of course, professed to be incompatible with Atheism. The charge against Raleigh had been made at his first trial by Coke, the King's Attorney-General, afterwards Lord Chief Justice. "O damnable Atheist," he said; and this has been generally supposed to have been mere vituperation to make up for a bad cause. "The extreme weakness of the evidence," says Sir James Stephen in his *History of the Criminal Law*, "was made up for by the rancorous ferocity of Coke." But the Lord Chief Justice, in passing sentence, said: "You have been taxed by the world with the defence of the most heathenish and blasphemous opinions. Let not any devil persuade you to think there is no eternity in Heaven; for, if you think thus, you shall find eternity in hell fire."

Although it has escaped the attention of Raleigh's biographers, there exists among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum a piece of contemporary evidence showing there was some foundation, if an insufficient one, for this opinion. It is the testimony of one Ralph Ironside, Minister of Winterbro', as to the sayings of Sir Walter Raleigh at a certain supper at Sir George Trenchard's; and, as his evidence gives a curious illustration of the religious dialectics of the time, as well as throws some light on the cast of mind of one of England's worthies, I venture to reproduce a large portion of his prolix narrative. It appears that Mr. Carew Raleigh, Sir Walter's brother, was reproved for some loose speech, and told by this Rev. Ralph Ironside that he thereby incurred the danger of death both of body and of soul also.

> "'Soul,' quoth Mr. Carew Raleigh, 'what is that? Better it were, said I, that we would be careful how the soul might be saved than to be curious in finding out the essence.
>
> "And so, keeping silence, Sir Walter requested me that, for their instruction, I would answer to the question that before by his brother was proposed unto me. I have been, saith he, a scholar, some time in Oxford; I gave answer under a bachelor of arts, and had talk with divers; yet hitherunto, in this point (to wit, what the reasonable soul of man is), have I not by any been resolved. They tell me it is *primus motor*, the first mover in a man, etc. Unto this, after I had replied that, howsoever the soul were *fons et principium*, the fountain, beginning, and cause of motion in us, yet the first mover was the brain or heart, I was again urged to show my opinion, and, hearing Sir Walter Raleigh tell of his dispute and scholarship sometime in Oxford, I cited the general definition of *Anima* out of Aristotle (2 *De Anima*, cap. 2), and thence *a subjecto proprio* deduced the special definition of the soul reasonable, that it was *Actus primus corporis organici agentis humanam vitam*.
>
> "It was misliked of Sir Walter, as obscure and intricate. And I, withal that though it could not unto him, as being learned, yet it might seem obscure to the most present, and therefore had rather say with divines plainly, that the reasonable soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, breathed into man by God, whereby he lives and moves, and understandeth, and so is distinguished from other creatures. Yea, but what is that spiritual and immortal substance breathed into man? saith Sir Walter. The soul, quoth I. Nay, then, said he, you answer not like a scholar. Hereupon I endeavored to prove that it was scholar-like—nay, in such disputes as this, usual and necessary—to run in *circulum*, partly because *definitio rei* was *primum et immediatum principium* and seeing *primo non est prius*, a man must of necessity come backward, and partly because *definitio* and *definitum* be *natura reciproca*, the one convertible answering unto the question made upon the other. As, for example, if one asked, 'What is a man?' you will say: 'He is a creature reasonable and mortal': but if you ask again, 'What is a creature reasonable and mortal?' you must of force come backward and answer: 'It is a man'—*et sic de cæteris*.
>
> "'But we have principles in our mathematics,' saith Sir Walter, 'as *totum est majus qua libet sua parte*; and ask me of it, and I can show it in the table, in the window, in a man, the whole being bigger than the parts of it.'
>
> "I replied, first, that he showed *quod est*, not *quid est*, that it was, but not what it was; secondly, that such demonstration was against the nature of a man's soul, being a spirit; for, as a thing being sensible was subject to the sense, so man's soul, being insensible, was to be discerned by the spirit. Nothing more certain in the world than that there is a God, yet, being a spirit, to subject Him to the sense otherwise than *perfectum*, it is impossible. 'Marry!' quoth Sir Walter, 'these two be like, for neither could I learn hitherto what God is.' Mr. Fitzjames answering that Aristotle should say he was *Ens entium*, I answered that whether Aristotle dying in a fever should cry, *Ens entium miserere mei*, or, drowning himself in Euripum, should say, *quia ego te non capio, tu me capies*, it was uncertain, but that God was *Ens entium*, a thing of things, having being of Himself, and giving being to all creatures, it is most certain and confirmed by God Himself unto Moses.'
>
> "'Yea, but what is this *Ens entium*?' said Sir Walter. I answer: 'It is God.' And being disliked as before, Sir Walter wished that grace might be said, for that, quoth he, is better than this disputation. Thus, supper ended and grace said, I departed to Dorchester with my fellow minister; and this is, to my remembrance, the substance of that speech with Sir Walter Raleigh I had at Wolveton. "RALPH IRONSIDE."

This deposition shows that scepticism was the natural attitude of Raleigh's mind, and this we shall find confirmed by the evidence of his writings.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE FALLACY OF ALLEGED CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

(Continued from p. 725.)

IT is to be regretted that modern defenders of Christianity content themselves with mere assertion. They appear to think that their statements should be received as if there were no doubt as to their accuracy. Thus Professor Stewart mentions "the correspondence of prediction with event," without even attempting to show their connection. He should remember that, as a matter of evidence, it ought to be demonstrated (1) that the prediction was *intended* to refer to the event, and (2) that such prediction was impossible without "divine aid." No less an authority than Neander states that it was the custom to refer certain phrases found in the Old Testament to their fulfilment in the New, whether warranted by their context or not. Dr. Davidson also writes: "The alleged coincidence of the Old Testament with the New must be modified by the doctrine of development. It has been fostered by types and prophecies supposed to refer to Christian times by the assumed *dictation* of all Scripture by the Holy Spirit; by fancied references of the one dispensation to the other; by the confounding of a Jewish Messiah, sketched in various prophets, with Jesus Christ" (*Canon of the Bible*, p. 256).

A striking example of thus confounding "prediction with event" is seen in the so-called prophecy recorded in Isaiah (vii. 14), "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," etc. The most superficial reading of the context will show that this passage can have no reference to Jesus, because the birth of the child was to be a sign to Ahaz, and must, therefore, take place during his lifetime. It is very incorrectly translated. Almah, which is the word in the original used for virgin, is never employed to express the sense of the English word "virgin," for which the Hebrew has quite a different term. The word is prefixed with the definite article, or demonstrative pronoun, and should consequently be rendered, "that young woman," and is, moreover, in the present tense instead of the future, which gives a very different reading to the whole passage. In any case, however, the prophecy has not been fulfilled. Christ was not called Immanuel, but Jesus, and the promise made to Ahaz was certainly broken. A prophecy, to be of any

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value, must contain a clear and unmistakable prediction of an event sufficiently long before that event happens for it to have been impossible to be foreseen by human sagacity. Moreover, the event must be of such a character as not to fall within the ordinary phenomena of cause and effect, or, after all, human thought from the former may have reached the latter. Supposing Bible prophecies could be verified, that would not prove the truth and utility of the entire Christian system. Neither would it be a guarantee that the teachings of the New Testament on the questions of morality and religion were safe to follow.

With a view of proving that, while no one particular evidence may prove Christian claims, yet all combined will reach "a *common* centre," the Professor gives the following two illustrations. The problem, he says, "is not, Can we explain away this or that element by mere chance or natural causes? but, How do the elements all come to meet in one and the same centre? Was it by chance that all the military roads led to ancient Rome, or was it because it was the imperial city?" "In a criminal trial the guilt of the prisoner may be abundantly manifest, and yet it may be possible to show that each of the lines of proof by which it is established is by itself inconclusive." Now, all illustrations, to be of argumentative service, should be analogous to the points at issue; but the above are not so. We can hardly imagine what an old Roman would have said if he had been told that no *one* of the roads led to the capital, but that, if a traveller marched up the whole of them, he would arrive safely. The fact is, that each of the roads *did* lead separately to the capital, and what was true of all was true of each. If it had been otherwise, it would have been rather difficult for anybody to have reached his destination. Was it by "chance," we are asked, that all the roads led to the same place? Certainly not, any more than it was by "chance" that not one failed to terminate in "a common centre." In reference to the criminal illustration, it does not matter how many "lines of proof" may be produced; if it were clearly established that someone saw the crime committed, *that* would settle the question. If, however, Christianity is what its devotees allege it to be, its evidences should be pertinent in every particular; certainly not mere possibility ought to be its characteristic.

Professor Stewart says: "It is obviously the policy of the opponents of Christianity to ignore the cumulative force of the Christian evidences, and to treat each as if the whole burden of the argument rested upon it alone. Desiring to overturn the tree, they cut its roots fibre by fibre." We may here remind defenders of Christianity that, if all the branches of a tree were destroyed, the trunk only would remain, and the probability of its bearing fruit in that condition would be very remote; but, if all the fibres of its roots were cut away, there can be no doubt as to what would happen. It did not seem to occur to the Professor that, if the Christian tree is "divinely perfect," and if it were planted and protected by an omnipotent being, it should be impossible for any human power either to destroy the branches or to "cut its roots." That such of its branches as the doctrines of hell and eternal torments, a personal devil, Bible infallibility, the efficacy of prayer, absolute reliance on, and genuine belief in, the God of the Old Testament, have lost the vitality they were once thought to possess, is a fact that cannot be effectually disputed. No first-class Christian defender can now be found who will in public debate contend for their reality as a "living faith."

We do not "ignore the cumulative force of the Christian evidences," for the good reason that we cannot discover it. Besides, we fail to see how an accumulation of fallacies can be converted into one "sublime truth." The cumulative argument for Christianity really amounts to this: That a god possessing unlimited power created man from the dust of the ground about six thousand years ago, and shortly after made woman from one of his ribs. This God then places them both amidst great temptations in a garden called Eden, and provides a serpent to induce them to go wrong; their natures become corrupt, and the whole of their posterity are thereby made sinners beyond the power of self-redemption. The son of God is then sent to atone by his death for an act in which he took no part, and over which the God-made sinners had no control. To escape from the consequences of the Divine act in the Garden of Eden, all who have heard of the name of Christ must believe in him as the Savior of the world; and if they do not, or cannot so believe, they are, after death, to go "into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Christ is to come "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them."

Such, briefly, are the features that form the cumulative argument for Christianity, and the only "force" we can recognise in it is that of fiction, gross injustice, and unmitigated cruelty. They constitute the "roots" of the orthodox faith, and in all sincerity we ask: What man or woman, whose natural feelings have not been hardened by familiarity with a degrading theology, can see therein any "force" of truth, love, and what is right and commendable? Take, for instance, the threatened "vengeance" upon those who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Is it possible to conceive that the time will arrive when the heavens shall frown on a ruined universe; when the sun shall lose his effulgence, and the moon refuse to give her light; when, amidst the "wreck of matter and the crash of worlds," those who were bound to us by the ties of nature shall be banished to a burning lake, for no other reason than because they were unable to believe in Christ and him crucified? For ourselves, we cannot believe that doctrine is true and valuable which is revolting to the better part of our common humanity. It is better to have no faith than one that proclaims that man's eternal happiness depends upon belief in a capricious God and the reception of an unnatural dogma.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

PALESTINE EXPLORATION.

THE Palestine Exploration Fund was started over thirty years ago. A large sum of money has been devoted to the purpose of ascertaining what antiquities the Holy Land has to offer in confirmation of the Holy Book. A great deal of real work has been done in the way of surveying and excavation. Eminent men have been employed on the job. Sir Charles Warren, Sir Charles Wilson, Major Conder, Professor Palmer, Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, and others, have been engaged. Much has doubtless been done; the topography of the land has been accurately surveyed; its geology has been investigated; many books have been issued; many old baseless conjectures have been replaced by more plausible ones. But, as far as confirmation of the Bible is concerned, the clerical contributors to the Fund must have been sadly disappointed. Not that there are no results, but that the results, so far from confirming the truth and inspiration of the Bible, go quite in the contrary direction. Indeed, one of the most eminent of the workers already mentioned is credited on good authority with being the author of *Bible Folk-Lore* and *Rabbi Jeshua*. The negative results of the exploration have been quite damning. Not a coin, not a vestige of a scrap of a remnant of the supposed magnificent kingdom of David and Solomon, has been found. The earliest known Jewish coin only goes back to the time of the Maccabees. All the earliest inscriptions are not in Hebrew at all, but in Phœnician, which has a totally different character. The survey of Jerusalem has conclusively shown that either the so-called "Josephus" was never there, or told the grossest lies about the hundreds of thousands there, since the entire plateau on which it is built could never have accommodated more than from thirty to forty thousand inhabitants. The important sites of this one-horse town, in which God Almighty took up his residence, are still in controversy. Christ has got three sepulchres, and the topographers are yet disputing as to where Solomon erected his shanty temple, which was ninety feet by thirty feet, and took seven years building.

All the so-called relics in and from the Holy Land are certainly questionable, and probably fraudulent. They show the site of the Crucifixion in the centre of Jerusalem, when, if it happened at all, it was certainly outside. Accordingly the explorers have shifted the traditional site of centuries from the middle of the city to outside the Damascus gate. The monks show a portion of the stone said to have been rolled from the sepulchre—only the Armenians claim to have possession of the real stone, and say that this is only a forgery. On either side of the entrance are holes through which the imposture known as the Holy Fire is given out every year. Although the

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Moslems have for centuries laughed at this fraudulent trick of pretending that Holy Fire descends at the sepulchre every Easter, the fraud is still perpetrated by the Christian monks. A visit to Palestine, indeed, so far from confirming Scripture, must rather tend to suggest that the whole system is a deliberate fraud, since nothing but lies and imposture pervade the so-called holy places.

The greatest find, the Moabite stone, was not the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, but of a French clergyman, the Rev. F. A. Klein, who communicated his find to the German consul. But the stone got smashed, and only squeezes taken from it remain. The inscription shows that, so far from the Bible account being correct, Jahveh was really what Milton calls Dagon, "that twice-battered God of Palestine," for his vessels were dragged to the ground before the face of Chemosh, the Moabite god. Chemosh, in fact, gave Jahveh just such a licking as he is said to have given Dagon.

The once famous Sinaitic inscriptions were deciphered by Professor Palmer, and proved to be, instead of any record of the forty years' wanderings over a territory smaller than Yorkshire, merely late and unimportant cuttings, mostly of proper names. Excavations at Lachish have, indeed, resulted in important finds. They have shown us an ancient civilisation in communication with Egypt. But the civilisation was not Jewish, but Canaanitish. The language was entirely different from Hebrew, and the records show that, while Hittites, Amorites, Philistines, and Phœnicians were known to the Egyptians, the Jews were unknown.

Of course, the gentlemen who are employed on the exploration, and derive good salaries from the Fund, say much has been done to confirm the Bible. They do it in this way. They excavate at Gaza, show it has some big remains, and say: "This is where Samson carried away the gates." They might as well say: "This is where he slew a thousand Philistines with his own jawbone." What they chiefly point to is that, in the words of the author of *Bible Folk-Lore*, "there remains still much more to be found than has yet been discovered." May they go on, for the fools who pay them are helping to explode their own fetish.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

MR. FOOTE'S LETTER TO THE AMERICAN SECULAR CONGRESS.

(Reprinted from the New York "Truthseeker," November 9.)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—President Putnam desires me to send you a communication from England, and I do so with great pleasure. Some day or other—next year probably—I shall have the deeper pleasure of greeting you face to face.

I should begin by saying something about President Putnam's visit to England, which he found still solidly rooted in its old position in the sea, just where Shakespeare died and left it. It is prophesied that our island is to be towed over to your continent for safety, but I fancy it will stop here after all; and the world, and even Freethought, will be the better for variety. We have something to learn from you, and perhaps you have something to learn from us. It is given to no country to monopolise the wisdom and originality of the planet. Mr. Putnam found many things here to admire; on the other hand, he brought with him a most welcome spice of your American humor. He has none of that stiffness which the platform has too often inherited from the pulpit. He is a proof that a man may be serious without solemnity, enthusiastic without fanaticism, and earnest without ceasing to be genial. And this is as it should be, for it is not enough to break away from the fetters of faith, unless we steep ourselves in the finer spirit of humanity. Mr. Putnam struck us as being full of the milk of human kindness. There seems no envy or enmity in his composition. The man who falls out with him must have a genius for quarrelling. We congratulate you on having such a leader at the head of your army. The soldier who smiles when he sees the enemy will be the last to run away.

We gathered from Mr. Putnam that America is "free and independent" in theory, but a good deal the reverse in practice. It is under the curse of religion and priestcraft. You seem to have developed in a single century most of the evils that with us are the legacy of ages. This does not prove that you have a double dose of original sin. It proves that theology is the one great overwhelming evil of human society, and that if it be not checked it will sweep on like an advancing tide on a level shore, and drown the noblest conquests of political and social progress.

We have an endowed religion; so have you. We have a hired man to say prayers in the legislature; so have you. We have blasphemy laws; so have you. We have laws that rob Freethinkers of the common rights of citizenship; so have you. We have the Bible thrust into public schools; so have you. We have Sabbatarian laws, maintained by clerical protectionists, who hate the competition of a free and open market; so have you. We have a huge black army exploiting our industry, and promising fine things to fools in the next world in return for cash and comfort in this world; so have you.

Let us shake hands across the Atlantic. We are companions in misery. Your duty is the same as ours. We have both to fight theology in the name of humanity. We have to enter the Bible-darkened school and liberate the children. We have to destroy every kind of privilege, and inaugurate the reign of equality. We have to secure freedom not for one or some, but for all; freedom to investigate, freedom to think, freedom to speak, and freedom to live. We have to annihilate the despotism of authority, and establish the free republic of reason.

Happily the bane in your case was followed by the antidote. The poison of theology came to you from Europe, but from Europe came also the counteractant of Freethought. Names that dwell upon our lips are not foreign to yours. It is one flag that flies over the forces of true Liberalism, though they be scattered to the ends of the earth, and never touch each other's hands for the width of sundering space. One flag, I say; the grand old flag of Freethought; shot-torn, blood-stained, but ever flying in bold challenge to Xerxes' hordes of tyranny and wrong. It was this flag that inspired the heart of Bruno till it burst in the fire of his martyrdom; it was this flag that Voltaire held high over Europe for half a century, while his eye melted with pity for the persecuted, and his brow darkened with the prophecy of doom to their oppressors; it was this flag that Thomas Paine grasped afterwards, and to which he was faithful in prison and amidst the vilest ingratitude; it was under this flag that Charles Bradlaugh fought and won a hundred battles for human liberty; it is this flag that Ingersoll carries over your continent, while engaged in what Whitman says is the business of all true poets: "To cheer up slaves and horrify despots."

We are not Brunos, Voltaires, Paines, Bradlaughs, or Ingersolls, but we are all men and women, and may all be soldiers in the great army of liberation. And under the flag consecrated by their eloquence, their toils, their sacrifices, and their blood, we may be glad to stand, and happy to fight, and proud to die.

American soldiers of the grand army, I salute you in the name of your English comrades. Be bold and brave; be also vigilant and skilful; let courage go hand in hand with wisdom, and your victories will cheer us in our own fight with the enemies of mankind. Yours faithfully,

G. W. FOOTE, *President.*

Orthodoxy and Lunacy.

In our lunatic asylums we frequently see persons sent there in consequence of what are called mental religious disturbances. I confess that I think better of them than of many who hold the same opinions, and keep their wits, and appear to enjoy life very well, outside of the asylums. Any decent person ought to go mad if he really holds such opinions. It is very much to his discredit, in every point of view, if he does not. Anything that is brutal, cruel, and makes life hopeless for most of mankind, and, perhaps, for whole races; anything that assumes the necessity of exterminating instincts which were given to be regulated, if received, ought to produce insanity in every well-regulated mind. I am very much ashamed of some people for retaining their reason when they ought to know perfectly well that, if they were not the most stupid or most selfish of human beings, they would become *non compos mentis* at once. —*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

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BITS FROM INGERSOLL'S LATEST.

An outline of Ingersoll's latest lecture appeared in our last week's number. We have since seen a fuller report, and give our readers extracts from portions which did not appear in the *Boston Herald* :—

CAN WE FORGIVE GOD?

God has caused his volcanoes to devour the good and the bad, his cyclones to wreck and rend the generous and the cruel, his floods to drown the loving and the hateful, his lightning to kill the virtuous and the vicious, his famines to starve the innocent and criminal, and his plagues to destroy the wise and good, the ignorant and the wicked. He has allowed his enemies to imprison, to torture, and to kill his friends. He has permitted blasphemers to flay his worshippers alive, to dislocate their joints upon racks, and to burn them at the stake. He has allowed men to enslave their brothers, and to sell babes from the breasts of mothers. This shows his impartiality. Ministers ask: "Is it possible for God to forgive man?" And when I think of what has been suffered—of the centuries of agony and tears, I ask, Is it possible for man to forgive God?

Is not this unthinkable God a guess, an inference? Can we think of being without form, without body, without parts, without passion? Why should we speak of a being without body as of the masculine gender?

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

Of the existence of such a being there can be, in the nature of things, no evidence. Confronted with the universe, with fields of space sown thick with stars, with all there is of life, the wise man, being asked the origin and destiny of all, replies: "I do not know. These questions are beyond the powers of my mind." The theologian arrives at the unthinkable, the inconceivable, and he calls this God. The scientist arrives at the unthinkable, the inconceivable, and calls it the Unknown. The theologian insists that his inconceivable governs the world; that it, or he, or she, or they, can be influenced by prayers and ceremonies; that it, or he, or they, punishes and rewards; that it, or he, or they, has priests and temples.

WAS CHRIST GOD?

How is it established that Christ was the Son of God? It is said that Joseph was told so in a dream by an angel. How could Joseph know that he had been visited by an angel in a dream? Could he know that the visitor was an angel? It all occurred in a dream, and poor Joseph was asleep. What is the testimony of one who was asleep worth? How was it possible for Mary to know anything about the Holy Ghost?

Christ, according to the faith, is the second person in the Trinity, the Father being the first, and the Holy Ghost the third. Each of these three persons is God. Christ is his own father and his own son. The Holy Ghost is neither father nor son, but both. The son was begotten by the father, but existed before he was begotten—just the same before as after. Christ is just as old as his father, and the father is just as young as his son. The Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and Son, but was equal to the Father and Son before he proceeded—that is to say, before he existed; but he is of the same age as the other two. Nothing ever was, nothing ever can be, more perfectly idiotic than the dogma of the Trinity. At this point, absurdity having reached its limit, nothing more can be said except, "Let us pray."

THE REDEMPTION.

We have also the scheme of redemption. According to this "scheme," by the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden human nature became evil, corrupt, and depraved. There is no sense in sacrifice, never was, and never will be. Make restitution, reparation, undo the wrong, and you need shed no blood. A god could not accept his own sufferings in justification of the guilty. This is a complete subversion of all ideas of justice and morality. This Christians call "satisfying the law."

Christians believe in infinite torture, in eternal pain. Eternal pain! That word is the disgrace, the shame, the infamy of our revealed religion. That word fills all the future with the shrieks of the damned. That word brutalises the New Testament, changes the Sermon on the Mount to hypocrisy and cant, and pollutes and hardens the very heart of Christ. This is the savagery of Christianity. This it why I hate its unthinkable God, its impossible Christ, its inspired lies, and its selfish, heartless heaven. This is the Christian prophecy of the eternal future: No hope in hell; no pity in heaven; no mercy in the heart of God.

GOD'S BLOOD!

"To feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28).

Unitarians, vainly intruding their unholy carnal reason into the sacred mysteries of the Almighty, have argued that it is indecent blasphemy to talk of God's blood, and that we ought to read "the Church of the Lord." This is, forsooth, as though we knew anything more of the Lord's blood than of God's blood. They assume that the writer of the Acts had the same spiritual notions of deity as a sort of nondescript "footless stocking without a leg," such as they hold themselves; and they declare, in the words of J. Wilson: "It is absolutely impossible that a Being without body, parts, or passions could shed his blood" (*Scripture Proofs and Illustrations of Unitarianism*, p. 115). Know, O vain man, that with God nothing is impossible. As to "a Being without body, parts, or passions," that is a capital definition of nobody and nothing; but it finds no warrant in holy scripture, which solemnly assures us that God has parts and passions—and pretty strong ones too. He has hair (Daniel vii. 9), nose (Isaiah lxv. 5), feet (Ezekiel xliii. 7), hands (Numbers xi. 23), loins (Ezekiel i. 27), bowels (Jeremiah iv. 19), and back parts (Exodus xxxiii. 23). Why, then, should he be deprived of his precious blood? How can I have true communion with him if he is bloodless? In the good old days, when Christian faith was a living verity, they swore by God's blood throughout Christendom. But Christianity has become anæmic, bloodless, and brainless. Its old gospel of gore has degenerated into cant and candlegrease.

So far as the external evidence of this text goes, "the Lord and God" has the greatest numerical amount of manuscripts in its favor. For God's blood alone may be cited the Vatican, the Sinaitic, the Vulgate, and the Syriac; while for the Lord's blood alone are the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and Bezae manuscripts. Under such circumstances, what lover of the Lord, who delights to imbibe his precious blood, would fail to acknowledge his purchase by the blood of God? Lucianus.

New Life in Buddhism.

Japanese patriotism is now likely to take the direction of keeping out Christianity as much as possible, since travelled Japanese have reported that it is decidedly inferior to Buddhism in its effect on the conduct of the people. Dr. Ohlingen, writing on the revival of Buddhism, says: "The Buddhist religion, which still has more adherents than any other, remains for the present undisturbed in China and Thibet, the countries where it has the most power. In India and Japan, however, where it comes into direct contact with Christianity, Buddhism has been put on the defensive, and ably uses the Press. In India the periodicals work chiefly for the restoration and maintenance of Buddhist temples and monuments. In Japan their language is more reformatory and polemic. The Japanese Buddhists claim to be the most genuine, if not the exclusive, defenders of Japanese institutions, and thus appeal to the strongly-developed patriotism of the Japanese. They rejoice in the present reactionary movement, but know that it is at its height, and that foreign influence will soon again prevail. Some acknowledge that the Buddhist religion is much endangered by the freedom of residence accorded to foreigners; but in the end the truth must prevail. 'Christianity is not truth that is proved by science,' they say. All are pretty unanimous in asserting that Buddhism is much superior to Christianity in its teaching of the origin of the world. The dogma that God is the Father of all men, and that we are all brothers before Him, is merely a human one. 'Buddhists do not believe in a divine creation and rule of the world; everything in this world and in our lives is ruled by natural laws, explainable by cause and effect.'"

The discovery of what is true and the practice of that which is good are the two most important objects of philosophy.—*Voltaire.*

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ACID DROPS.

When the "solemn blessing of the Church" was pronounced on the Duke of Marlborough and Miss Vanderbilt, the choir, which was hidden behind plants of flowers, burst into a "glad psalm" of "O let the nations rejoice and be glad." The nations are doing it. They are all thanking God for dukes and millionaire heiresses. Even the destitute and starving are praising the Lord.

American lynchings seem to go excellently well with religious exercises. A few weeks ago a negro, who was burnt alive for raping a white woman, prayed so loudly in the fire that he could be heard by all the crowd. During the latest lynching at Frederic, Maryland, for a similar outrage, a Salvation lass was allowed to kneel down by the negro and pray for his soul. That being done, he was strung up and shot. What became of his soul is not reported.

Rev. A. J. Waldron has been debating with another Christian—a Mr. Johannis—at Shields on whether the earth is flat; a very philosophic subject at this end of the nineteenth century. The flat gentleman supported his theory by quotations from the Bible. The round gentleman said he did not believe those texts. The Bible was inspired, but not always accurate. Nor was it the only inspired book. Shakespeare was inspired too. And the gentleman who says so is an agent of the Christian Evidence Society! "Are things what they seem, or is visions about?"

The members of a Christian Guild in the north of London, says the *Telegraph*, are going to discuss "A Critical Examination of Hamlet." The announcement was too much for a member of the congregation, who solemnly protested "as a Christian." What will this gentleman think when he hears that Christian Evidence lecturers are going about saying that Shakespeare was inspired!

The Boston *Standard* says anent the Grindelwald Reunion of the Pope: "The pre-millennial unity of Christendom still means that the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, only the lamb must be inside the lion."

The *Church Times* is very wrath at the advocacy of "unfermented liquor" in communion. It says the divine institution of marriage is to be adapted to the case of men and women with no higher authority than their own caprice, and now the divine command to use the fruit of the vine in the Eucharistic feast must be broken for the sake of inebriates. In Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* the teetotal aspect of the ill effects of communion at its proper strength is adverted to.

An anxious elector of Dublin University asked Mr. Lecky if he was a Christian or an Agnostic. Mr. Lecky replied that he has never severed himself from the Church of England, in which he was brought up. As to the rest, he declined to say anything, and would rather lose the election than admit any one's right to catechise him. There is, of course, a legal sense in which every Englishman is a member of the Church of England.

Christians are popularly supposed to be extensively engaged in laying up treasures in heaven; but, as a sort of foretaste of glory divine, Rev. Antonio Kozlowski, of Chicago, a Polish Roman Catholic priest, has begun a suit for $100,000 damages against the archbishop of the diocese, by whom he was recently excommunicated. Doubtless the Rev. Kozlowski takes the view that his archbishop's action has deprived him of considerable celestial wealth; and, therefore, he will solace himself with worldly dross and muck. Although the archbishop has a sure thing on futurity, he has as yet showed no signs of relinquishing his hold upon the $100,000, thus manifesting a disposition which, in a person of less rank, would be termed selfish.—*Boston Investigator.*

The Rev. William Radcliffe has a bad record for forgery and embezzlement. He has been sentenced to five years' penal servitude and two years' police supervision for obtaining goods under false pretences. He had previously been convicted, and the police said that he was an associate of the cleverest bank forgers in London. The judge directed that a notification of the case should be sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

This Rev. William Radcliffe has had a long career of crime. In 1888 he was chaplain to a Mr. Blackwood, near Faversham. Whilst there he obtained goods, value £10, from a jeweller named Norman, and then absconded. In September, 1889, he obtained articles by fraud at Tunbridge Wells; in March, 1890, some rings at Portsmouth; and in May, same year, a quantity of jewellery at Cheltenham. In September he was arrested in London for larceny at Margate, and the next month he pleaded guilty to the theft. Dr. Savage and Dr. Ramsden Wells certified him as of "moral insanity," but the Recorder paid very little attention to that, for he sentenced him to eighteen months' hard labor. He served that sentence, and in 1892 he was tried at the assizes in Winchester for obtaining goods, but he was acquitted. In 1893 he defrauded a wine merchant of Jersey, and also a warder of a lunatic asylum, near Salisbury; and in July he was at the Wells Quarter Sessions again sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. He was a plausible fellow with a true sanctimonious twang, and often got employment preaching for clergymen who wanted a holiday.

The Trilby mania has come to England from America, and is taken so seriously by the Rev. T. J. Ball that he writes to the *Church Times* to complain that in *Trilby* three clergymen are introduced—one is a drunken *roué*, the other two are fools. He associates this somehow with *Punch* being edited by a Roman Catholic.

A Baptist minister, in a rural village in the Eastbourne Parliamentary Division, tells in the *Daily News* how all the children, although the majority of them are Dissenters, have to attend the Church school. He says: "Not so long since one of the elder children, the daughter of a tenant farmer, was sent home crying because the teacher had told her that all children not baptised belonged to the Devil." This specimen of definite religious instruction, of course, excites the indignation of this Baptist minister. It excites ours that children's minds should be warped and their feelings frightened by religious nonsense of all kinds.

Father Black has presented a petition to the Archbishop of Canterbury, praying him to cite the Bishop of London and Canon Tristram before his Grace and the comprovincial Bishops of the province of Canterbury, to answer the charge that they have controvened the canons of the Church by issuing licenses for the re-marriage of divorced persons. We expect the wily Benson will do his best to cover up the matter.

A curious case of a soldier refusing to do duty has just been before a military tribunal in Germany. In the 2nd company of the Infantry Battalion at Insterburg a recruit named Trott, the son of a landed proprietor, refused to perform his duties. Trott said he was willing to do duty on six days of the week from sunrise to sundown, but he must be exempt from service on the seventh. He said he would rather die than work on the Lord's Day of Rest. Nothing could shake him, and he was sent back to prison.—*Daily News.*

The young man Giovannino, who, according to the priest, saw the Virgin at Petriguano, near Assisi, has, after a medical examination, been consigned to a lunatic asylum. There were no such institutions in the good old Bible days, when visions of angels were frequent.

The Rev. W. J. Jenkins, rector of Fellingham, now residing in Grove-villas, Muswell-hill, Hornsey, is everlastingly in rows. Week by week his irascible temper brings him before the law or police courts, and at his latest appearance he was fined for assaulting his housekeeper.

The *Nation*, which occupies the leading place among American reviews, writing on a proposed commission to examine the net results of missionary work in heathen lands, mentions that in Great Britain fifty-four Protestant missionary societies spend a million sterling a year. It says: "Thus far religious people have not even agreed on the theological doctrine to be taught in their own schools at home, and the heathen are daily puzzled and scandalised by the exclusive claims on their attention urged by each of the sects which have missions among them. How little chance there is of any such agreement, however, everyone knows; but until it comes about the Government might well decline lending its gunboats and Maxim guns to every variety of creed which chooses to attack the Chinese philosophy or superstitions."

Miss Codrington, one of the ladies who escaped from the "missionary massacre" at Ku-cheng, has been interviewed by a representative of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. She denies that the outrage has any special anti-foreign or anti-Christian significance, and declares that the average inhabitants of the district have no sympathy with such doings. In the village of Sa Yong, a day's journey from Ku-cheng, volunteer police kept guard over the mission houses for a whole week, in case the rioters should go there, and, when Miss Codrington returned, not a thing had been touched. It is very evident that the Christian journals in this country have immensely exaggerated the Ku-cheng affair, and dreadfully misrepresented the general character of the Chinese.

According to Miss Codrington, the Vegetarians, who perpetrated the outrage, are "a distinct religious body,

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holding, curiously enough, as a prime article of faith, that it is wicked to take life of any kind." But the lady need not be astonished. Chinese Vegetarians are not the only people who act against their professed principles. Christianity says "swear not at all," and Christians are always swearing. Christianity boasts a number of fine maxims about loving enemies, yet Christians are fighting all over the world, wherever they suffer the smallest affront or injury. They have actually secured the execution of some fifty persons on account of this very "missionary massacre" at Ku-cheng.

Miss Codrington will not draw the moral that we shall from the fact that the Vegetarians are a *religious* body. There is the secret of all the trouble. It is religious fanaticism which has kindled the flame of hatred in human breasts most fiercely ever since the dawn of human history. According to the Bible itself, the first murder in the world was the result of a religious difference; and as Cain served Abel, so have religionists served each other (when they had the power) ever since.

The *Christliche Welt*, of Leipsic (No. 32), gives some funny illustrations of Russian religion. It says that, at a trial at Odessa, the examination showed that a feud arose between two Russians because one of them claimed that Almighty God was superior to St. Nicholas. The other, in the interest of his patron saint, resented the slight. At Warsaw the emperor was taking part in a religious service in which, according to custom, the worshipper was to kiss the hand of the priest. The latter, in his confusion at the presence of the visible head of the State Church, failed to offer his hand, whereupon the Czar cried out: "Give me your hand, you dog; I want to kiss it."

The *Christliche Welt* says that the typical Russian will go to church and strike the floor fifty times with his forehead and then depart, and, as a witness, take a false oath before the courts because some friend has secured his promise to do so for a drink of *vodka*. He will consider himself justified when he tells the judge the common proverb that "even God himself will take a bribe," meaning by this his accepting so many candles and so many *Pater Nosters* for certain sins.

Khama, as a Christian chief, has got pretty much what he wanted as to keeping all intoxicants out of his territory. But it happens that Hemuhemu, of the Zwaartkop Location, thinks the missionaries are worse than intoxicants, and forbids them to come on his land. Thereupon an action against Hemuhemu is brought by the Rev. W. Baker, supported by the Missionary Conference of the Wesleyan Church. Hemuhemu is cited before the High Court, and will probably be ruined for having come in conflict with the whites.

The *Crescent* puts the relation of Christian powers to Africa rather neatly. It says: "In bygone times it was the custom for good Christians to steal Africans from Africa. Latterly, however, this process has been reversed, and the European Powers have contested in unfriendly rivalry at stealing Africa from the Africans."

It mentions, too, that the supply of Bibles, rum, parsons, and white-chokered sky-pilots of all kinds exceeds the demand for "these articles in 'Merrie England,' so a few hundred of them must be shipped off to

> Where Afric's sunny fountains
> Pour out their *golden* sand

(and the more golden the better), to teach the natives to wear high, stiff-starched, Gladstone collars, flaming yellow neckties, smoke poisonous cigars, sing Sankey's hymns, and drink Jamaica rum, British brandy, Scotch whiskey, and Holland's gin, and thus become good Christians, 'same as the white man.'"

St. John's-wood Chapel is closed at last. The pew-renters dropped down to five, the minister resigned, and the Marylebone Vestry has decided to shut up this gospel-shop altogether. It is suggested that it should be used for Sunday concerts. Perhaps the bigots would squirm at the idea of its being used for Secular lectures.

William Cable, one of the Peculiar People, has been tried at the Essex Assizes before Mr. Justice Hawkins, on a charge of neglecting his own children, whereby they sustained unnecessary suffering and injury to health. The prisoner lost four children from diphtheria in six weeks. In each case he did without a doctor, and followed the New Testament prescription of prayer and anointing with oil. However, as neglect under the Act has to be wilful or culpable, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty. Any other verdict would have been a declaration that Christianity itself must not stand in the way of science and common sense in such matters; and a declaration of that kind would create consternation in the Christian fold.

The most curious feature of the prosecution of William Cable is that it was instigated by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Mr. Waugh, the secretary of that Society, is a Christian. In company with another Christian, the Bishop of Chester, he uttered the infamous lie that Secularists were the worst ill-users of children. Yet here is this Mr. Waugh prosecuting *Christians* for cruelty, knowing all the time that their action is supported (as *they* say, and as we say too) by the Christian Scriptures! It would be difficult to find a worse inconsistency.

The low fellow who libelled the Hall of Science is now pursuing our old opponent, Harry Alfred Long, for libel. The damages are estimated, not at two farthings, but at the modest sum of £2,100. The *Christian Scotsman* said they might just as well have been £2,100,000; whereupon this eminent Christian advocate, whose own immunity, because he is not worth powder and shot, has apparently given him a taste for law, has entered an action against the *Christian Scotsman*. The theological squabble will amuse, if it does not edify, our Glasgow friends.

According to the latest statistics, the heathens of the world still vastly outnumber the Christians, Mohammedans, and Jews put together. Roughly speaking, there are now about one and one half thousand million of people. Of these the Roman Catholic Church claims about 200,000,000, the various Protestant Churches about the same number, and the Greek Church 100,000,000. The total amount of Christians at the highest estimate, including every inhabitant of a Christian country as a Christian, only gives a third of the world's inhabitants. The Jews number about 8,000,000, and the Mohammedans about 180,000,000, leaving 812,000,000 of Buddhists, Hindoos, Taoists, fetish worshippers, etc.—all classed as "heathen."

A question proposed for discussion at a Y.M.C.A. was, "Would Jesus have approved of individual cups in communion?" It was argued that, as tobacco and syphilis were unknown in the days of the apostles, they could all take from a common cup; or, in the oriental fashion, dip their fingers in a common dish; but, if they lived now-a-days and understood the germ theory of disease, they would have been rather more particular.

The appeal of the Rev. H. W. Jones in the divorce case of Worrall *v.* Worrall and Jones has been dismissed with costs.

According to the *Christian Advocate*, Prince Bismarck is a most eminent and exemplary Christian. Well, Christianity, though it has "love your enemies" on its lips, has always proved itself compatible with high-handed aggressiveness against all adversaries.

The *Planters' Gazette* records the sad death of a pet monkey at Calcutta. The adventurous simian climbed into a gentleman's dressing-room, and first of all pouched his patent automatic collar-stud. This did not hurt him, so he took the gentleman's prayer-book. He ate the outside morocco cover and the Thirty-Nine Articles, but he caved in when he chewed the Commination Service. The curse against him who removeth his neighbor's landmark probably finished him. He was a very moral monkey, says the *P. G.*, but religion internally killed him.

At Natal they have started an improvement in Sunday observance by having a band in the Town Gardens. The *Natal Mercury* says it was greatly enjoyed by a large number of visitors. At the same time, of course, the men of God were strongly denouncing the idea that the Sabbath was made for man, instead of for the monopoly of the ministers.

The *North British Daily Mail* does not think much of Mr. Swinburne's chance of the laureateship. He has "offended too deeply" against "morality and religion." Poor morality! How sensitive she is, to be sure! Mr. Swinburne has offended against her, like many other poets, by singing of love and beauty, and finding them divine even when they lead, as they sometimes do, to misery and ruin. Poor religion is as sensitive as her dear sister. Mr. Swinburne has called her some very bad names, and as she is so charitable, it is not to be expected that she will forgive him. But is it certain, after all, that Mr. Swinburne wants her forgiveness?

The London Trades Council has absolved the Salvation Army from the charge of "sweating." The majority, however, was not quite convincing. Fifty voted *for* the Army, and forty-four *against*. It is noteworthy, too, that the adverse resolution was moved by the representative of the London Compositors; which should be taken in connection with the fact that the charge of "sweating" specially affected the printing department.

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In consequence of the death of a little girl in America under the hands of a "Christian scientist" who practised only the faith cure, the question has arisen whether the parents cannot be prosecuted as the Peculiar People are here. They, at any rate, are now possibly cured of their faith. The faith cure will lose its power whenever the believers in it are attacked by an epidemic of common sense.

The *Schoolmaster* (November 16), noticing the letter of complaint against assistants from the Rev. G. Moore, vicar of Cowley, to the *Times*, remarks that the late master of Cowley Schools found difficulty in getting his salary. It also mentions the case of Mr. Beagle, head teacher of Warborough National School, who was dismissed because he had set up and been elected as an independent candidate for the parish council.

William Dawson, a Leeds barber, has been several times fined for shaving customers on Sunday. He may think cleanliness is next to godliness, and so it is; godliness comes on Sunday, and cleanliness must wait till Monday. Mr. Dawson's customers may think it hard that their faces cannot be properly cleaned up on Sunday, but they have a simple and easy remedy. Let them ask God to stop the growth of their hair between Saturday and Monday. Whatsoever they ask, believing, that they will receive.

Bolton magistrates are carrying on a crusade against clean faces. They are fining local barbers for shaving on Sunday. One of the victims declared that if he suspended business on Sunday morning he would have to apply for parish relief. In order to accelerate his application, the godly magistrates inflicted upon him the maximum fine with costs.

A shocking tale of Christian barbarity to helpless Africans in the Congo Free State is told by the Rev. John B. Murphy, of the American Baptist Mission. He declares that the natives are forced to collect rubber, the soldiers driving the people into the bush. If they will not go, they are shot down, their left hands cut off and taken as trophies to the commissaire. The soldiers do not care whom they shoot down, and they more often shoot poor helpless women and harmless children. These hands—the hands of men, women, and children—are placed in rows before the commissaire, who counts them to see that the soldiers have not wasted the cartridges. The commissaire is paid a commission of about a penny a pound upon all the rubber he gets; it is, therefore, to his interest to get as much as he can.

Ralph Stanton, of New Hirst, Northumberland, who is choir-master in a church at Ashington and a married man, has been committed to the assizes on a charge of criminal conduct with two girls of the Sunday-school. Indecent behaviour took place in the pulpit.

It appears from a correspondent of the *Basler Nachrichten* that the reported burning of ten heretics at Pachucha, Mexico, is quite correct. When the judge was told that his action was contrary to the laws of the State of Mexico, he calmly replied: "We must obey God rather than men."

A noble-spirited youth is going to rescue the world from Popery and Secularism. He has started the National Society of Prayer. "Object: By special prayer to Almighty God to save the United Kingdom from Infidelity and the errors of Romanism." Every person upon joining will be asked to contribute not less than sixpence," and "must solemnly promise to offer prayer on a stated day." It is hoped that "all who believe in the efficacy of prayer and our present object" will join and send their sixpences. Freethought and Catholicism will soon hide their diminished heads.

The anti-Semitic movement is proving to be a very powerful force in Austria, no less than in Germany, and the Government interference with the election of Dr. Lüger has excited great commotion. Clerical bigotry, which looks with rancor on the legendary crucifixion of Christ, unites with the common feeling of resentment against all the wealthy who use their riches to obtain the possessions of others, and between them the Jews almost have as bad a time in Austria as in Russia

A Temperance meeting held at King-street Church, Maidstone, resolved—"That this meeting is of opinion that the time has arrived when all sections of the Church should decline to receive money for Church purposes from publicans, wine merchants, brewers, and distillers." But why has the time taken nineteen hundred years to "arrive"? Tell us that, good Christians. And why don't you answer Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* pamphlet, instead of passing hypocritical resolutions?

The following is an account of a dinner given by a late Archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter written by the late Sir Archibald Alison, who was present:—"The dinner was served with the utmost splendour; thirty livery servants, and fifteen out of livery, attended on the guests; a profusion of magnificent plate loaded the table; and the viands, cooked with French delicacy, vied with the wines in evincing the hospitality of the noble host. The entertainment altogether was second only to the Royal banquets in St. George's Hall at Windsor. No guest was admitted if not attired in Court dress."

Richard Stephens, aged seventy, has been found guilty of unspeakable offences. The trial took place at the Winchester Assizes before Mr. Justice Wills. Prisoner was a county magistrate at Bournemouth and deputy lieutenant. The other man was a county policeman. "There was a great mass of correspondence," the *Westminster Gazette* says, "which the judge characterised as the sandwiching together of impurity, piety, gratitude to God for opportunities, and earnest requests that Stocks would never omit daily prayer." Pah! An ounce of civet, good apothecary.

The Glasgow Branch of the Educational Institute of Scotland opens and closes its meetings with prayer, though it does not appear that its deliberations are marked by more wisdom than those of other such institutions. Mr. Lee moved that the prayer be discontinued; this was seconded by Mr. Yates, and of course it gave rise to what the press described as a "heated discussion." Eventually it was decided by 43 to 27 votes to keep on praying. The Glasgow Branch of the E.I.S. is saved.

Parson Light, ex-vicar of Lambourne, on retiring from the Lord's vineyard, has been presented with a silver tea and coffee service worth eighty-five guineas. The subscribers were owners and trainers of horses in the district. Surely the present should have included a tankard.

A band of young lady workers, under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association at Birmingham, have passed a rule against kissing. They don't believe in the apostolic injunction to salute one another with a holy kiss. Any girl who does it is to be fined a penny. A Birmingham paper says that if the girls can't kiss each other they will have to fall back on the fellows.

While Dr. Foote, Sen., was addressing the audience on the subject of Comstock prosecutions a gentleman arose to inquire why the American Bible Society was not indicted on the same charge as J. B. Wise. That gave Dr. Foote a chance to tell the story about Goethe, who was called upon by a delegation of ministers to help organise a society for the suppression of immoral literature. Goethe acquiesced, and proposed that they begin with the Bible. Nothing further was heard of the movement.—*Truthseeker.*

Christian Concessions Insufficient.

It is the merest ostrich policy for contemporary ecclesiasticism to try to hide its Hexateuchal head, in the hope that the inseparable connection of its body with pre-Abrahamic legends may be overlooked. The question will still be asked, If the first nine chapters of the Pentateuch are unhistorical, how is the historical accuracy of the remainder to be guaranteed? What more intrinsic claim has the story of Exodus than that of the Deluge to belief? If God did not walk in the Garden of Eden, how can we be assured that he spoke from Sinai?—*Professor T. H. Huxley, Prologue to "Essays upon Some Controverted Questions."*

The Inquisition.

The supporters of that barbarous institution were not hypocrites, but enthusiasts. Hypocrites are, for the most part, too supple to be cruel. For cruelty is a stern and unbending passion; while hypocrisy is a fawning and flexible art, which accommodates itself to human feelings, and flatters the weakness of men in order to gain its own ends. In Spain the earnestness of the nation, being concentrated on a single topic, carried everything before it; and, hatred of heresy becoming a habit, persecution of heresy was thought a duty. The conscientious energy with which that duty was fulfilled is seen in the history of the Spanish Church.—*H. T. Buckle, "History of Civilisation in England," i. 187.*

Obituary.

The *Lindsey and Lincolnshire Star* reports at length the death and silent funeral of Mr. John Eccles, of Brigg, a well-known and esteemed Freethinker of that district. "When leaving the graveside Dr. Henry Eccles, second son of deceased, thanked all the friends and neighbors who had shown their respect for the deceased by following the remains to their last resting place. Before his death deceased said he wanted no one to tell him what happened in the high and low countries beyond the grave, for it was all the work of imagination and natural desire."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 24, Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C. : 7.30, "Huxley and Agnosticism."

December 1, Bradford ; 8, Foresters' Hall ; 15, Newcastle ; 22, Manchester ; 29, Camberwell.

January 5, Camberwell ; 12, 19, and 26, St. James's Hall.

February 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—November 24, Manchester ; 25, Derby ; 27, Ipswich. December 1, Wood Green ; 8, South Shields ; 15 and 22, Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 31 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. Wood.—Your list is filed. You need not send until the last item appears.

L. J. B.—Canon Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* will give you the facts about the Old Testament. We recommend it all the more cheerfully because it is written by a clergyman. *Supernatural Religion* (three vols.) will give you the facts about the New Testament ; but, as it is written by a non-Christian, you might read the late Bishop Lightfoot's reply and judge for yourself. Of course there is plenty of other literature on the subject, if you wish to pursue your inquiries further.

T. Wise.—Thanks for the information.

A. R. Munro.—Thanks for your valuable letter, the contents of which are duly noted. Kindly make inquiries about a hall—a good one. Mr. Foote will come, even if the admission must be free.

J. Partridge.—Pleased to hear you have made sixteen new members already in the new hall. Mr. Foote reciprocates the goodwill expressed by the Birmingham Branch.

J. K. (Plymouth).—Sorry to hear you were so unwell that Sunday.

J. W. Gott.—Thanks for all your trouble in the matter. The bigotry of Bradford is the best reason for an active Freethought propaganda there.

Peter Lang (Edinburgh) doubts the statement in our "Black Army" articles, that no Nonconformist minister in this country is paid five thousand a year. He says he has read in the Inquiry Column of *Tit Bits* that Dr. Alexander Whyte, minister of St. George's Free Church, Edinburgh, receives a salary of £10,000 a year. Prodigious! Too much so for our credulity. A Scotchman would take as much, but would Scotchmen ever give it? However, we are open to conviction, and shall be glad to hear from anyone who really *knows* the facts of the case.

J. Benson.—Acknowledged.

W. J. Vaughan.—Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past* is in the press, and we understand it will be ready shortly.

W. Cook.—See paragraph.

A. B. Moss.—It is only Messrs. Watts and Cohen at present who are free for country engagements under Mr. Foote's scheme. We have already announced that courses of week-night lectures are being arranged in London early in the new year, for which the services of other lecturers will be required.

J. Melling.—See paragraph.

H. Lees Sumner.—Thanks for paper.

W. S. Crawshay.—Notices or announcements for the *Freethinker* must reach us by Tuesday morning.

K. J.—Have put it to Shilling Month.

J. Richards.—Thanks for the information. The omission shall be seen to.

C. de Villiers (Johannesburg).—Letter and photograph to hand. We are well pleased with both. Glad to hear from you at any time. An Atheist is one literally "without God."

A. Dunn.—Only 2s. was paid on the share, as per receipt. We have acknowledged that amount in your name.

H. C.—Thanks for cuttings. We meant no offence in saying that the Birmingham workers for Freethought were mostly poor ; quite the contrary.

J. M. R.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. Munton.—It will be useful.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—Mrs. Henderson, £1 10s. ; G. Rolfe, 4s.

O. R. C.—Shall appear.

President's Honorarium Fund.—Per R. Forder : A. Scotter, 2s. 6d. ; J. Chamberlain, 5s. ; S. H. Munns, £1 ; J. Munns, £1 ; T. G., 1s.

R. Howard.—You surprise us. We thought we had reprinted Mr. Putnam's account of his visit to the Failsworth Secular Sunday School. We will look up the *Truthseeker* and supply the omission, which was purely accidental.

J. Sage.—Mr. Forder has your order to execute. Gratified to know it is one of your greatest pleasures to read the *Freethinker* every week.

R. Shedley.—The first is a wide question, that cannot be dealt with in this column. Nonconformist ministers are not paid out of State funds like Church clergymen. An archbishop's salary is not given him to spend upon the poor.

The Battersea Branch secretary asks if any friend will assist at the piano for the Branch on Sunday or Tuesday evenings?

G. Williams wishes to know where he can obtain the *Freethinker* near Sloane-square.

Papers Received.—Western Figaro—Blyth Weekly News—Echo—South Shields Free Press—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Citizen—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Freidenker—Freedom—Corner Stone—Liberty—Look Times—Look Post—Catholic Review—New York Public Opinion—Melbourne Argus—Mental World.

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

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One Year, 10s. 6d. ; Half Year, 5s. 3d. ; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d. ; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements* :—One inch, 4s. 6d. ; half column, £1 2s. 6d. ; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SHILLING MONTH.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

Three Newark Friends, 3s. ; A. Dunn, 2s. ; A. Sumner, 5s. ; J. Judge, £1 ; H. W. Parsons, £2 2s. ; Messrs. Platt, Chawn, and Jones, 3s. ; E. J., 2s. 6d.

Per Charles Watts.—G. A. (Liverpool), 10s.

Per R. Forder : J. Hughes, 5s. ; R. W., 2s. ; T. G ; J. H. Carr, 2s. ; J. McMunn ; G. Hutchinson ; R. Rutherford ; A Friend ; S. George ; W. Knight ; T. Reed, 6d. ; J. M., 3d. ; J. R, 3d. ; C. Sedgwick, 1s. 1d.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectured twice on Sunday at Leicester. There was a good morning audience, and the hall was crowded in the evening. "Huxley and Agnosticism" proved an interesting subject, judging by the attention and applause. Mr. Sydney Gimson, the chairman, invited discussion, but none was forthcoming. The opposition to the morning lecture was feeble on the part of one critic, and spiteful on the part of another. It is more agreeable to mention that several friends attended the lectures from distant places, three coming over from Derby.

This evening (Nov. 24) Mr. Foote occupies the platform at Foresters' Hall, and repeats his lecture on "Huxley and Agnosticism." London friends will remember that the admission at Foresters' Hall is free. They should try to induce their Christian friends to attend. The lecturer is anxious to preach the Gospel of Freethought to the heathen.

Mr. Foote's lectures at Bradford will, after all, have to be given in the Oddfellows' Hall. We have already noted the refusal of one theatre *sine phrase*. The Jollity Theatre might have been had, but it was pre-engaged. Application was made for the saloon of the Mechanics' Institute, which has been let to the Fabians, but it was refused to the Secularists. We hope the Bradford and district Freethinkers will mark their sense of all this bigotry by flocking to Mr. Foote's lectures next Sunday (Dec. 1).

Mr. Charles Watts delivered three lectures on Sunday at Liverpool to enthusiastic audiences. Several questions were asked, and answered, after the evening lecture. During the week Mr. Watts has been lecturing at Bolton and Blackburn under the President's scheme. To-day (Nov. 24) he is billed for three lectures in the Manchester Secular Hall, and we hope he will have first-rate meetings. On Monday he visits Derby, and on Tuesday he lectures under the new scheme at Ipswich.

Noticing some Christian criticisms on Ingersoll's recent lectures, the *Boston Herald* says : "Colonel Ingersoll is one of the first lawyers in the country—a man of high mental capacity and rare reasoning power. To say that boys and

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girls can answer his arguments, and that what he advances is transparent sophistry to the most immature minds, is to say what any intelligent person knows to be absurdly untrue. If he is met ta all, he must be met in a very different way from this."

The same paper concludes its leaderette on Ingersoll by remarking: "His lectures may be denounced as mischievous in their effect, but it is full time that this talk of him as a man of no importance in argument should cease. He is possessed of a high order of talent, and it is not at all to be supposed that he does not evince it in his attacks upon Christianity. He has studied that subject long, and he has made great sacrifices for the sincerity of his opinions. Had it not been for these, there were few men who had more brilliant prospects in public life than awaited Colonel Ingersoll. He may be both pitied and condemned for his delusion, but it is altogether a mistake to rate him as one of small ability."

The *Leek Times* reprints our last paragraphs on the proposed debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. W. Howard. Our readers will remember that Mr. Howard had framed the proposition he would maintain in debate, and that Mr. Foote then framed his in opposition. Our contemporary appends an editorial footnote, which runs as follows: "Too late and too long for publication this or any other week, we have received the proof of a letter by the Rev. W. W. Howard, sent to a paper printed in Hanley. It is something over a yard in length, and purports to be a reply to the above. Suffice it, Mr. Howard declines Mr. Foote's proposition, and does not agree to submit the question to be debated to three gentlemen of Leek, two of whom are to be nominated by Mr. Howard himself. There will, therefore, be no debate; and, as far as we are concerned, the matter is at an end.—Ed. *L. T.*"

This is just exactly the termination we expected. It is what happened in the negotiations for a debate at Spennymoor, and afterwards at Liverpool. Mr. Howard is a very brave man—on paper; but when it comes to business his courage evaporates in words. He stipulates a condition which he knows beforehand is absolutely impossible. Not content with framing his own proposition, he wants also to frame his opponent's. Which is absurd, as Euclid says.

Mr. C. Cohen lectured on Sunday afternoon for the Bradford Sunday Society, his subject being "Darwinism and Democracy." There was a large attendance, and a good report appeared in the *Bradford Observer*. Mr. Cohen is lecturing in the district under Mr. Foote's new scheme: November 25, Keighley; 27, Leeds; 28, Bingley.

Mr. A. B. Moss had a good and appreciative audience at Ball's Pond on Sunday evening. His lecture, which the chairman described as interesting and instructive, was received with loud applause.

We venture to call attention again to the *Secular Almanack* for 1896, which has just been published. We should like to see every copy bought up before Christmas. The price of this publication is only threepence, and every penny of the profit accruing from the sale goes into the National Secular Society's exchequer. The *Almanack* contains a great deal of information of interest to Freethinkers, which cannot be obtained in any other form.

The Camberwell entertainment in aid of the President's new lecture scheme was a great success. The hall was well filled, and all present seemed to be enjoying themselves. Miss Vance deserves thanks for the hard work she threw into the enterprise. Miss Brown's acting was a surprise. Her bearing was excellent, and her elocution admirable. Mr. Watts, of course, gave complete satisfaction. Mr. Moss convulsed the audience in a broad comedy part. Mr. Foote read Tennyson's "Rizpah," and Madame Burgwitz sang with her wonted charm and effectiveness. The large attendance of ladies gave a bright, social air to the assembly.

Mr. G. W. Foote's Humanitarian pamphlet, *The Shadow of the Sword*, is an eloquent plea for the substitution of arbitration for war. His arguments are supported by an array of facts and figures which ought to convince the most bloodthirsty of the fatuity of this mode of settling national differences.—*Clarion*.

The *Weekly Times and Echo* has a sensible and outspoken article on Dr. John Clifford's *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, which is in its second edition. Our contemporary thinks the book may do good in "certain quarters," but does not reckon its "actual value" as "very high." It refers to Dr. Clifford's "alternating fearlessness of exposures of surface errors, and nervous harking back to the intrinsic inspiration which is somehow supposed to string together a long set of gems, some flawed and some spurious, into one yet priceless jewel." Language of this kind is new in the weekly press.

The *Daily News* correspondent writes: "The monument to Garibaldi in Milan looks better than was expected. The bronze figure on horseback has a calm and resolute aspect. He is unsheathing his sword, and wears the traditional poncho and Hungarian cap. He is represented as he looked when in the prime of life, during the campaign of 1860. The horse is a majestic animal. To right and left are two bronze groups, 'Revolution' leaning on a lion, and 'Liberty' sheathing her sword after having conquered the tiger, symbolising Tyranny, which lies at her feet. All round the grey granite base of the monument are placed shields inscribed with the names of Garibaldi's principal victories. The inscription is simply, 'To Guiseppe Garibaldi—Milan.'"

Now the winter is upon us the demands are increasing upon the National Secular Society's Benevolent Fund. Mr. George Anderson sends us a cheque for £5, and perhaps other friends will follow his good example. The Committee all work gratuitously, and every application is investigated before assistance is granted.

THE SKY-PILOT.

You have often seen the Pilot
As he sanctimonious stands,
In his glossy coat of broadcloth,
With a Bible in his hands;
And his empty head bent forward
In a pious sort of way,
As he asks the Lord to clothe him
And to feed him day by day.

And you've often heard the Pilot
Expounding Moses's law,
And heard him tell the story
Of great Samson's ass's jaw;
But that he should earn his living
With the sweat upon his brow,
If you tell him ne'er so gently
You will raise a holy row.

No! that ne'er would suit the Pilot,
Who with work's not in accord,
And he hurries up to tell you
He's a servant of the Lord;
If the best you have you give him,
He will want it better still;
For the shepherd must be paid for,
And the sheep must pay the bill.

How he talks of golden pavements,
And the city's pearly gates;
How an everlasting mansion
Each poor Lazarus now awaits;
And he tells us that the weather
In that city's always warm—
But he shears his sheep in winter
To protect his own sleek form.

How he shuns the poor that labor,
And the pauper in the ditch
And proclaims they were created
To be servants of the rich;
Then he helps the great to plunder
And grind the weak and low;
"I'm about my Father's business!"
He says. "He made it so."

You have often met the Pilot
At the picnic and the tea,
At the concert and the lecture,
Where he always passes free;
And you've always met him smiling—
What has he to make him sad?
He has all the world can give him,
So he thinks we should be glad.

He's a "worker (?) in the vineyard,'
So he digs, and prunes, and hacks,
In the glorious work of piling
Burdens on the sinners' backs.
He's the Pilot of Life's Ocean,
Though its chart he'll never know;
And he'll land—or sink—you somewhere,
If you give him half a show.

—*Secular Thought.* W. A. Ratcliffe.

Heaven in Arizona: "And what may be the principal industry in the territory?" Resident: "Wal, stranger, in winter they mosly set on th'east sider th'house'n foller the sun roun' t' the wes; 'n summer they set on the wes'n foller the shade roun' to th'east."

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"GODLESS" EDUCATION:

AN OPEN LETTER TO

THE VERY REVEREND JAMES CARMICHAEL, M.A., D.C.L., AND BISHOP'S COMMISSARY, MONTREAL.

MY DEAR JIMMY AND VERY REVEREND DEAN,—It seems very strange at this distance of time and space since we trod the path of learning together up Harcourt-street, Dublin, to Dan Flynn's Academy, to be addressing you in these terms of mingled familiarity and deference. We started in life by different roads. You took up the sword of the spirit, as it is called, to fight the flesh, the world, and the Devil—I took up the sword of the flesh to fight my country's enemies. Judging by the present result at which each of us has arrived, you have been able to carve out for yourself with your spiritual weapon a more satisfactory material position than I with my weason-slitter of Brummagem steel. The last time I saw you with the eye was shortly after your arrival in Montreal one Sunday evening. I happened to be there, when I was enticed by a lady to go to St. George's to hear the new curate from Ireland. It appears to me now as only the other day that I saw you sweep up the aisle amid the other sky-pilots in processional stream, with the same perky pitch of the head, but with an added sanctimonious air befitting and necessary in the new *rôle* you had assumed since the days when we played tricks on old Swords, the doorkeeper, and made life a burden to one at least of our tutors, little Hugo de Burgh. The sight brought me many reflections, for I had long since lost all faith—indeed, I cannot say I ever had any—in the hocus-pocus business to which you had taken. I am not going to tell tales out of school, but I never had the impression that your life's work lay in the soul-saving line. But that you took to it, and have made it pay, is a proof of your shrewdness, if nothing else. "Great is truth, and it shall prevail," is an old saying with a certain amount of truth in it; but it would be more generally correct if, for the word "truth," "humbug" were substituted. Have you never, my dear Jimmy, when you have retired into your inner self, as I suppose most men do at times, taken a survey of your outer life? And if you have, what have been your reflections? And did not the saying of the Preacher echo lightly on your inner ears: "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity"? Or, as an eccentric old foreigner whom I once met in my world-wandering used to phrase it, "Phantasmata! phantasmata! phantasmata!" You could hardly persuade me that you seriously believed or believe in the reception of any special gift or power on the day some Bishop, Right Reverend Father-in-God, placed his fingers on your head and muttered his incantation after the manner of the wizard at a country fair about to perform the trick of the show. But the aforesaid Rt. Rev. Father-in-God may have been a man endowed with strong magnetic force, and capable of distilling, through his digits into your cranium, an influence which has permanently hypnotised you. If so, you are to be excused and commiserated for the delusions under which you appear, from your recent utterances on the education question, to labor.

You talk, my dear Dean, the usual shibboleth about "godless" schools. Have you ever found "God" in any school? The gabbling of prayers or invocations to a deity who, notwithstanding his attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, and general omniness, never seems to know anything or be anywhere at the right moment to be of use to "his creatures," does not, as you and I know of old, make the slightest impression in a religious sense on either boys or girls at school time. How, therefore, the absence of these performances constitutes "godless" education, I fail utterly to see, and so I expect do you and thousands of others of your brother clericals; only when one is climbing the ladder to preferment you are all compelled to talk in the orthodox jargon of the day. Your very existence as a class, and your influence and power as individuals, to say nothing of the money question, which is not the least vital consideration, depend on your being able to impose—and I use this word in every sense that can be given to it—upon the plastic and ductile intelligence of children. They are made to believe things not true in themselves, or about which the pastors and masters are as ignorant or befogged as the children can be, and you dishonestly evade the issues involved in the open discussion of your more or less sincere beliefs or misbeliefs. The preachers of hell fire and everlasting damnation among the Highland peasants in Scotland have found that, especially with the young, the practical abolition of hell, and the substitution for it of a locality or an existence or a nothing denominated Sheol, has quite upset their minds, and is emptying seats and pews in the kirks to an alarming extent. I notice that at the recent meeting of the Synod the Revised Version was objected to on the ground that "it had a tendency to disturb people's minds." This reminds one of the way the Chinese have explained their unwillingness to accept Western ideas; the same stupid, stolid conservatism. You should imitate the worldly wisdom of the society doctor, who, when his fair patient refused to continue the cod-liver oil (hell-fire) treatment, immediately conceded and prescribed curaçoa and cream (Sheol), and so retained his influence and fees. Don't run or swim against the stream, my dear Jimmy, if you are wise, and have not been entirely hypnotised. The world is moving forward, and to try to put things back is as impossible in the end as to prevent the world going round by sticking a pole into the earth and holding on to it. If you and your class insist on cod-liver oil when the world is clamoring for curaçoa and cream, you will be neither worldly-wise nor otherwise, and, in the vernacular of the day, you clericals will wake up one morning to find yourselves left. At the best you will only be able to stave off the evil day for your own time, for the economic forces that are at work are making for the abolition of the useless and superfluous classes of society, to which you and your cloth of all creeds and grades distinctly belong. The levelling of education and spread of knowledge (science) is rendering everyone who chooses to think capable of judging of the true value of the mumbo-jumboism of supernatural religion as hitherto taught by your class. The day is near when the professional religionist, with his vestments and incantations, will be relegated to the garret of time, where lie the bones of the mastodon and the dodo, and you will only hurry on that time by refusing to recognise the natural forces at work. The spiritual influence of the Pope has been greatly strengthened by his loss of temporal power; but the proof that he and his surroundings do not believe in the kingdom which is not of this world is afforded by the craving and desperate efforts they are making to recover his temporalities. The day they do their spiritual influence will be near to its end. The moral of what I am writing to you, my very reverend Dean, is don't grasp at too much; give us a little relaxation and change of diet. *Toujours perdrix* is wearisome to the palate. Let us have at least one period of our existence, one function of our mortal lives, free from the intrusion of the sky-pilot. We want education for the ordinary affairs of this life, which the old Latin Delectus told us is short, to be secular, and devoted exclusively to this world's business. You, the mystery men, fetish men, the angekoks of our civilisation, have your churches and Sunday schools to do what you are paid for doing, and, I make free to say, doing more or less badly; for in your efforts to make men *appear* religious you have quite forgotten or failed to make them moral. However, that is by the way. Study, then, my dear Jimmy, the signs of the times. New lights are breaking on men's minds, and dispelling, somewhat slowly, perhaps, just yet, the phantoms and dogmas of the old, worn-out creeds; but dispelling them they are beyond a doubt, and you and your class know it. Put up your dark lanterns, then, for they are of little further use; and if you still hanker after playing the physician to humanity, take my advice and substitute curaçoa and cream for the old rejected cod-liver oil. It agrees better with the stomach.

And may you live to be a bishop in your turn is the best wish of

AN OLD SCHOOLMATE.

P.S.—Don't forget that your renowned townsman, Oscar Wilde, was a distinguished product of Oxford, which is, according to your jargon, not a godless establishment. On the contrary, God has been there for centuries, and is, so far as I understand, still there. How comes it, then, that this godful institution turns out such as he, and, for the matter of that, hundreds worse?

—*Secular Thought.*

IT is to the diffusion of knowledge, and to that alone, that we owe the comparative cessation of what is unquestionably the greatest evil men have ever inflicted on their own species. For that religious persecution is a greater evil than any other is apparent, not so much from the enormous and almost incredible number of its known victims, as from the fact that the unknown must be far more numerous, and that history gives no account of those who have been spared in the body in order that they might suffer in the mind. We hear much of martyrs and confessors—of those who were slain by the sword or consumed in the fire; but we know little of that still larger number who, by the mere threat of persecution, have been driven into an outward abandonment of their real opinions; and who, thus forced into an apostasy the heart abhors, have passed the remainder of their lives in the practice of a constant and humiliating hypocrisy. It is this which is the real curse of religious persecution. For in this way, men being constrained to mask their thoughts, there arises a habit of securing safety by falsehood, and of purchasing impunity with deceit. In this way fraud becomes a necessary of life; insincerity is made a daily custom; the whole tone of public feeling is vitiated, and the gross amount of vice and of error fearfully increased. Surely, then, we have reason to say that, compared to this, all other crimes are of small account, and we may well be grateful for that increase of intellectual pursuits which has destroyed an evil that some among us would even now willingly restore.—*Buckle's "Civilisation," vol. i., p. 136.*

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BOOK CHAT.

A new philosophical series will shortly be issued under the editorship of Professor Knight, of St. Andrew's. The chief feature will be that the philosophies are studied from the sociological point of view.

* * *

Although John Addington Symonds was fond of referring to "God," and maintained that the human "soul" contains said God on this planet, he was by no means a Christian, for he had no belief in personal immortality. In writing to a friend he expressed himself as follows: "I will further confess that, had you gained the proof [of this immortality of the individual soul], this result would have enormously aggravated the troubles of my life by cutting off the possibility of resumption into the personal unconscious which our present incertitude leaves open to my sanguine hope.....Until that immortality of the individual is irrefragably demonstrated, the sweet, the immeasurably precious hope ending with this life the ache and languor of existence remains open to burdened human personalities."

* * *

The last number of the Bellamy Library, *Ten Men of Money Island*, by Seymour F. Norton, appendix by Henry Seymour, is by no means the least in importance of the series (London: William Reeves, 185 Fleet-street, E.C.). It deals with the financial question in a most attractive fashion. One would hardly think, from the usual run of works on questions of currency and finances, that they could be put in such a lively, simple, and intelligible form as they are by this American writer. His ten men on Money Island are named Plowem, Reapem, Foreplane, Sledgehammer, Dressem, Guidem, Pickaxe, Makem, Discount, and Donothing. The nomenclature gives the key to the story. All goes well while the ten men combine for mutual help; and they erect a bridge, exactly as Governor Le Brock, of Guernsey, did erect a market, by issuing labor notes in payment, receivable as taxes. But all goes ill when Donothing is allowed to do the governing, and Discount the banking of the island. Chapter XII., on "Specie Basis, Usury, and Banking," really gives a masterly insight into mysteries of finance. But Mr. Norton simplifies the problem overmuch, as Mr. Seymour points out in his appendix, and neither of these advocates of free currency considers the strongest objection to free paper currency—viz., that it may not continue to represent equivalent values when a debt is contracted and when it has to be paid. But this is not the place to discuss the currency question. Sufficient to say, Mr. Norton's book is an eminently readable one upon an important question, which but few know how to make interesting. Mr. Seymour's appendix is not so lively as the book, but it is more solid. It may be questioned, however, if the solution of the money question is quite so simple as he surmises. He says: "All that is required is the repeal of the legal tender laws, the demonopolisation of gold," etc. But these things are only simple on paper.

* * *

Buckle and His Critics: A Study in Sociology, by John Mackinnon Robertson (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; 10s. 6d.), is a stout volume of 565 pages, in which Mr. Robertson has elaborately defended the author of *The History of Civilisation in England* against the disparaging criticism of a large number of writers, including Leslie Stephen, Theodore Parker, John Fiske, G. A. Simcox, Mark Pattison, Oscar Peschel, Professor Flint, Mr. Gladstone, etc. One chapter is on "Buckle's Real Errors," another on "The Development of Sociology." In an appendix, Mr. Robertson gives a synthetic summary of Buckle's ideas. The work is well printed, and has a good index.

* * *

The Wizard Lute, by George Gresswell (Griffith Farran), is a shilling story of a youth magically placed alone, like Campbell's *Last Man*, in London. The position is one which would speedily show what an essential portion of our nature is sympathy with our fellows.

* * *

Mr. Leonard Huxley, a son of the late Professor, appears before the world as the translator of Hausrath's *History of the New Testament Times* (Williams & Norgate). The work is a rationalistic one, though it may be doubted if there are the materials for the reconstruction which Professor Hausrath attempts.

* * *

The New Testament, in its revised form, appeared in 1881, and the Old Testament came out in 1885; but the Apocrypha still remained to be revised. It is to be published this month at the Oxford and Cambridge presses. The revisers were appointed by the convocation of Canterbury in 1870, and have been a quarter of a century in doing their work.

* * *

Max Nordau's novel, *A Comedy of Sentiments*, is published in English this week by Heinemann.

The Rev. W. W. Smyth, a Scoto-Canadian, has made a Scottish version of the New Testament, which is announced as to appear this winter. It will be interesting to note whether he uses the "I sepad" of Thrums, or "A'nu" of Drumtochty. Some time ago the Rev. Hately Waddell put out a version of the Psalms in such "braid Doric" that few Scotsmen, and no Southerner, could understand it.

* * *

Mr. Herbert M. Thompson has written a work on *Russian Politics*, which Mr. Fisher Unwin will publish. It treats of the conditions of social life and government now existing in Russia. The emancipation of the serfs and various reforms of the same period are described with some fullness.

* * *

Musings for the Masses, by R. J. Derfel (Manchester), is a very cheap pennyworth, thirty-two pages, of verses and songs. One of them is on Charles Bradlaugh, and all show a love of freedom and sympathy with the masses.

* * *

Rabbi Placzek, of Moravia, has written a book on *Darwinism in the Talmud*. That old Jewish hodge-podge chronicles a Rabbi's opinion that Adam had a tail. But the doctrine of evolution is older than the Talmud. It is found in Lucretius, and before him in Democritus and Anaxagoras, more than two thousand years ago.

* * *

The Wonderful Visit, by H. G. Wells, is a curious novel. It tells how the vicar of Siddermorton, who was an ornithologist, shot an angel, believing it to be a rare bird, with iridescent wings. "A youth with an extremely beautiful face, clad in a robe of saffron," flutters down to the ground, with "a scream of superhuman agony." The clergyman, who is a delightful character, binds up the broken wing, takes the angel home, and clothes him in a suit of his own clerical garments. This wonderful visitor has some wonderful thoughts on the folly of human arrangements.

THE CAMBERWELL REUNION.

The Camberwell Branch of the N.S.S. scored a great success in the dramatic performance they gave on Wednesday, November 13, in aid of the Lecture Fund. By eight o'clock the compact little hall in New Church-road was filled with a cheerfully expectant and unusually good-tempered audience, for was not their honored President—usually only visible on Sundays at the unapproachable distance of the lecturing platform—sitting there among them as sociable as you please, with his wife and two pretty little girls beside him?

The whole performance went admirably; the amateur element, thanks to the excellent stage management, seemed almost eliminated, and even little Miss Harding, the youngest member of the Company, quite forgot to be shy, and danced with all the assurance and skill of a professional three times her age.

Mr. Watts's dramatic and forcible delivery of "Claude Melnotte's Apology and Defence" was warmly applauded, and Mr. Foote's tender and beautiful reading of Tennyson's "Rizpah" showed the N.S.S. folk their President in a new and very interesting light. The greater number of us only know our President as a lecturer and ethical teacher. True, he talks to us from that vague eminence, the Editorial Chair; but sometimes, when we feel the throb of the kind, true heart that beats behind the printed page, when we see his earnest face light up with noble feeling as it did when he recited on Wednesday, we wish we saw more of him from the human social side—we would like to feel the warm grasp of his hand, and have him among us oftener at such gatherings as these.

One of the best things on the program was *A Morning Call*, and Miss Annie Brown's Mrs. Chillingtone was certainly a most finished and artistic performance. Miss Brown, who looked remarkably handsome, was ably seconded by Mr. Charles Watts as the impressionable baronet, Sir Edward Ardent, and they gave such a spirited rendering of the sparkling little comedy, they played it with such lightness of touch and grace of manner, that they undoubtedly scored the success of the evening. Madame Saunders gave some excellent pianoforte selections, and Madame Kate Burgwitz sang with all her customary charm of expression. The entertainment concluded with the domestic comedy, *A Quiet Family*, and Mr. Benjamin Bibbs (Mr. George Brown) was so dogmatic, and his wife (Miss Miriam May) so long-suffering, Mr. Barnaby Bibbs (Mr. Arthur B. Moss) was so very depressed in the beginning and so very irrepressible at the finish, and all the other members of this quiet (!) domestic family were so thoroughly up in their parts, that the audience kept up a running accompaniment of applause, which lasted till the final fall of the curtain.

Veritas.

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DAWN!

Dawneth the new age:
Comes it light-girdled
Forth from the portals
Of near future time.
All who look forward
This truth shall perceive.

Heavings volcanic
Shake now the surface
Of creeds old and new.
Truth will not falter;
Friendship with error
It ne'er will maintain.

Yahveh, the last god!
Thy son is setting:
Soon shalt thou be with
Brahm, Jove, Osiris,
Baal, and Odin—
An archaic myth.

As Thor drove northward
Ymir the Jotun,
Melting the ice-thralls
That fettered the earth—
New birth inbreathing,
Fair promise of spring;

So doth bright Reason,
Greater than all gods,
Work intellectual
Freedom the world o'er:
Priesthood and dogmas
Dissolve in its light.

Aye! a fair era
Cometh to mankind:
Hunger shall vanish;
War shall we know not:
Freethought, of all men,
Will be the first care.

Speed ye the time, then,
When these things may be.
Comrades! combine, and
It is in your power
To sunder all bonds
Of Humanity.

F. W. Thorrington.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A QUEER NEW SECT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Thinking that it may be of use to your paper, I herewith send you some information concerning a fanatical religious sect—of which you have probably never heard—called the "Swanepoels," and living in the Transvaal. The sect, which is named the "Swanepoels" because it was originally started by a family of that name about the year 1893, live in Klerksdorp, a town in the Transvaal. Its followers, who are, for the most part, ignorant Dutch boer farmers, do not exceed fifty.

The sect was really originated by two men named Piet Swanepoel and C. J. Strydom, who, being "moved by the spirit," as they aver, began holding religious services on the farm of the former called Baviaanskloof, which, translated, means "Baboons' Valley," and which divine services were based on the last chapter of St. Mark, in which Christ exhorts his disciples to remain steadfast in their faith, which would have the effect of giving them the power of healing the sick instantaneously, etc. In fact, their whole religion has that chapter for its ground.

Swanepoel and Strydom, being both eloquent speakers, so worked upon the credulity and feelings of their audience that they all became impressed with the belief that it was possible to obtain the standpoint spoken of in the said last chapter of Mark.

Swanepoel, being a deacon of the Wolmoranestad (a town in the South African Republic) Church, resigned his position, and removed the scene of his preachings to the town of Klerksdorp. It was at this juncture that Strydom, who, I presume, was the more sensible of the two, and evidently seeing that the thing did not pay, deserted his old comrade and resumed his former position of deacon in the Wolmoranestad Church.

In the meanwhile Swanepoel still went on with his preaching; and at length, having obtained a sufficiently strong congregation, built a church, where divine services are held every morning and evening.

They have a belief that they are the chosen few, and that everyone else is "unsound," "possessed of devils," etc. Their devotional exercises are rather of a violent nature. As soon as they enter the church, everyone drops down on her or his knees, starts praying, singing, clapping their hands, and making peculiar noises; and they cause such a tumult when they are holding their services that, although the windows and doors of their church are always closed, yet the noise may be heard a good way off. While they are in this state of mind it is positively dangerous for anyone not belonging to their sect to venture inside the church.

A week or two ago some of them were charged before the magistrate at Klerksdorp for insulting and using violent language towards some people, and they were mulcted in a heavy fine of £5; I say *heavy* fine, because they are poor farmers.

Not so long ago a lady tried to put her faith to a practical test. She told her co-religionists that she was going to jump up to heaven alive, and for that purpose got on a high wall and attempted the feat—with what result you can imagine, for she came into violent contact with mother earth; which was quite the contrary to her expectation.

How most of these people live is a mystery, although some of them are fairly well-to-do farmers. The more educated (!) farmers in the neighborhood look upon them with the greatest aversion; and their opinion is that the sect will gradually die out when they find out (will they ever!) that they cannot obtain their object in spite of their violent efforts.

This is only one of the many cases in which we see how religion affects the brain and makes fanatics of persons; for one must admit that people who behave like the sect I have named cannot be called sane in any sense of the word.

Before closing I cannot help telling you how much I appreciate, as everyone who loves truth must, the splendid work you are doing, and have done, in advancing Freethought, and hope that you may continue to do so for many years yet. I have been a subscriber to your paper since the beginning of 1895, and hope to be one always, if "God spares me." It is hardly two years ago since I became a Freethinker. I was converted by reading Paine's *Age of Reason* and some back numbers of your paper; and, although I am only 19 years of age, I have since then made a fairly good progress in Freethought, having read Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Ingersoll, Foote, Strauss, and many others.

I send you, per book post, a photo of myself, taken a few days ago; I also send you a pamphlet by the Rev. Faure, called *The Truth About the Bible*, for your library. It contains more common sense than one usually would expect from a sky-pilot. Whenever I see anything in any paper worth sending to you, I will do so. C. de Villiers.

Johannesburg, South African Republic.

PROFANE JOKES.

Papa—"Did you ask God to give you your daily bread this morning?" Bobby—"No, papa; I looked in the pantry last night, and saw that there was enough to last for three days."

"My friend," said the long-coated old man solemnly, "have you made preparation for the day of judgment?" "Sir," replied the young man, "that's how I make my living." "Young man!" "I'm employed in the sheriff's office."

"I have been requested," said the pastor, beaming over the pulpit, "to offer prayers for rain, but the superintendent informs me that the Sunday-school picnic is arranged for Thursday."

Minister—"And so you say your little prayer every night before you go to bed? That's right. And now tell me why do you do that?" Little Ethel—"Because mamma says she'll spank me if I don't."

"Mamma, do liars ever go to heaven?" "Why no; probably not." "Has papa ever told a lie?" "I suppose not; he may have." "And mamma, have you ever told one? Uncle Joseph has, and I have, and almost everybody." "I don't know but I have sometimes." "Well it must be lonesome up there with only God and George Washington."

A little girl heard that people were made of dust, and, after watching heaps and columns of it eddying about the street, exclaimed: "Oh, mamma, I just thought there was going to be another little girl."

Parson Toogood: "Don't you think that the great number of Sunday fatalities is a judgment on the American people for abandoning the Sabbath of the Puritans?" Deacon Hardhead: "Well, I don't know. The Puritans had a good many Sunday fatalities themselves whenever the Indians got up an excursion."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Huxley and Agnosticism."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, R. Forder, "Jesus: Man, Myth, or God?" Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Wednesday, at 8, public discussion on "Christian Evidences."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, select entertainment and dance—special collection for benefit of Branch. Friday, November 22, at 8, urgent meeting of members and friends.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, a lecture. Friday, at 8, free science classes.

EAST LONDON (The Hall, Beaumont-street, Mile End-road, E.): 8, debate between W. C. Lyons and J. Tarry, "Is Secularism of More Benefit to Mankind than Christianity?"

FENTON HALL (61 Pentonville-road): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Brahminism or Indian Priestcraft."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Miss Vallance, "Future Rewards and Punishments."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Professor H. Sidgwick, "The Ethics of Religious Conformity."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Henry Spence, "The Evolution of the Horse."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH: 7.30, members' meeting at Mr. Stace's, 42 Vincent-street.

WOOD GREEN (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, Tousean Parris, "Christianity a Fraud."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Come to Jesus."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BINGLEY (Co-operative Hall): Thursday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Is it Reasonable to Believe in God?"

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 5, tea and social.

BRADFORD LABOR CHURCH: 3 and 6.30, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, A. B. Moss, "The New Age of Reason."

DERBY (Athenæum Room): Monday, at 8, Charles Watts, "Secularism in Modern Thought." Usual Branch meeting on Sunday to make arrangements for Mr. Watts's lecture.

DUNDEE (Tally-street Hall): 2.30, discussion class; 6.30, J. Christison, "Drink and Socialism."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion-class—J. Paul, "*Mystic Euphemia*: A Criticism"; 6.30, soirée.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Hauke, "Christian Heroics."

KEIGHLEY (Co-operative Hall): Monday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Is it Reasonable to Believe in God?"

LEEDS (St. James's Hall): Wednesday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "What is Secularism?"

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Alfred Milnes, M.A., "Causes and Conditions of Foreign Trade."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Progress."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Charles Watts, "Theological Puzzles"; 3, "Christian Evidences a Fallacy"; 7, "Secularism in Modern Thought."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, a lecture on "Secularism."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, Mr. Chubb will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, select entertainment.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.45, J. Bowey, "Secularism Defined and Defended."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, A. Easten, "Why I am a Secularist."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—November 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Croxton-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Nov. 24, New Brompton. Dec. 22, Leicester.

TOUSSAINT PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—November 24, Wood Green. December 1, Foresters' Hall; 8, Balls Pond; 15, Wood Green; 29, Foresters' Hall.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 48. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

ANOTHER CONVERTED ATHEIST.

We have received a copy of a sermon by the Rev. J. C. Fellowes, vicar of St. James's Church, Stockton-on-Tees. It was preached to the officers and members of the local Order of Druids—a branch of a great Friendly Society which is well known in all parts of the nation. Its intrinsic merits are very slight, and we only criticise it for an extrinsic reason, which will appear as we proceed.

Mr. Fellowes went in for what is called improving the opportunity. Of course he praised the thrift which provides for a rainy day; but (although he did not use these precise words) he thought still more of the thrift which provides for the day when it will rain brimstone and fire. It is well to attend to the affairs of this life, but how about "the affairs of the life that is to follow this life—the life eternal?" Alas! they are sadly neglected. People are so careless and short-sighted. They put off joining the Church of Christ till it is perhaps too late. "Join now," says Mr. Fellowes. Be some sort of a Christian, whether Wesleyan, Baptist, Catholic, or Churchman. Any church, like any friendly society, is better than none. "There is a home prepared for you in heaven"—God Almighty's almshouse, where you may live as an eternal pensioner. In that beautiful place "there will be no more partings, no more sorrow, no sickness, no pain, but peace, happiness, and content." Very attractive, to be sure; but so is the promise of a fortune held out to a pauper. Fine promises are cheap enough. The question is, will they be fulfilled? Yes, says Mr. Fellowes, if you die in a secular friendly society, you will have a nice funeral, but if you die in our religious friendly society, you will go straight to glory. This is a promise which the priests of all religions make to those who trust them and pay up; but you must die before you can test their accuracy, and (O the lucky dogs!) dead men tell no tales; so that a priest's promise has never to be redeemed.

Mr. Fellowes' religion is of the personally prudential order. It resembles that of the late Rev. Mr. Binney, who explained "How to Make the Best of Both Worlds." There appears to be something very fascinating in it to the ordinary British Philistine. It is scarcely, however, a religion for a gentleman. It is so individual, so egotistic. It reduces this life, and the next so far as it is involved in this life, to a nice calculation of personal advantage. If the Devil could offer better terms, there would be every reason for enlisting in his service. God happens to offer the best dividend, so it is more profitable to invest with him. Such is the philosophy of religionists who, without the least sense of humor, affect to dwell on high ethical and spiritual levels, far above the "grovelling materialist."

How curious it is that so many Christians turn their backs on the teaching of Christ. *He* never taught people how to make the best of both worlds. To him this life was nothing; the next life everything. Taking thought for the morrow was foolish, if not impious; wisdom, and true piety, consisted in taking thought for the hereafter. Friendly societies exist in direct opposition to the teaching of Christ—so strong and pressing are the interests of this life even in religious circles; yet, by a singular inconsistency, which it is difficult to discriminate from hypocrisy, these friendly societies get a minister of the Gospel of Christ to preach them a reassuring sermon, and he does so with the most perfect serenity, without a scintillation of misgiving.

It is hardly surprising that such preachers—to such congregations—should stoop to every artifice of priestcraft. To induce you to patronise their business the priests offer you a seat in heaven, with the certainty of a seat in hell if you deal with the opposite house; and to silence criticism, and disarm suspicion, they have stories of converted Atheists—men who never deal with the firm to the extent of sixpence, but who wished on their death-beds that they had made all their purchases at that establishment. Every man of God appears to have one of these frightful warnings, and Mr. Fellowes is no exception to the rule. We give his account of the curiosity in his own words:—

> "Again, I have sometimes been asked to go and see a sick man. I have found his wife in great distress. The doctor has ordered him to have some strengthening food; the wife has not the money to get it. I ask, 'Is he in any club?' 'No,' I am told; 'no; I wish he was.' Yes, but wishing will not make him a member. A man has to think about it before he is ill. Once again, Go to your Order, ye Druids; consider its ways and be wise. Let me draw another picture. It was in a house in this parish some years ago; I heard the man was very ill—dying, in fact. I saw his wife first, and she told me she was not sure if her husband would wish to see me, *he was an Atheist*. I asked her to go and tell him I was there, and if he was willing I would go up and see him. After a little talk with him, I said: 'You are an Atheist, I hear; are you quite sure you are right?' 'I was one,' he told me, 'when I was well, but since I have been lying here, doing nothing but think about it, I am not sure. O God! I wish I had been a Christian.' But, thank God, His ways are not as man's ways; He never refuses to receive any man who goes to him late or early. During the weeks that man lingered on he had the opportunity, and made use of it, to turn to the Savior; and that man died a Christian."

We have seen so many of these converted Atheist stories, and found so many of them to be frauds, that we decline to believe a single one without proof. It is idle to tell us, as we were told in the case of the Atheist Shoemaker, that a Christian minister is entitled to be believed upon his word. This is to put a man in the witness-box and withdraw him from cross-examination. We have yet to learn that Christian ministers are above the common frailties of human nature; and when it comes to lying, we say that they are under peculiar temptations. In the first place, veracity is not a special virtue in the New Testament; in the second place, falsehood for edification has always been regarded leniently (to say the least) in the Christian Church; and in the third place, as a mere matter of fact, the Christian Church has palmed off so many lies upon the world—lies which have been thoroughly exposed by modern criticism—that there is a presumption against, rather than in favour of, its truthfulness, whenever it states anything which is obviously to its advantage.

From this point of view, which we are amply justified in adopting, we beg to ask Mr. Fellowes a few questions. How long is "some years ago"? Will he give us the precise date? What was the name of the dying Atheist he visited? What street did he live in, and what was the number? Is the dead man's widow still living, and does Mr. Fellowes know of her whereabouts? Does the reverend gentleman keep a diary, and is the incident entered there? Did he make any sort of memorandum at the time? If so, has he preserved it, and will he produce it? Has he ever

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mentioned it before? If so, when and where? And if not, why not?

We decline to consider the meaning of a fact before it is established as a fact; otherwise we might be caught in a trap, like the one that Charles II. is said to have laid for the Royal Society. Mr. Fellowes must satisfy sensible people that his story is a true one. We invite him to do so; and, if he does, we will give the utmost publicity to the case. Will he refuse such a tempting offer?

G. W. FOOTE.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S OPINIONS.

SHAKESPEARE'S time was one of intellectual fermentation. Grave Burleigh complained that Queen Elizabeth's household was "a coverture for no small number of *Epicures* and *Atheists*, because the court is not comprehended within a parish, but seemeth to be a lawless place." Few in his day went further than Raleigh in questioning explanations of the soul and definitions of God. He "misliked" the clerical explanation "as obscure and intricate." He said what the soul of man is had never been resolved, and "neither could I learn hitherto what God is." Yet it must not be supposed he put himself out of communion with the Church of England, which, as a statesman, he may have regarded as a bulwark against the usurpations of Rome. The noticeable thing is that he never adverts to Christian dogmas or doctrines, and this though his writings are pervaded by a sense of the mystery of things, and of the impotence of man in presence of a power greater than his own. "God," he says, in the preface to the *History of the World*, written after he had been several years in prison, "who is the author of all our tragedies, hath written out for us, and appointed unto us, the parts we are to play." "Certainly there is no other account to be made of this ridiculous world than to resolve that the change of fortune on the great theatre is but as the change of garments on the less. For when on the one and the other, every man wears but his own skin; the players are all alike." Raleigh did not directly dispute the accepted doctrines of his time, but he evidently kept an open mind. In his *History of the World* he follows the Bible stories, but places them beside the legends and traditions of what was called profane history.

A story is told of the destruction of the second part of Raleigh's *History*. It is said that one day he looked out of the window of his upper storey in the Bloody Tower, attracted by the noise of a brawl in the court below. He witnessed the quarrel from near the beginning to the end. He saw it from a very favorable view, undisturbed by sympathy either way, and fancied he understood it. But when he came to talk over the matter with others he found that he had entirely misunderstood the nature of the whole affair. This made him ponder: If he could not understand what passed under his own eyes, how could he relate the truth of what took place hundreds or thousands of years ago, or, perhaps, never even took place at all? And in a fit of distrust Sir Walter threw the part of his history still in manuscript into the fire.

Our chivalric knight's misgivings were not without reason. A critical reader is obliged to say that, if the major portion of his first part had shared the same fate, the loss to the real history of the past would not have been great. "Bring me something that is true," Sir Robert Walpole is reported to have said to his librarian; "don't bring me *history*, for that I *know* is a lie." But the *History of the World* is, nevertheless, of great interest and value, simply because it gives the thoughts and opinions of Sir Walter himself. Many are the glances at his own time, and, perhaps, King James saw himself depicted in Ninias, "the foolish, effeminate son of a tyrannous, hated mother."

It has been contended that when Raleigh wrote his less known work, *The Sceptic*, which is professedly an apology for "neither affirming nor denying, but doubting," he may have had a never-carried-out idea of answering his own treatise by a defence of faith. But the evidence of the Rev. Ralph Ironside, already given, shows that scepticism was the natural bent of Raleigh's mind. "The Sceptick," says he, "doth neither affirm, neither deny any position; but doubteth of it, and opposeth his Reasons against that which is affirmed, or denied, to justify his not consenting." He argues that this is the reasonable conclusion "from the consideration of the great difference between living creatures." What is profitable to one is injurious to another; what to one seems sweet and agreeable may to another be the reverse. "For why should I presume to prefer my conceit and imagination, in affirming that a thing is thus or thus in its own Nature, because it seemeth to me to be so, before the conceit of other living creatures, who may as well think it to be otherwise in its own Nature, because it appeareth otherwise to them than it doth to me?" He mentions animal sagacity, and "the dog of Ulysses, who knew his master, having been from home so many years that, at his return, all the people of his house had forgot him." The dog, he points out, "delivereth one kind of voice when he hunteth, another when he howleth, another when he is beaten, and another when he is angry." *The Sceptic*, in short, is an early argument for the relativity of human knowledge.

His *Treatise of the Soul* shows the same disposition of mind. It sets out by saying: "There are two kinds of souls—one void of reason, another endued with reason; and of those without reason there are two sorts—one which feedeth and nourisheth the body, the other which giveth sense and feeling." Men thus have three souls, the trees and herbs one, and other animals two. He cites many opinions concerning the soul, only to show their variety and uncertainty. "Some men (which is a shame to utter) have called the souls of women into question; but by what show of argument? Because God framed the woman's rib, and is not said to breathe a soul into her; as though that were not to be understood of the woman which was spoken of the man. Cyril affirms 'That the souls of women are very womanish; hard and slow to understand hard things.' But, by his leave, some women, even in this, have been able to match the greatest men." Man, Raleigh holds, begets souls as well as bodies: "How can it be but God shall be a help to such as commit adultery, if he do give the souls if they beget the bodies?" All this shows a mind given to contemplation, and not readily accepting authority.

Raleigh's mind was never brighter nor happier than when in clear prospect of death. He wrote on the snuff of his candle the couplet:

> Cowards may fear to die, but courage stout,
> Rather than live in snuff, will be put out.

To some who deplored his misfortunes he observed that "the world itself is but a larger prison, out of which some are daily selected for execution." To his faithful wife, when she informed him she would be allowed to have his body, he replied: "'Tis fitting, Bess, that thou shouldst have that dead which was not much at thy disposition when living." Before he left the Gate-house a cup of sack was offered him, and he was asked if it was to his liking. "I will answer you," said Sir Walter, "as did the fellow who drank of St. Giles's bowl as he went to Tyburn: 'It is good drink, if a man might but tarry by it.'" He asked to see the axe, saying, "Dost thou think I am afraid of it?" Feeling its edge, he smilingly said to the sheriff: "This is a sharp medicine, but it is a physician for all diseases;" and, as he laid his head on the block, he said: "So the heart be right it is no matter which way the head lieth."

Thus, after keeping him fourteen years in the Tower, and then liberating him to go to Guiana and gather wealth for the Crown, did, upon his return, that "most dread sovereign" and most dreadful pusillanimous pedant "whom God Almighty, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon us, the people of England,"* devote to death the greatest of living Englishmen.† His objects were but to gratify his own spite and the enmity of Spain. Between the hours of the resolve and the execution King James spent his time in writing *Meditations on the Lord's Prayer*.‡ "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them which trespass against us" were words upon his lips that had never sunk into his callous heart.

Lady Raleigh buried the body in the chancel of St.

* *Dedication of the Holy Bible.*

† Shakespeare, of whom Raleigh was an evident admirer, had died two years previously.

‡ E. Edwards, *Life of Sir W. Raleigh.*

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Margaret's, Westminster. The head she had embalmed, a precious souvenir of the perfidy of a King. She lived on till 1647, thus witnessing the ruin of the dynasty which had destroyed her happiness. Raleigh remained on in the hearts of the people. He desired no other monument; and he needs no better epitaph than his own magnificent apostrophe to Death, saturated with thought and feeling as the sea with brine, sonorous as the incessant rush of rolling billows on the resounding shore.

> "O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none have dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hast flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet.*"

J. M. WHEELER.

THE FALLACY OF ALLEGED CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

(Concluded from p. 739.)

PROFESSOR STEWART assumes that "the preparation for Christ in Israel," and his appearance at the time he was expected, afford valuable evidence of the truth of Christianity. This, however, is nothing more than bare assumption, for, if we admit the expectation, the question then arises, Did Jesus, in his character and mission, realise what was expected from him? It is evident that he did not. The Jews were, prior to the advent of Jesus, looking for a king, or temporal ruler, which Christ never was. They had been for a century under the Roman yoke, and their national spirit was nearly crushed out. Hence they were expecting and longing for the appearance of some one to deliver them from their state of political and social submission. Even after his supposed resurrection some of Christ's followers asked him: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6). They appeared to have no idea that the kingdom he promised was a spiritual, not a temporal, one. Here the expectation and realisation differed, for, while a secular sovereign was anticipated, Jesus frankly stated: "My kingdom is not of this world. I am not of this world."

But, even if it were granted that the Messiah of the Jews did come in the person of Christ, he failed to accomplish his expected mission, which was supposed to be the breaking up of the Roman power and the establishment of a new faith upon the ruins of Paganism. Christ achieved neither of these results. As Clarke says in his *Ten Great Religions*, the decline of Rome was caused by Cæsarian despotism and the increase of philosophy. "So ended the Roman religion, in superstition among the ignorant, in unbelief among the wise." James Cotter Morison, in his *Service of Man*, writes thus: "It may with reason be doubted if the fact is as often remembered as it should be, that Christianity arose amid the corruption and decay of the greatest civilisation which the human race had seen amid the death-throes of the ancient world.....It is often assumed that this proud heathenism and Pagan glory were overthrown by the meek and unlearned disciples of the Galilean prophet of God. Nothing can be less true than this assumption.....The fall of the Empire, including the loss and ruin of the old philosophy and knowledge, was an indispensable condition of the spread of Christianity.....The birth of Christianity being on this wise—viz., having taken place in an era of decay and death of art and philosophy, of knowledge, of wealth, of population, of progress in every form; and the absence of these things having been one of the chief negative conditions of its growth and prosperity, we must look for the sources of its nourishment in another direction than these; *not* in knowledge or the eager questioning spirit which leads to knowledge, *but* in the humble spirit which believes and accepts on trust the word of authority; not in regulated industry, which aims at constant increase and accumulation of wealth, but in the resigned poverty which, scorning this world, lays up riches in heaven; *not* in political freedom and popular government, which aims at the progressive well-being of all, but in the stern rigor of arbitrary power, which coerces the vicious and refractory into a little order during their brief sojourn on earth. In the decline and fall of Rome, or, as it would be better to say, in the final ruin of ancient civilisation, the conditions favorable to this order of beliefs or doctrines spontaneously emerged" (pp. 174–5, 178–9).

The fact that the profession of Christianity "is co-extensive with the civilisation of the world" is no evidence that Christian pretensions are based upon fact. Freethought is co-extensive with progress, but orthodox believers will not admit that the former is the cause of the latter. The description of the world before Christianity dawned should be accompanied with a fair account of it when it was under the supreme control of the Christian rule—before science, liberty, and general knowledge changed the entire condition of society. It is said that the evidences converge towards one centre, which is the character of Christianity and its influence upon mankind. To fully understand this claim we should remember that the points upon which this convergence bears are: the abolition of war; the brotherhood of man, regardless of creed; the equality of the sexes; the abolition of slavery; the fostering of mental freedom; the establishment of justice; and the growth and spread of education. Now, after diligent search, we find no references in the New Testament to any proposals whereby, either separately or combined, the above reforms could be effectually obtained. We think it most improbable that Jesus would have been silent upon these questions if they formed a part of his program. It seems absurd to attribute the desire to secure liberty to one who never protested against slavery; or to credit the abolition of persecution and of the other evils of life to him who actually gave injunctions to bear with the one, and not to resist the other.

As an example of an advanced nation, in which Christianity appeared in its earliest times, let us take England. Has the Christian faith in this favored land shown itself to be the power that rids the world of its manifest and detestable blemishes? What has progressed more rapidly in this "Christian" country, under the very shadow of the cross, than Mammon worship, commercial unscrupulousness, extravagant love of military glory, and slaughter? Instead of abolishing war, instruments of destruction are being constantly improved, so that they may accomplish their deadly and savage object the more readily. Where is the brotherhood of those Christians who refuse to worship in the same church, or to be buried on the same side of the cemetery with other Christians? Persecution has not been practised by Christians upon heretics only, but it has been prominent in the fold of the faithful. In twenty years preceding 1688 it is estimated that 60,000 Dissenters suffered, of whom 5,000 died in prison. The power of Christians to issue writs for the burning of those who differed from them was blocked by law only as late as 1677, while the legal prohibition of the burning of witches is dated 1736. True education of the masses was unknown before the year 1870, and individual opinion upon matters of theology was not permitted when the Church was in full power. It is only within the last few decades that the position of woman has received any proper consideration, and even to-day brutality to wives and cruelty to children are frequently the subjects of inquiry in our police-courts. The lack of purity of married life is revealed in our divorce courts, even among the clergy and their aristocratic supporters. In the face of these painful facts, what evidence of the beneficial influence of Christianity does its history afford?

It is idle for Christians to be continually boasting that Christianity has saved the world. It has done nothing of the kind. In its earliest ages it left the evils that then cursed society untouched; despotism, slavery, ignorance, and mental subjection flourished for centuries under its very wings. If Christ has come, the question still to be answered is, Whence comes salvation? Nothing is more melancholy to-day than the fact that devout defenders of the historical faith are crying, in the words of Tennyson, "Ring in the Christ that *is to be.*"

CHARLES WATTS.

If revelation is lost to us, manifestation remains, and great manifestations appear to be opening on our view. Agnosticism is right if it is a counsel of honesty, but ought not to be heard if it is a counsel of despair.—*Goldwin Smith, in "North American Review," August, 1895.*

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A PARSON'S DIARY.

GLIMPSES of our ancestors are invariably interesting, and when peeps into the past, by other means than the ordinary official records, afford close and detailed presentments of certain phases of our social history, they are rightly regarded in the light of entertainment and instruction. One of the best channels through which knowledge, not otherwise so fully revealed, can be obtained of the customs and practices of former generations is that of private diaries. Diarists are now almost an extinct class; their vocation mainly existed from the time of the Reformation, when the middle classes more generally acquired the ability to read and write, up to the period of the advent of the newspaper press. The verbatim reports, the minute descriptions, and the concise registers of the modern journalist have supplanted the tedious notes, the erratic entries, and the egotistic writings of compilers of private journals. There is now no opportunity for a Pepys or an Evelyn. Our descendants will not have to depend for their acquaintance with local history on the diaries of industrious country gentlemen, humble village tradesmen, or unlearned schoolmasters. The files of their favorite newspaper, or the volumes of parochial historians, will supply them with all the information they require of the habits, wisdom, and folly of their forefathers. We to-day, however, are compelled to rely on diaries compiled during the last three or four hundred years, if we are desirous of acquiring knowledge of former conditions of particular localities. A country clergyman's diary, extending from 1655 to 1679, which has come under the writer's attention, is of unusual interest and value as rendering a capital picture of the daily life and experiences of a typical rural parson who lived both under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell and the sovereignty of the second Charles. His diurnal notes form the first sixty pages of the first volume of the Sussex Archæological Society's Collections.

The Rev. Giles Moore, rector of Horstead Keynes, Sussex, left behind him a diary remarkable for its methodical manner of entry and its characteristics of frankness and conciseness. Herein are frequently made manifest the puritanical practices of the times, which, compared with more recent records, enable us to determine the great decrease of religious observance. From his interesting notes we learn that Mr. Moore had, on an average, 180 persons to three communions at his church. In the last three years preceding 1848 the average number of communicants at eight sacraments at the same place had been 148, which is a good deal less than the number which attended those communions in Mr. Moore's time. During the reign of Cromwell religious rites and ceremonies were, of course, most strictly observed by the people, not from any real conviction of their value certainly, or on account of the religious sincerity of the observers, as the succeeding events of the Restoration clearly showed. Signs were not wanting during the time of the Commonwealth, and even in Mr. Moore's own household, of the supremacy of the great passion in those good days, for under date of November 8, 1659, the diarist writes:—

> "Thomas Dumbrell came to mee as servant to dwell with mee, with whom I agreed to give after the rate of £5 a yeare. On December 22 I payed him up to that time £1 8s.; that same night I found him sleeping with my mayd Mary, and I packed them off. January 2—I marryed Thomas Dumbrell and Mary, his wyfe, gratis, and I gave him on his wedding eight stone of beefe, 16s. 8d.; a hind quarter of mutton, 3s. 4d.; and a lambe, 7s. 6d.; besides butter, wheate, and fewell."

Thomas Dumbrell's and "my mayd Mary's" moral delinquencies did not receive such severe castigation as they would unquestionably have done in later days by rev. gentlemen. The public mind is pretty well acquainted with cases in which clergymen have refused to marry couples who have not loved wisely, but too well. To such as these the tender toleration of the Rev. Giles Moore for the weakness of the flesh may be recommended. Our forgiving country cleric had more than one experience of the troublous adventures of his domestics, as witness the following item of his diary:—

> "13th October.—I marryed Henry Place and Mary Holden [another erring Mary!], my two servants, and spent at theyr wedding 20s. I gave the fiddlers 1s. I also gave them a large cake, all theyr fewell, and the use of my house and stables for two dayes, with a quart of white wine; being in all not less than 40s., or one yeare's wages. On the 6th of February following shee was delivered of a daughter, so that the—[here the rev. diarist uses a very strong expression]—went but fifteen weeks and five days after her marriage."

If the entire house and *stables* were given over to the wedding party for two days, we should not be surprised if the rector had cause to deplore in forcible language a number of other hastily-arranged marriages and the premature arrival of several little cherubs. Mr. Moore included in his diary references to other matters on which his near relations would doubtless have had him more reticent. What were the personal peccadilloes of the Sussex rector are almost wholly left to our imagination, as not unnaturally his note-book was more concerned with the sins of other people than his own faults, and studded more with the records of his own good deeds than the virtues of other people. But we will charitably suppose that this really represented the moral superiority of the shepherd to his flock. It was a little ungracious of Mr. Moore, however, to hand down to succeeding generations a reference to one of his wife's little indulgences as instanced in such an entry as this: "Tobacco for my wyfe, 3d." Perhaps this will shock the virtuous spouses of clergymen to-day who have not yet advanced so far as the scented cigarettes of the new woman.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, according to the point of view, wine was very cheap in the days of Mr. Moore. Claret and dry sherry were chiefly drunk, the former being 1s. per bottle, and the latter but a trifle more. The rector was evidently not a teetotaler. "1st April, 1662.—I had 5 bottles of claret, and as many of sack from London, for which I payed, and for the bringing them down at 2d. the bottle, in all 12s. For a pint of old sack, 6d.; two quarts of muscadine, 3s.; two ounces of tobacco, 1s. For a sugar loafe weighing 4 pounds, 1s." It must not be supposed that Mr. Moore was unduly intemperate; indeed, when, presumably from want of care or thought, he had imbibed a trifle more than was his wont, his pious sorrow is touching to read of. In an entry in February, 1668, he says:—

> "This evening, between nine and ten o'clock, when I had began prayers with my family, I was so overpowered with the effects of some perry which I had taken, not knowing how strong that liquor was, that I was obliged to break off abruptly. O God, lay not this sin to my charge!"

It is a nice word, "overpowered." Ruthless critics would perhaps say that the rev. gentleman was drunk or slightly inebriated. He was not so; only "overpowered." And parson Moore also exercised prudence in the notification of his frivolity, in that the entry was made in Latin! Another paragraph of this diary, in which amusement and instruction are so deftly combined, instances the beneficent qualities of its writer: "I gave Mr. Salisbury, a begging minister, 4d." The individual here indicated was presumably one of those unfortunate clergymen of the Church of England who, admitted to benefices during the Commonwealth, could not stretch their consciences like others to conform to the new doctrines introduced after the Restoration, and so went out one "black Monday" to the number of two thousand.

One entry which, if unexplained, would doubtless perplex modern readers is this: "26th December.—I gave the howling boys 6d." These were not the waits with which we are made familiar at Christmas time. On New Year's Eve, says an explanator, it was, and it still continues to be, the custom to wassail the orchards. At Horstead Keynes and elsewhere the ceremony retains the name of "Apple Howling." A troop of boys visit the different orchards, and, encircling the apple trees, they repeat the following words:—

> Stand fast root, bear well top,
> Pray the God send us a good howling crop;
> Every twig, apples big;
> Every bough, apples enou';
> Hats full, caps full,
> Full quarters, sacks full.

They then shout in chorus, one of the boys accompanying them upon the cow's horn. During this ceremony they rap the trees with their sticks. This custom is alluded to in Herrick's *Hesperides*, page 311:—

> Wassail the trees that they may beare
> You many a plum and many a peare;
> For more or less fruits they will bring,
> As you do give them wassailing.

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The practice is not confined to Sussex, but it prevails in Devon and in Herefordshire. Investigators more experienced than the writer may trace the custom back to its origin. The reference to it in the Rev. Giles Moore's diary, together with other curious entries, may perhaps be held to justify the extraction of a few of its choicest *morceaux*.

FRED WILSON.

THE REVISED APOCRYPHA.

IT is over twenty-five years since Convocation decided on a revised version of the Bible. The revision was to be within the narrowest limits, the first rule laid down being "To introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorised Version, consistently with faithfulness." Nevertheless, the alterations were so important that, although the Revised New Testament was published in 1881, and the Old Testament in 1885, little or no attempt has been made to substitute the new version for the old. The books called Apocrypha formed an integral portion of the Authorised Version of the Bible of 1611, and no edition of it was published without them till 1629. Accordingly, the revision of the Authorised Version of the Apocrypha was included in the scheme. The translators have been a long while about their task; but perhaps that doesn't matter, as comparatively few people care a jot about the Apocryphal books, although the sixth article of the Church of England says the Church doth read them for example of life and instruction of manners. The Council of Trent declared them (with the exception of the books of Esdras) as integral and inspired portion of God's Holy Scriptures; and, for my part, I am fully prepared to believe they are just as much the Word of God as any other part of the Bible, and I am sure they are to the full as interesting reading.

The books of Tobit, Judith, the end of Esther, and the additions to Daniel, all throw light on Bible folk-lore; while the two books of the Maccabees, if not trustworthy historical documents, at any rate exhibit the Jewish version of what was, on the whole, the noblest period of Jewish national life. But it is the books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon which most clearly show that Christianity was only a development of germs already in the Jewish soil. The wisdom of Jesus, the son of Sirach, is, indeed, of a more practical order than that of Jesus, the son of nobody knows who. The Wisdom of Solomon is of a more elevated cast than that of the mass of the New Testament. It will be, for instance, hard to beat the following passage from the description of Wisdom in the seventh chapter:—

> For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding, holy,
> Alone in kind, manifold,
> Subtil, freely moving,
> Clear in utterance, unpolluted,
> Distinct, unharmed,
> Loving what is good, keen, unhindered,
> Beneficent, loving toward man:
> Steadfast, sure, free from care,
> All-powerful, all-surveying,
> And penetrating through all spirits
> That are quick of understanding, pure, most subtil:
> For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
> Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness.

If this is not as much inspired as the barbarous cracked-brained nonsense which John the Divine poured forth on Patmos, I wonder wherein inspiration differs from insanity.

The books of Esdras, which were expressly exempted by the Council of Trent in its claim of divinity for the Apocrypha, are specially important for the light they throw both on the Old and New Testaments. The second book (chap. xiv. 21) expressly says that the law of God was burnt, and that Ezra re-wrote it. In verses 42–44 of the Revised Version we read: "The Most High gave understanding unto the five men, and they wrote by course the things that were told them, in characters which they knew not. And they sat forty days: now they wrote in the day-time, and at night they ate bread. As for me, I spake in the day, and by night I held not my tongue. So in forty days were written fourscore and fourteen books." Here "the characters which they knew not" are an evident allusion to the tradition, recorded by Jerome, that Ezra was the inventor of the "square" Hebrew characters which superseded the alphabet in use previously; and the "ninety-four books" are the twenty-four books of the Canon, together with the seventy esoteric books which were to be delivered only to such as were wise among the people. What became of the seventy esoteric books God, the Kabbalists, and Mahatma Koot Hoomi alone know.

This second book of Esdras is now for the first time presented to the English reader in its complete form. It was found that the Oriental versions contained a long passage of seventy verses missing in the Latin text, and in 1865 Professor Gildemeister discovered that a leaf had been deliberately cut out of the MS. which had been taken as the authority for Western MSS. Since then Professor Bensley discovered the passage in a MS. in the Bibliotheque Communale of Amiens, which had once belonged to the neighboring Benedictine Abbey of Corbie. By letting this manuscript drift to a Republican Library, the Benedictines let out one of their many literary secrets. J. M. W.

HOW LINCOLN PRAYED.

AT the commencement exercises at Summitville the class address was delivered by Benjamin F. Phemister, one of Van Buren's teachers, who illustrated the spirit of his subject in the following story of Lincoln:—

"On the first day of January, 1864, while a blinding snowstorm swept with untold violence through the Northern and New England States—while thousands of our brave defenders were suffering upon the gory fields of the South, a man, tall, gaunt, and homely, was seen standing in Pennsylvania-avenue, in the City of Washington. A woman, with her head bared to the hurricane of heaven, with her feet naked to the frozen ground, with her gown tattered and torn, saw him. She, supposing him to be a minister of the Gospel, ran to him, and, falling at his feet, addressed him thus: 'Oh, sir! if you are a minister of the Gospel, if you serve the God who fed Elijah by ravens and Israel with manna, pray to Him to provide me a shelter from the storm and food for my poor starving children! I am a widow. My husband sleeps in the bloody bosom of Gettysburg. I'm sad and forlorn. Oh, pray to the Master till He hears my cry, that he may shelter and feed us, or pray we may die.'

"The tall, ugly man, with his heart overflowing with sympathy, and his eyes flooded with tears, extended both his hands to the dirty kneeling woman and said: 'Woman, get up; you are mistaken. I am not a minister of the Gospel. Jehovah never appears to hear my prayer. For four long years I have been praying for the restoration of our Federal Union and the cessation of this cruel, bloody war. Not until a petition was sent to the States in rebellion in the form of two of the most magnificent armies that ever shouldered a musket, under the guiding hands of Gens. Grant and Sherman, was there ever the remotest resemblance of an answer. My prayers have finally been answered through the instrumentalities of these two armies, under the matchless and daring skill of these two generals. Now, if I had any idea that a prayer would shelter, feed, and clothe you, I would bow down; but I think that the best prayer I can make in your behalf is a prayer to that groceryman on yonder corner.'

"Suiting the generous act to the kind and sympathetic words, that ugly-beautiful man took from his pocket a small order book and wrote: 'Washington, January 1, 1864.—Mr. Groceryman, Sir,—You will please supply the bearer with $25 worth of provisions as she may direct, and charge the same to—Yours truly, ABRAHAM LINCOLN.'"

—*Freethought Ideal.*

Bridget O'Hoolihan, an elderly Irish cook, had taken a situation in a wealthy family living in a quiet suburb, but at the end of two weeks gave "notice." "Why do you leave us, Bridget?" asked the mistress; "we pay you the very highest wages." "Ye do, ma'am, an' yer a perfect leddy. Oi'm not laven troo ony fault av the family, but this is such a dead old place, wid no chance to do onything loively in it, that, begorry, oi have to mek up a pack o' lies iv'ry toime oi go to confession, or oi'd have nothing to confesh at all at all!"

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LET HEBREWS REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD.

Tune—"Let Erin remember the days of old."

LET Hebrews remember the days of old,
Ere their faithless God betrayed them;
When prophets all future events foretold,
And the heav'ns and earth obeyed them.
The glorious days when the earth was flat,
And the sun went wheeling round it,
With special reversible gear so pat—
But the days are gone. Confound it!

The days when the Red Sea was folded back,
At wish, without a parley,
And over its bed was revealed a track
Like a path through waving barley;
When Moses, 'twixt motionless, spellbound "falls,"
Walked across with his companions;
'Twixt vertical sections of sea, like walls
Of the Colorado cañons.

Let Israel remember the good old day
When the foemen fell "a cropper,"
Through Joshua forcing the moon to stay
With his "Ease 'er, back 'er, stop 'er!"
The day when the sun had to stop his flight,
Ere he reached the spot's horison,
And helped to continue the finest fight
That a brigand ere set eyes on.

The days when the walls of a lengnered town,
That had stood 'gainst rams and missiles,
Would, all in a moment, come tumbling down
At the sound of horns and whistles.
The days when a word could dispel disease
That had baffled all the "sawbones";
And one could an army destroy with ease,
With the help of God—and jawbones.

The days when a dream about ghosts was proof
That the dreamer's girl's *bambino*
Was got by a ghost for the world's behoof;
But they knew not then what *we* know.
The days when this ghostling gave splendid wine
To a set of guzzling drinkers;
Religious mania to a herd of swine;
And a threat of hell to thinkers.

The days when, for harness, Effect and Cause
Were by far too wild and mettled;
And long ere the notions called Nature's Laws
Had become sedate and settled.
Now Cause and Effect have agreed to go
In a steady manner, tandem;
And "Laws" have now settled in business, so
We begin to understand 'em.

But oh! for the days that have passed away,
When a loaf increased by eating;
Alas and alack! for the days that stay,
For the saints still live by cheating.
Let all of us think of the godly past,
With its crime-begetting errors;
The blight that its horrible virtues cast,
And its ignorance and terrors.

And let us unfeignedly seek for truth
In the fields of sense and reason;
A quest that makes manhood to bloom like youth,
And protects from mental treason.
Though facts may extinguish the hopes of youth,
And, at times, give rise to terror,
'Tis better to learn a vexatious truth
Than to nurse a pleasing error.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

SOUL THEORY.—"Savages," says the Abbé Raynal, "wherever they see motion which they cannot account for, there they suppose a soul. All men may be considered as savages in this respect until they are capable of instruction and of using their faculties in a more perfect manner than savages do."—*Dr. Reid, "Essays on the Active Powers," iv. 3.*

ACID DROPS.

THE Conservatives have had a Conference at Brighton. Of course it was resolved to defend to the death the glorious union between Church and State. One of the speakers—a Mr. Foster, of Carlisle—assured the meeting it was not a question whether there should be various creeds, but whether Atheism should "flourish rampant in this land." "Rampant" is perhaps a Tory synonym for "openly." We dare say it is Mr. Foster's wish to make the Church strong enough to slay Atheism with stronger than spiritual weapons. We know what to expect from these gentlemen when they have the opportunity.

The Bible Revisers have finished their work by giving the world a new translation of the "Apocrypha," which is referred to in a Nonconformist paper as "those strange books, once regarded as sacred by the Church of God." *Once* is distinctly good. Those "strange books" are still "regarded as sacred" by the Catholic Church, and it is not so long ago since they were frequently included within the covers of the Protestant Bible. As for their "strangeness," we fail to see in what they differ from some of the books in the Protestant canon of the Old Testament.

A Yankee book-agent has hit upon a brilliant idea. Finding the Bible hang fire down South, he had all the angels in the illustrations done black to look like niggers. He is now selling Bibles as fast as he can get them delivered. When that line gets slack, he might have Jesus also done in black, and work up a fresh trade in New Testaments.

Dr. Henson, of the First Baptist Church of Chicago, says: "If there be no wrath to come, then every pulpit ought to be demolished, for the Bible is nothing but a tissue of lies.....The Bible proclaims a hell, against which it is the business of the pulpit to warn men." Yes, and just because the Bible proclaims this monstrous fiction, it is entitled to the designation suggested by Dr. Henson.

Not a single one of the Christian papers to which a copy of Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* was sent has (so far as we are aware) even included the pamphlet in its list of "received." They dare not answer the pamphlet, and they cannot afford to let their readers know of its existence. Still, it is having an excellent sale, and we hope there will soon be a call for a second edition. Freethinkers should circulate it amongst their orthodox friends. It is a veritable eye-opener to those who have been deluded by the bold pretensions of modern Christianity.

Meanwhile the Churches, with the drinker's text-book in their hands, calling the same the Word of God, are pushing forward with their intemperate crusade against intemperance. The Nonconformists have practically decided, at a great representative assembly, to support the Church of England Temperance Bill. Sunday closing, of course, figures conspicuously in this projected legislation. That is a point on which all Churches are naturally agreed, as it touches their professional interests. Another part of the new program is "drastic legislation" for clubs. In other words, these silly reformers mean to throw all the clubs in the country on the side of the publican. Such is their statesmanship!

A sky-pilot called Bennetts has a Temperance article on the front page of last week's *Methodist Times*. It is full of cant and unction, and is often self-contradictory. Mr. Bennetts goes in for Prohibition as one of the means of inaugurating the reign of Christ; the Jewish gentleman, that is, who was so partial to liquor that he turned a tremendous quantity of water into wine to keep a marriage fuddle going. At the same time, Mr. Bennetts sees no "human probability" of the "eradication of the vice of drunkenness from amongst the human race." It will have to be done, if at all, by supernatural power. Very well then, why not go in for the supernatural remedy and let legislation alone?

For our part, we believe the vice of drunkenness can be eradicated by human means. Apart altogether from religion, drunkenness has been chased out of decent society. The heavy drinker was once a hero; he is now a nuisance. Sanitation, both physical and social, is doing its work, and giving us a healthier and cleaner population.

The Queen approves the exclusion of strong drink from Khama's country, and is "glad to see the chiefs have determined to keep so great a curse from the people." Curse! Ahem! Her Majesty is said to take a little of the "curse" herself. But these little utterances, of course, are only intended for the newspapers.

The *Sunday News*, of Charleston, S.C., shows that the

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ministers of the New England States in the seventeenth century kept, sold, and bequeathed slaves, and defended the practice from the Bible. They, however, made up for it by calling them freed men of Christ, and expressing the belief that they often had a better chance of heaven than their masters.

The Rev. E. R. Donehoo, pastor of the Eighth Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg, who has been identified with Chinese mission work for years, has stated in an interview that he believes the efforts to convert the Chinese are futile.

Bishop Durnford prided himself on being laconic in writing. To a chaplain who asked for leave of absence for a trip to the Holy Land he wrote: "Go to Jericho, by all means."

A paper which calls itself "the only aggressive Christian Evidence journal in existence" has the following amusing item:—

THE GREENLAND WHALE.

The following are the average dimensions of this sea monster:

Total length of the animal	95 feet.
Height of ditto	18 feet.
Length of the head	22 feet.
Diameter of the throat closed	3 feet.
Length of the vertebral column	69½ feet.
Weight of the animal	480,000 lbs.
Quantity of oil extracted from one	4,000 gals.

And in the face of this evidence infidels assert the whale could not have swallowed Jonah.

Such aggressive Christian Evidence as this is perfectly irresistible.

At the Conference of Quakers Dr. T. Hodgkin pointed out that George Fox and the early members of the Society of Friends protested against the Bible being called the Word of God, and elevated the inner light above all outward or book revelation. As the Quakers got respectable they became more orthodox, but now that the old book is much discredited the younger section are ready to fall back on the earlier and more rational position.

Mr. Justice Wills, at the Winchester Assizes, sentenced a soldier to twenty years' penal servitude for an exceptionally brutal and cowardly outrage on a girl of eighteen. This soldier, the judge said, acted like a beast, and "others had passed by like the Pharisee of old and refused to help this courageous girl."

We ask our readers to recollect that this is a Christian country, that every regiment has its chaplain, that every soldier must belong to some denomination, and that Freethinking soldiers are compelled to attend "divine service." The soldier who outraged Lizzie Walker had heard plenty of preaching; so had the other soldiers who refused to help her when she was fighting desperately for her honor.

Christian England has so much fighting to do that she keeps up a large army, and upon the majority of her soldiers she enforces the rule of celibacy. What this means in the way of vice is well understood by every man gifted with common sense. The crime of Michael Cagney is only an outrageous illustration of a horrible truth, which is winked at by the Christian Churches.

The Bishop of Wakefield has been preaching at Holmfirth on religious education. Of course it was special pleading in the interest of the black army of sky-pilots. The nation would go to ruin unless children were brought up in the fear of the Lord, and then, if they supported the Church schools, they might save the rates and make the Government shell out more in their support. A self-respecting man, other than a sky-pilot, would be ashamed to put forward such an interested plea for his own class under pretence of moral and religious instruction.

The *Financial Times* tells a good story of a country sky-pilot who wrote to Barney Barnato in terms something like the following: "Respected Sir,—As the vicar of ——, my aim has always been investment, and not speculation. When your Bank came out I regarded the shares as an investment, and I purchased 400 at £4, sinking my little all in them—and a good deal more. They have now fallen to £2, and I am undone. My parish I cannot face as a bankrupt, and what am I to do? I throw myself on your mercy." Barney, so the story goes, was deeply moved by this touching appeal, and wrote back that in the painful circumstances of the case, he would buy back from the clergyman the 400 shares at £4—the price he had paid for them. Immediately on receipt of this generous reply, the guileless country parson at once wired to his brokers: "Buy 400 Barnato Banks at 2, and send round to Barnato Brothers, who will give you 4 for them." Here endeth the first lesson.

A respectable young woman in the service of a Chatham tradesman's family was found, on Thursday in last week, walking barefooted through the streets with an open Bible in her hand. The police took charge of her as a monomaniac. The open Bible has been declared the secret of England's greatness. It seems to have been the secret of this poor girl's insanity. What a noise there would have been had she walked about with an open copy of Ingersoll's lectures!

The anti-infidel crusader, who has brought an action against H. A. Long, has himself just been ordered by Sheriff Spens, of Glasgow, to repay £95 to Mr. Thomas Edward Mills, of 20 West Cumberland-street, Glasgow, which money he obtained from him to receive him into "full and equal partnership of the Anti-Infidel Crusade."

Macaulay, when bored by a sermon, used to withdraw his attention and read the Prayer Book. Other literature now seems occasionally to be within reach. Witness this from a correspondent of the *Church Review*: "Whilst staying in a provincial town recently I attended the parish church, and on entering discovered that I had omitted to provide myself with service books. Upon informing the courteous attendant of the circumstance, he promptly supplied the deficiency; but imagine my amazement, on opening the supposed Prayer Book at the Psalms, to find that it was an old cookery book, and the first thing that met my gaze was 'How to Jug Hare!'"—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

J. R. Willardyts writes from New Orleans to the *Daily News* on the lynching of negroes. He says: "Here in New Orleans, in broad daylight, have we not seen hundreds of assassins hunting and killing a few poor negro screwmen only because they wanted to earn an honest living? And this is a 'civilised city,' a 'Christian city'! What has civilisation or Christendom said of all those crimes? Not a word! The disfranchisement of the negro will not be worse for him than his assassination or roasting him alive." This writer declares: "A thrill of horror would pass through humanity if the history of the bloody massacres and butcheries that have taken place in the Southern States could be related." And he asks that a Commissioner should be sent from England to investigate. Apparently he has no trust in the Christians of America.

The Rev. W. Bolton, Vicar of St. Mary's, Penzance, is sending a circular to his parishioners asking that they shall sign a form declaring that their children shall be brought up in the faith of the Church and prepared for Confirmation, and further promising that they shall attend punctually and regularly at school and obey those in authority. This is not quite enough, for the parent further declares: "I will take care that my child says daily private prayers, and learns what is appointed from the Catechism and Holy Scriptures." We trust that all Cornish parents are not so servile as to wish their children brought up in the state of subordination desired by their spiritual pastors and masters.

Mr. Gladstone, though retired from public life, still fills the thoughts of the coming generation. On Sunday last the rector of a rural parish in Kent was examining a class of boys of ages averaging from five to twelve. "Who is the patron saint of England?' the rev. gentleman asked, his thoughts fondly dwelling on St. George as a symbol of "Unionism." With one accord the class broke out in loud response, "Mr. Gladstone."—*Daily News.*

As some compensation for the libel case which is detaining him from Queensland, Mr. H. A. Long's Glasgow admirers are getting up a testimonial for this distinguished Orange Calvinist. According to the *Helensburg Times*, Harry is not going out on spec, but to conduct an agitation against secular education, and in favour of having the Scriptures re-instated in the schools by Parliamentary enactment. We hope our Australian friends will give a good account of him.

The Church School party's deputation to Lord Salisbury was an amusing business. Not the least amusing part of it was the Premier's reference to the Nonconformists. He said that he quite understood why they were satisfied with Board School religion, because it was *their* religion that was taught there. Precisely so. His lordship hit the nail on the head. We have been saying the same thing all along. The Nonconformist game is twofold: first, to keep the Bible in the schools, and, second, to prevent its being interpreted in any way favorable to the Church of England. It must not be supposed, however, that we have any preference for the Church party. We detest them both alike. Instead of siding with either of them, we cry, "A plague o' both your houses." Each is trying to teach its own religion with other people's money. In this respect there is not a pin to choose between them.

We dare say the Voluntary schools, as they are facetiously called, will get a large sop from the Tory government, and

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when it has to be divided the Nonconformists will greedily take their share. Next, we shall see a Catholic University set up in Ireland; and then the landlords—poor devils!—will get *their* consideration. Really the head of the Tory government ought to be our old friend Barabbas.

We say that the Voluntary schools are called so facetiously. What is contributed voluntarily to their maintenance is insignificant in comparison with what is contributed by the State. Here are a few figures from the *Daily News* of November 21, relating to the so-called voluntary schools of Chatham:—

SCHOOL.	TOTAL INCOME.	SUBSCRIPTIONS.
Chatham Parish School ...	£911 ...	£90
Luton Schools ...	1,389 ...	122
St. John's Schools ...	1,324 ...	47
St. Paul's Schools ...	874 ...	16
Hards Town ...	204 ...	22
	£4,702	£297

The *voluntary* part of nearly five thousand pounds is a paltry £297, or about 6 per cent—that is, £6 in every hundred is contributed by the friends of these schools, and £94 from school fees and grants from the imperial exchequer. And on the strength of that miserable £6 the "voluntary" people not only clamor for still more money—in consequence of what the Archbishop of Canterbury calls the "intolerable strain" upon them—but strenuously insist on their right to dispense with any sort of public control. Of all the impudence in the world, there is none like the impudence of religion.

How many of the so-called "Voluntary schools" are really entitled to that designation? The annual report of St. John's National School, Birkenhead, for instance, shows that, while £1,850 5s. 5d. was received from the public purse, £7 7s. only was contributed in voluntary subscriptions. Lord Chatham said "taxation without representation is tyranny," yet the Church taxes the public pretty heavily to support schools over which the public have no control.

The last number of Mr. Stead's Spiritualistic quarterly, *Borderland*, said: "Eusapia Paladino has been the unexpected instrument of driving conviction as to the reality of psychical manifestations by the invisibles into the minds of many scientists, whose testimony can be neither pooh-poohed nor explained away." What will Mr. Stead say now that the tricks of Eusapia have been exposed, and the "scientists," like Professor Oliver Lodge, shown to be far more incompetent to deal with such "phenomena" than the conjurers like Mr. Maskelyne?

Richard Stanton, the married choirmaster at the "Christian Church," Ashington, has been sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with hard labor for offences under the Criminal Law Amendment Act with two Sunday-school girls whom he assaulted in the pulpit. Mr. Justice Grantham remarked that but for the conduct of the girls the punishment would have been much heavier.

Dr. Matthew Campbell, who committed suicide last week at Rugby, had been suffering from religious mania.

Alice Esther Carr seeks a dissolution of her marriage from the Rev. George Henry Carr, a Baptist minister, whom she accuses of adultery, and of throwing her baby across the bedroom.

Father Black declares that, if the Archbishop of Canterbury will not call the Bishop of London to account for permitting the re-marriage of divorced persons, he will apply to the Privy Council to direct the Archbishop to hear the case, as they directed him to hear that against the Bishop of Lincoln.

The Sunday-school Union had a bazaar in the Birmingham Town Hall, and Mr. J. S. Dugdale, Q.C., the City Recorder, made an appropriate opening speech. He ventured the assertion that the number of persons who "came before courts of justice" might have been "diminished if they had come under the influence of Sunday-school teachers." Mr. Dugdale appears to be ignorant of the fact that more than ninety per cent. of prisoners in English gaols have been Sunday-school scholars.

Mr. Dugdale went on to justify prosecutions such as those which are raging at Walsall. He did not want to see a Continental Sunday in England; it was not a day for amusement, but for rest and meditation. Well, for our part, we have no objection to Mr. Dugdale's spending Sunday in meditation, for he seems to need it. What we object to is the ridiculous idea that other people should meditate just when he does. Surely they might be allowed to choose their own time, and no doubt meditation on Monday is as good as meditation on Sunday.

George Bishop was once a Secularist lecturer. He was rather lazy, and so he became "converted" to a less exacting faith. Finally he entered the Church of England as a curate, and really found his true level.

Lecturing recently at Hucknall, the Rev. George Bishop delivered himself as follows: "I believe, according to the New Testament, it is a decided sin for any person to worship in a place not connected with the Church of England." Gods, angels, devils, and little fishes! What cheek! It is just a paraphrase of the old exclamation, "Come to my gospel-shop or be damned." Some people would *prefer* to be damned.

The Government of the Transvaal ordered November 2 to be observed as a day of humiliation and prayer on account of the prolonged drought. One of the Dutch ministers declined to pray for rain because, in his belief, God was sending punishment on the country on account of the evils which were daily committed, especially on Sundays. While God is withholding his rain, firework-makers are trying to bring it down by shooting rockets at the clouds. One more Dutchman denounced the godless operation. "Hij steek zijz vinger in die oog van die Heere!"—"He is poking his finger in the eye of God!" shrieked the shocked Boer.

An anti-infidel propagandist, whose whole fortune consists in his family name, is visiting Stockton-on-Tees, and the walls of the town are placarded with a warning to the inhabitants to "Beware of Infidelity." A number of hypocritical questions are asked as to the number of "infidel" hospitals, almshouses, and reformatories; the whole winding up with a barefaced, horrible lie about "the foul system of sensuality and free love" advocated by the National Secular Society. Altogether the bill is worthy of the fellow who promised to prove that libel on the Hall of Science "up to the hilt," and so ignominiously failed to do so that the court made him and his "dear friends" pay something like three hundred pounds.

Thomas Sackville Sedgwick has been handed over by the Scotch authorities to the English police. He is charged with embezzling £30 as treasurer of the Wells Wesleyan Sunday School.

A good many clergymen, it is said, have been watching the female bicyclists at the Aquarium. Well, why not? Clergymen are as much interested in anatomy as laymen.

Priest and ex-Nun Arrested.

For a robbery committed some little time ago (says the *Telegraph's* Paris correspondent) a priest, and a young woman who had formerly been a nun, have been arrested and incarcerated pending a judicial examination. The ex-religieuse, it appears, was admitted into the service of an elderly widow, and, by her engaging manners, speedily won her way into the old lady's good graces. The widow did not hesitate to confide to her new servant the keys of her various cupboards and desks. The unworthy domestic made good use of her opportunities, for, on moving into another house about four weeks ago, her employer discovered that she had been robbed of railway bonds to the value of £800. The police were apprised of the fact, and the maidservant, on her avowal that she had taken the bonds and thrown them into a cesspool, was arrested. One day, however, the widow was surprised to receive a letter from a curé to the effect that, for a commission of £300, he would restore the missing securities. This communication was forwarded to the police, who discovered that the priest had carried on relations with the female prisoner whilst the latter was in her convent. On being again examined, the ex-nun confessed that she had handed the papers to the curé, who was at once arrested, the bonds being found in his possession. In his defence, the ecclesiastic said he intended using them for charitable purposes.

We have no right to believe a thing true because everybody says so, unless there are good grounds for believing that some one person, at least, has the means of knowing what is true, and is speaking the truth so far as he knows it. However many nations and generations of men are brought into the witness-box, they cannot testify to anything which they do not know. Every man who has accepted the statement from somebody else, without himself testing and verifying it, is out of court; his word is worth nothing at all. And when we get back at last to the true birth and beginning of the statement, two serious questions must be disposed of in regard to him who first made it: was he mistaken in thinking that he *knew* about this matter, or was he lying?—*William Kingdon Clifford.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 1, Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road, Bradford: 11, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 3, "Life, Death, and After"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

December 8, Foresters' Hall; 15, Newcastle; 22, Manchester; 29, Camberwell.

January 5, Camberwell; 12, 19, and 26, St. James's Hall.

February 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 1, Wood Green: 7, Blyth; 8, South Shields; 15 and 22, Foresters' Hall.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

H. LEES SUMNER.—Thanks for cutting.

J. WOOD.—See paragraph.

J. G. DOBSON.—Mr. Foote is writing you with respect to hall and date. W. R. Bradlaugh's visit will do you no harm; quite the contrary. We like to see Christian Evidence people active; it sets the public inquiring after Freethought.

J. F. HARPSON.—Pleased to hear you made three new members after Mr. Watts's lecture at Bolton.

R. MORGAN.—Thanks. See paragraph. The little pamphlet you refer to will be amplified, as you suggest, when Mr. Foote finds time to do the writing.

G. F. DUPLAY.—Your suggestion that Mr. Foote's article does not express his real opinions renders discussion impossible.

WE have received an envelope containing a postal order for 3s., but no letter. Will the sender kindly tell us how the remittance is to be applied?

H. C.—All right. Thanks for cuttings.

R. S. PENGELLY.—We are obliged. Will use it next week.

J. DUNSMORE.—We are on the watch. All in good time. It is bad policy to give the ruffian gratuitous advertisements.

E. HOWARD.—We note your satisfaction.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME (Shilling Month).—Per C. Watts: F.S., £1; W. Gregory, 1s.; Jas. Leipper, 10s.; L. Hewitt, 2s. 6d.

R. W. JONES.—We are pleased. See paragraph. All the week-night lectures under Mr. Foote's scheme should be free. You must drop the idea of charging for admission.

MANCHESTER.—Mr. Foote has no sort of connection with the Bradlaugh Club at Balls Pond, neither has it any official connection with the National Secular Society. Mr. Foote simply gave the opening Sunday evening lecture by special invitation of the two local Branches that are co-operating in the Freethought propaganda carried on there. Mr. Forder is acting as a member of the Finsbury Park Branch in this matter, not as Honorary Secretary of the N.S.S. Of course there is plenty of room for all sorts of efforts in so huge a place as London.

J. W. GOTT.—See paragraph. Kindly send us any further notes of Mr. Cohen's tour.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH.—How is it we do not receive your lecture notices weekly?

L. J. B.—Any good bookseller would supply you with Canon Driver's *Introduction*. It is published at 12s. You might order through Mr. Forder.

G. CLANEY.—Glad to hear that Mr. Cohen's visit to Huddersfield has put new life into the Branch. We wish you all success.

J. P. GILMOUR.—Thanks for cutting, also for the new leaflet of the Glasgow Branch, which is excellent. We hope it is being widely distributed. Syllabus filed.

E. SNEDLEY.—(1) Church theology is taught in Church schools. That is the reason of their existence. (2) Nonconformists have persecuted when they have had the power. They did so in Scotland, in England under the Commonwealth, and most vilely in New England. (3) We do not know of any satisfactory book on English Church History, such as you require.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: W. C. (Dorking) £1; D. Young 2s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cape Times—Sunday Chronicle—Irish Daily Independent—Dundee Advertiser—Glasgow News—Standard and Digger's News—Johannesburg Times—Johannesburg Star—Irish Times—Echo—New York Herald—South Shields Free Press—Midland Counties Express—Cornishman—Helensburgh and Gareloch Times—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Torch of Anarchy—Freidenker—Progressive Thinker—New York Public Opinion—Two Worlds—Liberty—New York World—Freedom—Boston Investigator—Freethought Ideal.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

DELICATE and elderly people were, most of them, kept indoors on Sunday evening, when a bitter wind swept through the streets of London. There was an excellent audience, however, at Foresters' Hall, where Mr. Foote lectured on "Huxley and Agnosticism." The chair was taken by James Rowney, who, on the previous Sunday, occupied the platform at a very short notice, and acquitted himself most creditably.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day in the Oddfellows' Hall, Bradford, better places having been denied him. We hope the weather will permit of Freethinkers attending from the surrounding district, as well as from Bradford itself.

Mr. Parris occupies the Foresters' Hall platform this evening (Dec. 1), his subject being "More Bible Symbols, and their Meaning." We hope there will be a good attendance.

The Wood Green Branch has been holding very successful Sunday evening meetings at the Masonic Hall, which is connected with a principal hotel in the High-street. These meetings have incensed the bigots, who have resorted to surreptitious practices. The landlord has received an intimation from the Middlesex County Council that he is violating the conditions of his licence. We do not believe that he is, but he is justified in not incurring the wrath of official tyrants. Of course the Branch has to go elsewhere. It has decided to open a Club and Institute at 4, Lawn-villas, Stewart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church. Mr. Charles Watts will lecture there this evening (Dec. 1), and there ought to be a good gathering. The tickets (1s. and 6d.) can be obtained of Mr. J. M. Wood, 71, Gladstone-avenue.

Mr. Charles Watts had two very successful meetings, under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, at Bolton and Blackburn. The hall was filled on both occasions with a most attentive audience, many of whom would not otherwise have heard our principles expounded.

Mr. Cohen has been lecturing under Mr. Foote's scheme in the Bradford district. He has had good audiences, and has succeeded in starting two new Branches of the National Secular Society. On Sunday last Mr. Cohen lectured for the Labor Church at Bradford on "The French Revolution." He had large meetings and an enthusiastic reception.

The *Secular Almanack*, issued by the National Secular Society, and now published at threepence, is having an improved sale. We have already expressed a hope—and we repeat it—that every copy of the *Almanack* may be sold by Christmas. We also venture to repeat the information that any profit derived from the publication will accrue to the Society.

Mr. H J Stace, for six years President of the N.S.S., Westminster Branch, was on Sunday evening presented by the members with an illuminated address. Mr. W. Wheeler, who is a member of the local Vestry, made the presentation, and short speeches were added by Messrs. Barrell, Martin, and Littleton. Mr. Stace said he was proud of the honor conferred upon him, though, after all, he had only tried to do his duty. The testimonial, which was much admired, was most artistically executed by a friend, Mr. R. J. Thompson.

Mr. F. Wilson, in his article on "A Parson's Diary," notices the custom of wassailing orchards. This rite, which is not yet quite extinct, is adverted to by Mr. Wheeler when dealing with Christmas customs in his *Footsteps of the Past*. He considers it a most interesting survival of nature-worship, the libations being originally poured to the earth and tree-spirits.

Daylight, of Norwich, says of *The Shadow of the Sword*: "Mr. Foote's plea for peace is most eloquent; his appeal ought really to open the eyes of some of the people who talk of war as if it were simply a pastime."

Mr. John Morley does not mean to sequester himself in order to pursue his literary enterprises. He has accepted an invitation to stand for the Montrose Burghs, and as the seat is considered "safe," he will probably be soon back in the House of Commons. When he is there we shall

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expect him, if the opportunity arises, not only to vote, but to speak, on behalf of the claim of Freethinkers to the common rights of citizenship. Not being a member of the Government, Mr. Morley will be unmuzzled; and what is the use of having principles if you never do anything for them?

The irrepressible Rev. W. W. Howard returns to the charge in the *Leek Times*, and declares that he is still willing to debate with Mr. Foote. "It remains, however, to be seen," says our contemporary, "whether Mr. Foote will consent to forget Mr. Howard's remarks that he does not understand the meaning of that which he writes, is asinine in wit, and hog-like in grunt." Mr. Foote begs to say that he has no further civilities to exchange with Mr. Howard, and he declines to exchange incivilities. He is positively tired of reading Mr. Howard's diffuse and bombastic epistles. All he has to say now is this—if Mr. Howard wants a public discussion he can have it, but he must accept his opponent's proposition as it stands. Let him plainly and definitely say "Yes," on this condition, and the business details can be easily arranged by a joint-committee. This is Mr. Foote's last word on the matter—however many letters Mr. Howard may indite in his apparently too ample leisure.

November 12 was the eightieth birthday of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and it was celebrated in New York by a demonstration and banquet of the National Council of Women. Mrs. Stanton has given her voice and pen for Freethought as well as for the emancipation of her sex, and is deserving of all honor.

We are informed that the exhibits for the Paine exhibition at South Place Institute (Dec. 2 and 3) exceed in number and variety all expectation. Mr. Conway is busy preparing a catalogue. Among the exhibitors will be Mr. E. Truelove, who sends the table on which Paine wrote *The Rights of Man*, and other relics; and Mr. Wheeler, who sends a number of books.

There is an interesting story about Froude in Mr. G. W. Smalley's *Studies of Men*, and it is very much to that great writer's credit: "When he began to feel that he was drifting away from the Church, he told his father. His father was the Venerable Archdeacon Froude, not only a Churchman, but a dignitary of the Church, and something of a devotee. The father naturally sought to dissuade the son. Presently he added the weight of paternal authority to his entreaties. Finding this also ineffectual, he told young Froude plainly that, if he renounced the Church, he must renounce his expectations of fortune. The father was rich; wealth lay within the son's grasp; poverty was the price of resistance. Froude told the story very simply. He never said whether he hesitated. He only said: 'I gave up the fortune. I thought I could earn my own living, and I have earned it.' Yet when he threw off the frock he resigned his fellowship, and resigned the headmastership of a school which had just been offered and accepted, and began life over again as a man of letters. He had no income, and no certainty of pay for his writings.'"

The memorial to Huxley will take the shape of a statue to be placed in the Natural History Branch of the British Museum, and medals to be awarded by the Royal College of Science at South Kensington.

The New York *Morning Journal* gives a portrait of Stephen Girard and an account of this philanthropic merchant of last century, who was a stout Freethinker. His principal ship was named "Voltaire." He had a silent funeral, attended by the Freemasons of Philadelphia. By his will he left a noble college for the education of orphans. In it he prohibited the entrance of any ecclesiastic, missionary, or minister, as he wished the orphans educated in secular instruction only. Yet the black parasites have contrived to over-ride the Freethinker's will, and the children's minds are warped with the pernicious dogmas of the Churches. American Freethinkers should never cease their endeavors to obtain a reversal of this iniquity.

SOMETHING LIKE A FORGERY.

THE story of the woman taken in adultery (John viii. 1–11) is a pretty good instance of what could be done in the way of after-insertion into the Gospels. A yet more striking instance is that of the last twelve verses of Mark. Here Eusebius tells us expressly that accurate copies ended at the eighth verse. And here, in point of fact, do end the two oldest manuscripts, the Vatican and the Sinaitic, though these manuscripts cannot be pretended to be earlier than the fourth century, and are possibly later. Here, then, was Mark, generally thought to be the oldest gospel, pitchforking Jesus into the world like Melchisedek without any account of his birth, father, or mother, and leaving him crucified and buried without any resurrection. Evidently that would never do. Accordingly an ending was supplied with the promise that believers should take up serpents and drink poison with impunity, but he that believeth not shall be damned. When, where, and who perpetrated this forgery is a matter of speculation. The Rev. Heber Evans argues it was Paul; others assign it to Ariston. Whoever the forger was, he did not manage the business well. The preceding writer had just mentioned Mary Magdalene three times as a party presumably well known; but he, very unnaturally, in the ninth—his first—verse explained that the hysterical lady who was the first to recognise her beloved when he got up out of his grave, and threw away the linen in which he had been wrapped, was the same party "out of whom he had cast seven devils."

Dean Alford cancelled the forgery in his Testament. It is rejected by Tischendorf and T. S. Green. The Revised Version detaches the verses, and has the marginal note: "The two oldest Greek manuscripts and some other authorities omit from verse nine to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the gospel." This different ending is notable because it has been argued, with some plausibility, that the ending of the gospel at verse eight is too abrupt for the close of any narrative, unless the Holy Ghost at this point suddenly took St. Mark up to heaven, and a cloud received him out of sight. Now, the Codex Regius at Paris, which is assigned to the seventh century and the margin of the later Syriac, has this verse: "And all these things they reported to Peter's companions. And afterwards Jesus himself, from the east to the west, sent forth by them the holy and incorruptible preaching of eternal salvation"; which, of course, makes a satisfactory wind up to the blessed gospel, but would never have been written in the seventh or any other century if the other verses had been known to be the genuine words of St. Mark, inspired by the Holy Ghost.

LUCIANUS.

A Heathen Death-Bed.

The *Philadelphia Times* reports the death from consumption in that city of a Chinaman, Hong-Toi, whose friends came to his death-bed and read to him from the works of Confucius and Mencius:—

"He confronted death with all the calm courage of the true fatalist, evidently in full possession of all his mental faculties, and firm in his Oriental faith. There was not the faintest evidence of any fear in his manner or his words, nor did there seem to be any longing for life or desire to supplicate for it. To an American whom he knew well, and whom he had learned to regard as a good friend, he said, as he grasped his hand the day before he died: 'Mayhap die one week, maybe one month; die alle same. No solly myself. All light. Solly my mothee, my mothee.'

"To one of his Chinese friends he said, only a few hours before he breathed his last, and when he was almost unable to articulate: 'I think I see the dragons.' It was the last he said. Soon after he sank into what seemed a peaceful sleep, and save for his labored breathing he gave no further evidence of suffering. Slowly and more slowly he breathed, until with a long, gasping sigh he gave up the struggle and rested.

"There was no lamentation, nor any evidence of grief, though it was plain enough that to many of his friends his going was a real sorrow. Five or six of these friends were in the room when he passed away, and as soon as they saw that he was dead they began the preparations for his final disposal."

The Rabbis were proof against serpent bites; and Jesus was by no means original (nor were the Rabbis) in regard to the superstition of taking up serpents with impunity. The Talmud relates that a certain district was infested by an arud. An arud was a cross between a serpent and a lizard, and none the better for that. Well, Rabbi Chanena ben Dosa put his heel upon the hole of the reptile, and was bitten by it; but, like Goldsmith's mad dog, the reptile died, while the Rabbi was none the worse. It must be admitted that, in this instance, it was the Rabbi that was the poisonous animal. A proverb sprang out of this incident, "Woe to the man who encounters an arud; but woe to the arud which encounters Rabbi ben Dosa." Yet the Christians, who have no such power to kill reptiles, want to convert the Jews!—*J. Symes, in "Liberator."*

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IS THERE A GOD?

To any man of strong and healthy mind, there is nothing plainer than that there cannot be any such being as the God the Christians and Jews believe in; but whether any kind of an intelligence brought into existence this universe, and still controls it, is a question about which I am unable to form any definite opinion. I have never read a sound argument in favor of such an existence or against it.

It must be true either that the universe has existed always, or that there was a time when it began to exist. It is absolutely impossible for our minds to conceive of a time without a beginning or end, or of space without a beginning or end. No man, therefore, can intelligently believe that the universe has existed always, or that God has existed always. He cannot believe either of these propositions, because they are propositions that cannot be grasped by the human mind. The man who says that he believes the universe has existed always, or that God has existed always, is bound to realise that he does not say this having clearly before his mind the meaning of his words, as he does have when he says he believes the earth is round, or that Chicago has more than a million inhabitants.

And yet, if we do not believe that the universe or that God existed eternally, it seems that we are forced to believe that one or both of them had a beginning, as there is no other alternative; and yet it is simply impossible for us to conceive how God or the universe could have had a beginning.

We cannot imagine that once there did not exist any such being, or intelligence, as that which we commonly call God, and yet that in one minute after there existed a being something like that called God.

We cannot imagine either how this existence came instantly into the fully-developed God, nor can we understand how a being or intelligence might have started at a small beginning and grown into a fully-developed God.

All orthodox Jews and Christians claim to believe that God has existed always, yet that the matter or material of which the universe is made has not existed always, but that God created this matter absolutely out of nothing.

I have never heard from any intelligent Jew or Christian whether he believes God made in an instant all the matter of which the universe is formed, or took more or less time to make it; though they must know that, if God is omnipotent, he could have made it all instantly just as easily as he could have done it in a long time; and they must know that, if an omnipotent God took six days, or six seconds, to create the world, it must have been simply because he preferred to occupy some time in making it, when he could just as easily have done it instantly.

But if we admit that there was a time when matter did not exist, then we are forced to admit that before the existence of matter there were endless cycles of ages when God was doing nothing; for we can no more imagine a God doing something, with no matter of any kind in existence, than we can imagine a man doing something without something with which to do it.

Before God created matter there was nothing but space. We cannot conceive that there was ever a time when there was no space, so that space must have existed eternally.

All religions are compelled to make their gods more or less like men, and the Bible speaks of the hands and feet and arms and ears and eyes of God, and of his seeing and hearing and loving and pitying and hating and being angry, more or less as men do. But, in order to have hands and feet and arms and eyes and ears, and to see and hear, or to have anything like these, or to do anything like these, there must be some matter or material thing in existence.

If, then, God existed before matter existed, it must have been that at that time God had nothing anything like hands or feet or arms or eyes or ears, and that he could do nothing at all like seeing or hearing, because there was nothing for him to see and nothing for him to hear. And, further, if there was no matter in existence, it was impossible that God could have had any form, or size, or weight, or dimension; and, as there was nothing but space, there could not have been any particular place, or any kind of place, and it therefore would have been impossible that God could have been at any place, or could have been anywhere.

It would be simply absurd to say that, before the existence of matter, God was everywhere, as is now commonly said by religionists; for, if there was nothing but space, there could have been no place; and if there was no place, there was no where! It was impossible for God to be everywhere when there was nowhere; and it was folly to say he was at every place when there was no such thing as place, because place cannot exist without matter, and the very idea of place is inseparably linked with matter.

I am, then, perfectly free to confess that I cannot understand how the universe could have existed eternally, or how it could have had a beginning; and yet it seems that one or the other of these must be true.

—*Blue Grass Blade.* C. C. MOORE.

THE APOSTLE JUNIA (?).

How many disciples Jesus had, how many apostles or messengers he sent, cannot be ascertained. The general opinion is that they were twelve in number; but there must have been more.

1. Paul or Saul was an apostle, it is said; and he was not one of the twelve.

2. Barnabas was another apostle (Acts xiv. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5, 6).

3. Epaphroditus was also an apostle. See Philippians ii. 25, where he is called your messenger. In Greek it is your apostle.

4. Certain parties (in 2 Cor. xi. 13) are called false apostles; but the writer himself may have been of that character, as Paul must be admitted to have been.

5. Lying apostles are mentioned in Rev. ii. 2.

None of the above were members of the twelve, unless the false ones are of that group, which seems quite likely.

6. In Romans xvi. 7 we have a peculiar passage: "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note amongst the apostles, who were in Christ before me."

Who was Junia? Man or woman, Junia was related to the writer; was amongst the apostles—that is, was one of the apostles. Was Junia man or woman?

Irenæus says: "For after the twelve apostles, it is found our Lord sent seventy others." Tertullian states: "And he chose other seventy apostles besides the twelve." Clement of Alexandria speaks of "The apostle Barnabas, who was one of the seventy." Origen speaks of the seventy apostles.

Cyprian took the seventy disciples to be Apostles, and calls Church rulers the successors of the seventy. Ambrose and Jerome spoke of other apostles besides the twelve; and Augustine regards the five hundred mentioned in 1 Cor. xv as apostles also.

Chrysostom took the seventy to be apostles; and he regarded Junia as one. He exclaims: "Oh! how great is the devotion of this woman that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!" Calmet, in his *Dictionary*, under Junia, says: "St. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and several others, take Andronicus for a man, and Junia for a woman, perhaps his wife." The Greeks and Latins keep their festival day May 17, as husband and wife.

Theodoret says apostles were numbered by myriads.

If Junia was an apostle, who can grumble? Surely, it is as likely that a woman should be an apostle as that one should be the mother of God! Those who worship one woman as the mother of God need not begrudge Junia the title and honor of apostle. But Christians are so prejudiced. There is little else but prejudice about them.

If Junia was the first pope now, what of that? Rome was never any worse for that, nor is the Romish Church. A woman is better than a neuter any day.

JOSEPH SYMES.

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

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THE JAPANESE OPINION OF RELIGION.

THE following may be most fitly prefaced by Burns's lines:—

O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us.

It was at a lecture given on Tuesday week, before members of the Aldershot Military Society, of which His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught is the esteemed President, that the following remarkable and important statement—one fraught with much import to all Freethought readers—was made, and one that we should be lacking in discernment if we did not find a prominent position for in the *Freethinker* itself. It is a fair criterion of what many great nations think of the religion of so-called Christian countries (*sic*). H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught was unable to be present, but his place as chairman was ably filled by Sir William Butler, who, in a neat speech, introduced Surgeon-Colonel W. Taylor, M.D., the principal medical officer of the South Eastern District, to the assembly. The title of the lecture was that of "The Medico-Military Arrangements of the Japanese Army in the Field." With the general subject-matter we have little or nothing to do; suffice it to say, however, that the lecturer clearly proved—and it was admitted on all hands—that the arrangements of the Army Medical Organisation in the field were far and away more complete and valuable than those of England, or even Germany herself, although, forsooth, Western civilisation had up till the outbreak of the war regarded the movements of that nation's army as "merely playing at soldiers." In Japan, said the gallant Colonel, who was attached as a British officer on the Japanese staff during the late war, places abound for the teaching of almost every ology; yet it was only in the year 1869 that Japan made up its mind to bring itself into Western civilisation! It was related to him by high authority that, at this time, a commission was sent forth from Japan on a visit to the chief cities of the world for the purpose of determining four things, which should decide the future of Japan. The first great point to be decided was to determine which of all the armies of the world was the best and most suitable for Japan to base the formation of its own army upon; secondly, to determine which was the best navy of the world; thirdly, to decide which was the best system of education in the world; and, fourthly, which was the best religion in the world. The commission executed their mission, and then returned to their beloved Emperor and reported that they found that the French had the best army system, the British navy was the best navy, and the American system of education commended itself most to their minds; but, said Colonel Taylor, with regard to the deciding of the fourth question, the commission reported that, although they had visited the chief cities throughout the world, they had not in all their travels been able to find any religion that was worth following! Much hilarity was caused by this statement by the lecturer, and the risible faculties were still further tickled when Colonel Thompson added that all the so-called religious feasts were a complete farce, and the result of starting an American mission in Japan had been that the intended theological college had now become the greatest centre for Freethought! Yet, added the lecturer in conclusion, and after extolling the virtues of the Japanese mothers, "I have no hesitation in saying that Japan must necessarily become a nation of soldiers, composed of brave, loyal, and ideal men—men who, like the women of the country, esteem it an honor and a privilege to lay down their very lives in the service of their emperor, and for their love of liberty."

Such is the opinion of a great and successful nation of the religion of Western civilisation. Truly a clear manifestation that neither the Japanese commission, its emperor, nor its nation regard religion (save the mark!) as being calculated to bring about that balderdash of universal brotherhood, as enunciated by the people's poet—

The time will come when man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be.

Common sense is evidently the line that the Japs prefer to rely upon.

In Boston, in 1660, Mary Dyar was hung on the old elm on Boston Common by the Puritans on the following charges: She said magistrates had no right over the conscience of men; that God made revelations now as much as ever, was just as near to George Fox as to Moses and Paul, and just as near to her as to Jesus Christ; that priests had no right to bind and loose; that we should call no man "Master" on earth; that sprinkling water on a baby's face did it no good, and gave no pleasure to God. Besides, she said that woman had just as much right as man. And when we bade her hold her peace, impudently declared that she had as good a right to publish her opinions as we had to publish ours. So we hanged her by the neck in the name of God and the Puritan Church of New England. It is an act of religion. Glory to God and the vine he has planted in the wilderness.—*Rev. John Norton.*

WHAT THEN?

As I gaze at the fathomless sky,
And travel with thought through the past,
As I think of *what* is when I die
I oft wonder if "I" will still last—
The "I" that is thinking this out,
The "I" that men say is a "soul,
The "I" that is ever in doubt
Of what the Unknown can unroll.
If 'tis true that we all are a part
Of a thinkingless, fathomless *all*;
If 'tis true that the broken in heart
When dead have no future recall,
What then! Ah, what then?

Suppose it is true that the sod
Will contain all that forms now the "I";
Suppose it is true there's no God
As that told by the priests (they can lie);
Suppose that the future as told
By the priest for his bread is a snare,
A tale but for gathering gold,
Or to coax men wrong burdens to bear;
Suppose that the future is *nil*
For the toiler now crushed by our laws;
Suppose that the future is *nil*
For those who are crushed without cause.
If so, ah, what then?

How shall be paid the poor wretch
Now crushed by our cruel social laws?
How shall be paid the brave men
Now fighting for truth and her cause?
How shall be paid the poor slave—
The laborer sweating his brow
To feed the fat belly of cant?
The answer is—Never, or Now.
For if God's unconscious, what then?
If the future for man be but death,
If God be unmindful of men,
And the "soul" be a beating of breath,
What then! Ah! what then?

Wealth says 'tis the tale of a fool
To say there's no future or God;
That men could not hope to o'er rule
If the "soul" was dispersed in the sod.
Cant says 'tis a tale of a fool
To say there's no heaven or hell.
She teaches the poor in her school
That all after death will be well.
But still there's the dark, dreary doubt,
Which through ages and ages has ran
That future may mean *ever* sleep,
And that God is unmindful of man.
If so, ah, what then?

Are we to wait 'til the "trumpet sound"
To solve the problem I here propound?
Too long has Poverty bowed to Wealth;
'Tis time she tried to help herself.
Ah, see ye not, ye blinded poor,
The priestcraft yoke you do endure!
In spite of every parson's bray,
They cannot *prove* a word they say.

—*Reynolds's Newspaper.* JOSEPH TROPWEN.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A REAL TRINITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have for the last sixty-three years, as a confirmed Freethinker, considered the Christian idea of a Trinity or three-part God to be a most absurd and ridiculously crazy idea. Notwithstanding this, sir, you are well aware of the fact that for centuries past the clergy of the twin Churches of Rome and England have vastly enriched themselves by forcing these irrational ideas down the throats of their millions of dupes, amongst whom I feel proud to say that the daily increasing number of Freethinkers are not to be included. But I must here, with your permission, admit of the fact that the above-named clergy are in joint possession of a real, substantial, and tangible *Trinity* which I must term the Three C's—viz., the Cash, Cant, and Candlegrease Trinity.

T. DUNBAR HARRIS.

"I don't see much difference between your sacred concert programs and your secular concert programs." "The sacred concerts are given on Sunday."

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BOOK CHAT.

It is a healthy sign of the spread of music and musical criticism in this country to see so handsome a volume as that of *Gluck and the Opera*, a study in musical history, by Ernest Newman (London: Bertram Dobell, 77, Charing Cross-road; 1895). Germany has an abundance of philosophical musical critics, and in France Saint-Saens himself—"the French Bach"—does not disdain the office of study and criticism of his predecessors. Mr. Newman's book opens with a sonnet to Gluck, by David Friedrich Strauss, who found in music one of the chief elements wherewith to replace the effete influence of religion. It is, indeed, the merit of the work that it does not merely study Gluck and his productions, but views them in relation to the whole intellectual tendencies of the time. Mr. Newman says: "Everywhere we see that music has not developed along its own lines without reference to the other arts, but that these and the general culture of the times have helped to shape its course." He deals with his subject from a scientific, not a metaphysical, point of view.

* * *

Gluck, the great reformer of the opera, is a figure of interest to all music lovers, though the quarrels of the Gluckists and Piccinnists, which made a great noise in the third quarter of last century, have almost passed into the limbo of oblivion. The rival schools, however, provoked much discussion, in which men like Rousseau and Diderot joined. The path of reform was, as Mr. Newman shows, led by another Freethinker, Algarotti. Mr. Newman traces and analyses Gluck's own genius to its culmination in *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Mr. Newman adopts throughout the comparative method. He traces the course of the opera in Germany, Italy, and France, and does not suppose it has made its last effort in Wagner any more than in Gluck. His work is well written, and may be warmly commended to all interested in musical history. Indeed, as we have already indicated, it may claim a higher place as a part of the history of the development of culture.

* * *

From Gluck to Diderot is an easy transition. If the first was master of music of his time, the second was as certainly master of letters. Voltaire alone could compete his supremacy, and, in some respects, his work was more fecund than that of the greatest of modern wits. While Voltaire was crushing *l'infâme* with a thousand little darts and stings, Diderot, in the *Encyclopedie*, was uprearing the edifice of modern science and culture, which is slowly superseding the old superstitions. To this great work Diderot gave thirty years of his life, and Voltaire himself recognised that there was no other man in Europe who could have successfully achieved the colossal task. This, too, may be said that, while the Deist Voltaire was for ever fretting at the stupidity, superstition, and bigotry he encountered, the Atheist Diderot pursued his path, ever amiable, ever generous, with a supreme serenity, worthy of a philosopher.

* * *

Diderot sa vie, ses œuvres, sa correspondence, by A. Collignon (Paris: F. Alcon; 1895) is one of many signs that the great Encyclopedist is still an influence among his countrymen. And well indeed it is that it is so. The twenty volumes of his complete works, edited by J. Assezat, is a larger monument, and the greatest of all is *L'Encyclopedie* itself, for the impress of a genius like Diderot is not only in that which he writes himself, but as clearly stamped on all that comes under his direction, as was the *Times* when under the editorship of John Delane. But M. Collignon's book of 300 pages is a good introduction to the man and his work. M. Collignon has that happy style which makes French criticism more readable than many an English novel. It is far lighter in tone than Mr. John Morley's study in two volumes; yet it is, on the whole, quite as satisfactory. There is no beating about the bush with M. Collignon. He tells how Diderot, "at the outset of his career, had not raised himself above the Spiritualist theory and the feeble arguments with which it is satisfied," and also how he afterwards had the courage and sincerity to refute his Theistic errors. He shows that he was the first of moderns to broach the theory of evolution, remarking, in his *Rêve de d'Alembert*, "Organs produce wants, and reciprocally wants produce organs." M. Collignon cites many passages to show that the true precursor of "transformisme" was neither Lamarck nor Robinet, but Diderot. So in art he finds that Diderot was the precursor of Stendhal, Sainte Beuve, and Merimee.

* * *

The Country House is a new sixpenny illustrated magazine (30, Fleet-street). Mr. Grant Allen contributes a story, "The Lack of Kamouska," which is certainly not a hill-top novel. Therein a wrecker's home is called "God's Providence House." Mr. F. Lancaster Lucas has a silly story in which an Atheist is converted by seeing at night a post painted with luminous paint. Mr. Lucas must appraise the intellect of his readers at a very low level. Mr. R. Barr (Luke Sharp) has some really funny remarks on "The Common or Domestic Hen."

* * *

In an account of Verdi, the composer, we read that in 1814 the village of Roncole, Italy, was sacked by the invading Allies. Then the frightened women took refuge in the church—safe, as they thought, under the image of the Virgin; but the soldiers forced the door, and slew women and children until the floor ran with blood. One mother, with an infant at her breast, flew to the belfry and hid there, so saving herself and her child. This child was the infant Verdi.

* * *

Ten thousand copies of the first part of *The Woman's Bible* have been issued at New York. The *State Journal* of Ohio declares that this New Bible of the New Woman is the work of the Devil.

* * *

The *Free Review* for December opens with an article "On Compromise," by J. M. Robertson, which is very interesting on its critical side, but not particularly helpful on the side of practical suggestion. Arthur Lynch's article on "Herbert Spencer" is good reading, though not quite up to the writer's best level. "Salvation Army Charity" is trenchantly dealt with by R. Wheatley, with special reference to "Shelters," which are shown to be a form of philanthropy which earns a handsome dividend out of the worst necessities of the destitute. There are some well-written economical papers, and a peculiar article by a lady, entitled "A Woman's Right," which is marked by all the crudity of the free-love school. J. A. Nicklin contributes a bright, original literary article on "Marlowe's 'Gaveston.'" We also note a two-page review of Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* pamphlet.

* * *

The recently-published Letters of Matthew Arnold contain some references to Miss Harriet Martineau, who says Matthew Arnold "blasphemes frightfully." This was written at a time when Arnold never contemplated that he would be accused of "blaspheming frightfully" by his reference to the "three Lord Shaftesburys." He applauded Miss Martineau's courage even when, owing to the publication of *The Letters on the Laws of Man's Development*, she was in high disrepute, and says thereanent: "The want of independence of mind, the shutting their eyes and professing to believe what they do not, the running blindly together in herds, for fear of some obscure danger and horror if they go alone, is so eminently a vice of the English, I think, of the last hundred years—has led them, and is leading them, into such scrapes and bewilderment, that I cannot but praise a person whose one effort seems to have been to deal perfectly honestly and sincerely with herself, although for the speculations into which this effort has led her I have not the slightest sympathy. I shall never be found to identify myself with her and her people; but neither shall I join, nor have I the least community of feeling with, her attackers." In later years he speaks of Renan, "between whose line of endeavor and my own I imagine there is a considerable resemblance."

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Sunday-school Teacher—"What is faith?" Small Boy—"Taking an umbrella to church when the minister's goin' ter prey fer rain."

Mother—"I don't know what in the world to do with my son; he is a born rover." Neighbor—"Why not make a Methodist minister of him?"

Mrs. Watts—"Why were you not at the church Thursday night?" Mrs. Potts—"I was out of the city. What was going on?" Mrs. Watts—"We celebrated the silver anniversary of the boy evangelist's work in the missionary field. Oh, we had a lovely time."

A Portuguese artificer, who was suspected of Freethinking, was at the point of death. A Jesuit who came to confess him, holding a crucifix before his eyes, said: "Behold the god whom you have so much offended; do you recollect him now?" "Alas! yes, father," replied the dying man; "it was I who made him."

Mrs. Gray—"Was your prayer-meeting good last night?" Mrs. Green—"Rather uninteresting. None of the men who spoke had ever done anything very bad." Mrs. Gray—"But wasn't Mr. Graybeard there?" Mrs. Green—"Oh, yes; but you don't expect he'd confess any of his real crimes, do you?" Mrs. Gray—"Well, he might run a risk of being arrested."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "More Bible Symbols and their Meaning"—with diagrams.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, H. Snell, "Was Jesus Christ a Socialist?" Tuesday, at 8, social party. Wednesday, at 8, public discussion—Miss Lanchester Case.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, F. Haslam, "The Lord's Day: Past, Present, and Future." Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Friday, November 29, at 8, meeting of members and friends.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, conversazione. Friday, at 8, free science classes.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Roman-road): 3, Sunday-school; 7.30, Dr. Kaines, "The Religion of the Knowable."

FINSBURY BRANCH: 12, members' general meeting.

ISLE OF DOGS PROGRESSIVE CLUB (72 Stebondale-street, E.): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery, and is it a Woman's Friend?"

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road): 7, J. Kaspary, "Parseeism or Persian Priestcraft."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street: 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The German Emperor and German Socialism."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Harry Sadler, "The Vital Virtues."

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stuart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, opening lecture by Charles Watts, "Secularism in Modern Thought."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam, "Feed my Lambs."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): G. Bayliffe, "Creation v. Evolution."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

DUNDEE (Tally-street Hall): 2.30, discussion class; 6.30, adjourned debate, "What do Socialists Want?"—opener, Mr. Munro.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Robert Law, F.G.S., "Volcanoes and Earthquakes, their Origin and Distribution."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Christ of Myth, Mystery, and Mummery."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Monro, "The Bible God."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Rev. F. W. Ford, "The Foundations of Religious Belief."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., will lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Mr. Walnscott, "Free Trade and Competition v. Socialism."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, R. Mitchell will lecture; 8, monthly meeting—urgent business.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, W. Heaford, "Was Jesus a Socialist?" 3, "The Dual Character of Christ"; 7, "The Dream of Immortality." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business; 7.30, Wm. Bowie, "The History of a Piece of Coal."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, W. Elcoat, "The First Liberal."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 1, Edinburgh; 2 and 3, Dundee; 4, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 11 and 12, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne; 15, Blackburn; 22, Wood Green; 29, Ball's Pond.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Dec. 22, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Dec. 1, Foresters' Hall; 8, Balls Pond; 15, Wood Green; 29, Foresters' Hall.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 49. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1895. PRICE TWOPENCE.

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IN a great book, which has been the delight of millions of children, and full of suggestion to their elders, Man Friday asks Robinson Crusoe why God does not convert the Devil. It seemed as plain as daylight to that fine, unsophisticated fellow, that as sin came through temptation, and temptation came through the Devil, it would be an act of wisdom to convert Old Nick himself, and thus put a complete stop to the emigration from earth to hell. Not another sinner would exist, and therefore not another soul would be lost. Salvation would be effected wholesale instead of retail. Not one man, but all men, would be saved.

Robinson Crusoe was cornered, and, like other theologians in similar difficulties, he turned the conversation. Man Friday's question stands where it was raised by the wily Defoe. The clergy have never answered it. They have never *tried* to answer it. They never *will* try to answer it. It pays them better to pursue the policy of evasion.

Over in America there is a dreadful man called Ingersoll. He is the Devil of the United States. He goes up and down, like Satan in the book of Job, tempting people to desert God and join Humanity. A minister, the other day, said that he had two million followers in the land of the Stars and Stripes. All sorts of devices have been tried to stop his evil career. He has been slandered most outrageously, but pious filth falls off him like water from the back of a duck. It simply won't stick. The people look at "Bob's" face, and say "Lies! lies!" He has been challenged to mortal combat (with tongue or pen) by dozens of dirty little Christian apologists. He has been tackled by some superior men, such as Judge Black, Cardinal Manning, and Mr. Gladstone; and they soon had enough of it, leaving the "infidel" to look round the arena and wonder what had become of them. Some men of God have called him a fool; others have called him too clever by half, and said he would laugh the other side of his mouth when he found himself stewing in brimstone. Some have shouted "Police!" and begged the authorities to suppress this wicked "blasphemer." But it is all no good. "Bob" is jollier than ever. People flock to hear him in thousands. He is the most popular "devil" in the United States. It is said that people rub their hands with pleasure when they see him walking down the street.

Something must be done to save Christianity in America; and if natural means fail, resort must be had to miracles.

A brilliant idea occurred to the Christian Endeavor Society, which has members throughout the Union. It was an idea very much like Man Friday's. The way to save Christianity was to convert Ingersoll; and as *they* couldn't do it, they resolved to ask God to do it himself. Accordingly a midday prayer-meeting was arranged in all the Christian Endeavor churches. A quarter of a million people—mostly women, we suspect—assembled in the different cities, and offered a prayer of fifteen minutes' duration for the "conversion of Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, the famous Atheist lecturer." We are not favored with the form of words used on this occasion. No doubt it would be very entertaining to every Rationalist.

Heine, in one of his most characteristic poems, depicts a young man standing by the seashore and asking a number of questions about the universe. And the end of it is this:—

> The winds sweep, the waves scud,
> The stars glitter indifferent and cold—
> And a fool awaits an answer.

Were the witty poet alive now, he might say that, in America, a quarter of a million fools were awaiting an answer.

Have these people asked themselves *how* God could convert Ingersoll? There are only two possible ways—force or persuasion. Let us look at both.

Force might take several forms—internal or external, disease or violence. An apoplectic stroke, followed by softening of the brain, might be very efficacious. Or a sunstroke, such as Paul seems to have suffered near Damascus, might work wonders. It is astonishing what mental oddities are caused by sunstrokes. It is conceivable that a sunstroke might make even Ingersoll turn a Christian.

Persuasion is a different matter. It would leave Ingersoll's faculties intact. The appeal would be made to his intelligence. God, in short, would have to play the part of a Christian apologist. In that case, it is difficult to see how "Bob's" conversion could be effected. Infinite intellect is not required to prove the truth, and infinite intellect could not prove a falsehood. Take the Bible, for instance. Ingersoll points out its flagrant self-contradictions, absurdities, and immoralities. How in the name of common sense is he to see them otherwise, without a change in his mental vision or an alteration of his moral standard? And how is that to be brought about, unless God takes him to pieces and makes him up afresh?

These praying Christians might ask themselves whether there is *any* use in prayer. Some of us remember when all the churches in the United States were praying for the recovery of President Garfield, who fell by the bullet of a pious assassin. Prayers went up to heaven from all parts of the Union day after day, hour after hour; yet Garfield's life slowly ebbed away, and the only answer to millions of prayers was a cold white face upon the pillow.

Is it likely that prayers for Ingersoll will be heard and answered, when prayers for Garfield were neglected? Do the Christians of America fancy they have more influence with God at present than they had ten years ago?

Still, if the American Christians *must* pray, they should really ask God to supply the Church with a man of brains—equal to Ingersoll's; if, indeed, such a man could ever *enter* the Church. It is a scandal that they have not such a champion already. There are thousands of ministers, who are paid millions a year between them; yet none of them, nor all of them, can answer one "infidel," who has only his own mother-wit, without the assistance of inspiration.

This farce is a public confession of the weakness of Christianity. A miracle is the last resource of hard-pressed faith, and the miracle doesn't arrive. The game is up. Christian Evidences are played out. Christian apologists are at their wits'-end—if they have any wits to get to the end of. Christianity in America cannot even stand up. It is on its knees, praying for Ingersoll.

G. W. FOOTE.

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MOON-WORSHIP.

I HAVE before now expressed the opinion that sun-worship as "the key to all the mythologies" has been considerably overdone. That it did have a large place in ancient religion is certain. Dupuis, Volney, Higgins, Dunlap, and others, have shown this long since, though in some instances their sun heroes were, in my opinion, side by side with lunar heroes, or themselves luni-solar; and what they ascribe to the sun I might, perhaps, rather attribute to the general principle of reproductive life. It is, however, the Aryan mythologists, of the school of Max Müller and Sir G. W. Cox, who, with greater philological knowledge, have yet gone furthest astray by resolving so many myths into those of the sun and dawn, simply because, not fully accepting the evolution theory, they are bent on interpreting the myths of archaic man in accordance with the construction put upon them by highly-developed races like the Greeks and Brahmans. When M. Gaidoz showed that the same myths and customs were found in Central Africa as in Rome, he put a pin hole into the Aryan theory, which Mr. J. G. Frazer, by his *Golden Bough*, enlarged into a big gap; and Mr. Hartland having, in his *Legend of Perseus*, traced the same beliefs in all continents, we may fairly say its bottom is knocked out. It is to be hoped the principle of interpreting early man by the higher Aryan types, which is only another instance of evolving the camel out of our own inner consciousness, will soon receive its quietus.

The solar theory of religion has had a number of books devoted to its advocacy. The late Orientalist and archæologist, John O'Neill, saw it was incomplete, and in his erudite *Night of the Gods*, a work the second volume of which, I hope, will soon be published, advocated a polar theory—the view that ancient religion largely concerned itself with the Pole Star as the Most High. As yet, the lunar theory has had, to my mind, altogether inadequate attention; Gerald Massey, Herr Roscher, and Ignaz Goldziher being almost the only persons who have brought out the importance which the moon must have possessed to ancient races. Since early man's worst dangers were in the dark, it was natural that the light of night should be to him almost as important as that of day. The sun becomes of the utmost importance to the settled agriculturist. But in the preceding pastoral nomadic stage the worship of the nocturnal sky and the stars, which guide the way, prevails. The crescent is still the symbol of the Asiatic races.

Wherever there is sun-worship there is a residuum of moon-worship, but not the converse. The lights of the night sky, forming a contrast to the darkness of the earth, attract a savage more than the familiar daylight. There is an ever-changing drama of growth and decay going on up there which falls in with the fantastic magical character of early faith. Dr. Tylor, in his *Primitive Culture*, says:—

> "In Africa moon-worship is prominent in an immense district where sun-worship is unknown or insignificant. Among south-central tribes men will watch for the first glimpse of the new moon, which they hail with shouts of 'Kua!' and vociferate prayers to it. On such an occasion Dr. Livingstone's Makololo prayed, 'Let our journey with the white man be prosperous,' etc. These people keep holiday at new moon, as, indeed, in many countries her worship is connected with the settlement of periodic festivals. Negro tribes seem almost universally to greet the new moon, whether in delight or disgust. The Guinea people fling themselves about with droll gestures, and pretend to throw firebrands at it; the Ashango men behold it with superstitious fear: the Fetu negroes jumped thrice into the air with hands together and gave thanks. The Congo people fell on their knees, or stood and clapped their hands, crying, 'So may I renew my life as thou art renewed!' The Hottentots are described early in the last century as dancing and singing all night at new and full moon, calling the moon the Great Captain, and crying to him, 'Be greeted! Let us get much honey! May our cattle get much to eat and give much milk!'"

The importance of moon-worship in the history of the past lies here. The moon, as night-god, is side by side with the sun as day-god; while the moon as month-god is known long before, and has festivals far more frequent than the sun as year-god. The lunar calendar, as I have shown in my "Note on the Calendar" in the *Secular Almanack for 1896*, long preceded the solar calendar.* The importance of knowing the periodic recurrence of times and seasons set up customs and rites, added to the myths of the conflict of light and darkness, and was an integral part of much ancient religion. Dr. Tylor says:—

> "The rude savages of Brazil seem to worship or respect the moon, by which they regulate their time and festivals and draw their omens. They would lift up their hands to the moon with wonder-struck exclamations of 'Teh! teh!' They would have children smoked by the sorcerers to preserve them from moon-given sickness, or the women would hold up their babes to the luminary. An old account of the Caribs describes them as esteeming the moon more than the sun, and at new moon coming out of their houses crying, 'Behold the moon!'"

As the time regulator, the moon naturally became the special object of worship to women. Luna, the moon goddess, is the same as Lucina, the goddess of light, who brings to light; just as *lumen* is the same as *lucmen*. Lucina presided over childbirth, and Juno and Diana are both called Lucina. In the Temple of Luna, on the Palatine Hill, she was worshipped as Noctiluca, and her temple was lighted up every night. This was a representative charm, similar to the dancing by torchlight of ruder peoples.

The moon-worship of the ancient Arabs, Phœnicians, and Carthaginians* is well attested. The adoption of the weekly Sabbath everywhere points to luniolatry; and that the Jews once worshipped sun and moon seems certain from Deuteronomy xvii. 3, Job xxxi. 36, and Jeremiah viii. 2. Anyway, the new moon made their most ancient festival.

It is just possible that the Yahu or IAO of the Jews originally, like Io, represented a soli-lunar deity, the lord god of the Sabbath. Certainly his early festivals were those of the new moon. His function of opening and closing the womb (Genesis xx. 18, xxix. 31; 1 Samuel i. 6; Isaiah lxvi. 9) was especially that of "the Lord of growth." Ioh, in Egyptian, is the moon, and Ehe the cow. When Jeroboam made two golden calves and said, "Behold thy gods, O Israel" (1 Kings xii. 28), the calves were just as likely symbols of the sun and moon as of the sun in Taurus. The altar was decorated with horns, emblems of power, and also of the moon. Cedrennus tells us that "Iao is, among the Chaldæans, interpreted as meaning Intelligent Light in the Phœnician tongue, and Sabaoth as meaning Over the Seven Heavens." The Assyrian moon-god is Sin, whose name probably appears in Sinai and Sennacherib. The expression, "from the origin of the god Sin," was used to mark remote antiquity. Samas, the sun, is called in the Assyrian epic of Ishtar "The Son of Sin," the moon-god (iv. 2); and this points, as Schrader observes, "to a veneration of the moon-god in Babylonia earlier than that of the sun-god," or else to a conception of night preceding the day. Speaking of Mount Sinai, the learned Ignaz Goldziher writes: "The mountain must in ancient times have been consecrated to the moon. The beginning of the Hebrew religion, which, we shall see, was connected with the phenomena of the night sky, germinated first during the residence in Egypt on the foundation of an ancient myth. The recollection of this occasioned them to call the part of Egypt which they had long inhabited *eres siniim*, 'Moonland' (Isaiah xlix. 12)" (*Mythology among the Hebrews*, p. 160).

In China, as in Syria and Rome, the priests celebrated the new and full moon feasts. The birthday of the emperor in olden times was always fixed for the first day of a new moon. In Goa and other parts of India the natives prostrate themselves at the appearance of a new moon. "Monotheist as he is," says Dr. Tylor (*P. C.*, ii. 302), "the Moslem still claps his hands at sight of the new moon, and says a

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* *Mas* and moon are alike to be traced to the Ur-Aryan *ma*, to measure. Sanskrit, *mas*; Zend, *mao*; Persian, *mah*; Greek, *mene*; Latin, *mensis*; Saxon, *mona*. Man is the time-measurer, the moon the month-measurer. Strabo tells us that the cult of the moon-god *Men*, the Lunus of the Roman, was widely established in Asia Minor. The first man among the Maories was Maui, who has been compared to Menes, Manu, Minos, Minyas, and Mannus.

* That great writer, Gustave Flaubert, at once poet and realist, in his splendid reconstruction of Carthage, thus makes his heroine, Salammbo, address the moon with an ancient hymn: "Les épouses hurlent ton nom dans la douleurs des enfantements! Tu gonfles les coquillages! Tu fais bouillonner les vins. Tu putréfies les cadavres! Tu forme les perles au fond de la mer! Et tous les germes, ô Déesse, fermentent dans les obscures profondeurs de ton humidité. Quand tu parais, il s'épand une quiétude sur la terre; les fleurs se ferment, les flots s'apaisent, les hommes fatigués s'étendent la poitrine vers toi, et le monde avec ses océans et ses montagnes, comme en une miroir, se regarde dans ta figure. Tu es blanche, douce, lumineuse, immaculée, auxiliatrice, purifiante, sereine!"

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prayer." According to Vallency, the Irish, on seeing the new moon, immediately knelt down and repeated the Lord's Prayer. But moon-lore is so extensive that its further consideration must be deferred. The fact that among all peoples there are more remnants of superstitions about the moon than concerning the sun, affords, I think, support to my contention. J. M. WHEELER.

A GLOOMY ASPECT OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE Christian scheme of salvation is pronounced by its exponents as "glad tidings to man," but we regard it as presenting an exceedingly gloomy aspect of a most perplexing faith. The scheme is based upon the assumption that, in consequence of an event that is said to have occurred thousands of years ago, over which the human race had no control, mankind became sinners, and thereby rendered themselves liable to eternal misery and suffering in a future, and to us an unknown, state of existence. According to this scheme, the "everlasting destruction" of some people is a certainty, and this from no fault of their own. Hence we read in the New Testament: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.....By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.....For, by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. By man came death ..... in Adam all die" (Romans v. 12–18, 19; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22). This appears to have been Calvin's view, for he says: "We derive an innate depravity from our very birth; the denial of this is an instance of consummate impudence.....All children, without a single exception, are polluted as soon as they exist. Infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness. For, though they have not yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the whole seed of it in them; their whole nature cannot but be odious to God" (*Institutes*, book ii., sections 5, 6, and 8).

That the number to be saved by this scheme is limited is evident, for we read in the New Testament: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke xiii. 24). "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxii. 14). We are also told in Ephesians that some were predestined to be the children of Christ; and in Romans (ix.) it is said that others were made "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." In the Seventeenth Article of the Church of England it is stated: "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind."

The gloomy feature in this scheme is, that it is impossible for us to save ourselves; we are helpless and entirely dependent upon other resources for our salvation. Hence we read: "Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Romans iii. 20, 27, and 28; Romans iv. 2 and 3; Galatians ii. 16). The 9th, 10th, and 11th articles of the national religion plainly state that "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and, therefore, in every person born in the world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." "The condition of man is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God." "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings."

The Bible represents man as being so thoroughly bad that self-salvation is impossible. Its words are: "And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis viii. 21). "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm xiv. 2, 3). "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah xvii. 9). "For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing; for the good that I would," says St. Paul, "I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Romans vii. 18, 19, 20). It is useless to urge that the difficulty is removed by the invitation to go to Christ for salvation, for we cannot go to him by our own exertions. Here is a dilemma in which a poor helpless sinner is placed. In St. John's Gospel (xiv. 6) we read that Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me"; and in St. John (vi. 44) it also alleges that Jesus stated, "No man can come to me except the Father draw him." Thus we cannot be saved except we go to Christ; but we cannot go to Christ unless the Father draw us. This cheerless scheme amounts to this: if the Father draws us, we must go; and if he does not draw us, we cannot go, and then we are to be damned for not doing what God has prevented us from accomplishing. This is "glad tidings" with a vengeance! Briefly the matter stands thus: "We cannot do good if we would, for there is no help in us; we cannot be saved unless we have faith; but we cannot have faith unless we pray for it; but we cannot pray unless we have grace; but we cannot have grace unless God gives it; but he will not give it unless we ask it; and we cannot ask it unless he inclines us to do so." May it never be our fate to profess to believe in such theological metaphysics as Christianity here presents.

The question which should now be asked is: If the Christian scheme of salvation was necessary to regenerate the world, why was it not declared immediately after Adam's alleged transgression, so that it might have prevented a single generation going to the grave with the curse of original sin unremoved? But, according to Bible chronology, God allowed 4,000 years to elapse, and numbers of generations not only to live and die, but to run riot in all descriptions of ignorance and iniquity, ere the reparation was made. Why was this? Did it take God—to whom consideration of time is said to be as nothing—four thousand years to determine how to get out of the difficulty which he himself had created? If none could be saved except those who believed in Christ, what became of those millions of human beings who passed away prior to his birth? and what will be the fate of those now living who have never heard, and probably never will hear, the name of Jesus of Nazareth? Were the former saved by anticipation, and will the latter be excused on account of their ignorance? If so, where was the necessity of the atonement at all? If men could enter heaven without the crucifixion, then Christ need not have suffered. His sorrow, agony, and bloody sweat might all have been avoided, and numbers of human beings might have died quietly in their beds, instead of enduring tortures at the stake or on the rack. Besides, if ignorance of this scheme will save people from damnation, is it not useless and cruel to send missionaries to the heathen with the "glad tidings"? Let them not know of it, and they will be punished for rejecting it; inform them of it, and their eternal happiness becomes at least doubtful, for their diversity of organisation and their environment make it impossible that all can accept it as true.

This scheme of salvation is indeed a mystery, and it almost inclines one to believe with St. Mark that "all *these* things are done in parables; that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them" (Mark iv. 11, 12); or with St. Matthew, that "narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. vii. 14).

CHARLES WATTS.

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INGERSOLL'S NEW LECTURE.

(Further Extracts.)

THE AGE OF THE WORLD AND MAN.

THE geologists demonstrated that the author of Genesis was mistaken as to the age of the world, and that the story of the universe having been created in six days, about six thousand years ago, could not be true. The theologians then took the ground that the "days" spoken of in Genesis were periods of time, epochs, six "long whiles," and that the work of creation might have been commenced millions of years ago. The change of days into epochs was considered by the believers of the Bible as a great triumph over the hosts of Infidelity. The fact that Jehovah had ordered the Jews to keep the Sabbath, giving as a reason that he had made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, did not interfere with the acceptance of the "epoch" theory.

According to the Bible, Adam was certainly the first man, and in his case the epoch theory cannot change the account. The Bible gives the age at which Adam died, and gives the generations to the flood—then to Abraham and so on, and shows that from the creation of Adam to the birth of Christ it was about four thousand and four years.

According to the sacred scriptures, man has been on this earth five thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine years, and no more. Is this true?

Let me give you a fact: The Egyptians were astronomers. A few years ago representations of the stars were found on the walls of an old temple, and it was discovered by calculating backward that the stars did occupy the exact positions as represented about seven hundred and fifty years before Christ. Afterwards another representation of the stars was found, and, by calculating in the same way, it was found that the stars did occupy the exact positions represented about three thousand eight hundred years before Christ.

According to the Bible, the first man was created four thousand and four years before Christ. If this is true, then Egypt was founded, its language formed, its arts cultivated, its astronomical discoveries made and recorded about two hundred years after the creation of the first man.

In other words, Adam was two or three hundred years old when the Egyptian astronomers made these representations. Nothing can be more absurd.

TWO REST DAYS.

According to the Bible, Jehovah made the world in six days, and the work done each day is described. What did Jehovah do on the second day? This is the record: "And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so, and God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

Now, we know that there is no firmament, and we know that the waters are not divided by a firmament. Consequently we know that, according to the Bible, Jehovah did nothing on the second day. He must have rested on Tuesday. This being so, we ought to have two Sundays a week.

DAVID AS A COLLECTOR.

We are told by this inspired book of the gold and silver collected by King David for the temple—the temple afterwards completed by the virtuous Solomon. According to the blessed Bible, David collected about two thousand million dollars in silver, and five thousand million dollars in gold, making a total of seven thousand million dollars. Is this true? There is in the Bank of France at the present time (1895) nearly six hundred million dollars, and, so far as we know, it is the greatest amount that was ever gathered together. All the gold now known, coined and in bullion, does not amount to much more than the sum collected by David. Seven thousand millions! Where did David get this gold? The Jews had no commerce. They owned no ships. They had no great factories; they produced nothing for other countries. There were no gold or silver mines in Palestine. Where, then, was this gold, this silver, found? I will tell you: in the imagination of a writer who had more patriotism than intelligence, and who wrote, not for the sake of truth, but for the glory of the Jews. Is it possible that David collected nearly eight thousand tons of gold—that he by economy got together about sixty thousand tons of silver, making a total of gold and silver of sixty-eight thousand tons?

The average freight car carries about fifteen tons. David's gold and silver would load about four thousand five hundred and thirty-three cars, making a train about thirty-two miles in length. And all this for the temple at Jerusalem, a building ninety feet long and forty-five feet high and thirty feet wide, to which was attached a porch thirty feet wide, ninety feet long, and one hundred and eighty feet high. Probably the architect was inspired.

Is there a sensible man in the world who believes that David collected seven thousand million dollars' worth of gold or silver? There is hardly five thousand million dollars of gold now used as money in the whole world. Think of the millions taken from the mines of California, Australia, and Africa during the present century, and yet the total scarcely exceeds the amount collected by King David more than a thousand years before the birth of Christ. Evidently the inspired historian made a mistake.

THE WISE MEN.

Matthew says: "Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

Matthew does not tell us who these wise men were, from what country they came, to what race they belonged. He did not even know their names. We are also informed that, when Herod heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; that he gathered the chief priests and asked of them where Christ should be born, and they told him that he was to be born in Bethlehem. Then Herod called the wise men and asked them when the star appeared, and told them to go to Bethlehem and report to him. When they left Herod, the star again appeared and went before them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they came to the child they worshipped him, gave him gifts, and, being warned by God in a dream, they went back to their own country without calling on Herod.

Is this story true? Must we believe in the star and the wise men? Who were these wise men? From what country did they come? What interest had they in the birth of the king of the Jews? What became of them and their star? Of course I know that the holy Catholic Church has in her keeping the three skulls that belonged to these wise men, but I do not know where the Church obtained these relics, nor exactly how their genuineness has been established.

AN ANACHRONISM.

We are told in Matthew xxiii. 35 that Christ said: "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

It is certain that these words were not spoken by Christ. He could not by any possibility have known that the blood of Zacharias had been shed. As a matter of fact, Zacharias was killed by the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, and this siege took place seventy-one years after the birth of Christ, thirty-eight years after he was dead.

There is still another mistake.

Zacharias was not the son of Barachias—no such Zacharias was killed. The Zacharias that was slain was the son of Baruch.

But we must not expect the "inspired" to be accurate.

POLITE SAINTS.

Matthew says that at the time of the crucifixion "the graves were opened, and that many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves *after* his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." According to this, the graves were opened at the time of the crucifixion, but the dead did not arise and come out until after the resurrection of Christ.

They were polite enough to sit in their open graves and wait for Christ to rise first.

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JUDAS.

Besides, it is hard to see why Christians hate, loathe, and despise Judas. According to their scheme of salvation, it was absolutely necessary that Christ should be killed—necessary that he should be betrayed; and had it not been for Judas, all the world, including Christ's mother, and the part of Christ that was human, would have gone to hell. Yet, according to the New Testament, Christ did not know that one of his disciples was to betray him. Jesus, when on his way to Jerusalem, for the last time, said, speaking to the twelve disciples, Judas being present, that they, the disciples, should thereafter sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Yet, more than a year before this journey, John says that Christ said, speaking to the twelve disciples: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And John adds: "He spake of Judas Iscariot, for it was he that should betray him." Why did Christ, a year afterwards, tell Judas that he should sit on a throne and judge one of the tribes of Israel? There is still another trouble. Paul says that Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared to the twelve disciples. According to Paul, Jesus appeared to Judas with the rest. Certainly Paul had not heard the story of the betrayal.

Why did Christ select Judas as one of his disciples, knowing that he would betray him? Did he desire to be betrayed? Was it his intention to be put to death? Why did he fail to defend himself before Pilate?

According to the accounts, Pilate wanted to save him. Did Christ wish to be convicted?

The Christians are compelled to say that Christ intended to be sacrificed—that he selected Judas with that end in view, and that he refused to defend himself because he desired to be crucified. All this is in accordance with the horrible idea that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

THE INCARNATION.

The New Testament informs us that Christ was the son of Joseph and the son of God, and that Mary was his mother. How is it established that Christ was the son of God? It is said that Joseph was told so in a dream by an angel. But Joseph wrote nothing on that subject—said nothing, so far as we know. Mary wrote nothing, said nothing. The angel that appeared to Joseph, or that informed Joseph, said nothing to anybody else. Neither has the Holy Ghost, the supposed father, ever said or written one word. We have received no information from the parties who could have known anything on the subject. We get all our facts from those who could not have known. How is it possible to prove that the Holy Ghost was the father of Christ? Who knows that such a being as the Holy Ghost ever existed? How was it possible for Mary to know anything about the Holy Ghost? How could Joseph know that he had been visited by an angel in a dream? Could he know that the visitor was an angel? It all occurred in a dream when poor Joseph was asleep. What is the testimony of one who was asleep worth? All the evidence we have is that somebody who wrote part of the New Testament says that the Holy Ghost was the father of Christ, and that somebody who wrote another part of the New Testament says that Joseph was the father of Christ. Matthew and Luke give the genealogy, and both show that Christ was the son of Joseph. The "Incarnation" has to be believed without evidence. There is no way in which it can be established. It is beyond the reach and realm of reason. It defies observation, and is independent of experience.

THE TRINITY.

Christ, according to the faith, is the second person in the Trinity, the Father being the first and the Holy Ghost the third. Each of these three persons is God. Christ is his own father and his own son. The Holy Ghost is neither father nor son, but both. The son was begotten by the father, but existed before he was begotten—just the same before as after. Christ is just as old as his father, and the father is just as young as his son. The Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and Son, but was equal to the Father and Son before he proceeded—that is to say, before he existed; but he is of the same age as the other two. So, it is declared that the Father is God, and the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and that these three Gods make one God. According to the celestial multiplication table, once one is three, and three times one is one; and, according to heavenly subtraction, if we take two from three, three are left. The addition is equally peculiar; if we add two to one, we have but one. Each one is equal to himself and the other two. Nothing ever was, nothing ever can be, more perfectly idiotic and absurd than the dogma of the Trinity.

Is it possible for a human being, who has been born but once, to comprehend or to imagine the existence of three beings, each of whom is equal to the three? Think of one of these beings as the father of one, and think of that one as half human and all God, and think of the third as having proceeded from the other two, and then think of all three as one. Think that, after the father begot the son, the father was still alone, and after the Holy Ghost proceeded from the father and the son, the father was still alone—because there never was, and never will be, but one God. At this point, absurdity having reached its limit, nothing more can be said except: "Let us pray."

SACRIFICE.

A man steals, and then sacrifices a dove or gives a lamb to a priest. His crime remains the same. He need not kill something. Let him give back the thing stolen, and in future live an honest life.

A man slanders his neighbor, and then kills an ox. What has that to do with the slander? Let him take back his slander, make all the reparation that he can, and let the ox alone.

There is no sense in sacrifice, never was, and never will be.

Make restitution, reparation, undo the wrong, and you need shed no blood.

THE INFINITE WILD BEAST.

If Christianity were only stupid and unscientific, if its God were ignorant and kind, if it promised eternal joy to believers, and if the believers practised the forgiveness they teach, for one I should let the faith alone.

But there is another side to Christianity. It is not only stupid, but malicious. It is not only unscientific, but it is heartless. Its God is not only ignorant, but infinitely cruel. It not only promises the faithful an eternal reward, but declares that nearly all of the children of men, imprisoned in the dungeons of God, will suffer eternal pain. This is the savagery of Christianity. This is why I hate its unthinkable God, its impossible Christ, its inspired lies, and its selfish, heartless heaven. . . .

That word [hell] drove pity from the hearts of men, stained countless swords with blood, lighted fagots, forged chains, built dungeons, erected scaffolds, and filled the world with poverty and pain. That word is a coiled serpent in the mother's breast, that lifts its fanged head and hisses in her ear: "Your child will be the fuel of eternal fire."

That word blots from the firmament the star of hope and leaves the heavens black. That word makes the Christian's God an eternal torturer, an everlasting inquisitor—an infinite wild beast.

THE PERORATION.

But, says the prejudiced priest, the malicious minister, "You take away a future life." I am not trying to destroy another world, but I am endeavoring to prevent the theologians from destroying this. If we are immortal, it is a fact in nature, and that fact does not depend on Bibles or Christs, on priests or creeds. The hope of another life was in the heart long before the "sacred books" were written, and will remain there long after all the "sacred books" are known to be the work of savage and superstitious men. Hope is the consolation of the world.

The wanderers hope for home. Hope builds the house and plants the flowers and fills the air with song.

The sick and suffering hope for health. Hope gives them health and paints the roses in their cheeks.

The lonely, the forsaken, hope for love.—Hope brings the lover to their arms. They feel the kisses on their eager lips, though they may die alone.

The poor in tenements and huts, in spite of rags and hunger, hope for wealth.—Hope fills their thin and trembling hands with gold.

The dying hopes that death is but another birth, and love leans above the pallid face and whispers, "We shall meet again."

Hope is the consolation of the world. Let us hope that if there be a God he is wise and good. Let us hope that

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if there be another life it will bring peace and joy to all the children of men. And let us hope that this poor earth on which we live may be a perfect world—a world without a crime, without a tear.

—*Truthseeker.*

CURIOSITIES OF THE HEBREW BIBLE.

To most of us a Hebrew Bible is an unintelligible collection of cabalistic characters written topsy-turvey. But, after the student has mastered its backward alphabet, he finds that it contains curious anomalies of its own. In some places he finds a letter printed unusually large; in others unnecessarily small. If his copy be vocalised—that is, having a cloud of small marks attached to the letters—he will occasionally meet with words without vowels; or, still stranger, vowels without words. Sometimes a letter is printed upside down, or out of its place, and above the general line. The student may think that all these things are due to errors of that much-blamed being, the compositor, or he may have suspicions that the printer has been indulging in the culinary pastime of "making pie." But he will discover that these self-same errors are religiously repeated in every edition of the book to which he has access, whether it be in print or manuscript; and they are even older than the division of the Bible into chapters and verses.

The explanation lies in the fact that the Hebrew text was settled by the Jewish scholars of about the eighth century A.D.; and these scholars, instead of striving to produce a pure text by study and comparison of different manuscripts, simply took one MS. and made every other conform to it. This standard MS. was so servilely copied that the printed Hebrew Bibles of to-day reproduce the clerical errors of their prototype of the eighth century; and, unless they contain these errors, they are considered incorrect.

In many early manuscripts we find the first letter of a page written large, in order to give a good effect to the book; and this is the origin of our capitals. The prototype of the Hebrew Bible was evidently decorated in the same way, for we find initial letters of words still printed in larger type, although these words are now printed in the middle, or at the bottom of a page. Thus in Deuteronomy xviii. 13 and xxxii. 6 we find these "great letters" much larger than the rest of the text, not to mention many other places.

Again, in ancient manuscripts we find the last letters of a line compressed together, and some written small in order to get them in. If we turn to Genesis ii. 4, we see that the *h* of *Behibaram* is printed small; in xxiii. 2 the *k* of *Welibkothah*; in xxvii. 46 the *q* of *Qasthi*; and the same peculiarity occurs again and again without rhyme or reason.

When we are writing, and leave out a letter by accident, we write that letter above the word, and mark its place by a caret—thus Maasseh. The same thing was done in ancient MSS., except that they had no caret, and contented themselves with writing the letter above the line. In Judges xviii. 30 the letter *n* of the word Manasseh is "suspended" above the line. Without the *n* the name is *Moses*; and as the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and all other early versions read Moses, it is clear that this "suspended letter" is merely the result of Rabbinical ingenuity. In Psalm lxxx. 14 one of the letters of the word "wood" is suspended; and this appears to be a genuine correction. But Job xxxviii. 13 and 15 may have been emendations for doctrinal reasons.

If we turn to Psalm xxvii. 13 in the English Bible, we read, "*I had fainted* unless," etc. The italics of "I had fainted" show that they are not present in the Hebrew. They are merely put in to excuse "unless," which has a row of dots over it in the original. A comparison of old writings shows us that it was the general custom to cancel a word written in error by putting a dot over each letter. Now-a-days we run the pen through the word. This word, "unless," is unnecessary to the Psalm, and, in order to bring it in, scholars who deny the possibility of errors in the holy scriptures are obliged to read into the text something that is not there. Ezekiel xli. 20 contains a still more glaring instance. The first word of verse 21 (*ha-hekel*, the temple) was written twice over by mistake, and the scribe dotted the first *ha-hekel* to show that it was to be struck out. But the two words, dots and all, have been carefully copied into every known Hebrew Bible; and, consequently, scholars have sought to make sense of them in both verses. In Genesis xxxiii. 4 we read that Esau fell upon Jacob's neck and kissed him. It may have struck the reader that it is somewhat difficult to kiss a person by falling on his neck. But in the Hebrew the words, "and kissed him," are all dotted, so that it is a mistake to suppose that Jacob was kissed on that occasion. Esau fell on his neck and wept. (Compare Genesis xlv. 14.)

All the above peculiarities belong to the consonantal text; but when the vowels were invented and added to the consonants other remarkable features were developed. In vocalised books a word is sometimes met with unvocalised. This is a sign that it is not to be read at all. Occasionally a word is written with the vowels of another word. Thus "Yahveh" is generally adorned with the vowels of "Adonai"; or, when Adonai already precedes Yahveh, the latter is vocalised as "Elohim"—which, of course, means that the divine name Yahveh is not to be pronounced, but *Adonai* or *Elohim* substituted. Ignorance of this fact caused the translators of the English Bible to read the consonants and vowels together, as they were written, and gave us the form, "Jehovah." The word "Molech" arose in the same way. The Hebrew text has *Melech* = "king"; but the vowel points of *Bosheth* = "abomination," are written upon it as a sign for the reader to say "abomination" instead of "king."

There are a few places in the Old Testament (such as Jeremiah xxxviii. 16, Ezekiel xlviii. 16, etc.) where words are not vocalised, and are not read, because their insertion is ungrammatical. But there are other still more interesting instances where vowels are written where there are no consonants to attach them to. In the English Bible we read in 2 Kings xix. 37 that Sennacherib was slain by Adrammelech and Sharezer, "his sons." But the words, "his sons," *are not in the Hebrew text.* The vowels have been written in to make the passage correspond with the later corrupted text of Isaiah. It would have saved our Assyriologists from making themselves ridiculous if they had noted this fact, and not attempted to read on the monuments what was neither there nor in the book of Kings. Similarly, in 2 Samuel viii. 3, we read of David recovering his border at the "river Euphrates." *There is no such word as "Euphrates" in the Hebrew text.* The mediæval Rabbins wrote in the vowels of the word as a sign for the reader to pronounce it, although it is not in the text. It is evident from the names mentioned in the narrative that David was nowhere near the Euphrates in this campaign. Although the Jewish scholars of the Middle Ages were debarred by superstition from interfering with the text of the Bible as it was handed down to them, yet they had no scruples against touching it up here and there in order to enhance the glories of the Hebrew race.

CHILPERIC.

It Came Back.

At the parish church of Black River special sermons were to be preached and collections made on behalf of the Home and Foreign Missionary Society. To remind them of the annual effort, and to request their attendance in church, Archdeacon Ramson visited many of his flock for some time previously.

A few days after the event had transpired the worthy archdeacon walked into the shop of an old woman, a somewhat hardened case, whom he had seen at church on that day for the first time. Judge of his surprise and amusement when, before he could utter a word of greeting, she startled him by jerking out in great wrath: "Ah, you've comed; I tho't you would. But I'll give no more to your missions, not I. Why, look at that," reaching down a nickel penny from the shelf. "I put that in the plate, and it has comed back to me. I marked it, I did, for I knowed well them niggers never got the money."

Be to the best thou knowest ever true,
Is all the creed.
Then, be thy talisman of rosy hue,
Or fenced with thorns that wearing thou must bleed,
Or gentle pledge of love's prophetic view,
Thy faithful steps it will securely lead.

—*Sarah Margaret Fuller.*

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ACID DROPS.

Lord Rosebery has given another alarm to the Nonconformist Conscience. He has actually bought the fine portrait of Gibbon by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the papers say he is very proud of possessing it. A man who prides himself on having *the* portrait of Gibbon cannot be a fit and proper person to lead a great political party in the "most Christian" nation in the world.

Keir Hardie's *Labor Leader* is not infallible. In some respects it is not even fairly accurate. It says that "The Secularist movement has died, and is getting itself buried." What a curious confusion! Surely the writer must be Irish. Whoever heard of a dead person superintending his own funeral.

Some time ago Keir Hardie announced that the *Labor Leader* would have to be dropped in consequence of inadequate circulation. How he got out of the difficulty we don't know, though we hear it was through *bourgeois* assistance. The *Freethinker* is *not* dropping in consequence of inadequate circulation, and it does not depend on anybody's cheques.

The Nonconformists are very indignant with Lord Salisbury for pointing out that Board schools had been worked in their interest. Dr. Guinness Rogers declares that in ten thousand rural parishes throughout this country the children of Nonconformist parents are practically driven into Church schools, and are shut out from the chances of entering the teaching career in the places where they live unless they join a Church which is not the Church of their fathers. The Nonconformist deputation to Lord Salisbury, too, pointed out the practical uselessness in such schools of the Conscience Clause. Yet they unite with the Churchmen in thinking that Secularists should be satisfied with such a fraud. All the trouble which the Nonconformists see in front of them arises from their having deserted their old principle, that the State should have nothing whatever to do with the teaching of religion.

The Hon. E. Lyulph Stanley writes in the December number of the *Nineteenth Century* on "Reopening the Education Settlement of 1870." One of his illustrations of the management of Church schools is very edifying. It is the case of St. John's National School, Birkenhead. "The report on this school," Mr. Stanley says, "for the year ending the 31st of December, 1894, shows that the average attendance was 1,140; that the voluntary subscriptions were £7 7s.; the fees paid by parents were £272; that the total expenditure for the year was £1,780; about £130 was deducted under the 17s. 6d. limit, on account of the failure of local income. Nevertheless, the income for the year exceeded the expenditure by £100, and in spite of this surplus income the managers failed to pay attention to the demand made by the department that certain defective galleries should be improved, and that cloak rooms should be provided."

The State pays 3½ millions for the support of denominational schools, and the subscribers contribute £800,000; a large part of the latter amount being given to avoid the levying of a school rate. In 1893 no less than 1,061 denominational schools had no subscriptions; while in 674 others the subscriptions amounted to less than 1s. per child.

The Church schools of the 32 Lancashire boroughs raised only £24,532 in subscriptions; while the school fees amounted to £32,364, and the Government grants to £211,879. The Churchmen of Birmingham raise less than £3,000 a year for the maintenance of their schools; while the State contributes over £22,000.

Here are some figures showing what the State pays and what Church people pay for a number of Church schools in London:—

	GRANTS.	SUBSCRIPTIONS.
St. Thomas, Charterhouse ...	£337 19 0 ...	£2 2 0
St. Barnabas, Holloway ...	896 2 0 ...	27 19 8
St. Thomas, Islington ...	675 18 4 ...	3 5 0
St. George's, Camberwell ...	1,085 4 9 ...	58 2 3
St. Peter's, Battersea ...	189 17 0 ...	0 8 6
St. John's, Walworth ...	734 11 10 ...	33 7 9

At Rochdale, for every shilling paid by the State to Church schools the subscribers give less than a penny. At Burslem there is a school with only £6 16s. 6d. subscriptions against Government grants of £856 10s. At Ashton-under-Lyne the subscribers to Church schools pay only one-seventeenth of the whole expenditure. The largest Church school in Southampton (Holy Trinity) has a total income of £1,200; of this the subscribers contribute only £25. The Church school of St. John, Birkenhead, receives from Government £1,577 14s. 10d., and from subscribers £7 7s. The Church school of St. Andrew, Derby, receives from Government £1,236 7s. 8d., and from subscribers £20. The seventeen Church schools in Birkenhead receive from subscribers £633, from Government £7,853. The subscribers contributed 1s. 5½d. per child; the Government 18s. 1d.

Jabez Balfour, the pious scoundrel, who was so fond of reading the Bible, is now doing fourteen years' penal servitude. "Observer," writing to the *Standard*, says: "A short time ago I happened to be at West Croydon, and heard a beautiful peal of bells at the West Croydon Congregational Chapel. This peal of bells, I am informed, was presented by Mr. Jabez Balfour, and cost between £700 and £800. I cannot help thinking that if those in authority among the congregation at West Croydon wish for the luxury of such a peal of bells, they should be in a position to pay for them, and it seems to me that it would only be a Christian action on their part either to sell these bells or to subscribe their value, and devote the proceeds to the relief of the poor 'Liberator' victims."

The following paragraph appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* of Wednesday, November 27: "Secularism in the Colonies.—The Secularists of Sydney do not appear to be making much headway. According to the *Sydney Telegraph*, in 1892 they opened their Lyceum Freethought Hall in Campbell-street, costing £4,500, and dedicated it to the destruction of Christianity and Godism in Sydney. Last month the building was purchased by the Church of Christ for £2,200. At the opening services Mr. James Smith, now laboring for the City Mission, who was vice-president of the Secularists' Society when the hall was built, was among the speakers, and the first person to profess conversion to Christianity was a gentleman until recently secretary of the Freethought party."

This sort of thing will mislead Christians and indifferentists, as of course it is intended to do; but it should not mislead Freethinkers. Supposing the statement as to the building at Sydney to be true, what does it prove? Simply this: That Christian laws incapacitate Secular Societies from holding property in trust for their principles, and that nothing less than this will give them any security. Property that has to be held by a commercial tenure is, sooner or later, sure to be alienated. We have had illustrations of this in England, and the moral of it is that the acquisition of property is a mistake while the law remains as it is. We must go on *using* halls, without *possessing* them, and while we can do this—although it is not the ideally best thing—our movement will be very far from being as weak as the enemy fondly imagine it.

The Armenians estimate the losses suffered by their community during the late events in Anatolia at £T10,000,000, and the number of victims at 40,000. They fear that these figures will be considerably increased, owing to the approaching winter and the threatened famine.

The monks of San Francisco, at Bagnorea, Viterbo, have their own way of interpreting the injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount. A band of brigands attacked them, but they made such bold resistance with guns, knives, and any weapon that came to hand, that the armed robbers took to flight.

In the divorce case of Biedermann *v.* Biedermann the husband told the wife they were not legally married, as she was a Catholic and he was a Protestant. If civil marriage were compulsory, as in other countries, such nonsense would have no chance of being believed.

A telegram from Lima, Peru, states that, a proposal for reforms in the convict revenues having been made in Congress, the Church party were much alarmed, and a number of them assembled outside the House and attacked the deputies as they were leaving. The Congress subsequently censured the Government for neglecting to afford sufficient protection to members of Parliament.

The Rev. J. E. Vaux has a not intentionally amusing letter in the *Church Times* on "Priests without Blemish." He argues that the injunction in Leviticus, that all things offered to the Lord should be without blemish, applies to the priests. From Deuteronomy it is evident that if Mr. Vaux is right the bishop ought to require all candidates for the holy office to be stripped and inspected before they are ordained.

Mr. Lang, in a recent *Daily News* article, mentions that the early Scotch ministers solemnly accused a witch of transferring the illness of Archbishop Adamson to a white pony. The horse it was that died.

Paris women who wear bloomers or knickerbockers when riding bicycles will be disqualified from receiving the

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sacraments of the Church, according to the instructions issued to the clergy by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris.

The Kentish rector who asked a class of small boys who was the patron saint of England received as an answer, "Mr. Gladstone." This reminds one of the incident which occurred a few years ago when a deputation visited Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden to endeavor to enlist his sympathies in some enterprise which they projected. In the temporary absence of the ex-Premier the deputation was received by a friend of the family, who, by way of beguiling time, asked how the scheme was progressing. "Only moderately," was the response, "but we rely upon the aid of One Above." "Ah, yes," returned the querist, with upraised eyes; "he is only washing his hands, and will be down directly." The next instant Mr. Gladstone entered the room.

Oh, for the "good old times"! The Rev. S. Baring Gould says: "With the march of the times we have abolished dames' schools, and cut away thereby a means of livelihood from many a worthy woman; but, what is worse, we have driven the little ones into Board schools that are Godless, where they are taught to despise manual labor, and to grow up without moral principle." Of course, these statements are false; but equally, of course, in clerical eyes, absence of clerical domination means everything that is bad.

Christian civilisation is doubtless a divine article, but it means misery, degradation, and extinction to inferior races. Here is the testimony of the Christianised Dr. Eastman, the learned Sioux Indian, before a congregation of notable Christians at the Church of the Ascension, New York: "My race," he said, "has degenerated physically and morally since civilisation was thrust upon it." He described the Indians, as he knew them in early life, dignified, courteous, brave, merry and fleet-footed, spirited when at the camp fire, grave when at counsel, reverent to their elders, and kindly to their wives. "They owe," said he, "to civilisation the fact that they are now idlers, gamblers, drunkards, and beggars." This lets us understand how highly the Chinese and Japs are to be reprobated for wishing to have nothing to do with Christian civilisation.

An English missionary has been killed in Madagascar. This is a small set-off against the number of Madagascar natives who have recently been killed by Europeans.

Crazed by religion, Mrs. Elias Gilder, of Allantown, Pa., only a few days ago sacrificed the life of her babe to appease the wrath of a supposed angry Deity. The child was suffocated. Its little body had been badly beaten, and the tiny ankles were hacked with a butcher-knife.

Mrs. Rayward, of Hull, had musical tastes, and eloped with another member of the choir in her church. She also eloped with her husband's money. The court has granted him a divorce with £300 damages.

William Horrocks, superintendent of a Farnworth Wesleyan school, and conductor of a Wesleyan Mission Brass Band, has been sentenced to three months' hard labor at Bolton for stealing his employer's goods.

Edward Purkess, bank-manager at Stratford, is arrested on a charge of embezzlement. Between £20,000 and £30,000 is said to be involved. Purkess was a sidesman at Woodford parish church.

Durrant, the Sunday-school superintendent who has been convicted of murdering one of his scholars and fellow communicants in a chapel at San Francisco, appears to have been a most pious scoundrel. He was secretary of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, and prayed with the people after committing the murder. Christianity does not count much as a preventive of crime, but then it is a splendid thing to lay your sins on Jesus afterwards.

A friend of ours got the *Freethinker* into the Brampton Working Men's New Liberal Club. It was laid on the table, but some bigots used to hide it away. Our friend thereupon pinned the following notice on the paper: "If this paper *is not* required, have the courage to *say so*. Do not *hide* it. It is placed here to draw *all classes* into the Liberal fold again, for narrow-mindedness lost the Liberals the last election. It is also placed here to contradict the statement that this is just a *Methodist* Club."

Mr. E. W. Lummis, of West Bromwich, proposes, as "a step towards that Christian reunion which is so much projected," the formation of a Guild of Good Works. If the title rightly represents the idea, we cannot see anything specifically Christian about it, and Mr. Lummis would probably have difficulty in getting Christians to join his Guild on terms of equality with Jews, Atheists, Agnostics, and Deists.

A correspondent informs us that he recently saw an organ in the London streets with a picture of the Last Supper in front, and the tune being ground out was "Beer, beer, glorious beer!" The central figure of the picture seemed to be wondering why it wasn't wine.

The *Church Times* (Nov. 29) itself exposes the nonsense of Professor Sayce about identifying Kudar-ku-mal with Chedorlaomer of Genesis xiv. Some time ago "Chilperic," in our columns, by giving a literal translation of this chapter, showed its mythical character. Sayce is on the wrong track in trying to find far-fetched historical identifications. But ever since he was called over the coals for his admissions about the non-historical character of Daniel and Esther, he has been trying to keep in with the orthodox as much as possible. They have the disposal of good billets.

According to Colonel Cockerill, the missionaries to Japan are usually half educated, so that the Japanese declare that "those who are so ignorant as to be unable to make a living doing aught else abroad become missionaries." The educated Japanese see through the pretences of the missions, which are mainly the means for enabling incompetent sky-pilots to live abroad in luxury.

The moderator of the United Presbyterian Church deplores the antipathy of present-day church-goers to long sermons. A minister who likes exhorting for a couple of hours stands no chance now-a-days, unless he provides smoking-pews. The *Kirkintilloch Herald*, however, is not sorry. Few ministers, it says, can preach acceptably at length; in fact, it is "about as much as some of them can do to keep their hearers awake for a quarter of an hour."

Anatole France, writing on his early days in the *Forum*, says his toy Noah's Ark was a great proof to him of the truth of the Scriptures. In his Bible he saw God with a white beard. He says: "How sincerely I believed in Him! although, between ourselves, I considered Him inclined to be whimsical, violent, and wrathful; but I did not ask Him to render an account of his actions. I was accustomed to see great personages behave in an incomprehensible manner." M. France says: "But I did not understand why God had prohibited that good Flemish Eve from touching the fruits of the tree which gave pleasant knowledge." He came afterwards to think that God said to Himself: "Science does not make happiness, and when men come to know much of history and of geography, they will grow sad."

ON WHEELS.

One parson says a multitude—
E'en leaving out the ladies—
Upon their bicycles to-day
Are steering straight for Hades.

Another vows he's visions had
Much more to mortal liking,
Wherein he saw on heaven's gold streets
The blessed angels biking.

Their wheels, we're told, were gilded, too,
To match the heavenly highways;
And pretty saints in bloomers sped
Along the gleaming byways.

Thus, parsons, tho' they're prejudiced,
Betwixt 'em make us feel now,
Whichever way a body's bound,
He "gets there" on a wheel now.

Male cyclers still may take short cuts
To Sheol thro' Chicago,
Tho' biking saints in bloomers there
Are under an embargo.

M. N. B.

The teaching of the "Sermon on the Mount" is immoral. Take no thought for to-morrow, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed." This injunction, so at variance with all economy, prudence, and wisdom, is uttered, not once incidentally, but three times. It constitutes the passport of the indolent tramp, the voucher of the improvident sponge on society, and the senseless excuse for the beggar. No wonder the mythical Jesus "had not where to lay his head," if he acted as he preached. He did not deserve any.—*A. S. Hudson, M.D.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 8, Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C. :—7.30, "Gladstone's Theology." (Admission free.)

December 15, Newcastle ; 22, Manchester ; 29, Camberwell.

January 5, Camberwell ; 12, 19, and 26, St. James's Hall.

February 2, Liverpool ; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—December 7, Blyth ; 8, South Shields ; 9, North Shields ; 15 and 22, Foresters' Hall. January 12 and 13, Bolton ; 19, Glasgow ; 26, Edinburgh.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

T. Riley.—Thanks. We have used them.

H. L. Sumner.—Obliged. See paragraph.

Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.—G. Dodds' Friend, 1s. ; John Umpleby, £20.

A. Druck's subscription to Shilling Month should have been acknowledged as 2s. 6d.

G. Dodds.—Thanks for cuttings, etc. We printed Mr. Putnam's "Why Don't He Lend a Hand?" in the *Secular Almanack* two years ago. Perhaps we may reprint it in the *Freethinker*.

H. C.—Thanks for cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

F. T.—See paragraph.

J. Walton.—The Salvation Army captain, whom you heard state that Charles Bradlaugh took out his watch and gave God Almighty five minutes to strike him dead, is probably too insignificant for much notice. Of course the story is a lie. Charles Bradlaugh prosecuted one fellow for telling it in print. We should like to see Freethought propaganda renewed at Hartlepool. Why not speak to the gentleman you mention yourself, and ask him to communicate with us?

J. M. R.—We have not read Tom Duncan's *Canadian Woman*, but we will look at it as soon as we find time. Thanks for cuttings.

G. F. Duplat.—You certainly suggested—and rather more than suggested—that Mr. Foote did not express his real opinions in the article on Miss Lanchester's case. However, we note your disclaimer of having *intended* to do so.

F. Cresswell.—Please forward a bill.

J. R. Bowman.—Thanks. See paragraph.

A. Hindley.—Sunday traders are proceeded against under the Act of Charles II., prohibiting people from following their ordinary avocations on the Lord's Day. The penalty is a fine, which, if not paid, can be recovered by distraint.

W. Dyson (Barnsley).—Mr. Foote will offer you a date as soon as possible.

E Shedley.—(1) The word means *water-life*, all that lives in the water. (2) The Puritans were at first a party in the Church of England, and as they could not make the Church conform to their pattern they attacked it from outside. They did not fight for religious liberty ; in fact, they did not understand it. (3) All sects outside the Church of England are Dissenters. (4) Your brother in America might order what he requires through the *Truthseeker* office, Lafayette-place, New York.

N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges : M. A. M., £1 ; Geo. Anderson, £5 ; Westminster Branch, 5s.

Papers Received.—Herald of Peace—Islington Gazette—Leek Times—The Literary Guide—Freethought Ideal—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Liberty—Boston Investigator—Glasgow Evening News—North-Eastern Daily Gazette—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Isle of Man Times—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker.

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

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One Year, 10s. 6d. ; Half Year, 5s. 3d. ; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d. ; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements* :—One inch, 4s. 6d. ; half column, £1 2s. 6d. ; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

Liberty is not a means to an end, it is an end itself. To secure it, to enlarge it, and to diffuse it, should be the main object of all social arrangements and of all political contrivances.—*Buckle.*

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote delivered three lectures at Bradford on Sunday. Bigotry having refused him every decent hall, he was forced back upon one which is of fair size, but so out of the way, ugly, dirty, and uncomfortable, that the general public would not go there to hear God Almighty. In the circumstances the audiences were as large as could be expected, and the lectures were to all appearance very highly relished. Friends were present from Halifax, Dewsbury, Leeds, and other places. There was a good sale of literature at the bookstall.

Mr. Foote lectures at Foresters' Hall this evening (Dec. 8) on "Mr. Gladstone's Theology," with special reference to his new article in the *Nineteenth Century*. There should be a large audience. Freethinkers will find this a favourable opportunity for bringing their more orthodox friends to the hall.

The lectures at Foresters' Hall will be discontinued, for the present, at the end of December. Mr. Foote has engaged St. James's Hall for three Sunday evening lectures in January. In February the Athenæum, in Tottenham Court-road, has been engaged for two Sunday evening lectures by Mr. Watts. Other Sunday lectures will be organised in the West-end during the rest of the winter.

Courses of week-night free lectures are being organised under Mr. Foote's scheme in various parts of London during January and February. Mr. Foote will try to start each course himself, and will be followed by Messrs. Watts, Cohen, Heaford, Moss, Snell, etc.

Mr. Foote will be lecturing in London the whole of January, and in the country the whole of February. It is his intention to deliver a number of week-night free lectures, and places that desire a visit from him should communicate as early as possible.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured last Sunday evening at the Club and Institute, Wood Green, to a select but a most enthusiastic audience. Christian bigotry has deprived the local Secularists for the present of the use of a public hall, but the members of this enterprising Branch of the N.S.S. are determined to still carry on their Sunday evening lectures, and we hope that all possible support will be rendered them in their laudable efforts.

Mr. Watts was too unwell to fulfil his engagement at Ipswich on Tuesday, Nov. 27. The lecture was postponed till Thursday, and, as Mr. Watts was still suffering, his place was taken at very short notice by Mr. William Heaford, whose obliging disposition is equal to his profound devotion to the cause of Freethought.

Mr. J. W. Gott, of Bradford, sends us a complete statement of the eight free lectures delivered in the district by Mr. C. Cohen. The deficit on the local expenses amounts to £10 17s. 1d., and the lecturer has to be compensated in addition. The places visited were Halifax, Heckmondwike, Stanningley, Todmorden, Keighley, Bingley, and Leeds. Good halls were engaged in each place, and the attendance was most encouraging, especially at Leeds, where twenty-five names were taken for a new Branch which is in formation. Five new Branches, altogether, have resulted from this effort ; and they will do good work if the propaganda can only be continued. Of course it will be less expensive in future. Mr. Grange has promised to follow up shortly the work begun by Mr. Cohen.

Mr. Foote's lecture scheme is hailed by the provincial Branches as the best new feature of our movement. All that is wanted to make it a triumphant success is money. If any Freethinker is moved to send in a handsome cheque, we shall be happy to announce it as an encouragement to others.

Just as we are going to press we receive a cheque per Mr. Charles Watts for £20 from our veteran friend, Mr. John Umpleby, of Blackburn. Clearly a case of "providence."

The Church party have been badly beaten in the Nottingham School Board elections, the Archdeacon being among the defeated candidates. The Radicals polled 25,000 votes more than "the enemy." No less than 19,000 votes were polled by the Independent Labor candidate.

Hiram S. Maxim, the famous scientist, contributes an article to the New York *World*, in which he argues that the Chinese acted quite naturally in killing the Christian missionaries, and that it is infamous to demand blood for their "crime." He denies that the Chinese are barbarians ; on the contrary, he says they are highly civilised, or they

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could never maintain such a large population. As for religious liberty, Mr. Maxim wants to know whether it really exists in any part of the world, except perhaps in Paris and Constantinople. Christians are very tender about their own "feelings," but very indifferent to the feelings of other religionists. "Suppose," he says, "the Chinese were to send missionaries into the Southern part of the United States, that these Chinamen should not only persist in teaching the Chinese religion, but should also erect a compound for women and children. Does anyone believe that the compound would not be attacked and the missionaries murdered? And what satisfaction would the Chinese Government be able to obtain from the United States Government? Simply the payment of a small sum of money for each of the missionaries murdered, while the actual culprits would never be brought to justice."

Tit-Bits offers a prize of one guinea for the best quotation from Shelley. No doubt this will excite fresh interest in the beauty of Shelley's poems, and incidentally to the Freethought views expressed in them.

The Herald of Peace, the organ of the Peace Society, gives a long extract on Arbitration from Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword*.

The *Leek Times* reproduces our last paragraph on the projected debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. W. Howard. It now remains to be seen whether Mr. Howard means debating or self-advertisement.

Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, writing in the *Forum* on "Woman's Position in Pagan Times," says: "Paganism in the North did, undoubtedly, tend to evolve sturdier types of womanhood than Christianity has done; and it accorded a recognition to female intelligence which Christianity has been far slower in according."

A debate on the question, "Are Christ's Teachings Practical?" takes place this Sunday evening at the Northumberland Hall, Newcastle. The disputants are Messrs. Lynn and R. Mitchell.

The *Boston Investigator* has a very good defence of Ingersoll's methods of dealing with the Bible, from the pen of W. C. Sturoc, who points out that the mission of rationality is to shatter the superstitions which act as a barrier to human advancement, and that talk about destructive and constructive methods is mainly verbal bamboozlement.

There are some lively bits in Mr. Frederic Harrison's "Unto This Last," a conversation on John Ruskin in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*. "When I remember," he says, "all the rabid things, the wicked things, the inhuman things, to which great and good men have been driven by faith in the Papacy and the Catholic Church, faith in Calvinism, faith in Communism, faith in Spiritualism—when I think of dying men dragging themselves to Lourdes, generous men turning assassins, and tender mothers adoring the divine judgment that consigns their children to hell-fire—when I reflect on all the folly and wickedness that has stricken men *gravi sub religione*"—well, when Mr. Harrison reflects on all this he can easily understand a twist in the brain of Ruskin.

With respect to usury, which Ruskin condemns and denounces, Mr. Harrison observes that it is expressly forbidden in the Bible. "He took the Bible," says Mr. Harrison, "and acted on it, come what may, and Bible Christians now mock at him for so doing."

It is all very well," Mr. Harrison says, "for you and for me to ask for a more common-sense creed, and to feel what a ghastly mess the primitive Christians would make of the world if they had their way. But it is too bad that the professing Christians who read their Bible on Sundays, and pretend to believe in it as the Word of God, should laugh to scorn a Christian poet who does in his soul accept it as God's own truth, and resolutely takes it as the law of his life. The Bible undoubtedly does say: 'Thou shalt not give thy money upon usury'; 'I am the Lord thy God'; and John Ruskin says: 'I will not give my money upon usury,' whereat the whole Christian world roars out in mockery and wrath—falls upon him as the Jews on Paul as 'a pestilent fellow,' a 'mover of sedition,' and calls out in a loud voice, like Festus to Paul, 'John! thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.'"

Mr. John Morley's article in the same magazine on Matthew Arnold is interesting, but the style is not up to his best level. "Destroys true epistolary charm" is terrible cacophony. It is enough to break the jaws of a Welshman. Curiously enough, Mr. Morley does not say a word about Arnold's essays on religion, which form so large a part of his prose writings. We wonder if the omission is deliberate—with a view to the by-election in the Montrose Burghs.

We have much pleasure in once more calling attention to *Humanity*, the little monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, published by Reeves, of 185, Fleet-street. The December number contains a report of Mr. Josiah Oldfield's address at the Memorial Hall on "The Scientific View" of the Rights of Men and Animals. "The Churches' View" is to be given by the Rev. A. L. Lilley on Tuesday evening (8), Dec. 12, Canon Wilberforce in the chair. Some account of this address will be given in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Frederic Harrison gives "The Ethical View" on January 21, and Mr. G. W. Foote "The Secularist View" on February 18. The admission to these meetings is free.

Alexandre Dumas, the great French playwright, who has just died, was a pronounced Freethinker. It was his personal wish that he should be buried without any religious ceremony. The expenses of his funeral are defrayed by the State. Jules Simon, who is himself a Deist, pays a high tribute of respect to the personal character of Alexandre Dumas. "He was in his friendship, as in his works," says Simon, "upright, tender, and firm."

The Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control (2 Serjeant's-inn, Fleet-street) has issued a series of tracts on National Education. Though written from a Nonconformist point of view, they contain a number of facts and arguments in opposition to the attempts to obtain clerical control over education.

A Burns exhibition is to be held at the Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts next year, and will be open all the summer.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, continuing in the *Contemporary Review* his chapters on Professional Institutions, deals with the evolution of the teacher and the still incomplete differentiation of the teaching from the priestly class. He takes note of the fact that at the present moment there is going on a struggle to re-acquire clerical control. "Clerics," he says, "have striven, and are still striving, to make the public help them to teach Church dogmas in Church schools. At the present time" (the article was apparently written in June) "the Archbishop and clergy at large are fathering an Act which shall give them State funds without State control. With an arrogance common to priesthoods in all times and places, no matter what the creed, they say to the State: 'We will say what shall be taught, and you shall pay for it.'"

Mr. Watts lectures on Saturday evening, December 7, at Blyth under Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme, and to-day (Sunday, Dec. 8) he lectures three times at South Shields under the auspices of the local branch of the N.S.S. On Monday evening, December 9, Mr. Watts lectures at North Shields under Mr. Foote's scheme.

At the last meeting of the N.S.S. Executive a committee was appointed to carry out the customary arrangements for the Annual Children's Party. This is always a very pleasant function. Some hundreds of little ones have a jolly evening, and their elders look on delightedly at a convenient distance. Of course it takes a fair sum of money to defray all the expenses, but the appeal for this object has never met with ungenerous response. Subscriptions *pro tem.* can be forwarded to Miss E. M. Vance, at 28, Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Arrangements are also being made for the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant, full notice of which will appear in due course.

Archæology and the Bible.

No less fruitful [than the researches in Assyria] have been modern researches in Egypt. While, on one hand, they have revealed a very considerable number of geographical and archæological facts proving the good faith of the narratives entering into the books attributed to Moses, and have thus made our early sacred literature all the more valuable, they have at the same time revealed the limitations of the sacred authors and compilers. They have brought to light facts utterly disproving the sacred Hebrew date of creation and the main framework of the early Biblical chronology; they have shown the suggestive correspondence between the ten antediluvian patriarchs in Genesis and the ten early dynasties of the Egyptian gods, and have placed by the side of these the ten antediluvian kings of Chaldean tradition, the ten heroes of Armenia, the ten primeval kings of Persian sacred tradition, the ten "fathers" of Hindu sacred tradition, and multitudes of other tens, throwing much light on the manner in which the sacred chronicles of ancient nations were generally developed.—*Professor Andrew D. White, in "The Popular Science Monthly."*

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LECTURING NOTES.

FREETHOUGHT advocacy is now passing through a fresh crisis in this country, which deserves the special attention of every member of the Secular movement. Its principles are as potent as ever, and its influence is penetrating more and more into theological, political, and social sections of society. It, therefore, becomes the more necessary that proper care and united action should be manifested in the promulgation of our views. In the various churches the old style of service fails to draw congregations; hence Christians have to adopt a new method of advocacy. Preachers no longer rely upon their sermons as the principal feature of attraction, for the reason that they have found good music and singing to be far more potent in commanding the attention of hearers than expositions of the perplexing doctrines of faith and grace.

The new conditions that have sprung up in the Freethought world require a new departure in advocacy. I do not mean that the battle with theology should cease, but I do mean that our plans of attack need revision, and that the arrangement for lectures should be more carefully studied. At some of my recent lectures in the provinces many complaints were made that the work of preparing for the meetings devolved upon one or two of the members of local societies. This should not be, as it is the duty of each one to take his turn in conducting the affairs of the society. Then, where morning and afternoon lectures are held, the same attention should be shown in conducting them that is given to the evening gatherings. But, as a rule, I have not found this to be the case, except in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and one or two other towns. Of course, the day audiences are not so large as at night. That, however, is no reason why the majority of members should confine their interest to the evening lecture.

It must be recognised that the meetings of the Socialists and Independent Labor Party, being held at the same time as ours, affect somewhat our audiences in the provincial towns, inasmuch as these organisations are largely composed of Freethinkers. Still, the rapid progress of Secular thought during the present decade would, under more favorable conditions, cause our halls to be filled.

The question arises, What can be done to meet the new requirements of Secular propaganda? This question, I believe, will be fully dealt with at our next Conference; but, in the meantime, I suggest the carrying out, to the fullest possible extent, of what is known as Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme. Speaking from experience, I pronounce it to be an unqualified success. At my recent lectures given upon this plan all the meetings have been full, and most of them crowded. Admission being free, Christians attended and listened attentively to what was advanced, and, in some cases, they acknowledged that the exposition of Secularism and the criticism of orthodoxy which they had heard were very different from what they expected.

The fact is, we have been so misrepresented by theological exponents that the general public have had no opportunity of fairly judging of the true character of our principles. What we have long required, and what this scheme provides, is a plan whereby Christians should be induced to attend our meetings. Many of them object to pay to hear that of which they have but little knowledge, or very erroneous ideas. I repeat that the success of this enterprise has been most encouraging; and, although the operation of the scheme is, for the time being, confined to week-night lectures, no doubt it will be extended in certain cases to Sunday meetings if sufficient financial support is afforded. It will be a grand day when we are sufficiently wealthy to have free admission on Sundays. Then the largest halls at our command will be filled; our philosophy will be better known, and the triumph of our principles will, in my opinion, be secure.

Under this scheme I have already held twelve meetings, and arrangements are being made for me to lecture under its auspices next week at Blyth and other places in the North of England, in Scotland during January, and throughout the London districts in February. Mr. Cohen has also done good work through the aid of the Lecturing Fund, and many new branches of the N.S.S. have been formed. Thus our practical work goes bravely on, and it is intended that it shall continue.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE VIRGIN OF CHARTRES.

(Nôtre Dame de Soubs-terre.)

"I am black, but comely."—SONG OF SOLOMON, i. 5.

CATHOLICISM supplies its votaries with a multiplicity of virgins. Some are more popular than others. There are, for instance, our Lady of Lourdes, our Lady of Loretto, and our Lady of Guadaloupe, all of whom have numerous devotees, who take long pilgrimages to pay their respects at their respective shrines. But the most venerable of all is Nôtre Dame de Chartres. I am particularly fond of old women. They always know a thing or two, and if you get into their good graces can tell many a quaint and curious story of the past. The oldest of old virgins in Europe was, as I have said, our Lady of Chartres in France, and the question whether the spirit which animated the old statue reincarnated itself in the new statue which takes its place is a most important one. For, alas, the venerable underground Virgin Mother is no more. On the 9 Frimaire of the year II. of the French Republic (Nov. 29, 1793) she was taken from her subterranean crypt and burnt. For some two thousand years she had wrought miracles; yet she could not withstand the Revolution. Virtue had gone out of her, and the question whether the virtue has entered into the modern statue, which has taken the old one's place, is an important one to the archæologist as well as to the hagiologist. For the old statue could unfold a tale. Certain it is that a Druidical grove and grotto existed on the spot where the Cathedral of Chartres now stands, and there was a subterranean idol with the inscription, *Virgini Parituræ*—To the Virgin who shall bring forth. This virgin was older than Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Did she represent Isis, the mother of Horus; Cures, the mother of Bacchus; or Cybele, the lover of Attys? Her name is uncertain, but her meaning is clear. The black, underground Virgin of Chartres was our ever-virgin Mother Earth, who, sure as Lady Day arrives, sends forth verdure from her teeming womb. She is truly the blessed virgin whose chief feast comes round in mid-August, when the corn is in the ear. Fecundated in spring, she gives birth in December in Beth-lehem, the house of corn. But why was the Virgin of Chartres black? Because she came from the east as well as from the earth. The earliest picture of the Virgin and Child, in the Roman catacombs, is a picture of Isis and Horus. Paris still retains its Greek name, Para Isis (under the protection of Isis), as its great Cathedral bears the name of Nôtre Dame (our Lady)—a term applied to Isis, Ceres, Cybele, and other virgin mothers.

LUCIANUS.

A Calendar for Freethinkers.

The most interesting portion of *The Secular Almanack* for 1896 is that which might, in forgetfulness, be most easily overlooked. We mean the calendar itself. Instead of the conventional array of new moons, Sundays after Trinity, and the nativities of King George the Third's numerous descendants, a thoroughly novel and instructive list of the birth and death days of great Rationalists meets the delighted eyes. Taking the June catalogue as a sample, we note such names as Littré, James Thomson, W. J. Fox, Paine, Bruno, Harriet Martineau, Colenso, Mazzini, Huxley, etc. Mr. Foote furnishes a useful retrospect of 1895. Mr. J. M. Wheeler, whose fund of curious learning is inexhaustible, writes on the Calendar, old style and new, Easter, Christmas, and the like. Mr. Charles Watts looks hopefully at the prospects of the Freethought "Work of To-day." Full details touching the N.S.S. Council, Principles, and Branches, along with lists of American, Colonial, and Continental Societies, complete a very handy issue.—*Watts's Literary Guide.*

I am just and honest, not because I expect to live in another world, but because, having felt the pain of injustice and dishonesty towards myself, I have a fellow feeling with other men who would suffer the same pains if I were unjust or dishonest towards them. Why should I give my neighbor short weight in this world because there is not another world in which I should have nothing to weigh out to him? I am honest because I don't like to inflict evil on others in this life, not because I am afraid of evil to myself in another. It is a pang to me to witness the suffering of a fellow being, and I feel his suffering the more because he is mortal, because his life is so short; and I would have it, if possible, filled with happiness, and not misery.—*George Eliot.*

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THE REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE.

"These things themselves are neither true nor rare;
The wonder's how the devil they got there."

It is the horrible dream of a madman; the result of heavy lobster suppers at Patmos. If the rhapsody did not contain certain nasty passages, it would be awfully funny. The writer makes the most awkward blunders, far surpassing those of old Moses anent cosmogony. He predicts a general cataclysm, and all the worlds we see with our naked eyes (for he knew nothing of those that could be seen only through the telescope) go heelie-goleerie on to our unfortunate planet, evidently the centre of attraction, which, according to his weird fancy, is the biggest cosmic lump, and can stand the heaviest of bumps. Chapter vi. 12 I call a transformation scene. The sun is blackened, and the moon (sweet Selena) dyed in blood, *ad captandum vulgus*. Total eclipse! Verse 13.—"The stars of heaven fell unto the earth even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs." A silly comparison. This event is just as likely to happen as all the cannon balls in the world dropping on the top of an ordinary-sized potato. Where would that potato be? If a few stars only fell upon the earth, our planet would burst up into minute fragments, and disappear like a heap of sawdust in a whirlwind. Yet "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man [all, in fact, except the women] hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains" (verse 15). Poor devils! There could be neither rocks nor dens to hide in, for nothing would be left of this earth after such gigantic concussions.

VII.—Marvellous to relate, the world is still revolving. The damage done cannot have been very serious. The winds are stopped for devilment. They shall no longer blow on the earth. What a heavenly calm; but, oh, what stenches! No more breezes, gales, tornadoes, or squalls. Verse 1.—After the general smash up the world still revolves, for an angel says: "Hurt not the earth" (verse 3). After these frightful cosmical disturbances, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (viii. 1). From this I conclude that there were no ladies in the celestial roost. Trust them being silent five minutes. "*Pas si bête.*" Verse 5.—More cosmical phenomena and disturbances to the sound of seven trumpets. Fancy blowing brass instruments as an accompaniment to voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. What a disgusting din! Then follow hail and fire mingled with blood (verse 7). Query, whose? What a horrid mess! It is about the strangest mixture ever heard of, producing something like the effect of a seidlitz powder on an empty stomach. Of course, this queer stuff falling on the earth in large quantities would interfere somewhat with the vegetation. Verse 8.—"Then a great mountain, a volcano, was cast into the sea, and the *third* part of the sea became blood" *(sic)*. More likely turned into hot water *pro tem.*—cooked fish (stewed Leviathan) coming to the surface. Verse 9.—Of course, "a *third* part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died." What a haul for Billingsgate! Verse 10.—Another great star fell from heaven (at the blowing of the *third* angel). It fell upon the *third* part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. What a funnily-shaped star! All had evidently not come down. This star is called "Wormwood." Crasher would be more *à propos*. Verse 12.—Next, "the *third* part of the sun is again smitten, and the *third* part of the moon, and the *third* part of the stars, so as the *third* part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a *third* part of it, and the night likewise." This seems to me madness with method. How damnably irritating is this *third*. I understand the *third* in music, but not in cosmos smashing.

IX. 1.—Again a star falls from heaven upon the earth with the key of the bottomless pit *(sic)*. I cannot imagine the shape and size of that key; if I could, I would have the key to the mystery.

XII. 4.—More star shooting. The tail of a great dragon drew the *third* part of the stars of heaven! Still harping on the stars. The repetition of the word *third* makes one suspect that this fellow had an inkling of the rule of three, but not according to Cocker. And so he raves on. The madder his utterances, the more inspired, no doubt. Of course, we think that the earth will come to an end some day, but not in such an idiotic fashion. How beautifully Byron describes the final catastrophe! I can well imagine it: "Darkness. . . I had a dream that was not all a dream." The English poet's utterances are more true and more sublime than the ravings of the apostolical lunatic.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

THE PAINE EXHIBITION.

THE centenary of the publication of Paine's *Age of Reason* is a fitting occasion for bringing together such an exhibition of Paine relics as have been on view at South Place Institute. Mr. M. D. Conway, who, by his *Life of Thomas Paine*, has done so much for the vindication of the author-hero, and who, with Mr. Todd, the secretary, has been chiefly instrumental in getting up the present exhibition, lays most stress on Paine's political work. But it was by his *Age of Reason*, which brought him most obloquy, that he is most widely, and probably will be longest, known. So much of Paine's life was spent in America that an exhibition there would be likely to bring out some fresh articles of historical interest; but the present one exceeds both in number and variety all expectation. Four hundred and eighty items appear in the catalogue. It is true the majority of these are books, but that goes without saying in the case of a man whose chief work was done with the pen. Mr. Conway himself exhibited a great variety of Paine literature, including first editions of all his works, and the principal biographies and other works written about him. The most amusing of these, perhaps, is the broadsheet issued by the publishers of the *British Workman*, entitled "Thomas Paine's Recantation." A large number of portraits, prints, and other relics are also exhibited by Mr. Conway, many of them coming from America. Mr. Conway himself has the excellent oil painting of Paine by Jarvis, which looks better on canvas than in his *Life of Paine*. The portrait by Romney is probably still in existence somewhere, though its locality is unknown; but the engraving by Sharpe remains and attests its merits. Several copies were lent by various gentlemen, that belonging to Mr. G. J. Holyoake having an inscription from Paine to Clio Rickman. The most notable copy of the Romney portrait was that painted by Millière, and given by him to Charles Bradlaugh. The painter himself was shot on the steps of the Pantheon after the Commune. He died crying "*Vive l' Humanité.*" Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, who lent this, also sent portraits of Carlile and his daughters, and the baby-shoe worn by Hypatia Carlile while in prison with her father.

There were a number of engravings of the first iron bridge at Wearmouth, designed by Paine. A large-sized engraving and the patent were sent by Mr. Truelove, together with a number of interesting relics, including the table on which Paine wrote *The Rights of Man* and other works. This table he first saw over half a century ago when in the possession of Clio Rickman. We were pleased to notice a portrait of Mr. Truelove himself, who well deserves place with Eaton, Carlile, Watson, and others who have published Paine's works and maintained a free press.

A number of political medals and tokens in connection with Paine and his time were exhibited by E. Snelling and by A. W. Waters. Jugs, with portraits, etc., were lent by Mr. Willett from his collection of Historical Pottery in the Brighton Museum. A good bust of Paine, published by Mr. Truelove, was on the platform, together with death masks of both Paine and Burke. Among portraits of those brought into connection with Paine were several of Rickman, Eaton, Cobbett (of whom there were a number of relics contributed by his biographer, Mr. A. Smith), Carlile, Frances Wright, etc. Mr. Wheeler sent a portrait of Elihu Palmer, the blind author of *The Principles of Nature*, who, with Paine, set up the first Deistic Church in America. A well-engraved broadsheet, published by Carlile, showing Paine in a triumphal car, driving away superstition; the first German editions of *The Rights of Man* (Copenhagen, 1793) and of *The Age of Reason*; various lives of Paine and works issued by Eaton and Carlile, were also exhibited by Mr. Wheeler.

The only easily accessible objects conspicuous to us by their absence from the room were portraits of Blake, who assisted Paine to escape from England, and views of the Paine Memorial Hall at Boston. There was, however, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories*, illustrated by Blake, exhibited by Mr. Buxton Forman, who sent many other interesting works; while Mr. Alfred Morrison contributed many autograph letters and manuscripts of Paine. Other autographs were lent by Dr. Clair J. Grece, who contributed over forty articles. Probably the most curious article of the whole collection was a portion of Paine's brain, sent by Mr. Louis Breeze. Altogether the exhibition was of a most varied and interesting character to admirers of Paine, and the catalogue itself makes a good memento of the occasion. South Place Institute, turned for a while into a museum, was on Monday almost inconveniently crowded, many well-known Freethinkers being present. Music was interspersed, and brief addresses were given by Mr. Conway, Mr. Holyoake, Mrs. Bonner, and Mr. Picton.

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BOOK CHAT.

The specimen page of the new critical edition of the Hebrew Old Testament gives five different colorings of the passage it prints (1 Samuel xx. and xxi.). That is to say, five different writers are represented on this one page of the Bible. The Holy Ghost must have been more than a trinity—a multiplicity of persons.

* * *

R. McClure says of the late Robert Louis Stevenson: "He had no interest in the evangelising spirit. He liked best the primitive man of the islands, unbaptised, and not bartering for powder. The man who, in the Cevennes, wrote, 'Thus, to the high entertainment of the angels, do we pelt one another with evangelists, like schoolboys bickering in the snow,' was not driven to enthusiasm by the missionaries of the South Seas or the effect of their work."

* * *

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for December is as useful and interesting as ever. The brightly written review of Professor Huxley's collected writings is continued. "Jottings" are lively and clever—though, by the way, Thomas Dekker, the old dramatist, should not be printed as *Decker*. The Rev. Charles Voysey will scarcely like the criticism of his "Theism as a Science."

* * *

The Rev. D. P. Faure, who writes *The Truth About the Bible*, discourses delivered in the Free Protestant Church, Cape Town (Cape Town Argus Publishing Co.), is a very Liberal "Free Protestant" indeed. In this *brochure* he gives a lot of facts about the old books, which he regards as a purely human production. Of the ordinary theory of his school, that the Bible is human on one side and divine on another, right on morals and religion though wrong on science and history, he says: "The logical consistency of this theory is difficult to discover, but it is the necessary result of the recent scientific discoveries. The theory of plenary inspiration has broken down before these. Thinking men have been forced to admit that the science and the history and the chronology of the Bible are wrong; and they now claim infallibility for it only when it deals with the regions of the unknown. This theory, therefore, amounts to this, that the Bible is declared infallible in all those parts where it is practically impossible to test its correctness." We are glad to hear the work is having a good circulation, as it must tend to propagate Freethought and break up the old superstitions in South Africa.

* * *

In Miss Garnett's *Women of Turkey* (p. 73) mention is made that among the modern Greeks there is a custom similar to that we recently cited from M. D. Conway as existing at christenings in Cyprus—viz., of cutting three tiny locks of hair from the baby's head, and throwing them in the font in the name of the Father, Son, and Ghost. The hair symbolises the life, and, in the superstition of many countries, a lock places the person from whose head it is cut in the power of the one to whom it is given.

* * *

The Arcana of Nature, by Hudson Tuttle (London: H. A. Copley, Canning Town, E.; 2s. 6d.; 1895), purports to be a revelation of the History and Laws of Creation. If, as the publisher states, it was first published thirty-five years ago, it was certainly much in advance of the time, even though anticipated by the *Vestiges of Creation*. It is throughout evolutionary, and so mainly in accord with the conclusions of the latest science that we wonder why the author uses the term "creation" at all.

MR. PUTNAM ON THE FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

On Sunday morning, amidst alternate rain and shine, I journey over to Failsworth, about four miles from Manchester centre. It is a small manufacturing place of about 15,000 inhabitants; but it has a most wonderful development of Freethought constructive ideas—a Secular Sunday-school which has been in existence over fifty years. It began in a small and obscure way. Its history is scarcely traceable for a while, but it was a persistent movement; there were vigorous personalities connected with it; it grew and flourished; and is now an established institution, with an excellent property and membership. The services on Sunday were exceedingly interesting. There was singing by the little children, and by the larger pupils and the congregation. There is an orchestra connected with the school which is excellent. I gave addresses afternoon and evening. There was a full attendance, notwithstanding the stormy weather. The American visitor was warmly welcomed. He will not forget the brightness and promise of this Secular School, where the freshness of childhood gives inspiration to the work, where we see that our places as we pass on are filled with the energy and the enthusiasm of youth. We realise that Secularism has for its work the art, the music, the poetry, and the beauty of life; that it can interest and educate the child-heart as well as the mature brain. The Secular Sunday-school is a most noble institution.

—*Boston Investigator.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

A DREADFUL FATE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Though neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, I foresee for you, and other prominent Freethinkers, a fate compared to which that of the martyrs of old will be enviable. They were imprisoned, tortured, and burnt. Green wood was supplied by Calvin's executioners to prolong the burning agonies of Servetus. The rack, the wheel, the boot, and many other devices of pious ingenuity, were brought into requisition that heretics might have a foretaste of the eternity of woe which God Almighty has provided for his non-elect. Worse than this awaits you. Yes, worse! for Christians have invariably pursued Freethinkers not only with injury, but calumny. First they took their lives, then their liberties. Now they take their characters. Who has not heard of the wickedness of Voltaire, the horrible death-bed of Paine? But worse, infinitely worse than this, awaits you. When heretics were too strong to be killed, they were left to rot in prison; when they could no more be imprisoned, they were ostracised; and now they can no more be ostracised, a yet more subtle and horrible punishment has been devised. What is it, do you ask? The most malignant, cruel, and abominable charge that can be brought against a self-respecting man. Yes, in days to come they will say that you, Bradlaugh, and Ingersoll *were Christians*. Already the odious, dishonest lie has been used against the characters of Darwin and Huxley, and I have heard it darkly whispered of Ingersoll and Bradlaugh. How can you hope to escape such great damnation?

Uncle Benjamin.

PROFANE JOKES.

It was a colored preacher who said to his flock: "We have a collection to make this morning, and, for the glory of heaben, whichever of you stole Mr. Jones's turkeys, don't put anything on the plate." One who was there says: "Every blessed niggah in de church came down wid de rocks."

Gilbert Parker recently encountered a Canadian bishop whom he had known in his boyhood. The bishop pompously inquired: "Ah, Gilbert! and are you still writing your—ah—little books?" Mr. Parker answered promptly: "Yes, bishop. And are you still preaching your—ah—little sermons?"

"You fellows," roared the little man with the bristling moustache, "are a gang of thieves, cutthroats, liars, swindlers"—

"What do you mean? You"—

"Embezzlers, suborners of perjury, political tricksters"—

"Shut up, or we'll"—

"Rascals, assailers of innocence, and"—

"You"—

"Oppressors of the poor, wolves, tigers, jackals, skunks"—

"Kill him! Kill him! Bring a rope"—

Demure Little Woman—"Mercy, men! He's only practisin' on an imaginary congregation"—

"What does the scoundrel mean, then?"

"Oh, Jim's no scoundrel. He's got an idea that old-style preachin's too slow, and he's going to start out as a new style of evangelist."

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(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Mr. Gladstone's Theology."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, Touzeau Parris, "Some Bible Symbols." Tuesday, at 8, social party. Wednesday, at 8, public discussion.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, W. J. Ramsey, "Good Tidings of Great Joy." Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings.

CAMBERWELL: North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "The Meaning of Atheism."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. Heaford, "Why Should a Freethinker Fear to Die?"

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (76 Libra-road, Roman-road): 8, Sunday-school; 7.30, F. J. Gould, "Life of Bradlaugh."

ISLINGTON BRANCH: 8.15, special general meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road): 7, J. Kaspary, "Judaism."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "England's Duty to Inferior Races."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Mr. Manning, Dramatic Recitals.

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stuart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, A. Lewis, "Scientific and Theological Foundations of Morality."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, A. Holland, "The Ethics, Humor, and Philosophy of Shakespeare's Works."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, J. R. Wright, a paper.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, Chapman Cohen, "Charles Darwin"; 2.30, "Christianity and Morality"; 6.30, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"

HULL (Cobden Hall, Stocey-street): 7, Mr. Starke, "The Antiquity of Man."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Felix Volkhosky, "Exile Life in Siberia"—with lantern illustrations.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Progress." Special committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Edward Aveling, "The Value of Commodities"; 6.30, "Shelley: Socialist and Atheist."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, debate between Messrs. Lynn and R. Mitchell, "Are Christ's Teachings Practical?"

NORTH SHIELDS (Spiritualist Hall, Camden-street): Monday, at 7.30, Charles Watts will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Unbelief *v.* Faith—A Reply to E. W. Bailey, of London."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, Charles Watts, "Trust in God: A Delusion"; 3, "Theological Puzzles"; 7, "Secularism and Modern Thought."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Mr. Mitchison, a paper on "Buddha."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, "Salvation Army Charity."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN. 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 8, Glasgow; 11 and 12, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne; 15, Blackburn; 22, Wood Green; 29, Ball's Pond.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Dec. 22, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—December 8, Balls Pond; 15, Wood Green; 29, Foresters' Hall.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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TALES FROM THE BIBLE.

Tales from the Bible, Told to My Daughter. By F. J. Gould. Issued by the Rationalist Press Committee. (Watts & Co.)

MR. GOULD is a true soldier in the great army of human liberation. We have not the slightest doubt that his worldly prospects have been seriously injured by his devotion to Freethought. He has sacrificed what he valued least, and preserved his independence and self-respect. For many years he has served his ideas with a well-practised pen. His information is extensive, his English is irreproachable, and his style is one of admirable lucidity. We are able to speak with unstinted praise of his *Concise History of Religion*, two volumes of which have already been published. When the third appears, to complete the work, Mr. Gould may claim—though he will *not* claim—to have adequately filled an obvious gap in the more instructive literature of Rationalism.

Many of our readers will recollect that Mr. Gould is profoundly interested in the education of children, and sternly opposed to Bible teaching in Board schools. His passionate, but by no means wild, protest against such teaching was widely circulated during the last School Board elections in London, and brought upon him the ridiculous abuse of the *Daily Chronicle*. Mr. Gould's letter, which appears on another page of the *Freethinker*, calls upon Freethinkers to withdraw their children from religious instruction. We hope there will be a wide response to his appeal. The present writer has three children who are thus withdrawn from superstitious influence. He mentions the fact, not boastingly, but simply to persuade others, if he may, by his own example. Children are not so cruelly martyrised by this policy as parents are apt to imagine; and, after all, it is well that they should have a taste of something else than mere acquiescence, even in the tender age of intellectual infancy.

Mr. Gould, however, is not opposed to Bible reading by children, though he is opposed to their reading it in public schools. With certain by no means unimportant qualifications, he seems to share the view of the late Professor Huxley on this subject. Like this great scientist, and still greater controversialist, Mr. Gould holds the Bible in high estimation. Of course he is entitled to his opinion, but we must frankly say that we are unable to share it. The literary and historical value of the Bible seems to us to be monstrously exaggerated, even by persons who have emancipated themselves from its supernaturalism. From the point of view of evolution, it is simply invaluable; but this point of view is necessarily impossible to children.

The volume before us is an outcome of Mr. Gould's ideas on the Bible. The tales were written for his own daughter, not yet in her teens, and is published for "readers of her age and general capacity." That the book is well written goes without saying. Judged from the author's standpoint, it is a most excellent performance; and, considering the multitude of Christian books about the Bible, we hazard a hope that this one by a Freethinker may have an opportunity, through a wide circulation, of achieving its utmost possible usefulness.

But the question remains whether Mr. Gould's standpoint is the right one, and it is only fair to let him explain it, as he does in the following paragraph of his Preface:—

> "Many parents, who have freed themselves from the narrow orthodoxy which misunderstands the Bible while professing to revere it, often halt between two opinions. At one time they deem it best to keep the Bible altogether out of their children's hands; in which case the young people are deprived of information which is necessary to the comprehension of a large part of human history. At another time they incline to letting the children receive the popular religious instruction; in this case the young minds get imbued with doctrines and ideas which run counter to reason and to the moral sense. I counsel a middle way. Let the child be introduced to the Bible literature through a simple manual in which the picturesque old legends shall be related; but let the stories be combined with suggestions and warnings which will prevent an intelligent child from believing that all the narratives of the Bible are historical, or all its teachings pure."

The "middle way" is dear to Englishmen, but, in this case, what is its justification? We start, of course, from the position that the Bible is not the word of God; that it is not in any way inspired; that it is entirely a human production; that it is simply a statement of the mythology, legends, religious beliefs, and ethical doctrines of the Jews and the early Christians. Now what is the use of such a book *to children*, unless they are to accept its mythology and legends as history, and its religion and ethics as divinely authoritative? Christians desire children to accept the Bible in that way, and are logical in making them read it—and it alone of all the "sacred scriptures" of the world. But the Freethinker does not regard the Bible as unique, nor does he recognise its claim to any sort of authority. To him it is one religious book among many, and its importance in any part of Christendom is merely a geographical accident. Giving it a position of uniqueness, therefore, is at once a concession to Christian bigotry and an affront to the principles of evolution and humanity.

There seems to us no more reason for giving children the Bible to read than for giving them the Koran, the Vedas, the Buddhist scriptures, or any other of the "sacred books of the East," which make such a formidable array in Max Müller's edition.

We cannot see, either, that the Bible is "necessary to the comprehension of a large part of human history." The history of the ancient Jews, even if the Bible really contains it, is not of transcendent importance. Civilisation owes immensely more to the great empires of which we only catch glimpses in the Jewish scriptures. From the secular standpoint, a child had far better read Rollin, or some more recent history of antiquity. Above all, let him read Plutarch, who, historically and humanly, is worth all the Bible writers put together. As to the New Testament, how much *history* does it contain? To learn the history of the Christian religion we have to go to other sources.

The Bible is a book of *supernaturalism*. There is the fact which makes it an impossible book for the children of Freethinkers. Mr. Gould relates its "picturesque old legends," and what is the result? Most of the simple charm of the original has vanished, and what remains is minimised by the constant necessity of saying "Of course it isn't true." Sometimes the imaginative element is eliminated, and the result is mere distraction. "Out of the darkness," Mr. Gould says, "sprang a man who wrestled with Jacob for some hours." Now there is no *man* in the story; the other party in that wrestle was superhuman—an angel or Yahveh himself. And in this lies its romantic interest; but there is nothing particularly interesting in a "some

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hours" wrestle between a couple of mere men, unless it is related with varied and exciting details; and even then there should be some prize or great object achieved at the finish. "Some hours" fighting is all very well, if the victor rescues and marries the lovely ill-used heroine.

We should like to treat this subject at greater length, but our space is too limited on this occasion. Our difference with Mr. Gould is expressed frankly—we hope not offensively. We should be sorry to detract from the merit of his book, judged from his own standpoint. It is ably and beautifully written; and, we repeat, if books *about* the Bible, *instead* of the Bible, or *preparatory* to it, are to be used at all, this one should take a high and honorable place. Much information is given incidentally, without being officiously obtruded, and the tales are so arranged as to present a "connected, chronological view of the Old Testament."

G. W. FOOTE.

MOON-LORE.

THE wide prevalence of lunar superstitions tends to show their antiquity. Mr. W. F. Mayers (*Notes and Queries on China and Japan*, p. 123) says: "No one can compare the Chinese legend with the popular European belief of the 'man in the moon' without feeling convinced of the certainty that the Chinese superstition and the English nursery tale are both derived from kindred parentage, and are linked in this relationship by numerous subsidiary ties. In all the range of Chinese mythology there is, perhaps, no stronger instance of identity with the traditions that have taken root in Europe than in the case of the legends relating to the moon." The Rev. J. Doolittle, in his *Social Life of the Chinese* (vol. ii., p. 65), mentions their making moon-cakes. In Jeremiah vii. 18 we read: "The women knead dough to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven." According to Rashi, an image was stamped on these cakes. Our hot-cross buns probably commemorate the worship of the moon—Diana of the crossways. The Greeks made, for Selene, cakes called σελῆναι—moon-shaped; and moon-cakes used to be made not so long ago in Lancashire.

The Virgin Mary has been, by some, connected with the moon. She is depicted standing on a crescent, and surrounded with stars. She is called in the Missal "Sancta Maria, coeli Regina, et mundi Domina." Her first worshippers were the female Collyridians, who sought her favor by libations and offerings of cakes. In the Apocryphal Gospel of Matthew, and in the Gospel of Mary's Nativity, we read that when the Blessed Virgin was an infant she ran up the fifteen steps of the temple at full speed, which may, perhaps, describe the progress of the new moon to the full.

What Tacitus says of the Germans, that they believe that certain things are best undertaken in the new moon, or before its full, is applicable to the peasant to-day; and not to the Teutonic race only, but to Slavs, Kelts, Chinese, and Central Africans. Tusser, in his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, writes:—

> Sowe peason and beanes in the wane of the moone—
> Who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soone—
> That they with the planet may rest and arise
> And flourish, with bearing most plentiful-wise.

In Cornwall people still gather their medicinal plants when the moon is of a certain age, and pigs must always be killed when the moon is coming to the full. By performing all sorts of operations at stated times and seasons, unlettered people kept themselves in time with the lord of growth, the light of darkness, and great time regulator, the moon. While the calendar remained lunar thirteen was a lucky number, but when solar reckoning came in it became a feminine symbol and unlucky.

Aubrey, in his *Remaines of Gentilisme* (p. 83), says: "In Yorkshire, etc., northwards, some country woemen doe worship the New Moon on their bare knees, kneeling upon an earth-fast stone. And the people of Athol, in the High lands in Scotland, doe worship the New Moon." Camden, in his *Britannia* (vol. ii., p. 380), writes of the Irish: "Whether or no they worship the moon I know not; but when they first see her after the change they commonly bow the knee and say the Lord's Prayer; and, near the wane, address themselves to her with a loud voice, after this manner: Leave us as well as thou foundest us." Halliwell Phillips mentions, among his *Popular Rhymes*:—

> I see the moon, and the moon sees me;
> God bless the moon, and God bless me.

This looks like a Christian adaptation of older moon-worship. In Devonshire it is lucky to see the moon over the right, but unlucky to see it over the left shoulder. To see it straight before you is good fortune to the end of the month.

T. Thiselton Dyer says: "Various forms of moon-worship survive in the divinations and superstitious rites still associated, here and there, with its changes, many of which are supposed to influence the affairs of daily life. Thus the peasant considers it unlucky to have no piece of silver money in his pocket to turn for prosperity when he first sees the new moon. In Yorkshire the only way of averting this ill-omen is at once to turn head over heels." "I have known persons," says Mr. Hunt (*Popular Romances of West of England*, p. 429), speaking of Cornish superstitions, "whose attention has been called to a clear new moon, hesitate: 'Hey, I seed her out a'doors afore.' If not, they will go into the open air, and, if possible, show the moon a piece of gold, or at all events turn their money."

In Berkshire and other counties, says Mr. Dyer, at the appearance of a new moon, young women go into the fields, and, whilst looking up at it, repeat the following rhyme:—

> New moon, new moon, I hail thee!
> By all virtue in thy body,
> Grant this night that I may see
> He who my true love is to be.

Georgina F. Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 256, says: "I was myself accustomed in my childhood, on the first sight of the new moon, to curtsey three times, turning round between each curtsey in the expectation of receiving a present before the next moon. Some require nine bows or curtseys without the mystic turns, and some Shrewsbury friends simply perform the ceremony 'for luck,' without the definite expectation of a gift. The rite prescribed by a lady at Ruyton is to curtsey three times, saying, 'Pretty moon, pretty moon, pretty moon!' It is also lucky to get someone to kiss you when you see the new moon."

Mr. F. E. Sawyer, in his *Sussex Folk-Lore and Superstitions*, mentions a Sussex girl admitted to one of Dr. Barnardo's Village Homes who (*Night and Day*, 1881) says she had no knowledge of God; "the only thing she had any reverence for was the moon." She said: "You mustn't point at the moon like that, and you mustn't talk about it." A clergyman of Shrewsbury says he was instructed in childhood that it is wicked to point the finger at the moon! In Germany it is held wicked to point at the stars, "because they are angels' eyes." Mrs. Latham says that in West Sussex they bow or curtesy to the new or lady moon, as she is styled, to deprecate bad luck. The Rev. Mr. Parish says little girls curtsey three times to the new moon, and adds that it would be useless to remonstrate with his churchwarden for trying to catch sight of the new moon over his left shoulder, "especially as he might detect me in turning over my money three times at the same moment." Here I must pause and explain. In old symbology the left side is feminine, the right masculine. To look over the left shoulder has a totally different significance from looking over the right, being the proper way to regard a lady. Turning money in the pocket comes simply from the idea that the increase of the moon causes other things to increase, for which spitting on them is also efficacious.

At the first appearance of the first new moon of the year Sussex girls go out, and, looking on the moon, repeat these lines:—

> All hail to thee, Moon, all hail to thee!
> I pray thee, good Moon, reveal to me
> This night who my lover or husband will be.

In many parts there is a practice of divination by counting the reflections of the moon in the water. This is to tell when the lover, husband, or baby will come. Somerset folk, I believe, are called moon-rakers through this practice. In days gone by it was a common practice among peasants to say, when the moon was full: "It is a fine moon, God help her."

An astronomer showed some Sussex laborers the moon through his telescope. One, being asked his opinion, replied: "Well, sir, it be a gashly sight. Tester, he said so, when he see it; and he wur quite right; for you know, sir, that he haint never been to say well since."

J. M. WHEELER.

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THEOLOGICAL PERPLEXITIES.

ACCORDING to the New Testament (1 Peter i. 20), the death of Christ "was foreordained before the foundation of the world"; and theology teaches that man was created perfect and immortal. To the non-theological mind this is exceedingly perplexing, inasmuch as, if it were ordained that Jesus should die for the redemption of the world, the transgressions of Adam and Eve were only a part of God's plan, and certainly did not merit any curse, but rather a blessing. To urge that man had a free will does not remove the difficulty. If man had any choice in the matter, and supposing he had chosen differently, God's plans would have been thwarted. The account of creation as given in the Bible implies that man was so made that he could only follow the course which should ultimately lead to the sacrifice of Christ. Thus the fourth Gospel tells us that Christ knew from the beginning that Judas would betray him (John xiii. 21). Now, if the death of Christ was pre-ordained, so also was "the fall of man," as the one depends upon the other. "For as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive." If this be true, it was impossible for man to have been created perfect. But if man gave way to temptation, was not that a proof of his imperfection?

This story of the "Fall" suggests the following perplexing questions: (1) How could Adam and Eve have been free to choose when God had given them desires to eat a certain fruit, which he had caused to grow, and when he had also provided a serpent, "more subtil than any beast of the field," to tempt the woman? (2) Did God intend the fruit to be eaten? If yes, Adam and Eve committed no sin in partaking of it; if no, they acted in opposition to the plans of an omnipotent God. (3) Who created the serpent? If God, then he was responsible for the results; if, however, the serpent was not created by God, he was not the creator of all things. (4) If God were correct in saying that everything he had made was "very good" (Genesis i. 31), how did the serpent become bad? (5) How could Eve know, before she acquired knowledge, that the tree "was to be desired to make one wise" (Genesis iii. 6)? Would not this have been putting the effect before the cause? (6) If the plan were foreordained "before the foundation of the world," how was it possible for events to have happened differently from what they did?

What is termed "God's foreknowledge" is another most perplexing theory, inasmuch as it appears to us that, if he knew that a certain event would happen, that event must take place. We think it was Charles Southwell who wrote: "It has often been asserted that the events foreknown by God are certain, but not necessary. Those who say this would do well to consider its absurdity, which is, indeed, very evident. For, if the existence of a future event be certain, is its non-existence in the course of things possible? If its non-existence is not possible, how is the existence of the event contingent? And if its non-existence be possible, how is the existence of the event certain? And if the existence of the event be uncertain, how can the knowledge of its existence be certain?" We commend this foreknowledge puzzle to the attention of modern defenders of Christianity. No marvel that the orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith are being rapidly given up by the intelligent thinkers of to-day. Equally puzzling is the doctrine of predestination, which, if true, renders the freedom of the will an impossibility. For, if God predestined man to a certain condition, and knew that he would adopt a particular course, how could freedom of the will be exercised?

What does the free-will theory imply? Why this: That will, or volition, is a free cause—that is, a cause which is not an effect; a supposition which, to the human mind, is entirely incomprehensible. Sir W. Hamilton says: "Moral liberty does not merely consist in the power of doing what we will, but in the power of willing what we will." If this be so, the question arises, What is this "willing" power, and where is it located? Is it an entity that controls volition? If so, upon what does this power depend? Even Hamilton admits: "How the will can possibly be free must remain to us, under the present limitation of our faculties, wholly incomprehensible. We are unable to conceive an absolute commencement; we cannot, therefore, conceive a free volition." In our opinion, absolute freedom of the will is impossible; for, if a person has the power to call up a desire by the will, it is certain that some prior desire induced him to do so. What, therefore, caused *that desire*? Suppose an individual says he wills to do a thing, and he does it, he must have had an inclination, or he would not have thus willed and acted. Hence some inclination must have preceded the will, and clearly the will cannot be the cause of that which precedes itself in point of time, and to which, in fact, it owes its existence. According to the free-will perplexity, a man can choose what he likes; but how can he do this when man inherits certain mental and bodily tendencies, or if he has a defective brain or a diseased body? Besides, it is an admitted fact that the capacities of men vary in every race, and that each person's will-power is affected by the nature and extent of his mental capacity. The will of a Newton would differ widely from that of a savage; but why? Simply because the influences that called forth the will in the two cases were of a different kind. The history of the human race proves, to our mind, that there is no universal power of thought and action as is implied by free will. The conditions that produced Napoleon, who was the scourge of Europe, did not produce Washington, who was the deliverer of his nation. Here we recognise the operation of human causes; in the one case in a passion for military glory, and in the other in a love of national freedom.

It is contended by orthodox believers that man feels that he is free; and no doubt this is true. But the point is, free to do what? Simply to act in accordance with his volition, not to cause the volition itself—that is, an effect which is governed by motives and controlled by surrounding circumstances. As Tuttle points out, the human being, physically and mentally matured, is the representative of every law and condition which has ever acted on him or his progenitors, *ad infinitum*. In him they are not only individualised, they are *centrestantialised*. He exists because of their action; he is as they have made him. In this sense man is a creature of circumstances. So far as these forces and conditions acted previous to his birth, he is not a free agent, nor is he in his relation to the fixed action of the great forces of nature. But on the circumstances which surround his maturity he acts by virtue of his inherent selfhood, the resultant of all previous conditions which make up that selfhood. In this view he may be considered free, for what we call a man is nothing more nor less than the aggregate of forces and conditions, many of which we understand, and many of which we do not understand. He is free, just as his organisation, representative of all previous conditions and forces, will allow. This freedom is quite distinct from the dogmatical tenet of free-agency, inasmuch as it regards man's existence as an effect becoming a cause, and not a self-existent cause.

Besides, the Christian theory of the freedom of the will is a premium upon indifference and delay in reformation. For, if a person can will to act in one particular manner at any moment, he may lead a life of rascality, and repent only when he thinks his career is approaching its end. Hence we read:

> While the lamp holds out to burn,
> The vilest sinner may return.

Such a believer in free will, having, perhaps, spent threescore years and ten in pursuing a course of conduct neither creditable to himself nor useful to others, may delude himself by supposing that at the last moments of his existence he can undergo an entire change of character, and then

> Clap his glad wings, and tower away,
> To mingle with the blaze of day.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

The Worth of Life.

The value of earthly life has been, and is, often obscured. A certain kind of human conduct in the long run tends to obscure it. This course of conduct has obtained, and for the evolutionist shall retain, the name of *unrighteousness*. The opposite course of conduct has obtained, and for the evolutionist shall retain, the name of *righteousness*, the meaning and value whereof is, that in measure of its practice its broad and certain outcome is to make life ever better and better worth living.—*L. S. Bevington.*

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A CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL.

DID you ever visit a Christian hospital? Well, no! I did not think there is such a thing. Let us try to imagine one.

As a Christian is forbidden to lay up treasures upon earth, and even to take any thought for the morrow; and as he is forbidden to labor for the bread that perisheth, a Christian hospital could not be a building of any description—unless, by the way, we consider it a spiritual building, a house not made with hands. You see, bricks and mortar cannot be made or procured without a great deal of earthly labor, which, to use Scripture lingo, may also be "devilish." Stones require to be quarried; timber must be felled, dried, and sawn; and all these materials require a great deal of labor to remove them to the place of erection, and more labour still to turn them into a building.

It is clear, therefore, that Christians could never themselves get together the materials and erect a building without disobeying their Master's commands, and risking his heaviest and direst vengeance. Because, you see, at any moment of their lives the Lord Jesus may descend from heaven with a shout; and if he should come to judgment and find Christians working at worldly things, instead of watching for their Lord, as he so positively commanded them, he will "cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites." And you do not need to be told that no real Christian would risk anything so serious as all that. No, he is so intent upon watching for the coming of Christ that he has not a moment to spare for anything but religious duties; and is even afraid to sleep, lest he should be found in that state when Gabriel's trumpet shall blow.

Consequently, Christians can never erect a building; and their hospitals must be in the open air, with the ground for the floor, the clouds and sky for roof and ceiling, and plenty of ventilation for the patients. Their only light will be the sun, moon, and stars, except when a bright angel shall visit them, or the Devil come and glare upon them with his blazing eyes, sparkling horns, etc.

Some might be tempted to say that the Christian might buy for money what he himself could not or would not make, etc. But, nay! the true Christian parts with all his wealth in becoming a Christian. He cannot be one without doing so. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 33; read the context). A true Christian would as soon be found by the coming Christ committing murder or adultery as in possession of money or wealth.

There will be no stretchers on which to carry the patients to the Christian hospital, for to make such things would require unchristian work. For the same reason there will be no beds or furniture of any kind on the ground, except what nature supplies.

Drugs and surgical instruments and appliances will be entirely wanting, because contrary to Bible teaching, which admits of no cure of a purely worldly nature, none at all. King Asa was afflicted in his feet; the poor man applied to the physicians, and died. He did not apply to Dr. Jehovah, you see, as he should have done; and that gentleman, out of mere rivalry, killed him. And that is sufficient warning to all true Christians not to have anything at all to do with doctors, except they are of the purely spiritual kind.

And, besides all that, the blessed New Testament contains one prescription for every disease whatsoever; and that prescription can never fail. Here it is, *in extenso*: "Is any sick among you; let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James v. 14, 15).

There is the prescription, drawn up by the Holy Ghost himself, after an eternity's thought and careful study. You see, it covers every kind of sickness, no matter what. And it is warranted to cure, and that, too, on the spot.

And let me say that I never knew it fail in true Christian hands. Of course, if you are only nominal Christian it will not succeed; but if you are of the genuine type the prescription must succeed. If you do not believe me, you can surely believe the Lord's own word and promise! No! Then you are no Christian. Kindly step aside; I am speaking only to the faithful.

Take a look at the prescription; you need not fear Christ will come before you get through it. If he should, you can drop it and look up as if you had been all along expecting him. You are to call in the elders. The elders may be of any character, bad or good—"boom" swindlers; owners of property used for immoral purposes; magistrates who pack the bench for a bribe; judges who act unjustly; lying journalists or lying pulpiteers; adulterers, fornicators, thieves, or what not. The only duty enjoined on you is to call in the elders, not to inquire into their character.

The only difficulty at all in the prescription is the question of the oil. We are not told what sort of oil it should be—train oil, olive oil, cod-liver oil, oil of cloves, colza oil, turps, eucalyptus oil, kerosene, or what. My sanctified opinion is that it does not matter what the oil is; for, after all, it is not that which is to effect the cure, but the prayer of faith. I should say, then, just take whatever oil you have, or leave it to the elders to bring some with them. Many of them are oily enough themselves to meet the case.

The only other portion of the prescription which requires elucidation is the anointing. Is it to be partial, local, or all over the body? Here we have nothing to guide us; and therefore, I presume, it does not much matter. The quantity of oil to be used is not specified; therefore use as little as is necessary. Let the elders put a little on the tip of the nose, on the lips, on the forehead, and on the tip of each ear—where the patient has two of those appendages; and let one of the elders do this while the others apply the prayer of faith. The process will succeed before you scarcely know where you are.

The above is, I think, a very correct, scriptural, and godly description of a truly Christian hospital, and the mode of cure thereat practised and followed. If I am at all in error, the Christians can correct me from their own Divine word; and I shall then feel obliged to them.

When such a hospital is once established it will be a boon to humanity, will it not? Dr. Bevan, Dr. Carr, and Dr. Goe will recommend and support it, I am sure, and invariably go there for cure when they are ill—no matter what the sin may be for which they are afflicted

Besides being so extremely useful in the way just hinted at, how soon such a hospital would destroy all unbelief and convert all Atheists, Infidels, Sceptics, etc., to the true faith!

What can be the reason that the Christians do not set up or establish or inaugurate such a hospital? Are they afraid? Are they in league with the doctors and nurses, who get an income from the present institutions? or are they as sceptical as I am as to the virtues of the prescription? Do they really think Jesus and the Holy Ghost blundered? Eh, what! does James and Co.'s prescription really belong to the category of superstitions? Is that so? Do you tell me that modern scientific treatment of disease is really superior to God's Bible method? Have you more faith in well-trained doctors than in elders? in drugs than the prayer of faith?

Ah, well, my Christian enemy, I congratulate you on your loss of faith. But why do you still keep up your hypocritical profession of faith in what you heartily despise? And why do you hate and slander me for openly repudiating the very superstitions you secretly despise as well as I?—you contemptible, hypocritical coward!

JOS. SYMES.

—*Liberator.*

DON'T NEAD NO JURNALS.—The following interesting reply, says the *Pharmaceutical Era*, was returned by a Minnesota doctor to a circular letter soliciting subscriptions to a certain medical journal in the United States: "Your copy of the —— Jurnal come, and the letter to—askin' me to send fifty cens and git it fur a yeer. I don't nead no jurnals. When I git a tuff case I go off inter sum secrit place and tell the lord all about it and wate fur him to put inter my minde what ter do. That's bettern jurnals and nyklopedes and such. If we hed more lord trustin docters and less colleges, weed fare better. The lord noes morn all the docters, and if we go to him fur noledge it ill be bettern jurnals.—Fraternally in the lord, A CHRISTUN DOCTER. P.S.—I've practist medisen morn fifty yeers. You can publish this letter if you want ter."

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"VICTORY OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY METHODS."*

By the new race of Christian scholars it has been clearly shown that the first three Gospels, which, down to the close of the last century, were so constantly declared to be three independent testimonies agreeing as to the events recorded, are neither independent of each other nor in that sort of agreement which was formerly asserted. All Biblical scholars of any standing, even the most conservative, have come to admit that all three took their rise in the same original sources, growing by the accretions sure to come as time went on—accretions sometimes useful and often beautiful, but in no inconsiderable degree ideas and even narratives inherited from older religions; it is also fully acknowledged that to this growth process are due certain contradictions which cannot otherwise be explained. As to the fourth Gospel, exquisitely beautiful as large portions of it are, there has been growing steadily and irresistibly the conviction, even among the most devout scholars, that it represents an infusion of Greek conceptions into Hebraism, and that its final form is mainly due to some gifted representative or representatives of the Alexandrian school. Bitter as the resistance to this view has been, it has during the last years of the nineteenth century won its way more and more to acknowledgment. A careful examination made in 1893 by a competent Christian scholar showed facts which are best given in his own words, as follows:—

> "In the period of thirty years ending in 1860, of the fifty great authorities in this line, *four to one* were in favour of the Johannine authorship. Of those who in that period had advocated this traditional position one quarter—and certainly the very greatest—finally changed their position to the side of a late date and non-Johannine authorship. Of those who have come into this field of scholarship since about 1860, some forty men of the first class, two-thirds reject the traditional theory wholly or very largely. Of those who have contributed important articles to the discussion from about 1880 to 1890, about *two to one* reject the Johannine authorship of the Gospel in its present shape—that is to say, while forty years ago great scholars were *four to one in favour of*, they are now *two to one against*, the claim that the apostle John wrote this gospel as we have it. Again, one half of those on the conservative side to-day—scholars like Weiss, Beyschlag, Sanday, and Reynolds—admit the existence of a dogmatic intent and an ideal element in this Gospel, so that we do not have Jesus's thought in his exact words, but only in substance."

In 1881 came an event of great importance as regards the development of a more frank and open dealing with scriptural criticism. In that year appeared the Revised Version of the New Testament. It was exceedingly cautious and conservative; but it had the vast merit of being absolutely conscientious. One thing showed, in a striking way, ethical progress in theological methods. Although all but one of the English revisers represented Trinitarian bodies, they rejected the two great proof texts which had so long been accounted essential bulwarks of Trinitarian doctrine. Thus disappeared at last from the epistle of St. John the text of the Three Witnesses, which had for centuries held its place in spite of its absence from all the earlier important manuscripts, and of its rejection in later times by Erasmus, Luther, Isaac Newton, Porson, and a long line of the greatest biblical scholars. And with this was thrown out the other like unto it in spurious origin and zealous intent, that interpolation of the word "God" in the 16th verse of the third chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy, which had for ages served as a warrant for condemning some of the noblest of Christians, even such men as Newton and Milton and Locke and Priestley and Channing.

Indeed, so honest were the revisers that they substituted the correct reading of Luke ii. 33 in place of the time-honored corruption in the King James version, which had been thought necessary to safeguard the dogma of the virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus came the true reading, "*His father* and his mother," instead of the old piously fraudulent words, "*Joseph* and his mother." And even more important service to the new and better growth of Christianity was the virtual setting aside of the last twelve verses of the Gospel according to St. Mark. For among these stood that sentence which has cost the world more innocent blood than any other—the words, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

Most valuable, too, have been studies during the latter part of the nineteenth century upon the formation of the canon of Scripture. The result of these has been to substitute something far better for that conception of our biblical literature, as forming one book handed out of the clouds by the Almighty, which had been so long practically the accepted view among probably the majority of Christians. Reverend scholars have demonstrated our sacred literature to be a growth in obedience to simple laws, natural and historical; they have shown how some books of the Old Testament were accepted as sacred centuries before our era, and how others gradually gained sanctity, in some cases only acquiring it long after the establishment of the Christian Church. The same slow growth has also been shown in the New Testament canon. It has been demonstrated that the selection of the books composing it was a gradual process, and, indeed, that the rejection of some books and the acceptance of others was accidental, if anything is accidental.

So, too, scientific biblical research has, as we have seen, been obliged to admit the existence of much mythical and legendary matter, as a setting for the great truths, not only of the Old Testament, but of the New. It has also shown, by the comparative study of literatures, the process by which some books were compiled and recompiled, adorned with beautiful utterances, strengthened or weakened by interpolations expressing the views of the possessors or transcribers, and assigned to personages who could not possibly have written them. The showing forth of these things has greatly weakened that sway of mere dogma which has so obscured the simple teachings of Christ himself; for it has shown that the more we know of our sacred books, the less certain we become as to the authenticity of proof texts, and it has disengaged more and more, as the only valuable residuum, like the mass of gold at the bottom of the crucible, the personality and general teaching and ideals of the blessed founder of Christianity. The new scholarship has shown that even such absolute contradictions as that between the date assigned for the crucifixion in the first three Gospels and that given in the fourth, and other discrepancies hardly less serious, do not affect the historical character of the essential part of the narrative. Even the hopelessly conflicting genealogies of the Savior, and the evidently mythical accretions about the simple facts of his birth and life, are thus full of interest when taken as a natural literary development.

Vast masses of myth, legend, marvel, and dogmatic assertion, coming into this atmosphere, have been dissolved, and are now dissolving quietly away like icebergs drifted into the Gulf Stream. In earlier days, when some critic in advance of his time insisted that Moses could not have written an account embracing the circumstances of his own death, it was sufficient to answer that Moses was a prophet; if attention was called to the fact that the great early prophets, by all which they did and did not do, showed that there could not have existed in their time any "Levitical code," a sufficient answer was "mystery"; and if the discrepancy was noted between the two accounts of creation in Genesis, or between the genealogies or the dates of the crucifixion in the Gospels, the cogent reply was "infidelity." But the thinking world has at last been borne, by the general development of a scientific atmosphere, beyond that kind of refutation.

—Professor A. White, "Popular Science Monthly," condensed by New York "Public Opinion."

* New Chapters in "The Warfare of Science."

Bible Slavery.

"If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. *Notwithstanding*, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, *for he is his money*" (Exodus xxi. 20, 21). "I shall never forget the revulsion of feeling with which a very intelligent native, with whose help I was translating these last words into the Zulu tongue, first heard them as words said to be uttered by the same great and gracious Being whom I was teaching him to trust in and adore. His whole soul revolted against the notion that the Great and Blessed God, the Merciful Father of all mankind, would speak of a servant or maid as mere 'money,' and allow a horrible crime to go unpunished because the victim of the brutal outrage had survived a few hours."—*Bishop Colenso.*

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THE RIVAL RELIGIONISTS.

["Love ye one another?" See reports of recent Presbytery meetings. Something like the following may soon be looked for if the present keen competition is maintained.]

"HERE y'are, gents! We're a-waiting!
Ladies! *Won't* you 'ave a seat?
Pure, Refined, and Elevating!
Our's a worship can't be beat!
Cushioned pews and books provided;
Shorter sermons don't exist;
And the grand new organ's guided
By a long-'aired organist!"

"Hi! hi! hi! Now here's a chance, sirs!
That there fellow's talking trash!
Pay your seat-rent in advance, sirs;
Liberal discount off for cash!
Ladies, come, your hearts 'll tingle!
Take a trial quarter—do!
Our young minister is single:
Wants a wife; now, why not *you?*

"This way! this way with your money!
No collections; no bazaars!
Sermons up to date and funny;
All the choir composed of stars!
Husband, miss? A wife? In here, sir!
We supply 'em plain or toff;
From our membership last year, sir,
Twenty couple 'knocked it off!'"

(OMNES.)

"We're the only 'chosen people'!
Do not be misled although
Every cock on every steeple
Calls you with its canting crow!
Please don't let your order pass us
For your last, long earthly tour;
Bookings made to suit all classes;
We are bound for Jordan—sure!"

—*Glasgow Evening News.*

ACID DROPS.

THE London correspondent of the *Western Morning News* is not delighted with the "Tom Paine" Exhibition. In his opinion, the author of the *Age of Reason* and the *Rights of Man* was "too much of a bully and too violent in his tone." Anyhow, Paine could write English, which is more than we can say of this anonymous scribbler, whose opinions may be a theme of laughter to his friends. "Too much of a bully" is a ridiculous expression. It implies that Paine ought to have been just enough of a bully—which, as our old friend Euclid says, is absurd.

Thomas Paine was a bully, was he? What, then, are we to think of Jesus Christ? Search the writings of Thomas Paine from beginning to end, and see if you can find anything to equal the virulent abuse which Jesus Christ heaped upon the heads of his religious rivals in Jerusalem. Thomas Paine never called his opponents "vipers" and "children of hell."

The Lord Mayor of London, addressing the London Rifle Brigade, at a prize distribution, told his hearers that their first duty was to their Creator, and the next to their country. We understand that the Rifle Brigade are ready to shoot for their country. We did not know that they were also—and first of all—ready to shoot for their Creator.

The Lord Mayor sang the praises of England, in opposition to those unpatriotic persons who think other countries are in some respects wiser and happy. Why, said the Lord Mayor, they have everything in this country to make them happy. "Everything" is a large order. No doubt the Lord Mayor has everything to make him happy, but how about the million paupers, the myriads out of work, and the thousands who are perishing of destitution in the midst of plenty?

Mr. Hiram S. Maxim, the scientist, mentions that Mr. Davidson, a Scotch engineer, who spent a long time in China, relates that he had never known a native Chinese Christian who was a Christian five minutes after the missionary had ceased to pay him; that the missionaries could have just as many converts as they wanted in China, provided that they paid the price. The regular scale of prices was about three dollars a week for a clever and active Chinaman to go about and secure subjects for conversion; and the regular pay to converts was two dollars a month.

An Austrian officer in the service of the Chinese Government, speaking of the missionary question in China, said that he had never known of an honest Chinaman who was a Christian; that there was no such thing as converting the middle or better class of Chinaman. All the converts were of the lower class, and very poor people; they were Christians simply because it paid them to be Christians; their Christianity was on a strictly cash basis; it was simply a matter of how much they could make.

Bishop Moorhouse, in addressing the Manchester annual meeting of the S.P.G., let out a little fact concerning missionary enterprise in India. He mentioned that those of pure Aryan race, Brahmins and Rajpoots, were hardly as yet touched by Christian influence. Christians often boast of their converts in India without telling the classes from which they are drawn—viz., the aboriginal devil-worshippers, or the lowest castes, who find material welfare in a change of faith. The fact that Christianity succeeds with these, while failing with the higher castes of Hindus and with Moslems, determines its own real status.

A lady South African correspondent of the *Sketch* says she emphatically endorses the opinion of every colonial, that the missionised African is far worse than the raw heathen native. She says: "Ask any business man or woman who has lived in the Transvaal or Cape Colony why a raw Kaffir is physically and mentally and naturally pure, helpful, willing, and honest, and why that same Kaffir, having gone to some mission station to be educated, comes back supercilious, independent, lazy, and often dishonest, you can get no answer, simply a shrug and 'I don't know, but it is so.'" The secret probably is that the Christian is told he can lay his sins on Jesus, and immediately sets about copying Christian vices, that Jesus may have a good opportunity of displaying his wondrous love for sinners.

Another factor, says this South African correspondent, is that the Dutch Boer, filled with psalms and hymns, repeating texts by the yard, and going in for abundant services and prayer-meetings, is one of the most despicable of creatures. The average Boer is a sanctimonious rascal, who "will lie, will cheat, will slander to the very utmost, quoting Scripture all the time." The Kaffir, seeing Christianity is a mere hypocrisy among its professors, naturally also becomes a hypocrite when he becomes a Christian.

The Provincial Missionary Conference of South Africa has been discussing the question of the polygamy of converts. The Bishop of Bloemfontein, supported by the Bishop of Lebombo, moved that the subject be considered with closed doors; and, according to the *Natal Mercury*, the opinion was freely expressed that, before a native convert could be admitted to the catechumenate, he should be required to divorce all his wives but one, and put them, with their offspring, away from him.

This attitude has been a usual one with missionaries, but it is in accordance neither with humanity nor scripture. Jesus lived in a polygamous society, but he said nothing against polygamy; and Paul's injunction, that a bishop should be the husband of one wife, does not apply to catechumens, and has been interpreted as meaning that he must have one *at least*.

Describing a beautiful Chinese temple at Los Angeles, California, a local paper says: "In a corner is another stand, containing a bass drum and a heavy bell, used to wake the god or call his attention when worshippers are present." Probably the bells on the dress of Jewish priests, and the bell sounded at the elevation of the Mass, were originally for the same purpose.

A meeting of converted people was held at Krugersdorp, to which no unconverted people were admitted. Some of the latter requested admittance. A battle royal ensued, in which the church militant was victorious. Tall language was used on both sides, but at last the sinners carried the case before the Assistant Landdrost, who fined two of the saints £5 each, with the alternative of eight days' imprisonment, four days on spare diet.—*Natal Advertiser.*

In Maritzburg they had not only special prayers for rain, but also against the plague of locusts. The Rev. Mr. Heard, Baptist pastor, refused to pray, saying: "My idea is that the inhabitants of this or any country should first of all have done their level best to destroy the locusts, and then ask God to bless the effort." This minister's improvement on the old theology seems to be that we should act as if there were no God, but talk as if there were one.

The prayers for rain have excited much controversy in South Africa. The Rev. D. P. Faure, of the Free Protestant

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Church, says: "People might just as well pray for the direct miracle that their crops should be saved without the intervention of rain; but they would no more do that than pray for a broken leg to be miraculously set. Prayer for material blessings—the mere asking for favors—he regarded as degrading. The only legitimate prayer was to ask for spiritual blessings." But surely it is as illogical to expect spiritual miracles as material ones.

"Agnostic" had a good letter on the subject in the *Diggers' News*. He pointed out that the reasoning of believers is like the gambler's "heads I win, tails you lose." All facts that tell for their case are allowed to count, and all that tell against it are excluded. If what they pray for happens, that proves the efficacy of prayer; and if it does not happen, that proves nothing at all. Such is the logic of superstition in all ages.

A writer in Mrs. Bloomfield Moore's cranky *New Science Review* argues that the only escape from Materialism is belief in a fourth dimension. What a pity these Spiritists cannot remove from a world where the most perceptible dimensions are the length, breadth, and thickness of their own understandings.

Rubinstein's sacred opera, "Christus," has been performed at Bremen. The authorities ordered that no applause should be given during the performance, as that would be a desecration of the sacred piece.

As late as 1850 smoking was allowed in some churches in Wales. The communion-table stood in the aisle, and the farmers were in the habit of putting their hats upon it, and when the sermon began they lit their pipes and smoked, but without any idea of irreverence.

An American paper says: "There is no error which prevails more widely, even among educated people, than the belief that a man has one rib more in his right side than in his left, the deficiency being supposed to have been inherited from Adam. As a fact, men and women have each twenty-four ribs, twelve on each side."

A pretty quarrel over Hell is raging in the Midlands. It appears that the Rev. Kenneth Bond, minister of the Baptist Church at Swadlincote, came to the conclusion that there was no eternal punishment. Some of the Church members resented their preacher's heterodoxy. It made them quite uncomfortable to think there was any prospect of nobody going to the everlasting bonfire in perpetuity. Accordingly, a meeting was called to consider the situation, and a vote was taken by ballot, which gave the non-everlasting hellites a chance of supporting their minister without being discovered. Twelve voted in favor of Mr. Bond's resignation, and sixty-two against it. Only ten remained neutral, so that the majority was triumphant and decisive.

A number of local preachers "of various denominations" met at Greeley Wesleyan Church to sit (metaphorically) upon Mr. Bond and defend the grand old doctrine of eternal punishment. They expressed "in the strongest possible manner" their disagreement with Mr. Bond's views, and emphatically declared their belief that "such views are directly opposed to the teaching of the Word of God." We hope this quarrel will continue. The more Hell is talked about the sooner it will be extinguished.

Eminent German critics have been deploring the fact that the literature of Germany is fast becoming paralysed, while that of France shows every sign of vitality. Herr Litzmann, professor at Bonn, says: "The literature of Germany is neither hot nor cold, but dreadfully commonplace and destitute of individuality." It has had no poet since Freligrath; no philosopher since Schopenhauer. Meanwhile every person who shows the slightest individuality is in danger of prosecution for *lesé majesty*—the latest victim being the head of the ethical societies.

A rival contest in clairvoyance between J. B. Tetlow, a Spiritist medium, and Professor Steen, an avowed deceptionist, took place at the Manchester Free Trade Hall. A stake of £100 was said to be involved, but the affair ended in a squabble, and the *Sunday Chronicle* says: "As a contest it was little else than a farce." What else was to be expected?

Professor A. A. Bevan gives Professor Sayce a good dressing in the columns of the *Contemporary Review*. He mentions that his conclusions as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch are rejected by the most eminent archæologists, such as Schrader, Haupt, Winckler, and Maspero. The last, one of the most eminent Egyptologists, endorses Wellhausen, and holds that the Jehovistic portion of the Pentateuch was composed about 840 B.C.; the Deuteronomic Code, dating from the time of Josiah and the Priestly Code, being post-exilic. In regard to the author of the Priestly Code of the Bible, Maspero says in so many words: "Where the facts do not conform to his design, he abridges, suppresses, alters, and lends them a character purely ideal, or changes them so that they no longer respond to reality" (*Hist. Anc. des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 395; 1893). When such eminent archæologists differ, for Sayce to claim his as the verdict of archæology is simply orthodox cheek, and confirms an opinion given us by an eminent Egyptologist, derogatory to his character and his scholarship.

Professor Bevan points out that the archæological evidence relating to the Old Testament depends, in most cases, upon the identification of proper names—that is to say, a person, nation, or place mentioned in an inscription is *conjectured* to be identical with some person, nation, or place mentioned in the Bible. The *Church Times* (Nov. 29) showed how shaky were the identifications of Professor Sayce, and Professor Bevan goes still farther. What Sayce reads as Eri-aku, and identifies with Arioch, some of the best Assyriologists hold should be pronounced Rim-Sin. Indeed, many signs can be read so variously that such conjectured identifications must ever be extremely dubious.

Professor Sayce and others insist on identifying the nation called Kheta by the Egyptians, with the Hittites of the Old Testament. Yet one of the most learned archæologists in this country, Dr. E. Wallis Budge, has recently stated that for this theory there is not, in his opinion, "the slightest evidence."

Professor Bevan says, and proves, that Sayce's "knowledge of Biblical criticism is altogether superficial." Nay, he shows this is the most charitable construction to be put upon the fact that he ascribes to "the critics," as a body, "opinions which no critic of repute has ever dreamt of maintaining." Sayce's inference, that Moses must have written because the Egyptians and Assyrians had a knowledge of writing, is shown to be inconclusive. "Even at the present day it is quite usual in the East to find utterly illiterate tribes living in close proximity to great centres of civilisation." Of course Sayce never attempted to touch the question whether such regulations as those given in Leviticus could have been promulgated in the wilderness.

Sir Henry Howorth goes farther than Professor Bevan and other critics. He claims to show that the Septuagint represents a far earlier state of the Hebrew than the Masoretic text of the Old Testament, the received version, which he believes was arranged and published by Akiba and his pupils at Jamnia in the first centuries after the Christian era.; that, in particular, the previous continuous work of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, was then touched up and altered; and that the first book of Esdras, in the Apocrypha, enables us to partly reconstruct the text of that work before it was tampered with and altered.

In Professor Sayce's inaugural address, delivered before the ninth International Congress of Orientalists, he himself pointed to the difficulties of deciphering cuneiform inscriptions. He said: "Sounds which were certainly distinct in Assyrian pronunciation are confounded together in writing, while sounds are separated in writing which may have been identical in pronunciation." Add to this that every character possesses more than one phonetic value, and the difficulty of identifying proper names with certainty must be apparent.

Mr. F. C. Conybeare, M.A., writes in the *Expositor* for December on "The Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark's Gospel." He mentions that they do not appear in the Armenian versions until a copy of the year 989 A.D., in which they are said to have been written by one Ariston, the Elder. He holds, however, that they were part of the fifth-century Armenian version, and were afterwards erased.

Mr. Conybeare mentions incidentally that old Armenian codices preserve very old features of the New Testament text. Thus in Matthew ii. 9 the Moscow codex of the year 887 reads: "The star.....stood still over the cave where was the child." Now, Justin Martyr, Origen, and the Protoevangelion, ascribed to James, all speak of Jesus as born in a cave like Mithras and other solar heroes.

Dr. A. D. Watson writes on the psychology of religious revivals in the *Canadian Methodist Review*. He broadly hints that what the Methodists often take for the workings of the Holy Ghost, such as "seizures, trances, and convulsions," are really signs of religious insanity. He says: "It will thus be understood why the objectionable features of revivals are so frequent among the unlettered aboriginal peoples, when missionaries go among them. Indeed, excessive outbursts of feeling, manifested in hysterical proportions, almost invariably occur among persons of an excitable temperament, among those of weak will, or those of a debilitated physical constitution."

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"Given a number of such persons in a series of meetings, and if the evangelist should appeal chiefly to motives of fear or to the intensely emotional part of the sensibility, rather than to urge the case mainly upon its reasonable and righteous grounds; if the evangelist have a powerfully magnetic and commanding presence, and insist on certain forms without clearly defining that obedience to the Lord, rather than the mere performance of the evangelist's desire, constitutes duty; further, if it be understood or surmised that there would be general approval of any exceptional occurrence, such as prostration or highly wrought or excited movements, these demonstrations are pretty sure to occur."

A good many sky-pilots have reiterated what has never been questioned—viz., that writing was well known in the time of Moses. But they do not tell their auditors the further fact that writing was in existence long anterior to the time assigned to Adam. Chinese documents go back to about 3000 B.C., while some say 7000 B.C. Mr. C. J. Ball, M.A., who has done much to identify Chinese with the Accadian language, says of that tongue: "Five thousand years before our era it already possessed a system of writing which the earliest existing documents prove to have been of pictorial origin."

The murderer Durrant has not yet paid the penalty of his crimes. The body of Blanche Lamont, a Sunday-school girl, was found decomposed on the belfry of the Emanuel Baptist Church, San Francisco, on April 14, and Durrant, who was an usher of the church and a pious superintendent of the Sunday-school, was seen taking her in there on April 3. His trial lasted from July 22 to November 1, when the jury unanimously balloted him as guilty after five minutes' consultation. Another victim was found in the church, and this is occasioning the delay. Durrant went on teaching and attending prayer-meeting, as the district attorney said, "while his victim rotted in the spire that pointed its slender finger to the sky." He was a leading figure in the church, and may point the warning that it is not always safe for young girls to accompany pious teachers into sacred buildings, even in broad daylight.

A telegram from Columbia, South Carolina, says that four prominent whites tortured to death a young negro who was suspected of stealing a Bible. In their zeal for religion, they murdered his aged mother likewise.

The man Covington, who was executed at Bedford for the murder of his girl cousin, spent most of his time in prison in reading religious books. As he made a most edifying ending, he has doubtless gone to join Abraham, Issac, and Jacob in the mansions of the blest.

The *Daily News* points out that the State contributes £311,383 to Roman Catholic schools, a sum sufficient to pay the whole cost of the secular education given therein. Yet Lord Chief Justice Russell abuses his office by joining in the cry for more State support without State control.

Mr. Justice Day, charging the grand jury at Lincolnshire Assizes, said that perjury was widely prevalent. "It was shocking to think that so many persons called on God to witness that they would speak the truth when they were present for the express purpose of falsehood."

A friend has sent us a little pocket edition of *The Life of David*, by Peter Annet, who was imprisoned for "blasphemy" in last century, and was mentioned in terms of praise by Voltaire. This edition was published by T. Williams, Broadway, Blackfriars, in 1796. It is bound in old tree calf, and the binder—either personally or by instigation—has put a stroke of genius on the cover, which bears the title: "Life of a Scoundrel."

The number of deaths in India caused by bites of wild animals and reptiles is on the increase. The deaths from snake bites last year were 21,000, and in the same period nearly 120,000 deadly snakes were killed. Wild animals caused the death of 2,800 persons in the same year; the tigers and leopards more than four hundred; the wolves, 175; bears, 121; and elephants, 68. On the other hand, nearly 15,000 wild beasts were killed, including nearly 1,300 tigers, and more than 4,000 leopards. In addition to the loss of human life, nearly ninety thousand head of cattle were destroyed. The bounties offered by the Government seem ineffectual to decrease the number of wild animals. The superstitions of the natives tend to perpetuate their scourge.

The Rev. Frank Hyatt Smith, pastor of the North Avenue Congregational Church at Cambridge, Mass., has been arrested for sending obscene and scurrilous post-cards to members of his congregations. They did not consist of Bible texts, but were to the full as offensive.

The law case between the rival infidel-slayers at Glasgow promises to be very amusing. The pursuer is alleged to have been converted several times. At one time he posed as a converted clown, and after this he was convicted of an assault on a constable at Bristol in October, 1892. He accuses the defender of gross falsehood and calumny.

Elder Ebert, of the Seventh Day Adventists, says that crack-brained John on Patmos referred to the Mohammedan rule in his ninth chapter; and he thinks that the waning power of the Turk is a sure sign of the speedy advent of the much-delayed Jesus. It seems the third part of men are to be slain (Revelation ix. 15), and this means the destruction of the Moslems and other infidels. Hallelujah!

Those sanguine individuals known as Adventists may glean some information about the probable fate of Christ, and the reason for his non-reappearance up to date, from a prayerful consideration of two passages in Matthew. According to Matthew x. 34, Christ says: "I came not to bring peace, but a sword." In Matthew xxvi. 52 he supplements this statement with another: "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Brethren, what do you think about it?—*Boston Investigator.*

Luther R. Marsh, an aged Spiritist who resides with Mrs. Huyler, a medium, at Middleton, told a correspondent as follows: "The spirit of Henry Ward Beecher informed Mrs. Huyler that he (Beecher) would bring before her the spirits of the patriarchs, in order that she might secure from them evidence to establish the authenticity of the Scriptures." This is the very thing that is wanted. Profane sceptics have been suggesting that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are simply mythical ancestors of a Semitic tribe, and Samson no more than a sun-hero. If Mrs. Huyler will only trot their spirits out and have them photographed, all the world will have a chance of being convinced.

The *Daily News* recently made the following statement in a leading article on Mr. Lecky and the Dublin University election: "Freethinkers have in all ages, and for obvious reasons, supported the principle of ecclesiastical establishment. Establishment and endowment have, in their eyes, the transcendent merit of putting down enthusiasm, of keeping religion in its proper place."

This statement was caught up as "jam" by the *Liberator*, the organ of the Liberation Society, whose officials seem to forget that Dr. Parker and Mr. Spurgeon refused to appear at any Disestablishment meetings that were marred by the presence of Charles Bradlaugh.

Voltaire and Thomas Paine did not support a State Church; neither did Robert Owen, John Stuart Mill, or Jeremy Bentham. George Jacob Holyoake, like Charles Bradlaugh, has always opposed a State Church on principle, and the "disestablishment of religion" is one of the objects of the National Secular Society. The *Daily News* should really keep up to date.

Parsons have so long taught that the theatre is the Devil's house—in opposition to the church, which is God's—that some of their hearers have come to believe it. In fact, the Rector of Killamarsh, Derbyshire, has been unpleasantly talked of for going to the Queen's Theatre, and has deemed it necessary to write a letter to the malcontents in defence of his conduct. We hope the poor man of God will come out of it all right. A parson's business is rather a dull one—christening strange babies, marrying people who often ought to know better, attending funerals as a superior undertaker, and preaching what he frequently but half believes. It is only natural that he should yearn for a little amusement.

The Popes.

Cobbett, whose *History of the Protestant Reformation* is still largely circulated by Catholics, said of the Popes: "To support their pride they shed oceans of blood; they made weak princes the vile sport of their passions—sometimes their victims, and sometimes their executioners. Sovereigns, become their vassals, executed, with fear and trembling, the decrees of heaven pronounced against the enemies of the Holy See, which had created itself the arbiter of faith. In fact, these inhuman Pontiffs immolated to their God a thousand times more human victims than Paganism sacrificed to all its divinities" (*Register*, vol. xxvi., p. 379).

The history of mankind, if compared in long periods, shows a very slow, but still a clearly marked, improvement in the character of successive creeds; so that, if we reason from the analogy of the past, we have a right to hope that the improvement will continue, and that subsequent creeds will surpass ours.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 15, Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street (near Grey's Monument), Newcastle:—11, "Gladstone's Theology"; 3, "Huxley and Agnosticism"; 7, "Life, Death, and After."

December 22, Manchester; 29, Camberwell.

January 5, Camberwell; 12, 19, and 26, St. James's Hall.

February 2, Liverpool; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 15 and 22, Foresters' Hall. January 12 and 13, Bolton; 19, Glasgow; 26, Edinburgh. February 2 and 16, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

PAINTER.—Your repeated subscriptions to the lecturing scheme ought to stimulate more sluggish supporters.

JOHN RICHARDS.—See paragraph.

A. J. H.—No doubt the Ethical Societies are doing good work. We wish them success in secularising morality. At the same time, that is what we have been doing all along; only, in our opinion, it cannot be done without opposing superstition.

W. ROSE.—Mr. Foote will try to let Edmonton have a course of week-night lectures in January.

A. W. B.—It is sheer hypocrisy for the apologists of Voluntary Schools (heaven save the mark!) to argue that they put no financial burden on the ratepayer. Whether the School Grants come out of the rates and taxes is all the same in the long run. The whole people have to pay.

E. SHEDLEY.—It is impossible to deal with the matter satisfactorily in this column.

D. MCINTYRE.—We know nothing of E. Foster's "Story of Lincoln's Life," which you refer to as giving some curious—and, on the face of it, ridiculous—testimonies to the Bible and Christianity. The book shall be looked up, and the matter inquired into. Look for an answer next week.

HELP ME.—We have not time to write the essay you suggest. Nor is there much room in the three verses you mention for a characteristic *Freethinker* criticism. The story of Jonathan and David is one of the prettiest in the Bible, and hardly lends itself for satire. You would find Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes* and *Bible Romances* helpful in regard to the Scripture generally. Both works are published by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

E. G. TAYLOR.—We do not see that any reply is necessary in the *Freethinker*, unless you confine yourself to mere matters of fact. Remember the proverb about fighting the sooty.

A. H. COLEMAN.—The definition of Atheism in *Lloyd's Encyclopædic Dictionary* is wrong, as might be expected when the editor is a clergyman. Atheism is not "Literally, disbelief in a God." Atheism means—both etymologically and philosophically—"without belief in God." The Atheist is simply unable to accept the evidences of Theism as sufficient. He is therefore "without God." The quotation from Bacon, with other passages from the same author, is dealt with in a special article in the second volume of Mr. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought*.

A. F. CARTER.—"What Becomes of the Infidel Leaders?" printed in the *Christian Million*, is really a tract by the late Rev. C. J. Whitmore. All the names are withheld, in order to deceive the public. Mr. Bradlaugh pointed out the falsehood and absurdity of this tract, as we did some years ago in the *Freethinker*. Some of the persons referred to were never converted at all, and it is ridiculous to call many of them "leaders." The footnote that "practically there is no leader now" is as true as the rest of the statements.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Hanley Branch, 6s. 7½d.; Westminster Branch, 11s.

J. P. GILMOUR.—Glad to hear you were all so pleased with Mr. Cohen at Glasgow. Professor Black's address is racy reading. It is high time that somebody told the truth about hospitals.

T. J. ROSCOLLAR.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks for your good wishes.

A. W. MARKS.—It was an absurd statement. See our comment this week. Your epithet "silly" is not too severe.

T. E. M.—Your subscription for Benevolent Fund is handed to Miss Vance. The verse shall appear. Pleased to have your opinion that the article on "Praying for Ingersoll" was "bright enough to make a dyspeptic hilarious." Mr. Lecky nowhere makes an explicit declaration of his religious views, though it is easy to see between the lines that he is a Rationalist. Even his praise of Jesus Christ, which is so often cited by Christian apologists, is quite inconsistent with a belief in the Incarnation—as hasty or dull-witted Christians fail to perceive.

A. V. W.—Thanks for your subscription to our "admirable lecture scheme." The paper you mention must have miscarried.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Painter, £1; A. V. W., 5s. Per Miss Vance:—W. Gregory, 1s.; Isle of Doge Progressive Club, 5s.; H. Hutchins, 1s. Per R. Forder:—W. Stewart, 1s.; J. M. L., 2s. 6d.; Le Diable, 3s.; R. Taylor, 1s.; R. W., 1s.

D. F. GLOAK.—Mr. Foote will visit Dundee when he goes to Scotland in February. Glad to hear Mr. Cohen has "caught on" in Scotland.

ERNEST NEWMAN.—Sorry to hear of Mr. Doog's illness. See paragraph. Will you note that Mr. Foote has booked February 2 for Liverpool?

G. BAKER.—Thanks for cutting. Your order handed to Mr. Forder.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Arbeiter Freund—De Dageraad—Truthseeker—Christian Life—Sunday Chronicle—Natal Mercury—Natal Advertiser—Johannesburg Star—Digger's News—Critic—South American Journal—Literary Digest—Public Opinion—Liberty—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Der Freidenker—Post—Cape Argus—Grahamstown Journal—Gloucester Journal—Isle of Man Times—Glasgow Herald—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Manchester Courier.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was an improved audience at Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening, and an improved collection towards the expenses—although a good many people must have been kept away by the bitter weather. Mr. Shallard, of the West London Branch, made an excellent chairman. The lecture on "Mr. Gladstone's Theology" was listened to most attentively, and very heartily applauded. It was followed by a few questions, but no discussion.

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (December 15) for the Newcastle Branch, in the Northumberland Hall, near Grey's monument. The last time Mr. Foote visited Newcastle it rained vehemently all the day. It is to be hoped the weather will be an improvement this time, so as to give the "saints" in the surrounding district an opportunity of attending.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at Foresters' Hall this evening (Dec. 15), and also on the following Sunday. Mr. Parris delivers the last lecture there (for the present) on December 29.

Mr. Cohen delivered his first lectures in Glasgow on Sunday. The morning and afternoon meetings were but middling, but there was a good house at night. Mr. Cohen's lectures were highly appreciated and enthusiastically applauded. He has arranged to visit Glasgow again in the spring.

Paisley and Dundee were visited by Mr. Cohen under the President's lecture scheme. At the latter place he delivered three lectures, with which the Branch secretary says "we are all delighted."

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner is arranged to take place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29—Thomas Paine's birthday. Mr. G. W. Foote will be in the chair, with Mr. Charles Watts and other leading Freethinkers to the left and right. The tickets are, as usual, four shillings; and the function is timed to begin at 7.30, so as to give ample time for terminating at a convenient hour.

The Rev. W. W. Howard definitely agrees to debate with Mr. Foote. He has accepted the conditions he said he would never, never agree to, when negotiations took place at Spennymoor and Liverpool. Yet he now talks of having "brought Mr. Foote to the scratch." However, the reverend gentleman's epistolary eccentricities are not our game at present. He appoints Mr. James Cornes, of Norton House, Leek, to form his wing of the committee. Mr. Foote will see to his side of the business as soon as possible. But he

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cannot debate before March, as his time is fully occupied till then.

Mr. Foote will be very busy lecturing in London in January. He will be in the provinces during the whole of February. It is his intention to deliver several week-night lectures during his country tours. Wherever possible a good hall should be engaged, and the admission should be free. Branches or places that would like a visit from Mr. Foote in February should communicate with him as soon as possible.

Public Opinion, of New York, in its issue of November 21, reproduces Mr. Wheeler's article on "Holy Kissing" from our columns almost in its entirety.

Our American readers—and they are many—may do well to patronise *Public Opinion*, of New York, which gives interesting extracts from all the world's literature. *Public Opinion* is very ably edited by Mr. Ernest E. Russell. Its contents are more varied, bright, and impartial than those of its only compeer, the *Literary Digest*, which, like our own *Literary World*, is published by a theological firm, and always reminds the readers of the fact.

In the *Westminster Review* for December Mohammad Barakatullah has an interesting article on Islam and Soofeeism. Of the Moslem mystics he says the very essence of their creed is love. "*Tusleem*, or submission, is the first letter in the Soofeeic alphabet; *Sulhukkul*, universal peace and goodwill to all, is the second commandment of their religion; *Mahabatulkiul*, to love all, is the final but strict injunction to be carried out."

A study of that fine French writer, Gustave Flaubert, by Ernest Newman, appears in the December *Fortnightly*. Mr. Newman says: "Flaubert held no brief for the Ormuzd of this universe; and if, as the pious Burke once said, 'He censures God who quarrels with the imperfections of men,' Flaubert's sympathies were assuredly not on the side of the angels."

In Herbert Spencer's paper on "Teachers," in continuation of his "Professional Institutions" in the *Contemporary Review*, he argues that the teacher has evolved from, and is gradually supplanting, the priest, although "the differentiation of the teaching class from the priestly class is even now incomplete." The priests, he notices, are still arrogant enough to claim control of what is taught, and State funds without State control.

The new edition of *The Shadow of the Sword*, by G. W. Foote, issued by the Humanitarian League, is noticed in the December number of *Concord*, the organ of the International Arbitration and Peace Society. It is called "an admirable pamphlet, by an old pamphleteer." Its statistics are said to be "valuable," and the peroration is said to be "eloquent" and "worthy of quotation."

The *Star* says the Paine Exhibition marked the progress of the good work of clearing a great man's name from obloquy.

De Dageraad for December opens with a translation of the poetical prose passage on "The Truthseeker," rendered by G. van Beerse from the English of Olive Schreiner. J. G. ten Bokkel writes on the religious descent of Jesus, referring to early Christian notions and the recently-discovered Sinaitic MS., which attributes his fatherhood to Joseph.

Professor Boyesen considers Pagan woman in many respects superior to her Christian sister, and says in the *Forum*: "I cannot but think that the Oriental view of womanhood, implied in the Bible, has had an enormous influence in forcibly checking the normal development. The Catholic Church not only adopted, but immensely exaggerated, the disabilities under which the sex had labored in Semitic lands; and the result was that the free-born, sagacious, and nobly self-dependent daughter of the Teutonic forests was dwarfed, subdued, and spiritually crippled until she became the commonplace, insignificant, obedient *Hausfrau* of to-day."

Mr. Boyesen further remarks: "It will, perhaps, surprise many to learn that the legislation regarding marriage and divorce was, in Iceland and Norway, far more mindful of the wife's interest than it has ever been during the Christian era. The old Icelandic law stipulated, for instance, that if a man were divorced from his wife (even though she were the offending party) he had to return her dowry intact. Divorce was legally obtainable if both parties desired it, and the law did not, as in Christian times, insist upon publicly humiliating and disgracing every man and woman who, in youthful folly, had committed themselves to a choice which made every breath a blight upon the face of life, and the hours a burden to be dragged through the weary length of day."

The *Popular Science Monthly*, which ever since its foundation by E. L. Youmans has been a foremost advocate of evolution as well as a most interesting *répertoire* of scientific advance, will next year be published simultaneously in London and New York.

Professor Campbell Black's presidential address to the Medico-chirurgical Society, Glasgow, is reported at length in the *North British Daily Mail*. It is most refreshingly outspoken. Here are a few bits: "Subscriptions to infirmaries and the building of churches may be regarded as a social whitewash applied to dirty reputations"—"He was a church elder of the most pronounced Calvinistic sanctity, and wore a three-decker white choker"—"Some sapocacious cleric gets up and sententiously and solemnly moves a vote of thanks to the medical officers"—"Some wretched outcast in the tyrant grip of phthisis, forsaken of God and man." It is really astonishing to see these and similar passages printed in a great daily newspaper. What *is* the world coming to?

Mr. C. Doeg has for many years been a hard worker for the Secular cause in Liverpool. For a considerable time he has been secretary of the N.S.S. Branch. We deeply regret to hear that he is now lying seriously ill, but we hope he will soon recover. Meanwhile all communications about Branch business should be addressed to Mr. Ernest Newman, 1 Saxony-road, Kensington, Liverpool. Mr. Newman is the Branch president.

The Sunderland and Ryhope friends are going to have a social gathering on Christmas Eve, to which they invite all Freethinkers in the district. It will take place in the ball-room of the Guide Post Hotel, Ryhope Colliery, commencing at seven o'clock. There will be songs, recitations, etc., and arrangements will be made for the future propaganda of Freethought.

The Birmingham Branch intends calling a Conference of Midland Branches of Freethinkers early in January. Invitations have been sent out, and on receipt of replies the time and place of meeting will be settled and announced in the *Freethinker*. It is hoped that there will be a response from Freethinkers at Wolverhampton, Walsall, Wednesbury, Dudley, Coventry, Stafford, Cheltenham, etc.

Obituary.

A REMARKABLE woman and gifted writer has passed away in the person of Louisa Sarah Bevington Guggenberger, whose talents won for her the respect and friendship of Herbert Spencer. Miss Bevington was a poetess of no mean order, as was shown in her first volume, *Key Notes*, published in 1879, and succeeded by her *Poems, Lyrics, and Sonnets*, 1882, and her later *Liberty Lyrics*. She showed the high and able quality of her Freethought in her articles on "Modern Atheism and Mr. Mallock" in the *Nineteenth Century* (October and December, 1879), in which she argued that "Conscience has taken millenniums to develop, and it has developed in obedience to a need, and not to a creed, springing out of the fundamental demands of progressive existence rather than from the comparatively recent demands of theological aspiration." Miss Bevington contributed a notable paper on "The Moral Demerits of Orthodoxy" to *Progress*, when edited by Mr. Foote. She was also a contributor to *Modern Thought*, *Mind*, the *Echo*, *Liberty*, etc. She held the ideal of self-government, and did not scruple to call herself an evolutionary Anarchist. Her last book was entitled *Common-Sense Country*.

THE interment of Ivy, the infant daughter of Robert and Sarah Boardman, took place at Failsworth Cemetery on Thursday, December 5, the Secular Burial Service being read by Mr. Henry Clough. The interment was to have taken place in the churchyard, but the clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Barnes, refused to allow the Secular Service to be read, and at the last moment arrangements had to be made at the cemetery. Much sympathy is felt for the parents in their bereavement. They, together with many relations, are firm supporters of the Secular movement in this district.

Christianity is nominally in the nineteenth century of its existence; it maintained slavery in its midst, and instituted slavery in the various countries where it planted the cross, for nearly eighteen centuries; and now it is claimed as a universally admitted fact that Christianity had a large share in bringing about the abolition of slavery.—*Charles Bradlaugh*, "*Notes on Christian Evidences*," *p. 42*.

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WOE IN LONDON.

(After Campbell's "Hohenlinden.")

In London, when the sun was low,
Nigh "dudless" lay on trodden snow,
A dying waif of winter's woe—
Her eyes were closing wearily.

In Canaan, 'neath a genial sky,
The Lord—unless the Gospels lie—
On loafing idlers cast his eye
In pity for their "peckishness."

In London young and old may cry
To God for food, there's no reply.
They weep and pray, and starve and die—
The Lord's no longer pitiful.

Though Christ neglects starved London brats,
He filled with wine some guzzler's vats,
And gorged a mob with loaves and sprats,
In days of old, in Galilee.

In London starving workers dine
With old "Duke Humphrey"; as for wine,
'Twas made by Christ, in "Auld Lang Syne";
But now he's turned teetotaler.

God's ears can hear the flatt'ring "Hail!"
And pleasing anthem; but they fail
To hear the feeble, piteous wail
Of foodless, helpless little ones.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

PIETY AND IMPOSTURE.

M. COURNOT, Advocate-General at Angers, has been enlightening his brother lawyers on the ways and means of accomplished mendicants. In his speech, or address, at the opening of term, M. Cournot said little that is new, for his information about beggars' "guide books" has long been known in Paris. Metropolitan mendicants have for years had at their disposal books in which the names and addresses of charitable persons are inscribed, together with the sums which an artful cadger may manage to extract from them. The Advocate-General of Angers, however, had something original to state in his illustrations of the manner in which people may be duped by so-called miracles at Lourdes. He cited the case of one Rivière, who was an object of universal sympathy and charity in parts of the departments of the Maine-et-Loire and the Mayenne, where he exhibited himself as a hopeless cripple. He also posed as a deaf mute. He used to journey on crutches or by train from one village or town to another, and was everywhere welcomed, fed on the fat of the land, and supplied with money. His thanks he expressed by signs, and it was found that he was able to divine what people said by the movements of their lips. "How wonderful!" cried his sympathisers, and they prayed, good souls, for his complete recovery. Rivière at last started for Lourdes, his pockets well lined with sterling coin and notes of the Republic. He was plunged into the well of icy water, and immediately recovered his speech, hearing, and the use of his limbs. Then he returned in triumph from the sacred fountain. At every station on his way to Marans, in the Maine-et-Loire department, which he particularly favored, collections were made for him, and when he entered that village the church bells were pealed in his honor. He had collected nearly £80 on his way from Lourdes, and at Marans people were adding to his horde. The Mayor of the place, however, suspected something wrong, and, before organising a general subscription for the cripple so suddenly transformed, thought it prudent to submit Rivière to examination by a skilful medical expert. No sooner did Rivière hear that he was about to be taken before a doctor than he promptly disappeared from Marans. A few weeks afterwards he was discovered at Andouille, in the Mayenne, another of his haunts, deaf, dumb, and paralysed. He was condemned to three years' imprisonment for his series of frauds. M. Cournot also amused his colleagues by the story of the ragpicker, whose children were baptised fourteen times by Catholic priests and twelve times by Protestant pastors, the able and artful parents receiving a substantial bonus on each sprinkling.—*Daily Telegraph* (Dec. 6).

CHINA AND MISSIONARIES.

SUPPOSE that a Chinese missionary society should persist in sending missionaries into the interior of Ireland; that these missionaries should construct a large compound, or enclosure, as the English do in China, and should induce some weak-minded women and children to enter their compound with a view to proving to them that their ancient faith was false and impossible, and should attempt to teach them a new faith, which the Irish believed to be thoroughly immoral, and in reality the religion of the devil? Does any one believe for one moment that the Irish would not turn out, destroy the compound, and murder the Chinese missionaries? and would the Government at London be able to protect these missionaries from being attacked and slain by the Irish people?

It has been suggested by a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* that the British and the American Governments should force the Chinese to pay £2,000,000 sterling for every foreign missionary murdered. I presume that this writer likes to see fair play, and would not ask anything from China which England and the United States would not in like manner grant to China; so China, of course, would have to be paid £2,000,000 sterling for every Chinaman who is murdered either under the English or the American flag. I think that, at this rate, at the end of the first year the balance in favor of China would enable them not only to pay off their war indemnity, but would also enable them to purchase the largest ironclad fleet in the world. H. S. MAXIM.

PRANKS OF BAPTISM.

A YOUNG woman of twenty, named Françoise Grollet, died on Sunday in the village of Massetterie, in the Department of the Puy-de-Dôme. She was expecting to be confined in a few days, but uræmia set in, and, as her relatives supposed, she expired before the doctor could attend from a neighboring village. Her friends sent at the same time for the Curé of the Commune, and he arrived first, carrying the viaticum for the purpose of administering the last rites of the Roman Catholic religion. "The poor woman is dead," they replied to the Abbé. "And the child? Have you thought about that? Perhaps there is still time; it must be baptised." The husband, the father, and the mother were taken aback at the idea of the operation which must be made in order to carry out the ceremony; but when the Abbé said, "Let me do it," they had not sufficient courage to oppose the imperious man of the Church. They left the room, and, in the presence of an old woman of seventy-two, he took a knife, carried out the operation, and baptised the child! The old woman then asked him, "What is to be done with it?" "Put it back again," he replied, and then left the room. On the threshold he met Dr. Girard, to whom he remarked in the most off-hand way, "The woman is dead, but it is all right. I have done all that was necessary."

You may imagine the stupefaction of the doctor when he learned the full significance of the priest's words. Dr. Girard is also Mayor of the Commune, and the first thing he did was to call in the police. In his opinion, the woman was not dead when the operation was performed; she was, he affirms, simply in a state of syncope, which had followed upon one of the attacks of the disease. The police are therefore discussing the question whether to prosecute the Abbé for "homicide by imprudence," or for the "unlawful practice of surgery." The Abbé, on his side, writes a letter to the local paper, the *Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme*, in which he discusses and attempts to justify the act, as if it were the only thing which his creed permitted him to do. "What you describe as a horrible operation," he writes, "was one which my sovereign conscience rendered painfully necessary. The woman had been dead half an hour when I arrived, but her relatives assured me that the child was still living, and it was incumbent upon me to make sure that it should go to heaven by baptism, and perhaps give it life on earth by the aid which science could afford. As regards the 'repugnant operation,' the relatives present approved of it, though they refused to carry it out themselves. My rôle in this affair was not marked so much by temerity as by my devotion to my religion." A full inquiry is to be made, and it should put an end to this barbarous Cesarean custom.

—*Sunday Chronicle.*

We have lost many good things of Cervantes, and other writers, because of the tribunal of religion and dulness. One Aonius Palearius was sensible of this, and said that "the Inquisition was a poniard aimed at the throat of literature." The image is striking, and the observation just; but the ingenious observer was in consequence immediately led to the stake.—*I. D'Israeli.*

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JESUS AND HIS FATHER.

Although M. Clermont Ganneau has speculated that Jehovah was not originally a bachelor, but had a consort, afterwards known as Kadosh, just as Baal had Ashtoreth, it is certain that by the time Ezra, or the great Synagogue, or someone else compiled the Jewish writings, the God of the Jews, while retaining his masculine character, was altogether too old, stern, and far-off for anything in the line of amorous adventures. Nor did he make up for his lack of the companionship of goddesses by indulging in those intrigues with the daughters of men for which the deities of Greece and Rome were famous. Jews and Mohammedans alike repudiate such a notion. "Sole Maker of the Heavens and of the Earth! How, when He hath no consort, should he have a son?" asks Mohammed (Koran vi. 100). True, in the old days, "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took wives of all which they chose" (Gen. vi. 3). But the Ancient of Days, though he commanded his prophet Hosea to break the Seventh Commandment (Hosea i. 2, iii. 1), can never be suspected of having done the like himself. He was not that kind of a deity at all. Ruling a refractory race like the Jews indisposes for sports like those of Krishna with the Gopis.

One cannot help fancying that we should never have heard of this carpenter's wife's Son of God, born without a human father, had not the Pagan world been accustomed to ascribe divine birth to their heroes. The god Apollo was assigned as the father of Plato. Buddha was born from the left side of the immaculate Maya. Alexander the Great gave out that he was begotten by Zeus. Divine parentage was ascribed to Augustus Cæsar, and to the Pagan Christ, Apollonius of Tyana. All the old culture-heroes were born of gods, and usually from virgin mothers. When Christianity spread among the heathen, its hero must have as high an origin as any of them. Justin Martyr, in his *First Apology* (chap. xxii.), expressly puts him in the same category. He says: "And if we assert that the Word of God was born of God in a peculiar manner different from ordinary generation, let this be no extraordinary thing to you, who say that Mercury is the angelic Word of God..... And if we even affirm that He was born of a virgin, accept this in common with what you accept of Perseus." Mr. Hartland, in his erudite *Legend of Perseus*, shows that stories of supernatural birth are literally world-wide.

It is curious that of the four gospellers only two mention the virgin birth, which is never alluded to by Paul or the other epistle writers. And these two hopelessly contradict each other. In Matthew, Mary appears unaware of the honor (or shame) brought upon her. In Luke it is announced by Gabriel. Matthew tells us that Joseph, but for his dreams, would have put her away. How Matthew got to know what Joseph dreamt we are left to conjecture. From Luke it does not appear that Joseph knew anything of the condition of his betrothed. Although Mary had sung, "Henceforth all nations shall call me blessed"; though angels announced the wonderful birth to shepherds; though the miraculously-born child had been visited by wise men from the east, and had been declared by Zacharias, "the prophet of the most high," purifications were offered for him as for an ordinary sin-born infant; he had to submit to the rite of circumcision; and when at twelve years of age he stayed in the temple, "his parents" were astonished, and his mother said: "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing" (Luke ii. 41-48). Matthew relates that in his own country they asked: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas?" (xiii. 55). The reply of Jesus, that a prophet is not without honor but among his own kin, shows that he shared the general belief. John tells us "neither did his brethren believe in him" (vii. 5). Perhaps they went to eternal torment for their unbelief; but certainly they were in a position to know the facts of the case somewhat better than the believers of to-day. Be it noted, too, that the Hebrew Christians, the people who, if any, were in the best position to be acquainted with the facts, did not believe in the virgin birth. Moreover, the Syriac Gospel of Matthew, discovered by Mrs. Lewis, makes the distinct statement that Joseph begat Jesus. It was the Gentile Christians, those already used to the fables of men born of gods, who credited and circulated a story which is not only an outrage upon human credulity, but is refuted by the evidence of the very documents upon which alone it is built.

It may be too much positively to affirm that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of Joseph, as Philip told Nathaniel (John i. 45), and as the Syriac Gospel affirms. If it is a wise child that knows its own father, it is sometimes venturesome for anyone else—save the mother—to make any affirmations as to fatherhood. Some suspicion may rest on Zechariah, the high priest; on Gabriel, the messenger; or on the scamp Pandera, to whom the Jews assigned the paternity. But, in view of her marriage and large family, it is charitable to Mary to assume that Philip and the Syriac Gospel were right.

Uncle Benjamin.

BOOK CHAT.

There is a combative air about *Spiritual Truth and Common Sense*, a plea for Spiritualism, by Brian Hodgson. The author offers to meet, "at any time and at any place he chooses to name," any individual, "be he scientist or theologist, who has the courage to stand up to one of his own size." We are unacquainted with Mr. Hodgson's size, but he talks large. He appeals for spirit return first to "universal experience," and he quotes Dr. Draper as saying "there is a body of evidence reaching from the remotest age to the present time." Yet Dr. Draper plainly implied that the evidence for ghosts, enormous in quantity, is deficient in quality; and if there be but one person without evidence of ghosts or gods, it is incorrect to appeal to "*universal* experience." The question is, What is the testimony to alleged supernatural facts worth? Mr. Hodgson himself would probably reject the stories of witchcraft, told by Central Africans, on the ground that they must interpret facts in accordance with their own limited ideas and education. The devils are as true to them as the spirits to Mr. Hodgson. Of course we are told the old story about Mr. Crookes and Florence Cook; but in our reading of it an able scientist was grossly humbugged by a clever woman, as in the case of Eusapia Paladino and Mr. Oliver Lodge. There is nothing unusual in a tricky woman being able to deceive a grave professor. But Mr. Hodgson gives us some of his own experiences. He tells us: "During seven sittings my body was systematically subjected to an operation impossible to describe in materialistic terminology." The final object, if we understand Mr. Hodgson aright, was to induce in him a spirit of humility, and he shows it by saying: "Thus I learned how it was that the investigation of Spiritualism has no attraction for the scientist." The person who does not believe himself the medium of supernatural communications seems to be, to Mr. Hodgson, the natural type of arrogance.

* * *

A record of all the old English customs which still exist is about to be published. It has been collected by the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, rector of Barkham, Berks.

* * *

Messrs. Methuen and Co. announce a new work by F. S. Granger, M.A., on *The Worship of the Romans*. It deals with such topics as Dreams, Nature-Worship, Magic, Divination, Holy Places, Victims, etc.

* * *

In the catalogue of the Paine Exhibition (No. 10) is mention of a motto inscribed in gold letters. The lines, which are said to be probably by Rickman, are:—

He who dare not reason is a slave;
He who cannot reason is a fool;
He who will not reason is a bigot.

The passage, we believe, is really taken from the *Academical Questions* of Sir William Drummond, a work which influenced Shelley, and is quoted by him in his notes to *Queen Mab*. As the work is now rare, the whole passage is worth quoting: "The free and philosophic spirit of our nation has been the theme of admiration to the world. This was the proud distinction of Englishmen, and the luminous source of all their glory. Shall we, then, forget the manly and dignified sentiments of our ancestors to prate in the language of the mother or the nurse about our good old prejudices? This is not the way to defend the cause of truth. It was not thus that our fathers maintained it in the brilliant periods of our history. Prejudice may be trusted to guard the outworks for a short space of time, while reason slumbers in the citadel; but, if the latter sink into a lethargy, the former will quickly erect a standard for herself. Philosophy, wisdom, and liberty support each other: he who will no reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool; and he who dares not is a slave."

* * *

The orthodox cannot be expected to relish *The Woman's Bible*, and "Nym Crinkle" expresses their view in the *New York World* of Sunday, November 24. He reminds women that all the knowledge concerning the Hebrew Scriptures which is accessible to the race has been garnered for two thousand years by men. This, it may be said, is all the more reason that woman should have her turn. At any rate under the guidance of Mrs. Stanton, she is taking it; and one of her first steps is to unsex Jehovah, and turn him into an hermaphrodite deity. Now, 'Nym Crinkle' objects to this, "because in carrying sexual consideration over into primordial fields she unwittingly postulates a goddess who is subject to the vagaries, the invalidism, and the physical and mental perturbations which are indissolubly united to the finite woman." But is not making God the Father, and masculine, also "carrying sexual consideration over into primordial fields"? and what better is a jealous and tyrannical god than a whimsical goddess? If the New Woman means to run a new deity, the sneers of "Nym Crinkle" will not hinder.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

SAVE THE CHILDREN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have just withdrawn my daughter from religious instruction in a Board school, and have induced neighbors to withdraw three other children in the same school. I earnestly beg Freethinkers in every part of London (and elsewhere) to take the same step. I will gladly advise any parent who feels anxious on the subject, and I will send copies of my leaflet, "Our Children," gratis to any address. This leaflet states reasons for withdrawing children from Bible lessons, and points out the importance of plain, moral instruction apart from theology. This religious difficulty will never approach a settlement until parents, in considerable numbers, take their children out of the Bible classes. The clergy of the churches, wise, exceedingly wise, in their generation, make strenuous efforts to seize the minds of the young. They can laugh at the efforts of Rationalists. As fast as we convert one adult they train up ten children in the old, false way. Let me beg all parents, who value their children's welfare, to consider this most serious question. Save the children; and, in order to ease the children's burden, let parents act together, so that the scholars may be withdrawn, not in units, but in twos, and threes, and fours.

F. J. GOULD.

12 Meynell-road, Hackney Common, N.E.

THE HEBREW BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The puerilities of the Jewish faith concerning the Jewish fetish is a subject not exhausted by Chilperic's interesting article on "Curiosities of the Hebrew Bible." His writings are always instructive, and his *Witness of Assyria* is a decided acquisition to a Freethinker's library. I am, however, not quite sure if the suspended *ain* in Psalm lxxx. 14 is, as he says, "a genuine correction." Orthodox Jews say this letter is suspended because the initial of the accursed "tree." It is supposed to refer to the cross; and the wild boar, which ravages the vine of Israel, is the same person the Chinese call "the pig Jesus." Yet the Christian editors, Michaelis, Van der Hooght, Frey, Leusden, and Jahn, have gone on reprinting the suspended *ain*, just as the Jewish scribes had to adhere to all the mistakes of their copies, unaware that they were thereby perpetuating an insult on their blessed Savior. The Jews also suspended the *ain* in Jeshu, that it shall not imply he brings salvation. The explanation of these suspended letters being certainly post-Christian, it is probable that the suspension is also; just as the Jews never thought of turning Moses into Manasseh in Judges xviii. 30 until they were far removed from idolatry, and wished to cover the fact that the descendants of Moses were idolaters.

Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (c. 73), accuses the Jews of cutting out from Psalm xcvi. 10 the words, "from the wood." He says the passage ought to read: "Tell ye among the nations the Lord hath reigned from the wood." But this was a false accusation of the Christian father, and one that falls back on his own party; for, as the note by Otto to the Clarke Ante-Nicene Christian Library says, "These words were not taken away by the Jews, but added by some Christian."

What different meanings may be attached to Hebrew words will appear from the following illustration:—Psalm lxxxix. 49, which in the Authorised Version reads, "Lord, where are thy former loving kindnesses which thou swearest unto David in thy truth?" may be fairly translated to read: "O, my Adonis, where are thy endearments of old which thou sworest for the sake of love, by thy phallus (or Tau), O Amen?" If the Bible throughout was translated in this style, we should be led back to quite a different religion from that taught in the Board schools.

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(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE monthly Executive meeting was held on Thursday, November 29, the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. C. Watts, E. Bater, J. Potter, J. Zwiebel, F. Wood, S. Jones, E. Quay, H. J. Stace, A. F. Yayter, and Miss Vance (sec.).

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed, and cash statement received.

A letter was ordered to be filed from James Anderson, notifying that he would appeal to the next Conference against the removal of his name from the Society's books. A letter from his Branch (Finsbury) was ordered to be returned, with an intimation that it was unconstitutional, as the power to remove members was vested solely in the Executive.

An application from Paisley asking for permission to reform the Branch, in consequence of the interest aroused by Mr. Watts's lecture under the new lecture scheme, was considered, and permission granted.

The President reported the formation of three fresh Branches in Yorkshire by Mr. Cohen in the same manner; also that he (the President) was arranging for week-night lectures in the West-end of London.

It was resolved to hold the annual Children's Party in January. Several names were proposed to form a committee, and the Secretary was instructed to obtain consent. The full list will be duly announced.

It was also resolved that the Annual Dinner, at the Holborn Restaurant, should be held in January.

The President reported that financial assistance had been rendered to the Battersea Branch from the Lecture Fund.

Mr. Watts moved (seconded by Mr. Stace): "That Mr. R. O. Smith be requested to send some answer to the resolution passed by the Executive at its last meeting"; and, on it being carried, the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, *Assistant Secretary.*

Children's Party.

THE Committee are making arrangements for the annual treat for our little ones, the time fixed being early in February. Miss Vance is secretary, and Mr. R. Forder is the treasurer. Those who have supported us in the past are reminded that funds are needed, and the sums subscribed will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

R. FORDER, *Treasurer.*

28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Those Kids!

A pretty little maid had red hair, and often heard it disparaged by neighbors and servants. Said her grandmother to her: "Child, your hair was made by the dear God, and whatever he has made is well done." "Still, I would rather have nothing else made by him," replied the little one.

Dolly (to her brother Tommy)—"Do you know, Tommy, that you come from heaven?" Tommy—"Did I?" Dolly—"Yes." Tommy—"Well, I must have come down a devil of a whop."

A little girl, four and half years old, lately said; "Papa, who made Mary and Joseph?" "Why, God, of course." "Oh, no, papa, that could not be; for, if Jesus is God, and Mary is Jesus's mother, how could God make his own mother?"

"Mamma, I don't want to be an angel when I die, and I needn't, need I?" "Why, Susie?" questioned mamma. "'Cos I don't want to leave off all my clothes, and wear fedders like a hen!"

Jesus knew all things, created all things, we are told. And yet we do not find that he understood one art or one science. His science was just that of any street arab. He was profoundly ignorant of history, of science, and philosophy, as well as of literature. All the greatest works of ancient times were written before his day—the literature of Greece was past its prime before he lived, and that of Rome had reached its highest excellence in his supposed lifetime. He knew nothing of either.—*J. Symes.*

If you wish depth, genius, imagination, taste, reason, sensibility, philosophy, elevation, originality, nature, intellect, fancy, rectitude, facility, flexibility, precision, art, abundance, variety, fertility, warmth, magic, charm, grace, force, an eagle sweep of vision, vast understanding, instruction rich, tone excellent, urbanity, suavity, delicacy, correctness, purity, clearness, eloquence, harmony, brilliancy, rapidity, gaiety, pathos, sublimity, and universality—perfection, indeed—behold Voltaire.—*Goethe.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Clerical Conspiracy Against Education."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, Dr. E. B. Aveling, "Karl Marx and Charles Darwin." Tuesday, at 8, social party. Wednesday, at 8, public discussion—George Standring, "Socialism and Secularism."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, a lecture. Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. Kent, "Are the Unemployed to go to the Devil?"

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (74 Libra-road, Roman-road): 8, Sunday-school; 7.30, M. S. Nathan, "London Government."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, F. J. Gould, "The Life of Bradlaugh."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Graham Wallas, "Public Opinion and Public Action."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, J. Cooke, "Is Suicide Justifiable?"

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stuart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, Tonzeau Parris, "Sin Against God an Impossibility."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, S. Armfield, "The Birth of the Christian God."

BLACKBURN (Spinners' Institute, St. Peter-street): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 3, "The Dream of Immortality"; 6.30, "Scepticism: its Meaning and Value."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Voltaire."

DARWEN (Assembly Rooms, over *News* office): Monday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Is Christianity True?"

DUNDEE (Tally-street Hall): 6.30, discussion, "God is Love—Is it True?"

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—G. Faulkner, "Some Notes on King Solomon"; 6.30, Mr. McGivern, "The Basis of Materialism."

HULL (Colden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Grainger, "Random Bible Readings."

IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, members' meeting—all attend.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Children of Freethinkers"; 6.30, "The Workings of Conscience in Shakespeare's Plays."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Rhodes, "Christian Evidences and Freethought."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Water: its Uses and Properties."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, G. W. Foote, "Gladstone's Theology"; 3, "Huxley's Agnosticism"; 7, "Life, Death, and After."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Robert Lane, F.G.S., "Denudation: its Cause, and its Effects upon the Earth"; 7, "Some of the Terrible Monsters of the Ancient World: their Probable Use, and Cause of Extinction"—with lantern illustrations. Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Mr. Yates, "Genesis and Geology."

TODMORDEN (Sobriety Hall): Saturday, Dec. 14, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "What Think ye of Christ?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 15, Blackburn; 22, Wood Green; 29, Balls Pond.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Dec. 22, Leicester.

TOUSSAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—December 15, Wood Green; 29, Foresters' Hall.

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The Freethinker

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NOTICE.

Owing to the holidays, next week's "Freethinker" will be published on Tuesday, Dec. 24. Lecture Notices must be sent in by the previous Saturday.

A BABY GOD.

CHRISTMAS will be here in a few days, and millions of Christians will celebrate, under a new name, the old pagan festival of the new birth of the Sun. Centuries, perhaps millenniums, before Jesus Christ was born or thought of, the twenty-fifth of December was commemorated with good cheering and rejoicing. The sun, the real lord and giver of life, without whose rays the earth would be a sterile rock in a lonely infinitude—the royal sun was once more beginning his triumphant career. His first slight ascent from his winter tomb was a prophecy of spring, with its bursting vegetation; of summer, with its loaded harvests; and of autumn, with its gathered sheaves, and golden fruit, and purple vines. Life was still worth living, hope gleamed through the desolation, men's hearts gladdened, and they danced and sang, ate and drank, and mocked the wrinkled face of care.

Christianity adopted this old pagan festival, and associated it with the pretended birth of Christ. We say *pretended*, because the birthday of Christ (if he ever existed) is utterly unknown. The earliest Christians were ignorant of it, and, when it was first celebrated, different dates were patronised by various sections of the Church. At length, in the fourth century, when the Church allied itself with the State, and stooped to conquer, and paganised itself to convert the pagans—the twenty-fifth of December was definitively selected, although it was obviously incompatible with the gospel story of shepherds watching their flocks by night, which is an absurdity during mid-winter in Judea.

From that time the SON has been worshipped instead of the SUN. But there has been little difference in the essential character of the celebration. Shibboleths have altered, but the observances have been unchanged. Eating, drinking, and visiting go on as before, and scattered families still meet around the hearth and festive board. Religion raises her voice in the pauses of merriment, but the season is mainly social, and strongly smacks of its carnal origin. It is impossible for the profane mind to perceive any connection between Jesus Christ and roast turkey and plum pudding.

Religion has been called the poetry of unpoetical natures. There is certainly a lack of imagination in ordinary Christians. The birth of a man may be celebrated with carnal festivities, but the birth of a god should surely be celebrated with spiritual recreations. Love-feasts may be all right, if we exclude indiscriminate kissing; but wine-feasts, and still more whiskey-feasts, seem rather incongruous, unless they are a tribute to the Holy Spirit.

There is also a want of imagination in sermons about the birth of Christ, to say nothing of pious conversation on the same incomprehensible subject. Christians say the babe of Bethlehem was God; indeed, the designation of "Mother of God" has been applied to Mary by Protestants as well as Catholics. Words are easily uttered, but it is sometimes difficult to realise their meaning. We invite our Christian friends to form (if they can) some definite conception of a baby god. Just imagine him in the hands of the doctor or midwife, a helpless, wailing little lump of flesh. Fancy him afterwards mewling and puking in his nurse's arms. Picture him learning to walk, with many failures, and sad falls on the part mercifully provided by nature for such mishaps. Conceive him teething, keeping his mother awake at nights, and making his father use the language of commination. Think of a god spotted with measles or raucous with the whooping-cough. Is it possible that a god would (or could) go through all these trials, and be subjected to all these infirmities? Yet this is what the Christian is bound to believe—though happily not bound to understand—with respect to Jesus Christ.

What a position is babyhood for the alleged creator and governor of this illimitable universe! What vanity, what cheek on man's part, to make the Almighty go through all the undignified stages of *his* petty career! His worship consists in pulling down God to his own level.

When this baby god of the Christians was born, it is said that angels sang of peace and goodwill on earth. This was meant as a prophecy, but it reads like irony. The peace has not come, and the goodwill is as hard to find in our reckless commercialism and wicked exploitation of inferior races, from whom we actually thieve under pretexts of morality and religion. Europe to-day is one big camp. Millions of soldiers are grasping arms, and a terrible part of the wealth of every Christian nation is spent on preparations for war. It is the goodwill of the bloody sword, the peace of thunderous artillery.

Look at the great Nonconformist demonstration just held in London in favor of the Armenians and against the Turks. Religion is at the bottom of all the trouble; it separates those whom humanity would unite. And nine-tenths of the sympathy with the Armenians is a religious sympathy. Christian bigotry is the sentiment which is being stimulated. How many indignation meetings would be held if Christians were slaughtering Mohammedans? And how much more discreet these Nonconformists would be if Turkey were a great power? They do not clamor about the tyrannies in Russia, or go into hysterics over the horrors of Siberia—simply because the Czar commands a million bayonets. And what peaceful sentiments they display! They are trying to induce England to thunder with her battle-ships, and that would mean red war, with European Turkey as a cockpit for all the armies of Europe, probably in fratricidal strife. There is really nothing like religion for stirring up men's minds to what Carlyle called "the due infernal pitch."

G. W. FOOTE.

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EARLY CHRISTIAN MONUMENTS.*

ARMENIA, which unfortunately has of late been forced on the attention of Europe, claims to be the oldest Christian country, and the Armenian Church boasts of retaining the primitive aspects of its religion. Perhaps it does, for a ridiculous, superstitious hodge-podge it is. It is pretended that Jesus Christ himself corresponded with Agbaros, King of Edessa, who also corresponded with the Emperor Tiberius. Most Protestants regard these documents as forgeries, but they illustrate the Armenian pretensions.

Monuments of early Christianity, other than literary ones, are of the most meagre and uncertain description. Some tombstone inscriptions, catacomb paintings, lamps, and old brass crosses, of uncertain date and possibly Pagan derivation, make but a beggarly collection of Christian antiquities. Our only real sources of information are the documents descended through monkish hands. Until late years these have been mainly those in the care of the Latin Church, whose scrupulous fairness in literary matters is not entirely above suspicion. Certainly the most important sidelights on Christian origins have come from sources beyond the control of the Romish Church. As instances may be mentioned the book of Enoch recovered from Abyssinia, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles found at Constantinople, the Gospel of Peter found in Egypt, and the Syriac Gospels recently discovered by Mrs. Lewis in the Sinaitic Peninsula.

Mr. Conybeare, though still but a young man, has already done something in helping to throw light on Christian origins by his translations of Armenian texts, and by his edition of the work of Philo, *About the Contemplative Life*. The Armenians, surrounded by enemies to their faith, have naturally preserved, extolled, and exaggerated the doings of those who have suffered for their creed. The whole of the texts here given are of this description, but they cast many side-lights on the real character of early Christianity, which are well exhibited by Mr. Conybeare in his "General Preface."

Mr. Conybeare notices that the note generally struck by these sainted Christian martyrs is one of hatred, defiance, and imprecation; and this feature of their religion the Armenians seem to have carefully preserved. A curious item is that one saint, Demetrius, encourages another to fight in the gladiatorial show. He rushes on his opponent confident in the saint's prophecy of victory, and slays him at once.

One point is clearly brought out by Mr. Conybeare in his "General Preface"—viz., that the early Christians did not deny, but believed in, the old Pagan gods, whom they regarded as demons. Justin Martyr (*Apol.* 55) says so explicitly. Mr. Conybeare says (p. 11): "We are thus prepared to find the Christian saints resorting to exorcism against the gods of the heathen." And he gives an instance in which the demons cast out from their images were Dis, and Apollo, and Artemis. Minutius Felix, the earliest Latin apologist (c. 27), similarly professes his belief in the heathen gods and goddesses.

A natural consequence of this attitude was the destruction by Christian saints of Pagan works of art. As our author says: "The obvious way of scotching a foul demon was to smash his idols; and we find that an enormous number of martyrs earned their crowns in this manner." He tells us, moreover, "the most popular of the saints were those who resorted to such violence and earned their death by it." Many must have wondered why the early Christians are said to have been subject to such persecution, while the Jews of the same era, who equally objected to sacrificing to other gods, were exempt. Mr. Conybeare throws some light on this. He tells us plainly that the Christians were punished for their anti-social tendencies. "There was first that rejection of family ties and relationships which accompanied the belief that the world was speedily and any day coming to an end. Young men and maidens were taught not to marry, husbands and wives not to cohabit and beget any more children. Eunuchism, because of the kingdom of heaven, was even tolerated by the very founder of the religion. And all this just at a time when the most thoughtful and patriotic of the Romans were deploring the decay of population all over the empire, and were even making laws against celibacy and holding out rewards to married men with families." Mr. Conybeare further refers to their interference with family relations, their elevation of improvidence and poverty into virtues, their repudiation and ridicule of other cults, and the secrecy of their rites. He says (p. 287), in a passage I must quote at length:—

> "The teaching of Early Christianity was thus altogether subversive of ancient society. So it would be of modern society, and any one set of people who should literally carry it out in their conduct would very soon come into conflict with established law and morality, and would certainly descend, sooner or later, into beggary and destitution. A system of ethics inspired by the belief that the existing order of things is shortly to succeed, and, by an abrupt peripety, give way to a kingdom of heaven, in which angels and superhuman agencies will supersede the slow and arduous methods and industry of this earth—such a system will not much avail us until the promise is fulfilled; we shall be fortunate if it does not put us into much useless conflict with the old and permanent constitution of things. Into such conflict the early Christians fell. They were regarded, and rightly, as enemies of the human race. If it is possible to endorse any judgment of the past, we may endorse this one of the authorities of the Roman empire."

Another point brought out by our author is "the extent to which there gathered round the personality of a favorite martyr the stories which had been believed of the demi-gods and heroes of an earlier age." Surely this is as true of Jesus as of any of the later Christian saints. The supernatural descent and virgin birth had been told of many pagan heroes. Miracles of healing had been related of Esculapius. Buddha had been tempted in the wilderness by Mara. Elisha had raised a widow's son. The feeding of multitudes, walking on water, and turning water into wine were natural incidents ascribed to any solar deities; and prodigies attended the death of Julius Cæsar. If legends clustered round the minor martyrs, surely they did also around the greatest. Mr. Conybeare seems to allow this, for he mentions that the story of the virgin birth is wanting in the earlier "Acts."

Mr. Conybeare will not allow that Christian documents are in any way to be condemned because they relate miracles. He says: "In appraising the historical value of an early Christian document we ought to condemn it; not in case it contains miraculous elements, but in case it be wholly lacking in local color, in case the sentiments and teachings put into the mouths of the actors, and the actions attributed to them, be foreign to their age and country, so far as of these we have any reliable knowledge." Try John by Mr. Conybeare's canons, and, though it is nothing against him that he (according to some MSS.) makes an angel come down to disturb a pool, we may rely on his speaking of the office of high priest as yearly, and his attributing to Jesus discourses and sentiments unlike those of any Palestinian Jews.

Mr. Conybeare is always looking for history, and, of course, he finds it. Even of such a palpable theological concoction as the dogmatic discourse attributed to Callistratus, he can only use the words of Professor Jowett concerning the Phædo of Socrates: "How far the words attributed to Socrates were actually uttered by him we forbear to ask; for no answer can be given to this question. And it is better to resign ourselves to the feeling of a great work than to linger among critical uncertainties." Such an attitude can scarcely be wondered at when we remember that no Christian critic has yet discovered that the "Sermon on the Mount" is a literary compilation, never uttered by one man, either on mount or plain.*

Mr. Conybeare's training at Oxford and among Armenian Christians has hardly served to develop that rugged scepticism which, it seems to me, is a preliminary requisite for sound criticism of early Christian documents. He would seriously have us believe that in these stories of the early Christian martyrs we have the actual record of dialogues between judges and the accused some seventeen hundred years ago! Some nucleus of truth there may be; but a verbatim record—*Credat Judæus.*

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* *The Apology and Acts of Apollonius, and other Monuments of Early Christianity.* Edited, with a General Preface, Introduction, Notes, etc., by F. C. Conybeare, M.A. (London: Swan Sonnenschein.)

* In my paper on "The Literary Character of the Gospels," *Freethinker*, March 27, 1892, I was the first, so far as I am aware, to announce this view.

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I should be sorry to leave the reader with a sense of disparagement of Mr. Conybeare. He is both learned and fair-minded. His life, I should say, must have been mainly spent in study, and he is too honest and amiable to readily impute dishonesty to others. Had he, however, mixed much with the world, he would have seen how easily facts get twisted whenever the interests of a powerful corporation are concerned. When such a corporation has had for many centuries sole control of literature, every item thereof must be scrutinised with the utmost caution. Mr. Conybeare's own works confirm the opinion of De Quincey that no one has yet sifted the remains of early Christianity with sufficient critical care. J. M. WHEELER.

THEOLOGICAL PERPLEXITIES.

(Concluded from p. 787.)

In my article in last week's *Freethinker* I endeavored to show the perplexing nature of the New Testament account of the death of Christ, the Bible story of the Fall of Man, and the theological theory of free-will. The inconsistency of this last Christian teaching is such that it may be well to return to the subject.

There is, underlying the popular view of free-will, the assumption that all persons are endowed at birth with a faculty that selects and decides upon a certain course of conduct, or a particular form of belief, irrespective of the influence of environment. This is a palpable fallacy, for it would be equally as reasonable to suppose that cabbages, for instance, are endowed with power to grow independently of soil, rain, and sunshine. Now, it is a fair question to ask: If man has been designed by a supreme and eternal will, how can he act in accordance with an inferior and temporal will of his own? Further, can there be one great irresistible designing will, and at the same time millions of little changeable wills frustrating its designs? When a person says, "I will to do a thing," and afterwards he wills not to do it, there is no free-will, as the term is commonly understood by theologians, but simply a conflict of ideas, caused by the introduction of fresh factors in the act of determining. The change of determination does not mean that in the brain there is a presiding officer, as it were, who first decides upon one course of action, and then countermands it by issuing different orders. The theological fallacy is in regarding the will as being the *cause* of the determination, whereas it only expresses the *final* conclusion arrived at through impressions made upon the mentality by circumstances which at the time were in operation.

In the development of our intellectual and moral powers we pass through the stages of infancy, youth, and maturity, and the excellence or otherwise of our conduct will depend upon the nature of the conditions that surround each stage. There is no volition in man that can produce a moral character from immoral conditions. As a rule, a person's conduct is a reflex of his environment. What we term mind, thought, or will is undoubtedly influenced by causes, internal and external. For instance, defective sight prevents the formation of accurate ideas of distance and of color, and a defective memory may mar the success in life of an otherwise gifted man. Some persons are so criminally inclined by nature that it becomes necessary to place them under restraint; and others are born and trained under such inferior conditions that they are unable to rise to a high virtuous plane. These facts, to a large extent, explain the why and the wherefore of good and bad characters, of rational and irrational conduct. It is not here contended that man is an abject victim to fatalism, for by the accumulation and observance of the lessons of experience he may learn to control nature, and also to create new circumstances that will strongly influence his life. Through discovery and invention persons change under fresh circumstances, which may be of their own making. It is an utter fallacy to suppose that we can divest ourselves of the effects of the civilisation of our time. We can no more do so than we can dismiss all sensation by closing our eyes. Science implies power over matter, and shows that while it controls us we can also control it. Thus, by the careful observation of the manifestation of nature, and by the study of the physical and mental laws which govern man's organisation, we find an explanation of phenomena which theological conceptions do not afford.

Estimates of right and wrong may vary in different ages and nations. It is not, however, the result of free-will, but rather the consequence of the evolution of thought and action. The transformation of noble thoughts into noble deeds is the work of a progressive people, and depends upon material causes. Samuel Laing, in his *Modern Zoroastrian*, says: "Now, it is certain that the will, like life, memory, consciousness, and other mental functions, is, so far as human knowledge extends, indissolubly connected with matter and natural laws, in the form of certain motions of the cells which form the grey substance of the nerves, and of the nervous ganglia of which the cortex of the brain is the most considerable. This is conclusively proved by experiment. We know that by removing certain portions of the brain of a dog or of a pigeon we can destroy the power of motion while preserving the will, and by removing certain other portions we can destroy the will while preserving the powers of motion. Take away a certain portion of the brain of a pigeon, and, although it retains the power of taking food, it has so totally lost the will to exercise this power that it will starve in the midst of abundance, though it can be kept alive by placing the food in its mouth. In like manner, in the human brain there are certain portions which, if destroyed by injury or disease, will paralyse the power of giving effect to the will by muscular movements, while the destruction of other portions will paralyse the will which originates such movements. Numerous cases are recorded in medical treatises in which the will is completely paralysed for the performance of certain functions, and in such cases the anatomist can lay his finger on the spot where the brain is affected, and when the brain is dissected after the death of the patient it will be found that his prediction is verified, and that this region of the brain really was diseased" (pp. 191–2).

It is asked, if man has not a free-will, or if he is necessitated to do a thing, why should he be punished? The answer is, for his own improvement, and for the protection of society. Punishment affects its motive, motive controls will, and will regulates conduct. According to the free-will theory, punishment is vindictive; it is inflicted for past conduct, rather than for the purpose of preventing wrong-doing in the future. But if I am free, why punish me at all? To tell me I am free to act, and then to punish me for so acting, is a sham. Besides, the very fact of threatening me with eternal punishment, unless I act or believe in a certain way, prevents freedom, inasmuch as the very dread produced by the threat affects my power of choice, and renders free volition impossible. It is a circumstance in itself, supposing I thought it to be true, that would impel me to arrive at one conclusion.

As to the perplexed question of man's responsibility, it depends so entirely upon what is meant by the term, and to whom we are supposed to be responsible. Its true meaning is being amenable, accountable; but this involves a mutual agreement, a contract between two parties. Now, I have no agreement, neither have I made any contract, with God, and, therefore, I feel that I am not responsible to him. I am here without any choice upon my part, and I gave no consent as to the alleged relations between myself and God. If any bargain exist, it is a one-sided one which was forced upon me. Besides, the odds are all against me, for, according to the orthodox theory, I was handicapped from the very commencement. I was, it is said, "born in sin"; "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew xx. 16); "broad is the way that leadeth to destruction," while "narrow is the way which leadeth unto life" (Matt. vii. 13, 14). The only responsibility that I can recognise is that to my fellow man, from whom I receive reciprocal service. CHARLES WATTS.

The minister had been in the little Kentucky town but a short time, and when he was called on to preach a funeral sermon he thought it best to pick up a few facts about the deceased. "I trust our brother gone before was a truly religious man?" he said to the surviving brother. "You bet he was," was the earnest answer. "Why, brother, he never tuk out his gun to lay for one of the Simmonses without fust prayin' three hours."

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THE WOMAN'S BIBLE.

THE first part of the long-talked-of "Woman's Bible," edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and colleagues, has been published, and it proves so heretical that Frances Willard, Lady Henry Somerset, and other representatives of the Christian New Woman, have made haste to repudiate all connection or approval. Joined with Mrs. Stanton in the production of this first part, which consists of comments on the Pentateuch, are Lillie Devereaux Blake, Rev. Phœbe Hanaford, Clara Bewick Colby, Ellen Battelle Dietrick, Ursula N. Gestefeld, Mrs. Louisa Southwork, and Frances Ellen Burr. The method of work adopted by these leaders of the New Woman Movement is described by Mrs. Stanton in the Preface as follows: "Each person purchased two Bibles, ran through them from Genesis to Revelation, marking all the texts that concerned women. The passages were cut out and pasted in a blank book, and the commentaries then written underneath."

In her Introduction, Mrs. Stanton defends the attempt of women to look at the so-called sacred books with feminine eyes. She asks: "Why is it more ridiculous for women to protest against her present status in the Old and New Testaments, in the ordinances and discipline of the Church, than in the statutes and constitution of the State? Why is it more ridiculous to arraign ecclesiastics for their false teaching and acts of injustice to women than members of Congress and the House of Commons? Why is it more audacious to review Moses than Blackstone, the Jewish code of laws than the English system of jurisprudence?

"The sentimental feelings we all have for those things we were educated to believe sacred do not readily yield to pure reason. I distinctly remember the shudder that passed over me on seeing a mother take our family Bible to make a high seat for her child at a table. It seemed such a desecration, I was tempted to protest against its use for such a purpose, and this, too, long after my reason had repudiated its divine authority.

"Bible historians claim special inspiration for the Old and New Testaments, containing most contradictory records of the same events, of miracles opposed to all known laws, of customs that degrade the female sex of all human and animal life, stated in most questionable language that could not be read in a promiscuous assembly, and call all this 'the Word of God.'

"I do not believe that any man ever saw or talked with God; I do not believe that God inspired the Mosaic Code, or told the historians what they say about woman; for all the religions on the face of the earth degrade her, and so long as woman accepts the position that they assign her, her emancipation is impossible."

The most notable item in Mrs. Stanton's comment on the first of Genesis is the contention that, since man was made male and female in the image of God, the deity must contain feminine as well as masculine elements. She says: "If language has any meaning, we have in these texts a plain declaration of the existence of the feminine element in the Godhead, equal in power and glory with the masculine, the Heavenly Mother and Father!

"As to woman's subjection, on which both the canon and the civil law delight to dwell, it is important to note that equal dominion is given to woman over every living thing, but not one word is said giving man dominion over woman."

Ellen Battelle Dietrick comes next in the rôle of commentator. She insists that the first three chapters of Genesis contain "two entirely separate and very contradictory stories of creation, written by two different, but equally anonymous, authors." She gives extracts to prove that the serpent was more truthful than God.

Lillie D. Blake considers the rib story a ridiculous myth, but finds consolation in the superiority of Eve to Adam. Of the conversation with the subtil serpent she says: "In this prolonged interview the unprejudiced reader must be impressed with the courage, the dignity, and the lofty ambition of the woman. The tempter evidently had a profound knowledge of human nature, and saw at a glance the high character of the person he met by chance in his walks in the garden. He did not try to tempt her from the path of duty by brilliant jewels, rich dresses, worldly luxuries or pleasures, but with the wisdom of the gods. Like Socrates or Plato, his powers of conversation and asking puzzling questions were, no doubt, marvellous, and he roused in the woman that intense thirst for knowledge that the simple pleasures of picking flowers and talking with Adam did not satisfy. Compared with Adam, she appears to great advantage through the entire drama."

Mrs. Colby thinks highly of the Genesis story of creation, but has qualms about the domestic arrangements of Noah's Ark. She says: "The paucity of light and air in this ancient vessel shows that woman had no part in its architecture, or a series of portholes would have been deemed indispensable."

Further on Mrs. Blake expresses her contempt for Abraham as a man. She sees nothing grand or poetical in his character. On the other hand, she thinks he is a bad pattern for the other patriarchs. She says on this score: "Like many a modern millionaire, he was not a self-made, but a wife-made, man. When Pharaoh sent him away with his dangerously-beautiful wife, he is described as 'being rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold'; but it is a little curious that the man who thus gained wealth at the price of his wife's dishonor should have been held up as a model of all the patriarchal virtues."

Rebekah and Rachel are somewhat roughly handled by Mrs. Stanton. She says it was a good test of the former's patience and humility "to draw water for an hour, with a dozen men looking on at their ease, and none of them offering help." She sums up her opinion of the Pentateuch as follows: "Indeed, the Pentateuch is a long, painful record of war, corruption, rapine, and lust. Why Christians who wish to convert the heathen to our religion should send them these books passes all understanding. It is most demoralising reading for children and the unthinking masses, giving all alike the lowest possible idea of womanhood, having no hope nor ambition beyond conjugal unions with men they scarcely knew, for whom they could not have had the slightest sentiment of friendship, to say nothing of affection."

Near the end of the first part Mrs. Stanton thus sums up her view: "This utter contempt for all the decencies of life and all the natural personal rights of women, as set forth in these pages, should destroy in the minds of women at least all authority to superhuman origin, and stamp the Pentateuch at least as emanating from the most obscene minds of a barbarous age."

When the book of Exodus is reached, Moses is attacked very savagely by Mrs. Stanton. Moses, indeed, has not a single good trait from her point of view. She charges that he deluded an ignorant and superstitious people in order to gain ascendency over them. She declares that woman's inferior place in civilisation is directly attributable to him. She asserts, moreover, that the tables of stone containing the commandments were not given to Moses by Jehovah, but were "faked" by that unscrupulous prophet. Neither has she any great respect for the commandments themselves. "A critical reading of them," she declares, "will show that they are chiefly for men." The following are some of the comments on the Mosaic law: "Women are always considered sufficiently clean to beg, work, and give generously for the building and decoration of churches and the support of the priesthood. They might always serve as inferiors, but never receive as equals."

Incidentally, Mrs. Stanton says: "If women have been faithful to any class of the human family, it has been to the Levite. The chief occupation of their lives, next to bearing children, has been to sustain the priesthood and the churches. With continual begging, fairs, and donation parties, they have helped to plant religious temples on every hilltop and valley, and in the streets of all our cities, so that the doleful church bell is forever ringing in our ears."

"The Woman's Bible" has been received with some cheap ridicule in the American press, but if it gives women courage to express their honest opinion of the fetish book written and supported by men, it will serve no mean purpose.

A worthy clergyman, having been presented to an important living, preached his first sermon from the words, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." He was surprised and distressed when the churchwardens afterwards hinted to him that, though such words might be very charitable when used by a divine tongue, his predecessors in the incumbency would think his use of them rather unjustifiable.

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FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND INGERSOLL.

All the world has heard of Frederick Douglass, the runaway slave, who became a famous orator and the friend of some of the most distinguished men in the United States; and most Freethinkers have heard how, on a famous occasion, the colored orator, in calling on Ingersoll to speak, introduced him by reciting Leigh Hunt's famous lines on Abou Ben Adhem. It appears from the autobiography entitled *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* that the ex-slave had good reason to know that the name of Ingersoll should be written among those who loved their fellow men.

Mr. Louis Levine, of Charleston, who is always doing some good work for Freethought, has sent to the *Freethought Magazine* an extract from Douglass's book, which we are sure our readers will like to see reproduced in our columns:—

"A dozen years ago, or more [1868 or earlier], on one of the frostiest and coldest nights I ever experienced, I delivered a lecture in the town of Elmwood, Illinois, twenty miles distant from Peoria. It was one of those bleak and flinty nights when prairie winds pierce like needles, and a step on the snow sounds like a file on the steel teeth of a saw. My next appointment after Elmwood was on Monday night, and in order to reach it in time it was necessary to go to Peoria the night previous, so as to take an early morning train, and I could only accomplish this by leaving Elmwood after my lecture at midnight, for there was no Sunday train. So a little before the hour at which my train was expected at Elmwood I started for the station with my friend Mr. Brown, the gentleman who had kindly entertained me during my stay. On the way I said to him: 'I am going to Peoria with something like a real dread of the place. I expect to be compelled to walk the streets of that city all night to keep from freezing.' I told him 'that the last time I was there I could obtain no shelter at any hotel, and that I feared I should meet a similar exclusion to-night.' Mr. Brown was visibly affected by the statement, and for some time was silent. At last, as if suddenly discovering a way out of a painful situation, he said: 'I know a man in Peoria, should the hotels be closed against you there, who would gladly open his doors to you—a man who will receive you at any hour of the night, and in any weather—and that man is Robert G. Ingersoll.' 'Why,' said I, 'it would not do to disturb a family at such a time as I shall arrive there, on a night so cold as this.' 'No matter about the hour,' he said; 'neither he nor his family would be happy if they thought you were shelterless on such a night. I know Mr. Ingersoll, and that he will be glad to welcome you at midnight or at cock-crow.' I became much interested by this description of Mr. Ingersoll. Fortunately I had no occasion for disturbing him or his family. I found quarters at the best hotel in the city for the night. In the morning I resolved to know more of this now famous and noted 'infidel'! I gave him an early call, for I was not so abundant in cash as to refuse hospitality in a strange city when on a mission of goodwill to men. The experiment worked admirably. Mr. Ingersoll was at home, and if I have ever met a man with real living human sunshine in his face, and honest, manly kindness in his voice, I met one who possessed these qualities that morning. I received a welcome from Mr. Ingersoll and his family which would have been a cordial to the bruised heart of any proscribed and storm-beaten stranger, and one which I can never forget or fail to appreciate. Perhaps there were Christian ministers and Christian families in Peoria at that time by whom I might have been received in the same gracious manner. In charity I am bound to say there probably were such ministers and such families, but I am equally bound to say that in my former visits to this place I had failed to find them. Incidents of this character have greatly tended to liberalise my views as to the value of creeds in estimating the character of men. They have brought me to the conclusion that genuine goodness is the same, whether found inside or outside the church, and that to be an 'infidel' no more proves a man to be selfish, mean, and wicked than to be evangelical proves him to be honest, just, and humane."

The Dutch Freethought work, *Dominie, Pastor, and Rabbi*, by J. G. ten Bokkel, one of the editors of *De Dageraad*, has been translated into French and German.

A BRAVE WOMAN.

Leslie's Weekly, which is sent to us with other American papers by our good friend, Mr. Louis Levine, of Charleston, gives in its issue for November 28 a number of illustrations of the reception in honor of the eightieth birthday of Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Mrs. Stanton was associated with Ernestine Rose both in the anti-slavery and women's rights crusades, and the first convention in favor of the rights of women was held at her home in Seneca Falls in July of 1848. With her friends, Susan B. Anthony and Parker Pillsbury, both sterling Freethinkers, she edited the *Revolution*; and, like Ernestine Rose, she has never been backward in pronouncing that the priest has been the great enemy of her sex. Ten years ago she wrote a notable article in the *North American Review* on the question, "Has Christianity Benefitted Woman?" Later still she contended earnestly for the Sunday opening of the World's Fair, and at present she is occupied in bringing out *The Woman's Bible*. At the celebration of her eightieth birthday, at which her life-long friend, Susan Brownell Anthony, herself seventy-five years of age, was by her side, she said, as reported in the New York *Public Opinion*:—

> "We women must now make the same demands of the Church that we have made of the State during the last fifty years for the same privileges that man enjoys. We must see that the canon laws, Mosaic code, Scriptures, Prayer Books, and liturgies are purged of all invidious distinction of sex, of all false teachings as to woman's origin and destiny. To make her the author of sin, cursed in her maternity, a subordinate in marriage, an after-thought in creation, and all by the command of God, is to so overweight her in the scale of being that centuries of civilisation have not yet been able to lift the burden. We must demand an equal place in the offices of the Church, as pastors, elders, deacons; an equal voice in the creeds, discipline, in the conferences and general assemblies. We must insist that all unworthy reflections on the sacred character of the mother of the race, such as the allegory of her creation and fall, and St. Paul's assumption as to her social status, be expunged from Church literature. Such sentiments cannot inspire the rising generation with respect for their mothers. We must demand that the pulpit be no longer desecrated with men who read these invidious passages of Scripture and teach the subordination of one-half the human race to the other.'

Mrs. Stanton's life should be an inspiration to others of her sex. Her consistent Freethought and maintenance of women's rights have brought her the respect of the leaders of thought in America, and her birthday celebration was attended by delegates representing 700,000 women.

WHY INGERSOLL WAS NOT CONVERTED!

The Christian Endeavorers made a fine display of Christian Endeavor by their united prayer, in which many of the Salvation Army joined, for the conversion of "the erring orator," Colonel Ingersoll. The Rev. J. Z. Tylor, President of the Christian Endeavor Union, expressed beforehand the utmost confidence in the accomplishment of the object prayed for; and L. V. Denis, another prominent officer of the Union, declared there were many instances of sinners and infidels being converted that way. In fact, they were too numerous to specify. "I cannot name any just now," said he; "that is, any prominent instances; but I have heard of many persons who have been converted by prayer, and we hope to convert Mr. Ingersoll."

As Mr. Ingersoll has not yet had his brain atrophied or proclaimed his conversion, explanations are asked for, and will have to be given. The effectual fervent prayers of the pious endeavorers have not been answered, not because they were not righteous, but because they were not effectual. And why were they not effectual? The answer, to one in the secret counsels of Jahveh, is easy. Prayers were ordered for two o'clock on the afternoon of December 1. It happened that Jahveh's ears had been dinned for a long time past with the rival prayers of Turks and Armenians, and, on taking his nap (his custom always of an afternoon), he fell into such a sound slumber that he heard nothing of them. His hearing, as many must have noticed, has been

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defective for a long time. When he awoke, and took his customary promenade in the cool of the day, the prayers were all over. Thus it happens that Ingersoll goes on his way unstricken with softening of the brain.

The Jewish priests were better acquainted with the habits of Jahveh than the Christian Endeavorers. The high priest had a garment fringed with bells that the sound thereof might wake up Jahveh whenever he went into the holy place (see Exodus xxviii. 35). The next time the order is given for united prayer for Ingersoll's conversion all the bands of the Salvation Army should be required to pray together also. That may be efficacious, for it is well known to many races that shouts and the beating of drums and gongs are the proper instruments to ward off eclipses of the moon.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

THE FAKIR OF THE MONKEY-TEMPLE.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Kolnische Zeitung* tells the following strange story, which, if true, may help us to believe that Rudyard Kipling's tales of India are not altogether creations of the imagination. This writer says: "Every visitor to Simla (India) knows the Jakko Hill—about 1,500 feet high—in the neighborhood, and the monkey-temple on the top of it. There lives an ascetic, fanatical fakir, who supports himself and the monkeys on the offerings of the faithful, and who is treated by those creatures with the most profound respect. There are two troops or regiments of monkeys, each with its king, who is appointed to that position by the fakir. The king, alone, has the right to eat in the temple; the other monkeys remain outside, and the fakir himself brings a dish of tit-bits for their *Kotwal* or general. When they have done, they file respectfully before the fakir, who dismisses them with 'Go, my children.' This fakir, who is bronzed by wind and weather, clothed only in a leopard-skin, and whose hair has not been cut or combed for twenty years, is a European. He is able to converse in perfect English, and his name is Charles William de Rousette. His father was a shopkeeper in Simla, and sent him as a boy to the best school there. But an ex-servant of the father had been intimate with the fakir of Jakko, and on the latter's death had succeeded to his position. The young Rousette used to visit him frequently, and the man showed great regard for the son of his old employer. Threatened with some punishment at school, the boy took refuge with his friend the fakir at the temple, but was found there some days later and brought back. He seemed to have lost all interest in life, was always wanting to return to the temple, and one day he suddenly disappeared. The next twelve years he spent in his novitiate, wandering about India, and 'clothed' only with his hair. After the twelve years, he reappeared in Simla as the disciple of the fakir, and on the latter's death succeeded him. The elder Rousette had meanwhile died, leaving a good fortune, but the son made no effort to secure it. He says that he is perfectly happy, and has no desire to re-enter the 'false and corrupt European society.' He has a particular antipathy to the Anglo-Indian clergy, and possesses an extraordinary influence over all classes of Hindus, who revere him as a saint. He is the only instance of a fakir brought up as a Christian, and of European parents, who, though heir to a considerable fortune, leads a wretched life, deprived of all visible enjoyments, and yet to all appearance absolutely happy and contented."

A Pious Show.

A holiness camp-meeting has been in progress some time at Haines's Grove, a few miles from Lamar, and shortly after it had begun a gaudily-painted poster that astonished the natives in that vicinity was put up by the roadside, painted thus:—

"Eureka! Here we are! Great Gospel Show and Holy Hippodrome at Haines's Grove! Greatest display of legendary traditions ever placed on exhibition. Two performances daily, under the management of Happy Charlie, the world-renowned pulpit-pounder and sky-pilot, assisted by Hallelujah Jones, the efficient masticator of yellow-legged chicken. In our gallery of Gospel myths and holy relics may be seen the following: Core of the apple that Eve ate; Jacob's ladder; gold bricks from the streets of the New Jerusalem, and cinders from the other place; blubber from Jonah's whale; broomstick ridden by the witch of Endor; gang-plank over which the animals walked into the ark; Noah's log book; club with which Cain slew Abel; Satan's poker and shovel, etc., etc. New attractions added daily. You keep the grub waggon rolling; we'll do the rest."—*Kansas City Journal.*

ACID DROPS.

THE Toxteth Board of Guardians have had a little religious discussion in connection with the boarding out of pauper children. It appears that the vicar's wife at Dufton, where the little ones are boarded, is a rabid Churchwoman, and declares that if people go to any gospel-shop but those of the Church of England their salvation is endangered. Mr. Moulding, one of the guardians, thought that bigots of that sort were candidates for a lunatic asylum. In his opinion, we all have a chance of getting to heaven, whether we go to church or not. What a dreadful doctrine! It is enough to make a parson swear till his neck runs over his collar.

Under the heading of "Shocking Depravity at Hoylake," a Liverpool paper records the prosecution of a barber for cutting a man's hair on Sunday. The culprit was let off with a warning, on his promising never to repeat his awful crime.

A correspondent of the *Leek Times*, who has a poor opinion of the Rev. W. W. Howard's controversial methods, deplores the debate which is to take place between that gentleman and Mr. Foote. He admits that "Mr. Foote commands in many ways our respect, and in this correspondence has proved himself fully more self-restrained than some others." At the same time, he thinks it wrong to "drag things which every Christian holds dear and sacred into the dirt and dust of a public arena." What is still worse, the "seeds of doubt" will be sown "in young minds." Very likely.

Janet Stirling was going to a prayer meeting, but it was a "thick" night, and, as Providence did not guide her, she walked into the Forth and Clyde Canal. The poor woman's body was drowned, and her soul is supposed to have gone to the land of everlasting prayer-meetings, where there is no night—thick or thin—and no canal.

Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* ought to have a good circulation in Glasgow, where a controversy is raging over the great drink question. Mr. F. Faithful Begg, M.P., a son of the great Dr. Begg, of godly memory, remarked that Jesus Christ turned water into wine, while Paul recommended a stimulant to Timothy. This remark has elicited a howling reply from the Rev. R. W. Dobbie, who calls Mr. Begg an irresponsible fool. Such are the amenities of controversy when men of God engage in it.

The *Irish Times*, reviewing Dr. Kinyon's new book on *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, catches his style and speaks of the old literature as "that guide-book of all humanity." Why, three-fourths of humanity do not even yet possess it, and those who do rarely read it, and fewer still think of regulating their lives by it. But to cant and gush comes natural to pietists when speaking of the Bible.

The papers have been again writing about the worship of the Devil. The adoration of a being who condemns the mass of mankind to eternal woe comes the nearest to this definition of any we know.

The Charity Organisation Society has issued a damaging report on the orphanages, sisterhoods, and other institutions of the Church Extension Association, which refuses to have a committee and submit to a regular audit. The C. E. A. is said to be in the hands of a single person.

The *Daily Chronicle* has an article on "Salvation Army Shelters," which, it admits, bring grist to the Army mill, and are at the same time centres of pauperism, idleness, crime, and disease.

The police complained, before Alderman Morgan, that the Salvation Army shelter in Fetter Lane was closed against them, and they had to wait outside until thieves came out before they could arrest them. Alderman Morgan said it was a disgraceful thing that people who represent themselves as administering charity should act in this manner.

Dr. John Macleod, the Established Church minister of Govan, has been attacking Dr. Ross Taylor and Dr. Stalker, of the Free Church, hammer and tongs. He twitted them with abortive efforts at Church destruction, said Dr. Taylor's remarks reminded him of the words of Scripture, "A brutish man knoweth not, neither does a fool understand"; and accused him of "cant of the worst description." Scotch Free-churchmen are looking for a smart reply from their leaders. How they love one another!

There are many Christs living in America—Christ Schlatter, Christ Teed, Christ Murphy, and Christ Schweinfurth. The latest addition is Christ Huntsman, who has an establishment called "The Lord's Farm," holding a community of the Lord's People at Pascack, Bergen County, New Jersey.

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Christ Huntsman has visions and revelations. His followers are simple people, vegetarians, who work seven days a week. They have been much persecuted by their Christian neighbors. All sorts of incendiary rumors were current: that they were "free lovers," and held shameless orgies, which they designated as "Angel Dances"; that they enticed and ruined young women under guise of religious proselyting; that they were blasphemers, and practised hypnotism and other forms of witchcraft. But a lady correspondent of the *New York World*, who visited them, describes them as innocent people, and thinks that if Jesus Christ was here he would not live as the world lives, but as they live at "The Lord's Farm."

Christ Schlatter, the healer, who eloped from Denver on account of the press, has turned up in Colorado on a white horse journeying to New Mexico. He says the Father had told him to go to Albuquerque, where he would begin a fast, the duration of which the Father would indicate. After the fast he expects revelations, which usually arrive when the brain is weakened. He predicts a social upheaval, which probably is more in the air than any second coming of Jesus Christ.

Christ Schlatter expects to go to Chicago and New York. If well advised, he would keep away from the cities, remembering what his predecessor suffered in Jerusalem. Schlatter stated, in reply to an inquiry, that all the letters which were in Denver would be returned in the proper manner, and whether he handled them himself or not the handkerchiefs would have the same cure and powers. The fact that the sufferers indicated a willingness to have him touch the articles was sufficient, and the actual touch was unnecessary. As with certain patent medicines we wot of, it is the faith that works the cure.

Christ Schlatter, if not himself inspired, is an inspiration to others, and several faith-healers are now parting their hair *à la* Jesus Christ, and pretending communication with the Father.

Another Christ has turned up in England. His name is Alfred E. H. Gaynor, and he calls himself "Spirit Architect and Constructor of the Universe; the Osiris, or Incarnate representative of the solar power: Buddha, Krishna, and Jesus Christ resurrected." Mr. Gaynor reminds us of a person who was very unpopular at Colney Hatch. He proclaimed himself the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Wellington, and God the Father. This was not giving the other inmates of the asylum a fair chance.

Christ Gaynor appears to be an Anarchist-Communist. In a strange publication, entitled *The Truth Book*, part 2, which is dated "November, 1895; Olombia, or Millennial Era, I.," he announces Olombia, which is a "Saturnian, or No-Money Commonwealth, with its members, the Spirit Builders of the White Light and the Truth University," which, he says, is now established. We are happy to read that "six hours will be a commonwealth working day, five days will be a week, twenty days a month, and ten days a year. Twenty-nine years will be a commonwealth working limit."

Another mistake of Providence! Gresham Baptist Chapel, Brixton, has been burnt down after a tea-meeting.

"Purple and Fine Linen," East Dulwich, has sent us two halfpenny stamps "towards augmenting the present ridiculously low stipend (only £10,000 per annum) of the Bishop of London." We are grateful for this prompt response to our appeal, but beg to suggest to other intending subscribers that their contributions should be sent direct to his lordship's official residence, Fulham Palace, S.W.—*Morning Leader*.

Hugh Allen, formerly incumbent of St. Mary's, Old Kent-road, has been sentenced to nine months' hard labor at the Old Bailey for obtaining money by false pretences.

Rev. T. G. Dale, vicar of Alton, Staffs., is in custody on a charge under section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. We need not be more specific.

The current *Homœopathic World* records the case of a Sunday-school teacher who suffered from religious melancholy. She was taken to the Homœopathic Hospital, as it afterwards appears, by mistake for the Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, Queen's-square—was treated with *Plumb. Acet 6*, and in two doses recovered. Constipation is at the root of much religious disorder.

A tombstone has been found at Cesarea with an inscription, "Monument belonging to Mary and Lazarus." As usual with Palestinian relics, the tomb is a fake. The inscription is in Greek, and it was at first supposed to be merely a monument of two persons by the names of Mary and Lazarus. But Professor Gelzer, of Jena, shows that, in view of the fact that Mary's name comes first, there is no doubt was intended to represent the Scriptural characters. He dates it about the fifth century, when the discovery of apostles' and prophets' tombs was "a flourishing and manifestly also a lucrative branch of industry." At that period it was claimed that the bodies of Joseph, Samuel, Zachariah, John the Baptist, and other Biblical men were found, and many of these pseudo-relics were transported to the capital city of Christendom, Constantinople. It is not impossible that at this period also the pretended remains of the sister and brother from Bethany were transported to Cesarea, which in the ante-Chalcedonian period—*i.e.*, down to 451—was the metropolitan centre of the Church in Palestine.

A Japanese correspondent says: "I find that all the English here dislike the missionaries, at least those I have heard talk about the matter; and the reason is that, whereas they leave England as heroes and martyrs, amid the clamor of Exeter Hall, when they come here they live well and luxuriously. In fact, in the present depressed times they are the only class well off; while others starve, they are in plenty. Indeed, they are the most fortunate class, making more money than if they had to earn their living."

From India comes a story of the beating to death of a girl of the Kumbi caste, whose parents thought she was possessed of devils. She patiently allowed herself to be so treated until she succumbed. W. N. Cooper, in his work on *Flagellation*, gives an instance of similar treatment by Christians in the Middle Ages.

According to Professor J. F. Jenkins, human sacrifice prevails among a sect known as the "Tshukshem," not far from Yakootsk, Siberia. Old people who have lived beyond the Biblical allotment, and sick ones tired of life, offer themselves for sacrifice. When one of these characters decides to "offer himself up," he sends word to all his relatives, friends, and neighbors, who then visit him and try to persuade him to change his intentions; but all to no purpose. He chooses the manner in which he shall die, and he is killed with great ceremony. The body is then taken to a crematory near by, where it is reduced to ashes, which are carefully preserved in an urn of silver by the relatives. During the cremation the relatives pray to the spirits, begging them to guard the lives of those mortals still left on earth. This custom has been followed by the sect for centuries.

The Rev. John T. Vine, "a venerable evangelist," who was taken to the Butler-street Police Court, Brooklyn, on a charge of drunkenness, is reported in the *New York Herald* (Nov. 29) as having been very popular in England. It says: "His sermons last summer in the East-end of London drew enormous crowds of workmen." Perhaps the crowds were attracted more by the spirit than by the sermons.

"Clericus," who is a queer cuss, writes to the *Isle of Wight County Press* to correct the false notion that we shall be judged hereafter by our actions, and not by our beliefs. "We are, and shall be," he says, "held responsible for right faith as well as for right conduct." And what is right faith? "Clericus's" faith, of course. Said we not that he is a queer cuss? "Me and God" should be his motto.

Ball, in his *Jungle Life in India* (p. 26), says: "Hindus sometimes put crocodiles, which are objects of veneration, with some classes at least, into tanks—an attention which the crocodiles reciprocate by preying, when they get the chance, on their benefactors' persons, or on their flocks and herds." This reads like an allegorical satire on our treatment of priests and other venerated pietists.

Some Christians make teetotalism part of their religion, despite the doings of Jesus at Cana. With the Moslems it is an integral part of Islam. The Sikhs are equally opposed to tobacco, and believe that smokers cannot attain salvation. If a Sikh touches tobacco, he offends the manes of his ancestor. The water touched by a person using tobacco is said to be as bad as spirits, and sends the user and seven generations of his descendants to hell.

A Tennessee mob cut off the ears and fingers of a negro victim, hanged him, and then mutilated the body. The people of Tennessee are so eminently pious that they kept eight men in jail for several months for working on a Sunday.

A writer in the *Arena*, who proclaims himself "neither a sceptic nor a cynic," but "an orthodox clergyman who loves the Church and writes from a heart which is sad at contemplation of these things," says that the modern preacher is merely the servant of the plutocrat. "Religious professions," he says, "have become a commodity in trade. The *Church* has waxed, *religion* has waned; 'Christians' have multiplied, but the significance of the term has

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become indefinitely vague; quantity has been attained, but quality lost. The result is, as it always *must* be, quantity too is now in danger of being lost."

"Jesus said: 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!' and the Church is saying, by actions which speak louder than words: 'How easily shall they that have riches enter into and rule the Church'; by which we are bound to conclude that the fittest for membership in the Church are the least fit for the kingdom of heaven."

Sometimes we hear of provincial juries bringing in a verdict of visitation of God in cases of death by lightning. H. O. Forbes says that, if a person is struck by lightning in Java, no one can be found brave enough to lift him from the ground.

According to the Danish statistician, Vahl, there are 304 missionary societies for the conversion of the heathens to Christianity. Seventy-six of these have their head-quarters in England. These organisations employed, in 1892, 5,520 male missionaries, 2,771 unmarried females, 4,285 native preachers, and 45,683 native assistants. The greatest number of missionaries were in the employ of the English organisation—namely, 1,810. The American societies come next with 1,619 men. The Germans have only 525 missionaries abroad.

Simultaneously with the report of how the Kurds at Kharpout offered the Armenians the alternative of conversion or death, we read how fourteen Moslems, born and bred as such in Ufa, Russia, were brought before the Court, and the whole of their property taken because they refused to enter the orthodox church. The Procurator called a number of witnesses, who deposed that the parents of the accused, Mohammedan Tartars, had been forcibly baptised during "the good old days," when conversion by force was looked upon as a soul-saving service to God. But these "converts" were never anything more than Christians in name. Moreover, it was proved that not one of the accused had ever entered a Christian church; they had all been exemplary Moslems from their childhood. The defence was not accepted by the Court, and the whole of the property, including household goods and chattels, of the fourteen Mohammedans was ordered to be sequestrated.

Father Ivan Sergieff, the "miracle worker of Cronstadt," was asked his opinion of actors using the sign of the cross in Count Tolstoi's dramatised work, *The Power of Darkness*. He thought it not permissible, and expressed his opinion that Tolstoi was himself the victim of the power of darkness. Father Ivan said the impression left upon him by Tolstoi's works was that their author is either a man of prodigious self-pride and of bombastic pretensions and assumptions, or he is a lunatic. How about Father Ivan's own pretensions and assumptions?

Mrs. Chisholm, of Fulton-avenue, Rochester, New York, where the bicyclists meet, applied to the district attorney to suppress the bloomer costume, which, she says, is ruining young girls by the hundred. Said Mrs. Chisholm: "Why, you have no idea how these bloomer girls carry on. They ride up and down so boldly, and last night they sang 'Only One Girl' and 'Her Golden Hair was Hanging,' and all those low songs, so you could hear them blocks away. I know their names, and I want to have something done about it. I've got a mission from heaven to preach against bicycles. I would sooner see my daughter in her grave than ride one of those machines of Satan."

Joshua Critchlow, a farmer of Hartington, claimed sixteen guineas from the London and North-Western Railway Company for sheep who walked up a snowdrift over a wall, on to the railway, and were killed. The defence was that the snowdrift was an act of God. The judge, however, held that it was not the act of God, and the company have to pay.

Professor George D. Herron, of Iowa College, one of the leading Christian Socialists of America, has a light-hearted fashion of stigmatising all who do not follow his ideals as Atheists. Atheism he defines as God-out-ness from life, and religion is God-in-ness in relations. We should say he is God-intoxicated.

H. Nipperdey, writing on Fetich Faith in Western Africa, says: "The white man is regarded by tribes who have seen only a few of the white race as a fetich, and is feared by them, especially by their women and children, as if he were a ghost." The fetich-doctor, or medicine-man, of the negro, is his priest, physician, and chief justice in one, and gets out of him his valuables in return for some trash served up in cloth or leather, or enclosed in a goat's horn, which he will not part with for any price. Selden well says "Priests of all religions are the same."

In the Church of Santa Maria Annunziata, at Naples, once a year, on the day of Our Lady, before its altar kneels a silent row of thirty girls dressed in black, and with folded hands. They are orphans from the neighboring foundling asylum, and once a year those who have reached the age of eighteen have a chance of being chosen in marriage by any honest man whose character is good. At the door leading to the sacristy stands a gray-haired priest, the head of the foundling institution. By-and-bye a young man approaches him, and hands him a packet of papers. These the priest reads carefully, and, being satisfied, leads the candidate towards the row of girls. The man walks slowly along the row—at last he stops: his choice is made, and he stretches out his hand. The girl rises, puts her hand into that of the stranger by way of consent, and together they disappear into the sacristy. The ice having been broken, others follow, and this goes on until the suitors are exhausted, or all the girls have been chosen.—*Tit Bits.*

George Arthur Lynch, who was executed at Adelaide Gaol for the murder of a boy, died in the cheerful assurance of soon settling down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Speaking to the city missionary, the condemned man said: "Good-by, Mr. Berry; we shall meet in heaven."

Ritualism has made great progress among the Episcopalians of New York, and is said to reach its acme in the just-opened Church of St. Mary the Virgin, whose rector, the Rev. Dr. McKee Brown, has a wealthy congregation. Ritualism in New York, as elsewhere, has advanced usually by these well-recognised steps: The surplice, unlighted tapers, lighted tapers, plain vestments, colored vestments, high mass, and finally the confessional. The old surplice was a voluminous white garment, falling to the feet of the wearer. The surplice now is the barometer of Ritualism. As the Church rises in Ritualism the surplice rises, until finally, in the highest Ritualistic church, the surplice is a cotta, coming to the waist, and upon special occasions trimmed at the bottom with lace. Men may think this making guys of themselves, but it takes with the ladies.

The Rev. I. M. Gibson, of Plattsburg, Mo., says that the Lord's Supper ought to be a real meal, and not a sham supper of crumbs of bread and drops of wine. There is no doubt it was a square meal in primitive times. Paul say. of the early celebration (1 Cor. xi. 21): "One is hungry and another is drunken." In the representations of the Eucharist in the Roman Catacombs it is a common meal, with fish as well as cakes. Dean Stanley mentions fish in the early Eucharists.

William Henry Cadman, a traveller, who has been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for marrying seven wives, kept up pious correspondence with each of them. When discovered, he invited No. 1 to share his hopes of "the dawn of a better life," and thus to carry out the purposes of her Maker, "in His infinite and mysterious ways."

The *Daily News* speaks of a crisis occasioned by the refusal of the Bishop of Winchester to license a third altar in the Church of St. Agatha, Portsmouth, erected by the popular High Churchman, the Rev. R. Dolling, who declares he holds it as "part of his duty as priest to exercise his sacrificial powers on behalf of those of his children who were dead as well as those living." The difference between the doctrine of Mr. Dolling and the Sacrifices of Masses, which in the Thirty-first Article are called "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits," is not easy to distinguish.

The town of Peebles, Ohio, has passed an ordinance requiring a curfew bell to be rung at 8 o'clock every evening except Sunday. When it rings, every boy between the ages of six and eighteen, and every girl between the ages of six and sixteen, unless accompanied by parents or guardians, must be within doors, under penalty of arrest and a fine of not less than $1 and costs.

The Paisley *Mirror* notices Mr. Cohen's lecture as "at times very eloquent." But the writer says of Secularism: "Granting, for the moment, that it is true, how can it be called satisfactory?" Does he, then, find no satisfaction in truth, or is he only to be satisfied with illusions?

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 22, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester:—11, "Mr. Gladstone's Theology"; 3, "The Old Serpent"; 6.30, "How and Why was Jesus Born?"

December 29, Camberwell.

January 5, Camberwell; 12, 19, and 26, St. James's Hall.

February 2, Liverpool; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 22, Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell. January 1, Camberwell; 5, Birmingham; 8, Hammersmith; 12 and 13, Bolton; 14, Blackburn; 19, Glasgow; 26, Edinburgh; 29, Dinner of the N.S.S. February 2 and 16, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 23, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

D. MCINTYRE.—Many apocryphal stories are told about Lincoln, and we should say that the one on p. 120 of E. Foster's book is decidedly of that description. The standard *Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by W. H. Lamon, or that by his partner, W. H. Herndon, will let you see how heretical were his views on religion.

A. L. (Douglas).—Thanks for your encouraging letter. It is pleasant to know that you "could not do without" your *Freethinker*. The story in *Great Thoughts* (a pious paper) about Voltaire's insulting Pope's mother is an infamous concoction. There is no ground for it whatever.

J. D. LEGGETT.—Starkie's is the standard book on the Law of Libel. It is big and expensive. There is a good summary in the late Judge Stephan's Digest of the Criminal Law.

J. BRIERLY.—Thanks. Mr. Forder executes your order.

H. BUTCHER.—Obliged. See paragraphs.

J. F. ARMISTEAD.—We have noticed the matter you refer to.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. BROWN.—Mr. Holyoake is not conducting any paper at present. His address is—Eastern Lodge, Brighton. You will find all such information in the *Secular Almanack*, which only costs threepence. Glad to hear you mean to purchase Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past*, which we shall review shortly.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—A Friend, 5s.; G. Forbes, 1s.; R. Walker, 1s.; J. Walker, 1s.; Nicholson, 6d. Per Miss Vance: Camberwell Entertainment, £3 3s.; Mrs. B. E. Marks, 10s.; S. A., 5s.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for your budget, some items of which will be used next week. Glad to have your opinion that *Bible and Beer* is "a splendid pamphlet." Of course it might be more widely distributed if it were cheaper, but the author is not a millionaire and cannot risk a loss. We heartily endorse your praise of Chilperic's articles, which we are always very glad to receive.

D. D.—Shall appear.

SERVANT GIRL.—Pleased to hear from you. Gordon Scott's poem is good, but rather long for reproduction in our columns.

ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Miss Vance acknowledges receipt of the following subscriptions:—G. W. Foote, 10s. 6d.; C. Watts, 10s. 6d.; Mrs. B. E. Marks, 5s.; W. Middleton (per C. Watts), 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Mrs. B. E. Marks, 10s.; S. A., 10s.; W. Middleton (per C. Watts), 2s. 6d.

J. R. M'LELLAND (Paisley).—Pleased to hear from you. See "Sugar Plums."

ERNEST NEWMAN.—We deeply regret to hear of the death of Mr. Doeg. He was a brave and loyal soldier in the "forlorn hope" section of the army of progress.

J. M. R.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. W. JONES.—Mr. Foote will write you as to a lecture in February.

W. DYSON.—Miss Enid Stacy is free to call Bradlaugh and Foote "religious men." It amuses her, and hurts no one else. She is incorrect in stating that Secularism is dying. We suspect the wish was father to the thought. She is incorrect also in saying that most Socialists are Christians. They are notoriously *not* so in Germany and France, and a large proportion of them are Freethinkers in England.

T. CHARLTON.—The debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. W. Howard is not yet fixed as to time and place. We note your suggestion that the Victoria Hall, Hanley, would be very central.

WELL WISHER says he cannot obtain the *Freethinker* now at Brighton. Thatcher's shop, in Oxford-street, where it used to be sold, is closed. Will one of our Brighton readers give the address of another shop where it can be obtained?

J. B. mentions that the Wiltshire people are called moon-rakers, and a story is told of smuggled goods being raked for in ponds on pretence of raking the moon. The *Shadow of the Sword* is published at 2d. by the Humanitarian League, 13 Great Queen's-street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

T. R. ALLISSON.—Thanks for hint.

E. G. TAYLOR.—Is he really worth all your powder and shot?

H. LEES SUMNER.—The list of newsagents who sell the *Freethinker* is far too long to publish in every number as you suggest; and you know it would not make very readable copy. Why not write the local newsagent's name, or stamp it, on the three or four copies you kindly give away every week?

J. UPTON.—Mr. Foote will be glad to see you when he visits Liverpool. It is, as you say, the young people that we most want to get hold of, and who are our hope for the future. Thanks for the cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Staffordshire Sentinel—Melbourne Age—Der Arme Teufel—South Shields Free Press—Crescent—Melbourne Standard—South American Journal—Glasgow Herald—Isle of Man Times—Liberator—Freidenker—De Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—Irish Times—Middlesex Chronicle—Jerusalem Star—Manchester Guardian—Le Gaulois—Le Temps—Club World—Arbeiter Freund—Paisley Mirror.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

NEWCASTLE gave Mr. Foote three most appreciative audiences on Sunday, the hall being crowded in the evening, and the applause being very enthusiastic. Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (December 22) in the Secular Hall, Manchester. By special request, he will give a poetical reading before the evening lecture.

Mr. Foote's new pamphlet, *Who Was the Father of Jesus?* is now on sale. It is a drastic discussion of the great question which really caused all the turmoil of the last School Board elections in London. The subject has never to our knowledge been dealt with so thoroughly and carefully before, and, as the pamphlet is seasonable just now, we fancy it will have a good circulation.

We are glad to hear that Mr. Watts had a good audience last Sunday evening at Foresters' Hall. He again lectures at the same place this Sunday evening, December 22, taking for his subject, "The Religious Man." Mr. Watts will deal with the different types of that much-talked-of individual. There should be a good audience.

We are informed that Mr. Cohen acquitted himself admirably in his recent debate with Mr. Waldron at Newcastle. Mr. Cohen is delivering a good many lectures under Mr. Foote's scheme, and he will shortly give in our columns a brief account of his recent tours.

Canon Wilberforce presided at the discourse on "Animals Rights," from the Church point of view, by the Rev. A. L. Lilley, under the auspices of the Humanitarian League, and there was a good attendance and an animated discussion, in which Mrs. C. Mallet, the Rev. J. Stratton, Mr. Ernest Bell, Miss Woodward, and others, took part. The views that have previously been discussed are the Humanitarian and the Scientific. The one announced for January is the Ethical, when Mr. Frederic Harrison will be the lecturer, and Mr. Passmore Edwards will take the chair. Mr. Foote will follow in February from the Secularist point of view.

Henry Dunkerly ("Verax") had a notable article on "Sunday-School Teachers and the Bible," in the *Manchester Guardian* of Tuesday, December 10. Of the books of the Pentateuch he says: "It used to be believed that they were all written by Moses, and that they formed substantially a single work, which was supposed to have come down to us just as it left his hands. This is now known to have been a mistake, due to a want of careful examination by competent investigators. The Pentateuch is found to consist of a number of different narratives, composed by persons whose names are unknown, and they cannot have taken their present form till after the Exile."

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"Verax" mentions a story recorded of Mr. Johnson, one of the missionaries killed in Madagascar. In giving the Malagasy a lesson on Saul and the Amalekites, he could not bring himself to say that the dumb animals and the innocent children had been doomed to death. "That is," comments "Verax," "a religious man in the nineteenth century could not bring himself to tell his converts of a transaction which appears from the Israelitish records to have been done by the direct command of the Almighty." "Verax" concludes his article by saying that, when the change in view regarding the Bible is fully realised, it will amount to a new Reformation.

Secularists in Greenock, Kilmarnock, and Hamilton who are willing to co-operate in arranging for week-night meetings to be addressed by Mr. C. Watts between January 19 and 26, 1896 (under Mr. Foote's scheme), are requested to communicate at once with Mr. J. P. Gilmour, 439 Victoria-road, Glasgow.

The Glasgow Branch holds its Annual Conversazione on Thursday, December 26, at 8 p.m., in the Blythwood Rooms, 155 West Regent-street. Members and friends intending being there are requested to purchase tickets at the meetings to-day (Sunday), or not later than Tuesday, from R. Ferguson, 88 Ingram-street. Gents, 2s. 6d.; ladies, 2s.

Several courses of free lectures are being arranged in London during January and February, under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme. A beginning will be made at Camberwell and Shepherd's Bush, a course of four lectures to be given at each place. Other courses will be given at Battersea, Islington, and Edmonton. It will be seen, therefore, that the President means business, and is not allowing the grass to grow under his feet. Miss Vance, with the assistance of Miss Brown, is seeing to the practical details.

At the French Academy of Moral Sciences a prize was offered for a history and exposition of Positivism, discussing its methods, aims, and applications. M. Leon Say, the appointed judge, took occasion to himself deliver a long discourse on Positivism. He regarded Comte as giving birth to the three currents of Agnosticism, Evolutionism, and Monism, though viewing with misgiving the consequences of these currents of intellectual life.

We read in *North Indian Notes and Queries* of a sect called Sadh, in Karnal. It says: "It was founded by one Udaydás, and its headquarters are at Furrukhabad. The sectarians are freethinkers, and, as they can see no gods, worship none. Their only ceremonial consists in large public dinners, especially on the Puran Mashi festival. They abjure tobacco, and affect special personal cleanliness."

The New York *Review of Reviews* gives in its December number a full-page portrait of Herbert Spencer, with a character sketch, said to be written by an eminent English scientist. He says: "Nor must you expect, if you make up your mind to tackle Mr. Spencer's great work, to find any particular tenderness displayed for your creed or your class, your own pet prejudices, social, religious, political, or moral. In all probability you will discover, to your dismay that everything you hold most sacred in life is rudely called in question. The existence of a God, the reality of creation, the truth of the Bible narrative, the immortality of the soul, the foundations of morality, the origin and meaning of marriage and the family, the inherent right of majorities to coerce minorities, the absolute wisdom of governmental agencies, and a thousand other points on which you have hitherto held dogmatic opinions, you will see subjected to most searching and unsparing analysis and criticism."

Mr. F. C. Conybeare recently read a paper before the Folk-Lore Society on the Legend of St. Josaphat and Baarlam. He admitted that the germ of the legend was Buddhistic, and, moreover, that the non-Christian versions of the story contained a parable of the Sower.

Freethinkers do the cause a real service by timely letters to newspapers that are fair enough to insert their views. Last week Mr. Rolley had a good letter in the *Echo* in answer to the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams, and Mr. Wellesley Orr contributed a good reply to the Rev. D. Ellison in the columns of the *Blackpool Herald*.

Our Huddersfield friends celebrate the Pagan birthday of the sun with "a grand social and dance" in the Friendly and Trade Societies' Hall, which they hope will be well attended by members and their friends.

The Paisley Branch was resuscitated by Mr. Watts's visit under the President's lecture scheme. The hall was crowded on that occasion, and five new members were added to those who had previously joined themselves together. Mr. Cohen followed Mr. Watts, and, though his lecture was not quite so largely attended, it excited much interest. The new Branch has taken Tannahill Hall for its monthly meetings, beginning on Sunday, January 5, when Mr. W. McLean will deliver the inaugural address. Mr. Watts in January, and Mr. Foote in February, will give week-night lectures in Paisley.

The new year's number of the *Freethinker* (dated Jan. 5) will be a special one, though at the usual price. It will contain exceptional reading matter and some good portraits.

LECTURING NOTES.

My recent visit to South Shields and its districts was a very pleasant one. I found the friends exceedingly earnest in their endeavors to aid Mr. Foote in his efforts to increase the scope and force of Secular propagandism. My audiences were not so large as usual, but that was attributed to the severe weather then prevailing, and to the near approach of the Christmas holidays, which demanded extra attention to business and economy in expenditure; but at all my meetings the greatest enthusiasm was manifested, and a decided intention was avowed by the friends in South Shields to carry on a vigorous advocacy during the coming year.

At Blyth and North Shields I lectured under Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme, and one and all expressed their very hearty approval of the President's plan. Undoubtedly this new venture has, as the Americans would say, "caught on," and, if the wealthy friends in our movement will financially mark their appreciation of Mr. Foote's scheme, the practical results will, I feel assured, be most satisfactory. There is plenty of work to be done, fresh districts have to be visited, and a knowledge of our principles has to be imparted to those who hitherto have had no fair opportunity of knowing what our views really are. There are willing and able workers, ready to devote their services to the cause; the only additional requirement is the "sinews of war," and, if these are forthcoming, there can be no doubt that Mr. Foote will see that they are usefully employed in advancing the interests and power of the Secular movement. I am quite in accord with my colleague upon this matter, and I shall be glad when he has the means at his command to keep Messrs. Heaford, Moss, Snell, and others, as active in the field as he has recently been able to command the valuable services of Mr. Cohen.

Personally, I am desirous to render all possible support to the Lecturing Scheme, and, therefore, I wish to intimate to provincial friends that when I lecture in any large town on Sundays it will be a pleasure to me to visit the surrounding districts on the following week-nights. The only expense the branches will have to meet will be the hire of the hall and the cost of advertising the meetings, towards defraying which a collection can be made at all the lectures.

Last Sunday I lectured at Foresters' Hall, London, to a good audience, which was most enthusiastic. This evening, Sunday, December 22, I speak again at the same place, upon "The Religious Man." During January and February I lecture in the various London districts on week evenings, in conjunction with Mr. Foote, Mr. Cohen, and others, under the new Lecturing Scheme. Thus it will be seen that real active work is being done, the result of which must necessarily be the still further advancement of the great principles of Freethought and Secular philosophy.

CHARLES WATTS.

LOVE.

This only do I hold as faith,
And this is all my creed contains—
That love will flourish without scath
When neither creed nor faith remains.

This is the faith against belief,
Which shall awake and disenthrall
The world from its dark dream of grief—
Love—the be-all, the all-in-all.

PYRITES.

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THE NEW BIBLE.

THE New York *Morning Journal* prints a symposium on the "Woman's Bible," which, except for the appreciative contribution of Mrs. Anna H. Shaw, would be a total condemnation of that work. Mrs. Shaw is the clergywoman who, at the late celebration of Mrs. Stanton's birthday, said that the worst chain that had ever bound womankind was the chain of religious superstition. The other symposiasts are T. De Witt Talmage, Dr. Joseph H. Rylance, and Mrs. Elizabeth Grannis, editor of a religious paper. Talmage says you might as well publish a shoemaker's Bible as a woman's Bible, and offers other remarks derogatory to the enterprise; Dr. Rylance characterises the work as ridiculous; while Mrs. Grannis declares that it is "utterly preposterous that a committee of women should presume to give us a Woman's Bible." Mrs. Grannis also says that "the best women everywhere are evangelical Christians, and these will be led to believe that the leaders of woman suffrage are what is termed Freethinkers." The calm insolence of the lady in claiming that evangelical Christian women are better than other women is equal to her humility in deprecating female commentary on the Scriptures. In what way she herself is better than Mrs. Stanton, Mrs. Gage, Mrs. Gardener, or any other Freethinking woman, or even those Christian women not evangelical, she does not take the space to explain. The mother of Jesus Christ was not an evangelical Christian, and yet the existence and destiny of all evangelical Christians rest upon the question of her anatomical chastity.

Anybody who is led to believe, either from the "Woman's Bible" or from other evidence, "that the leaders of woman's suffrage," so many of them as are women, "are what is called Freethinkers," will not be far out of the way. There are two divisions of the movement. One demands the suffrage in the name of right and justice, regardless of consequences. This division is led by Freethinking women like Mrs. Stanton. The other division demands the suffrage in the name of Christ, in order that God may be voted into the Constitution, the Bible into the schools, and Christian doctrine generally into civil law. This division is led by the churches, Anthony Comstock, and Dr. Funk; and the women like Mrs. Grannis, Mrs. Livermore, and Miss Willard, who imagine themselves leaders, are only followers. Their voice is heard from the pillion, but a minister occupies the saddle and pushes on the reins.

—*Truthseeker*. G. E. MACDONALD.

ORIGIN OF RELIGION.

MAN, in his ignorance, supposed that all phenomena were produced by some intelligent powers, and with direct reference to him. To preserve friendly relations with these powers was, and still is, the object of all religions. Man knelt through fear and to implore assistance, or through gratitude for some favor which he supposed had been rendered. He endeavored by supplication to appease some being who, for some reason, had, as he believed, become enraged. The lightning and the thunder terrified him. In the presence of the volcano he sank upon his knees. The great forests filled with wild and ferocious beasts, the monstrous serpents crawling in mysterious depths, the boundless sea, the flaming comets, the sinister eclipses, the awful calmness of the stars, and, more than all, the perpetual presence of death, convinced him that he was the sport and the play of unseen and malignant powers. The strange and frightful diseases to which he was subject, the freezings and burnings of fever, the contortions of epilepsy, the sudden palsies, the darkness of night, and the wild, terrible, and fantastic dreams which filled his brain, satisfied him that he was haunted and pursued by countless spirits of evil. For some reason he supposed that these spirits differed in power; that they were not all alike malevolent; that the higher controlled the lower, and that his very existence depended upon gaining the assistance of the most powerful. For this purpose he resorted to prayer, to flattery, to worship, and to sacrifice. To pacify these spirits was considered of infinite importance. The poor barbarian, knowing that men could be softened by gifts, gave to these spirits that which to him seemed of the most value. With bursting heart he would offer the blood of his dearest child. It was impossible for him to conceive of a god utterly unlike himself; and he naturally supposed that these powers of the air would be affected a little at the sight of so great and so deep a sorrow. It was with the barbarian then as with the civilised now—one class lived upon and made merchandise of the fears of another. Certain persons took it upon themselves to appease the gods, and to instruct the people in their duties to these unseen powers. This was the origin of the priesthood. The priest pretended to stand between the wrath of the gods and the helplessness of man. He was man's attorney at the court of heaven. He carried to the invisible world a flag of truce, a protest and a request. He came back with a command, with authority and with power. Man fell upon his knees before his own servant, and the priest, taking advantage of the awe inspired by his supposed influence with the gods, made of his fellow-man a cringing hypocrite and slave. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

"FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT."

Flowers of Freethought are two volumes of editorials on living topics written by G. W. Foote, editor of the London *Freethinker*. I do not know of anyone in England who has gathered together a larger store of information than Mr. Foote, or who uses it with more happy effect. Taking all these editorials together, they exhibit an abundant knowledge of history, of literature, and of philosophy. Mr. Foote is a dweller in libraries, as well as a man of the world. He browses among books; he gets the best they contain, and he gives it to his readers in a most available and interesting manner. These editorials are short, always to the point, fresh with illustrations, clear cut from beginning to end. Mr. Foote's language is like an arrow; it moves straight to the mark. There is no flourish, no involution of sentences, no fireworks. When you read Mr. Foote you know exactly what he is driving at; there is no obscurity.

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—*S. P. Putnam, in "Truthseeker" (New York).*

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM.

"Then said Jesus, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'"—LUKE xxiii. 34.

IF there is one thing more clear than another from a criticism of the Gospel history, it is that Jesus, the miracle-worker, is earlier than Jesus, the moral reformer. The Sermon on the Mount is a manifest compilation of traditional sayings, never uttered by one person at one place and one time. The peculiar doctrine of forgiveness, inculcated in the story of the woman taken in adultery, is, as we have seen, an interpolation; and the above text, the finest of the alleged sayings of Jesus on the cross, must be put in the same category. The passage is wanting in the oldest manuscript, the Vatican MS. In the Sinaitic it is put by Tischendorf as omitted by S_2, which means a later hand; but the later hand may be that of the insertion. It is wanting in the Codex Bezæ, in the Old Latin, in a copy of the Coptic, and in the Sahidic. These omissions in widely-separated versions are inexplicable, save on the view that the text did not exist in ancient times. The theory of an accidental oversight on the part of many copyists is an imputation on the Holy Ghost and an imposition on human credulity. If Jesus ever said "Father, forgive them," it must have been in reference to the misdeeds of his own followers. LUCIANUS.

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PARSONS.

Does he, dare he, can he ever think straight or simply on any subject as any other man thinks, edged in as he is by so many limitations! He is considered a gentleman—which, perhaps, you and I are not—unless we happen to behave as such. It is a condition of his noble calling. Perhaps it's in order to become a gentleman that he becomes a parson. It's about as short a royal road as any to that enviable distinction—as short almost as Her Majesty's Commission, and much safer and much less expensive—within reach of the sons of most fairly successful butchers and bakers and candle-stick makers.

While still a boy he has bound himself irrevocably to certain beliefs which he will be paid to preserve, and preach, and enforce through life, and act up to through thick and thin—at all events, in the eyes of others, even his nearest and dearest, even the wife of his bosom.

They are his bread and butter, these beliefs; and a man mustn't quarrel with his bread and butter. But a parson must quarrel with those who don't believe as he tells them.

Yet a few years' thinking and reading and experience of life one would suppose might possibly just shake his faith a little, and teach him that many of these beliefs are simply childish—and some of them very wicked indeed and most immoral.

It is very wicked and most immoral to believe, or affect to believe, and tell others to believe, that the unseen, unspeakable, unthinkable immensity were all part and parcel of source of eternal, infinite, indestructible life and light, is a kind of wrathful, glorified, and self-glorifying ogre in human shape, with human passions and most inhuman hates—who suddenly made us out of nothing one fine day, just for a freak, and made us so badly that we fell the next, and turned us adrift the day after—damned us from the very beginning and ever since—never gave us a chance!

All merciful Father, indeed! Why, the Prince of Darkness was an angel in comparison (and a gentleman into the bargain).

Just think of it—a finger in every paltry pie—an eye and ear at every keyhole, even that of the larder, to catch us tripping and find out if we're praising loud enough, or grovelling low enough, or fasting hard enough—poor God-forsaken worms!

And if we're naughty and disobedient, everlasting torment for us—torture of so hideous a kind that *we* wouldn't inflict it on the basest criminal, not for one single moment!

Or else, if we're good and do as we are bid, an eternity of bliss so futile, so idle, and so tame that we couldn't stand it for a week but for thinking of its one horrible alternative, and of our poor brother for ever and ever roasting away and howling for the drop of water he never gets.

Everlasting flame or everlasting dishonor—nothing between!

Isn't it ludicrous as well as pitiful—a thing to make one snigger through one's tears? Isn't it a grievous sin to believe in such things as these, and go about teaching and preaching them and being paid for it—a sin to be heavily chastised, and a shame. What a legacy!

And even at that it's a failure, this precious image! Only the very foolish little birds are frightened into good behavior. The naughty ones laugh and wink at each other, and pull out its hair and beard when nobody's looking, and build their nests out of the straw it's stuffed with (the naughty little birds in black especially), and pick up what they want under its very nose, and thrive uncommonly well. And the good ones fly away out of sight; and some day, perhaps, find a home in some happy, useful fatherland far away, where the Father isn't a bit like this. Who knows?

But the poor parson!

He must, willy-nilly, go on believing, or affecting to believe, just as he is told, *word for word*, or else good-bye to his wife's and children's bread and butter, his own preferment, perhaps even his very gentility—that gentility of which his Master thought so little, and he and his are apt to think so much—with possibly the Archbishopric of Canterbury at the end of it, the *baton de marechal* that lies in every clerical knapsack.

What a temptation! one is but human!

So how can he be honest without believing certain things, to believe which (without shame) one must be as simple as a little child; as, by the way, he is so cleverly told to be in these matters, and so cleverly tells us—and so seldom is himself on any other matter whatever—his own interests, other people's affairs, the world, the flesh, and the devil! And that's clever of him, too.....—"*Trilby*," *by George Du Maurier.*

Old Mercator (to little Billy Ducks, just left school, who applies for situation as office boy, and produces testimonial from clergyman): "We don't want you on Sundays, my good little boy. Have you a reference from any one who knows you on week days?"

CORRESPONDENCE.

THACKERAY'S HERESY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—In *Freelight*, p. 61, I read:—William Makepeace Thackeray was fond, in the early portion of his literary career, of writing very boldly. In his admirable verse he cries:—

Forgive me if, in all Thy works,
I see no hint of damning,
And think there's faith among the Turks,
And hope for e'en the Brahmin.
Cheerful my mind is, and my mirth,
And kindly is my laughter;
I cannot see this smiling earth,
And think there's hell hereafter.

Can you or any of your readers tell me where this verse is to be found in Thackeray's works? C. W.

[We are not sure if this verse is found in the collected edition of Thackeray's works. But it is certainly his. *Freelight* was edited and largely written by Richard Bedingfield, who was a cousin of Thackeray. Bedingfield was a Pantheist, and wrote in the *National Reformer* with the signature, B. T. W. R.]

Sequel to a Salvationist Wedding.

A Wife Given up to a Lodger.

There were some remarkable revelations at the Shoreditch County-court yesterday, when a cabinet-maker, named Scott, of Hackney, sued Annie Scott, of Clapton, his wife, for the return of certain furniture detained by her. The defendant, who entered the box crying bitterly, stated that the furniture was hers, the plaintiff, who had left her, having given it to her. They were married in 1892 at the Salvation Army Congress Hall, Clapton, in the presence of four thousand people. They lived together for over two years, but she was now living with a gentleman whom her husband gave her up to. He signed an agreement for her to go and live with this gentleman. After seeing the agreement, Judge French said: "I give judgment for defendant. Here is the plaintiff's signature to this abominable document. That is sufficient for me." The solicitor for the plaintiff said that, as these painful circumstances had been gone into, he must lay the facts of the case before his honor. This young man was weak-minded. He lived happily with his wife for two years, until this man, a brush-maker named Gowling, came to live in the house with them. He had been the cause of all this. The plaintiff was a tool in her hands. The plaintiff stated that when he was married both he and his wife were members of the Salvation Army. She did not buy a single one of the goods, nor did he give them to her. When living in Earlsfield-road, Clapton, they took Gowling with them as a lodger. The landlady called his attention to rather suspicious conduct on the part of his wife and Gowling. One day, in a weak moment, and over-persuaded by the woman, he signed the document produced. His wife and Gowling, who always passed as a very religious man, then lived together, treating him as a lodger, and later on he left. Judge French said these details, shocking as they were, were absolutely irrelevant to the case. He could not understand how any solicitor could act for a man who had put his name to such a document as that before him. He believed the woman's evidence that the furniture was given her, and gave judgment for her, with costs. Outside the court a number of the plaintiff's friends set upon the defendant and severely beat her. Her own friends took her part, and the assistance of the police was needed to clear away the crowd.—*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 13.

A contemporary says of the Rev. Dr. Carleton (of whom we have not the advantage of having previously heard) that he has not been absent from his congregation on Sunday for seventeen years. If any pious gentleman of his flock has attended service as regularly for as many months, he is entitled to a crown of glory beside which that earned by the Doctor shall appear but an indifferent old felt hat.

A prominent Chicago divine, like all others there, had a very exalted opinion of the city. His end came. Reaching his eternal home, he looked round with surprise, and said: "Really, this does great credit to Chicago. I expected some change in heaven." A black attendant severely observed: "This is not heaven!"

Trance Medium (recovering)—"Yes, friend; while the dormant clay of my body lay here, my spirit was in the heavenly city. I saw the pearly gates, the towers of gold ——" Bicycling Enthusiast (interrupting eagerly)—"How were the roads?"

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BOOK CHAT.

In criticising the pretensions of Theosophy we have expressed the opinion that it is both natural and desirable that the contact of European thought with that of the East should react on Western beliefs. This is shown to the full as much in the profound philosophy of Schopenhauer as in the charlatanism of Blavatsky. A serious and notable example comes to us in the form of some translations *From the Upanishads*, by Charles Johnston (Dublin: Whaley, Dawson Chambers; 1896). Mr. Johnston, in his dedication to his friend, G. W. Russell, says of these old Sanskrit sacred books: "I have found them wise, beyond all others; and, beyond all others, filled with that very light which makes all things new—the light discovered first within, in the secret place of the heart, and which, brimming over there, fills the whole of life, lightening every dark and clouded way."

* * *

The passages selected by Mr. Johnston for translation are not new to English readers. Sir Edwin Arnold has already, under the title of "The Secret of Death," told, from the Katha Upanishad, of the visit of Nachiketas to the House of Death, or Yama:—

> But coming, all unsummoned, to the House,
> Where red Death dwells, no Yama found he there
> To bid him bitter welcome.

The final passage, "That Thou! art," from the Chhandogya Upanishad, which contains the very essence of Hindu philosophy, is also found in the *Sacred Books of the East*. Without pretending to any qualifications to speak as to the merits of Mr. Johnston's work as a translation, it seems to hit the happy medium between mere literalness and the ornamental flourishes which we suspect Sir E. Arnold of giving to his versions of Oriental works. There is a quaint, almost child-like, simplicity about the diction, even when the thought is most profound. This suits the Brahmin character. Freed from worldly cares, this caste went in meditation as far as abstract thought can go, yet without practical experience and worldly knowledge. Transcendentalism may be said to have been tried on the banks of the Ganges over two thousand years ago, and even under Hegel or Emerson it has got "no forrarder," while its chief votaries are a subject race under occidentals who have subordinated metaphysics to physics.

* * *

The contributions made by the Brahmins to religion, philosophy, and speculative thought are well worthy the attention of students, and the extracts chosen by Mr. Johnston may serve as an introduction to the Bhagavat Gita and other writings in *The Sacred Books of the East*. Of their value as philosophy we need not here speak. Something of its gist may be surmised from this quotation from "In the House of Death": "When all desires that dwell in his heart are let go, the mortal becomes immortal and reaches the Eternal." The teaching of the Upanishads is humility, self-control, and universal regard. Christians are too apt to ascribe everything of worth in other religions to borrowing from Christianity. Now, of whatever date these Upanishads may be—and there are good grounds for considering them long anterior to the Christian era—it is certain that their philosophy is unique, and all of a piece. It is, in short, Pantheism pure and simple.

* * *

There is a German translation of *The Testament of Jean Meslier*, the French priest who abjured Catholicism for Freethought. It is made by Samuel Ludvigh, and is circulating in the United States.

* * *

Two Suffolk Friends, by Francis Hindes Groome (Blackwood and Sons; 1895), is an interesting record of R. H. Groome, who was Archdeacon of Suffolk, and his friend Edward Fitzgerald, the poet and translator of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*. Dr. Thompson, the late Master of Trinity, wrote to Mr. Groome in 1885: "Two of the purest living men among my intimates, Fitzgerald and Spedding, were prisoners in Doubting Castle all their lives, or, at least, the last half of them. This is to me a great problem, not to be solved by the ordinary expedients, nor on this side the veil, I think." The problem would have been unveiled could Dr. Thompson have seen that he was in the prison of orthodoxy, while Fitzgerald and Spedding were outside in the free air of liberty and Freethought. It may be doubted if Spedding could have achieved his great work on *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon* if he had not been a Freethinker; while Mr. Groome himself admits that Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat* reflects his own deepest doubts.

* * *

There is a curious picture of Omar Khayyam Fitzgerald in these recently-published reminiscences of his friend, F. H. Groome. The poet, Mr. Groome says, was always perfectly careless as to dress. "I can see him now," he adds "walking down into Woodbridge, with an old Inverness cape, double-breasted flowered satin waistcoat, slippers on feet, and a handkerchief, very likely, tied over his hat. Yet one always recognised in him the hidalgo. Never was there a more perfect gentleman." Mr. Groome says that a former rector of Woodbridge once called on Fitzgerald to express his regret that he never saw him at church. "Sir," said Omar, "you might have conceived that a man has not come to my years of life without thinking much of these things. I believe I may say that I have reflected on them fully as much as yourself. You need not repeat this visit."

* * *

Gibbon wrote his Roman History once; but the history of his own life he wrote no fewer than seven—or, indeed, eight—times. The manuscript versions themselves have been preserved among the Gibbon papers, which since the historian's death have remained in the safe custody of the Sheffield family. These seven autobiographies, together with Gibbon's Journals and correspondence, are now published by Murray.

* * *

The editor of the *South-western Presbyterian* feels constrained to warn his readers against "the subtle poison" of humanitarianism which he finds lurking in some of the Drumtochty stories by "Ian Maclaren." For example, in the case of the good physician, Dr. Maclure, it appears that, with all his kindness of heart and nobleness of character, he was not "a professor of religion, or even an attendant at church." Horrible! And yet Dr. Ian Watson is the idol of the kirks, and himself a meenister.

* * *

Mr. John Hollingshead, in *My Lifetime*, has a good story of the pious doings of Bendigo, the converted Nottingham prize-fighter. Bendigo was an active, not a passive, missionary—a member of the Church Militant. Those who knew his strength and weakness played upon them. "Ben," said one of his supporters, pointing to a group of men at a public meeting, "do you see those fellows?" "Yes," said the converted one. "Do you know what they are?" continued his tormentor. "No," replied the ex-pugilist. "They're Atheists, that's what they are," continued the tormentor. "Wot's Atheists?" asked the simple-minded and not too well-educated Bendigo. "They don't believe in God, Bendigo." "Wot?" shouted the fighting-man, snorting like a war-horse, "don't believe in not no God. Here!" (taking off his coat) "let me get at 'em! I'll damned soon show 'em wot's wot!"

* * *

Essays and Notices, Philosophical and Psychological, by T. Whittaker, B.A., is published by T. Fisher Unwin, and includes his rationalistic essay on "The Philosophy of History," which we have previously noticed.

* * *

Was Israel Ever in Egypt? or, A Lost Tradition, by G. H. Bateson Wright, D.D., is published by Williams and Norgate.

Obituary.

It is with great sorrow that we have to record the death of our secretary, Mr. C. Doeg, on December 15, at the early age of forty-seven. This regret will be shared by all Freethinkers who have ever met him and have enjoyed an hour in his genial company. He had a great enthusiasm in work for popular causes. He was a compositor by trade, and had always been a staunch Trade Unionist. His energy, ability, earnestness, and readiness to put his principles into practice placed him always in the forefront of the various movements with which he was connected. His loss to the Secularist cause in Liverpool is great. For many years, Sunday after Sunday, he had been at his post of duty, often to the sacrifice of his personal comfort and gain. Socialists, Trade Unionists, the unemployed, and all who need help, will miss his willing work. He will live long in the memories of his Liverpool comrades.—L. Small.

I regret to have to record the death of Mr. William Allen, of Walthamstow, at the age of forty-seven, which took place on the 13th inst. He was for many years a prominent member of the old Balls Pond Branch, but the last few years he had been doing active work in Walthamstow. He will be remembered by many for his ardent support of our movement and the manner in which he helped to bind Freethinkers together. He suffered a long, painful illness for eight months with a calm fortitude that was remarkable, and we are conscious that his death is the loss of a brave soldier to the Freethought army.—William Simons.

The idea of the miraculous, which a superficial observer might have once deemed its most prominent characteristic, has been driven from almost all its entrenchments, and now quivers faintly and feebly through the mists of eighteen hundred years.—*W. E. H. Lecky, "History of Rationalism," i. 198*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Forresters' Hall (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Charles Watts. "The Religious Man."

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (84 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, James Rowney, "The Atonement: Ethical and Historical." Tuesday, at 8, social party.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, open discussion on "Socialism." Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, at 8, social gatherings.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, a lecture.

Deptford Anarchist Group (Smith's Coffee Tavern, Deptford Bridge—adjoining Broadway): 7.30, T. Cantwell, "Anarchism and Secularism."

Penton Hall (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The Real Jesus."

West London Branch N.S.S. ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): 7.30, half-yearly general meeting.

Wood Green (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stuart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Origin of Man."

Open-Air Propaganda.

Battersea Park Gates: 12, F. Haslam, "Peace on Earth."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, members' meeting; 7, W. J. Russell, "Christ and Confucius."

Bristol (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): Boxing Day, at 7, concert and dance.

Derby (St. James's Hall, St. James-street): Friday, Dec. 20, at 8, C. Cohen, "What Think ye of Christ?"

Dundee (Tally-street Hall): 6.30, discussion—"Christianity and Woman."

Glasgow (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Gunn, "Swedenborgianism"; 6.30, A. Paul, "The Birthday of Jesus."

Heckmondwike (Lombard Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, meeting—local Freethinkers invited.

Huddersfield (Friendly and Trade Societies' Hall, No. 5): Wednesday, Dec. 25, grand social and dance.

Hull (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Hendy, "Historical Evidences for Christianity."

Leicester Secular Hall (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Arthur B. Moss, "The New Age of Reason."

Liverpool (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Ernest Newman will lecture.

Manchester Secular Hall (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, G. W. Foote, "Mr. Gladstone's Theology"; 3, "The Old Serpent"; 6.30, "How and Why was Jesus Born?"

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, M. E. Copland, "Thomas Paine"; 8, monthly meeting.

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, J. Pearson, "Toryism, Liberalism, and I.L.P.-ism." Members and friends' annual soiree and ball on New Year's Day.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, music; 7.30, W. Cook, "Ancient Philosophy."

Stockton-on-Tees (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, G. Thwaites will read a paper "On Health."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 22, Wood Green; 29, Balls Pond.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Gordon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Dec. 22, Leicester.

Touzeau Parris, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—December 29, Foresters' Hall.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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THE STAR OF CHRIST.

EIGHTEEN hundred and ninety-five years ago, according to Christian chronology, a wonderful star was seen in the East. Somehow or other it escaped the notice alike of Jews and Pagans. It was never heard of by the chroniclers of prodigies. In fact, it was only visible to three "wise men," who were fools enough to follow it. They must have rested all day and journeyed all night, and we may imagine their delight when it came to a standstill. We are told that it stood over a certain house, and the three wise men knew the little King of the Jews they were looking for must be inside that building.

That star was more than wonderful—it was thrice wonderful. It must have moved along in the earth's atmosphere, and, as the Yankees say, low down at that. Anyone who thinks otherwise should just go outside his front door on a fine, clear night, fix his eye on the likeliest looking star, and then walk down the street and decide which house it is over.

Having come from nowhere, the star went back to the same place. It was never seen before or after. It was fetched out, so to speak, by the story-teller, and replaced in the bag when the trick was ended.

The wise men came from the East, which is a large region. If you face the sun at midday, north of the equator, the East is all the world on your left hand. The wise men came from there, and returned there. It is not surprising that they got lost, and there is no record of their having been found.

That wandering star heralded the birth of a baby called Joshua, or more commonly (in the Greek form) Jesus. He was to astonish the world, and he has done it. King Herod wanted to settle him in his cradle. Some people say it is a pity he failed. But the king took a wrong course. Instead of sending one of his detectives after the wise men, he exacted a promise of information from *them*, and they went home (or somewhere), and left him in the dark. Herod was therefore obliged to kill many children instead of one. He ordered the massacre of every child under two years of age in the whole neighborhood. Curiously, however, Herod's worst enemies never heard of this infamous deed. Josephus, who rakes up all he can against Herod, is silent over this stupendous atrocity. The consequence is that persons who are endowed with more sense than faith decline to believe it ever happened.

For thirty years the world knew nothing of the baby born under the wise men's star. Then he burst upon the public as a preacher. Three years afterwards he was executed for sedition. While he was dying the sun was eclipsed for three hours. This is an astronomical impossibility. It must, therefore, have been supernatural. The power which produced this astounding darkness was the same power which made the moon stand still for General Joshua. Perhaps it was like the Egyptian darkness—a thick one that could be felt, one that could be cut into slices. But a still more wonderful thing than the darkness itself is the cat-like vision that was possessed by the people of that age. They saw excellently well in the dark; in fact, they did not notice it *was* dark; so they never mentioned it, and the most prodigious eclipse in all history is without the attestation of a single contemporary.

It is surprising that the star of Christ's birth did not show up again in the darkness of his crucifixion. It had a splendid opportunity of distinguishing itself. For three hours it might have skipped in the sky, and secured universal attention. Perhaps it was aware of the cat's eyes of the general public, and refrained from wasting a big display.

For some time after the crucifixion the star of Christ was hidden. Then it began to appear to a multitude of low, illiterate persons, whom it lured to entertain great expectations beyond the tomb. Many of them expected that Christ would come again, and establish a universal kingdom, in which they would enjoy fine positions. But they looked for him in vain, and died without a glimpse of him. Whether they saw him after death is more than anyone can say. Our private opinion is that they saw him as much after death as they did before.

The star of Christ rose higher and higher in the heavens, and it shone the more brightly in the darkness which fell upon civilisation. At length it became the only light men had to walk by, and history tells us what monstrous doctrines and practices flourished in that obscurity. It was an age of faith and an age of filth. The masses were oppressed and miserable. Kings ruled despotically by the grace of God. Nobles were masters of the very lives of their dependents. Priests lorded it over the laity, and were mostly ignorant, idle, luxurious, and profligate. Lazy monks and hysterical nuns too often realised the worst dreams of pandemonium. Intellectually and morally, Europe sank into a state which would have seemed impossible to the Greeks and Romans.

This state of things continued for nearly a thousand years. Then there was a stir in the darkness. The stifled mind of man began to assert itself. Ancient literature was read, a few bold spirits studied science, printing was invented, maritime discovery opened up new ideas of the world, and astronomy whispered the great secrets of the universe. "Light, more light!" became a daily growing aspiration, and the priests of darkness trembled at their altars. They determined to keep back the light if they could. They imprisoned investigators, tortured those who had courage to think for themselves, and slew myriads of men who were touched by "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come." But the light still spread, and the star of Christ paled in its splendor.

Religions, said Schopenhauer, are like glowworms; they require darkness to shine in. This is true of Christianity, as it is true of every other superstition.

The star of Christ is approaching its utter extinction. As a god, the Nazarene is dead already. Few educated and intelligent people believe the full orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Even in professional Christian circles stress is laid upon the human and ethical aspects of the "preacher of the Sermon on the Mount." All this shows a general drifting from the dogma of his godhead. It is absurd to bespeak our sympathy and admiration for a supernatural being. A god does not invite approval; he demands obedience. In vain does Count Tolstoi picture an arbitrary Christ, and manufacture a new Christianity by a process of selection from the ruins of the old system. The result only commends itself to those who are seeking a dignified escape from orthodoxy, without being ready for a complete spiritual emancipation. A played-out god should have his niche in the historical pantheon; he should not be thrust into the Valhalla of actual heroes. This truth is instinctively admitted by ordinary men and women, who listen with impatience to these high-pitched panegyrics on

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the man Jesus. Stripped of his deity, he is not imposing enough to be the centre of universal reverence. Jesus has had his day, and the great god Christ is dead; dead, this time, beyond all hope of resurrection.

G. W. FOOTE.

PANTOMIMES.

PANTOMIMES are what our American friends call an institution. Christmas comes but once a year, but when it comes it brings pantomimes as surely as plum puddings. Fairies and transformation scenes are, to townspeople, almost as natural an accompaniment of Yuletide as holly and miseltoe. If, however, we look up the accepted authorities, we shall find pantomimes set down as quite a modern institution. We are led to suppose that, because the first Drury Lane pantomime was produced in 1702, the thing was then wholly new.

In my *Footsteps of the Past* I have argued that the customary ascription of the drama to the Christian miracle plays of the Middle Ages is wrong. I hold that the drama has developed, not from the Church, but side by side with it, from the mimetic movements of early man. Mummery, or imitative magic, as I hope to convince readers of my book, is rather the foundation of the Church than the Church the founder of the drama. So with pantomimes. In certain of their features—their masks, mummery, supernatural and allegorical personages and transformations—they represent ancient features of human thought; and this, in part at least, is the source of their delight to children.

Doubtless the name of pantomimes, and certain elements in them, were borrowed from the Italians in the early part of last century. But names are easily misleading. The Italian Arlechino is quite different from our spangled and splendid Harlequin. Moreover, as Isaac Disraeli pointed out, the Italian pantomimes were themselves descended from the early Roman popular diversions. It was exactly so in England. When pantomimes were introduced into our theatres, they, as Mr. Gomme has already noticed, "travelled along thoroughly English lines, and met a tide of popular English drama which just then flowed into London from the country."

We are told that Manager Rich, of Drury Lane, happened to hit upon pantomimes, and they were copied everywhere, because their success was prodigious. But why so? Because they hit the taste of the country people then flocking into the towns. They had previously been used to mummery and puppet-shows at Christmas, and in London the same thing was catered for more gorgeously. That the magical element was early predominant we may guess from Pope's lines on the rival houses of Drury Lane and Covent Garden:—

> When, lo! to dark encounters in mid air
> New wizards rise—here Booth, and Cibber there.
> Booth in his cloudy tabernacle shrined;
> On grinning dragons Cibber mounts the wind.

The severer critics cried out against these mummeries, as they rightly called them. But it was this that was the great source of attraction.

In the old mummery a chief aim was to surprise by the oddity of the masks and the splendor of dresses. In the *Records of Norwich*, 1410, we read of a wealthy citizen who was crowned King of Christmas, and rode in state dressed in silks and tinsel, preceded by twelve persons as the twelve months of the year. Mummers in grotesque dress and imitating animals followed. There is a curious manuscript in the Bodleian, written and illuminated in the reign of Edward III., in which the mummers are exhibited wearing the heads of animals. One wore the head of an ox, another of a goat, one of the hare, another of the dog, and so on through the list. Strutt mentions that in the year 1348 the king kept his Christmas at Guildford, where the mummers exhibited. Eighty buckram tunics of various colors were provided, forty-two visors of different similitudes—fourteen with female faces, fourteen with faces of men, and fourteen heads of angels made with silver. There were tunics wrought with the heads of dragons, swans, peacocks, etc., fourteen of each; and a variety of others were provided. In other instances whose record has reached us there were heads of deer, swine, owls, and fish which had been prepared at great cost, and were worn by the mummers. They seem to have entered the rooms to dance, and to imitate the sounds of the beast or bird in whose similitude they appeared; but we do not read of anything they did beyond this in the way of playing their parts. From the ragged remnants of such popular plays at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun yet preserved to us, we may infer that the main import of Yuletide mummery was the celebration of the triumph of light over darkness, and that mummers really preserved some features of ancient religion. The essence of Yuletide mummery was nature worship, and after the Reformation this was so clearly seen that an Act was passed ordering that, if any persons disguised themselves as mummers, they should be treated as vagabonds and sent to prison for three months. From this blow the old custom never recovered, though it lingered in places; and in the Court masques some of the old features were preserved, as in Ben Jonson's *Christmas his Masque* two of the characters are taken by Minced Pie and Bride Cake. When pantomimes were introduced into the theatres, they came as a revival and illustration of earlier customs.

Our old mumming and puppet shows were themselves but dramatised versions of traditional tales. The nursery stories upon which popular pantomimes are still built are the ancient ones, such as Jack the Giant-killer, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Whittington and his Cat.* In witnessing the pantomime we may become children again, and catch some glimpse of ancient thought handed down to us by tradition from the earlier ages of the world, served up with all the splendid accompaniments of beautiful scenery, magnificent dresses, dazzling lights, and joyous songs and dances. This at least may, perhaps, serve as an excuse for an old fogie like myself paying a visit to the pantomime "only once a year," just to witness, on the mimic stage, the assured triumph of Light over Darkness, and of Youth, Beauty, and Love over Age, Ugliness, and Hatred.

J. M. WHEELER.

A Religious Epidemic.

The *Alienist* tells of a peculiar religious movement which took place in the province of Kiev, Russia, in the winter of 1891-92. The originator was a Stundist, who began to suffer from hallucinations, among others perceiving extremely pleasant perfumes, which he declared to be the smell of the Holy Ghost. Then he conceived that he was possessed of the Holy Ghost, and that he was Jesus Christ. He obtained numerous peasant followers, who sold their possessions, gave up work, and looked upon their insane leader as the Savior of the world, in which there should soon be new regulations; no one should die, and no one should have need to work or to care for the future, for God would care for them all. Most of them suffered from hallucinations of the sense of smell, perceiving extremely agreeable odors, which they described as pertaining to God and heaven. Many had a feeling of remarkable bodily lightness, as if floating in the air, and many others were taken with convulsions, manifestly hysterical. The congregations were always noisy and excited, some falling to the earth, others jumping, striking themselves on the breast, and shouting inarticulately. Some would imitate conversation; but it consisted of incomprehensible, senseless sounds, which they believed to be a language spoken somewhere. Most of them were emaciated and anæmic. The epidemic was finally overcome by the authorities; those who were most insane being shut up in asylums, while the hysterical were sent to hospitals and convents.

I sent my soul through the invisible,
Some letter of that after-life to spell;
And by-and-by my soul returned to me,
And answered, "I myself am heaven and hell."

Heaven, but the vision of fulfilled desire,
And hell, the shadow from a soul on fire,
Cast on the darkness, into which ourselves
So late emerg'd from, shall so soon expire.

—*Omar Khayyam.*

* Mr. Clouston (*Popular Tales and Fictions*) shows the tale of Whittington was current in Persia in the century before Sir R. Whittington was born. Possibly the story of the cat was associated with him from his *acate*, or "purchases." In September, 1668, S. Pepys went to Southwark Fair, "and there saw the puppet-show of Whittington, which was pretty to see," and, he adds, "how that idle thing do work upon the people to see it, and even myself too."

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CHRISTMAS AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of." So wrote the inimitable Shakespeare; and, although he applied the words to ordinary men and women, they would be equally applicable to Christianity and the story of the advent of its hero. There is no doubt in our mind that a large portion of the Christian faith is composed of the very same "stuff as dreams are made of." This is particularly so with the theological associations of Christmas, which is the period that orthodox believers celebrate in honor of the alleged birth of their Master. If the New Testament may be relied upon, the inception of Christianity was exceedingly dreamy, and it certainly was not in harmony with the present welcome and hilarious manner, which most sensible people appreciate, of commemorating this pagan festive season.

According to the Gospel ascribed to St. Luke, Joseph was "espoused" to Mary, the mother of Jesus, when an angel appeared and made an important announcement to her that, although a virgin, she would "bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus." This information astonished the affianced bride, who exclaimed, for a very good reason, as given in Luke i. 34: "How shall this be?" Joseph, the engaged young man, was also naturally concerned at the condition of his future wife, and "was minded to put her away privily." St. Matthew, however, informs us that while Joseph was thinking the matter over an angel appeared to him "in a dream," and stated that the father of the coming little stranger was the "Holy Ghost." The only assigned reason given in the account for this new and remarkable mode of reproduction was that once upon a time a prophet said, without referring to either Joseph or Mary, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah vii. 14). The fact that this alleged prophecy had no reference to Jesus, and that he was not called Immanuel, does not seem to convince Christians of their absurdity in connecting the two events. Perhaps in this matter the perceptive powers of believers are "overshadowed" to this day. It is said that dreams go by contraries, but Joseph, when he was awakened out of his sleep, seems to have been satisfied that his dream was a reality, for he took Mary unto him as his wife. Evidently Joseph was as easily duped as many of Christ's followers, who believe the story, have been since. It would be difficult to induce any sensible person to believe that such a Holy Ghost procedure could take place in the present age.

But Joseph did not have all the dreaming to himself, for the wise men of the East, who had instructions to report on this matter to Herod, had "a dream that they should not return to Herod," and, therefore, they did not carry out their instructions. Then Joseph had another dream, in which he was told that he should take the mother and child into Egypt in case Herod should seek to destroy the son of the Holy Ghost. This, we are informed, was done because another prophet had said (not, be it remembered, in reference to Christ): "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matthew ii. 15). Yet another dream overtakes Joseph, in which an angel instructs him to take mother and child back, "for they are dead which sought the young child's life." But this time Joseph did not display the same confidence in God's warning as he had previously done, for he turned aside "into the parts of Galilee," fearing that Herod's son and successor might do some mischief to the progeny of the Holy Ghost. This, it is said, was done "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets—He shall be called a Nazarene." Of course, the prophets here referred to made no allusion whatever to the hero of the Gospels, as may be seen on reading Judges xiii. and 1 Samuel i. However, Jesus had already honored Bethlehem by being born there, and now it was sought to make Nazareth immortal by a visit. Perhaps the strange account given of these occurrences may be attributed to the fact that people who are given to much dreaming get confused notions of things; and it often happens that the dreamer, when awake, is unable to make either "top or tail" of his vision. It strikes us as being peculiar that, if the birth of Jesus were supernatural, there should be so much anxiety necessary to protect him from injury. If the Holy Ghost, aided by God, were the author of his being, surely the two combined should be more than a match for the machinations of Herod or anyone else. Further, we cannot but think that, if Joseph had been more wide-a-wake, he would not have been deluded by such dreamy, angelic announcements. It is quite clear that to make-believe was a much easier process in the early days of Christianity than it is now.

St. Mark does not appear to have heard of these very remarkable dreams, for he introduces Jesus full grown from Galilee to be baptised by John, who makes Jesus appear as an unknown person, as one who standeth "among you whom ye know not" (John i. 26). After this it is alleged Jesus was "found," not as the offspring of the Holy Ghost, but as the son of Joseph. Not only do Mark and John omit to refer to Joseph's dreams and peregrinations up and down the different countries, but Mary nowhere mentions the peculiar nature of the angel's visit to her at Galilee and its unique consequences. It is not even stated by Luke that she dreamt that the angel visited her, nor does she again refer to the matter, after the speech in which she made the false prophecy that "all generations shall call me blessed." Is it not singular that the very one who must have known of the miraculous birth of Jesus, if it had been true, was silent all her life upon the subject? One must be gifted with poetic vision to see in this story any solid foundation for the advent of what is termed the greatest moral power ever revealed to the world. No Rationalist can consistently accept the inexplicable account of the origin of Mary's son as given in Matthew and Luke, inasmuch as it is in direct contradiction of all known laws of human generation.

Perhaps the next most important event recorded as having taken place in those dreamy times of early Christianity was what is said to have happened to Peter when he went to the top of the house to pray (Acts x.). He saw heaven opened, and a "vessel descending unto him" containing "four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." Being hungry at the time, and having been told to "kill and eat," he refused by saying: "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." But the interpretation of the appearance of this vessel, and of the "voice" which "spake" thrice before the "vessel was received up again into heaven," is the amusing point of the story. This vision, or trance, completely revolutionised what was inaugurated in the dream of Joseph. At first it was intended that the efforts of the principal subject of the dream should be confined to the Jews, for we are told "that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or to come unto one of another nation" (Acts x. 28). The vision entirely changed Peter's policy, for from that time he was not disposed to confine his sayings and doings to the Jews. He ceased to obey the injunction of Jesus to "go not into the way of the Gentiles," for he said: "God had shown me" by the vision "that I should not call any man common or unclean." After this "eye opener," which he received in a "voice," Peter opened his mouth and said: "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Those who heard Peter's declaration were "astonished," because, as they argued, this new announcement "poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost on the Gentiles." But Peter replied that they had "received the Holy Ghost as well as we," and could not be forbidden. Now, but for that vessel of wild beasts, etc., and the voice which said "Kill and eat," probably there would have been no permission given for embracing other nations into the Christian fold.

At the present season, when our streets resound with Christmas carols intended to recall the realisation of Joseph's dream in Judea, and when it is celebrated upon a day on which it is generally acknowledged he was not born, Christians may do well to pause and reflect upon the dreamy absurdities recorded in the tenth chapter of Acts. From the story as there set forth it is clear that the original proclamation, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men," was intended for the Jews only. Moreover, even to-day, notwithstanding Peter's vision, there is neither peace nor goodwill existing among all Christian men, to say nothing of all mankind. One nation is steeped in jealousy and mistrust of another, while the followers (a long way off) of Christ are hurling reproaches at their co-believers who belong to another section of the Christian community. The realisation of this peace and goodwill is but a dream, although a pleasant one, and it would be still more pleasant if it duly affected the dreamers in their wakeful moments. Unfortunately, this has not been the

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case, for, after eighteen hundred years of Christian profession, the world is still in arms, and we are saddened with the cry of "war and rumors of war." Millions of money are being spent annually, and some of the best skill of the country is being employed, in preparing for battle with those for whom "Christian England" has but little goodwill. It is said the "Man of Peace" came, that the Cross was established, and that its influence was felt; and yet discord, envy, and malice, to an alarming extent, mar the happiness and tranquility of our race. Instead, therefore, of relying upon Christian dreams as foreshadowing the means whereby peace and goodwill shall obtain, let us turn our earnest attention to the lessons learnt in our wakeful moments, and endeavor to bring about this desirable object by fostering national justice, personal freedom, and the true brotherhood of the human family, irrespective of creeds, wealth, and social distinctions. If this is done, then, as the festive season comes round, we shall have better reasons than we now possess for believing that all well-wishers of their kind will enjoy "A Merry Christmas."

CHARLES WATTS.

WHAT IS OUR PROGRAM?

IT is to clear the human field of weeds, the rank over and undergrowths of superstition, so that useful and beautiful plants, plants intellectual, plants moral, and plants æsthetic, may be grown in the greatest possible plenty.

To us the world appears an immense jungle, or forest and jungle combined, with here and there a patch of land more or less cleared and planted with useful plants. We observe that, where the original forest-jungle has not been cut or cleared away by human labor and sound sense, little or nothing grows that is of benefit to man. There man is blind, ignorant, a creature of impulse, dreamy, submissive, slavish, with most of the possibilities of his life missed or wasted, and with little or no hope of improvement in this world. But where the ground has been cleared we find man has reached his highest development, is the most intellectual, most independent, pushing, and hopeful as regards the life that now is. And just where the ground has been most perfectly cleared, there man himself reaches his highest perfection—intellectual, social, and moral.

The forest-jungle of which I am speaking consists of the world's superstitions, amidst which nearly all the real elements of human progress are either wanting, or else are choked and stunted by the weeds and poison-plants around them. We argue, therefore, that, since up to date, the less superstition, the more knowledge—the more independence, the more virtue. If all superstitious jungle-forests were cleared away and burnt up, the world would be immeasurably the better for it in every sense.

As this is our belief, and as we respect mankind, lament man's slavery, his ignorance, his enslavement to priests and superstition, we are doing our best to destroy superstition wherever we can, with the full persuasion that, by so doing, we advance the interests of man much more than we possibly could do in any other kind of work we could undertake.

We know that our motive is good—the best and purest possible, in fact; and we know that our work is good.

Although most of our work is clearing the ground, yet we are incessantly dropping seeds of truth, of encouragement, of morality and good behavior, as we move about the field. Ay, when a favorable wind blows we stand on some elevated spot, and fling seeds of truth into the gale, that they may be carried and sown as far as may be in the forest-jungle of superstition. Much of this seed takes root and springs up here and there, putting new thoughts and emotions into the forest-jungle dwellers, and inciting them to set to work to cut down and cart away, or burn up, the enormous masses of fungus-growths, which merely tend to cheat, impoverish, mislead, poison, and torture them.

Those who oppose and vilify us and our work are of two sorts: 1st. The wild beasts and reptiles which abound in the forest-jungle, and there prey upon human dwellers. The whole round of parasites and creatures which live and flourish upon superstition are our deadly foes. 2nd. Those who either cannot, or do not, understand us are in a fright, thinking that, if we cut down the jungle, we shall leave the land bare, barren, and uninhabitable. They think superstition to be the only shelter and only comfort for man; and some of them positively fear that the human race would perish without it. This, of course, is the result of ignorance—an ignorance priests and clergy do their best to encourage.

These, then, are the only foes we have—the only opponents of our pioneer work. Our task is to show the ignorant that, just in proportion as superstition abounds, so do poverty, ignorance, sickness, epidemics, and general misery—misery arising from physical evils, and also from panic fears and frightful creatures of the imagination. Our task is to show them that, as the jungle is cleared, and plants of knowledge and science flourish, so do civilisation and the good things of time increase and abound, while fears and bugbears cease to haunt the brain.

No work could be more humane than ours, or more helpful to man. We do not teach the virtues of trust in another, but of self-dependence. Our gospel is that, if a man is not saved, and blest, and happy upon earth, he never will be at all; that, if he does not contrive to save himself, there is no possible salvation for him; that his greatest need is salvation from his saviors, the various orders of priests and clergy, who hold him in bondage and fleece him here, under the shallow pretence of saving his soul in some impossible state after death.

I confidently call upon the lovers of truth and of humanity to help us in this great and glorious work of ours. At the same time, if we have honest and reasonable opponents, I ask them to send on their objections to our work for publication in this journal.

JOS. SYMES.

—*Liberator.*

THE CREED OF INGERSOLL.

IN a sermon on Colonel Ingersoll, the Rev. Minot J. Savage recently made the following remarks, as reported in the *Boston Sunday Post*:—

The ideas of which Colonel Ingersoll is at present the most prominent exponent in this country are not new. I suppose he would not claim that they are. Nor are his methods original, except as far as they spring out of his personal characteristics and peculiarities. His ideas are very largely those of Voltaire, of Gibbon, of Hume, of Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and of a good many others of our prominent revolutionary heroes; and, curiously enough, they are largely the ideas of the most intelligent Biblical critics of the modern world, of men who are still nominally connected with the orthodox churches. Yet, if his ideas are not new, Colonel Ingersoll has so identified himself in the popular mind with those ideas that they have come to take his name, and so he stands before the modern world as one of the marked religious signs of the times.

Colonel Ingersoll is, in my opinion, the most remarkable popular orator to-day on earth. I have heard the best speakers in this country; I have heard some of the best speakers in England, including Mr. Gladstone, and I do not know of a man living who is so mighty a master over a popular audience as is Colonel Ingersoll. And the secret of his power as a popular orator is not far to seek. He is a master of expression—wonderful in his power of moulding and shaping words to the utterance of his thought. Then, again, he is a poet, and he has a deep, high, broad sympathy with whatever is human. There is nothing that touches the interests of men that does not find an echo in his heart and brain. He feels with a power that is simply colossal. Moreover, he is the mightiest popular orator in his power, not only on religious, but on other topics which he treats. He has an unsurpassed fund of wit and humor; his power in this direction is exerted without malice and without effort.

Is Colonel Ingersoll an honest man? Does he believe himself to be a reformer, or is he only a vulgar, cheap sensationalist? Does he prostitute those gifts of his for the purpose of making money? This is the common charge that is hurled against him; and let me note here, as very significant, that this is almost the only one which is hurled against him, and for this reason—that no other can be made even for a moment. What were his antecedents? His father was a Presbyterian clergyman, and he tells us how, when a boy, he spent some hours looking up into the sky thinking of hell. His was the kind of childhood thousands

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and thousands of boys have had to experience. It has been charged against him that he was without reverence for his parents in that he attacked Presbyterianism. But he himself has shown that men do no honor to their parents by going around swearing that the false views held by their parents were true.

I believe that he is as honest and as earnest as was John Calvin or Richard Baxter. I believe he is as sincere in his opinions—whether you choose to call them religious or irreligious—as any man that ever lived or spoke. Does he need to lecture on religious subjects to get money? If he had had no other resources, or if he made twice as much in that as in any other way, and if he devoted himself exclusively to that, the charge might have some basis. But he is able to earn money as a successful lawyer, and he does in that way earn all that he wishes or needs. Besides, he can earn money by lecturing, whatever his subject may be. Then, again, it seems to me that, so long as the great majority of ministers feel a divine call to leave a small parish and a poor salary in order to go to a large parish and a large salary, it is not quite safe for them to trust to the attempt to blacken Colonel Ingersoll's character by charging him with being influenced by pecuniary motives. I believe, then, that he is earnest and sincere.

Now, what are his positions regarding religious belief? He is the great red-hot antagonist of those teachings of the Church which he regards as incarnate and infinite cruelty. The great thing he attacks is the orthodox belief in hell, because he thinks it crushes the human heart, blots out human happiness, makes people afraid to think, turns the brain into a dungeon, and prevents human progress. Colonel Ingersoll's sympathy is the key to his character and career. I have never known a man more tender, more easily moved; he is as sensitive and sympathetic to all the movements of life and thought about him as the leaves of the poplar to the air. It is this tremendous power of sympathy that turns him into a flaming hatred of anything that seems causeless, inexcusable cruelty. So this one great, horrible, world-shadowing dogma of eternal hate has been the one thing that he has devoted his life to fight.

EVOLUTION OF THE DEVIL.

THE Devil originates from the exact same spot as God—namely, from human fear. The earliest gods are all ugly devils. The first religious rites are spells to ward off evil, and sacrifices to bribe the powers that be to transfer their malignant attentions to somebody else. But as in the beginning there were gods many and lords many, so were there devils many, and early religion largely concerns itself with the question of how to deal with the devils. For they are all around and even inside of us. All sickness is attributed to them, and a whole legion may take up their abode in one person. The differentiation between gods and devils, in the sense of beneficent and maleficent powers, is in early times mainly the difference between ghosts of one's own tribe and those of hostile tribes. The ancestral spirit may be supposed propitious to his tribe, even though he be extolled as a cannibal delighting in blood; but the gods of other peoples—and often the peoples themselves—are set down as devils. Moreover, one's own parents and chieftains were rather feared than loved, especially after their death, so that the worship even of ancestral gods was mainly a propitiatory diabolism. The more deities were invested with arbitrary, irresponsible power, the less clear their differentiation from devils. And the gods, being derived from dead chieftains, ever tended in this direction. Jahveh was regarded by the Jews as their national protector. But, for all that, he was a dreadful and jealous god, who might manifest his displeasure in thunder, lightning, fire, or pestilence. Jahveh, indeed, asserts that he is the author of evil as well as of good (Isaiah xlv. 7, Amos iii. 6). He was a consuming fire, to be worshipped in fear and trembling.

In the story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, as we find it in the Old Testament, there is no clear trace of a devil. The story is told to account for many puzzles—man's hard lot, woman's child-bearing, and the prone position and horror excited by the serpent, among other things. The most subtle beast of the field only developed into a devil after contact with the Persians, who, as light and fire worshippers, had in their cult the glaring contrast of the principles of light and darkness, Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu; or, as the Greeks called them, Ormuzd and Ahriman. Before the Jews were brought into contact with the Persians these nature deities had assumed ethical characteristics—the god of light being the representative of all that was pure and beneficent, and the other of the opposite. Each had a kingdom of his own. Good men and women belonged to the kingdom of Ahura Mazda; bad ditto to that of Angra Mainyu. During the captivity in Babylon the Jews received this questionable gift of an adversary—Satan or the Devil.

Critics allow that Asmodeus, the demon who figures in the book of Tobit, is none other than the Zend demon, Eshma Deva, with hardly a change of name. This shows a way was open by which the Parsee devils could enter into Judea, and by the time of the Gospel writers they had got there in swarms.

Satan makes his first entrance in the Bible in the book of Job. This probably dates it, as Driver, Cheyne, and Davidson think, about the time of the captivity. Here, however, "the adversary" is, if not an angel of light, at least among the sons of God, and talks on familiar terms with the deity. In the Parsee books we read of the Opposition, and in Job it is in Hebrew *the* Satan, the presence of the article denoting a similar poetical abstraction. The next appearance of Satan is in the book of Zechariah, who saw "Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." Here again Satan is the opposing counsel, and the scope of his devildom is by no means clear.

In the book of Chronicles Satan stands out more completely, especially in its contrast with the books of Samuel. In the latter (2 Samuel xxiv. 16), which are by far the earlier, God moved David to number Israel, and then punished him for doing so. This is a real picture of the good old God who cannot be distinguished from a Devil. But in Chronicles xxi. 1 we are told that Satan provoked David to number Israel. No doubt a just reconciliation of these passages would make out God and the Devil to be one and the same, for which, as I have hinted, there is a good deal to be said.

In the New Testament, however, the Devil comes out clearly as a personality. As I have shown in my pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*, far more clearly defined personal characteristics are ascribed to him than to the Holy Ghost. He is the head of an organised kingdom, with angels under him (Matthew xii. 24–26, Revelation xii. 9, Ephesians vi. 12), and is described as the prince, and even the god, of this world (John xii. 31, 2 Corinthians iv. 5). He has power to transform himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians xi. 14), and to deceive the whole earth (Revelation xii. 9, xx. 8). Belief in possession by devils naturally led to the horrors of witchcraft, and the rationalists who first threw doubts on the existence of witches were accused of Sadduceeism and unbelief in the Bible. "The giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible," wrote John Wesley. It is more. All the considerations applied to show that the Devil has no real existence, but is only a poetical abstraction, can logically be brought to bear on his divine antagonist.

J. M. W.

A sporting Marquis, who married a Gaiety chorus-girl, prided himself on his hats. He went into his hatmaker's in Piccadilly, and asked for a new one to be made. The shop-walker took the hat, and walked to the far end of the shop to give the requisite instructions, leaving the hatless Marquis standing in the shop. At this moment there entered the short-sighted Bishop of X., also in want of new headgear. He looked behind the counter; there was nobody there. He only saw a small man, who might have passed for a shopkeeper, standing staring at him. So he took his peculiar hat off his head and went up to him. "Do you think, my good man," he said persuasively, "that you have a hat like that?" The Marquis looked at him for a moment speechless with indignation, while the shopkeeper, seeing what was amiss, hurried up as fast as he could. Unfortunately, the Marquis found his voice before the hat-man reached his client. "No," he said, giving the Bishop back his headgear; "I haven't got a hat like that, and if I had, I'm d——d if I would wear it." The Bishop doesn't go to the same shop now.

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BETHLEHEM OR GREENWICH.

IN nought B.C., or nought A.D.—
It matters not, take either;
The whole affair is nought to me,
So take them both, or neither.

At any rate, the dateless date
Was found within a stable
At Bethlehem, if parsons state
A fact, and not a fable.

This zero morn a goblin child—
Or bastard little stranger—
Appeared amidst the straw, and smiled
Or squall'd within a manger.

This stable stood on parallel
North, two-and-thirty, nearly,
And five-and-thirty east from hell—
That is, from London, clearly.

The monks began, it now appears,
To date from "Bedlam's"* stable;
But not till full six hundred years
Had sanctified the fable.

Now, all our books and deeds we date
From Yahveh's "incarnation,"
Or what we now denominate,
In law, "affiliation."

The folk that claim the sign "A.D."
For Christ are green as spinach,
Since Time and all earth's belt must be
Referred direct to Greenwich.

If birth of Him that saves our race
From Eden's fell ophidian
Begins our years, His natal place
Should be our first meridian.

But no; despite devout pretence
Of sanctified obedience,
The Christian has a lively sense
Of secular expedience.

Once, three wise noodles chased a star,
And found themselves in "Bedlam";
Now, Greenwich and Polaris are
Preferred to faith in *dead* Lamb.

O, Christians all! for once agree—
From pope to Stewart Headlam—
And let your prime meridian be,
Not Greenwich Park, but "Bedlam"!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

One morning last week, while waiting for the train, I overheard the following conversation between two young men, who were waiting also: "I say, Bill, our young Dick, as goes to the Church Sunday-school, was a-readin' in the Testament last night about things as I never knew before. He read as Jesus Christ's father was a carpenter; but he was a bit of a preacher hisself, and he used to preach for nothing, and all his pals was fishing coves; but after a bit the *bigwas* killed him, by fixing him on two pieces of wood nailed crossways. Now, Bill, I thinks as if he and his pals could come alive again, and visit this country, and go into any of our churches, they would be forced to sit on the forms down by the door, where our poor people sits. But, Bill, I am sure they would not be here very long, as the bishops and parsons would soon have them nailed up again for preaching under price; in fact, they preached for nothing at all, which would be playing the devil with the trade of the Church. What do you think, Bill?" "Well, Fred, I thinks the same as you; and I am sure that, if they went into any of the swells' seats, and sat on the beautiful cushions, they would soon be kicked out of the church altogether, and sent to Limbo."—T. DUNBAR HARRIS.

* Contraction for "Bethlehem"—a mad-house.

ACID DROPS.

LAST Sunday was Peace Sunday, and the representatives of the Prince of Peace were in the full flow of their cheap eloquence. Most of them, however, if not all, forgot to say that Christian nations do the principal part of the fighting on this planet. They also build the warships, make the artillery, rifles, bayonets, and gunpowder, and generally play the devil at every point of the compass. But on Sunday, and especially on Peace Sunday, they go to church and swear butter wouldn't melt in their mouths.

It is amusing to read the *Methodist Times* account of the great Nonconformist demonstration on behalf of the Armenians. Dr. Parker's speech is described as "too moderate." He actually "recognised difficulties in the situation." The other speakers didn't. They were very strong on "Cromwell," and yearning for gunpowder and blazes. There would be a pretty kettle of fish boiling if these fanatics were able to direct the foreign policy of England. It is well enough to sympathise with the Armenians. Every man of common sensibility must long to secure them against their oppressors; and the tale of murder, mutilation, and outrage is enough to make the coldest blood boil. But what, after all, is it that stands in the way of their enfranchisement? Simply the bitter jealousies of the Christian powers. Were they united on behalf of the Armenians, and animated solely by a desire to aid them, the Sultan would give way in five minutes.

Mr. William Watson, one of the most promising of our younger poets, seems to have lost his head over the Armenian business. His two sonnets in the *Westminster Gazette* on "The Purple East" are not lacking in a certain power of expression, but his concluding apostrophe of England is too bellicose—perhaps not for an irresponsible poet, but certainly for a responsible statesman.

> How long shall they be borne, O England? Up,
> Tempest of God, and sweep them to their doom.

We have a very decided objection to England's playing "the tempest of God." If the tempest once began, it would soon be the Devil's.

Perhaps the poet will tell us whether England was playing the "tempest of God" when she mowed down the Matabele with her gatlin guns.

We have no doubt that the American Freethinkers will do their best to damp down the jingo spirit in the United States. The idea of a war between the land of Ingersoll and the land of Bradlaugh is too shocking (if not ridiculous) for contemplation. President Foote, of the National Secular Society, can't think of pointing a rifle at President Putnam, of the American Secular Union. Give these two a bottle of good wine and a good cigar, and they would settle all the bother to the satisfaction of every honest and sensible "patriot." We suggest that they should be appointed arbitrators. It would be better than leaving the quarrel to the professional politicians, who would boil their kettles over hell without shuddering.

Christians in general have always had a surprising knowledge of what goes on (or doesn't go on) in supernatural regions. They talk about God—to use Matthew Arnold's expression—as though he were a man living in the next street, with whom they are on terms of personal intimacy. And of all these know-all Christians the Methodists would come out first in any examination. Here is a recent illustration of their excellence in this line. There is a Methodist Union movement in South Australia, and, according to one minister at Broken Hill Conference, it seems that "God, the angels, and all that is sensible and good are on the side of the union, whilst its only opponents are the Devil and a few Methodist preachers." In our opinion, this is a rather blasphemous way of asserting that the speaker is right and his opponents wrong.

Taking the name of God in vain is common amongst religious people. They might, however, leave the Devil alone. It is not pretended that they have any right to speak for *him*.

The Rev. W. Berger says of his fellow sky-pilots: "Oftentimes ignorance is the helmet, bigotry the breastplate, hypocrisy the shield, and hate the sword with which they arm themselves." Mr. Berger is evidently a man of some Christian experience.

The following is likely to be a bitter pill to those who are for ranking Huxley among the Christians: "Grand Hotel, Eastbourne, September 14, 1890. Dear Mr. Hyde Clarke,—I am glad to see that you are as active-minded as ever. I have no doubt there is a great deal in what you say about the origin of the myths in Genesis. But my sole point is to

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get people who persist in regarding them as statements of fact to understand that they are fools. The process is laborious, and not yet very fruitful of the desired conviction. —Ever yours very truly, T. H. HUXLEY."

Dr. Miller, the founder of the Madras Christian College, which was established in connection with the Free Kirk of Scotland, is spoken of as almost a convert to Brahmanism. At any rate, he has given up all pretensions to Christianity being an exclusively divine faith, and, in an address to the students of the college, gave credit to Hinduism for presenting to the world, as no other religion has presented it, "the omnipenetrativeness of God" and "the solidarity of men."

Dr. Miller also gave utterance to the following language, according to the writer in the *Congregationalist*: "You have not to do with churches or with missionaries. The very plan of the world shows that in them there is evil and mistake. They have no authority as your guides. It is of Christ you have to judge. He stands apart, seeking to found no sect and to upset none."

The writer in the *Congregationalist*, who seems to speak from an intimate knowledge of the situation, says: "Many claim that these statements clearly reveal the reason why, during many years, so few of the students of that college have made an open profession of Christ. It certainly shows that Dr. Miller has a novel idea of the functions of a missionary college in a heathen land, and that he is entirely out of touch with at least nine-tenths of the Christian missionaries of India." The fact is, of course, that Dr. Miller is a little too enlightened for the Christianity which claims there is no salvation for any except those who rely on the blood of Christ.

Many reasons have been given for the fact that the missionaries in India have no success in the cities, and in the provinces the converts are mainly from the aboriginal tribes which have not been gathered up into Hinduism. The secret is an open one, illustrated by Christian missions in every part of the world. When it comes in contact with savagery, Christianity triumphs; but when with a civilised faith, whether Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, or Brahmanism, it makes no headway.

A survey of the whole field of Christian missionary enterprise proves conclusively that Christianity succeeds only where it meets barbarism, while in what are called Christian countries culture ever tends to replace and obliterate the distinctive features of Christianity. The Christian Churches may continue their missionary activity among barbarous peoples, but in the centres of the development of culture they more and more enter into the character of worn-out powers, and entirely fail to make impression on cultured peoples educated in other faiths.

On the other hand, the culture of the age, its material acquisitions, its science and its secular spirit, are ever extending their dominion. The races who will not accept our religion are mastering our science. All arts and industries are becoming world-wide. Despite competition, they tend to become means of union between the nations of the earth, while its various religions are the causes but of strife and division.

The *Crescent* says: "Brother Muslims, while you are reading this copy of the *Crescent*, calmly enjoying your right to serve God as your conscience deems right, a fellow man, named R. R. Whaley, of Church Hill, State of Maryland, United States of America, lies a prisoner in gaol, under a Christian law, prosecuted by Christians against a fellow Christian, his only offence being that he hoed cabbage plants on Sunday in his own garden. What a religion of peace and goodwill to men Christianity truly is!"

A real "dispensation" has happened at Fairmont, Tenn. The Rev. D. F. Levy has just died there of blood-poisoning, caused by running a splinter into his knee when he threw himself violently on to his knees to pray.

Jesus taught his followers not to be as the hypocrites are, who stand in the synagogues and corners of the street to pray, but to enter their closets, shut the doors, and pray in secret. Mrs. Hudson did not heed that direction while in church conducting a prayer meeting, so she is stricken down in a moment. Here is the telegraphic dispatch: "Anderson, Ind., November 24.—Mrs. W. W. Hudson, while kneeling in her pew at church to-day and conducting prayer, was stricken with paralysis. She was in the best of health when she entered the church."

Another warning comes from Clifton City, Mo., where George Steele, a well-to-do farmer, dropped dead in the Methodist church, while leading the choir at a protracted meeting. He was 45 years old, and was in excellent health up to the time he was stricken. Probably the powers above did not relish G. Steele's sacred music.

According to a correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, there are four Conventicles of Luciferans (or Satanists) in Paris. He does not know much about them, but says that Madame de Montespan was a blasphemous devotee. They steal consecrated hosts and chalices, so it is certain they are believers. Indeed, they represent elements of early pagan faith never yet overcome by Christianity.

Real Devil-worship has conventicles everywhere, for what other is the worship of a being who condemns most of his creatures to hell-fire? Jahveh, we are told, is a man of war (Exodus iv. 3). He swore to have war with Amalek from generation to generation (Exodus xvii. 16). He burns with anger, his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is a devouring fire (Isaiah xxx. 27). A smoke came out of his mouth so that coals were kindled by it (2 Samuel xxii. 9). If these are not descriptions of the Devil, they might easily be mistaken for such.

What worse item of Devil-worship is there than belief in salvation for the guilty through the efficacy of the blood of an innocent person? Persons holding such a doctrine have not much reason to exclaim against Devil-worship.

A correspondent of the *Progressive Thinker* states that about forty years ago the Rev. Simon C. Hewitt, a Universalist minister, was engaged in a house in Boston constructing "The Mechanical Jesus of the New Dispensation." This was a spiritually directed apparatus which was to revolutionise the machinery of the world. The Mechanical Jesus died, but not by crucifixion. It had its heart torn out by a graceless mob, who regarded the idea as blasphemy. The correspondent of the *P. T.* considers "the Mechanical Jesus" was a sort of John the Baptist to modern electricity.

The burglar's wife who has joined the Salvation Army at Preston, and confessed where her husband—now in jail—hid the proceeds of his burglaries, recalls the story of the Frenchman. "No," he said, "I do not like it, when Madame has one of her pious weeks. She goes to confession? Yes, but it is *my* sins she confesses!"

A choice commentary on the efficacy of Christian preaching of peace and goodwill is that the Pagan Romans kept the peace of the world with less than a tenth part of the soldiers of Christian Europe. "Peace Sunday" comes just when the two nations who are foremost in spreading Christianity are quarrelling over the affairs of a country thousands of miles distant from either of them.

The Chicago Parliament of Religions was trumpeted as a sign of something more than the much-talked-of re-union of Christendom. It was supposed to herald the sympathetic union of all religions. The millennial time seems, however, still distant. Hindus and Moslems still fight in India; Jews and Moslems are still persecuted under the Czar; Christian missionaries have been massacred by Chinese, Armenians by Turks; and at the very centre of Christendom Italy has to take precautions against the preaching of a holy war for the restoration of the temporal dominion of the Pope. When will people give up looking for peace and goodwill to flow from what has ever been a fruitful cause of strife?

The Rev. Newman Smyth, a leading American Broad Churchman, says we might at first think repulsive the opening chapters of Hosea, wherein the Lord tells the prophet, "Go take unto thee a wife of whoredoms" (i. 2); and again, "Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress" (iii. 1). But, viewed as a poetic allegory, we discern that "through his intense purifying love, stronger than sin or shame, Hosea had received his prophetic consecration." It is an historical fact that Jewish harlots were consecrated persons; but are these the sort of stories to be put indiscriminately before children?

The catechism of the Rev. A. F. Gace, vicar of Great Barling, Essex, which a lady teacher tried to introduce by *viva voce* questions in a London Board school, contains, among other choice items, the following: "*Q.*—We have among us various sects and denominations who go by the general name of Dissenters. In what light are we to consider them? *A.*—As heretics; and in our Litany we expressly pray to be delivered from the sins of false doctrine, heresy, and schism. *Q.*—Is Dissent a great sin? *A.*—Yes; it is in direct opposition to our duty towards God."

Another question was the following: "But why have not Dissenters been excommunicated? *A.*—Because the law of the land does not allow the wholesome law of the Church to be acted upon; but Dissenters have virtually excommunicated themselves by setting up a religion of their own, and leaving the ark of God's Church." This Catechism has

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reached twelve editions, being very popular with High Churchmen.

Cardinal Vaughan stands up for Catholic schools as the most moral and religious. No doubt they are religious enough, but their superior morality is open to question. It appears that there are 397 Catholic children in Industrial Schools at part cost of the Manchester School Board. The number of Protestant children in the same category is 387. In other words, although Catholics are in the minority at Manchester, a larger number of Catholic children are under a magistrate's order of detention. Secularists' children don't seem to figure in the statistics.

Canon Gore preached at Westminster Abbey recently on "The Efficacy of Prayer." He appeared to think prayer was not sufficient in the case of the Armenians. Englishmen would have to make "sacrifices incomparably greater" than any they have yet contemplated; and thus, we presume, answer the prayers that fall unheeded on the ears of the Sphinx of the Universe.

An extraordinary case of superstition is reported in the French press to have just occurred at Beziers, near Montpellier. A Spanish woman, named Marie Riviere, living in the Rue du Seminaire, believed herself possessed of a demon. To exorcise this and die purified she soaked her clothes in petroleum and ignited them, persuading her husband to act similarly.

The Catechism used in schools in the Polish provinces of Russia declares, in the most unequivocal manner, that the authority of the Czar proceeds immediately from God. It says his humble subjects owe him "worship, obedience, fidelity, the payment of taxes, service, love, and prayer." "We should, if required, sacrifice ourselves in compliance with his will, both in a civil and military capacity, and in whatever manner he deems expedient." In short, the religion inculcated in this Catechism is mainly Czar-worship as "the Vicegerent and Minister of God, to execute the Divine commands." It is because the Pope is really in this respect a rival that every effort is made to drive Polish Roman Catholics into the bosom of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Mr. W. T. Stead is bringing out a series of *Penny Poets*, as a sort of opposition to the Penny Dreadfuls. We looked into his penn'orth of selections from Matthew Arnold, and found the whole thing ridiculous. Mr. Stead's introduction was longer than all the poems put together. It was such a little Arnold to all that intolerable quantity of Stead! And the paper was so wretched, and the general appearance so unlovely, that Arnold, had he been living, would perhaps have cursed his inclusion in this cheap and nasty enterprise.

Mr. Stead, however, is a good Nonconformist, though we don't know of what particular brand; so it is natural that he should be puffed in these papers and lifted sky-high on billows of flattery. One of these papers assures him that he has "raised for himself a monument more enduring than brass." *Brass!* What an ill-chosen word! Surely the praise of Mr. Stead's friend lacks finish; anyhow, it lacks discretion.

By way of apology for the sordid look of these Penny Poets, Mr. Stead's pious friend remarks that "the paper, binding, and illustrations are not the book after all, any more than the vile body is the man." *Vile body* is distinctly good. It is Christian philosophy in a nutshell. But the poor Christian is incapable of acting up to his principles. The carnal element will assert itself. When he is looking about for a wife, he likes the "vile body" of his future partner to be as comely as possible; and he forgets the "vile" altogether when he sees her decked out for the matrimonial altar.

The late Rev. Peter Mackenzie was an extraordinary clown, and his ridiculous mince-meat of Bible stories was heartily relished by thousands of Wesleyans who were afraid to go to a circus and smelt brimstone in a pantomime. They are going to publish his biography, and also to erect a monument. We suggest a statue, with the head grinning through a horse-collar. Peter might have taken a prize at any country fair.

The Rev. Dr. James Stalker, of Glasgow, says the Bible has a human, a very human side. Yet he advises people not to dwell on this. He says: "But the Bible has another side, through whatever human media it may have reached us; it is a gift from the Eternal Spirit, and it is intended to be the food of the human spirit. For the appreciation of this, however, there is requisite a totally different sense from that which weighs the *pros* and *cons* of evidence as to dates and authorships." This totally different sense, we should say, is nonsense.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has given a point blank refusal to the demand of Father Black that he shall put the Bishop of London on trial for infringing the canon law by permitting the re-marriage of divorced persons. The English Church Union, after receiving this rebuff, are going to petition the Episcopate to "stop the scandal," as they call obedience to the law of the land.

Professor Sayce did not relish the *exposé* of his dubious Assyriology in the *Church Times*, and he writes to that paper giving the authority of Mr. Pinches as backing him up. It turns out, however, that Professor Sayce has not even seen the tablet which he interprets as confirming Genesis xiv., while the *C. T.* reviewer has, and tells him that when he has had that advantage he will see good reason for admiring the caution of the late Eb. Shrader. The reveiwer also mentions that his condemnation of Sayce's readings was largely based on the remarks of Mr. Pinches, who himself writes to the *C. T.* asking students to suspend judgment until the publication of the tablet texts.

In the French Midlands the pagan custom of having a Yule log, or *cosse de Noa*, on the household hearth at Christmas still survives. According to venerable tradition, it should be taken from an oak felled at midnight, and is kindled at midnight, by the head of the family, after receiving a sprinkling of holy water. This is a survival of sun-worship.

The Jewish feast of Chanuka, held at this part of the year, is considered as a patriotic festival in honor of the Maccabees. It doubtless preserves remnants of an earlier nature festival, being a "feast of lights."

CONDITION OF WOMEN IN BURMA.

Opponents of the Woman's Rights Movement are wont to remark that women have never proved their ability to maintain a position of perfect equality with man, and the advocates of the movement often base their arguments upon cases of such hazy antiquity that it is very difficult to accept the testimony. According to the *Journal of the Maha-Bodhi Society*, Calcutta, there is no need for this. There is a country in which women are as free as men, right at this present time, and that country is Burma. The paper gives an enthusiastic description of the Burmese women. We condense its main points as follows:—

Before the law, in religion, and with regard to the moral code, men and women are here perfectly equal. The women administrate their property themselves, and when they marry it remains in their full possession. The Burmese husband has no jurisdiction over his wife's belongings, nor over her person. She is perfectly free from the day of her birth. The age of the knights, who praised their women as goddesses and treated them like slaves, never came to Burma. No lover there composes sonnets in which woman is spoken of as a supernatural creature, only to look upon her as an inferior being as soon as he marries her. Religion in Burma has never described woman as the cause of all evil, and never warned man against her devices. On the other hand, no Pope has called her the "last hope of the Church." No mediocre literature has imbued women with false ideas regarding themselves, men, and the world in general. Hence they are left to decide for themselves what is befitting.

Married or single, all Burmese women have an occupation besides their home duties. Among the upper classes they look after their property; among the middle and lower classes they generally manage stores. Most retail stores are in the hands of women. As business is conducted during three hours of the day only, it does not interfere with their home duties. Women may, however, adopt any calling they please in Burma, without fear of shocking public opinion. Curiously enough, sewing and knitting are specially male occupations. The great liberty enjoyed by the women of Burma enables them to extend their views of life, and makes them tolerant. They know their weakness and their strength, and reckon with them. Divorce is obtained very easily in Burma, but less than one of every hundred marriages is ever annulled.

Christmas Paganism.—On the face of it, Christmas is a Pagan festival. The head of the house, who invites his scattered family to make merry with him at this time, does exactly what his Pagan ancestors did centuries before the Christian era. Nor has the strong arm of religion quite banished the Pagan name, for, in many parts, Yule-tide and Yule log and a glad Yule are still favorite terms.—"*Footsteps of the Past*," *p.* 184.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 29, North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell:—6.30, "How and Why was Jesus Born?"

January 5, Camberwell; 12, 19, and 26, St. James's Hall.

February 2, Liverpool; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—January 1, Camberwell; 5, Birmingham; 8, Hammersmith; 12 and 13, Bolton; 14, Blackburn; 19, Glasgow; 26, Edinburgh; 29, Dinner of the N.S.S. February 2 and 16, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 23, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.—Per D. Baxter, 4s.

J. W. Sutcliffe.—Pleased to hear you are forming an N.S.S. Branch at Bingley. Miss Vance is sending you the necessary information.

F. Creswell.—Received with thanks.

S. J. Bellchambers.—Glad to hear from you again.

Well-Wisher (Brighton).—West, 28 Edward-street, supplies the *Freethinker*.

C. W.—Mr. Wheeler's new book gives a pretty full account of Christmas customs.

L. Levine (Charleston).—Seasonable compliments.

Owing to the holidays, and our going to press so early, the usual answers to correspondents mostly stand over till next week.

Papers Received.—Chicago Daily Tribune—Public Opinion—Monthly Record—Crescent—Boston Investigator—Hairdressers' Chronicle—Two Worlds—Melbourne Age—Glasgow Herald—Dublin Evening Herald—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Manchester Guardian.

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

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

Lecture Notices must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Dec. 29) in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, his subject being, "How and Why was Christ Born?" Next Sunday (Jan. 5) he lectures again from the same platform. On Sunday, January 12, he begins his course of three special lectures in the Banqueting Room, St. James's Hall. The tickets for this course are now on sale, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or personally from Miss Vance at any of the London meetings which she is arranging under the President's lecture scheme. The expenses of these St. James's Hall meetings are naturally heavy, and we hope our London friends will make a special effort to fill the room on each occasion. The subjects are calculated to appeal to the general liberal public as well as to Secularists.

Mr. Touzeau Parris delivers the last lecture (for the present) at Foresters' Hall this evening (December 29), and will doubtless have a good meeting. It is Mr. Foote's intention to work the West-end of London for some time in the new year, and Sunday evening lectures are being organised there accordingly.

Mr. Cohen is back in London. During his absence of thirty-two days he has delivered thirty-four lectures, nineteen of them being under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme.

A course of free lectures under the President's lecture scheme is billed take place at the Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Goldhawk-road, Shepherds Bush, London, W., on Wednesday evenings, January 1, 8, 15, and 22. The West London Branch will doubtless do its best to make these lectures successful, and to capture fresh members from the audience. Mr. Foote opens the course with a lecture on "The Curse of Creeds." He will be followed by Messrs. Watts, Cohen, and Moss. Of course there will be a collection in aid of expenses, which in this case are fairly heavy.

Another course of lectures is arranged to take place on the same Wednesdays in January at the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell. Mr. Watts opens this course, and it will be closed by Mr. Foote, with Messrs. Cohen and Heaford intervening. These lectures are under the auspices of the Camberwell Branch, whose members will probably try to fill the hall with residents in the neighborhood.

A third course of free lectures is arranged to take place in the Assembly Rooms, Edmonton, on Thursday evenings, January 2, 9, 16, and 23. This course will be opened by Mr. Foote, who will be followed by Messrs. Snell, Heaford, and Forder. The Wood Green friends will of course do their best for the success of this course of lectures.

Two other courses of free lectures are being arranged for Battersea and Islington in February, of which due notice will be given in the *Freethinker*.

Tickets are now on sale for the Annual Dinner, which takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29, which is Thomas Paine's birthday. The next day is the anniversary (alas!) of Charles Bradlaugh's death, and his services to the "good old cause" will not be forgotten in the after-dinner speeches. Those who defer purchasing tickets till a few days before this function should at least mark the date in their "engagements." We hope to see a big representative gathering of London Freethinkers.

Miss Vance and the committee are making arrangements for the Annual Children's Party. This is a function which must on no account be neglected. It is better than a play to watch hundreds of little ones, many of them very poor, romping, racing, eating, drinking, and generally having a high old time. And the climax comes when the prizes and toys are distributed. Of course a good deal of cash is required to pay the fiddler for this merry dance, but that has always been forthcoming. Subscriptions can be sent to Miss Vance, or to Mr. R. Forder, the hon treasurer—both at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

On Christmas Eve, December 24, there will be a distribution of boots, etc., to poor children of the Balls Pond neighborhood at the Bradlaugh Institute, 36 Newington-green-road, N. Hours from 5 till 8 p.m.

On January 1 a portrait of Mr. Bradlaugh will be unveiled by Mrs. Bonner at the Bradlaugh Institute. Mr. George Anderson will preside at 8.15. Mr. Foote is unavoidably absent, being billed to lecture at Shepherds Bush.

Nya Sanningar, the organ of the Swedish Freethinkers has reached its twentieth number, and gives its readers an excellent portrait of Thomas Paine.

The *Hairdressers' Chronicle* has a sensible article on "Sunday Shaving in Barbers' Shops." It says: "The man who delivers milk and cream at our doors every Sunday morning, the carrier who supplies the Sunday paper, are public benefactors; they supply nourishment for the body and food for the mind, and why should they be denounced as violators of the law? Several men engaged in the labors of the day cannot afford the time to be bathed and barbered except on Sunday. If a man may perform this duty himself, why should he be deprived of the right to employ another to perform it? Does the employing constitute the wrong?"

The *Freethought Magazine* for December gives its readers a portrait of Mr. William J. Ros, who has contributed many bright, original articles to the American press under the *nom de plume* of "Hudor Genone." Mr. Roe's biggest book is entitled *Inquirendo Island*. Mr. T. B. Wakeman writes on "Thomas Paine in France," and Dr. Felix Oswald and Judge C. B. Waite pulverise the Rev. Dr. Kaye.

The Moslems in London have held a meeting and decided to start a mosque—indeed, have opened a temporary one at the West-end. There is a mosque at Woking and one at Liverpool, but the followers of Islam in London desire one of their own. The opinion was expressed that the movement should become a missionary one, and things made as easy for converts as possible.

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SHALL I LIVE AGAIN?

I DO not think it possible that I can have a conscious existence after death. My body and mind are the product of earth. They have been evolved out of the elements and the surroundings, or environments, of our solar system, except, perhaps, the ego, or the conscious atom, that first began the sentient life of this planet. That may have floated from some remote star, or been brought by a comet. The heaven that Jesus preached was to be in the renovated earth. He never conceived of any other planet or star. The only way we can live after death is by our descendants or our works.

The priests of old times invented heaven for their special benefit, and they offered it to the highest bidder.

The Greek poets used to sing the praises of eternal sleep; and it seems to me that they made it very desirable to a weary, worn-out soul. There were to be in the heaven of Jesus mostly uninteresting persons and things. There were to be no earthly, sensual, or devilish things in his heaven. Why did he not tell us what the enjoyments there would be? My answer is, Because he knew nothing of such a place. St. Paul labored long and arduously to establish the belief in a future existence; but what did he think he would find to do in heaven? Even Theodore Parker could give no account of the heavenly kingdom. No learning, no science, no philosophy, has ever shown any knowledge of such a state of existence. Man's soul is not fitted to that kind of a place. It would be there like a fish out of water. All our faculties would be useless. No Almighty Being could turn our souls into angels. He would have to make creatures with not one particle of the old earthly nature in their composition. As old Job asked, "Will ye lie for God?" The poet Pope aptly complains that—

> Men would be angels, angels would be gods;
> They quit their proper spheres and rush into the skies.

—*Investigator.* DEAN DUDLEY.

HUMAN SACRIFICE!

A SAVAGE king, it seems, has, in respect
Unto the mem'ry of an ancestor,
Offered up human lives as sacrifice;
That thus their souls might company his shade
As fitting escort to the unknown world.

* * * * *

Hearing of this, a nation civilised
Becomes infected with the mania
That leads men thus their kind to immolate,
Believing not that *their* dead need a train
Of subject souls to furnish regal state
During the passage o'er the waves of Styx,
They yet a counter superstition have
To set against the savage one;
For they
Are curst with worship of the God of War;
And at the shrine of blood and human groans,
Reeking from myriad, age-long sacrifice,
They purpose slaying those who volunteered
To give themselves in satiation of
This demon's ever-searching crimsoned lust.

* * * * * *

Which people civilised is, and which
The savage race? Placed in the balance, weigh
The merits of these superstitions dire;
Which call ye worse? When, when will England cease
To look upon another's fault alone?
When seek to right the wrongs that press upon
The lives of her own crowded populace?
That greater wisdom were by far, and thus
She only can throw off the shackles of
The prison-night of war; emerging to
The sunlit atmosphere of human peace.

F. W. THORRINGTON.

Mrs. Loftie—"The organist at our church is the most stupid fellow in the world, and is always playing the most inappropriate selections. Why, at Carrie Curfew's wedding he played, 'Trust her not, she's fooling thee.' The very idea!" Mrs. Posted: "Stupid? Indeed he is not. He was once engaged to Carrie himself, and she jilted him. He knew what he was about when he selected that tune."

GOD'S NOSE.

"The nose of the Ancient of Days is life in every part."—"*Zohar*," *Idra Rabba; sec.* 201.

I HAVE been taken to task by a correspondent for, when writing on "God's Blood" (*Freethinker*, p. 741), alluding to various other portions of the anatomy of deity. It is supposed that, because I mention the Lord's nose as one of his prominent features, I can have no poetry in my soul, and am like the person devoid of music, "fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils." Now, I am rather partial to poetry, though I prefer Shakespeare to Ezekiel, Tennyson to Zechariah, and Morris to Malachi. But I happen to hold a theory about poetry, which, whether right or wrong, I am entitled to maintain till shown to be in error. My view is this: Physics come before metaphysics. Belief in the literal concrete fact precedes belief in the abstract allegorical expression. The metaphors of the poet are often remnants of actual beliefs. "Breath" was known before "spirit"; the sun was regarded as the eye of heaven, before there was any notion of an all-seeing deity; it was thought that magicians could actually stop the course of the sun, before theologians discovered that the narrative in Joshua was poetry.

Just so with God's nose. If now a poetical symbol, it was once as real as any other portion of the deity. All early gods are "magnified non-natural men," and the Bible God is no exception. He has the form and feelings of man. Like man, he has eyes, only sharper. Like man, he has a nose, only keener. He not only rests, but is "refreshed" (Exodus xxxi. 17). Genesis says that when Noah offered a sacrifice "the Lord smelled a sweet savor" (Genesis viii. 21). Could such an expression have been used if the original idea had not been that the Lord was altogether such another as man? Nay, Herbert Spencer thinks that Jahveh, like other deities, was originally a dead chieftain. Again, God says (Leviticus xxvi. 31): "I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors." And once more (Amos v. 21): "I will not smell in your solemn assemblies"—*i.e.*, on the day of feasting. Upon this Gerald Massey remarks: "This divinity, like the Kamite (Gold Coast) Amanse, the spider-god, *talks through his nose*" (*Natural Genesis*, i. 80, 81). When, then, the Lord's nostrils are spoken of, I form the inference that originally the Lord was supposed to have a nose. Why else were sacrifices and incense so constantly offered before him? I take it he was first supposed to like roast meat, and then had to be content with the smell. Belated Ritualists continue to offer their decrepid deity incense, though he has long since lost his olfactory organs. As the organ of smell was of greater relative importance to archaic man; as the lower races still greet by rubbing noses, and smelling is synonymous with knowledge, I am not joking, but quite as serious as one ought to be in writing upon such a solemn subject, when I say that probably the proboscis of deity was originally the most prominent thing about him.

LUCIANUS.

MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.

THE following bits on Missionary Enterprise are all clipped from the *Yorkshire Evening Post*:—

It is difficult to say if, or how far, the missionaries themselves have contributed to the *emeute*. But their own testimony is not encouraging. "I stayed in An-Haien," writes Mr. David Callum, one of the foremost of the missionaries, "for about two months, preaching and book-selling—preaching on the street, by the riverside, in the markets, and right inside the temples in front of the idols!" What would happen, I wonder, if a party of Chinese missionaries forced their way to the altars of our churches and commenced a vigorous onslaught on the Christian faith!

Missionaries in China reckon their harvest as amounting to a fraction more than two Chinamen per missionary per annum.

One missionary in China, after laboring nearly six years, confessed he had no male converts. This is the usual experience.

For every converted pigtail a thousand of our own heathen at home might be done good to.

It is a melancholy fact that there is spent annually on the despairing task of converting the heathen Chinee a sum of £350,000, which is equal to the combined incomes of the ten chief London hospitals.

The entire scheme of missionary work in such places as China is utterly useless, expensive (of money that could be employed to far better ends at home), and demoralising. So writes a correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

In one province of China 23 missionaries claim to have converted 11 Chinamen in eight years.

Most of our missionaries who have toiled in Madagascar for years confess that they are beginning to despair of this race.—*Times*.

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LET THERE BE LIGHT.

"At the St. Pancras Vestry last evening the Electricity Committee recommended that the charge for supplying current for churches and chapels be 5d. per unit, the rate charged for public street lighting. Dr. W. Smith, in moving the adoption of this recommendation, said that at present only one of the seventy churches and chapels situated in St. Pancras was lighted by electricity; and, as an inducement to the others to follow this example, it was deemed desirable to make a reduction in the charge as compared with the cost to private customers of 1d. a unit. Of course until dusk the charge would be uniformly 3d. per unit, as hitherto. Mr. Menzies stated that an additional reason for desiring to get places of worship to use the electric light on Sunday was that on that day the staff had little or nothing to do. The motion was adopted."—*Sun*, December 12, 1895.

Is not this lovely? One church has contracted to take the light, some of the others will, and all are hoped for by the Electricity Committee.

We have all heard the tales of the sweated labor employed by the great Bible-producing societies, but this is a new development of the sharp commercialism of the modern church, whipped up by a deliberate premium on Sabbath-breaking. The churches are to have an advantage over the ordinary customer of 1d. per unit, a bonus which is to be made by what is really an intensification of the Sunday labor of the staff of the electrical works. It is just possible that there is a legal aspect to this question which it might be worth while raising. It is a point of some delicacy, and would require some careful looking up; but any Freethinking vestryman or ratepayer, with the legal turn of mind and patience of Charles Bradlaugh, might give the clerical members a cold shock by suggesting that the rebate of 1d. per unit in favor of the church lights is an illegal relief of church expenses, at the cost of the ordinary ratepayer. That this is not so far-fetched as at first sight may seem will be admitted when recalling the actions raised by several London vestries against the London County Council to recover rates levied on London parks—one of the stupidest things ever done by pig-headed vestrydom, for the vestries themselves have to raise the money with which the C.C. has to pay the rate to the vestry, *plus* the awful law costs.

T. S.

RELIGION.

Religion makes enemies instead of friends. That one word, "religion," covers all the horizon of memory with visions of war, of outrage, of persecution, of tyranny, and death. That one word brings to the mind every instrument with which man has tortured man. In that one word are all the fagots and flames and dungeons of the past, and in that word is the infinite and eternal hell of the future.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow men. Although they have been preaching universal love, the Christian nations are the war-like nations of the world. The most destructive weapons of war have been invented by Christians. The musket, the revolver, the rifled cannon, the bombshell, the torpedo, the explosive bullet, have been invented by Christian brains. Above all other arts the Christian world has placed the art of war.

A Christian nation has never had the slightest respect for the rights of barbarians; neither has any Christian sect any respect for the rights of other sects. Anciently the sects discussed with fire and sword, and even now something happens almost every day to show that the old spirit that was in the Inquisition still slumbers in the Christian breast.

Whoever imagines himself a favorite with God holds other people in contempt.

Whenever a man believes that he has the exact truth from God, there is in that man no spirit of compromise. He has not the modesty born of the imperfections of human nature; he has the arrogance of theological certainty, and the tyranny born of ignorant assurance. Believing himself to be the slave of God, he imitates his master; and of all tyrants, the worst is a slave in power.

When a man really believes that it is necessary to do a certain thing to be happy forever, or that a certain belief is necessary to ensure eternal joy, there is in that man no spirit of concession. He divides the whole world into saints and sinners, into believers and unbelievers, into God's sheep and Devil's goats, into people who will be glorified and people who will be damned.

A Christian nation can make no compromise with one not Christian; it will either compel that nation to accept its doctrine, or it will wage war. If Christ, in fact, said, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword," it is the only prophecy in the New Testament that has been literally fulfilled (also Luke xii. 49-53, xiv. 26).—*Robert G. Ingersoll*, in "*Some Reasons Why.*"

THOMAS PAINE.

Freethinkers must frequently have been surprised at the long-continued prejudice concerning such men as Paine and Voltaire. Even liberal papers like the London *Echo* still persist in speaking of "Tom" Paine. It appears that Christians inculcate prejudice even in the school-room, and school-books contain some notable examples of pious fraud. In Mackenzie's *Nineteenth Century* (p. 14) occurs this startling footnote: "The primary object of Voltaire's attack was Christianity, as represented by the Roman Catholic Church of his day," etc. On the next page Voltaire is referred to as "the withered unbeliever."

In another book by the same author, *America: A History* (p. 104), a great man is thus sneered at: "Conspicuous among those whose writings aided in convincing the public mind stands the unhonored name of Thomas Paine, the infidel." It is well to mention that both these school-books are published by Nelson and Sons, Paternoster-row.

Singular that almost every Christian engaging in controversy violates the Christian principle—charity. It is a liberal education in religious tactics to know the real Paine from the "bogey" set up so long by orthodoxy. The Religious Tract Society is chiefly responsible for the continued publication of the recantation lie about Thomas Paine.

Paine, as a writer, is not wanting in the more finished graces of imagery and illustration. Edmund Burke himself might have envied the illustration of his too exclusive compassion for the sufferings of the *noblesse* in the French Revolution. "Mr. Burke pities the plumage, but he forgets the dying bird."

C. E. S.

FREETHOUGHT IN INDIA.

In a Church paper of recent date there appeared an article from a missionary in India, bewailing the fact that infidel writings have found their way to India. Listen to his tale of woe. Speaking of the educated Hindus, he says: "They adopt Atheism or Agnosticism, following such teachers as Mrs. Besant, Madame Blavatsky, and Colonel Olcott, whose writings, as well as those of such men as Ingersoll, Huxley, and Spencer, have flooded the country."

How strange that the Hindu, whose religion teaches him to hold all life sacred, should reject a religion whose meek and lowly Savior said: "Those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay before me." How unreasonable for him to adopt Atheism instead of a belief in a triple God who sacrificed one-third of himself in order to partially appease the wrath of the other two-thirds. How it must strengthen his heathenish double of the Christian Bible to find a large number of the missionaries' own countrymen doubting and ridiculing it; to find them asking for an explanation of its numerous contradictions, and condemning its obscenity and immorality. Is it not shocking that the poor benighted heathen, who has been taught to place morality and justice above all else, should fail to appreciate the beauties of a religion which has left in its wake such a record of crime and bloodshed as has no other which the world has ever known; a religion which has, whenever possible, silenced all opposition by torture and imprisonment; which is to-day making a desperate effort to regain its legal hold upon the people? Terrible, indeed, is the thought that the record which nature has written of her evolvement from a low to a high order of being should be placed in the hands of the pagan, that he may contrast it with the Biblical mud man and spare-rib woman.

Must not his doubts be still further increased by learning that our planet in its present condition is the result of ages of growth, instead of a nice flat world on "pillars," which was created in a few hours, with a firmament set with cute little stars which "sang together," and could go frisking about upon occasion, and finally land in a stable; and, worse yet, must he learn that the sun is an immense body many times larger than the earth, the centre of our planetary system, around which the world revolves, instead of being a light in the sky which will stand still when man orders it to, while a horde of barbarians whip other barbarians?

How sad to think that the poor missionary, who has devoted his life for a good salary to the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, should have to contend with Western scepticism as well as Eastern heathenism. What wonder that he cries: "Woe is me! Christianity is falling! is falling?"

A. Cramer.

"I have no fear of the future," said a sad-looking man; "I suffer so terribly from rheumatism that all I want is to be somewhere where it's warm."

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BOOK CHAT.

On January 1 the catalogue of Renan's library will be published, with a view to sale by auction. It is especially rich in works of Biblical and Oriental interest. There are more than three thousand works, in several languages, comprising the chief literary sources of Biblical criticism. It would be a pity if such a collection were dispersed, and it is to be hoped that it may find a resting-place in some public library or institution. Renan, before his death, expressed a hope that it might be kept together. He was at much pains to make it complete and representative, and its unique value, of course, remains only so long as it is undivided.

* * *

Dean Hole, in his *Little Tour*, tells of a Chicago man who came one morning to his office with such a radiant smile that his partner could not refrain from inquiring the cause. "My dear fellow," he replied, "my doctor ordered me to walk here from my house, and this morning I have been able, in consequence, to do three splendid acts—enough, surely, to make any man happy. As I was passing one of the churches I saw a poor woman with a baby in her arms, weeping bitterly on the steps. I inquired the cause, and she told me that she had brought her little darling to be baptised, but that the priest said she must pay a dollar, and that she had no money. I told her that I had nothing in my purse but a ten-dollar note, but that she might take it to the priest, and I would wait outside for the change. She brought it, with such profuse expressions of gratitude and praise that in my modesty I hurried away. Hear now what I have done, and refrain from envy, if you can. I have dried a poor woman's tears; I have placed her little one upon the heavenly road; I have passed a false ten-dollar note, and have got the change in my pocket!"

* * *

England, the Remnant of Judah, and the Israel of Ephraim, by the Rev. F. R. A. Glover, is one of the many cranky works devoted to the Anglo-Israel mania. Mr. Glover thinks that "Ollan Fola of Tara," in Ireland, was really Jeremiah, who migrated there after the taking of Jerusalem—in search, we presume, of a milder climate. He took, it appears, the daughters of Zedekiah with him, and there is no record of his return, or theirs, to the land of Judah; whence it follows that our own royal house is descended somehow from the daughters of Zedekiah. Selah!

* * *

A powerful anti-Christian work has been published in Japan by Inone Tetsujiro, a professor of the University of Berlin, where he holds the degree of Doctor in Philosophy, and who has seen the actual working of Christianity in Christian lands; and he shows that, wherever the Christian religion is in the strongest force, there the people are worst off, and the nation weakest, while the most educated classes hold it in but half-disguised contempt. The absence of patriotism and of the inculcation of citizen and domestic duties is a strong point with Dr. Tetsujiro, who says that patriotism is the true religion of Japan. He urges that "Christianity is contrary to the welfare of country and home," and therefore unsuited to the Japanese State and the Japanese people.

* * *

Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (3s. 6d.) comes to us from A. and H. Bradlaugh Bonner, Took's Court, E.C. Mrs. Bonner states that this is a collated edition, based on the earliest issues of the work, and especially on the Symonds issue (1792), which is said to have been revised by Paine himself. Mr. J. M. Robertson furnishes a long and excellent biographical introduction. The book is well printed, and stands midway between the shilling edition and the expensive edition of Mr. Conway. It is intended to be the first volume of a complete issue of Paine's writings.

* * *

The *Introduction to the Talmud*, by M. Mielziner, Ph.D., Professor of Talmud at the Hebrew Union College, Chicago, reminds us of Christian books on the Bible, in that it exalts the beauties of the Talmud, while passing over its absurdities and obscenities. It must be allowed that the Talmud contains some fine ethical maxims. Indeed, some Christians, recognising this, have pretended that they may have been taken from unrecorded sayings of their legendary Christ. Professor Mielziner closes his brief though careful survey of the ethics of the Talmud with this characteristic passage: "The liberal spirit of Talmudic ethics is most strikingly evidenced in the sentence, 'The pious and virtuous of all nations participate in the eternal bliss,' which teaches that man's salvation depends not on the acceptance of certain articles of belief, nor on certain ceremonial observances, but in that which is the ultimate aim of religion—namely, morality, purity of heart, and holiness of life." This is certainly better than "He that believeth not shall be damned."

*

At Munich is being published a collected edition of the works of Wilhelm Weitling, a Freethinking Social Democrat, who was born at Magdeburg in 1804, and died in America in 1871. The most famous of his writings was *The Gospel of Poor Sinners*, of which an English translation appeared in 1848. He also wrote *The Workmen's Republic: Humanity as it is and as it should be*, etc. The edition will have an historical biography of Weitling by Dr. C. Hugo.

DUTY.

Were I to know beyond dispute
  This life ends all,
I would go on nor change my way
From this same path I tread to-day
  Whate'er befall.

Duty is ever duty still;
  Nor need we care
What lies across the great divide;
There's work enough upon this side
  For all to share.

To do some good deed every day,
  To lift mankind
From lower depths to higher planes,
Are worth far more than sordid gains
  Of any kind.

Yea, even to have brought one soul
  Into the light
Of hope and love is better far
Than wealth and fame and glory are
  To any knight.

—*Myron H. Goodwin.*

French Views on Death.

Le Journal of Paris recently asked several notables their views on death. The late A. Dumas, who has since met death, answered: "I maintain that we should think often of death if we desire to have at all times a fairly correct conception of the things of life.—A. Dumas, Fils."

Other replies were as under:—

"If death is an evil, it is an indispensable evil, and, as a matter of simple justice, ought not humanity to be subject to the same lot which it metes out to the inferior orders of creation? We must one day disappear and pass into Paradise, hell, Nirvana, or nothingness. But as for that, let each one believe as he will. You don't expect me to speak about the beyond, do you?—William Bouguereau (*Member of the Institute*)."

"Death is the quarter of an hour after life's banquet which Rabelais speaks of. I sincerely hope that you will ask me on the day of the next carnival what I think of life.—Jules Claretie."

"According to the ancient myth, death and love are brothers; the one gives life, and the other takes it away. In a word, death is the necessary end of every act and every form of being. Without it the world would be insensible, immobile, and, according to our conceptions of things, a mere void.—Berthelot (*Secretary of the Academy of Sciences*)."

"Death is the close of a more subtle life. In the flower it sets free the perfume, in the chrysalis the butterfly, and in man the soul.—Juliette Adam."

"If there were no old age, death would be an abominable thing; but, as there is old age——H. Meilhac."

"Death is only the end of life. It is good, because it frees us from the imbeciles and the canaille, with whom we are forced to come into contact.—J. L. C. Jerome."

"Kindly excuse me. I think so badly of death that I could not, in a grave matter of this kind, express a properly impartial opinion.—Paul Strauss."

"There are no theories which will enable one to bear with resignation the death of others, of those whom one loves, or, at any rate, such theories cannot be set forth in a newspaper interview.—Marcel Prevost."

"Here is my reply to your question, 'What do you think of death?' Chut!!!—Alphonse Daudet."

Civilisation.

Christians claim that our civilisation is due to Christianity. The claim is not true. The cause is mistaken for the effect. Our civilisation has modified Christianity. It was once a Christian duty to murder Freethinkers and witches, and to uphold slavery. Christians now deny that such things were ever right. Christianity has changed. New interpretations have been put on Scripture to make it less repulsive to mankind. Christianity is following up the march of civilisation, but keeps a long distance in the rear.—*Boston Investigator.*

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Distance of the Stars.

The sun is but a small star compared with others much further off; but even it is ninety-one millions of miles from this earth. A railway train, running at the rate of forty miles an hour, without stoppages, would require 90,625 days, or 248 years, in getting to the sun. There are other suns a great deal further off; one of the nearer ones of these is "Alpha of the Centauri," which it would take the above train many years to reach; and some of the further-off ones the train would not reach for some centuries. Astronomy can verify this. Then where is the heaven above? Is it a mental fiction, like the soul *said* to leave the body at death, but of which there is no proof, though people die daily in our midst, with every opportunity of seeing all that occurs? Will some well-educated Christian give a few words of explanation? GEORGE ANDERSON.

Sorry for Aaron.

The *Youth's Companion* tells of a church choir that repeated many times, "Oh, turn my pi—, Oh, turn my pi—, Oh, turn my pi—, Oh, turn my pious soul to thee." Dean Hole tells in his *New Memories* how one of these anthems annoyed the first Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Connecticut, Dr. Samuel Seabury. The Bishop was visiting the parish of Middletown, and an anthem, composed by a local musician, was sung. The words were those of the 133rd Psalm, and eight times the singers repeated the phrase, "That ran down upon the beard." At a dinner, after the service, the Bishop was asked, at the suggestion of the composer, what he thought of the music. "Oh," he replied, "I daresay it was very good, but I sympathised so with Aaron that I could not attend properly. I thought that the running down of the ointment eight times could hardly have left a hair upon his head."

Bits from Ingersoll.

Religion is supposed to consist in a discharge of the duties we owe to God.

If God is infinite, we can neither give, nor can he receive, anything. Anything that we do, or fail to do, cannot, in the slightest degree, affect an infinite God; consequently, no relations can exist between the finite and the Infinite, if by relations is meant mutual duties and obligations.

Some tell us that it is the desire of God that we should worship him. What for? Why does he desire worship?

We cannot assist the Infinite, but we can assist our fellow men.

The civilisation of man increases as the secular power of the Church decreases.

Man, in his helplessness, has, by prayer and sacrifice, endeavored to soften the heart of God?

Why should a Christian believe in religious toleration, and yet worship a God who does not?

Side by side across the open Bible lie the sword and fagot.

Every church is a cemetery, and every creed an epitaph.

Reason, Observation, and Experience—the Holy Trinity of Science—have taught us that happiness is the only good, that the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so. This is enough for us. In this belief we are content to live and die. If by any possibility the existence of a power superior to, and independent of, nature shall be demonstrated, there will then be time enough to kneel. Until then let us stand erect.—*Selected by L. Levine.*

Obituary.

We have to notice the death of two New England Freethinkers of standing, Mrs. Ellen Batelle Dietrick and Dr. O. B. Frothingham. Mrs. Dietrick was one of the editors of the *Woman's Bible*. She was founder of the Women's Industrial and Educational Union, of a home for old women, a cooking school, and a kindergarten. By her pen she did good service to the cause of Freethought and woman's emancipation in the pages of *Liberty* and the *Twentieth Century*. Dr. Frothingham, at one time a clergyman of the Unitarian Church, became more radical, and was first president of the Free Religious Association. He became a disciple of Mill and Spencer, and in 1879 severed all his church connections, and was reckoned among the Agnostics. He had reached his seventy-third year.

We regret to record the death, on December 19, of Mrs. Mary Attwood, who expired at 2 Trinity-road, Sheerness-on-Sea. Mrs. Attwood was a lifelong and consistent Freethinker, interested in everything and everyone connected with the movement. In accordance with her own wishes, her brother-in-law, Mr. A. W. Marks, carried out a silent funeral.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

DURING the first few centuries after the fall of the Western Empire, literary activity at Constantinople had fallen to its lowest ebb. In the West, amidst the general neglect of learning and literature, the collecting of books, though not wholly forgotten, was cared for by few. The charge of books, as well as of education, fell more and more exclusively into the hands of the Church. While the old schools of the rhetoricians died out new monasteries arose everywhere. Knowledge was no longer pursued for its own sake, but became subsidiary to religious and theological teaching. The proscription of the old classical literature, which is symbolised in the fable of the destruction of the Palatine library by Gregory the Great, was only too effectual. The Gregorian tradition of opposition to pagan learning long continued to dominate the literary pursuits of the monastic orders and the labors of the scriptorium.—"*Encyclopædia Britannica*," *art. Libraries.*

In Christian England, when it first becomes known under that name, one of the most striking features is the popular belief in the power of human beings to make contracts with demons. Special penances were provided for those who, by evil practices, acquired the art of sending forth tempests: in this and in similar cases it is always clear that the punishment is inflicted, not for believing in the influence of the demons, but for making use of that existing influence to attain an end. The demons themselves seem commonly to be identified with the old pagan gods, who were held in honor many generations after Augustine's mission. Even as late as the beginning of the eleventh century it was thought necessary to enact that Christianity should be maintained and Heathenism expelled. The clergy, during the whole of this time, seem to have been most firm believers in the power of those who styled themselves magicians or enchanters; and it was even decreed that, if one of the clergy himself practised the forbidden arts, he should be degraded.—*L. O. Pike*, "*History of Crime in England*," *p. 58.*

There is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is when the garment of make-believe, by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features, is stripped off.—*Professor Huxley.*

Mankind has never groaned under the yoke of a more atrocious combination of moral, mental, and physical despotism than at the period when the Christian hierarchy had reached the zenith of its power.—*Dr. F. L. Oswald.*

PROFANE JOKES.

In the S—— family desert was sometimes jokingly called "the afterwards." The kitchen girl, coming in at dinner with a message from the lazy cook, lost the sentence by the way, and announced, timidly: "Please, mum, there's no hereafter."

Tired Child (at church)—"Mamma, how much did you put in the collection?" Mamma—"A penny, my dear." Child—"Well, the preacher gives an awful lot for his money." Mamma—"Yes, my dear; but it was like one of your soap-bubbles—very big, but mighty little substance in it."

"Mamma," said the little boy, in a whisper, "is this church buildin' insured?" "Hush, Johnny," she answered. "I presume it is." Johnny was silent a few moments. Then he returned to the attack. "Couldn't the Lord take care of it?"

"If a church burns down when it hain't got any insurance, don't it show that the Lord takes better care of the insurance companies than he does of the church."

Aged and infirm Old Man (to country parson, who has been reading the Bible to him)—"Lor' now, sir, and how many wives does it say Solomon had?" Parson—"Seven hundred, William." Old Man—"And how many concubines?" Parson—"Three hundred." Old Man—"Lauk a mussy, sir, but what a blessed privilege them early Christians did enjoy."

Judge Stringer: "I understand that during his recent illness Tarantula Jack experienced a change of heart?" Alkali Ike: "You bet he did. When he found himself at death's door, with Dr. Slade doing his level best to pull him through, he sent for Preacher Harps, confessed his sins, made his peace with heaven, and resolved to lead a better life if he was spared. And when I dropped in to see him this afternoon I found him propped up in bed before the open window, with his revolver in his wasted hand, peacefully shootin' the glass out of the back winders of the Salvation Army hall, across the alley."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Mystery of the Birth of God."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): Tuesday, Dec. 24, 5 to 8, distribution of boots, etc., to poor children. Thursday, Dec. 26, at 8.30, social party. Sunday, Dec. 29, at 7, C. Cohen, "Gods and God-Makers." Wednesday, Jan. 1, at 8.15, unveiling of portrait of the late Charles Bradlaugh by Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, select entertainment and dance. Tuesday, at 8, special social gathering. Thursday, at 8, members' general meeting—election of officers and other important business.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "How and Why was Christ Born?"

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (74 Libra-road, Roman-road): 8, Sunday-school; 7.30, Zona Vallance, "The Old Faith Grown More Wide."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary will lecture.

WESTMINSTER BRANCH (42 Vincent-street): 8, members' meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stuart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, a lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 5, tea and soirée.

DUNDEE (Tally-street Hall): 6.30, discussion.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—W. Reid, "Utopias Unlimited"; 6.30, Zeisman, "The Gentle Art of Criticism."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Saracen, "Priests and Progress."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, musical and literary evening.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. Roberts, "Greek Philosophy: Socrates—Antisthenes."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, a lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 5, tea; 7, social. All Secularists invited.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, select entertainment. Wednesday, at 5.30, tea, soirée, and ball.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, music; 7.30, a lecture.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, a meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 29, Balls Pond.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—December 29, Foresters' Hall.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

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